

Protecting children who are victims of child abuse and neglect



- In 1998, SCF received 31,456 reports of child abuse and neglect, an increase of 12.3 percent over 1997.
- Of those reports, field assessments were completed for 17,300; an increase of 0.7 percent.
- There were 10,147 child abuse victims in 1998, a 4.2 percent increase from the previous year.
- Incidents of threat of harm rose 17 percent and mental injury rose 23 percent. All other types of maltreatment dropped.
- The number of drug-affected babies dropped for the fourth year in a row and continues a downward trend which began after the peak in 1989.
- In 1998, 6 children died from abuse; 11 died from causes related to neglect.



What is child abuse?

CHILD ABUSE IS DEFINED IN ORS 419B.005

Q. If a parent spanks a child, is it considered child abuse?

Parents have a right to discipline their children. Simply spanking is not child abuse. However, tissue damage such as bruises, welts, or lacerations may be signs of child abuse. Injuries such as these, not resulting from an accident, must be investigated.

ORS 419B.005 defines child abuse as:

- Any assault, as defined in ORS chapter 163, of a child and any physical injury to a child which has been caused by other than accidental means, including any injury which appears to be at variance with the explanation of the injury.
- Any mental injury to a child, which shall include only observable and substantial impairment of the child's mental or psychological abilities to function caused by cruelty to the child, with due regard to the culture of the child.
- Rape of a child, which includes but is not limited to rape, sodomy, unlawful sexual penetration, and incest as those acts are defined in ORS chapter 163.
- Sexual abuse as defined in ORS chapter 163.
- Sexual exploitation, including use of children for pornography and prostitution.
- Negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child, including but not limited to, failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care. Any child who is under care or treatment solely by spiritual means pursuant to the religious beliefs or practices of the child or the child's parents or guardians shall not for this reason alone be considered a neglected or maltreated child.
- Threatened harm to a child, which means subjecting a child to substantial risk of harm to the child's health and welfare.
- Child selling, which includes buying, selling or trading for legal or physical custody of a child. This does not apply to legitimate adoptions or domestic relations planning.



What are child protective services?

The Child Abuse Reporting Law, ORS 419B.005 to 419B.045, was enacted in 1971 and has been updated several times. The law was designed to provide early identification and protection of children who have been abused.

- When a report of child abuse or neglect is received, either by SCF or a law enforcement agency, the response is made according to the protocols of the local multidisciplinary team.
- The facts are reviewed to determine if a home visit is appropriate and, if so, which members of the team will be involved.
- Law enforcement investigates the facts and determines responsibility for maltreatment of the child.
- The SCF caseworker assesses risk to the child, the family's ability to provide safety, and supportive resources available to the family.
- After the investigation and assessment, a reported incident is determined to be founded, unfounded, or unable to determine because of lack of information.

Wherever possible, the caseworker and other members of the team work in collaboration with the family. They prepare an action plan to provide safety for the child and use the strengths of the family.

**THE CHILD ABUSE REPORTING
LAW WAS ENACTED IN 1971**



Who must report child abuse?

MANDATORY REPORTERS ARE REQUIRED BY LAW TO REPORT CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

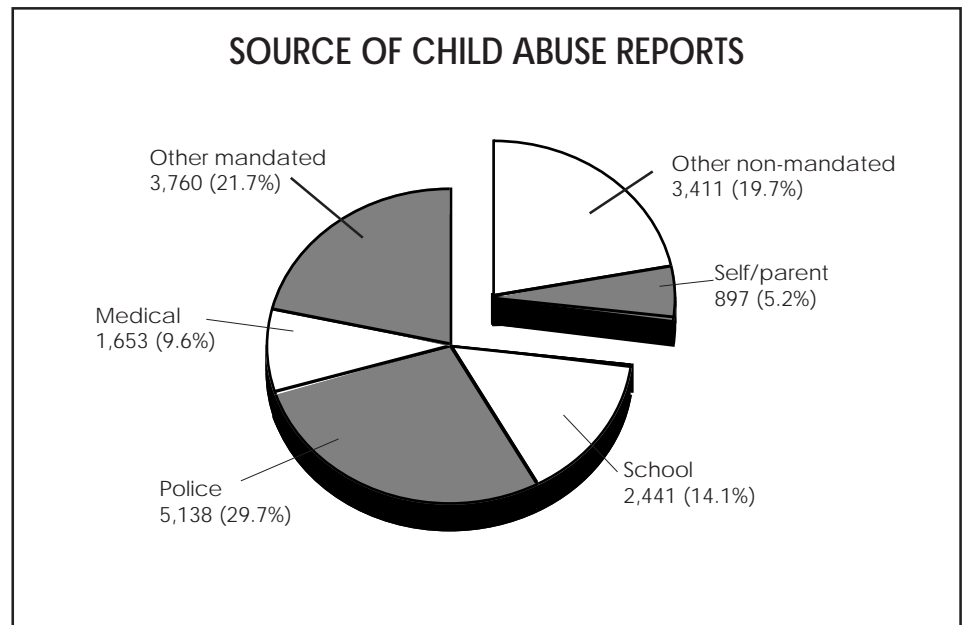
MANDATORY REPORTERS ARE:

- Physician, including any intern or resident
- Dentist
- School employee
- Licensed practical nurse or registered nurse
- Employee of the Department of Human Resources, State Commission on Children and Families, Child Care Division of the Employment Department, the Oregon Youth Authority, county health department, community mental health and developmental disabilities program, a county juvenile department, a licensed child-serving agency, or an alcohol and drug treatment program
- Peace officer
- Psychologist
- Clergyman
- Licensed clinical social worker
- Optometrist
- Chiropractor
- Certified provider of day care, foster care or an employee thereof
- Attorney
- Naturopathic physician
- Firefighter
- Emergency medical technician
- Licensed professional counselor
- Licensed marriage and family therapist
- Court appointed special advocate as defined in ORS 412A.004

Certain people are required by Oregon law to report suspected cases of child abuse and neglect to the local SCF office or law enforcement agency. These people are required to report because they have frequent contact with children and are able to identify children who are at risk from abuse and neglect. In addition, any other person may make a report of suspected child abuse and neglect.

