

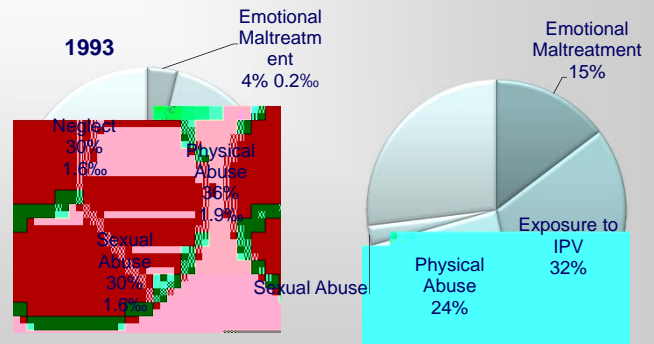
# Shifting definitions of emotional maltreatment: An analysis child welfare investigation laws and practices in Canada

Nico Trocmé, Barbara Fallon, Bruce MacLaurin, Claire Chamberland, Martin Chabot & Tonino Esposito

December 7, 2011



## Forms of substantiated maltreatment, OIS 93 / 03







### Emotional maltreatment & other maltreatment investigations CIS 08

	Any EM	Other† Maltreatment	Total Maltreatment Investigations
<b>All investigations</b>	26,329 (4.37)	148,082 (24.58)	174,411 (28.96)
<b>Substantiated investigations</b>	11,213 (1.86)	74,227 (12.33)	85,440 (14.19)
<b>Rate of substantiation</b>	43%*	50%	49%

†: Substantiated physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence cases that did not involve EM. Cases involving substantiated EM as a primary or second or third form of maltreatment were classified as "Any EM"  
 \*: p<.01 for Chi Square test comparing EM to Other Maltreatment in 2008

### Selected characteristics of substantiated EM compared to other Mal, CIS 08

	Any EM	Other† Maltreatment
<b>Emotional Harm</b>		
No harm	50%	75%
Harm, no treatment required	19%	10%
Harm, treatment required	31%	15%
<b>Age of child</b>		
0-3	16%	26%
4-7	22%	26%
8-11	26%	23%
12-15	36%	25%

### Selected characteristics of substantiated EM compared to other Mal, CIS 08

	Any EM	Other† Maltreatment
<b>Problems noted during the investigation</b>		
Any caregiver substance abuse or mental health problem	69%*	53%
Either caregiver victim of IPV	42%*	49%
Child aggression, suicide thoughts, self-harm, YCJA, multiple runs, substance abuse	39%*	24%
Multiple family moves	12%	10%

### Selected characteristics of substantiated EM compared to other Mal, CIS 08

	Any EM	Other† Maltreatment
<b>Child welfare interventions</b>		
Referral to other services	81%*	67%
On-going child welfare services	60%*	41%
Out of home placement	25%*	15%
Application to court	14%*	8%

### Comparison of forms of EM CIS-98 / 03 / 08

CIS-98 & CIS-03	CIS-08
<p><b>Emotional Abuse:</b> The child has suffered or was at substantial risk of suffering from mental, emotional, or developmental problems caused by overtly hostile, punitive treatment, or habitual or extreme verbal abuse (threatening, belittling, etc.).</p>	<p><b>Terrorizing or threat of violence:</b> A climate of fear, placing the child in unpredictable or chaotic circumstances, bullying or frightening a child, threats of violence against the child or child's loved ones or objects.</p> <p><b>Verbal abuse or belittling:</b> Non-physical forms of overtly hostile or rejecting treatment. Shaming or ridiculing the child, or belittling and degrading the child.</p> <p><b>Isolation/confinement:</b> Adult cuts the child off from normal social experiences, prevents friendships or makes the child believe that he or she is alone in the world. Includes locking a child in a room, or isolating the child from the normal household routines.</p> <p><b>Exploiting or corrupting behaviour:</b> The adult permits or encourages the child to engage in destructive, criminal, antisocial, or deviant behaviour.</p>

Centre for Research on Children and Families

### Comparison of forms of EM CIS-98 / 03 / 08

CIS-98 & CIS-03	CIS-08

Centre for Research on Children and Families

<b>Forms of substantiated emotional maltreatment, in Canada (excluding Québec); 1998, 2003 &amp; 2008</b>			
Estimated count (rate per 1,000 children)	1998	2003	2008
Terrorizing or threat of violence			1,850 (.40)
Verbal abuse or belittling			4,559 (.98)
Isolation or confinement			560 (.12)
Exploiting or corrupting behaviour			563 (.12)
Any emotional abuse (any of the above in 2008)	6,531 (1.35)	17,522 (3.68)	7,185 (1.54)
Any emotional neglect	2,968 (.61)	6,093 (1.28)	
Any non-organic failure to thrive	45 (.01)	124 (.03)	
Any inadequate nurturing or affection‡			3,063 (.66)
Any emotional maltreatment†	9,190 (1.90)	22,504 (4.73)	9,743 (2.09)

†: Up to three forms of EM can be substantiated, rows are not additive  
‡: See Table 1 for changes in EM typologies from 2003 to 2008

**Information on Children and Families**

<b>Selected characteristics of substantiated emotional maltreatment across cycles in Canada (Excluding Quebec) in 1998, 2003 &amp; 2008</b>			
Rate per 1,000 children	1998	2003	2008
<b>Documented emotional harm</b>			
No harm	0.82**	2.84**	1.00
Harm, no treatment required	0.33**	0.57*	0.41
Harm, treatment required	0.74**	1.28**	0.68
<b>Age of investigated child</b>			
0-3	1.50**	4.23**	1.48