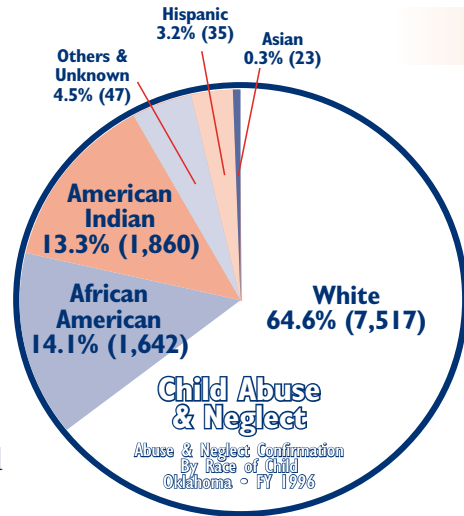


Abuse and neglect allegations reported to the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) during Fiscal Year 1996 climbed to almost forty-five thousand (44,879).



DHS again this year investigated and confirmed a near-record high number of the allegations. Close to twelve thousand (11,646) of the more than forty thousand (40,916) incidents investigated were found to be actual abuse and/or neglect.

In Oklahoma, approximately every forty-five minutes a child is a victim of confirmed abuse or neglect.

During this past year the proportion of Oklahoma child abuse and/or neglect actually confirmed remained fairly level at a near-record high (moving from 13.5 to 13.4 per 1,000 children in the community), with comparable rates worsening in the majority (40 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties.

COUNTIES WITH THE TEN HIGHEST RATES OF CONFIRMED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE & NEGLECT • FY 1996

More than one-third (4,114 or 35.3 %) of the children abused in Oklahoma are from three counties: Oklahoma (2,465 or 21.2%), Tulsa (1,124 or 9.7%) and Cleveland (525 or 4.5%).

1. Garvin	43.2 per 1000
2. McIntosh	31.5 per 1000
3. Blaine	29.1 per 1000
4. Washington	24.4 per 1000
5. Dewey	23.7 per 1000
6. Marshall	23.3 per 1000
7. Seminole	23.0 per 1000
8. Pushmataha	22.9 per 1000
9. Haskell	22.8 per 1000
10. Le Flore	22.7 per 1000



Talking Points:

Child abuse and neglect results in serious consequences for its child victims. Half will suffer delay in their development or serious physical or emotional impairments. Many will die.

Child abuse and neglect has enormous economic consequences, including the cost of foster care, court services, counseling, specialized education, and medical care.

Most abused children are abused by their own parent or parents.

In Oklahoma, child victims of abuse are most commonly beaten or sexually abused.

Children of adolescent mothers are more than twice as likely to be victims of child abuse and neglect than are the offspring of mothers who are either twenty or twenty-one years of age.

Research indicates that victims of child abuse are at a higher risk of abusing their own children when they become parents.

A much higher proportion (13.4 per 1,000) of children are confirmed to be child abuse and/or neglect victims than were confirmed in the mid-1980s (8.5 per 1,000), with such rates also worsening in the vast majority (52 of 77) of Oklahoma's counties during the same period.

The highest proportion of the children confirmed to be victims of child abuse and/or neglect (43.2 per 1,000) is found in Garvin County; the lowest (0.9 per 1,000) is in Ellis County.

A total of twenty-nine children died from child abuse and/or neglect in FY 1996. Among the dead were seventeen girls and twelve boys of all races ranging in age from a newborn to fifteen years old.

While non-White children make up less than one-fourth (24.0%) of the child population, they make up almost one-third (31.0%) of the population of abused and neglected children.