Mandatory reporters are listed in ORS 419B.005(3). In addition, an SCF publication, "Recognizing and Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect," provides more detailed information on Oregon's Mandatory Reporting Law.

A mandatory reporter must inform either SCF or a law enforcement agency if they have reasonable cause to believe they have had contact with a child who has suffered abuse or a person who has abused a child. The law applies to any contact a mandatory reporter has with such a child or other person.



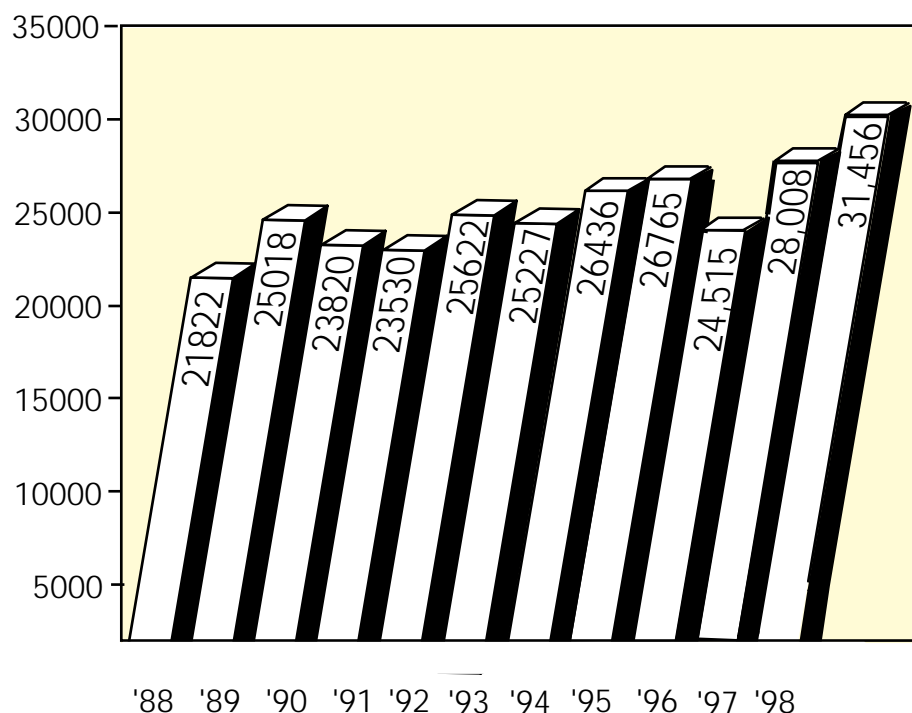
- Public and private officials who are required by law to report child abuse and neglect made 75 percent of the referrals to SCF in 1998.
- Forty-four (44) percent of the referrals came from schools and law enforcement agencies.
- Former spouses accounted for only 1 percent of the referrals.



Total child abuse reports

**SCF RECEIVED 31,456
REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE
AND NEGLECT IN 1998**

- In 1998, 31,456 reports of suspected child abuse/neglect were recorded. In 1981, 10,621 reports of suspected child abuse/neglect were made. This is an increase of 196 percent.
- The increasing number of young, more severely abused victims as well as the intensity of family problems result in more difficult cases that take longer to resolve.
- Current staffing limits the number of families that SCF can serve. There has been a 28.3 percent increase in reports from 1996 to 1998. There has been a 7.1 percent increase in casework staff over the same period. This continuing rise in reports as well as the intensity of family problems presents a challenge to SCF and community partners to meet the needs of today's children.
- There were 7,461 founded abuse reports in 1998, up 2.7 percent from 7,262 in 1997.

