

Ontario Child Welfare Service Performance Indicators

Safety Outcome - Recurrence of Child Protection Concerns in a Family after an Investigation

Definition:

The percentage of family cases closed at investigation in a fiscal year that were re-investigated within 12 months after closing and where the child protection concerns were verified.

Why is this Measure Important?

Closing a case following an investigation assessment suggests that there are no child protection concerns requiring ongoing Children's Aid Society involvement or there are factors that are present that are beyond the control of the agency. However, at the conclusion of many investigations, workers make referrals to community-based services for families. This measure is important for further understanding of those families that return to a Children's Aid Society with verified protection concerns and those that do not, in terms of the families' willingness to work with agency, the emergence of new child protection concerns not present at the time of closure, the level of engagement and intensity of the services offered, as well as the risks, strengths and needs of children and families.

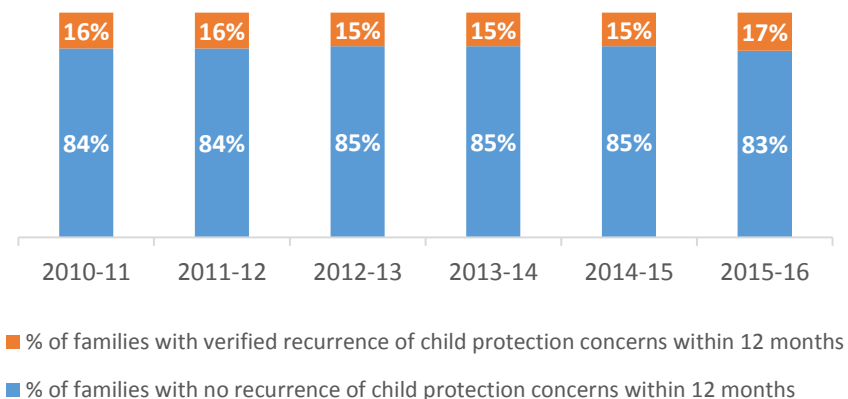
Limitations of the Data

The data results do not identify whether it is the same child who experienced a recurrence of protection concerns; only that protection concerns have reoccurred in the same family. The reason for investigation and verification represents any recurrence of any kind of protection concern rather than recurrence of the same protection concern (e.g., a case may return with different protection concerns than those originally investigated). Data represent only those families reported to a Children's Aid Society and do not include protection concerns that are not reported or not identified.

Key Considerations

There is no agreed-upon benchmark for the "acceptable" level of recurrence. While a lower level is generally desirable, the rate of recurrence is unlikely ever to be 0% for a variety of reasons including the long-lasting nature such as struggles experienced by families commonly known to the child welfare system, e.g., poverty, substance abuse and mental health problems. Furthermore, the reconnection of some families with the child welfare system can be in and of itself a protective factor to children whose families experienced valuable supports from the agency which addressed their risks and needs.

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Results:

Data suggest that the majority (i.e., 83-85%) of families do not return for service within 12 months of case closure. A minority of families return to a Children's Aid Society with verified child protection concerns within 12 months: between 15-17% in each of the years under review.

These data have been compiled and analyzed by the University of Toronto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work through the Ontario Child Abuse & Neglect Data System.

2010-11: Represents 35 of 47 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 44,035 Investigations

2011-12: Represents 35 of 47 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 45,416 Investigations

2012-13: Represents 36 of 47 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 47,601 Investigations

2013-14: Represents 35 of 47 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 45,525 Investigations

2014-15: Represents 36 of 47 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 42,519 Investigations

2015-16: Represents 28 of 48 Ontario Children's Aid Societies

N = 41,926 Investigations