

Report finds 45,500 kids in the Aussie care system were maltreated in 2021–22

June 6 2023



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The rate of substantiations within the child protection system has remained stable at around 8 per 1,000 children between 2017–18 and 2021–22, with around 45,500 children found to have been maltreated in

2021–22.

The latest Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) report, *Child protection Australia 2021–22 Insights*, presents information on children aged 0–17 years who have come into contact with the child protection system.

Around 178,000 Australian children came into contact with the child protection system in 2021–22, a slight decrease from 179,000 in 2020–21.

"Children who came into contact with the child protection system include those who were the subject of an investigation; on a care and protection order; and/or in out-of-home care (such as [foster care](#) or kinship care)," said AIHW spokesperson Dr. Gabrielle Phillips.

"A substantiation is when, after an investigation, it is concluded that there is reasonable cause to believe the child has been, is being, or is likely to be maltreated," said Dr. Phillips.

Around 101,000 children had a finalized investigation in 2021–22. Of these children, 45% were substantiated and 55% were not.

Emotional abuse (57%) was the most common type of substantiated maltreatment, followed by neglect (21%).

Children who have been seriously harmed, being at risk or significant risk of harm or have no other care options, may be placed on care and protection orders. These are legal orders that give child protection departments some responsibility for a child's welfare.

The rate of children on care and protection orders remained steady at around 10–11 per 1,000 children between 30 June 2018 and 30 June

2022.

"Children who experience [maltreatment](#), or are unable to live with their families due to safety concerns, may be placed in out-of-home care," said Dr. Phillips.

The rate of children in out-of-home care has remained relatively stable at around 8 per 1,000 children between 30 June 2018 and 30 June 2022.

Over the next 12 months, the AIHW will be releasing quarterly updates to include content specifically focusing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the child protection system, the safety of [children](#) in care and pathways from out-of-home care.

Provided by Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW)

Citation: Report finds 45,500 kids in the Aussie care system were maltreated in 2021–22 (2023, June 6) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-06-kids-aussie-maltreated.html>

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