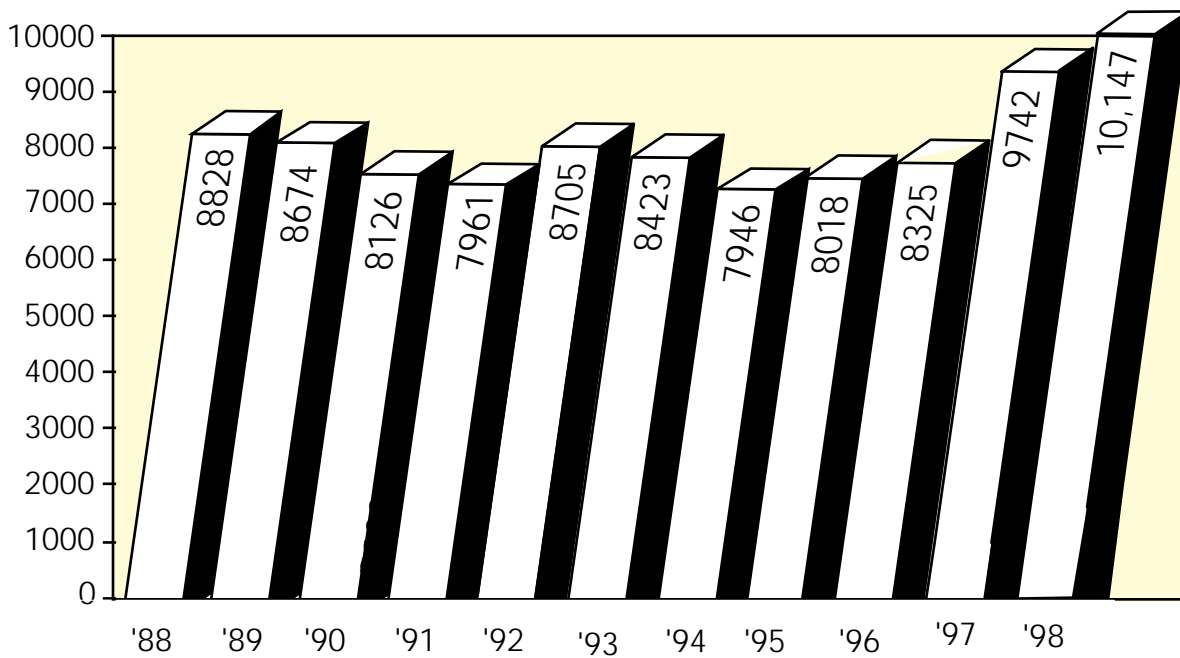




Child abuse victims

THERE WERE 10,147 CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS IN 1998, A 4.2 PERCENT INCREASE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR

- The largest single age group of victims were less than one year old.
- 47 percent of victims were less than 6 years old.



Ethnicity of Child Abuse & Neglect Victims

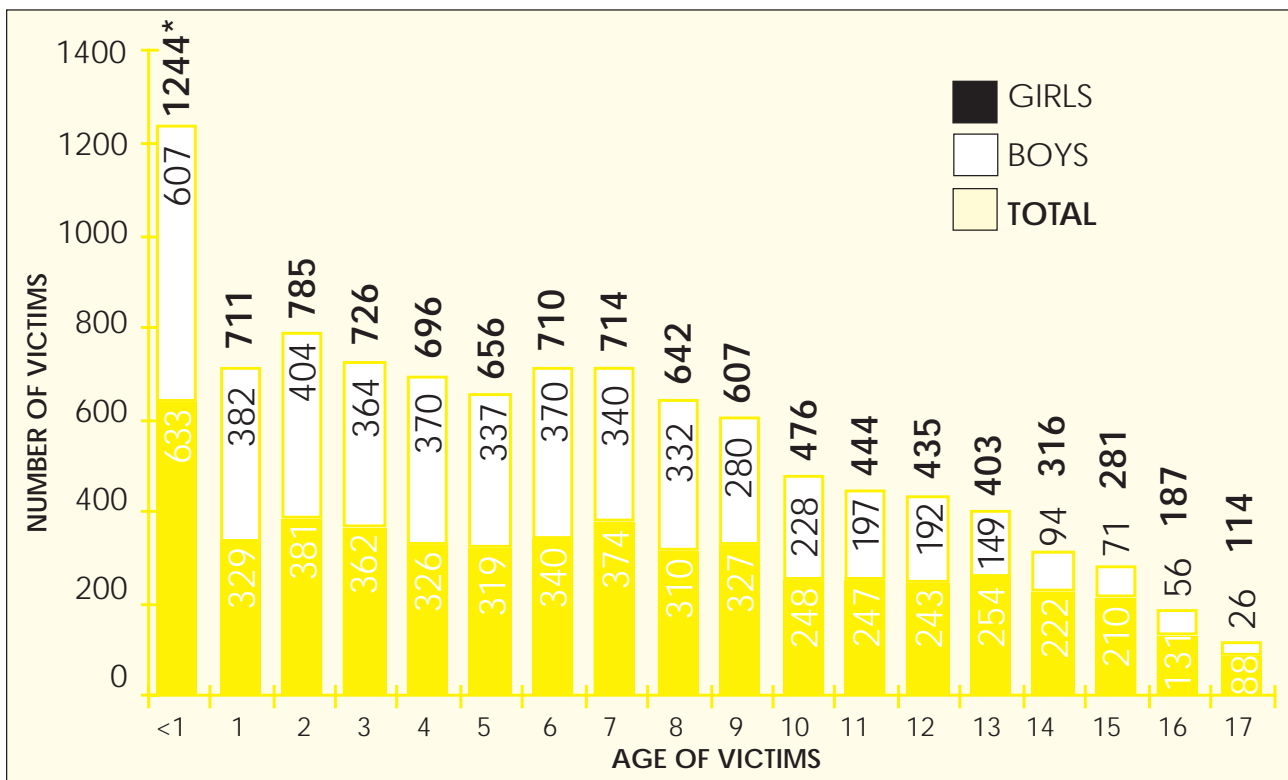
Asian	1.4%	Hispanic	11.1%
African American	7.1%	Native American	3.1%
Caucasian	77.2%		



Victims by age and sex

- Infants make up the largest single age group of victims (1,244). This reflects several factors: the number of children who were found to be drug-affected at birth, the extreme vulnerability of this population, and the stresses that occur in families when children are born.
- Females represent 53 percent of all abuse victims.
- In sex abuse cases, 77 percent of victims are female. This is reflected in the chart that shows the number of victims drops as children get older. However, of those older victims, a larger proportion are females – in large part due to sexual abuse. For more detail on sexual abuse, see page 9.

INFANTS MAKE UP THE LARGEST SINGLE AGE GROUP OF VICTIMS



*The sex of four victims under age one was unknown.

