

**ONTARIO INCIDENCE STUDY OF REPORTED  
CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT 2018**

# **UNDERSTANDING THE OVER-REPRESENTATION OF BLACK CHILDREN IN ONTARIO CHILD WELFARE SERVICES**

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## ONE VISION ONE VOICE, A PROGRAM OF THE ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

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The cover art represents a hand stretched with kola nuts. A symbol of hospitality and respect, the kola nut has important meaning within West African cultures and throughout the African diaspora. The kola nut is often used in ceremonies or meetings as a gesture of goodwill, welcome, unity or reconciliation. In these ceremonies, it is often the youngest person that breaks the nut. We want to invite and center the experiences of Black children and families in this work and use their voices to inform and direct change.

During the middle passage, enslaved Africans used kola nuts to make the water drinkable aboard the slave ships. While the nut is bitter – a lot of what is in the report speaks to unpleasant and unpalatable truths about glaring overrepresentation and disparities – It also signifies survival, resiliency and the ability of Black people to endure in hopes of a better day.

# Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	6
Section I: Introduction and Methodology.....	11
Section II: Framing the Context of Black Children’s Involvement in the Child Welfare System.....	14
Section III: Service Dispositions.....	21
Section IV: Investigation Reason.....	30
Section V: Child and Caregiving Functioning.....	37
Section VI: Household Characteristics.....	43
References.....	47

# List of Figures

<b>Figure 1:</b> Disproportional Representation of Black Children in the Child Welfare Population Compared to the Overall Child Population in Ontario.....	<b>7</b>
<b>Figure 2:</b> Disparate Representation of Black Children in the Ontario Child Welfare System in 2018.....	<b>8</b>
<b>Figure 3:</b> Disparate Investigation Outcomes in Child Welfare Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>8</b>
<b>Figure 4:</b> Referral Source in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure 5:</b> Child Functioning Concerns and Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>9</b>
<b>Figure 6:</b> Socioeconomic Circumstances in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>10</b>
<b>Figure 7:</b> Nature of Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>10</b>
<b>Figure 8:</b> Conceptual Map of Policies and Practices that Drive Child Welfare Involvement for Black Families in Ontario (Mohamud et al., 2021).....	<b>17</b>

# List of Tables

<b>Table 1:</b> Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children (ages 0-15) in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>23</b>
<b>Table 2:</b> Referral Source in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>25</b>
<b>Table 3:</b> Provision of Ongoing Services Following Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>26</b>
<b>Table 4:</b> Applications to Child Welfare Court in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 5:</b> Out-of-Home Placements in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>29</b>
<b>Table 6:</b> Nature of Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018 .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Table 7:</b> Substantiation Decisions in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>34</b>
<b>Table 8:</b> Characteristics of Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>36</b>
<b>Table 9:</b> Child Functioning Concerns in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>40</b>
<b>Table 10:</b> Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>42</b>
<b>Table 11:</b> Household Source of Income in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>45</b>
<b>Table 12:</b> Household Ran Out of Money for Basic Necessities in the Past Six Months in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Ontario in 2018.....	<b>46</b>

# Executive Summary

**This report describes maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 that involved Black children and compares these investigations to those involving white children.**

These analyses present data from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018 (OIS-2018), the sixth provincial study of maltreatment-related investigations conducted in the province.

The report was prepared by the OIS-2018 Research Team at the request of One Vision One Voice, a program of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies.



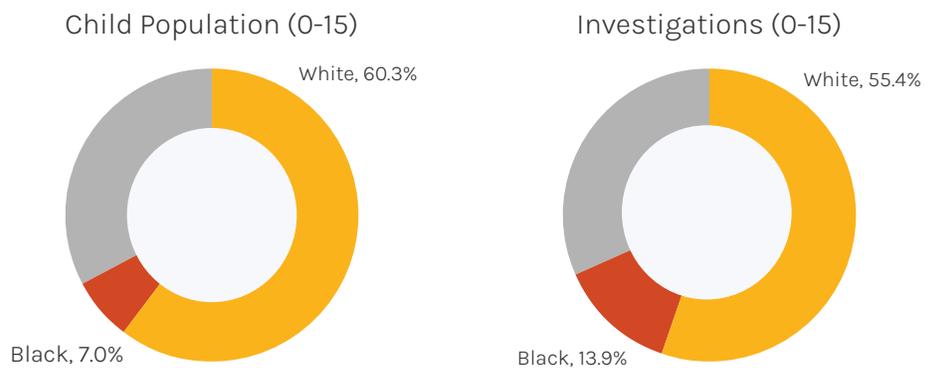
# DISPROPORTIONALITY AND DISPARITY

**Disproportionate** means not in proportion. Disproportionality indices compare the proportion of children who experienced a child welfare outcome (e.g., investigation or placement in care) that are in a specific ethno-racial group to the proportion of children in a broader population (e.g., the general child population) in that ethno-racial group. Disproportionality indices do not compare ethno-racial groups to one another.

Figure 1 describes the disproportional representation of Black children involved in a child welfare investigation compared to the proportion of Black children in the total child population in Ontario. Black children represent seven percent of the child population but represent nearly 14 percent of the child welfare service population.

**FIGURE 1**

**Disproportional representation of Black children in the child welfare population compared to the overall child population in Ontario**



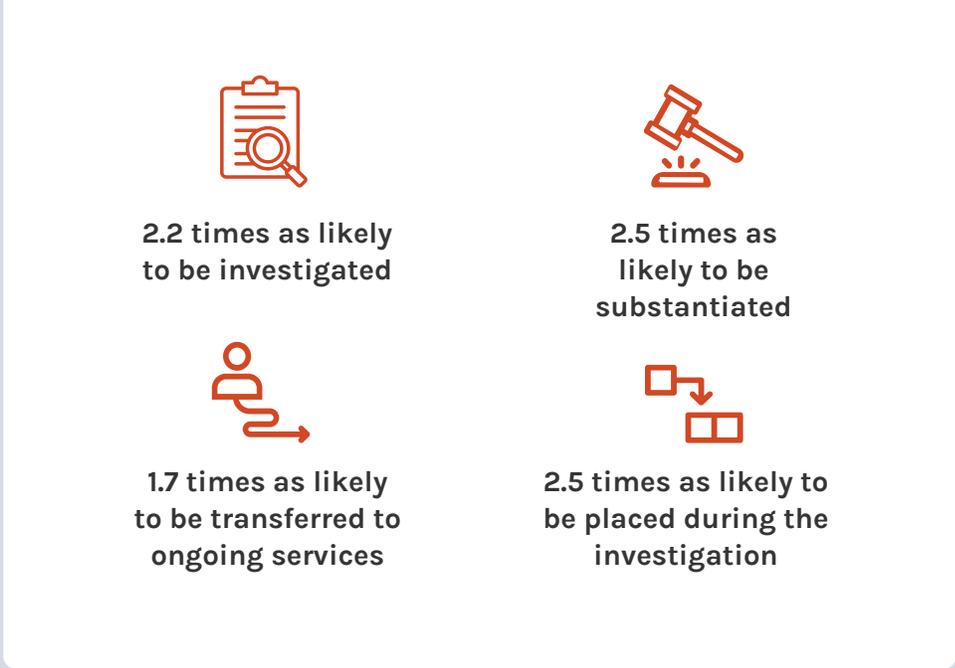
Resource: Statistics Canada, Special tabulation, based on 2016 Census of Population. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

**Disparity** means lack of similarity. Disparity indices compare the proportion of the population of children from one ethno-racial group who experienced a specific child welfare outcome to the proportion of the child population of another ethno-racial group (usually white) that experienced the same outcome.

Figure 2 describes the disparate representation of Black children compared to white children in the Ontario child welfare system in 2018. Overall, compared to white children, Black children were 2.2 times as likely to be investigated (see Table 1). These investigations were then 2.5 times as likely to involve substantiated maltreatment (see Table 7), 1.7 times as likely to be transferred to ongoing services (see Table 3), and 2.5 times as likely to involve a placement in out-of-home care (see Table 5).

