

# Household Risk Factors

in Investigations Involving

## First Nations

## Children

Living On Reserve and Off Reserve and

## Non-Indigenous Children

in Canada in 2019



### Introduction

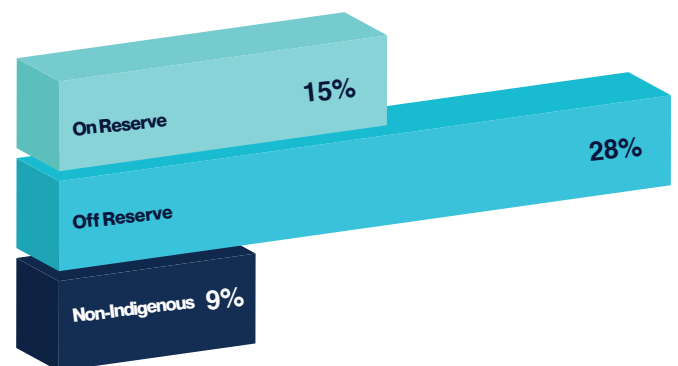
The data presented in this information sheet were collected as part of the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2019 (FN/CIS-2019), a data collection effort to produce estimates of the incidence of reported and investigated child maltreatment in Canada. This information sheet describes noted household risk factors in child maltreatment-related investigations involving First Nations and non-Indigenous children in Canada in 2019. These household risk factors were analyzed by comparing the proportions of investigations that noted these risk factors involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children. The information presented must be understood within the context of the ongoing legacy of colonialism, discrimination, and poverty that First Nations communities in Canada continue to face. Further information on the colonial practices that drive these disparities is available in Section 1 of the *FN/CIS-2019 Major Findings Report*.<sup>1</sup>

### Household Ran Out of Money for Basic Necessities

Investigating workers were asked to indicate whether the investigated household had run out of money in the past six months for food, utilities, telephone/cell phone, transportation, or medical care.

Figure 1 describes the proportion of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children in which the investigating worker indicated that the household had run out of money for at least one of these basic necessities. In 28 percent of investigations involving First Nations children living off reserve, 15 percent of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, and nine percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children the household was noted to have run out of money for basic necessities in the past six months.

*Figure 1. Proportion of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children in which the household was noted to have run out of money for basic necessities in Canada in 2019 (excluding Quebec)*



<sup>1</sup> Fallon, B., Lefebvre, R., Trocmé, N., Richard, K., Hélie, S., Montgomery, H. M., Bennett, M., Joh-Carnella, N., Saint-Girons, M., Filippelli, J., MacLaurin, B., Black, T., Esposito, T., King, B., Collin-Vézina, D., Dallaire, R., Gray, R., Levi, J., Orr, M., ... Soop, S. (2021). *Denouncing the continued overrepresentation of First Nations children in Canadian child welfare: Findings from the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2019*. Ontario: Assembly of First Nations.

**Unsafe Housing Conditions**

The presence of unsafe housing conditions was noted based on the investigating workers' assessment at the conclusion of the child welfare investigation. Unsafe housing conditions were noted in six percent of investigations involving First Nations children living off reserve, five percent of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, and four percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children (see Figure 2).

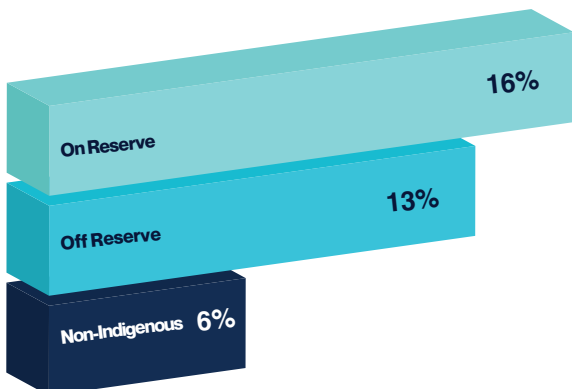
Figure 2. Proportion of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children in which unsafe housing conditions were noted in Canada in 2019 (excluding Quebec)



**Overcrowded Housing**

As with unsafe housing conditions, participating workers indicated the presence of overcrowding in the home based on their clinical judgement at the end of the initial investigation. Sixteen percent of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, 13 percent of investigations involving First Nations children living off reserve, and six percent of investigations involving non-Indigenous children involved homes that were noted to be overcrowded by the investigating worker (see Figure 3).

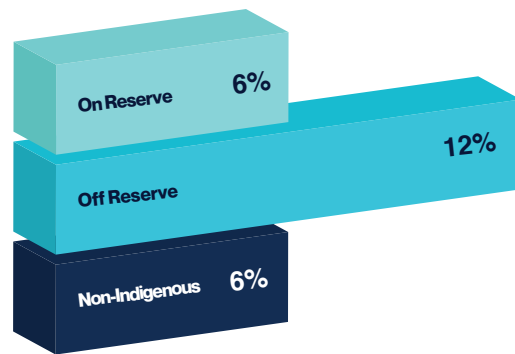
Figure 3. Proportion of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children in which overcrowded housing was noted in Canada in 2019 (excluding Quebec)



**Two or More Moves in the Past Year**

The FN/CIS-2019 asked workers to indicate the number of moves the family had made in the past year. As shown in Figure 4, workers noted that two or more family moves were made in 12 percent of investigations involving First Nations children living off reserve and six percent of investigations involving both First Nations children living on reserve and non-Indigenous children.

Figure 4. Proportion of investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve, First Nations children living off reserve, and non-Indigenous children in which the investigated family moved two or more times in the past year (excluding Quebec)



**Summary**

Investigations involving First Nations children were more likely to involve families facing multiple structural challenges, such as living in unsafe housing conditions, poverty, and overcrowded housing, which limit the resources available to provide for their children. Achieving substantive equity means intervening at a structural level to address these disparities.

## Methods

The data presented reflect the clinical judgement of the investigating child welfare worker and are point-in-time estimates of the front-end of the child welfare service continuum. The FN/CIS-2019 sample (for all regions excluding Quebec) was drawn in three stages. First, a sample of 47 mainstream and 16 First Nations agencies was selected from a sampling frame that included all child welfare agencies in Canadian jurisdictions outside of Quebec. A three-month sampling period (October 1 – December 31, 2019) was then used to select cases within these sites. Investigating workers completed a data collection instrument for each sampled case. The final stage involved identifying child-level investigations meeting the study criteria. Complex survey weights were used to derive an estimate of child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Canada in 2019 from these sampled cases. In Quebec, data were extracted from information systems from all agencies able to participate (this included data from six First Nations agencies). It should be noted that information on household risk factors was not collected in Quebec. Please see the *FN/CIS-2019 Major Findings Report* for a full description of study methodology.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Fallon, B., Lefebvre, R., Trocmé, N., Richard, K., Hélie, S., Montgomery, H. M., Bennett, M., Joh-Carnella, N., Saint-Girons, M., Filippelli, J., MacLaurin, B., Black, T., Esposito, T., King, B., Collin-Vézina, D., Dallaire, R., Gray, R., Levi, J., Orr, M., ... Soop, S. (2021). *Denouncing the continued overrepresentation of First Nations children in Canadian child welfare: Findings from the First Nations/Canadian Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect-2019*. Ontario: Assembly of First Nations.

**Suggested citation:** Carnella, N., Fallon, B., & Saint-Girons, M. (2021). *Household risk factors in investigations involving First Nations children living on reserve and off reserve and non-Indigenous children in Canada in 2019*. CWRP Information Sheet #227E. Canadian Child Welfare Research Portal.