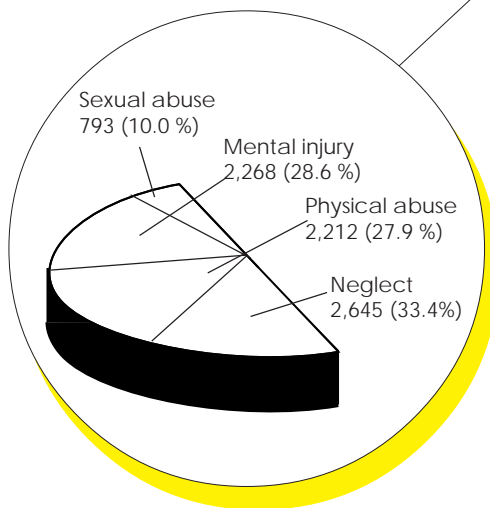
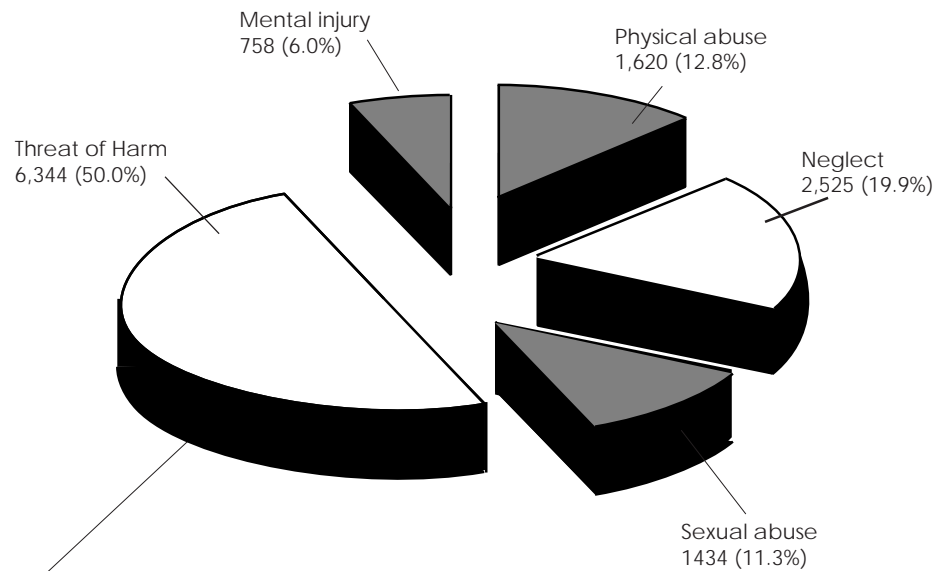


Incidents of child abuse

- In 1998, 55 percent of neglect incidents involved children aged 0-5 (9.9 percent were infants).
- The young age of children needing services also impacts foster care. Ten years ago, 30 percent of children in foster care were less than 6 years old. Today, that age group represents 40 percent of foster care.
- Neglect is potentially as lethal as abuse, and often requires more services over a longer period of time.

(The number of incidents is larger than the number of victims because victims may have suffered more than one type of abuse.)

THERE WERE 12,681 INCIDENTS OF CHILD ABUSE IN 1998; AN INCREASE OF 4.6 PERCENT FROM 1997



There were a total of 7,918 threat of harm victims in 1998. This is more than the number of threat of harm incidents since a child could be a victim of more than one type of threat of harm.

THREAT OF HARM PLACES CHILDREN IN DANGER

Threat of harm includes all activities, conditions, and persons which place a child at substantial risk of physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, or mental injury.

Examples of threat of harm include:

- Children living with a convicted sex offender (perhaps mother's new boyfriend).
- Young children living in a high risk domestic violence situation.
- Siblings to victims who have received a serious injury or have died from child abuse or neglect.



Sexual abuse victims by age and sex

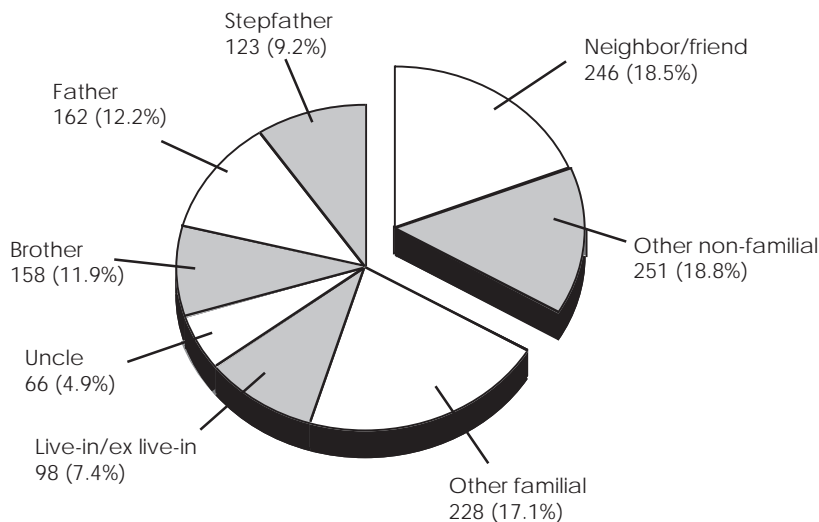
In 1998, the number of sex abuse victims declined by 2.8 percent over the previous year. There are several factors that may contribute to the decrease in sexual abuse cases:

- SCF is focusing more on in-family sexual abuse. Many out-of-family or "third party" sexual abuse cases are investigated by law enforcement agencies and might not be entered into SCF's data base.
- In past years, methods of determination varied from county to county. SCF is now using a more rigorous standard statewide for recording founded cases of abuse, and staff are better trained to distinguish between various types of abuse.
- The decrease in incidents of sex abuse may be the result of a decade of educational efforts to teach children how to protect against sex abuse and how to respond if it occurs.