When we examine children and families who are investigated (child welfare service population) and analyze the child welfare decisions made after investigations are screened in, investigations involving Black children were 16 percent more likely to be substantiated, 21 percent less likely to be transferred to ongoing services, and 15 percent more likely to involve a placement in out-of-home care. See Figure 3.

**FIGURE 2**  
Disparate representation of Black children in the Ontario child welfare system in 2018



**FIGURE 3**  
Disparate investigation outcomes in child welfare investigations involving Black and white children in Ontario in 2018



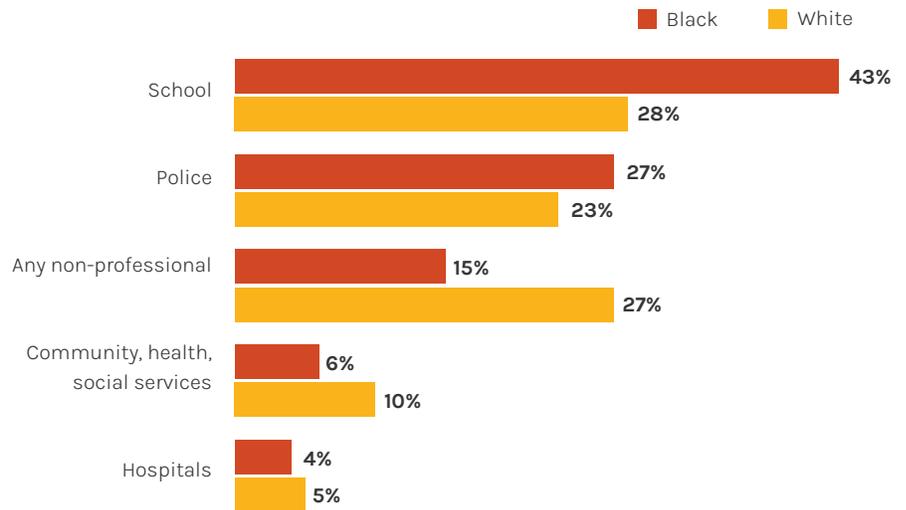
# INVESTIGATION CHARACTERISTICS

## Referrals

As shown in Figure 4, compared to investigations involving white children, investigations involving Black children were more likely to be referred by school personnel and police. Investigations involving Black children were less likely to be referred by non-professional sources (e.g., community members, family, etc.; see Table 2).

**FIGURE 4**

Referral source in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children in Ontario in 2018

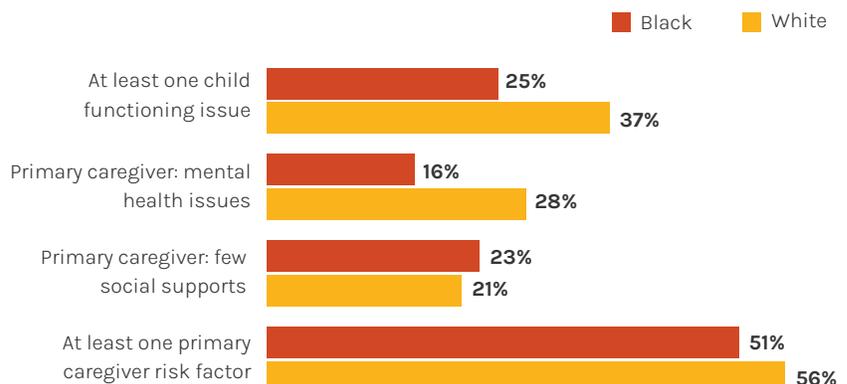


## Child and Caregiver, Characteristics

Investigating workers were less likely to note at least one child functioning concern and at least one primary caregiver risk factor in investigations involving Black children compared to white children (see Figure 5, Table 9 and Table 10).

**FIGURE 5**

Child functioning concerns and primary caregiver risk factors in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children in Ontario in 2018

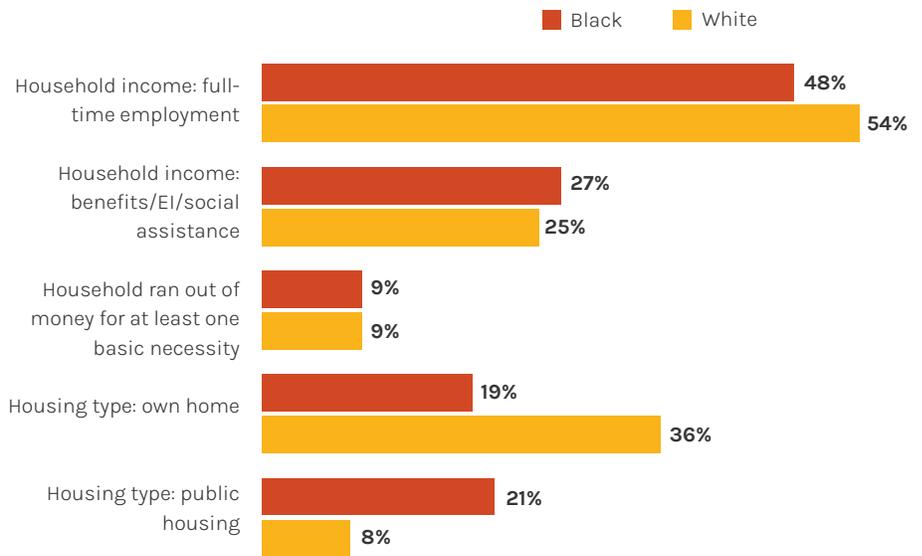


## Household Circumstances

Investigations involving Black children were more likely to involve families whose workers indicated they were living in public housing and less likely to involve families who lived in homes they owned and who had a full-time source of income compared to investigations involving white children (see Figure 6, Table 11 and Table 12).

**FIGURE 6**

**Socioeconomic circumstances in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children in Ontario in 2018**



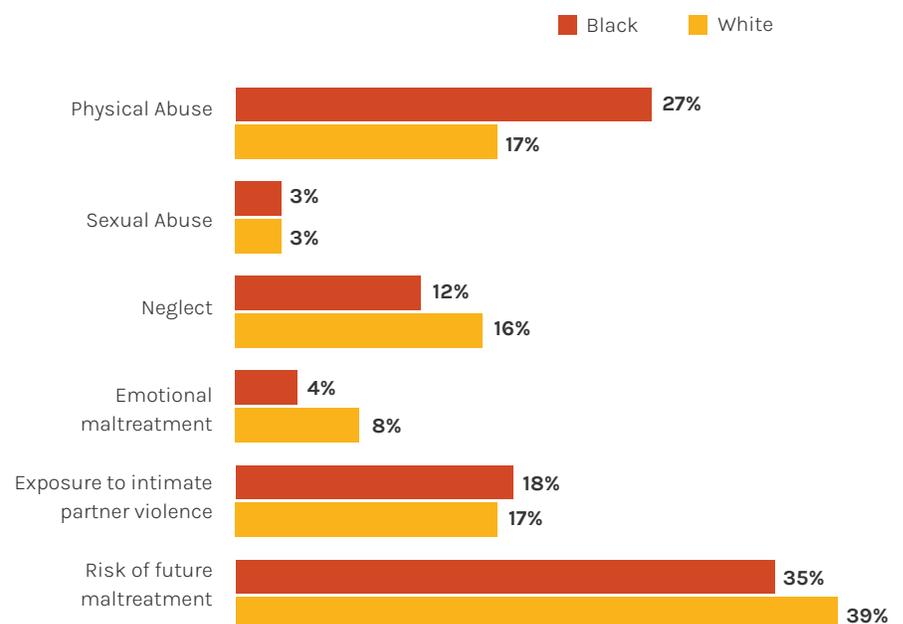
## Nature of Investigation

Compared to investigations involving white children, investigations involving Black children were more likely to be focused on a concern of physical abuse and less likely to be focused on concerns of neglect, emotional maltreatment, and risk of future maltreatment (see Figure 7 and Table 6).

