

Report and data summary

Child Protection Australia 2018-19

A summary of the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare's annual report outlining the latest national data on child protection and family support services for 2018-19, and trends over the five-year period from 2014-15 to 2018-19.ⁱ

National data

- ◆ 451,184 notifications were made in 2018-19 concerning 269,193 children
- ◆ 273,269 notifications were resolved without investigation (60.6 per cent of all notifications)
- ◆ A total of 131,416 investigations were finalised in 2018-19 (29.1 per cent of total notifications)
- ◆ 170,151 children (one in 33) received child protection services in 2018-19, of which 51,470 were Indigenous (one in six):
 - 115,733 were the subjects of an investigation
 - 47,516 were the subjects of substantiations, of which 12,580 were Indigenous
 - 69,467 were on a care and protection order (59,073 at 30 June 2019, of which 21,931 were Indigenous)
 - 54,989 were in out-of-home care (44,906 at 30 June 2019, of which 17,979 were Indigenous)
- ◆ In 2018-19, the number of Indigenous children receiving child protection services was almost eight times the rate for non-Indigenous children
- ◆ 67.6 per cent (over two-thirds) of children receiving child protection services were repeat clients in 2018-19
- ◆ 11,500 infants (aged under one) received child protection services in 2018-19 and were the age group most likely to have received child protection services
- ◆ 12,563 children (7.4 per cent) were involved in all three components of the system (investigation, care and protection order and out-of-home care) in 2018-19
- ◆ 97,882 (57.5 per cent) of children receiving child protection services were the subject of an investigation *only*, of which 83,477 were finalised in 2018-19 (35,588 substantiated, 47,889 not substantiated)
- ◆ Children from *very remote* areas were almost three times as likely as those from *major cities* to be the subject of a substantiation
- ◆ Of children who were the subjects of substantiations:
 - 1,529 were unborn
 - 4,768 were aged less than one
 - 11,296 were aged one to four
 - 13,181 were aged five to nine
 - 12,554 were aged ten to 14
 - 4,143 were aged 15 to 17

- ◆ Of children who were the subjects of substantiations (by the type of abuse deemed as causing most harm):
 - 6,986 experienced physical abuse
 - 4,714 experienced sexual abuse
 - 25,736 experienced emotional abuse
 - 9,882 experienced neglect
 - For 197, it was not stated
- ◆ Of children who were the subjects of substantiations, the number of children in each socioeconomic status index category (from 1 – lowest to 5 – highest) were:
 - 11,298 at 1
 - 7,925 at 2
 - 6,962 at 3
 - 4,381 at 4
 - 2,044 at 5
- ◆ Of children on care and protection orders at 30 June 2019:
 - 4,113 were living with their parents
 - 50 were in family care with relatives/kin
 - 17,290 were living in foster care (29.3 per cent)
 - 23,076 were in home-based care with relatives/kin (39.1 per cent)
 - 428 were living in other home-based care
 - 6,453 were in third-party parental care
 - 2,783 were living in residential care
 - 175 were living in family group homes
 - 249 were in independent living
 - 4,456 were other/unknown
- ◆ Of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019:
 - 17,415 were in foster care (38.8 per cent)
 - 23,490 were living with relatives/kin (52.3 per cent)
 - 544 were in other home-based care
 - 186 were in family group homes
 - 2,876 were in residential care
 - 183 were in independent living
 - 212 were other/unknown
- ◆ 64.3 per cent of Indigenous children were placed with relatives/kin, other Indigenous caregivers, or in Indigenous residential care
- ◆ 4,982 children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019 had a disability (12.1 per cent) and for 15,155 children (36.9 per cent) their disability status was not stated

- ◆ One in 18 Indigenous children were in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019, more than 10 times the rate for non-Indigenous children
- ◆ 30,279 children had been in out-of-home care for two years or more at 30 June 2019
- ◆ 1,450 households commenced foster care and 1,680 households exited foster care (excludes New South Wales and respite placements)
- ◆ 5,415 households commenced relative/kinship care and 4,345 households exited relative/kinship care (excludes New South Wales and respite placements)
- ◆ Of children in relative/kinship placements at 30 June 2019:
 - 1,662 were living with a grandparent (43.7 per cent)
 - 853 were living with an aunt/uncle (22.4 per cent)
 - 44 were living with a sibling
 - 156 were living with another relative
 - 129 were living with someone with a non-familial relationship to the child
 - Eight were living with someone with an Indigenous kinship relationship to the child
 - Seven were other
 - 943 were not stated (24.8 per cent)
- ◆ 3,724 children in out-of-home care were reunified with their family in 2018-19 (excludes New South Wales and Queensland)
- ◆ 438 intensive family support service providers delivered services in 2018-19 across 372 locations
- ◆ 28,797 children commenced intensive family support services, of which:
 - 10,901 were aged zero to four (37.9 per cent)
 - 8,469 were aged five to nine (29.4 per cent)
 - 8,295 were aged ten to 17 (28.8 per cent)
 - 1,132 were unknown (3.9 per cent)

National trends

- ◆ The number of children in notifications rose from 39 per 1000 in 2014-15 to 48.2 per 1000 in 2018-19
- ◆ The number of children receiving child protection services rose by about 12 per cent over five years (from 28.5 per 1000 in 2014-15 to 30.5 per 1000 in 2018-19)
- ◆ The number of Indigenous children receiving child protection services increased from 42,913 (134.2 per 1000) in 2014-15 to 51,470 (155.6 per 1000) in 2018-19
- ◆ There was a small increase in the rate for children in out-of-home care in Australia at 30 June, from eight per 1,000 children in 2015 to nine per 1,000 children in 2017, followed by a fall back to eight per 1,000 children in 2019
- ◆ The number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care increased from 15,455 (48.1 per 1000) in 2014-15 to 17,979 (54.2 per 1000) in 2018-19