1,434 CHILDREN WERE IDENTIFIED AS VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ABUSE IN 1998

Sex Abuse Victims 1998			
Age (yrs)	Male	Female	Total
0-1	6	9	15
2-5	88	207	295
6-9	131	285	416
10-13	70	317	387
14-17	29	292	321
TOTALS	324	1,110	1,434

Sexual abuse perpetrators



- The number of identified sexual abuse perpetrators in 1998 was 4.0 percent lower than the previous year. This is consistent with the reduction in the numbers of sexual abuse victims.
- Sixty-three percent of sexual abuse occurred within the family. In those familial situations, a father figure accounted for 34 percent of perpetrators.



Fatalities Related to Abuse and/or Neglect

IN 1998, PRELIMINARY NUMBERS SHOW 17 CHILDREN DIED FROM CAUSES RELATED TO ABUSE AND/OR NEGLECT

NUMBER OF CHILD FATALITIES		
	ABUSE	NEGLECT
1998	6	11
1997	12	22
1996	13	17
1995	8	28
1994	11	22
1993	7	4
1992	21	11

Three families had an open SCF case at the time of the child's death. One of those deaths occurred in day care. An additional five cases had contact or referral to SCF in the previous year. One death involved a murder-suicide by the parent.

In 1995, the Oregon legislature established the State Technical Assistance Team (STAT) to track and analyze all child deaths. Tracking deaths from child abuse and neglect is a part of these statistics. The numbers printed here are preliminary.

STAT, housed at the Health Division will be producing a more comprehensive report on all child deaths with the goal of directing attention and resources to reduce the number of deaths. The 1998 Child Fatality Review Report, due in October 1999, will reflect the final data on child fatalities.

In 1998, 17 children died from causes related to abuse and neglect.

- Eleven of the 1998 deaths resulted from neglect. Six child deaths were caused by abuse.
- Of the neglect fatalities, 6 were associated with lack of supervision by a parent or caretaker.
- In 8 deaths, there was an indication that drug/alcohol abuse was an issue.

Neglect deaths were related to serious acts of omission and negligence, such as operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants; children left unsupervised; failure to obtain medical care/treatment for a child; lack of smoke detectors (or non-functional detectors); access to firearms; not wearing life jackets.

1998 CAUSE OF DEATH	
NEGLECT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motor vehicle crash – 4 • Medical neglect – 2 • Boating – 1 • Electrocutation – 1 • Suffocation – 1 • Gun shot – 1 • Nutritional neglect – 1 	ABUSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shaken baby – 2 • Chemical asphyxiation – 1 • Strangulation – 1 • Knife wounds – 1 • Undetermined – 1

Please note that an error was found by PSU in how population estimates were calculated in years prior to 1998. This error may skew the victim rate per 1000 so it is not comparable to the 1998 rate. (As an example, using U.S. Census population estimates would change the 1997 victim rate from 11.8 to 12.0.)



Victim rate per 1000 children by county

County/Region	Population under 18 years			Victims			Rate/1000		
	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
Multnomah Metro Region	160850	162232	147502	1934	2217	2390	12.0	13.7	16.2
Benton	16290	16197	16726	151	178	120	9.3	11.0	7.2
Clackamas	80193	81870	83324	330	362	482	4.1	4.4	5.8
Clatsop	8812	8544	8683	113	145	184	12.8	17.0	21.2
Columbia	10477	10872	12864	109	72	101	10.4	6.6	7.9
Lincoln	9842	9849	10370	214	285	279	21.7	28.9	26.9
Linn	25861	25954	26664	241	262	259	9.3	10.1	9.7
Marion	72373	73292	72544	655	891	952	9.1	12.2	13.1
Polk	13960	14373	15427	99	119	162	7.1	8.3	10.5
Tillamook	5648	5427	5395	85	129	109	15.0	23.8	20.2
Washington	105390	107290	105664	560	627	791	5.3	5.8	7.5
Yamhill	21385	21551	22937	290	258	283	13.6	12.0	12.3
Western Region	370231	375219	380598	2847	3327	3722	7.7	8.9	9.8
Coos	14518	14325	14527	186	284	351	12.8	19.8	24.2
Curry	4618	4634	4747	67	58	91	14.5	12.5	19.2
Douglas	24383	24126	25264	343	338	307	14.1	14.0	12.2
Jackson	41377	41775	44157	459	605	627	11.1	14.5	14.2
Josephine	17435	17581	17013	219	363	314	12.6	20.6	18.5
Klamath	16174	15936	16062	332	282	204	20.5	17.7	12.7
Lake	2048	1912	2161	64	49	55	31.3	25.6	25.5
Lane	72854	72777	73890	588	733	659	8.1	10.1	8.9
Southern Region	193407	193066	197821	2258	2712	2608	11.7	14.0	13.2
Baker	4105	4124	4170	89	118	116	21.7	28.6	27.8
Crook	4223	4269	4425	56	55	47	13.3	12.9	10.6
Deschutes	25816	26359	26196	218	242	288	8.4	9.2	11.0
Gilliam	485	468	533	7	12	5	14.4	25.6	9.4
Grant	2091	2037	2184	25	43	48	12.0	21.1	22.0
Harney	1919	1881	2101	46	39	34	24.0	20.7	16.2
Hood River	5391	5327	5641	91	93	127	16.9	17.5	22.5
Jefferson	5269	5273	5549	49	44	32	9.3	8.3	5.8
Malheur	8833	8679	8853	139	186	157	15.7	21.4	17.7
Morrow	2722	2609	3146	109	91	70	40.0	34.9	22.3
Umatilla	18623	18212	18567	197	215	173	10.6	11.8	9.3
Union	6149	6002	6489	138	120	111	22.4	20.0	17.1
Wallowa	1791	1778	1913	9	18	13	5.0	10.1	6.8
Wasco/Sherman	6131	6070	6535	111	207	196	18.1	34.1	30.0
Wheeler	347	348	382	2	2	10	5.8	5.7	26.2
Eastern Region	93895	93436	96684	1286	1485	1427	13.7	15.9	14.8
Total	818383	823953	822605	8325	9742	10147	10.2	11.8	12.3

