

# Sexual Abuse

## Definition

*Investigations* is the number of allegations of sexual abuse referred to, and investigated by, the Department for Community Based Services. *Percent substantiated* is the percent of investigations for sexual abuse where the Department for Community Based Services determined that the abuse occurred.

## Data in context

Children need to build safe, appropriate relationships with caring adults to thrive and learn to trust others. Sexual abuse includes actions by a parent or caretaker ranging from indecent exposure to rape to exploitation through prostitution.<sup>1</sup> Child sexual abuse is often underreported because it may go unnoticed by outside observers. In addition, children who are victims of sexual abuse commonly feel ashamed and scared, and perpetrators often pressure child victims into not telling anyone about the abuse. Inappropriate sexual knowledge is often one sign a child has been sexually abused.<sup>2</sup>

Although children are resilient, the consequences of sexual abuse can be significant.<sup>3</sup> Children who experience sexual abuse may feel guilt, sadness, anxiety, depression, or other emotions.<sup>4</sup> Some child victims, though not all, will display long-term effects, such as inappropriate boundaries, self-harming behaviors, or socio-emotional dysfunction. Other behavioral problems may include bedwetting, thumb sucking, troubled sleep, and problems eating.<sup>5</sup> Sexual abuse has such a negative impact on young people that about 1 in 3 victims of child maltreatment will subsequently perpetrate abuse on their own children.<sup>6</sup>

Of all child victims nationwide in FFY 2005, 9.3 percent experienced sexual abuse.<sup>7</sup> Nationwide

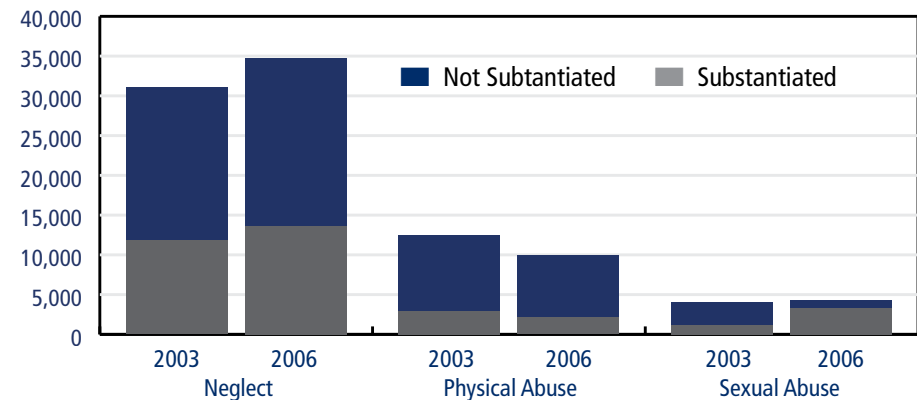
rates of maltreatment by type of abuse or neglect have not changed significantly in recent years.<sup>8</sup> Referrals for sexual abuse, however, declined in Kentucky from 2003 to 2006. National data suggests that 4 out of 5 people accused of all types of child abuse or neglect were parents of the child, and the rate for Kentucky is comparable.<sup>9</sup>

Investigations of sexual abuse statewide decreased from 2003 to 2006 (659 fewer investigations). Fayette and Jefferson Counties, the most populous counties, had the most investigations where sexual abuse was reported. The number of investigations decreased in 68 counties from 2003 to 2006 but more than doubled in eleven others. In 2006, 29 percent of investigations for child sexual abuse were substantiated statewide, a decline of 1 percentage point from 2003. Nine counties had no substantiated investigations in 2006, while more than 50 percent of investigations were substantiated in seven counties. Rates of substantiated investigations of sexual abuse declined in 53 counties from 2003 to 2006.

**Data Source:** Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services. Number of children for rate calculation from Kentucky Population Research at the University of Louisville Urban Studies Institute.

**Rate Calculation:** (number of investigations with sexual abuse substantiated in 2003 \* 100) / (number of investigations of sexual abuse in 2003) (number of investigations with sexual abuse substantiated in 2006 \* 100) / (number of investigations of sexual abuse in 2006)

**Investigations by Type of Abuse Reported and Percent Substantiated, 2003 and 2006**



Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services.