Victorian data

- ◆ 122,925 notifications were made in 2018-19
- ◆ 82,179 notifications were resolved without investigation (66.9 per cent of all notifications)
- ◆ A total of 36,884 investigations were finalised in 2018-19 (30 per cent of total notifications)
- ◆ 47,271 children received child protection services in Victoria in 2018-19:
 - 33,511 were the subject of an investigation (13,858 not substantiated)
 - 18,883 were the subject of substantiations, of which 2,289 were Indigenous
 - 18,384 were on care and protection orders (14,316 at 30 June 2019, of which 3,042 were Indigenous)
 - 12,093 were in out-of-home care (8,490 at 30 June 2019)
- ◆ 71.1 per cent of children receiving child protection services were repeat clients in 2018-19
- ◆ 2,809 (5.9 per cent) of children receiving child protection services were involved in all three components of the system in 2018-19 (investigation, care and protection order and out-of-home care)
- ◆ 27,527 children were subject to an investigation *only*, of which 26,801 were finalised in 2018-19 (13,525 substantiated and 13,276 not substantiated)
- ◆ Of children who were the subjects of substantiations:
 - 2,174 were aged less than one
 - 4,644 were aged one to four
 - 5,357 were aged five to nine
 - 5,087 were aged ten to 14
 - 1,621 were aged 15 to 17
- ◆ Of children who were subjects of substantiations (by the type of abuse deemed as causing most harm):
 - 2,559 experienced physical abuse
 - 1,444 experienced sexual abuse
 - 14,172 experienced emotional abuse
 - 625 experienced neglect
 - For 83, it was not stated
- ◆ Of children on care and protection orders at 30 June 2019:
 - 3,455 were living with their parents (24.1 per cent)
 - 1,583 were living in foster care (11.1 per cent)
 - 5,207 were living in home-based care with relatives/kin (36.4 per cent)
 - 66 were in other home-based care
 - 3,151 were in third-party parental care (22 per cent)
 - 453 were in residential care
 - 37 were in independent living

- 364 were other/unknown
- ◆ 4,543 children were admitted to out-of-home care in 2018-19, of which 924 were Indigenous
- ◆ 3,849 children were discharged from out-of-home care in 2018-19, of which 736 were Indigenous
- ◆ Of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019:
 - 345 were aged less than one, of which 87 were Indigenous
 - 2,019 were aged one to four, of which 535 were Indigenous
 - 2,411 were aged five to nine, of which 675 were Indigenous
 - 2,345 were aged ten to 14, of which 584 were Indigenous
 - 1,370 were aged 15 to 17, of which 300 were Indigenous
- ◆ Of children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019:
 - 1,591 were living in foster care (18.7 per cent)
 - 6,224 were living with relatives/kin (73.3 per cent)
 - 173 were in other home-based care
 - 455 were living in residential care
 - 40 were in independent living
 - Seven were other/unknown
- ◆ 79.1 per cent of Indigenous children were placed with relatives/kin, other Indigenous caregivers, or in Indigenous residential care
- ◆ 485 children in out-of-home care at 30 June 2019 had a disability (5.7 per cent) and for 5,447 children (64.2 per cent) their disability status was not stated
- ◆ 3,868 children had been in out-of-home care for two years or more at 30 June 2019. Of these children, 2,613 (67.6 per cent) had experienced one placement and 176 (4.6 per cent) had experienced more than five placements
- ◆ 458 households commenced foster care and 721 households exited foster care (excludes respite placements)
- ◆ 3,261 households commenced relative/kinship care and 2,787 households exited relative/kinship care (excludes respite placements)
- ◆ Of relative/kinship care households with a placement at 30 June 2019:
 - 2,873 had one child
 - 887 had two children
 - 422 had three to four children
 - 39 had five or more children
- ◆ Of foster care households with a placement at 30 June 2019:
 - 574 had one child
 - 296 had two children
 - 116 had three to four children
 - Nine had five or more children

- ◆ 3,027 children in out-of-home care were reunified with their family in 2018-19
- ◆ 13,542 children commenced intensive family support services of which:
 - 4,334 were aged zero to four (32 per cent)
 - 4,017 were aged five to nine (29.7 per cent)
 - 4,989 were aged ten to 17 (36.8 per cent)
 - 202 were unknown (1.5 per cent)
- ◆ 85.3 per cent of children commencing intensive family support services were living with their parents

Victorian trends

- ◆ The number of Indigenous children receiving children protection services increased from 4,109 (178.3 per 1000) to 6,689 (277.7 per 1000) in 2018-19
- ◆ The number of non-Indigenous children receiving child protection services increased from 29,194 (22.7 per 1000) in 2014-15 to 40,559 (29.2 per 1000) in 2018-19
- ◆ The number of Indigenous children in out-of-home care increased from 1,511 at 30 June 2015 (65.2 per 1000) to 2,181 at 30 June 2019 (90 per 1000)

ⁱ Data in this summary sheet is largely included verbatim from the report and the data tables. Please interpret with care.
A child is aged 0-17 unless otherwise stated.

The full report can be found here:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/getmedia/3a25c195-e30a-4f10-a052-adbfd56d6d45/aihw-cws-74.pdf.aspx?inline=true>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2020, *Child protection Australia 2018-19*, AIHW, Canberra.

The data tables can be found here:

<https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/child-protection/child-protection-australia-2018-19/data>

Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) 2020, *Data tables: Child protection Australia 2018-19*, Child Welfare series no. 72, Cat no. CWS 74, AIHW, Canberra.