

## Definition of Indicator

Concerned citizens and mandated reporters contact the Child Abuse Registry (CAR) to discuss and report children at risk for maltreatment. A report is taken for review and intervention, when the circumstances legally warrant it. State law defines child abuse as 1) physical injury inflicted on a child by another person, 2) sexual abuse, or 3) emotional abuse. Child neglect is defined as negligent treatment that threatens the child's health and/or welfare. It is important not to interpret the reports to Child Abuse Registry as the actual number of child abuse and neglect cases.

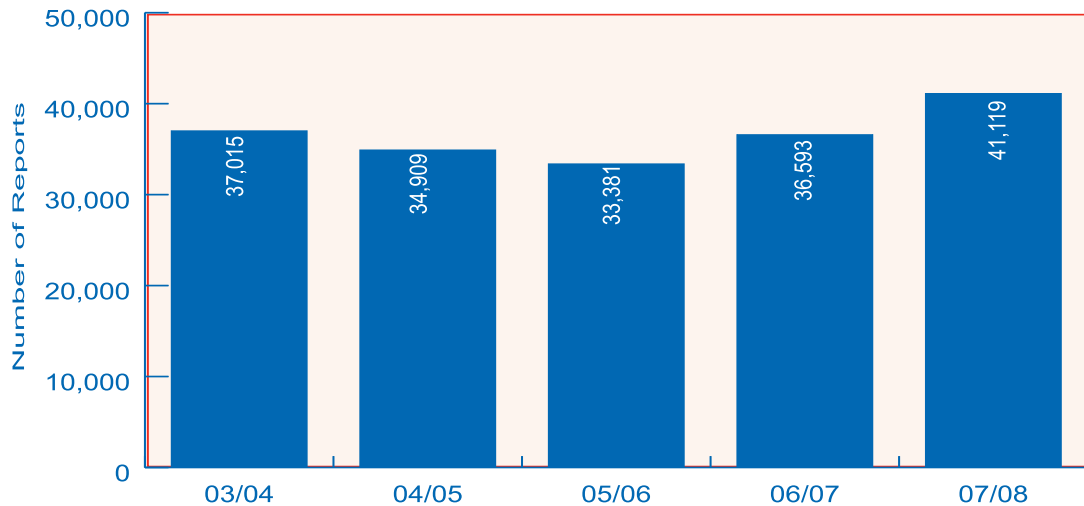
## Findings

There were 41,119 child abuse reports filed in Orange County during 2007/08. The gender representation was 52% female and 48% male. Children ages 6 to 12 had the highest concentration of reports at 38%. Children ages 13 to 18 represented 29%, followed by children ages 1 to 5 at 26%. Newborn children to age 1 comprised 6% of the total reports. The most prevalent types of abuse reported in 2007/08 were general neglect (37%), at-risk/sibling abuse (21%), physical abuse (15%), and sexual abuse (13%).

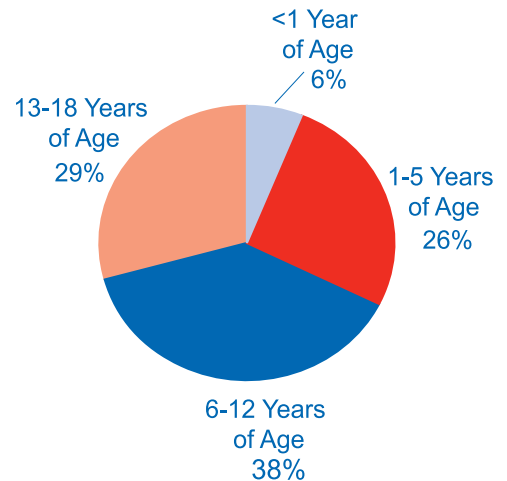
### STATEWIDE:

In 2008, 486,787 children ages 0-17 had a child abuse referral. 96,575 of these children had their referral substantiated.<sup>1</sup>

**Total Number of Child Abuse Reports, 2003/04 to 2007/08\***



**Total Number of Child Abuse Reports by Age, 2007/08**



## Trends

Due to changes in data reporting, comparisons of data before 2003/04 are not considered valid. Child abuse reports increased 11.1% from 37,015 in 2003/04 to 41,119 in 2007/08.

