

Changes and Trends in Orange County Child Abuse Registry Reports

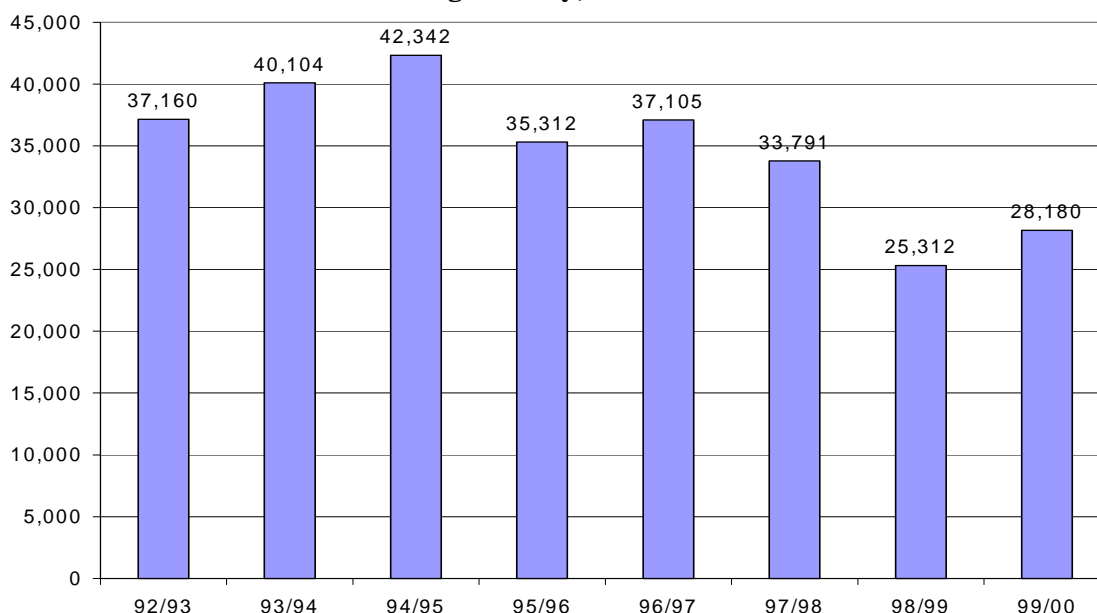
INTRODUCTION

The Orange County Child Abuse Registry is one source of information upon which to judge the current condition of children in Orange County. The numbers generated by the Registry should not, however, be interpreted literally. A number of factors, other than the actual incidence of child abuse, affects the number of calls recorded by the registry. Still, absent any other good source, the registry information does serve to inform us about the relative frequency of such activity.

The information in this issue of *Profiles* contains the number of phone calls received by the OC Child Abuse Registry. These recorded calls are alleged cases of abuse and will be referred to from this point on as the number of child abuse cases or reports. To clarify, this information does *not* refer to the number of abuse cases investigated or substantiated, only the number of abuse cases alleged and recorded by the Registry.

The number of child abuse reports recorded by the Child Abuse Registry has been falling since 1994-95 (Chart 1). After rising to over 40,000 calls in 1993-94, and again in 1994-95 (42,342), the number of cases of child abuse reported to the Child Abuse Registry fell to 35,312 in 1995-96, a 16.6% decline. The figure rose slightly in 1996-97 before declining again to 33,791 calls in 1997-98. During the most recent two years, the number of child abuse reports have been below the 30,000 mark. In 1998-99, a total of 25,312 child abuse calls were recorded by the Registry. In 1999-2000,

Chart 1
Child Abuse Registry: Number of Cases Reported: 1992-1993 to 1999-2000
Orange County, California

