Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Understanding the Over-representation of Latin American children in Ontario child welfare services

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Executive Summary

This report describes maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 that involved Latin American children and compares these investigations to those involving white children. The analyses presented data from the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018 (OIS-2018), the sixth provincial study of maltreatment-related investigations conducted in the province. The report was prepared by the OIS-2018 Research Team at the request of Rights for Children and Youth Partnership (RCYP).

Disproportionality and Disparity

Disproportionate means not in proportion. Disproportionality indices compare the proportion of children who experienced a child welfare outcome (e.g., investigation or placement in care) that are in a specific ethno-racial group to the proportion of children in a broader population (e.g., the general child population) in that ethno-racial group.

Disproportionality indices do not compare ethno-racial groups to one another. Figure 1 describes the disproportional representation of Latin American children involved in a child welfare investigation compared to the proportion of Latin American children in the total child population in Ontario. Latin American children represent 1.3 percent of the child population but represent 2.8 percent of the child welfare service population.

Disparity means lack of similarity. Disparity indices compare the proportion of the population of children from one ethno-racial group who experienced a specific child welfare outcome to the proportion of the child population of another ethno-racial group (usually white) that experienced the same outcome. Figure 2 describes the disparate representation of Latin American children compared to white children in the Ontario child welfare system in 2018. Overall, compared to white children, Latin American children were 2.3 times as likely to be investigated (see Table 1). These investigations were then 3.0 times as likely to involve substantiated maltreatment (see Table 7), 2.7 times as likely to be transferred to ongoing services (see Table 3), and 7.4 times as likely to involve a placement in out-of-home care (see Table 5).

Ontario Child Population 2018 (0-15 Years)

1.3% Latin American

60.3 % White
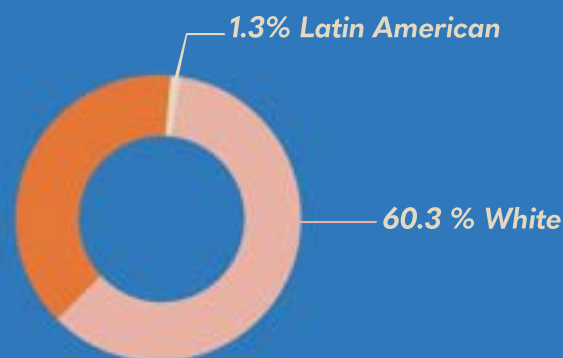
Child Welfare Investigations in Ontario in 2018 (0-15 Years)

2.8% Latin American

55.4 % White
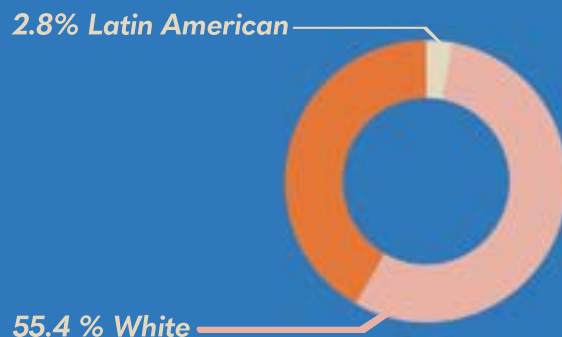
Resource: Statistics Canada, Special tabulation, based on 2016 Census of Population. Reproduced and distributed on an "as is" basis with the permission of Statistics Canada.

Compared to white children, Latin American children in Ontario investigations were:

Figure 2
Disparate representation of Latin American children in the Ontario child welfare system in 2018

2.3 times more likely to be investigated

3.0 times more likely to be substantiated

2.7 times more likely to be transferred to ongoing services

7.4 time more likely to be placed in out-of home care

When we examine children and families who are investigated (child welfare service population) and analyze the child welfare decisions made after investigations are screened in, investigations involving Latin American children were 22 percent more likely to be substantiated, 19 percent less likely to be transferred to ongoing services, and 231 percent more likely to involve a placement in out-of-home care. See Figure 3.

