

Sexual Abuse

Definition

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

Data in context

Children need to build safe, appropriate relationships with caring adults to thrive and learn to trust others. Sexual abuse occurs when a parent or other caregiver either has inappropriate physical contact with the child or commits a non-physical offense, such as exposure to sexually explicit materials. In most cases, sexual abuse takes place within immediate or extended families.¹

Although children are resilient, the consequences of sexual abuse can be significant. Victims of sexual abuse experience varying amounts of violence and emotional trauma, depending on the type and duration of abuse and the relationship with the perpetrator.^{2,3} Sexual abuse can lead to emotions such as guilt, sadness, anxiety, or depression. Additional psychological and behavioral problems can include eating disorders, disrupted sleep, or a regression to habits from earlier childhood, such as thumb sucking or bedwetting.⁴ A lead indicator of sexual abuse is a child who demonstrates sexual knowledge beyond their age or developmental stage, shows an inordinate interest in sex, or acts out sexually.⁵

As adults, some victims of child sexual abuse continue to experience depression and anxiety; they often suffer from chemical dependency and abusive relationships as well.⁶

Sexual abuse can be difficult to substantiate for several reasons. Many victims feel shame and confusion about what took place, particularly if the perpetrator is a relative or other trusted person, and may be pressured not to speak about it. In addition, others may not notice

or recognize the physical effects of the abuse on the victim.

Of all child victims nationwide in FFY 2006, 8.8 percent experienced sexual abuse, a decline of 0.5 percentage points from the prior year.^{7,8} Investigations for reported sexual abuse decreased by 426 in Kentucky from 2003 to 2007. Just over half of all counties mirrored this trend, with the largest decreases in Barren, Jefferson,

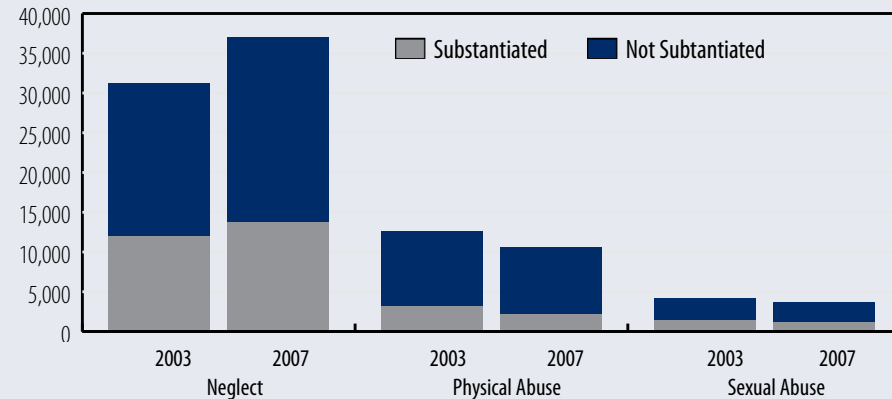
Kenton, and Shelby Counties. Meanwhile, the number of investigations with sexual abuse reported increased by 110 in Perry County, more than doubling.

Statewide, the number of investigations with sexual abuse substantiated decreased from 2003 to 2007, and the rate of substantiation decreased by four percentage points to 26 percent.⁹ Sixty-five Kentucky counties saw declines in the number of investigations for sexual abuse and sixty counties saw declines in the rate of substantiated investigations for sexual abuse. In contrast, the number of investigations with substantiated sexual abuse more than doubled in Fulton, Knox, Mason, Muhlenberg, and Owen Counties. Eight counties had no investigations with sexual abuse substantiated in 2007.

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

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 2007 * 100) / (number of investigations of sexual abuse in 2007)

Kentucky Child Abuse Investigations by Type of Abuse Reported and Substantiation, 2003 and 2007



Source: Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

- 1 Goldman, J., Salus, M., Wolcott, D., and Kennedy, K. (2003). *A Coordinated Response to Child Abuse and Neglect: The Foundation for Practice*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- 2 Ibid.
- 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 August 2008.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children, Youth and Families (2008). *Child Maltreatment 2006*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- 8 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.
- 9 Data obtained from the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Department for Community Based Services, July 2008.