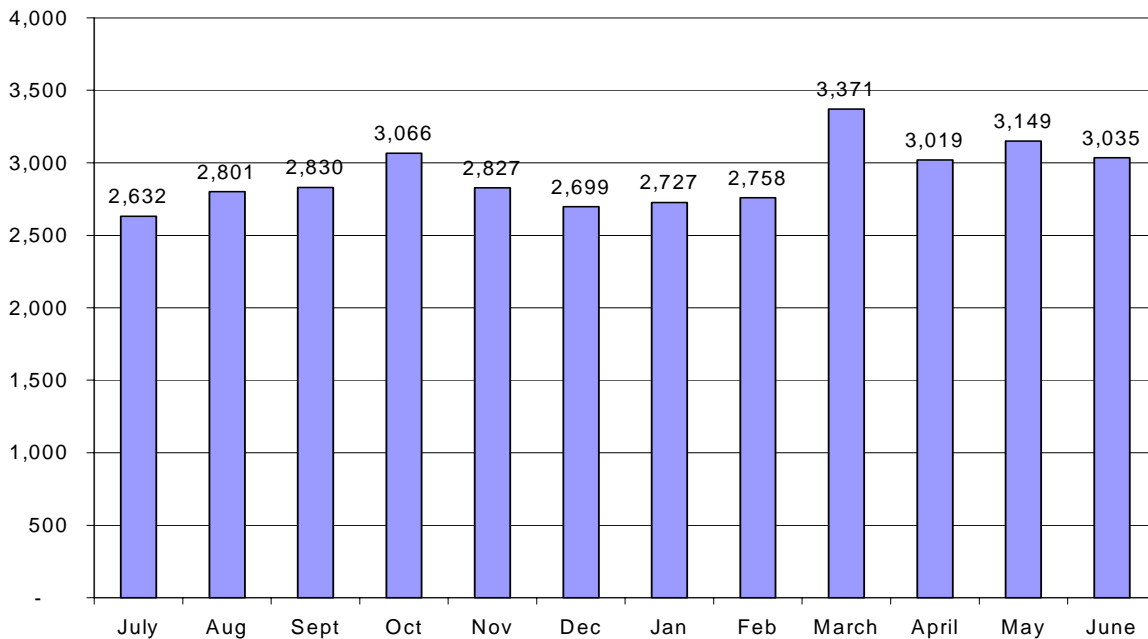


SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency, Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

that figure rose slightly to 28,180 reported cases. Based on the first four months of 2000-2001, the 2000-2001 total may be slightly higher than the 28,180 cases reported in the previous year.

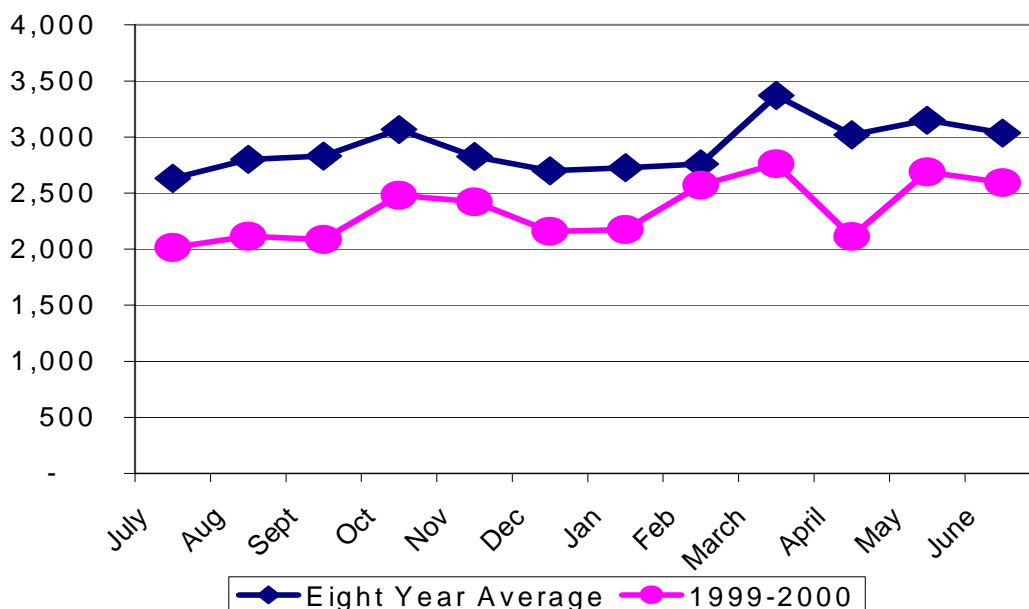
Looking at the monthly records over the past eight years, most calls are made in March, May and October of each year. The lowest periods for report child abuse cases are in July, December, January and February. The averages over the eight years for the months are reported in Chart 2 and displayed in Figure 1.

Chart 2
Average Number of Cases Reported By Month: 1992 - 2000



SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency, Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

Figure 1
Monthly Average Compared with 1999-2000 Data



SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency, Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

During 1999, there were a total of 25,804 child abuse reports filed with the Registry. This figure increased to 27,700 reports during the year 2000. This change of 1,896 cases represents an increase of 7.3% over the previous year (Table 1).