Figure 3
Disparate investigation outcomes in child welfare investigations involving Latin American and white children in Ontario in 2018

22% more likely to be substantiated

19% more likely to be transferred to ongoing services

231% more likely to be placed during the investigation
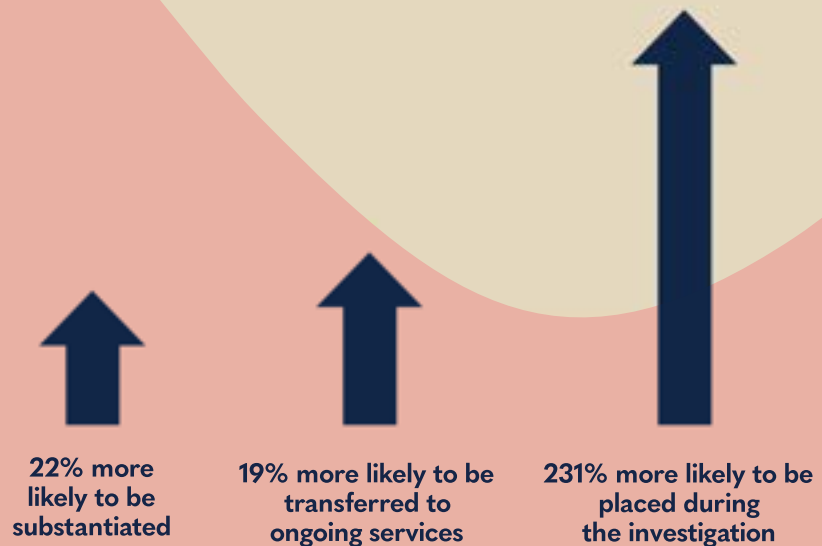
Investigation Characteristics

Referral Source

As shown in Figure 4, compared to investigations involving white children, investigations involving Latin American children were more likely to be referred by police. Investigations involving Latin American children were less likely to be referred by family or friends.

Latin American Children
White Children
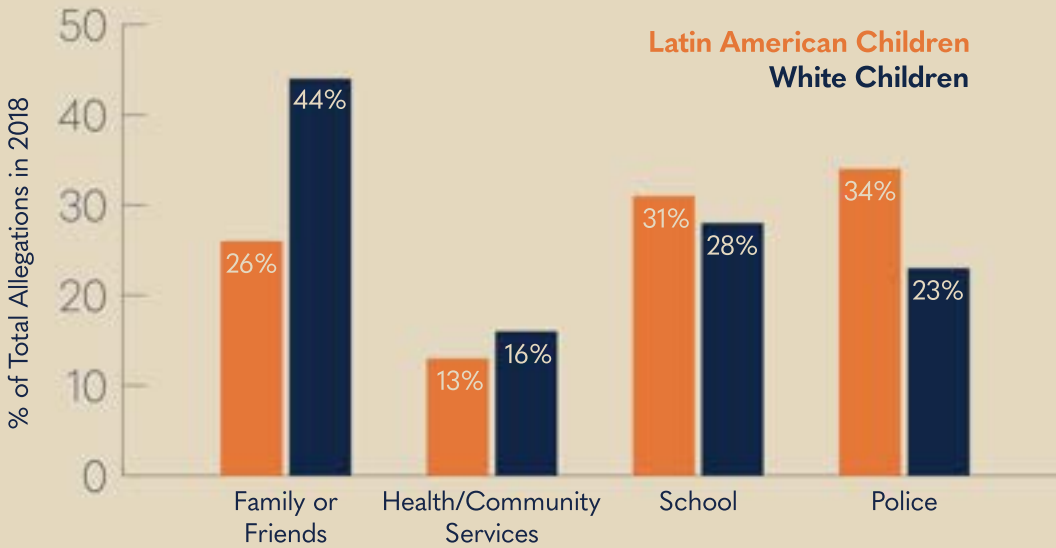
Figure 4
Referral source in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American and white children in Ontario in 2018

Nature of Investigation

Compared to investigations involving white children, investigations involving Latin American children were more likely to be focused on a concern of physical abuse or exposure to intimate partner violence (see Figure 5 and Table 6).