The data and disparities presented in this report need to be situated within the context of the role of race, anti-Black racism, and white supremacy in our society and importantly as structural drivers of child welfare involvement. Section II of this report provides theory and research to frame the subsequent results presented.

**FIGURE 7**

**Nature of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children in Ontario in 2018**



*Section I*

# Introduction and Methodology

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“Importantly, the findings in this report are contextualized with theory and research that underscore the impact of anti-Black racism on the experiences of Black families before and during their involvement with Ontario Children’s Aid Societies.”

This report was prepared by the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018 (OIS-2018) Research Team at the request of One Vision One Voice, a project of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies of Ontario.

This report describes child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 involving Black children and compares these investigations to investigations involving white children across child, family,

and household characteristics, as well as characteristics of the investigations themselves. Importantly, the findings in this report are contextualized with theory and research that underscore the impact of anti-Black racism on the experiences of Black families before and during their involvement with Ontario Children's Aid Societies.

## METHODOLOGY

The OIS-2018 is the sixth provincial study to examine the incidence of reported and investigated child maltreatment-related concerns in Ontario. The OIS-2018 captures information on investigation outcomes, forms, and severity of maltreatment, and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Ontario. A multi-stage sampling design was used to first select a representative sample of 18 child welfare agencies from 48 child welfare organizations in Ontario. Investigations opened between October 1 and December 31, 2018 were then sampled for inclusion in the study.

The OIS-2018 definition of maltreatment-related investigations includes

situations in which there were concerns that a child may have already been abused or neglected (maltreatment investigations) as well as situations in which there was no specific concern about past maltreatment but where the risk of future maltreatment was being assessed (risk investigations). These procedures yielded a final sample of 7,115 child maltreatment-related investigations involving children aged 0-15 years old. Weighted provincial, annual estimates were derived based on these investigations. Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a detailed description of weighting procedures.

Workers were asked to indicate the ethno-racial category that best described the investigated children and their caregivers.

The ethno-racial categories used in the OIS-2018 were those used by Statistics Canada in the 2016 Census. Using the 2016 Census categories allows for a calculation of the incidence rate of investigations per 1,000 children in Ontario. These incidence rates are derived by taking the estimated number of cases, dividing by the child population for a given ethno-racial category in Ontario, and multiplying by 1,000.

The estimates presented in this chapter are derived from child maltreatment-related investigations from a representative sample of child welfare agencies in 2018. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates do not include:

1. Incidents that were not reported to child welfare agencies;
2. Reported cases that were screened out by child welfare agencies before being fully investigated;
3. New reports on cases already open by child welfare services; and
4. Cases that were investigated only by the police.

Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a full description of the sample inclusion and exclusion criteria.

This report defines investigations involving Black children as those where the worker indicated that the investigated child's ethno-racial category was Black. In order to produce incidence rates, estimates for investigations involving Black children were divided by the Black child population in Ontario and multiplied by 1,000. The same procedure was implemented to generate estimated rates of investigation for white children. The reported weighted estimates are based on unweighted samples of investigations involving Black (n=852) and white (n=3,920) children aged 0-15 in the OIS-2018.

The estimated number of investigations involving Black children based on this sample may not reflect differences in specific jurisdictions within Ontario and are instead aggregated for the entire province. This may result in obscuring more substantial differences in regions where populations of Black families and investigations involving Black children are more concentrated.

*Section II*

# **Framing the Context of Black Children's Involvement in the Child Welfare System**

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**“Anti-Black racism is woven into the fabric of every social, economic, and political system that is meant to support citizens and help them succeed.”**

# ANTI-BLACK RACISM AND WHITE SUPREMACY

Akua Benjamin (2003) defines anti-Black racism as “a particular form of systemic and structural racism in Canadian society, which historically and contemporarily has been perpetrated against Blacks” (p. ii). Anti-Black racism is woven into the fabric of every social, economic, and political system that is meant to support citizens and help them succeed. In our country’s context, Black Canadian experiences are rooted in the history of slavery, segregation, racist immigration policies, discriminatory housing and employment policies and practices as well as policing and surveillance throughout various state sanctioned institutions (Maynard, 2017; Mullings et al., 2016).

In order to fully understand the involvement of Black children, youth, and families in Ontario’s child welfare system, it is important to recognize the historical and continual impacts of anti-Black racism (Maynard, 2017). Issues of disproportionality and disparity for Black families within institutional settings can be understood as symptoms of a history of anti-Black racism (Clarke et al., 2018; Pon et al., 2011; Thobani, 2007), and scholars have argued that the child welfare system has participated in its perpetuation (Clarke, 2011; Mohamud et al., 2021; Pon et al., 2011).

Canada is often portrayed as being the safe haven of the Global North; it became a country that accepted large numbers of Black migrants from the global diaspora under the veil of multiculturalism and as a refuge from slavery (Maynard 2017). However, this refuge is illusory, and whiteness remains overvalued while non-white bodies are deemed inferior (James, 2003).

Ahmed (2007) argues that colonialism has made the world white, whereby whiteness is inherited, familiar, and implicitly known. Whiteness therefore functions as a guiding force that makes the world ‘ready’ for white bodies and unaccepting of racialized ones (Ahmed, 2007, p. 153). White supremacy, colonialism and anti-Black racism underpin the disproportionality, disparities and discrimination in services provided to Black families (Adjei & Minka, 2018).

As such, the Ontario child welfare system reinforces white supremacy and the promotion of Eurocentric parenting methods that centralizes standardization and sameness of parenting (Clarke, 2011). These notions have yet to be dismantled, thereby failing to include diverse parenting styles and account for Black parents’ experiences within and across institutional settings (Clarke, 2011; Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2021).

Race is an important organizing principle in North America, and whether it is noticed or intentional, race defines and informs relationships (Hardy, 2008). Hardy (2008) argues that racial nuances shape practically every act, behaviour and interaction. As such, the impact of race and the structural functions of anti-Black racism

and white supremacy must consistently be integrated into any analysis of data pertaining to Black experience. The report will use this lens to contextualize OIS-2018 findings regarding the nature and disparities of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black children, youth, and families.

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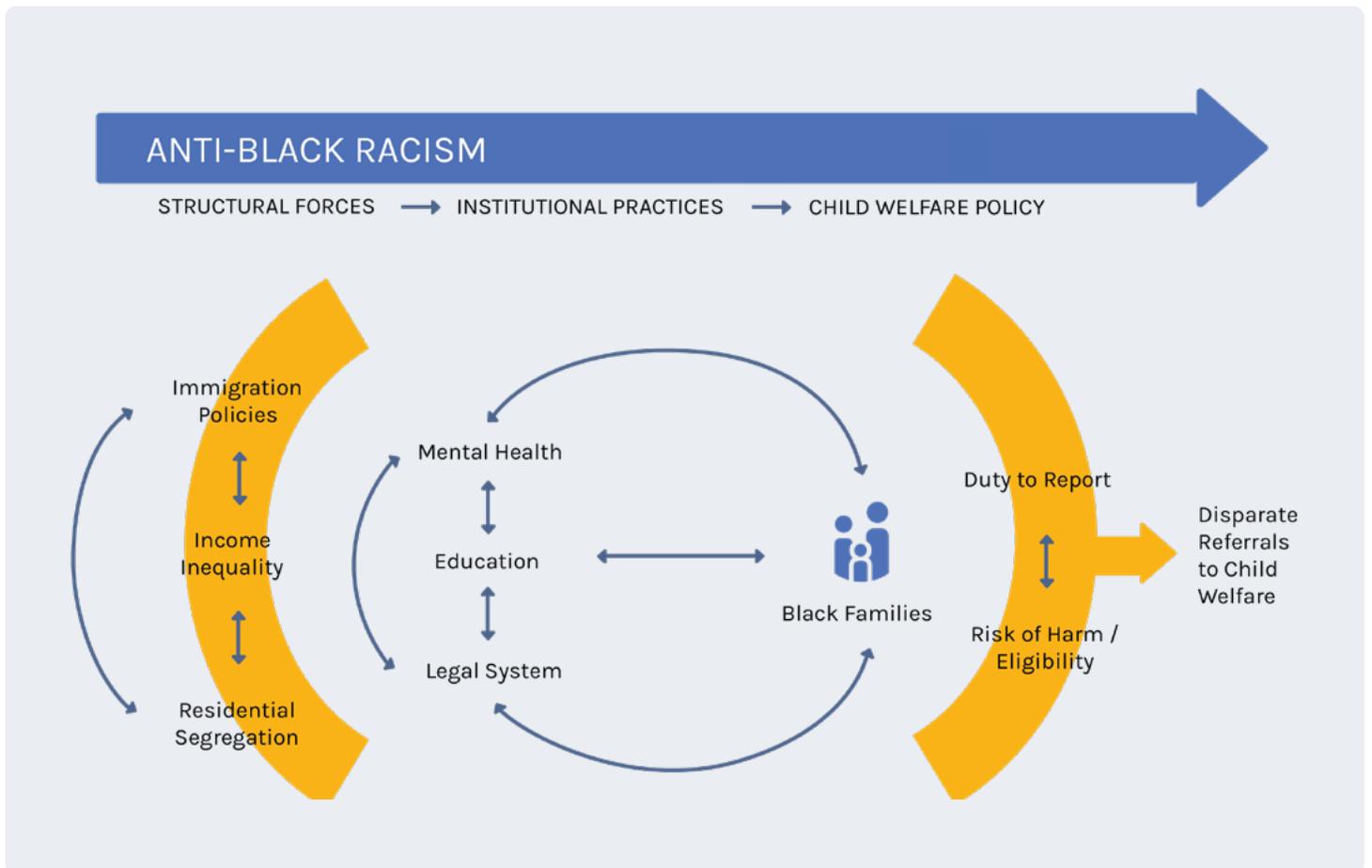
## **SYSTEMIC DRIVERS OF CONTACT WITH THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