Table 1
Gender of Child for Child Abuse Reports:
Orange County, CA, 1999 - 2000

Gender	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Male	12,753	49.4	13,618	49.2
Female	13,008	50.4	14,032	50.7
Unknown	43	0.2	50	0.2
Total	25,804	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency
Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

The gender distribution in reported cases has changed very little over the past two years: i.e., a roughly equal number of males (49.4%) and females (50.4%).

There has also been little change in the age distributions of the victims from year to year. In 5.5% of all cases reported, the victim is less than one year old. Seventeen percent of the victims are in the one to three year old age range. The largest age groups are the four to seven year olds (26.4% of all reported cases) and the eight to twelve year olds (28.4% of all reported cases). Finally, teen children (between 13 and 18 years old) constitute 21.6% of all reported cases. The data contained in Table

Table 2
Age of Child: Child Abuse Reports
Orange County 1999 - 2000

Age	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Under 1 year	1,369	5.3	1,612	5.8
1 - 3	4,335	16.8	4,765	17.2
4 - 7	7,071	27.4	7,314	26.4
8 - 12	7,309	28.3	7,919	28.6
13 - 18	5,590	21.7	5,982	21.6
Unknown	130	0.5	108	0.4
Total	25,804	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency
Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

2 show an increase in the younger aged population of victims: the less than one year age group increased from 5.3% of all victims to 5.8%, while the one to three year category of children increased from 16.8% to 17.2% of all reported abuse cases.

Table 3 contains the ethnicity of the victims reported to the Child Abuse Registry. In 1999, about 42% were identified as Caucasian, 46.4% were reported as Hispanic, 4% were identified as black, 1.4% were identified as Asian and 2.8% were identified as Indochinese. By the year 2000, the percent of victims that were identified as Caucasian fell to 39.0%, while the percent identified as Hispanic rose to 49.2%. Black, Asian and Indochinese, which were already small proportions of all victims, changed only slightly or not at all between 1999 and the year 2000. It should be noted that the percent of victims for whom ethnicity was unknown, declined from 3.7% in 1999 to 3.1% in the year 2000, which may account for some of the changes evident in Table 3 in the numbers of Caucasian and Hispanic cases reported.

Table 3
Ethnicity of Child Abuse Reports
Orange County 1999 - 2000

Ethnic Background	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Caucasian	10,785	41.8	10,816	39.0
Hispanic	11,961	46.4	13,627	49.2
Black	1,029	4.0	1,166	4.2
Asian	358	1.4	400	1.4
Indochinese	720	2.8	843	3.0
Other/Unknown	951	3.7	848	3.1
Total	25,804	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency
Child Abuse Registry: 1999, 2000

A recent report from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Programs (Juvenile Justice Bulletin, January 2001), indicates:

“Substantiated cases of child sexual abuse decreased from a national estimated peak of 149,800 cases in 1992 to 103,600 cases in 1998, a decline of 31 percent” (Page 2).

“Although cases of other types of child maltreatment have also declined in recent years, the decrease in child sexual abuse cases has been more marked. Substantiated cases of physical abuse declined 16 percent from a 1995 peak, compared with a 31 percent decline in child sexual abuse cases” (Page 2).

This same report indicated that California had experienced a 28% decline in Child Sexual Abuse from its peak year to the 1998 data.

Using the Registry data as a gauge, there has been a small decline in the number of sexual abuse cases reported in Orange County over the past two years. In 1999, 4,520 cases of sexual abuse were reported; in 2000, this figure was 4,513. This calculates to only about a .2% decline. However, the number of sexual abuse cases reported in 1999 represented 17.5% of all cases reported that year. The number of sexual abuses cases alleged in 2000 represented only 16.3% of all types reported. The change in the percentages from 1999 to 2000 constitutes a 6.9% decline in the number of sexual abuse cases reported.

Table 4
Types of Child Abuse Allegations
Orange County 1999 - 2000

Types of Alleged Abuse	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
Sexual	4,520	17.5	4,513	16.3
Physical	8,254	32.0	8,923	32.2
Severe Neglect	758	2.9	664	2.4
General Neglect	7,811	30.3	8,740	31.6
Emotional	3,478	13.5	3,879	14.0
Exploitation	29	0.1	32	0.1
Incapacitated	954	3.7	949	3.4
Total	25,804	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency
Child Abuse Registry 1999, 2000

Incidents of physical abuse reported increased from 8,254 cases to 8,923 cases, an 8.1% increase in numbers, but virtually no change in percentages (32.0% in 1999 versus 32.2% in 2000). The number of incidents of general neglect reported increased from 7,811 to 8,740

(an 11.9% increase). General neglect also increased in its percentage of all types of abused alleged (from 30.3% to 31.6%, or about a 4.3% increase). Among the other smaller categories of reported types of abuse, “emotional neglect” increased slightly, “severe neglect” declined from 2.9% of all abuse allegations in 1999 to 2.4% and “incapacitated” also declined from 3.7% of all alleged abuses to 3.4% of all alleged abuses.