*\* Reporting of Child Abuse Reports changed during 2003. Beginning January 2003 information on reports is generated automatically from the Child Welfare System/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). Earlier years age categories were converted to new categories, which changed some of the reporting categories. Beginning July 2003, all reports from a mandated reporter are included. It is important to keep in mind that these changes make direct comparisons with data prior to 2003 of uncertain validity.*

### RELATED INDICATORS:

- Dependents of the Court and Out-of-Home Care
- Adoptions
- Foster Care

## Child Abuse Reports by Percent for Children Under 18 Years of Age by Type of Abuse, 2003/04 to 2007/08

Type of Abuse	03/04	04/05	05/06	06/07	07/08
Sexual Abuse	14%	15%	15%	14%	13%
Physical Abuse	20	18	18	17	15
Severe Neglect	1	1	1	1	1
General Neglect	43	43	44	39	37
Emotional Abuse	1	1	1	1	1
Exploitation	.03	.04	.03	.01	.04
Caretaker absence	1	1	2	1	1
Substantial risk	2	2	1	1	.2
At risk/sibling abused	1	1	1	13**	21
Allegation involving Sibling/other	17	18	18	13**	10

\* In November 2006 the "At Risk/Sibling Abused" allegation was assigned to siblings of children with an abuse or neglect allegation which has led to a decrease in the category "Allegation involving Sibling/other".

### Why is this Important?

A report to the Child Abuse Registry is the primary entry point for children and families into Orange County's Child Welfare Services (CWS). Depending on the severity of the report, there are established time standards for initiating an investigation. The Child abuse report may represent the only opportunity a child and family has to receive outside help to end maltreatment. The majority of reports are received from professionals working with children. The vigilance of relatives, friends, neighbors, and even anonymous reporters are also crucial to ameliorate child maltreatment. All reports are anonymous and confidential.

### What's Happening in Orange County?

Orange County Social Services Agency continues to provide responses to allegations of abuse that include strength-based assessments of the family and interventions/services that are community-based and culturally competent.

- SSA is currently piloting Differential Response Path<sup>1</sup> which provides a community-based response to calls received by Child Abuse Registry that do not rise to the level of abuse or neglect. Assistance and preventative resources are provided to families in need.
- Regionalized caseloads promote improved collaboration with community agencies and resources.
- Interventions such as Team Decision Making Meetings, Parent Mentors, and Family Services Workers focus on early engagement of families in the Child Welfare System resulting in more successful outcomes for children and families.

#### What's working:

- A rapid response protocol that brings social workers to the police officer in the field for a joint assessment and mutual exploration of placement alternatives.
- Family to Family Initiative which is an approach to child welfare practice emphasizing building community partnerships; continue self-assessment; recruiting, training, and supporting foster/adoptive parents and relative caregivers; and Team Decision Making Meetings with birth parents and community stakeholders, and continual self-evaluation.
- Early intervention and prevention services offered by community-based Family Resource Centers.
- Multi-Disciplinary Consultation Team (MDCT) is a collaboration of SSA, HCA, Probation and Department of Education representatives working with families to reduce the need for protective custody and out of home placement by stabilizing and strengthening the family through a coordination of available resources.

✓ See page 182 in Supplemental Tables for additional data

### NATIONWIDE:

During 2007, an estimated total of 3.2 million referrals, including approximately 5.8 million children, were made to Child Protective Services agencies. Of this number an estimated 771,200 (24.1%) were substantiated cases of abuse or neglect, and the majority involved cases of neglect. An estimated 1,760 children died from abuse or neglect—at a rate of 2.35 deaths per 100,000 children.<sup>2</sup> This compares to the 1 out of every 200,000 that died in Orange County in the same year.

#### DATA SOURCE:

Orange County Social Services Agency

#### NOTES:

<sup>1</sup>University of California, Berkeley, Center for Social Services Research, Child Abuse Referral Highlights, 2006

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Child Maltreatment Annual Report, 2007