Using anti-Black racism as a theoretical framework, Mohamud and colleagues (2021) conceptualized reasons for the overrepresentation and interlocking interactions of Black families navigating multiple institutions within a historical continuum of oppression. This continuum began with the settlement of enslaved Black people in Canada and has been enacted through ongoing systemic exclusion and inequity (Benjamin, 2003; James, 2012; Maynard, 2017). Mohamud and colleagues (2021) posit that structural anti-Black racism is represented through federal immigration laws that continue to separate parents living in Canada from their children, housing policies that result in the residential segregation of families, and employment barriers that contribute to income inequality (Galabuzi, 2006; Hackett, 2016; Maynard, 2017; Tate, 2011).

Subsequently, these structural policies seep into the practices of local institutions (e.g., education, policing, mental health) that then maintain and perpetuate anti-Black racism against children and families through harmful acts of oversurveillance, stigmatization, criminalization, bias, and neglect (Maynard, 2017; Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2019; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2005).

Mohamud and colleagues (2021) argue that “race-neutral” assessments and policies consistently and disproportionately impact Black families and Black communities (p. 8). They propose that the construction of risk, as defined by these policies, mirrors the cumulative consequences of these larger macro inequalities and results in disproportionate and disparate referrals of Black children, youth, and families to the child welfare system (Mohamud et al., 2021). These dynamics are presented in Figure 8.

**FIGURE 8**  
**Conceptual Map of Policies and Practices that Drive Child Welfare Involvement for Black Families in Ontario (Mohamud et al., 2021)**



## IMMIGRATION

Canada's immigration system has used stereotypical representations of Black migrants, perceiving them as social problems who disrupt expectations of Canadian identity and citizenship (Calliste, 1993; Hackett, 2016). Despite the exclusionary immigration policies rooted in anti-Black racism, such as the Immigration Act and the point system (Mohamud et al., 2021), the Black population in Canada more than doubled between 1996 and 2016 (Statistics Canada, 2019). This increase is particularly notable in Ontario, the province with the largest concentration of Black people, where the majority of whom are immigrants from Caribbean and African countries (Statistics Canada, 2019).

Given the available pathways for immigrating to Canada, many of these families arrive to Canada separately, with caregivers arriving first and children reunifying once caregivers have settled (Tate, 2011). Staggered migration can impact attachment relationships and the capacity for families to adequately adjust to their circumstances in Canada (Hackett, 2016; Lashley, 2000). These challenges are compounded by social, economic, and institutional barriers to integration (Alaazi et al., 2018; Social Planning Council of Ottawa, 2010).

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## INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES – MENTAL HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND LEGAL SYSTEMS

Though Canadian research on the intersection of race and mental health is scarce, there is some evidence that highlights immigration status and income can negatively impact mental well-being (Hyman & Wray, 2013). Access to and utilization of mental health services for racialized groups are limited because of structural barriers, including negative experiences with service providers, language barriers, finances, location, and lack of awareness of services (Williams, 2001).

For example, Ontario children and youth can find themselves waiting up to two and a half years for services, and these wait times may be exacerbated by race, income level, age, and location (Children's Mental Health Ontario, 2020). These long wait times can lead to further conflict and difficulty within families, as the dilemmas associated with children and youth's unsupported mental health concerns (e.g., children missing school, parents missing work) compound over time (Children's Mental Health Ontario, 2020).

Moreover, lengthy wait times are notably concerning since research highlights that mental health needs are a significant contributor to child welfare involvement and decision-making for youth in Ontario (King et al., 2018).

The criminalization of Black communities with mental health concerns hinders people seeking mental health support (Anucha et al., 2017; Bala et al., 2013). In 2016, the former Ministry of

Children and Youth Services, which is currently the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, performed an analysis of the residential system that shed light on the criminalization of Black youth (Gharabaghi et al., 2016). This report validated that Black youth in Ontario were notably underrepresented in mental health services and overrepresented in institutions that concentrate on containment (Gharabaghi et al., 2016).

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## INCOME INEQUALITY

Canadian research demonstrates that income inequality can be explained by a lack of policy regulations and systemic discrimination (Hulchanski, 2008). Income disparities are racialized; for example, Black employees in Canada in 2006 earned 75.6 cents for every dollar that non-racialized employees earned (Block & Galabuzi, 2011). According to more recent (2016) census data, nearly one quarter of the Black population in Ontario fell into the low-income category

(Government of Canada, 2017). Additionally, Black Canadians had a 71 percent higher rate of unemployment compared to non-racialized Canadians in 2016 (Block, 2017). Mohamud and colleagues (2021) argue that immigrant Black families living in poverty are at greater risk of being reported and investigated by Ontario child welfare agencies.

## **EXISTING RESEARCH ON THE INVOLVEMENT OF BLACK CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES IN THE ONTARIO CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

A growing body of Canadian research highlights that Black families are overrepresented in the child welfare system and within specific agencies or jurisdictions, often beginning at the reporting or investigation stage and carrying forward into later decision-making (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2020; Boatswain-Kyte et al., 2020; King et al., 2017; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2018).

Scholars have argued that much of the disparities between investigations of Black and white children and families in Ontario stem from the over-policing and over-reporting of Black families at the point of entry into the child welfare system (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2020; King et al., 2017; Maynard, 2017; Mohamud et al., 2021). Provincial-level analyses have validated the disparate representation of Black children in investigations compared to white children. A study conducted by King and colleagues (2017) found that Black children in Ontario were 41% more likely to be investigated than their white peers. Relatedly, an Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC) report found that Black children and youth were disproportionately admitted into foster care in the 30 percent of Ontario child welfare agencies providing data for the study (OHRC, 2018).

Scholars have also described how Black families in Ontario experience their involvement

with workers and within agencies (Clarke, 2011, 2012). In Clarke's (2012) study, Black mothers reported experiencing a number of negative encounters with the child welfare system, with race, class, gender, and the struggle of power dynamics playing a significant role in these interactions. Black mothers expressed that being poor created space for systems and institutions to punish and control them (Clarke, 2012). Mothers also described the challenge of meeting expectations of child welfare workers to attend parenting classes and other therapeutic services that did not address their fundamental material and social concerns, such as housing and childcare. A mother stated, "these people control your life and ruin your life... [especially] if you do not follow their rules... you will never get your kids back" (Clarke, 2012, p. 241).

