



2010 Report On Child Protection in Vermont



Annual Report for Calendar Year 2010

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Message from the Commissioner

While Vermont is one of the safest and healthiest states in the nation for children, child maltreatment remains a serious problem. As you read this report, consider this: the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) receives a report of suspected child abuse and neglect, on average, once every 33 minutes.



Behind the numbers found in this report are children. Children who will grow to become adults. What will become of them? How will they deal with the trauma they experienced? What support do they need to succeed?

Research tells us that child abuse and neglect has a serious and long-lasting impact on children—affecting their development, ability to learn, and future. Children who have been abused and neglected are more likely than other children to experience suicide, depression, poverty, illness, incarceration, and unwanted pregnancy. According to Vermont data, 40% of teens who were in state custody during the last decade were incarcerated or on public assistance by the age of 23. The data is sobering. The cost to children and society is staggering.

DCF is committed to taking action to stop abuse, making sure children are safe, and providing services that strengthen families and address the impact of trauma on children. Our efforts, however, are only part of the solution.

Preventing child abuse and protecting children is a shared community responsibility. Each one of us — as individuals, parents, and community members — has a moral imperative to protect children. And we must all do whatever we can to help them succeed as adults.

This report, issued annually, helps focus attention on this important issue. As you read it, ask yourself these fundamental questions: How are the children? What can *I do* to make Vermont a better place for them to grow up?

Remember, it is easier to build a child than it is to repair an adult.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Yacovone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dave Yacovone, DCF Commissioner

Message from the Family Services Deputy Commissioner

In January of 2008, the Family Services Division of DCF embarked on an ambitious plan to change the way we work and improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. This transformation, which continues today, included:

1. Centralizing the intake of child abuse and neglect reports.

Intake involves receiving and screening reports of suspected child abuse or neglect to determine whether they meet legal and policy guidelines for acceptance and intervention. In September of 2008, Vermonters began calling one statewide number (1-800-649-5285) to report their concerns. Reports had previously been handled by our 12 district offices. Centralization has led to a more consistent response statewide and an increase in the number of reports accepted for intervention.

2. Implementing a “differential response” to accepted reports of child abuse or neglect.

Up until a few years, the only available response to an accepted report of child abuse or neglect was a child abuse investigation. In 2008, however, Vermont enacted legislation to implement *differential response* and allow a “child abuse assessment” as an alternative response to reports of child maltreatment. Implemented in July of 2009, differential response allows us to respond differently to reports — based on factors such as the type and severity of the alleged maltreatment, the number of previous reports, and the family’s willingness to engage in services to reduce risk. This new approach allows us to help struggling families without requiring a formal determination of whether abuse or neglect occurred. This means more children and families get the support they need to stay together, safely.

3. Increasing the use of less adversarial, earlier interventions with families.

We are using family engagement strategies more often and sooner to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children (e.g., Family Safety Planning, Family Group Conferencing, and Family Time Coaching). This has resulted in fewer children coming into state custody and a greater number of ongoing child protection cases.

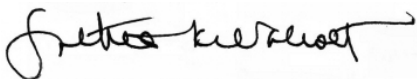
4. Increasing the number of social workers.

We have almost 10% more social workers than two years ago. These workers focus on helping families increase their capacity to safely and appropriately parent their children.

5. Placing children with relatives whenever possible.

When children come into state custody, we look for relatives and family friends who can safely care for them while they can’t be at home. Living with extended family may be less traumatic for children, and it keeps them connected — to their parents and, often, to their communities.

While the way we do the work is changing, our fundamental goal remains the same: for children to live in safe, supportive, and healthy environments where they can grow and thrive.



Cindy Walcott, Family Services Deputy Commissioner

Introduction

The Family Services Division of the Vermont Department for Children and Families (DCF) is responsible for responding to reports of child abuse and neglect, providing ongoing services to families at risk, and working with families and community partners to make sure children are safe. The ultimate goal is for children to live in safe, supportive, and healthy environments where they can grow and thrive.

This report provides child protection data for calendar year 2010.

Reports to the Child Protection Line

The toll-free Child Protection Line (1-800-649-5285) is available statewide—24 hours a day, seven days a week. In 2010, we received 15,379 calls about suspected child abuse and neglect, an increase of 6.1% over 2009. Since 2007—one year before the statewide Child Protection Line was implemented, calls about suspected child abuse and neglect have risen by 19.8%.

Reports to the Child Protection Line, 2004 to 2010		
Year	Total Reports ⁱ	Annual Change
2004	12,873	-
2005	12,746	-1.0%
2006	12,635	-1.0%
2007	12,829	1.5%
2008	13,434	4.7%
2009	14,488	7.9%
2010	15,379	6.1%

ⁱ One report may involve more than one child. Similarly, we may receive multiple reports about the same child or situation; these may be counted separately.

Child/Family Factors Identified by Reporters in 2010

The following table identifies factors in both children and families that were identified by reporters when they contacted the Child Protection Line in 2010. While some factors may not have been validated during ensuing interventions, this list helps us better understand the difficult challenges families face.

Knowing about these factors can help supervisors and social workers plan effective intervention strategies. For example, if a language barrier is identified, a worker may arrange for an interpreter. If domestic violence is identified, a worker may consult with our domestic violence coordinator to plan interviews in a way that does not increase the risk to an adult victim.

