

# CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS BY DISPOSITION

**DEFINITION:** Number of allegations of child abuse and neglect referred to, and investigated by, the Department of Social Services (DSS) in fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007).

## SIGNIFICANCE

Child abuse and neglect is linked to a host of negative outcomes for children.

Research consistently shows that children who have been abused or neglected are more likely to suffer poor physical and mental health, social difficulties, and cognitive dysfunction. These children are also more likely to engage in high-risk activities and have serious behavior problems. Prevent Child Abuse America estimates that child abuse and neglect costs the United States \$103.8 billion every year in direct and indirect costs. Direct costs include hospitalizations, mental health care, child welfare services, and law enforcement. Indirect costs taken into account include juvenile delinquency, lost productivity to society, and special education.<sup>1</sup>

In Louisiana, the child protection investigation process begins with a report of child abuse and/or neglect. Reports are then screened to determine whether or not the allegations meet the definition of child abuse and/or neglect. Once a report has been screened in, a child protection investigation is conducted to determine whether or not abuse and/or neglect has occurred. A valid finding indicates that DSS determined that child abuse or neglect has occurred. Circumstances in which an allegation is determined to be invalid include cases in which there was no evidence of harm or threat of extreme harm, cases in which the perpetrator was not a parent or caregiver, and cases in which there was insufficient evidence to support the allegation.

The percentage of child abuse and neglect investigations with a valid finding varied substantially among parishes during FY 2007. In ten parishes, more than 40% of investigations had a valid finding. Among the five parishes with the lowest rates of investigations resulting in valid findings, fewer than 25% of investigations resulted in a valid finding. Additionally, there were no investigations in Tensas and West Carroll parishes in FY 2007. Consistent with national trends,



a majority of valid child abuse and neglect allegations in Louisiana in FY 2007 involved neglect (75%), while a smaller percentage of valid allegations involved physical abuse (17%) and sexual abuse (5%).

## DATA SOURCE

Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, by special request.

## DATA NOTE

Data reflects the number of investigations, not the number of child victims. A child may be the subject of more than one investigation over the course of a year, and a single investigation may involve more than one child.

## RATE CALCULATION

$100 * (\text{number of child protection investigations with a valid finding} \div \text{total number of child protection investigations})$

$100 * (\text{number of child protection investigations with an invalid finding} \div \text{total number of child protection investigations})$

$(100 * \text{number of child protection investigations with an other finding} \div \text{total number of child protection investigations})$

<sup>1</sup> Ching-Tung Wang, Ph.D. and John Holton, Ph.D., "Total Estimated Cost of Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States," Prevent Child Abuse America, 2007, retrieved from [www.preventchildabuse.org](http://www.preventchildabuse.org) on 5/1/2009.

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FY 2007

	No.	"VALID" FINDING		"INVALID" FINDING		"OTHER" FINDING	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>LOUISIANA</b>	<b>23,911</b>	<b>7,659</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>14,545</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1,704</b>	<b>7</b>
Acadia	377	157	42	212	56	8	2
Allen	234	84	36	129	55	21	9
Ascension	424	102	24	291	69	31	7
Assumption	<i>see Lafourche Parish</i>						
Avoyelles	153	75	49	71	46	7	5
Beauregard	213	75	35	136	64	<5	LNE
Bienville	<i>see Webster Parish</i>						
Bossier	1,029	372	36	612	59	45	4
Caddo	1,430	410	29	913	64	107	7
Calcasieu	1,949	814	42	986	51	149	8
<i>Cameron</i>							
Caldwell	<i>see Ouachita Parish</i>						
Cameron	<i>see Calcasieu Parish</i>						
Catahoula	147	48	33	96	65	<5	LNE
<i>La Salle</i>							
Claiborne	<i>see Webster Parish</i>						
Concordia	80	33	41	42	53	5	6
De Soto	243	93	38	149	61	<5	LNE
East Baton Rouge	1,737	363	21	1,111	64	263	15
East Carroll	97	32	33	65	67	0	0
East Feliciana	130	39	30	90	69	<5	LNE
<i>West Feliciana</i>							
Evangeline	194	75	39	113	58	6	3
Franklin	9	<5	LNE	<5	LNE	<5	LNE
Grant	285	92	32	182	64	11	4
Iberia	510	120	24	361	71	29	6
Iberville	234	89	38	124	53	21	9
<i>West Baton Rouge</i>							
Jackson	<i>see Webster Parish</i>						
Jefferson	1,475	367	25	929	63	179	12
Jefferson Davis	214	67	31	139	65	8	4
Lafayette	1,070	276	26	753	70	41	4
Lafourche	448	96	21	335	75	17	4
<i>Assumption</i>							
La Salle	<i>see Catahoula Parish</i>						
Lincoln	139	46	33	78	56	15	11
Livingston	997	484	49	458	46	55	6
Madison	56	28	50	28	50	0	0
Morehouse	279	84	30	178	64	17	6
Natchitoches	316	106	34	203	64	7	2
<i>Red River</i>							
Orleans	779	212	27	445	57	122	16
Ouachita	906	317	35	562	62	27	3
<i>Caldwell</i>							
Plaquemines	<5	0		0		<5	LNE
Pointe Coupee	99	36	36	57	58	6	6
Rapides	1,013	289	29	661	65	63	6
Red River	<i>see Natchitoches Parish</i>						
Richland	137	46	34	90	66	<5	LNE
Sabine	111	33	30	74	67	<5	LNE
St. Bernard	113	48	42	52	46	13	12
St. Charles	<i>see St. John the Baptist Parish</i>						
St. Helena	<i>see Tangipahoa Parish</i>						
St. James	<i>see St. John the Baptist Parish</i>						
St. John the Baptist	325	92	28	222	68	11	3
<i>St. Charles</i>							
<i>St. James</i>							
St. Landry	791	246	31	521	66	24	3
St. Martin	213	80	38	132	62	<5	LNE
St. Mary	307	106	35	182	59	19	6
St. Tammany	1,228	382	31	807	66	39	3
Tangipahoa	752	209	28	476	63	67	9
<i>St. Helena</i>							
Tensas	0	0		0		0	
Terrebonne	326	75	23	231	71	20	6
Union	78	41	53	29	37	8	10
Vermilion	402	156	39	219	54	27	7
Vernon	606	214	35	359	59	33	5
Washington	481	218	45	253	53	10	2
Webster	499	185	37	295	59	19	4
<i>Bienville</i>							
<i>Claiborne</i>							
<i>Jackson</i>							
West Baton Rouge	<i>see Iberville Parish</i>						
West Carroll	0	0		0		0	
West Feliciana	<i>see East Feliciana Parish</i>						
Winn	89	26	29	57	64	6	7

\* Parish totals do not equal the statewide total because a small number of cases are handled directly by the state office.  
LNE Percentages were not calculated for any number less than five.