Latin American Children
White Children
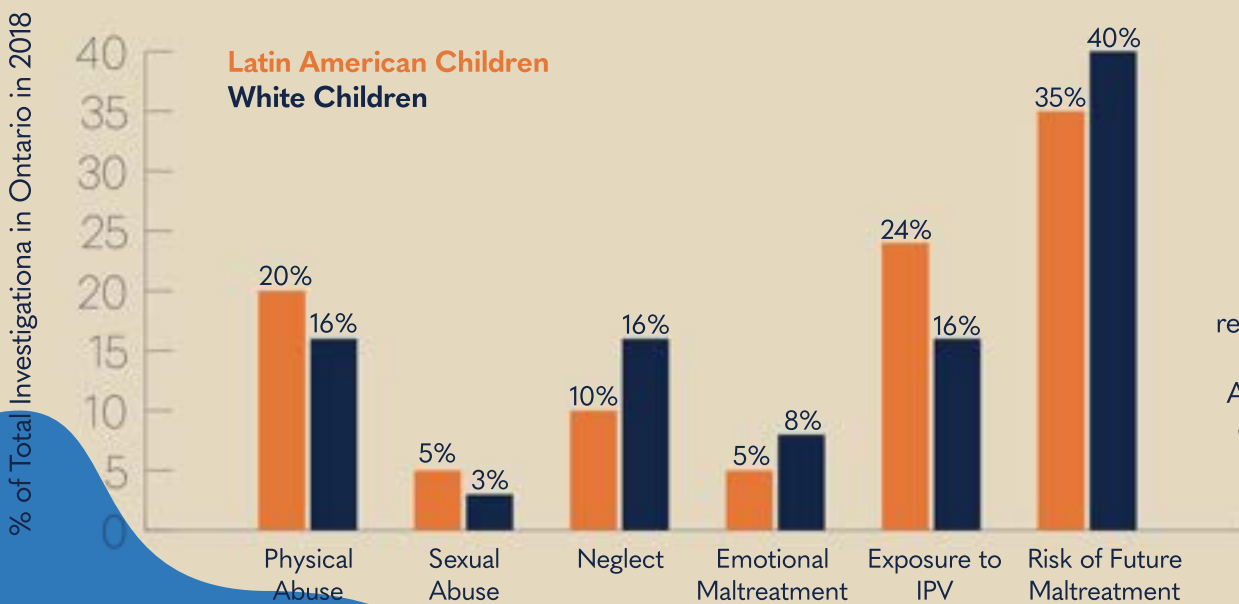
Figure 5
Nature of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American and white children in Ontario in 2018

The data and disparities presented in this report need to be situated within the context of the role of race and white supremacy in our society and importantly as structural drivers of child welfare involvement. Section II of this report provides theory and research to frame the subsequent results presented.

Child, Caregiver, and Household Characteristics

Investigating workers were less likely to note at least one child functioning concern and at least one primary caregiver risk factor in investigations involving Latin American children compared to white children (see Figure 6, Table 9 and Table 10).

Figure 6
Child functioning concerns and primary caregiver risk factors in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American and white children in Ontario in 2018