These findings have been echoed in studies with child welfare workers and other service providers (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2022; Cénat et al., 2021; Gosine & Pon, 2011). Findings like these have led Canadian scholars to argue that the disproportionate involvement of Black families in the child protection system is intrinsically connected to the history of race in North America, which has resulted in the system becoming characterized by anti-Black racism (Clarke et al., 2018; Hasford, 2015; Thobani, 2007).

*Section III*

# Service Dispositions

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“Black children were 2.2 times as likely as white children to be investigated in Ontario in 2018.”

This chapter provides a description of child welfare service dispositions in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children. The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted Ontario estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2018 in a sample of Ontario child welfare agencies. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates.

The estimates do not include (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare agencies, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare agencies before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare agencies, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police. Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a full description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

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## CHILDREN IN INVESTIGATIONS

An estimated 148,536 child maltreatment-related investigations were conducted in Ontario in 2018 (a rate of 62.89 investigations per 1,000 children) for children and youth 0-15 years of age. Table 1 provides the estimated counts of investigations involving Black and white children, the respective rates per 1,000 children, and each group's proportion of total investigations. Fourteen percent of child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 involved Black children (an estimated 20,637 investigations, representing

a rate of 124.82 investigations per 1,000 Black children). In comparison, 55 percent of all investigations involved white children (an estimated 82,279 investigations, representing a rate of 57.83 investigations per 1,000 white children).

Based on these incidence rates, **Black children were 2.2 times as likely as white children to be investigated for a child maltreatment-related concern in Ontario in 2018.**

**TABLE 1**  
**Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children (ages 0-15) in Ontario in 2018**

Child Ethnicity	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	% of Total Investigations
Black	20,637	124.82	14%
White	82,279	57.83	55%
<b>Total</b>	<b>148,536</b>	<b>62.89</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black children (0-15) and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children (0-15) in 2018.

## REFERRAL SOURCES

Table 2 describes the sources of referral in investigations involving Black and white children. Each independent contact with the child welfare agency regarding a child (or children) was counted as a separate referral. The person who actually contacted the child welfare agency was identified as the referral source. For example, if a child disclosed an incident of abuse to a teacher at school, who made a report to child welfare services, the school was counted as a referral source. If both the teacher and the child’s parent called the child welfare agency, both would be counted as referral sources.

The OIS-2018 Maltreatment Assessment included 18 pre-coded referral source categories and an open “other” category.

### Non-Professional Referral Sources:

**Parent:** This includes parents involved as a caregiver to the reported child, as well as non-custodial parents.

**Child:** A self-referral by any child listed on the Intake Information Section of the OIS-2018 Maltreatment Assessment.

**Relative:** Any relative of the child in question. Workers were asked to code “other” for situations in which a child was living with a foster parent and a relative of the foster parent reported maltreatment.

**Neighbour/Friend:** This category includes any neighbour or friend of the children or their family.

**Professional Referral Sources: Community, Health, or Social Services:**

This includes referrals from social assistance workers; crisis service/shelter workers; community recreation centre staff; community health physicians, nurses, or mental health professionals; or any community agency staff.

**Hospital (Any Personnel):** This includes referrals that originate from a hospital that are made by a doctor, nurse, or social worker rather than a family physician or nurse working in a family doctor's office in the community.

**School:** Any school personnel (teacher, principal, teacher's aide, school social worker, etc.).

**Other Child Welfare Service:** Includes referrals from mandated child welfare service providers from other jurisdictions or provinces.

**Day Care Centre:** Refers to a child care or day care provider.

**Police:** Any member of a Police Force, including municipal, provincial/ territorial, or RCMP.

**Anonymous:** A caller who is not identified.

**Other Referral Sources:** Any referral source that does not fall into one of the pre-existing categories (e.g., legal or dental service provider).

In 2018, 15 percent of investigations, or an estimated 3,106 investigations, involving Black children and 27 percent of investigations, or an estimated 22,337 investigations, involving white children were referred by non-professional sources (rates of 18.79 investigations per 1,000 Black children and 15.70 investigations per 1,000 white children). Eighty-two percent of investigations involving Black children were referred by professionals (an estimated 16,894 investigations or 102.18 investigations per 1,000 children), and 68 percent of investigations involving white children were referred by professional sources (an estimated 56,065 investigations or 39.40 investigations per 1,000 children). In five percent of investigations involving Black children and nine percent of investigations involving white children, the referral source was either anonymous or categorized as an "other" source of referral.

**Investigations involving Black children were 14 percent more likely to be initiated by professional referral sources than those involving white children.**

**TABLE 2****Referral Source in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Referral Source	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
<b>NON-PROFESSIONAL</b>						
Custodial or Non-Custodial Parent	1,807	10.93	9%	13,484	9.48	16%
Child (Subject of Referral)	145	0.88	1%	1,018	0.72	1%
Relative	424	2.56	2%	3,523	2.48	4%
Neighbour/Friend	784	4.74	4%	4,925	3.46	6%
Total Any Non-Professional	3,106	18.79	15%	22,337	15.70	27%
<b>PROFESSIONAL</b>						
Community, Health, or Social Services	1,293	7.82	6%	8,565	6.02	10%
Hospital (Any Personnel)	924	5.59	4%	4,499	3.16	5%
School	8,917	53.93	43%	22,672	15.93	28%
Other Child Welfare Service	242	1.46	1%	1,773	1.25	2%
Day Care Centre	363	2.20	2%	822	0.58	1%
Police	5,615	33.96	27%	18,952	13.32	23%
Total Any Professional	16,894	102.18	82%	56,065	39.40	68%
Other	210	1.27	1%	3,205	2.25	4%
Anonymous	818	4.95	4%	4,240	2.98	5%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about referral source.

Columns do not add up to totals because an investigation could have had more than one referral source.

Detailed referral source data do not add up to sub-category totals as the sub-category totals account for one referral from the category.

## TRANSFERS TO ONGOING SERVICES

Investigating workers were asked whether the investigated case would remain open for further child welfare services after the initial investigation. As seen in Table 3, the proportion of cases that were transferred to ongoing services were similar in investigations involving Black

children and investigations involving white children. In Ontario in 2018, 16% of investigations involving Black children were transferred to receive ongoing services; 20% of investigations involving white children were transferred to ongoing services.

**TABLE 3**  
**Provision of Ongoing Services Following Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Provision of Ongoing Services	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Case to Stay Open for Ongoing Services	3,349	20.26	16%	16,817	11.82	20%
Case to be Closed	17,288	104.57	84%	65,462	46.01	80%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about transfers to ongoing services.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding

## CHILD WELFARE COURT

Workers were asked to indicate any applications made to child welfare court during the investigation period. Applications to child welfare court can be made for a number of reasons, including orders of supervision with the child remaining in the home, as well as out-of-home placement orders ranging from temporary to permanent.

Although applications to court can be made during the investigation period, where possible, non-court ordered services should be offered before an application is made to court. Because the OIS can only track applications made during the investigation period, the OIS court application rate does not account for applications made at later points of service.

Investigating workers were asked about three possible statuses for court involvement during the initial investigation:

- No Application: Court involvement was not considered.
- Application Considered: The child welfare worker was considering whether or not to submit an application to child welfare court.
- Application Made: An application to child welfare court was submitted.

Table 4 collapses “no application” and “application considered” into a single category (No Application to Court). In three percent of investigations involving Black children and two percent of investigations involving white children the worker indicated they made a child welfare court application.

