Canadian Child Welfare
SCOPING

February 2023
Victoria Chui

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Canadian Data

Structure	Administrative structure of each province's child welfare system, age coverage
Referral	Referral sources for child investigations
Placement	Placement location after initial investigation
Cases over Time	Number and rate (/1000) of child maltreatment investigations (1998, 2003, 2008)
Categories	Categories of substantiated investigations, number, rate, percentage (2008)
Aboriginal Heritage	Aboriginal heritage, number, rate, percentage (2008)
Caregiver	Age, sex, relationship, risk factors for child's primary caregiver, housing and income type

First Nations Inequality Data

Age	Age distribution for investigations for all children
Caregiver	Primary caregiver risk factors, household income risk factors
Documented Harm	Documented physical and emotional harm
Court	Applications to child welfare court

*comparing First Nations and Non-Indigenous children in each case

Provincial Data

Investigations	Number, rate of child maltreatment investigations*
Category	Primary category of substantiated maltreatment*
Placement	Placement in child maltreatment investigations*
Out of Home	Number of children and youth in out-of-home care

*ON, QC, AB

Primary Category - Ontario 2018	Number	Rate per 1000	%
Physical Abuse	7081	3.00	19
Sexual Abuse	1019	0.43	3
Neglect	8082	3.42	21
Emotional Maltreatment	4689	1.99	12
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	17051	7.22	45
Total	37922	16.06	100

Out-of-Home 2019	Child Population	Children in Care	Rate per 1000
Ontario	2,765,376	12,385	4.48
Quebec	1,584,856	9,174	5.79
Alberta - 2022	469,965	7,985	**16.99**
British Columbia	926,072	6,263	6.76

Placement - Ontario	2008	2008 rate	2013	2013 rate	2018	2018 rate
No Placement	121436	50.98	121020	51.51	144351	61.12
Informal Kinship Care	3616	1.52	1874	0.80	2488	1.05
Formal Placement	3696	1.55	2387	1.02	1697	0.71

Maltreatment Investigations Rate / 1000	1998	2003	2008	2013	2014	2018
Country-Wide	21.47	38.33	39.16	NaN	NaN	NaN
Ontario	NaN	NaN	54.05	53.32	NaN	62.89
Quebec	15.44	NaN	18.47	NaN	20.72	NaN
Alberta	NaN	43.16	35.02	NaN	NaN	NaN

Risk Assessments

Overall Takeaways:

1. No algorithmic implementation

2. Depends on province

3. Involves categories and scales

4. Most information available on Ontario's risk assessment tool

Canadian Resources

Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal:
- Information sheets, articles concerning Canadian research around risk assessments
- Topics such as hospital referral rates, domestic violence, articles involving CIS data...

Child Protection Systems book:
- "Residual welfare system, based on the idea of protection rather than support"
- "need for more accessible information about...child welfare"

Study on neglect/harm in Canadian children:
- CIS screens differently for cases where family factors lead to risk of future maltreatment
- Parents should receive more support after initial risk assessment

Risk Assessments - ON

1. One of the implementation issues raised by the various calls for improvements in the delivery of child welfare services in Ontario was the lack of standardized approaches to service, inherent in the highly decentralized service delivery model that had developed across the province.

2. The Ministry of Community and Social Services introduced a common risk assessment model to standardize the approach to many critical child protection decisions across the province.

3. Implemented in 1998, the model included a standard set of service eligibility criteria, a safety assessment tool and a risk assessment tool.

2002, University of Toronto

Risk Assessment – ON

ON's 2000 model has:

-New standards for all protection cases integrated with risk assessment model
-Revisions to reflect commitment to improve the model, addressing feedback based on knowledge and experience
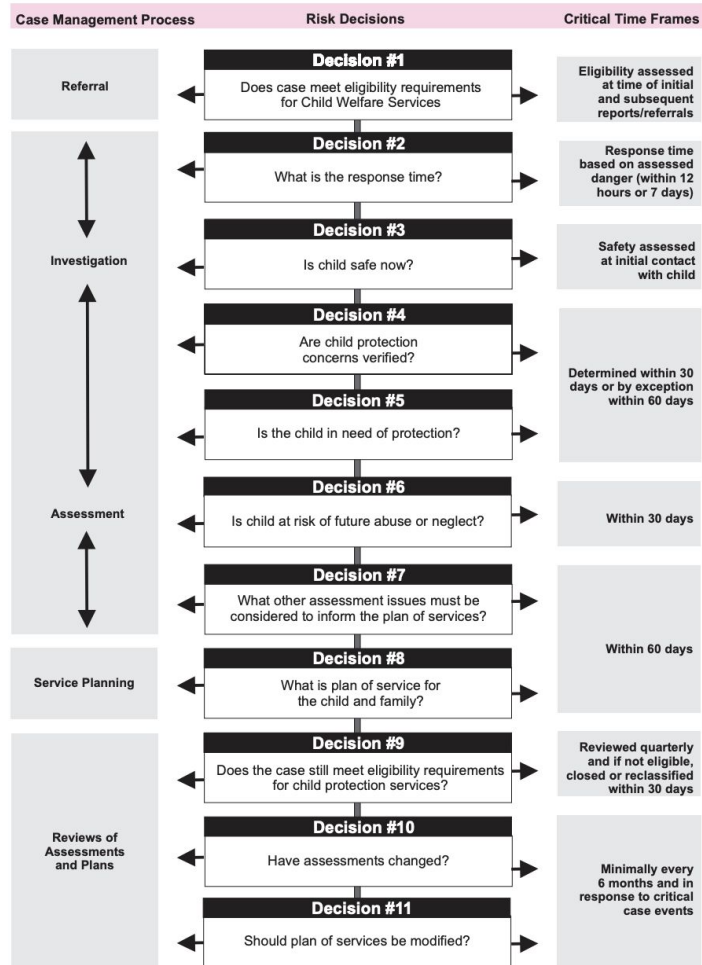
ON's 2000 model includes:

-Eligibility Spectrum, to ensure consistent decisions about eligibility for service
-Safety and risk assessment tools which lead to decisions to remove children from danger

ON's 2000 model involves:

-An outline of the risk decisions case workers undertake after a referral/report to determine child(ren) safety

Risk Assessment Model for Child Protection in Ontario*

Case Management Process	Risk Decisions	Critical Time Frames
Referral	**Decision #1** — Does case meet eligibility requirements for Child Welfare Services	Eligibility assessed at time of initial and subsequent reports/referrals
Investigation	**Decision #2** — What is the response time?	Response time based on assessed danger (within 12 hours or 7 days)
	Decision #3 — Is child safe now?	Safety assessed at initial contact with child
	Decision #4 — Are child protection concerns verified?	Determined within 30 days or by exception within 60 days
	Decision #5 — Is the child in need of protection?	
Assessment	**Decision #6** — Is child at risk of future abuse or neglect?	Within 30 days
	Decision #7 — What other assessment issues must be considered to inform the plan of services?	Within 60 days
Service Planning	**Decision #8** — What is plan of service for the child and family?	
Reviews of Assessments and Plans	**Decision #9** — Does the case still meet eligibility requirements for child protection services?	Reviewed quarterly and if not eligible, closed or reclassified within 30 days
	Decision #10 — Have assessments changed?	Minimally every 6 months and in response to critical case events
	Decision #11 — Should plan of services be modified?	

Government →

Study assessing applicability of risk assessment →

Table 1
Summary of Areas for Risk Assessment

1. *Caregiver Influence*

   Abuse/neglect
   Alcohol/drug use
   Expectations of child
   Acceptance of child
   Physical capacity to care for child
   Mental/emotional/intellectual capacity

2. *Child Influence*

   Vulnerability
   Response to caregiver
   Behavior
   Mental health and development
   Physical health and development

3. *Family Influence*

   Family violence
   Ability to cope with stress
   Availability of social supports
   Living conditions
   Family identity and interactions

4. *Intervention Influence*

   Caregiver's motivation
   Caregiver's cooperation with intervention

5. *Abuse/Neglect*

   Access to child by perpetrator
   Intention and acknowledgement of responsibility
   Severity of abuse/neglect
   History of abuse/neglect or neglect committed by present caregivers

Standard 4 Conducting a Risk Assessment

On this page

ON – Government

- Government of Ontario outlines the standards that "promote consistent high quality service delivery to children, youth and families receiving child protective services."
- From referral to conducting an investigation.

ON Assessment – Study

Summary

- Ontario Differential Response Model (2007) increased delivery options for children

- Decision-making in Ontario is composed of: Eligibility Spectrum, Safety Assessment, and Risk Assessment

- Risk assessment tool has 5 assessment categories/"influences"
    - Caregiver, child, family, intervention, and abuse/neglect

Takeaways

- Rates of physical abuse investigations were higher for Black then White families

- Usage of Eligibility Spectrum and lower risk threshold likely contributed to higher proportion of Black families investigated

- Seek involvement of Black families in development of decision-making tools

Evaluation of Risk Assessment Model (1999)

"In conclusion, our evaluation of the initial implementation and training of the Risk Assessment Model reveals a comprehensive and well-planned strategy that has led to the Risk Assessment Model becoming the standardized risk assessment system used by all Children's Aid Societies in the province. While the response to the Ministry's lead initiative has been positive, this first phase evaluation has identified some potentially serious implementation issues that should be carefully monitored to ensure that the Risk Assessment Model is indeed leading to improved practice."

Final Takeaways

Data

- Expansive data available through Canadian Incidence Studies
- Covers topics such as child demographics, caregiver and home characteristics, First Nations status...
- Ontario has the most provincial data available, while Alberta seems to have the highest rate of maltreatment investigations

Risk Assessments

- Doesn't seem to be algorithmic implementation in Canada
- Most assessments take the form of questions concerning potential risks for child and family, answered in a ranking system
- Many studies/articles have been done regarding the usage of risk assessments and potential discriminations for Black/First Nations communities
- Ontario government is transparent about each step of a child maltreatment investigation
- Risk assessments in Ontario were standardized 20 years ago across the province

Canadian Child Welfare
Data Finding

March 15 2023
Victoria Chui

Looking for Data Repositories...

Current Data

- No publicly available data
- The Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect (CIS) is currently the only Canada-wide data source on child maltreatment investigations and out-of-home care placements. To date, there have been three CIS cycles at the federal level, using data from 1998, 2003, and 2008. CIS data is drawn from a representative sample of child welfare agencies from across Canada.

Looking for Data Repositories…

Future Goals - Canadian Government

- <u>Canadian government</u> aims to develop Canadian Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) with administrative data, approved in 2021
    - Purpose is to support nationally standardized analyses and reporting on child maltreatment; investigations and outcomes; the number of children in need of protection; and passage through the child welfare system, including referral to services, placement in foster care, connections to family, reunification, and other requests for family services
    - Could inform policies, laws, programs and family support services to improve the lives of children and their families
    - Help Indigenous inequality
- <u>Public Health Agency of Canada</u> has collaborated to develop the Canadian Child Welfare Information System that will provide information about children and families involved with child welfare systems across Canada

Possible Future Work

Writing

- Could write a scoping paper about this landscape and the need for public data
    - Compare to research and potential in US, any consequences of public repositories
- Write about need for public repositories in Canada, their potential, and how CCWIS does not allow for algorithmic development