Family Factors	Number	Percent
Cognitive/Physical Disabilities	519	3.4%
Domestic Violence	1,763	11.5%
Financial Stress	852	5.5%
Mental Health Issues	1,349	8.8%
Substance Abuse	4,198	27.3%

Child Factors	Number	Percent
Challenging Behavior	2,273	14.8%
Cognitive/Physical Disabilities	1,189	7.7%
Mental Health Issues	1,582	10.3%
Speech/Language Barriers/Hearing Problems	635	4.1%
Substance Abuse	457	3.0%

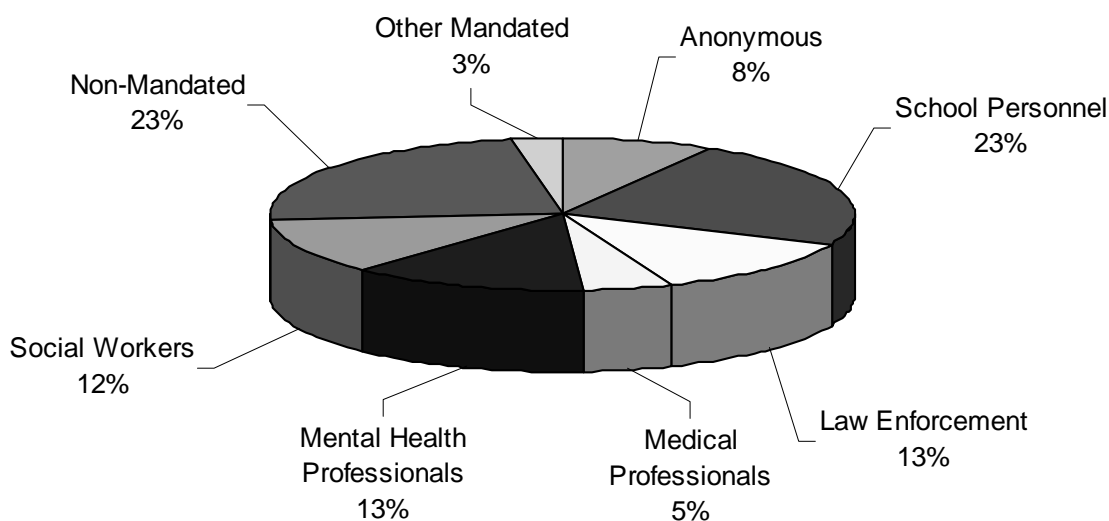
Mandated Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect

While anyone can voluntarily report suspected child abuse and neglect, certain people—called mandated reporters— are required by Vermont law to do so (Title 33, Chapter 49). What's more, they must report their suspicions to Family Services *within 24 hours*.

Mandated Reporters in Vermont

- Chiropractors, dentists, emergency medical personnel, licensed practical nurses, medical examiners, mental health professionals, osteopaths, pharmacists, physicians, physicians' assistants, psychologists, registered nurses, surgeons, and any other health care providers;
- Hospital administrators, interns, and resident physicians in any hospital in the state;
- School guidance counselors, librarians, principals, superintendents, teachers, and any other individuals regularly employed by school districts, or contracted and paid by school districts, to provide student services for five or more hours per week during the school year;
- Childcare workers, police officers, probation officers, social workers, and clergy members;
- Residential and non-residential camp administrators, counselors, and owners; and
- Employees, contractors, and grantees of the Agency of Human Services who have contact with clients.

Reports Alleging Child Abuse and Neglect, by Reporter Type (2010)



How Reports Are Made

In Vermont, both mandated and non-mandated reporters alike call 1-800-649-5285 to report suspected child abuse and neglect. This 24-hour Child Protection Line makes it easy for people to share their concerns about children with trained social workers.

What happens when someone makes a report?

A social worker:

- Questions the reporter about the nature of his or her concerns;
- Requests any known details about the child (e.g., child's name, date of birth and home address, names of the child's parents or caretakers);
- Records the information provided; and
- Asks the reporter to complete a written report.

Can reporters be sued?

Vermont law provides reporters with immunity from civil or criminal liability as long as their reports are made in good faith.

Are reporters' names kept confidential?

We will not divulge the identity of a reporter unless:

- He or she gives us permission to do so;
- A report leads to a court or human services board proceeding;
- A court finds probable cause to believe the report was not made in good faith and orders DCF to divulge the reporter's identity; or
- The person substantiated for abuse requests a review of the decision, and we determine that the reporter's identity can be provided without compromising his or her safety.