**TABLE 4**  
**Applications to Child Welfare Court in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Child Welfare Court Application	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
No Application to Court	20,017	121.07	97%	81,017	56.94	98%
Application Made	620	3.75	3%	1,262	0.89	2%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about child welfare court applications.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding

## OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

The OIS tracks placements in out-of-home care that occur at any time during the investigation. Investigating workers are asked to specify the type of placement. In cases where there may have been more than one placement, workers are asked to indicate the setting where the child had spent the most time. The following placement classifications were used:

**No Placement Required:** No placement is required following the investigation.

**Placement Considered:** An out-of-home placement is still being considered, but the child remained at home at this point of the investigation.

**Kinship Out of Care:** An informal placement has been arranged within the family support network; the child welfare authority does not have temporary custody.

**Customary Care:** A model of Indigenous child welfare service that is culturally relevant and incorporates the unique traditions and customs of each First Nation.

**Kinship in Care:** A formal placement has been arranged within the family support network; the child welfare authority has temporary or full custody and is paying for the placement.

**Foster Care (Non-Kinship):** Includes any family-based care, including foster homes, specialized treatment foster homes, and assessment homes.

**Group Home:** Out-of-home placement required in a structured group living setting.

**Residential/Secure Treatment:** Placement required in a therapeutic residential treatment centre to address the needs of the child.

For the purposes of Table 5, the placement categories were combined into four broader categories: child remained at home (no placement required and placement considered), informal kinship care (kinship out of care), foster care (kinship in care and non-family foster care), and group home/residential (group home and residential/secure treatment). In 97 percent of investigations involving Black children (an estimated 20,007 investigations or 121.01 investigations per 1,000 children) and 97 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 80,103 investigations or 56.30 investigations per 1,000 children), the child remained at home. Of the remaining proportion of investigations involving Black children, two percent resulted in placement with a relative in an informal arrangement and another one percent were placed in foster care (Table 5). No investigations involving Black children resulted in placement in a group home or residential treatment.

**TABLE 5****Out-of-Home Placements in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Placement Status	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Child Remained at Home	20,007	121.07	97%	80,103	56.30	97%
Child with Relative (Not a Formal Child Welfare Placement)	357	2.16	2%	1,391	0.98	2%
Foster Care (Includes Foster and Kinship Care)	273	1.65	1%	664	0.47	1%
Group Home/ Residential Secure Treatment	0	0.00	0%	121	0.09	0%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about placement.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding

*Section IV*

# Investigation Reason

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“Four percent of substantiated investigations involving white children and Black children identified physical harm. Investigations involving Black children were more likely to experience police involvement during the investigation.”

The nature of investigations involving Black and white children is described in Table 6. The OIS-2018 tracks two types of investigations: those conducted because of a concern about a maltreatment incident that may have occurred and those conducted to assess whether there is a significant risk of future maltreatment where there is no alleged or suspected maltreatment. Where there is a concern about maltreatment incidents, the OIS-2018 identifies five major sub-types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence.

Of the 20,637 estimated investigations involving Black children conducted in Ontario in 2018, 65 percent were maltreatment investigations which focused on a concern of abuse or neglect (an estimated 13,458 child maltreatment investigations or 81.40 investigations per 1,000 children), and 35 percent of investigations involved concerns about risk of future maltreatment (an estimated 7,179 investigations or 43.42 investigations per 1,000 children). Sixty-one percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 49,934 investigations or 35.09 investigations per 1,000 children)

were focused on concerns of abuse or neglect, and 39 percent of investigations involving white children were focused on assessing the risk of future maltreatment (an estimated 32,345 investigations, or 22.73 investigations per 1,000 children).

Among maltreatment investigations involving Black children, physical abuse was the primary concern in 27 percent of investigations (an estimated 5,661 investigations or 34.24 investigations per 1,000 children), followed by exposure to intimate partner violence in 18 percent of investigations (an estimated 3,797 investigations, or 22.97 investigations per 1,000 children) and neglect in 12 percent of investigations (an estimated 2,474 investigations or 14.96 investigations per 1,000 children). In comparison, among maltreatment investigations involving white children, physical abuse was the primary concern in 17 percent of investigations, followed closely by exposure to intimate partner violence in 17 percent of investigations and neglect in 16 percent of investigations.

**TABLE 6****Nature of Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Nature of Investigation	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Physical Abuse	5,661	34.24	27%	14,036	9.86	17%
Sexual Abuse	622	3.76	3%	2,423	1.70	3%
Neglect	2,474	14.96	12%	13,281	9.33	16%
Emotional Maltreatment	904	5.47	4%	6,361	4.47	8%
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	3,797	22.97	18%	13,833	9.72	17%
<b>Subtotal: All Maltreatment Investigations</b>	<b>13,458</b>	<b>81.40</b>	<b>65%</b>	<b>49,934</b>	<b>35.09</b>	<b>61%</b>
Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations	7,179	43.42	35%	32,345	22.73	39%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the nature of the investigation.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding

## SUBSTANTIATION DECISIONS

Table 7 describes types of investigations and substantiation decisions resulting from maltreatment-related investigations involving Black and white children conducted across Ontario in 2018.

The outcomes of maltreatment investigations are classified in terms of three levels of substantiation:

- Substantiated: the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has occurred;
- Suspected: insufficient evidence to substantiate abuse or neglect, but maltreatment cannot be ruled out;
- Unfounded: the balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has not occurred (unfounded does not mean that a referral was inappropriate or malicious; it simply indicates that the investigating worker determined that the child had not been maltreated).

The outcomes of risk-only investigations are classified in terms of three categories:

- Significant risk of future maltreatment
- No significant risk of future maltreatment
- Unknown risk of future maltreatment

Twenty-eight percent of maltreatment investigations involving Black children were substantiated compared to 24 percent of investigations involving white children. In a further four percent of investigations involving Black children and four percent of investigations involving white children, there was insufficient evidence to substantiate maltreatment; however, maltreatment remained suspected by the investigating worker at the conclusion of the investigation. Thirty-three percent of investigations involving Black children and 32 percent of investigations involving white children were unfounded.

In four percent of risk-only investigations involving Black children and seven percent of investigations involving white children, the investigating worker concluded there was a significant risk of future maltreatment. In 27 percent of risk-only investigations involving Black children and 30 percent of investigations involving white children, no significant risk of future maltreatment was indicated. In four percent of investigations involving Black children and three percent of investigations involving white children, workers did not know whether the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment.

**TABLE 7****Substantiation Decisions in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Substantiated Decision	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Unfounded Maltreatment	6,745	40.80	33%	26,640	18.72	32%
Suspected Maltreatment	868	5.25	4%	3,428	2.41	4%
Substantiated Maltreatment	5,846	35.36	28%	19,866	13.96	24%
No Risk of Future Maltreatment	5,655	34.20	27%	24,630	17.31	30%
Risk of Future Maltreatment	777	4.70	4%	5,411	3.80	7%
Unknown Risk of Future Maltreatment	746	4.51	4%	2,304	1.62	3%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>124.82</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about substantiation or risk of future maltreatment.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding

## CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBSTANTIATED MALTREATMENT DECISIONS

Characteristics of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Black and white children are described in Table 8 including police involvement, emotional harm, and physical harm.

### Police Involvement

Workers were asked to indicate the level of police involvement for each maltreatment code listed. As shown in Table 8, in half of substantiated investigations involving Black children and 56 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there was no police involvement, in a quarter of substantiated investigations involving Black children and 22 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there was a police investigation, and in 23 percent of substantiated investigations involving Black children and 21 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there were charges laid.

### Emotional and Physical Harm

Information on emotional harm was collected using a series of questions asking the investigating child welfare workers to describe emotional harm that had occurred because of the maltreatment incident(s). If the maltreatment was substantiated or suspected, workers were asked to indicate whether the child was showing signs of mental or emotional harm (e.g., nightmares, bed-wetting, or social withdrawal following the maltreatment incident[s]). In order to rate the severity of mental or emotional harm, workers indicated whether therapeutic treatment was required to manage the symptoms of mental or emotional harm.

Table 8 shows that emotional harm was noted in 24 percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Black children and 40 percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving white children. The investigating worker indicated that emotional harm was severe enough to require therapeutic treatment in 13 percent of substantiated investigations involving Black children where emotional harm to the child was noted. In 24 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children, emotional harm was severe enough to require therapeutic treatment.