At least one child functioning concern
- 21%
- 39%

Primary caregiver: mental health issues
- 10%
- 28%

At least one caregiver risk factor
- 46%
- 55%

Latin American Household
White Household

Full time employment
- 61%
- 54%

Part time/seasonal employment
- 7%
- 11%

Social assistance/other benefits
- 22%
- 25%

Household ran out money for basic necessities
- 9%
- 9%

At least one housing issue
- 15%
- 24%
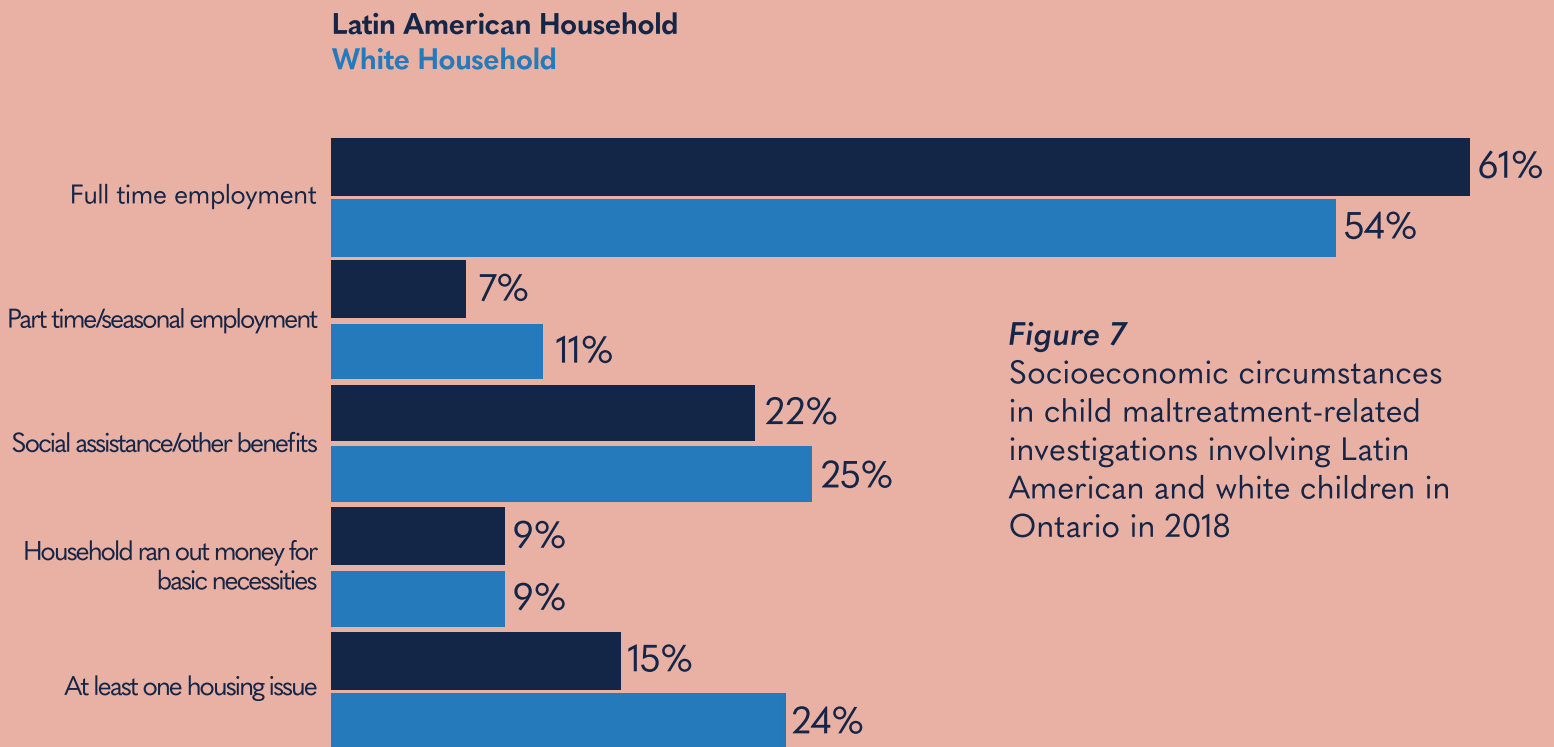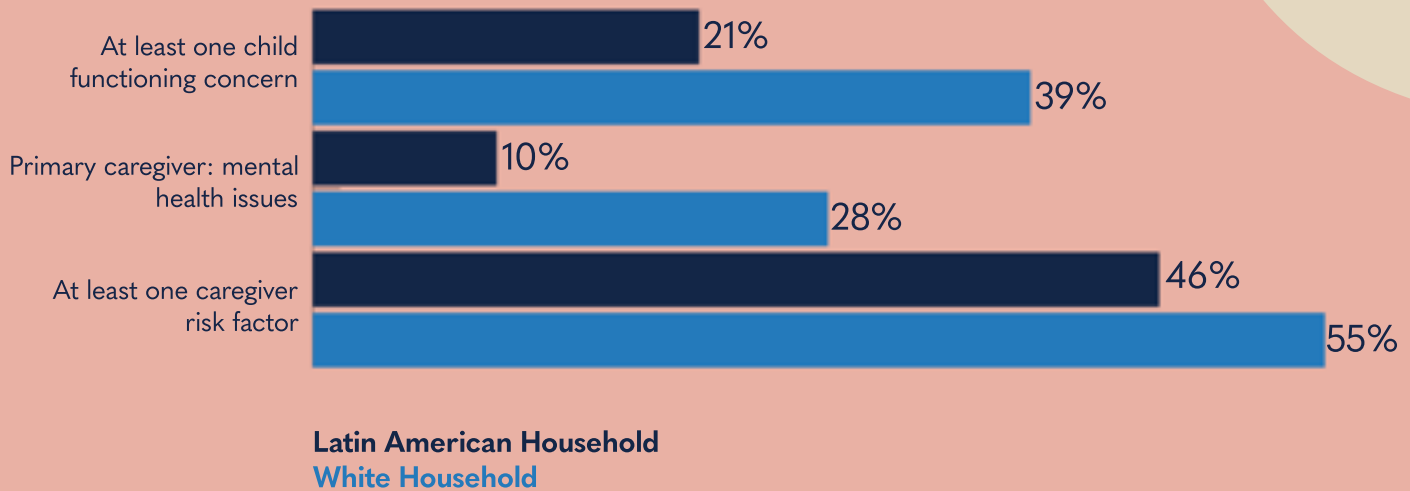
Figure 7
Socioeconomic circumstances in child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American and white children in Ontario in 2018