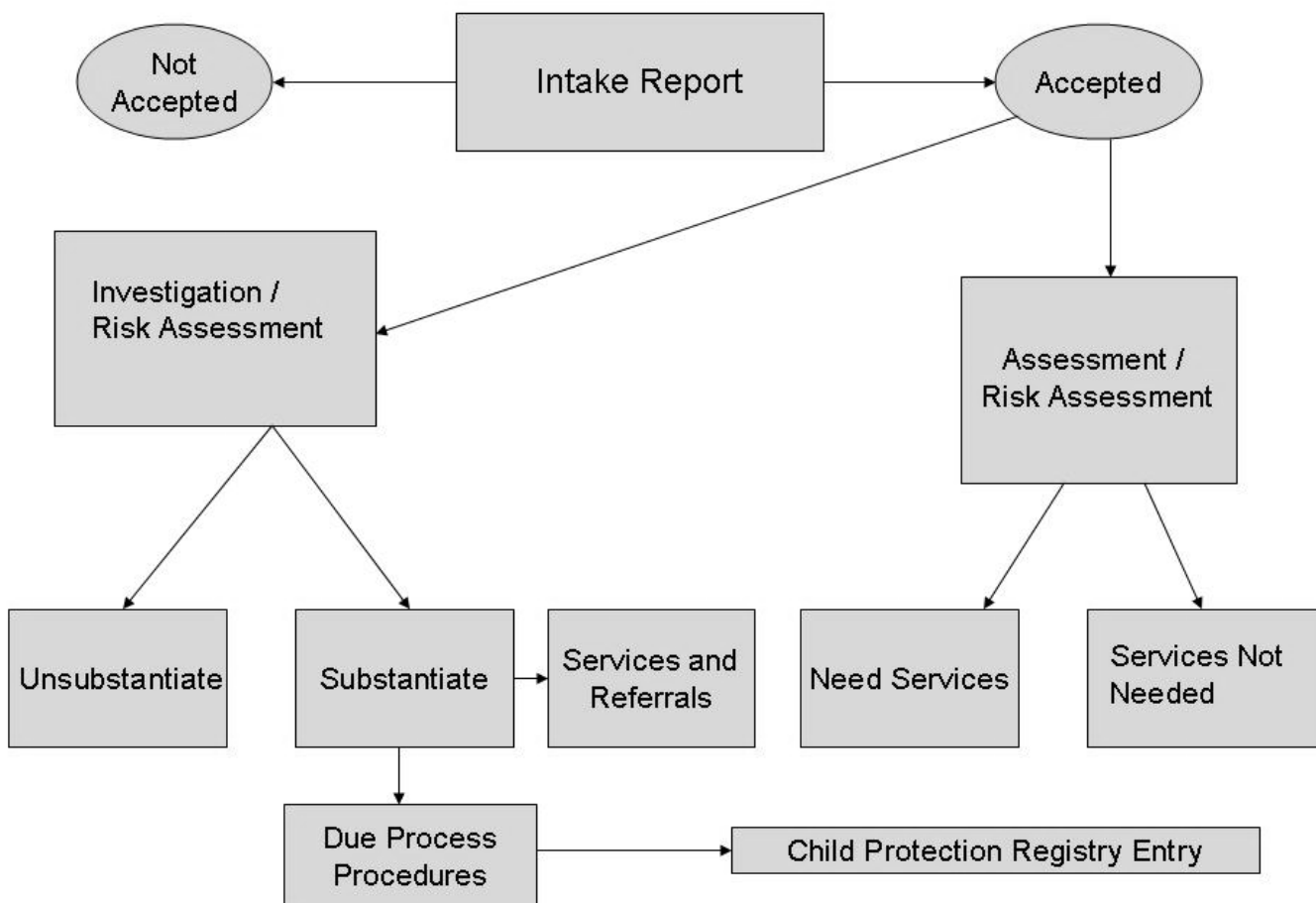
While reporters may choose to remain anonymous, we encourage them to disclose their identities and provide their contact information (e.g., name, phone number, and email address). This allows us to contact them again if we need more information.

If a child is in immediate danger, dial 911 or call your local police. Follow up by making a report to DCF.

What DCF Does With Reports

The diagram below provides a visual reference for the three sequential steps that may be followed for each report.

1. We determine whether a report may be accepted for intervention. ↓
2. If the report is accepted, ➔ we determine the appropriate intervention. ↓
3. At the conclusion of the intervention, we determine the outcome.



These steps are described on the following three pages. Please refer to the diagram above for visual reference of the process.

1. A supervisor evaluates the report to determine whether it may be accepted for intervention — in accordance with Vermont law and departmental policy.

To make this determination, the supervisor *must* consider:

A. The age of the alleged victim.

Vermont law allows DCF to intervene when an alleged victim is under age 18. We may also intervene when an alleged victim is over 18 if the alleged abuse happened before the person turned 18 and the alleged perpetrator has access to children.

B. The alleged abuser's relationship to the child.

If a report alleges sexual abuse or risk of sexual abuse, Vermont law allows DCF to intervene no matter the relationship between abuser and child (e.g., parent, sibling, friend, teacher, or neighbor). For all other types of abuse, the alleged abuser must be “a person responsible for the child's welfare” (see definitions on page 25).

C. The nature of the allegation.

Vermont law allows DCF to intervene if the report alleges that:

- A child was abused or neglected as defined in Title 33, Chapter 49 of state law (see definitions on page 25); or
- A child is without proper parental care or subsistence, education, medical, or other care necessary for his or her well-being (Title 33, Chapter 51).



2. If the report is accepted, a supervisor determines the appropriate intervention.

A. Allegation of Child Abuse and Neglect.

Vermont law authorizes two types of intervention in response to this type of report: i) a child abuse assessment and ii) a child abuse investigation.

i. Child Abuse Assessment

The aim of an assessment is to engage and support families so they can keep their children safe. It involves assessing the safety of/risk to the child, the underlying factors interfering with appropriate care of the child, the family's strengths, and the family's need for ongoing supports and services. We will conduct an assessment if:

- An accepted report is not required by law or policy to be investigated;
- There is no immediate threat to the child's safety and well-being; and
- The family may benefit from services.

ii. Child Abuse Investigation

The aim of an investigation is to determine the safety of/risk to the child, the validity of the allegation, and whether continued DCF involvement is necessary. While we may conduct an investigation for any report, we will conduct one if a report alleges:

- A child was sexually abused.
- The acts or omissions of *a person responsible for a child's welfare* resulted in a child's death.
- A person responsible for a child's welfare:
 - Abandoned a child;
 - Maliciously punished a child;
 - Physically abused a child under the age of three;
 - Physically abused a child of any age who is non-verbal or non-ambulatory; or
 - Allowed a child to be exposed to the production of methamphetamine.

A supervisor may approve changing a child abuse assessment to a child abuse investigation if it appears necessary to ensure the child's safety. In 2010, 45 interventions that began as child abuse assessments were later changed to the investigation track.

B. Allegation of Child Without Proper Parental Care.

Vermont law authorizes one type of intervention for reports alleging children are without proper parental care: family assessments.

i. Family Assessment

The immediate focus of a family assessment is to keep the child safe while we work with the parents to address the issues that are interfering with safe and appropriate parenting. Reports accepted for family assessments could include, for example:

- A pattern of concerns, when evaluated together, call a child's safety into question;
- An allegation that a parent is neglecting a child's education;
- A newborn with a positive toxicology screen for illegal substances; and
- An allegation that there is a serious threat to the health of a child due to a mother's substance use during pregnancy.