The OIS-2018 tracked physical harm identified by the investigating worker. Information on physical harm was collected using two measures, one describing severity of harm as measured by medical treatment needed and one describing the nature of harm. The severity of physical harm in investigations involving Black and white children is described in Table 8. Physical harm was identified in four percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Black children, which is the same proportion as white children. Physical harm was severe enough to require medical treatment in less than 2% of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Black children and 1% of those involving white children.

**Four percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving white children and Black children identified physical harm. Investigations involving Black children were more likely to experience police involvement during the investigation.**

**TABLE 8****Characteristics of Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Characteristics of Maltreatment	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
<b>POLICE INVOLVEMENT</b>						
Investigation	1,445	8.74	25%	4,329	3.04	22%
Charges Laid	1,359	8.22	23%	4,258	2.99	21%
None	2,948	17.83	50%	11,042	7.76	56%
Unknown	-	-	2%	238	0.17	1%
<b>EMOTIONAL HARM</b>						
Emotional Harm, No Therapeutic Treatment Required	652	3.94	11%	3,287	2.31	17%
Emotional Harm, Therapeutic Treatment Required	739	4.47	13%	4,707	3.31	24%
No Emotional Harm Documented	4,456	26.95	76%	11,873	8.34	60%
<b>PHYSICAL HARM</b>						
Physical Harm, No Medical Treatment Required	259	1.57	4%	865	0.61	4%
Physical Harm, Medical Treatment Required	-	-	2%	255	0.18	1%
No Physical Harm Documented	5,499	33.26	94%	18,747	13.18	94%
<b>Total Substantiated Maltreatment</b>	<b>5,847</b>	<b>35.37</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>19,867</b>	<b>13.96</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 238 substantiated child maltreatment investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 952 substantiated child maltreatment investigations involving white children.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding and because low frequency estimates are not reported in table but are reported in totals.

- Estimate was <100 investigations.

*Section V*

# Child and Caregiving Functioning

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“In general, workers noted concerns at similar or lower rates in investigations involving Black children than in those involving white children.”

# CHILD FUNCTIONING CONCERNS

Child functioning was documented based on a checklist of challenges that child welfare workers were likely to be aware of as a result of their investigations. The child functioning checklist was developed in consultation with child welfare workers and researchers to reflect the types of concerns that may be identified during an investigation. The checklist is not a validated measurement instrument for which population norms have been established.

The checklist only documents problems that are known to investigating child welfare workers and, therefore, may undercount the occurrence of some child functioning problems.

Investigating workers were asked to indicate problems that had been confirmed by a diagnosis, directly observed by the investigating worker or another worker, and/or disclosed by the parent or child, as well as issues that they suspected were concerns but could not fully verify at the time of the investigation. The six-month period before the investigation was used as a reference point where applicable.

Child functioning classifications that reflect physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural issues were documented with a checklist that included the following categories:

## **Positive Toxicology at Birth:**

When a toxicology screen for a newborn tests positive for the presence of drugs or alcohol.

**FASD:** Birth defects, ranging from mild intellectual and behavioural difficulties to more profound problems in these areas related to in-utero exposure to alcohol abuse by the biological mother.

## **Failure to Meet Developmental Milestones:**

Children who are not meeting their developmental milestones because of a non-organic reason.

## **Intellectual/Developmental Disability:**

Characterized by delayed intellectual development, it is typically diagnosed when a child does not reach his or her developmental milestones at expected times. It includes speech and language, fine/gross motor skills, and/or personal and social skills (e.g., Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder).

**Attachment Issues:** The child does not have physical and emotional closeness to a mother or preferred caregiver. The child finds it difficult to seek comfort, support, nurturance, or protection from the caregiver; the child's distress is not

ameliorated or is made worse by the caregiver's presence.

**ADHD:** Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that occurs more frequently and more severely than is typically seen in children at comparable stages of development. Symptoms are frequent and severe enough to have a negative impact on the child's life at home, at school, or in the community.

## **Aggression/Conduct Issues:**

Aggressive behaviour directed at other children or adults (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, fighting, bullying) or violence to property at home, at school, or in the community.

**Physical Disability:** Physical disability is the existence of a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. This includes sensory disability conditions such as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment that noticeably affects activities of daily living.

### **Academic/Learning**

**Difficulties:** Difficulties in school including those resulting from learning difficulties, special education needs, behaviour problems, social difficulties, and emotional or mental health concerns.

### **Depression/Anxiety/**

**Withdrawal:** Feelings of depression or anxiety that persist for most of the day, every day for two weeks or longer, and interfere with the child's ability to manage at home and at school.  
**Self-harming Behaviour:** Includes high-risk or life-threatening behaviour and physical mutilation or cutting.

**Suicidal Thoughts:** The child has expressed thoughts of suicide, ranging from fleeting thoughts to a detailed plan.  
**Suicide Attempts:** The child has attempted to commit suicide.

### **Inappropriate Sexual**

**Behaviour:** Child displays inappropriate sexual behaviour, including age- inappropriate play with toys, self, or others; displaying explicit sexual acts; age-inappropriate sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions; sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge; or prostitution or seductive behaviour.

### **Running (Multiple Incidents):**

The child has run away from home (or other residence) on multiple occasions for at least one overnight period.

**Alcohol Abuse:** Problematic consumption of alcohol (consider age, frequency, and severity).

**Drug/Solvent Abuse:** Includes prescription drugs, illegal drugs, and solvents.

### **Youth Criminal Justice**

**Act involvement:** Charges, incarceration, or alternative measures with the youth justice system.

**Other:** Any other conditions related to child functioning.

Table 9 reflects the types of problems associated with physical, emotional, and/ or cognitive health, or with behaviour-specific concerns for Black and white children in maltreatment-related investigations in Ontario in 2018. In 25 percent of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Black children (an estimated 30.70 investigations per 1,000 Black children) and in 37 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 21.69 investigations per 1,000 white children), at least one child functioning issue was indicated by the investigating worker.

Academic or learning difficulties was the most frequently reported child functioning concern in investigations involving Black children (12 percent of investigations involving Black children) and in investigations involving white children (16 percent of investigations involving white children). The second most frequently noted child functioning concern in investigations involving Black children was ADHD (8 percent of investigations involving Black children), and for investigations involving white children, the second most frequently noted child functioning concern was depression, anxiety, or withdrawal (14 percent of investigations involving white children). In general, workers noted concerns at similar or lower rates in investigations involving Black children than in those involving white children.

**TABLE 9****Child Functioning Concerns in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Child Functioning Concern	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Positive Toxicology at Birth	112	0.68	1%	946	0.66	1%
FASD	-	-	<1%	895	0.63	1%
Failure to Meet Developmental Milestones	767	4.64	4%	4,961	3.49	6%
Intellectual / Developmental Disability	1,538	9.30	7%	9,067	6.37	11%
Attachment Issues	830	5.02	4%	5,525	3.88	7%
ADHD	1,704	10.31	8%	10,331	7.26	13%
Aggression/Conduct Issues	1,434	8.67	7%	10,848	7.62	13%
Physical Disability	-	-	<1%	1,328	0.93	2%
Academic/Learning Difficulties	2,380	14.40	12%	13,501	9.49	16%
Depression/Anxiety/Withdrawal	1,358	8.21	7%	11,261	7.91	14%
Self-harming Behaviour	415	2.51	2%	3,322	2.33	4%
Suicidal Thoughts	400	2.42	2%	3,191	2.24	4%
Suicide Attempts	110	0.67	1%	900	0.63	1%
Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour	337	2.04	2%	1,888	1.33	2%
Running (Multiple Incidents)	191	1.16	1%	1,564	1.10	2%
Alcohol Abuse	-	-	<1%	569	0.40	1%
Drug/Solvent Abuse	119	0.72	1%	1,173	0.82	1%
Youth Criminal Justice Act Involvement	-	-	<1%	626	0.44	1%
Other Functioning Concern	177	1.07	1%	1,013	0.71	1%
<b>Subtotal: At Least One Child Functioning Concern</b>	<b>5,076</b>	<b>30.70</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>30,854</b>	<b>21.69</b>	<b>37%</b>
No Child Functioning Concerns	15,561	94.12	75%	51,425	36.14	63%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,637</b>	<b>121.84</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>82,279</b>	<b>57.83</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 852 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,920 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about child functioning concerns.