Population estimates from The Center for Population Research and Census, Portland State University. The population numbers represent the number of children under age 18 in each county. The rate per 1000 represents the number of victims per 1000 children. The rate per 1000 is affected by numerous factors, including screening procedures, public awareness, and extent of other community resources.



Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

Q. How does SCF respond to a report of child abuse or neglect?

SCF assesses the family situation to determine whether abuse or neglect has occurred and if the child is at risk of further abuse.

Q. What is the difference between an SCF assessment of suspected child abuse and a criminal investigation and prosecution?

There are two separate systems to respond to reported child abuse. SCF is part of the social service system, designed to protect children by helping families. SCF does not prosecute. Law enforcement and the courts make up the criminal justice system that is designed to protect the community and to punish offenders. The two systems may operate at the same time but they are independent.

Q. Is SCF held accountable for its decisions and actions?

SCF operates within a system of checks and balances. Judges, counselors, law enforcement officers, Citizens Review Boards, and court-appointed special advocates are involved in ongoing review of SCF decisions.

building safe families



- Mothers and fathers are the most prevalent perpetrators of child abuse. They represent approximately 69 percent of all cases.
- Familial perpetrators constitute 92.1 percent of the total cases of child abuse and neglect.
- A recent SCF study shows 62.4 percent of parents had drug/alcohol involvement in cases where children are removed from home.



Alleged perpetrators of child abuse

- Mothers and fathers are the two most prevalent perpetrators of child abuse. They represent 69 percent of all cases.
- Familial perpetrators, as listed in the table, constitute 92.1 percent of the total.
- These increasing trends toward familial perpetrators are consistent with younger victims of child abuse and neglect, and with the difficulties some people have when single parenting.

Alleged Perpetrator	Number			Percent		
	1996	1997	1998	1996	1997	1998
Familial						
Mother	3168	3761	3706	42.2	44.1	41.8
Father	1837	2144	2417	24.5	25.1	27.2
Brother	176	229	216	2.3	2.7	2.4
Sister	26	25	26	0.3	0.3	0.3
Stepfather	417	427	470	5.6	5.0	5.3
Stepmother	52	53	50	0.7	0.6	0.6
Step-sibling	55	43	53	0.7	0.5	0.6
Grandfather	95	87	93	1.3	1.0	1.0
Grandmother	67	72	70	0.9	0.8	0.8
Aunt	38	30	31	0.5	0.4	0.3
Uncle	124	106	113	1.7	1.2	1.3
Foster parent	76	58	81	1.0	0.7	0.9
Live-in companion	438	512	562	5.8	6.0	6.3
Other relative	125	98	88	1.7	1.1	1.0
Ex live-in	111	165	198	1.5	1.9	2.2
TOTAL FAMILIAL	6805	7810	8174	90.6	91.6	92.1
Non-familial						
Babysitter	64	73	61	0.9	0.9	0.7
Neighbor/friend	334	310	290	4.4	3.6	3.3
Unknown perp.	55	55	50	0.7	0.6	0.6
Other	250	277	300	3.3	3.2	3.4
TOTAL NON-FAMILIAL	703	715	701	9.4	8.4	7.9
TOTAL	7508	8525	8875	100.0	100.0	100.0

Problems in families of child abuse victims

Some categories of stresses on families showed an increase. The major problems facing families of abused and neglected children are:

- Drug/alcohol abuse.
- Unemployment.
- Parental involvement with law enforcement.
- Domestic violence (physical abuse of spouse/fighting).

Many families also face heavy child care responsibilities and parental abuse as a child.

Stress Indicator	Percent of Founded Abuse Reports		
	1996	1997	1998
Suspected Drug/Alcohol Abuse	39.3	41.0	38.0
Parental Involvement with Law Enforcement Agency	27.1	32.3	36.0
Domestic Violence (Physical Abuse of Spouse/Fighting)	22.7	27.6	31.9
Head of Family Unemployed	26.2	27.3	26.6
Heavy Child Care Responsibility	20.9	19.8	20.2
Parental History of Abuse as a Child	14.9	14.3	14.6



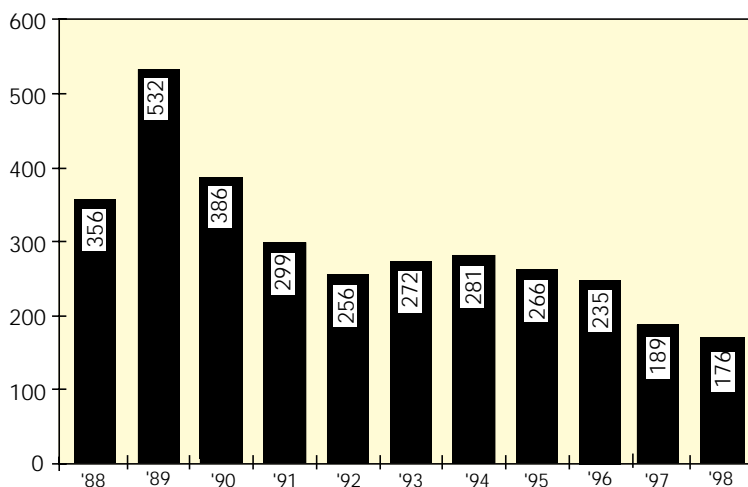
Drugs/alcohol in abusive families

ONE-THIRD OF CHILDREN REMAIN IN CARE DUE TO PARENTAL DRUG OR ALCOHOL PROBLEMS

An SCF study of over 3,700 cases where children had been removed from their homes because of abuse found that alcohol and drug problems are pervasive in families of abused and neglected children and that substance abuse is a substantial barrier to these children returning home.