3. At the conclusion of an intervention, a supervisor determines the outcome.

i. **Assessment -**

Both child abuse and family assessments result in a recommendation about the need for ongoing services, based on an assessment of the risk of future maltreatment. If the assessed risk is high or very high, we offer the family ongoing services (e.g., substance abuse treatment, parenting classes).

ii. **Investigation -**

An investigation results in both:

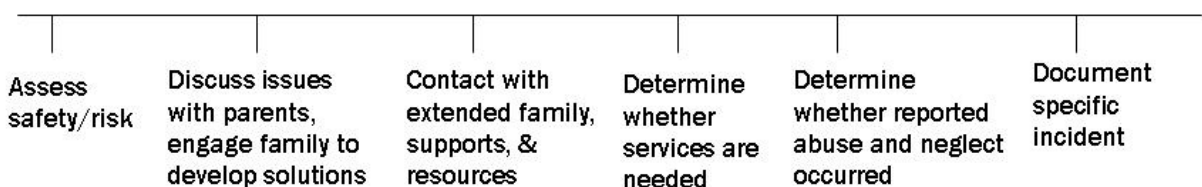
i. A formal determination of whether the reported abuse or neglect occurred

The report is *substantiated* if the evidence would lead a reasonable person to believe the child was abused or neglected. Information about substantiated persons is entered into Vermont's Child Protection Registry (see page 24 for more details).

ii. A determination of the need for ongoing DCF services, based on an assessment of the risk of future maltreatment

If the assessed risk is high or very high, Family Services opens a case and develops a case plan to address the identified risks.

Assessments & Investigations



Statewide Trends, 2005 to 2010

Traditionally, the only available response to an accepted report of child abuse or neglect was a child abuse investigation. In 2008, however, Vermont enacted legislation to implement differential response, which means that beginning on July 1, 2009, a child abuse assessment was available as an alternative response to a report of child maltreatment.

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Reports To Vermont's Child Protection Line	12,746	12,635	12,829	13,434	14,488	15,379
Reports Accepted For:						
1. Child Abuse Investigation	2,371	2,528	2,633	2,896	2,831	2,465
2. Child Abuse Assessment ¹	-	-	-	-	638	1,058
3. Family Assessment	176	244	305	630	1,021	1,078
Total Reports Accepted For Intervention	2,547	2,772	2,938	3,526	4,490	4,601



¹ This intervention was not available prior to July 1, 2009.

Reports Accepted in 2009 & 2010 — by Intervention¹ & District²

District	Child Abuse Investigations		Child Abuse Assessments		Family Assessments		Total Reports Accepted for Intervention	
	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Barre	315	307	72	124	95	108	482	539
Bennington	189	160	27	65	56	70	272	295
Brattleboro	124	108	41	61	91	85	256	254
Burlington	526	407	106	201	182	133	814	741
Hartford	183	186	48	64	53	86	284	336
Middlebury	139	115	32	62	45	57	216	234
Morrisville	182	180	56	46	59	55	297	281
Newport	141	151	45	47	59	45	245	243
Rutland	293	236	66	103	135	135	494	474
Springfield	217	193	47	100	96	146	360	439
St. Albans	321	234	64	119	84	108	469	461
St. Johnsbury	151	118	30	57	62	44	243	219
Out of State	50	70	4	9	4	6	58	85
Statewide	2,831	2,465	638	1,058	1,021	1,078	4,490	4,601

¹ See pages 12-13 for descriptions of the different types of intervention.

² Means the district where the child's caregiver lives.

Outcomes of Investigations in 2009 & 2010 – by District¹

In 2010, we conducted 2,510 investigations: 2,465 that began as investigations and another 45 that began as assessments but were later changed to the investigation track. Of the 2,510 investigations conducted, 626 were substantiated² and 430 were opened for services³ based on an assessed risk of future maltreatment.

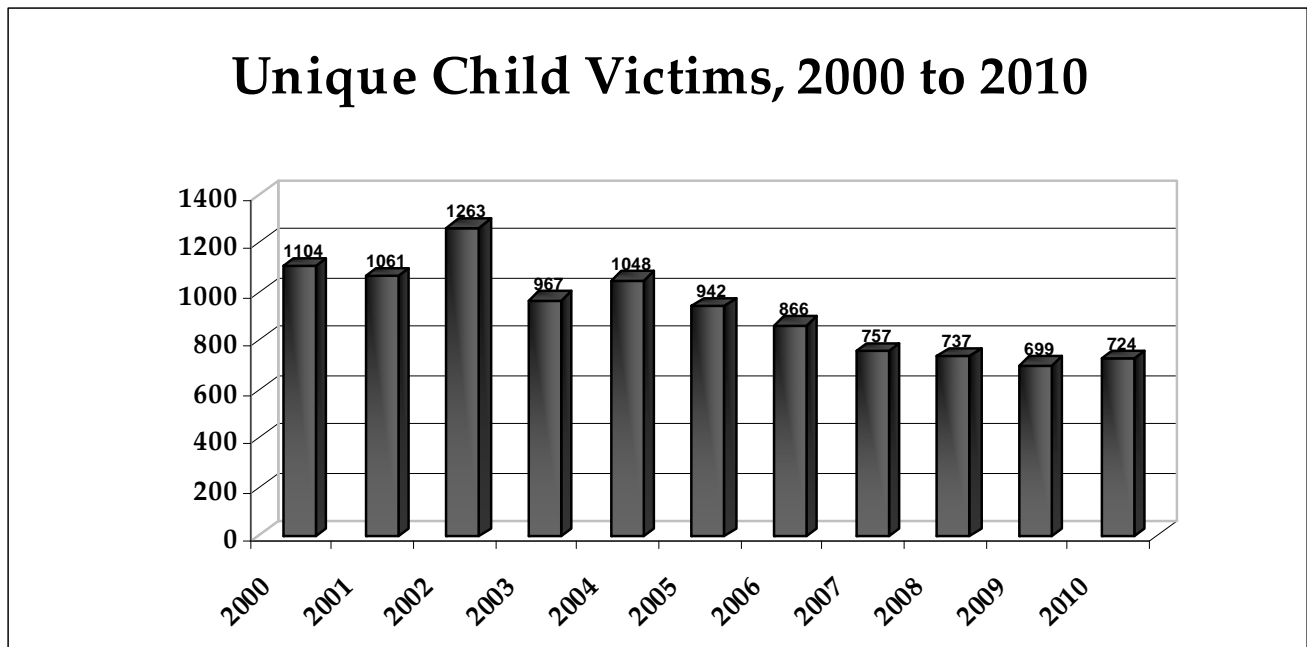
	Child Abuse Investigations		Substantiated		Case Open for Services	
District	2009	2010	2009	2010	2009	2010
Barre	315	310	83	93	49	84
Bennington	189	160	42	33	19	29
Brattleboro	124	112	30	35	16	12
Burlington	526	411	104	98	84	91
Hartford	183	186	37	35	21	21
Middlebury	139	120	39	48	16	15
Morrisville	182	184	51	45	30	28
Newport	141	153	30	31	16	18
Rutland	293	236	28	37	34	38
Springfield	217	208	62	68	30	32
St. Albans	321	239	74	62	51	37
St. Johnsbury	151	121	40	18	24	16
Out of State	50	70	11	23	7	9
Statewide	2,831	2,510	631	626	397	430