Table 5
Regional Distribution of Reported Cases

Residence	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
North	7,066	27.4	7,375	26.6
South	3,728	14.4	3,949	14.3
West	4,662	18.1	4,996	18.0
Central	6,875	26.6	7,572	27.3
Coastal	2,743	10.6	2,867	10.4
Out-of-County	617	2.4	723	2.6
Unknown	112	0.4	218	0.8
Grand Total	25,803	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency
Child Abuse Registry 1999, 2000

The final characteristic easily accessible in the Registry data is the place of residence. Table 5 reports the regional distribution of the reported child abuse cases for 1999 and 2000. Over one quarter of the reported cases are found in the northern part of the county (about 27%) and another one quarter of all reported cases can be found in the eastern portion of the county (also about 27%). About 18% of all reported cases live in the western part of the county, about 14% live in the southern part of the county with some 10.5% living in the coastal areas. About 2.5% of all cases reported to the child abuse registry are for children whose residence is outside the County of Orange. Changes in the geographical distribution from 1999 to 2000 were very small and in no particular direction. Table 6 provides a more detailed presentation of the geographical distribution of reported child abuse cases in Orange County. Here the data are presented by city of residence. The data have also been mapped for a visual presentation of the same information.

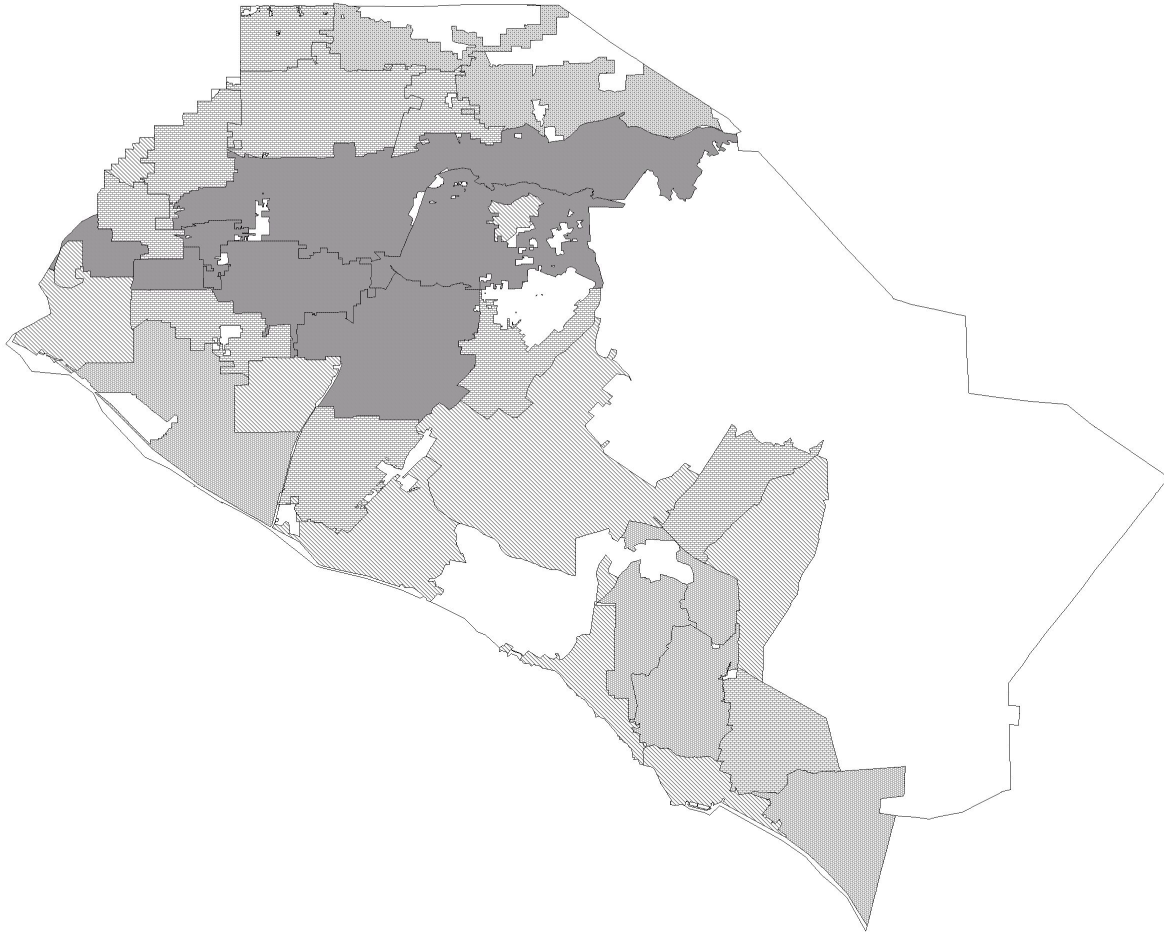
Table 6
Distribution of Child Abuse Reports by City and Community
Orange County 1999 - 2000