Investigations involving Latin American children were less likely to involve families whose workers indicated they had at least one housing issue and slightly more likely to involve families who had a full-time source of income compared to investigations involving white children (see Figure 7 and Table 11).

Section I: Introduction and Methodology

Introduction

This report was prepared by the Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018 (OIS-2018) Research Team at the request of Rights for Children and Youth Partnership (RCYP). This report describes child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 involving Latin American children and compares these investigations to investigations involving white children across child, family, and household characteristics, as well as characteristics of the investigations themselves.

Methodology

The OIS-2018 is the sixth provincial study to examine the incidence of reported and investigated child maltreatment-related concerns in Ontario. The OIS-2018 captures information on investigation outcomes, forms, and severity of maltreatment, and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Ontario. A multi-stage sampling design was used to first select a representative sample of 18 child welfare agencies from 48 child welfare organizations in Ontario. Investigations opened between October 1 and December 31, 2018 were then sampled for inclusion in the study. The OIS-2018 definition of maltreatment-related investigations includes situations in which there were concerns that a child may have already been abused or neglected (maltreatment investigations) as well as situations in which there was no specific concern about past maltreatment but where the risk of future maltreatment was being assessed (risk investigations). These procedures yielded a final sample of 7,115 child maltreatment-related investigations involving children aged 0-15 years old. Weighted provincial, annual estimates were derived based on these investigations. Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a detailed description of weighting procedures.

Workers were asked to indicate the ethno-racial category that best described the investigated children and their caregivers. The ethno-racial categories used in the OIS-2018 were those used by Statistics Canada in the 2016 Census. Using the 2016 Census categories allows for a calculation of the incidence rate of investigations per 1,000 children in Ontario. These incidence rates are derived by taking the estimated number of cases, dividing by the child population for a given ethno-racial category in Ontario, and multiplying by 1,000.

The estimates presented in this chapter are derived from child maltreatment-related investigations from a representative sample of child welfare agencies in 2018. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates do not include (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare agencies, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare agencies before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare services, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police. Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a full description of the sample inclusion and exclusion criteria.