¹ Means the district where the child's caregiver lives.

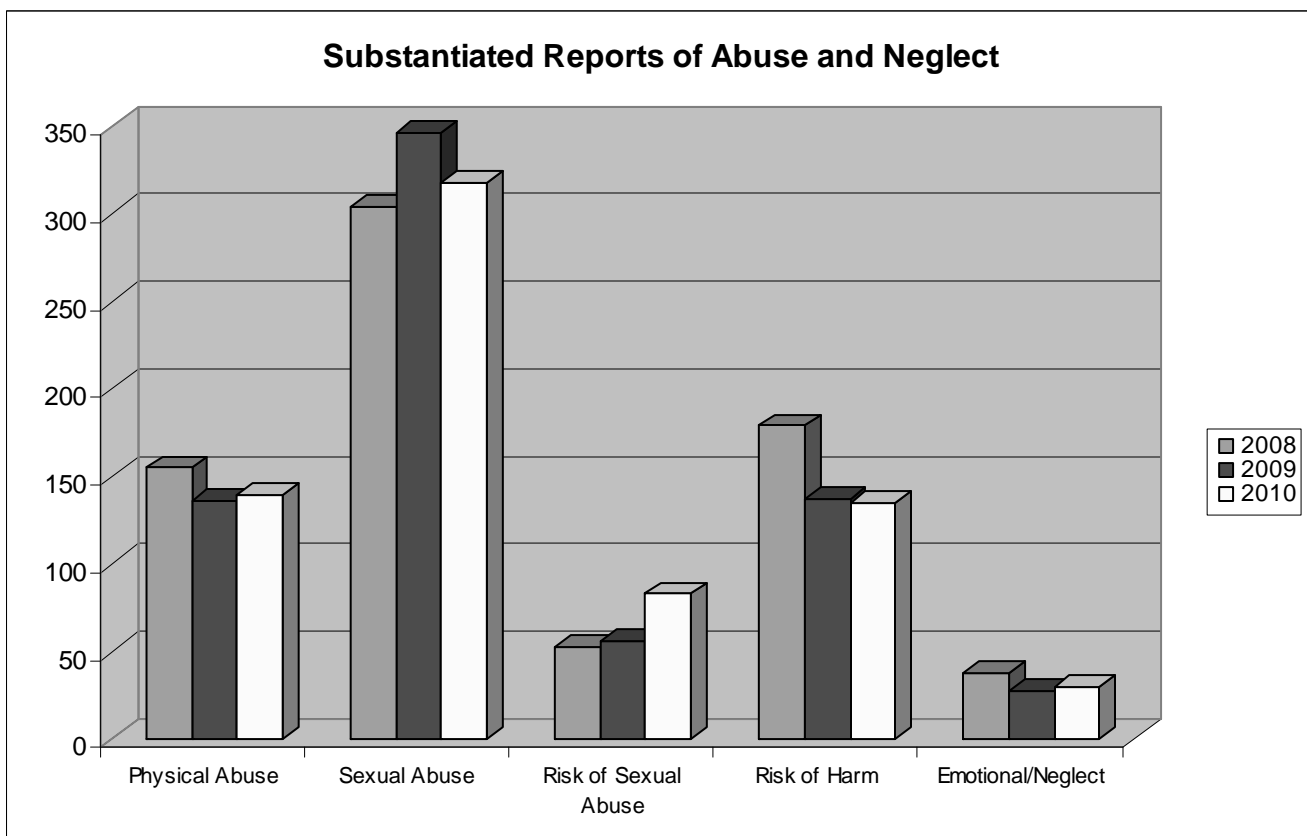
² Substantiated means the evidence would lead a reasonable person to believe the child was abused or neglected.

³ If the assessed risk is high or very high, a case is opened and a case plan developed to address the identified risks.

Note: the numbers in the graph below are an unduplicated count of victims of substantiated child abuse and neglect.



Note: since a report can be substantiated for more than one type of abuse, the numbers below reflect a total greater than the number of substantiated reports.



Reports Substantiated in 2010 — by Type of Abuse

Since a report can be substantiated for more than one type of abuse, the numbers below reflect a total greater than 626 — the number of reports substantiated in 2010.