- Parental drug/alcohol involvement is one of several factors considered to put a child at high risk of serious abuse/neglect or removal from home.
- In cases where children are removed from home, 62.4% of parents had drug/alcohol involvement.
- One-third of children remain in care due to parental drug or alcohol problems.
- Most single mothers with substance abuse problems require a multitude of services outside SCF. They are faced with inadequate housing, inadequate income, criminal involvement, frequent relocation, and domestic violence.

Drug-affected babies



These numbers include only confirmed incidents of drug-affected babies.

Drug or alcohol usage during pregnancy may result in:

- Fetal malformation.
- Low birth weight babies.
- Mental retardation.
- Facial anomalies such as cleft palate.
- Damage to child's organs and nervous system.
- Drug-addicted babies.

Many parents who are drug or alcohol addicted cannot take adequate care of their children. As a result, these children may be placed in foster care and eventually may need adoptive homes.

These children continue to have problems throughout their lives related to the prenatal drug abuse of their mothers, such as:

- Hyperactivity.
- Short attention span.
- Delayed motor skills.
- Growth retardation.
- Learning problems.

Assuring quality foster care for children



- In 1998, approximately 7 percent of total child abuse reports resulted in a child being removed from home.
- Fifty-seven (57) percent of foster children have special needs.
- Since 1993, the number of children placed with relatives has increased by 66 percent.
- The number of children in foster care averages 6,500.



Protective custody

IN 1998, APPROXIMATELY 7 PERCENT OF CHILD ABUSE REPORTS RESULTED IN A CHILD BEING REMOVED FROM HOME

Q. Is there anything parents can do when a child protective service worker removes a child from their home?

The juvenile court holds a hearing within 24 hours of a child's removal. The need to place a child out of the home is reviewed by a judge at this time. Parents are expected to attend and bring legal representation if they choose. SCF's goal is to see that parents are always closely involved in planning what must be done to make the home a safe and healthy environment before the child is returned.

Where there is an immediate danger to a child's well-being, Oregon statute permits law enforcement or SCF to take a child into protective custody. When it is determined that a child is abused or neglected and would probably be injured because parents or caretakers are unable to protect him/her, the child is placed in foster care. Parents are notified immediately if their child is placed in foster care.

A juvenile court hearing is held within 24 judicial hours to review the need for continued protection of the child through foster care while the investigation of child abuse and assessment of the risk continues.

Parents can attend this hearing. It is an opportunity to present evidence to determine if the child can be returned home without danger of physical injury or emotional harm.

Approximately 7 percent of the total reports of child abuse and neglect result in a child being removed from home. On any given day, there are an average of 6,500 children in foster care. However, over 10,000 individual children were placed in substitute care for some period of time over the past year. Substitute care includes shelter care, family foster care, and relative foster care.

Families of children placed in foster care face many issues. From a list of 36 problems or conditions, families with children in care have an average of eight factors that put them at risk of abusing or neglecting their children. The factors seen most frequently are listed below:

FAMILY FACTORS OF CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE			
Drug/alcohol involvement	66%	Inadequate income	45%
Poor parenting skills	60%	Emotional instability	42%
Chronically neglect their children	60%	Unemployment	39%
Teen parent	51%	Parent abused as a child	38%
Criminal involvement	50%	Overwhelming child care	38%
Single parent household	48%	History of abusing children	33%
Domestic violence	48%	Non-protective parent	20%
Past protective service removals	44%	Inadequate housing/homeless	20%

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PLACED WITH RELATIVES INCREASED BY 66 PERCENT SINCE 1993

When safe, relatives are considered for foster care placement. Since 1993, the number of children placed with relatives increased by 66 percent (from 1,144 in 1993 to 1,895 in 1998).



Foster children have special needs

Children in foster care may have difficult behaviors or conditions due to their abuse and/or neglect which require special care.

CONDITIONS/BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE	
Diagnosed medical condition	46%
Exposed to domestic violence	42%
Angry or aggressive	29%
Sexually abused	29%
Victim of sequential physical abuse	28%
Out of parents' control	20%
Academically delayed	11%
Attention deficit disorder	14%
Depressed	13%
Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	10%

57 PERCENT OF OUR FOSTER CHILDREN HAVE SPECIAL NEEDS

Ethnicity of Children in Foster Care*

Asian	1.0%
African American	13.2%
Caucasian	74.0%
Hispanic	6.9%
Native American	4.9%

Assuring quality foster homes

Foster parents are a valuable resource in returning children to a safe, nurturing home. When people apply to become foster parents for SCF:

- They take 12 hours of pre-service training which includes children's developmental abilities by age, as well as how to deal with issues that foster children have, such as loss and grief, sex abuse, and drug-addicted parents.
- A home study is done which includes interviews, reference and medical checks, criminal records checks, and a child safety home inspection.
- Foster parents are required to complete 10 hours of training in foster care issues each year.
- Support groups for foster parents are often available to help them learn what other foster parents are doing and keep current on issues in foster parenting as they arise.