Investigations of child sexual abuse (number & percent substantiated)

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Kentucky	3,974	30	3,548	26
Adair	25	60	15	27
Allen	21	43	31	26
Anderson	26	31	14	14
Ballard	4	75	1	0
Barren	84	33	44	27
Bath	16	44	11	45
Bell	33	27	24	25
Boone	31	26	50	26
Bourbon	16	25	9	22
Boyd	41	34	54	17
Boyle	26	23	24	17
Bracken	7	14	7	29
Breathitt	21	19	33	21
Breckinridge	20	25	10	0
Bullitt	29	41	20	25
Butler	10	40	5	20
Caldwell	4	25	8	25
Calloway	16	19	16	25
Campbell	57	21	36	22
Carlisle	23	17	7	57
Carroll	17	29	11	45
Carter	30	27	25	28
Casey	6	17	19	16
Christian	50	30	50	20
Clark	24	38	26	15
Clay	31	19	38	18
Clinton	12	8	7	43
Crittenden	8	0	11	27
Cumberland	0	*	8	13
Daviess	130	31	98	38
Edmonson	14	21	18	28
Elliott	2	0	9	11
Estill	7	0	15	13
Fayette	200	23	172	25
Fleming	15	40	13	31
Floyd	62	27	60	20
Franklin	40	28	41	17
Fulton	7	14	11	45
Gallatin	6	0	7	29
Garrard	15	27	17	12

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Grant	33	52	15	7
Graves	28	50	29	21
Grayson	14	14	15	13
Green	11	55	15	47
Greenup	27	26	32	9
Hancock	10	20	9	56
Hardin	93	39	76	26
Harlan	26	31	34	21
Harrison	15	20	7	14
Hart	27	11	26	15
Henderson	48	27	27	41
Henry	9	22	21	5
Hickman	5	20	1	0
Hopkins	42	43	38	16
Jackson	20	40	20	35
Jefferson	597	37	480	31
Jessamine	54	20	30	30
Johnson	68	25	50	30
Kenton	183	25	125	24
Knott	34	35	19	21
Knox	22	9	31	35
LaRue	5	0	22	36
Laurel	58	40	67	31
Lawrence	14	36	13	15
Lee	3	0	13	8
Leslie	27	22	36	22
Letcher	30	43	29	28
Lewis	8	0	10	20
Lincoln	47	26	22	32
Livingston	13	38	4	25
Logan	12	25	13	31
Lyon	5	40	6	0
McCracken	68	25	59	27
McCreary	43	21	8	25
McLean	3	33	2	50
Madison	65	43	62	19
Magoffin	39	26	31	55
Marion	26	27	7	43
Marshall	23	48	22	36
Martin	31	26	27	37
Mason	11	9	15	27

	2003		2007	
	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated	Number of investigations	Percent substantiated
Meade	22	27	16	38
Menifee	2	0	3	0
Mercer	22	9	18	17
Metcalfe	18	33	11	9
Monroe	6	33	13	46
Montgomery	22	32	14	0
Morgan	8	38	8	0
Muhlenberg	19	11	21	33
Nelson	38	11	28	25
Nicholas	5	20	3	33
Ohio	24	38	16	31
Oldham	23	26	25	36
Owen	7	14	8	75
Owsley	0	*	7	0
Pendleton	14	14	10	60
Perry	47	30	157	8
Pike	59	17	89	26
Powell	16	13	32	16
Pulaski	68	29	56	30
Robertson	2	50	1	100
Rockcastle	12	58	18	56
Rowan	32	25	18	6
Russell	21	43	12	8
Scott	27	41	29	31
Shelby	121	30	49	39
Simpson	10	10	8	25
Spencer	4	100	5	20
Taylor	26	27	8	50
Todd	8	63	6	50
Trigg	7	43	8	25
Trimble	21	38	26	27
Union	9	33	12	17
Warren	70	29	56	39
Washington	4	0	8	38
Wayne	24	33	4	25
Webster	10	10	13	23
Whitley	35	34	65	15
Wolfe	9	33	15	13
Woodford	19	37	9	22

* County had no investigations for sexual abuse.