District ¹	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse	Risk of Sexual Abuse	Risk of Harm	Emotional/ Neglect
Barre	19	44	19	13	6
Bennington	5	22	2	5	1
Brattleboro	2	23	4	8	6
Burlington	24	42	13	36	1
Hartford	5	26	1	8	1
Middlebury	12	16	7	13	0
Morrisville	10	30	4	3	0
Newport	13	13	2	3	2
Rutland	7	23	3	2	1
Springfield	22	18	19	22	7
St. Albans	13	34	3	16	3
St. Johnsbury	3	11	4	3	2
Out of State	5	16	2	3	0
Total Statewide	140 (19.8%)	318 (45%)	83 (11.8%)	135 (19.2%)	30 (4.2%)

¹ Means the district where the child's caregiver lives.

Reports Substantiated in 2010 — by Age & Gender of Victim

The data below represents the age and gender of the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect. Please note that a child is represented more than once if he or she suffered more than one type of abuse or was involved in more than one substantiated report during the year.

Age	Percent	Physical	Sexual	Risk of Sexual Abuse	Risk of Harm	Neglect/Emotional
< 1	5.7%	9	2	7	22	7
1	4.5%	8	2	4	16	7
2	5.0%	3	6	6	23	3
3	7.2%	8	9	16	24	3
4	3.9%	6	13	5	6	2
5	5.3%	6	21	7	8	2
6	5.8%	9	14	9	15	2
7	4.4%	6	16	12	2	1
8	6.6%	8	19	10	13	5
9	6.6%	14	22	8	11	0
10	5.6%	10	18	7	10	1
11	4.5%	10	16	4	4	3
12	4.2%	7	19	5	3	1
13	6.2%	9	29	3	5	5
14	7.9%	8	43	7	5	2
15	6.8%	5	41	6	4	0
16	5.7%	8	25	6	7	1
17	4.1%	12	17	3	1	1
TOTAL	100%	146	332	125	179	46
Gender						
Male	41.7%	84	77	55	108	21
Female	58.3%	62	255	70	71	25
TOTAL	100%	146	332	125	179	46

Reports Substantiated in 2010 — by Age & Gender of Abuser

The data below represents the age and gender of substantiated abusers. An abuser may be represented more than once if more than one type of abuse was substantiated.

Age	Physical	Sexual	Risk of Sexual Abuse	Risk of Harm	Neglect/Emotional
<20	7	119	5	2	0
20 - 29	47	76	27	67	16
30 - 39	44	53	39	51	10
40 - 49	30	38	22	20	12
50 - 59	11	18	8	3	0
60+	2	16	2	1	0
Unknown	1	5	0	0	0
Gender					
Male	89	305	59	59	13
Female	52	20	44	85	25
Unspecified	1	0	0	0	0

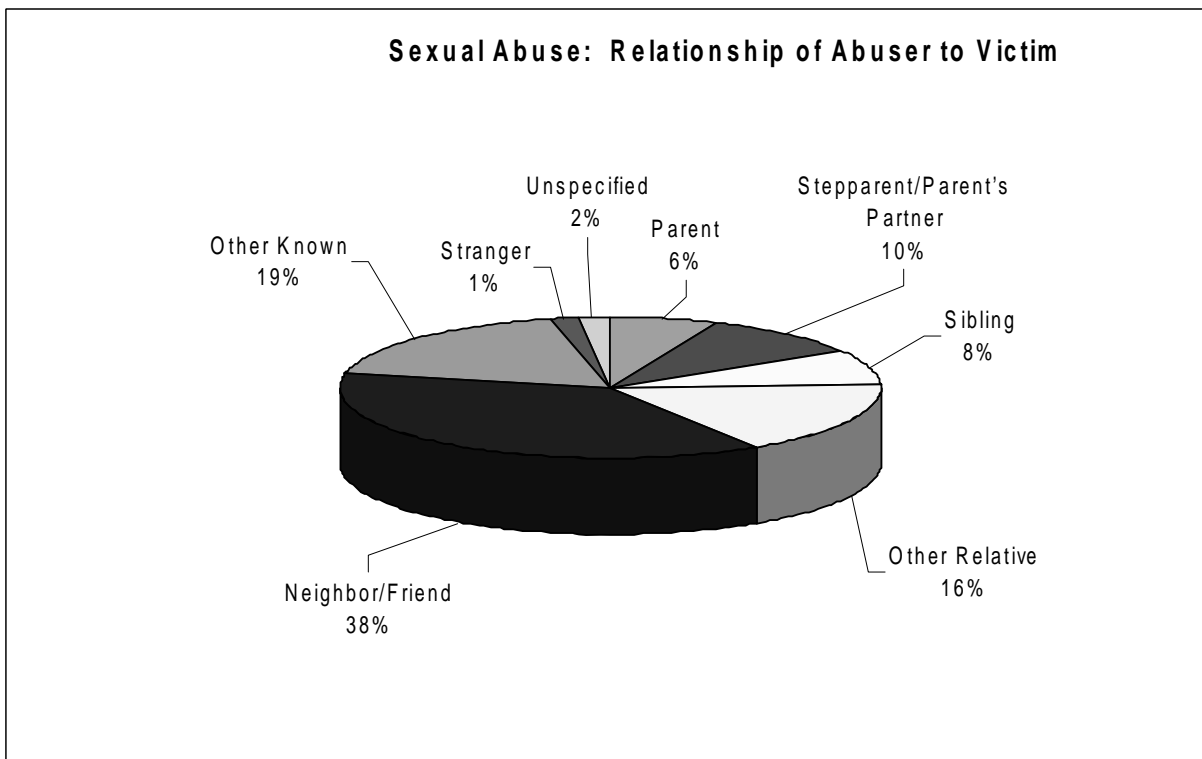
Reports Substantiated in 2010 — by Relationship of Abuser to Child

Relationship	Physical	Sexual	Risk of Sexual Abuse	Risk of Harm	Neglect/Emotional
Parent	92	22	86	158	53
Stepparent/Parent's Partner	45	33	26	21	1
Foster Parent	4	2	0	3	1
Sibling	1	28	1	0	0
Other Relative	7	56	21	4	1
Neighbor/Friend	0	126	13	1	0
Other Known	4	61	10	7	1
Stranger	0	5	0	0	0
Unspecified	8	7	4	6	8

