

2002 Vermont Child Abuse and Neglect Statistics

What is Child Abuse and Neglect?

Vermont statute (33 V.S.A., Chapter 49) defines an abused or neglected child as a child under age 18 whose physical health, psychological growth and development, or welfare is harmed – or is at substantial risk of harm – by the acts, or omissions of a parent or other person responsible for the child’s welfare. It also means a child who is sexually abused or at substantial risk of sexual abuse by any person.

Harm can occur by:

1. Physical injury or emotional maltreatment.
2. Failure to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care (referred to as neglect).
3. Abandonment.

Physical injury means death, or permanent or temporary disfigurement or impairment of any bodily organ or function by other than accidental means.

Emotional maltreatment means a pattern of malicious behavior that results in impaired psychological growth and development.

Sexual abuse means any act or acts involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including, but not limited to, incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, child pornography, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child.

Risk of harm means a significant danger that a child will suffer serious harm or other than by accidental means, which harm would be likely to cause physical injury, neglect, emotional maltreatment or sexual abuse.

Reports

Every day SRS receives referrals from mandated reporters and others expressing concerns about the welfare of children. Supervisory staff carefully review the referrals and determine whether the concerns are sufficient to warrant the initiation of a child abuse or neglect investigation. SRS investigates approximately one out of every three referrals that it receives. The remaining referrals tend to involve general parenting concerns that are not specific enough to justify an investigation. In these cases, SRS staff often refer callers to community service providers for further advice and assistance.

Once a referral has been accepted as a report, SRS commences an investigation and determines whether the child has been maltreated or is at risk of maltreatment. Department staff must then decide whether further action may be required to protect the child.

In 2002, 38% of perpetrators were women and 62% were men. About half of all perpetrators were under the age of 30. 42% of perpetrators were the child's parents.

Number of substantiated victims by year

| Year | # of victims |
|-------------|---------------------|
| 1982 | 776 |
| 1983 | 1216 |
| 1984 | 1445 |
| 1985 | 1597 |
| 1986 | 1736 |
| 1987 | 1589 |
| 1988 | 1489 |
| 1989 | 1577 |
| 1990 | 1500 |
| 1991 | 1437 |
| 1992 | 1498 |
| 1993 | 1272 |
| 1994 | 1168 |
| 1995 | 1094 |
| 1996 | 1064 |
| 1997 | 1041 |
| 1998 | 887 |
| 1999 | 1080 |
| 2000 | 1104 |
| 2001 | 1061 |
| 2002 | 1317 |

There was a 19% increase in the number of victims of child abuse in 2002. In 2002, 40% of victims were boys and 60% were girls. 18% of victims were between newborn and 3 years of age. 70% were teenagers.

Substantiated Child Abuse Victims by Type

| Year | Physical | Sexual | Risk of Harm | Neglect |
|-------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| 1980 | 165 | 88 | 302 | 177 |
| 1981 | 217 | 115 | 254 | 149 |
| 1982 | 191 | 151 | 206 | 170 |
| 1983 | 408 | 247 | 258 | 227 |
| 1984 | 393 | 439 | 320 | 204 |
| 1985 | 473 | 607 | 333 | 202 |

| | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1986 | 588 | 724 | 341 | 223 |
| 1987 | 566 | 630 | 333 | 225 |
| 1988 | 513 | 675 | 317 | 200 |
| 1989 | 447 | 749 | 417 | 212 |
| 1990 | 417 | 769 | 397 | 151 |
| 1991 | 416 | 734 | 323 | 148 |
| 1992 | 426 | 811 | 326 | 110 |
| 1993 | 338 | 628 | 303 | 111 |
| 1994 | 327 | 583 | 257 | 108 |
| 1995 | 290 | 538 | 272 | 99 |
| 1996 | 282 | 538 | 240 | 95 |
| 1997 | 266 | 511 | 296 | 66 |
| 1998 | 235 | 371 | 286 | 86 |
| 1999 | 238 | 436 | 435 | 86 |
| 2000 | 258 | 471 | 396 | 85 |
| 2001 | 229 | 424 | 415 | 93 |
| 2002 | 274 | 508 | 531 | 112 |

While there has been a significant decrease in sexual abuse, physical abuse, and neglect since 1990, all types of abuse have increased in the past two years.