FOSTER PARENTS ARE A VALUABLE RESOURCE IN RETURNING A CHILD TO A SAFE, NURTURING HOME

Q. What if a child can't be kept safely at home?

Where there is an immediate danger to a child's well-being, Oregon statute permits law enforcement or SCF to place a child in protective custody. SCF first looks to relatives for a temporary placement. If a relative placement is not available, the child will be placed with foster parents in a family setting.



Returning a child home

SCF WORKS TO RETURN A CHILD HOME WHENEVER POSSIBLE TO DO SO SAFELY

When a child is placed in foster care, SCF staff work to:

- Return the child home whenever possible to do so safely.
- Facilitate parental or family visits with children in care.
- Encourage parents to become involved in children's activities during visits.
- Support treatment services to remove barriers which keep children from returning home.

Providing permanent homes for children



- SCF adoptive placements in 1998 totaled 849, up from 702 in 1997.
- SCF is currently placing more than 80 children each month into adoptive homes.
- Children being freed for adoption quickly replace those being placed. SCF anticipates that more than 1,300 children will need adoptive homes by the end of 1999.



Adoptions



If a child cannot be safely reunited with a parent, SCF staff will implement an alternative plan such as adoption, guardianship, long-term relative care, permanent foster care, or long-term foster care.

If adoption is the goal, a family is recruited that best matches the child's needs. Many factors are considered, including keeping siblings together if it is in the best interest of the children.

Adoptive children have special needs

Most of the children placed for adoption by SCF have special needs. Those special needs include:

- Being over 8 years old.
- Being a member of a sibling group of two with one of the children over age 6 or a sibling group of more than two.
- Having a documented disability or a history of abuse/neglect that could cause future problems and need for treatment.
- Being a member of an ethnic/racial/cultural minority.

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN NEEDING HOMES OUTPACES THE FAMILIES AVAILABLE

Although SCF is currently placing more than 80 children each month into adoptive homes, children being freed for adoption quickly take their place on the family recruitment list. In 1992, 587 children were waiting for adoptive homes. SCF anticipates that more than 1,300 children will need adoptive homes by the end of 1999.

The following adoption statistics illustrate SCF's efforts in the adoption arena:

- Adoptive placements between July 1, 1997 and June 30, 1998 totaled 849, up from 702 the previous year.
- During this same period, the number of adopted children under three years old increased to 214, representing 25 percent of total adoptions.
- Most adopted children (66 percent) were placed with relatives or foster parents.

There is a continuing need for homes that can meet the cultural needs of minority children.

- Two-hundred-thirty-one minority children were adopted in 1998. This is 27 percent of total children adopted.

SCF continues its recruitment efforts for ethnic minority children.



Open Adoption/Mediation

An open adoption can work in the best interest of the child

Oregon was the first state in the nation to use mediation in parental rights termination cases. This process tries to avoid the costly and stressful process of a court trial and lays the groundwork for the birth parents to be involved in planning for their child's future.

In this process, the birth parents voluntarily relinquish their parental rights, but play a role in planning for their child. A mediator negotiates an agreement between the birth parents and adoptive parents that allows for some level of post adoption communication. The focus of the agreement always remains the best interests of the child.

In 1998, the legislature provided funding to expand mediation services statewide. Contracted mediators are now available in all counties. It is anticipated there will be a significant increase in the number of cases resolved in this cooperative process.

Q. What if a child in foster care can't be returned home?

If a child cannot be safely reunited with a parent, SCF will find an alternative plan such as adoption, guardianship or long-term relative care. If adoption is the goal, a family is recruited that best matches the child's needs. Many factors are considered, including keeping siblings together if it is in the best interest of the children.

After the adoption

SCF works hard to recruit families that match the needs of the child. This careful adoption process helps assure that the adoption will be successful. Statistics show that 96 percent of Oregon adoptive placements continued without disruption. In other states, disruption rates can be as high as 30 percent.

After adoption, SCF recognizes an ongoing commitment to preserve the family that the agency has assisted in creating. The Adoption Assistance program provides benefits such as medical coverage, monthly payments, or one-time payments for unexpected needs until an adopted child turns 18. The number of children receiving Adoption Assistance grew from 4,283 to 4,976 during 1998.

In October 1998, a Request for Proposals was issued for a comprehensive, statewide Post Adoption Services support system. This represents a major step forward in providing for the ongoing needs of special needs children who are adopted. Services will be offered beginning in April 1999.

**96 PERCENT OF OREGON
ADOPTIONS CONTINUE
WITHOUT DISRUPTION**



Adopted children have life-long special needs

MANY ADOPTED CHILDREN HAVE LIFE-LONG SPECIAL NEEDS

Many adopted children have life-long special needs

For many of these children, their early lives of abuse have resulted in conditions or behaviors that will need to be dealt with for the rest of their lives.

A recent survey of SCF adoptive parents showed that almost 40 percent of adopted children cope with at least five special needs, conditions, or behaviors.

While adopting a special needs child holds many challenges, there are also rewards. As one adoptive mom from Lane County said, "You have to work through the lows to reach the highs."

PROBLEMS/CONDITIONS OF SCF ADOPTED CHILDREN

PROBLEM/CONDITION	% OF CHILDREN
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome or other problems due to prenatal drug exposure	32.6%
Learning disability	30.2%
Emotional/psychological disturbance	29.7%
Attention Deficit Disorder	27.9%
Hyperactivity	24.0%
School behavior problems	28.4%
Stealing	24.0%
Wetting or soiling bed or clothes	23.7%
Attachment problems	18.0%