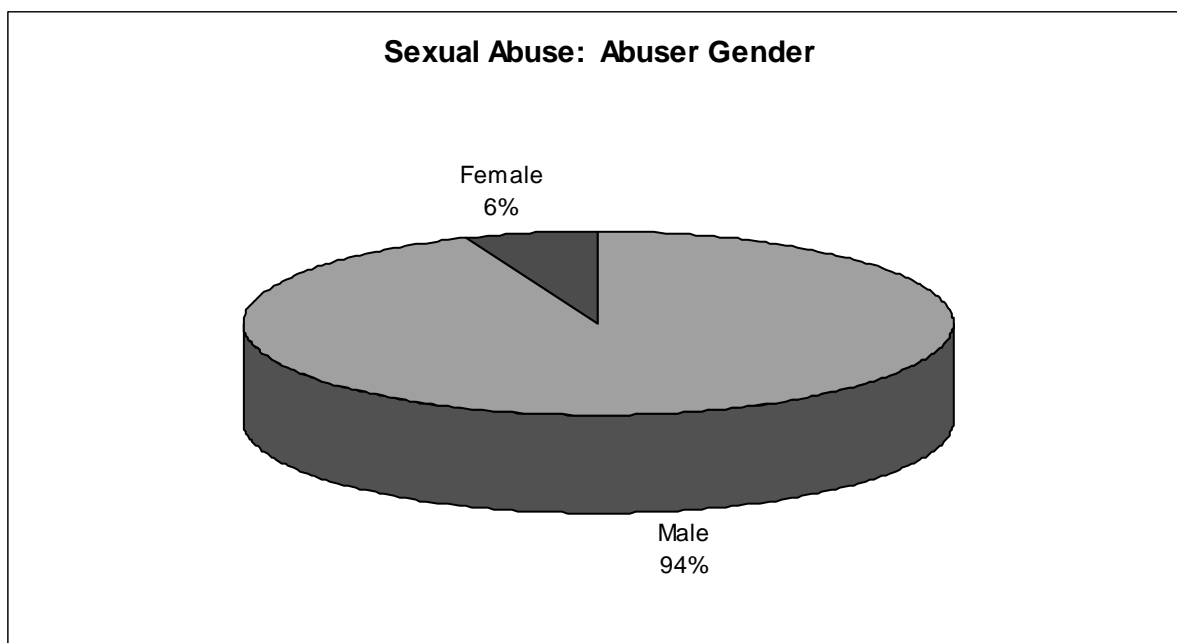
Reports Substantiated for Child Sexual Abuse in 2010

The department investigates all valid allegations of sexual abuse and risk of sexual abuse — regardless of the relationship between the alleged abuser and child. Here's what the 2010 data tells us about child sexual abuse in Vermont:

- At least 97% of child sexual abuse was committed by people the children know.

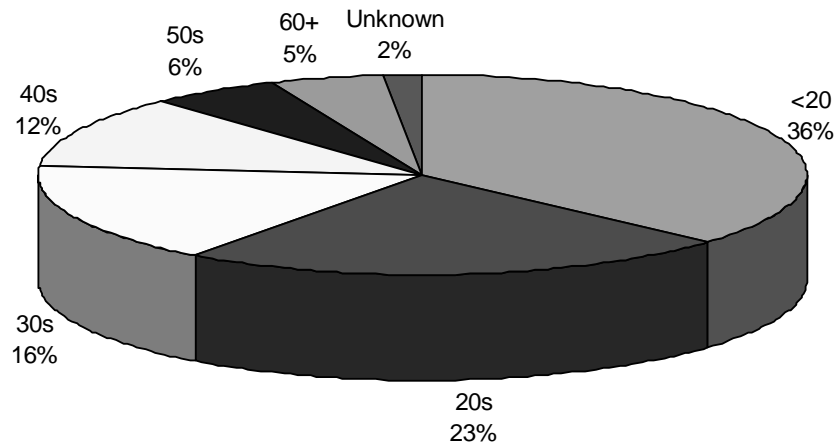


- 94% of the known abusers were male.

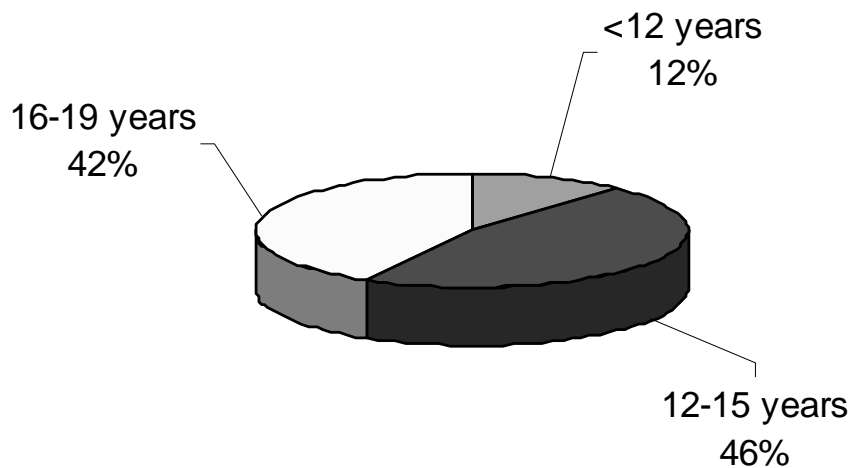


- At least 36% of the abusers were under the age of 20. Of these, 88% were between the ages of 12 and 19.

Sexual Abuse: Abuser by Age Group



Sexual Abuse: Perpetrators by Age Group Under Age 20



Vermont's Child Protection Registry

The Child Protection Registry is a database of substantiated reports of child abuse and neglect, dating back to January 1, 1992.