Number of Reports, Victims, and Substantiations

| Year | # of substantiations | # of victims | # of reports |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1980 | 839 | 592 | 1253 |
| 1981 | 797 | 561 | 1253 |
| 1982 | 776 | 549 | 1056 |
| 1983 | 1216 | 933 | 1865 |
| 1984 | 1445 | 1080 | 2144 |
| 1985 | 1597 | 1341 | 2572 |
| 1986 | 1736 | 1482 | 2594 |
| 1987 | 1589 | 1378 | 2349 |
| 1988 | 1489 | 1365 | 2512 |
| 1989 | 1577 | 1426 | 2728 |
| 1990 | 1500 | 1383 | 2580 |
| 1991 | 1437 | 1367 | 2635 |
| 1992 | 1498 | 1430 | 2750 |
| 1993 | 1272 | 1157 | 2595 |

| | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| 1994 | 1168 | 1098 | 2386 |
| 1995 | 1094 | 981 | 2197 |
| 1996 | 1064 | 1007 | 2259 |
| 1997 | 1041 | 994 | 2223 |
| 1998 | 887 | 815 | 1883 |
| 1999 | 1080 | 923 | 2263 |
| 2000 | 1104 | 998 | 2604 |
| 2001 | 1061 | 957 | 2931 |
| 2002 | 1317 | 1152 | 3189 |

The number of reports has increased each year since 1999 due to increased awareness of child abuse and neglect. SRS substantiated 20% more cases of child abuse or neglect in 2002 than in the previous year.

Reports received from mandated reporters are more often substantiated. Mandated reporters in 2002 were:

| | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---|--------------|
| Physician | Health Care Provider | Registered Nurse | Dentist |
| Surgeon | Medical Examiner | Physicians Assistant | Chiropractor |
| Day Care Worker | Resident Physician | Licensed Practical Nurse | Psychologist |
| Social Worker | Mental Health Professional | School Teacher | Intern |
| Hospital Administrator | School Librarian | School Principal | Osteopath |
| Police Officer | Probation Officer | School Guidance Counselor | |
| Residential & Non-Residential Camp Administrators | | Residential & Non-Residential Camp Counselors | |

Any other person who has reason to believe that a child has been abused or neglected may make a report.

Reports by Source

| Source | Total Reported | Substantiated | % Substantiated |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Community | 333 | 87 | 26% |
| Self-Report | 37 | 18 | 49% |
| Caretaker | 318 | 112 | 35% |
| Victim | 13 | 9 | 69% |
| Child Care | 97 | 26 | 27% |
| Law | 562 | 293 | 52% |
| Social | 614 | 239 | 39% |
| School | 724 | 226 | 31% |

Physical Abuse

- 274 children were victims of physical abuse in 2002, a 15% increase from 229 in 2001.
- Boys under 15 years of age, and girls in their teens were more likely to be the victims of physical abuse.

Physical Abuse by Type, Alleged and Substantiated

| Type of Abuse | Alleged | Substantiated |
|-------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Confine | 22 | 6 |
| Dislocate | 4 | 2 |
| Bite | 12 | 5 |
| Fracture | 16 | 9 |
| Wound | 4 | 2 |
| Poison | 0 | 0 |
| Burn | 15 | 1 |
| Internal | 2 | 1 |
| Head Injury | 21 | 10 |
| Central Nervous System Injury | 0 | 0 |
| Bruise | 808 | 240 |
| Other | 86 | 27 |

Sexual Abuse

- 508 children were victims of sexual abuse in 2002, a 16.5% increase from 424 in 2001.
- Perpetrators were referred for criminal prosecution in 222 cases.
- Females in their teens were more likely to be victims of sexual abuse.

Sexual Abuse by Type, Alleged and Substantiated

| Type of Abuse | Alleged | Substantiated |
|---------------|---------|---------------|
| Other | 269 | 122 |
| Exploit | 63 | 35 |
| Expose | 108 | 66 |
| Fondle | 680 | 324 |
| Oral | 199 | 104 |

| | | |
|-------------|-----|-----|
| Anal | 55 | 23 |
| Intercourse | 316 | 128 |

Neglect

- 112 children were victims of neglect in 2002, a 19% increase from 93 in 2001.
- Pre-school-aged children were more often the victims of neglect.
- 17 victims were hospitalized as a result of neglect.

Neglect by Type, Alleged and Substantiated

| Type of Abuse | Alleged | Substantiated |
|---------------|---------|---------------|
| Education | 26 | 17 |
| Abandon | 56 | 43 |
| Emotional | 21 | 7 |
| Medical | 107 | 38 |
| Clothing | 12 | 8 |
| Shelter | 86 | 25 |
| Food | 42 | 13 |

Risk of Harm

- 508 children were placed at risk of harm in 2002, a 18% increase from 415 in 2001.
- Children under the age of 9 were more likely to be at risk of harm.

Risk of Harm, Alleged and Substantiated

| Type of Risk | Alleged | Substantiated |
|--------------|---------|---------------|
| Harm | 1381 | 480 |
| Sexual Abuse | 227 | 96 |