Residence	1999		2000		Residence	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent		Total	Percent	Total	Percent
North					West				
Anaheim	4,011	15.5	4,484	16.2	Buena Park	904	3.5	881	3.2
Brea	355	1.4	256	0.9	Cypress	432	1.7	400	1.4
Fullerton	1,216	4.7	1,190	4.3	Garden Grove	1,603	6.2	2,106	7.6
La Habra	846	3.3	649	2.3	La Palma	73	0.3	75	0.3
Placentia	307	1.2	444	1.6	Los Alamitos	136	0.5	144	0.5
Yorba Linda	331	1.3	352	1.3	Rossmoor	13	0.1	9	0.0
Total	7,066	27.4	7,375	26.6	Stanton	439	1.7	453	1.6
South					Westminster	1,062	4.1	928	3.4
Aliso Viejo	206	0.8	215	0.8	Total	4,662	18.1	4,996	18.0
Capistrano Beach	69	0.3	48	0.2	Central				
Dana Point	215	0.8	166	0.6	El Modena	0	0.0	1	0.0
Irvine	645	2.5	679	2.5	Orange	1,578	6.1	1,818	6.6
Laguna Beach	107	0.4	91	0.3	Santa Ana	4,629	17.9	5,007	18.1
Laguna Hills	214	0.8	196	0.7	Tustin	659	2.6	727	2.6
Lake Forest	442	1.7	539	1.9	Villa Park	9	0.0	19	0.1
South Laguna	8	0.0	9	0.0	Total	6,875	26.6	7,572	27.3
Laguna Niguel	374	1.4	378	1.4	Coastal				
Mission Viejo	433	1.7	430	1.6	Balboa	15	0.1	4	0.0
Modjeska	14	0.1	8	0.0	Corona del Mar	43	0.2	42	0.2
Rancho Santa					Costa Mesa	997	3.9	1,056	3.8
Margarita	294	1.1	339	1.2	Fountain Valley	252	1.0	238	0.9
San Clemente	359	1.4	386	1.4	Huntington Beach	1,080	4.2	1,059	3.8
San Juan					Midway City	67	0.3	67	0.2
Capistrano	267	1.0	353	1.3	Newport Beach	222	0.9	309	1.1
Silverado	10	0.0	9	0.0	Seal Beach	66	0.3	92	0.3
Trabuco	71	0.3	103	0.4	Sunset Beach	1	0.0	0	0.0
Total	3,728	14.4	3,949	14.3	Total	2,743	10.6	2,867	10.4

	1999		2000	
	Total	Percent	Total	Percent
All Regions	25,074	97.2	26,759	96.6
Out-of-County	617	2.4	723	2.6
Unknown	112	0.4	218	0.8
Grand Total	25,803	100.0	27,700	100.0

SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency, Child Abuse Registry 1999, 2000

Child Abuse Registry Reports by Jurisdictional Boundaries



Ratio of cases alleged per 1000 population



SOURCE: Orange County Social Services Agency Child Abuse Registry 1999, 2000

PROFILES IS PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR DEMOGRAPHIC RESEARCH, CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON.

PROFILES IS A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION THAT FOCUSES ON DEMOGRAPHIC ISSUES IN ORANGE COUNTY.

THIS ISSUE WAS AUTHORED BY DR. DENNIS BERG.

WE WELCOME COMMENTS & SUGGESTIONS AND CAN BE REACHED AT (714)278-3009. [HTTP://WWW.FULLERTON.EDU/CDR](http://WWW.FULLERTON.EDU/CDR)

CDR
Center for Demographic Research