As of June 13, 2011, there were 14,638 individuals listed in the Registry.

What does a registry record include?

- The name of the individual substantiated for child abuse or neglect and at least one other personal identifier (e.g., date of birth, social security number);
- The date and nature of the finding; and
- For individuals placed on the Registry on or after July 1, 2009, it also includes a designated child protection level¹, related to the risk of future harm to children.

As of June 13, 2011, 898 individuals in the database had a designated child protection level: 738 were designated as Level 1² and 160 were designated as Level 2³.

How is the Child Protection Registry used?

To help protect children, Vermont law authorizes DCF staff to search the Registry whenever:

1. Someone applies to become a foster parent, adoptive parent, child care provider, or employee of a residential facility for children or youth in Vermont; and
2. Someone authorized to receive registry information requests a search. This includes:
 - Employers whose staff provide care, custody, treatment, transportation, or supervision of children, youth, or vulnerable adults;
 - Schools (*Act One—AN ACT RELATING TO IMPROVING VERMONT'S SEXUAL ABUSE RESPONSE SYSTEM—signed into law in March 2009, makes it mandatory for schools to request checks of both the child protection and adult abuse registries for certain employees/contractors*);
 - Owners/operators of facilities regulated by DCF;
 - Adult protective services and child protection agencies; and
 - Others as provided for in statute.

We conducted 46,918 registry searches in 2009 and 46,947 in 2010.

¹ Designated child protection levels related to the risk of future harm to children are assigned to individuals placed on the Registry on or after July 1, 2009. Two levels are assigned: Level 1 or Level 2.

² Level 1 is assigned if the substantiation involves substantial child endangerment, there are court adjudications for related conduct, or there is a high risk of future harm.

³ Level 2 is assigned to all other substantiations.

Child Abuse and Neglect Definitions

Vermont law (33.V.S.A. 49, § 4912) defines an “abused or neglected child” as:

A child whose physical health, psychological growth and development or welfare is harmed, or is at substantial risk of harm, by the acts or omissions of his or her parent or other person responsible for the child’s welfare. It also means a child who is sexually abused or at substantial risk of sexual abuse by any person.

Harm can occur by abandonment, emotional maltreatment, neglect, physical injury, or sexual abuse.

Risk of harm means a significant danger that a child will suffer serious harm other than by accidental means, which would be likely to cause physical injury, neglect, emotional maltreatment, or sexual abuse.

Child: an individual under the age of 18.

Person Responsible for a Child's Welfare: includes the child's parent, guardian, foster parent, and any other adult residing in the child’s home who serves in a parental role; an employee of a public or private residential home, institution or agency; or other person responsible for the child's welfare while in a residential, educational or child care setting, including any staff person.

Emotional Maltreatment: a pattern of malicious behavior, which results in impaired psychological growth and development.

Neglect: failure to supply a child with adequate food, clothing, shelter or health care.

Physical Injury: death, permanent or temporary disfigurement, or impairment of any bodily organ or function other than by accidental means.

Sexual Abuse: any act or acts by any person involving sexual molestation or exploitation of a child including but not limited to incest, prostitution, rape, sodomy, or any lewd and lascivious conduct involving a child. Sexual abuse also includes the aiding, abetting, counseling, hiring, or procuring of a child to perform or participate in any photograph, motion picture, exhibition, show, representation, or other presentation which, in whole or in part, depicts a sexual conduct, sexual excitement or sadomasochistic abuse involving a child.

Child Protection Resources Available From Family Services

To get copies of these resources, call the Family Services Division at (802) 241-2131. You can also download them for free on our website: www.dcf.vt.gov/publications.

- **Child Protection Registry**

This brochure explains what the Child Protection Registry is and how it's used. It includes sections for employers and for persons substantiated for child abuse/neglect.

- **Child Safety Interventions: A Parent's Guide To Investigations and Assessments**

This brochure explains the Family Services Division, why Family Services becomes involved with a family, what our involvement means, and the supports and services that may be available.

- **How to Report Suspected Child Abuse & Neglect**

This brochure explains the process for reporting child abuse and neglect in Vermont (e.g., who must report it, how to make a report, and what happens to reports received).

- **Parent's Guide to Family-Centered Meetings**

This brochure explains two types of family-centered meetings available to families who are involved with Family Services: Family Safety Planning and Family Group Conferencing.

- **Safe Havens for Babies in Vermont**

This brochure answers the most frequently-asked questions about Vermont's Baby Safe Haven Law and how it works.

- **Step Up: Protect Children from Sexual Abuse**

This 36-page guide helps parents and others learn how to prevent, identify, and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.

Child Protection Website

Go to protectkids.vt.gov for links to pages about:

- Vermont's Baby Safe Haven Law;
- Ways to keep children safe from sexual abuse;
- Shaken Baby Syndrome and how to prevent it; and
- Vermont's Child Protection Registry.

protectkidkids.vt.gov

STEP UP: HELP END CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Child sexual abuse is most often committed by people known to the children, including family members (e.g., parents, stepparents, siblings, and grandparents) and people in a family's circle of trust (e.g., friends, neighbors, teachers, or coaches).

There are steps you can take to help end child sexual abuse!

Go to dcf.vermont.gov/stepup to:

- ✓ Learn the facts about sexual abuse;
- ✓ Get tips for talking about it—with your children and with other adults;
- ✓ Learn how to proactively plan for safety;
- ✓ Find out what to do and who to call if you notice inappropriate behavior or suspect abuse; and
- ✓ Get connected to community, regional, and statewide resources.

**Learn what you can do to prevent, recognize,
and react responsibly to child sexual abuse.**

HELP PREVENT CHILD ABUSE

If you suspect a child is being abused or neglected,
call Vermont's Child Protection Line to
report it — 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

1-800-649-5285

Preventing child abuse helps
ensure the safety, health, and
optimal development of our children.

<http://dcf.vermont.gov>