Columns may not add to totals because multiple child functioning concerns could be noted and low frequency estimates are not reported but are included in totals.

- Estimate was <100 investigations.

## CAREGIVER RISK FACTORS

Concerns related to documented caregiver risk factors were reported by investigating workers using a checklist of nine items that were asked about each caregiver. Where applicable, the reference point for identifying concerns about caregiver risk factors was the previous six months. The checklist is not a validated measurement instrument. The checklist only documents problems that are known to investigating child welfare workers. The checklist included:

**Alcohol Abuse:** Caregiver abuses alcohol.

**Drug/Solvent Abuse:** Abuse of prescription drugs, illegal drugs, or solvents.

**Cognitive Impairment:** Caregiver has a cognitive impairment.

**Mental Health Issues:** Any mental health diagnosis or problem.

**Physical Health Issues:** Chronic illness, frequent hospitalizations, or physical disability.

**Few Social Supports:** Social isolation or lack of social supports.

**Victim of Intimate Partner Violence:** During the past six months the caregiver was a victim of intimate partner violence including physical, sexual, or verbal assault.

**Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence:** During the past six months the caregiver was a perpetrator of intimate partner violence including physical, sexual, or verbal assault.

**History of Foster Care or Group Home:** Caregiver was in foster care and/or group home care during his or her childhood.

Table 10 presents primary caregiver risk factors that were noted by investigating workers. At least one primary caregiver risk factor was identified in 51 percent of maltreatment-related investigations involving Black children (an estimated 10,258 child investigations), and at least one primary caregiver risk factor was identified in 56 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 44,993 child investigations).

The most frequently noted primary caregiver risk factors in investigations involving Black children were being a victim of intimate partner violence (25 percent), having few social supports (23 percent), and mental health issues (16 percent). These proportions were fairly similar for investigations involving white children, except for primary caregiver mental health issues, which was noted in 28 percent of investigations involving white children (compared to 16 percent of investigations involving Black children).

**TABLE 10**

**Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Primary Caregiver Risk Factors	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Alcohol Abuse	760	4.60	4%	6,379	4.48	8%
Drug/Solvent Abuse	853	5.16	4%	7,682	5.40	9%
Cognitive Impairment	323	1.95	2%	3,397	2.39	4%
Mental Health Issues	3,214	19.44	16%	22,712	15.96	28%
Physical Health Issues	668	4.04	3%	5,834	4.10	7%
Few Social Supports	4,581	27.71	23%	16,845	11.84	21%
Victim of Intimate Partner Violence	5,040	30.48	25%	20,824	14.64	26%
Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence	849	5.14	4%	6,000	4.22	7%
History of Foster Care/ Group Home	775	4.69	4%	3,580	2.52	4%
<b>Subtotal: At Least One Primary Caregiver Risk Factor</b>	<b>10,258</b>	<b>62.05</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>44,993</b>	<b>31.62</b>	<b>56%</b>
No Primary Caregiver Risk Factors	9,888	59.81	49%	36,001	25.30	44%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,146</b>	<b>121.85</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80,994</b>	<b>56.92</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 835 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,858 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about primary caregiver risk factors.

This question was not applicable for a sample of 17 investigations involving Black children and 62 investigations involving white children in which the case was opened under a community caregiver. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting). The estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving Black children is 491 and the estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving white children is 1,285.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals because multiple primary caregiver risk factors could be noted.

*Section VI*

# Household Characteristics

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“Investigations involving Black children were less likely to involve households whose primary income source was from full-time work.”



## HOUSEHOLD INCOME SOURCE

Investigating workers were requested to choose the income source that best described the primary source of the household income. Income source was categorized by the investigating worker using nine possible classifications:

**Full-time Employment:** Family income is derived from at least one permanent, full-time position.

**Part-time (fewer than 30 hours/week):** Family income is derived primarily from at least one part-time position.

**Multiple Jobs:** Caregiver(s) has more than one part-time or temporary position.

**Seasonal:** Caregiver(s) works either full- or part-time positions for temporary periods of the year.

**Employment Insurance (EI):** Caregiver(s) is temporarily unemployed and is receiving employment insurance benefits.

**Social Assistance:** Caregiver(s) is currently receiving social assistance benefits.

**Other Benefit:** Refers to other forms of benefits or pensions (e.g., family benefits, long-term disability insurance or child support payments).

**None:** Household has no source of legal income.

**Unknown:** Household source of income was not known.

In Table 11 household income sources are collapsed into full-time employment, part-time employment (which includes seasonal and multiple jobs), benefits/employment insurance/social assistance, unknown, and none. Table 11 shows the household income source in investigations involving Black and white children. Investigations involving Black children were less likely to involve households whose primary income source was from full-time work. In 48 percent of investigations involving Black children the household's source of income was from full-time work, while in 54 percent of investigations involving white children the household's source of income was from full-time work.

**TABLE 11****Household Source of Income in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Black and White Children in Ontario in 2018**

Household Income Source	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Full-time Employment	9,660	58.43	48%	43,626	30.66	54%
Part-time/Multiple Jobs/ Seasonal Employment	1,930	11.67	10%	8,830	6.21	11%
Benefits/EI/Social Assistance	5,425	32.81	27%	20,334	14.29	25%
Unknown	1,877	11.35	9%	4,037	2.84	5%
None	1,254	7.58	6%	4,167	2.93	5%
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,146</b>	<b>121.85</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80,994</b>	<b>56.92</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 835 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving Black children and 3,858 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about household income source.

This question was not applicable for a sample of 17 investigations involving Black children and 62 investigations involving white children in which the case was opened under a community caregiver. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting). The estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving Black children is 491 and the estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving white children is 1,285.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding.

## MONEY FOR BASIC NECESSITIES

Workers were asked whether the household had run out of the money for any of the following in the six months prior to the investigation: food, housing, utilities, telephone/cell phone, or transportation. Table 12 shows that in nine percent of investigations involving both Black and white children, the household had run out of money for at least one of these basic

necessities in the past six months.

This represents an estimated 1,823 investigations involving Black children (or 11.03 investigations per 1,000 Black children) and an estimated 7,313 investigations involving white children (or 5.14 investigations per 1,000 white children).

**TABLE 12**  
**Household Ran Out of Money for Basic Necessities in the Past Six Months in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations in Ontario in 2018**

In the Past Six Months, Household Ran Out of Money for:	Black Children			White Children		
	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	%
Food	1,209	7.31	6%	4,122	2.90	5%
Housing	380	2.30	2%	2,752	1.93	3%
Utilities	428	2.59	2%	2,255	1.58	3%
Telephone/Cell Phone	852	5.15	4%	3,172	2.23	4%
Transportation	569	3.44	3%	2,469	1.74	3%
<b>Subtotal: Household Ran Out of Money for At Least One Basic Necessity</b>	<b>1,823</b>	<b>11.03</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>7,313</b>	<b>5.14</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>Total Investigations</b>	<b>20,146</b>	<b>121.85</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>80,994</b>	<b>56.92</b>	<b>100%</b>

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Based on a sample of 835 child maltreatment-related investigations in 2018 involving black children and 3,858 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the household running out of money for basic necessities in the past six months.

This question was not applicable for a sample of 17 investigations involving black children and 62 investigations involving white children in which the case was opened under a community caregiver. A community caregiver is defined as anyone providing care to a child in an out-of-home setting (e.g., institutional setting).

The estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving black children is 491 and the estimated number of community caregiver investigations involving white children is 1,285.

Rate and percentage columns may not add to totals due to rounding.

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