- 1 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2006). *Child Abuse and Neglect: General Information Packet*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed September 2006.
- 2 American Psychological Association (2001). *What Are the Effects of Child Sexual Abuse?* Available at <http://www.apa.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 3 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). *Long-Term Consequences of Abuse & Neglect*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed September 2007.
- 4 American Psychological Association (2001). *What Are the Effects of Child Sexual Abuse?* Available at <http://www.apa.org>. Accessed September 2007.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Child Welfare Information Gateway (2007). *Cycle of Abuse*. Available at <http://www.childwelfare.gov>. Accessed September 2007.
- 7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2007). *Child Maltreatment 2005*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.

## Investigations of child sexual abuse (number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Kentucky	3,974	30	3,315	29
Adair	24	58	10	0
Allen	24	54	26	27
Anderson	28	36	13	46
Ballard	4	75	1	100
Barren	47	47	38	32
Bath	16	44	14	21
Bell	34	32	51	31
Boone	29	31	42	40
Bourbon	19	32	9	44
Boyd	35	29	45	16
Boyle	29	21	18	22
Bracken	7	14	8	0
Breathitt	25	20	18	28
Breckinridge	21	24	8	13
Bullitt	27	37	35	26
Butler	7	43	15	27
Caldwell	6	17	3	33
Calloway	17	18	6	50
Campbell	58	22	46	33
Carlisle	22	14	7	14
Carroll	18	17	21	14
Carter	33	36	35	23
Casey	8	13	20	25
Christian	44	34	51	27
Clark	19	37	28	32
Clay	18	22	26	19
Clinton	13	8	9	33
Crittenden	8	0	9	11
Cumberland	0	*	2	0
Daviess	127	32	100	25
Edmonson	19	16	5	100
Elliott	3	0	17	24
Estill	6	0	8	38
Fayette	206	21	181	17
Fleming	13	46	11	18
Floyd	55	33	55	27
Franklin	38	29	42	26
Fulton	8	13	8	0
Gallatin	8	13	1	0
Garrard	15	27	6	33

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Grant	35	49	14	7
Graves	33	45	40	35
Grayson	13	8	21	24
Green	13	62	7	29
Greenup	28	25	32	28
Hancock	9	11	5	20
Hardin	161	37	95	27
Harlan	26	27	39	23
Harrison	22	23	9	0
Hart	27	15	29	34
Henderson	64	20	35	23
Henry	8	25	20	25
Hickman	6	33	0	*
Hopkins	51	39	52	27
Jackson	19	42	15	27
Jefferson	601	37	462	38
Jessamine	61	23	29	21
Johnson	52	15	50	30
Kenton	178	25	114	40
Knott	34	35	23	17
Knox	23	9	20	20
LaRue	5	0	8	13
Laurel	59	41	86	26
Lawrence	15	33	20	15
Lee	3	0	8	0
Leslie	27	22	17	35
Letcher	28	46	34	12
Lewis	8	0	8	50
Lincoln	44	25	26	19
Livingston	14	43	3	67
Logan	10	30	9	22
Lyon	4	25	9	44
McCracken	65	26	43	37
McCreary	43	21	11	55
McLean	3	33	15	40
Madison	68	41	43	19
Magoffin	40	25	19	26
Marion	28	25	15	13
Marshall	17	53	12	17
Martin	33	27	32	22
Mason	10	10	7	14

	2003		2006	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Meade	16	31	13	38
Menifee	3	0	8	13
Mercer	21	14	26	50
Metcalfe	17	29	13	31
Monroe	7	43	16	69
Montgomery	22	32	11	36
Morgan	8	38	13	23
Muhlenberg	18	11	22	23
Nelson	38	13	22	45
Nicholas	1	0	3	0
Ohio	26	35	11	55
Oldham	23	22	13	46
Owen	8	13	6	33
Owsley	0	*	2	0
Pendleton	18	22	11	45
Perry	48	27	48	17
Pike	59	15	76	32
Powell	15	13	5	40
Pulaski	69	30	37	16
Robertson	2	50	0	*
Rockcastle	12	58	23	22
Rowan	37	27	9	11
Russell	21	43	13	23
Scott	22	36	17	6
Shelby	51	24	27	37
Simpson	12	17	11	36
Spencer	4	100	7	14
Taylor	30	23	18	39
Todd	9	56	5	40
Trigg	7	43	10	70
Trimble	22	41	4	50
Union	9	33	14	36
Warren	88	26	92	35
Washington	6	0	17	41
Wayne	26	31	20	30
Webster	13	8	6	33
Whitley	33	30	64	14
Wolfe	9	33	12	50
Woodford	18	39	6	17

\* County had no investigations for sexual abuse.