This report defines investigations involving Latin American children as those where the worker indicated that the investigated child's ethno-racial category was Latin American. In order to produce incidence rates, estimates for investigations involving Latin American children were divided by the Latin American child population in Ontario and multiplied by 1,000. The same procedure was implemented to generate estimated rates of investigation for white children. The reported weighted estimates are based on unweighted samples of investigations involving Latin American (n=191) and white (n=4,119) children aged 0-17 in the OIS-2018. The estimated number of investigations involving Latin American children based on this sample may not reflect differences in specific jurisdictions within Ontario and are instead aggregated for the entire province. This may result in obscuring more substantial differences in regions where populations of Latin American families and investigations involving Latin American children are more concentrated.

Section II: Framing the Context of Latin American Children's Involvement in the Child Welfare System

Latin Americans in Canada

Officially, the Canadian Census has included a question on 'visible minorities' since 1996. The results are used primarily by governments, businesses, community groups, healthcare providers, researchers, and others promoting employment equity (Jedwab, 2019). Information regarding the Latin American population raises further concerns, given that respondents often identify as a visible minority and a non-visible minority. Given that the Latin American identifier is an ethnic identity and not a race, the experiences between those who identify as Latin American and as visible minority versus those that identify as Latin American and non-visible minority often differ. For example, there is a 15 percent income difference between Argentinians that identify as visible minorities and those that identify as non-visible minorities (Jedwab, 2019). It is essential to note the diversity of experiences when examining this ethnic group as a single community.

According to the 2016 Canadian census, there are 447,325 self-identified Latin Americans in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2017); however, following an official recount, the Canadian Hispanic Congress found that Latin Americans in Canada could number as high as 1,054,670 (Canadian Hispanic Congress, n.d.). The disparity likely stems from the classification of Latin Americans by census Canada, which does not consider mixed identities or racial diversity within the 'Latin American' category (Jedwab, 2019). For example, individuals in the Canadian census identifying as Latin American and White are classified as "not a visible minority" (Jedwab, 2019).

Immigration

Between 2005 and 2014, the Latin American population accounted for approximately 10% of all newcomers each year, and by 2016 Latin American immigrants had a growth rate three times higher than the overall immigrant population (Ansion & Merali, 2018; Babis et al., 2019; Statistics Canada, 2017). This increase is most notable in Ontario, with Toronto being home to more than 77,000 people from Latin America (Statistics Canada, 2017).

Although Latin America as a regional concept is used to homogenize diverse Latin American identities, it is vital to recognize that there is a variation of experiences based on issues of race, region, religion, and migratory history. These experiences impact how Latin American youth and families adapt and engage with institutions due to systemic barriers faced, along with the lack of support to learn how to effectively navigate Canadian institutions (Parada et al., 2021a; 2021b).

Discrimination

Discourses of whiteness and the white experience remain the benchmark that structure and order most institutions in Canada (Allen, 2019; Creese, 2019; Wallcott, 2019). In practice, multiculturalism serves only to deny the reality of white supremacy and positions the "white" body as neutral and all other racialized bodies as "other" (Creese, 2019; Parada et al., 2021a). Structural racism has been found to lead to poor health outcomes—including negative impacts from encountering racism, such as stress and declining mental health—mistrust of institutions, alienation of racialized people, and other barriers.

While all bodies are racialized, specific constructions of race based on skin colour or ethnic origins often create inequality in treatment and produce disparities in social life. In Canada, Latin Americans experience a racialization process that impacts immigration policies, reduces access to housing, employment, and health services, and increases poverty and social exclusion rates. Because this community constitutes a small percentage of the population, their experiences are often unaddressed and ignored by policymakers and other key stakeholders (Parada et al., 2021b). Some studies have indicated that Latin Americans experience discrimination while living in Canada (Anison & Merali, 2018; Parada et al., 2021a; 2021b; Tairo, 2017; Wilkinson, 2018).

Income Inequality

The Government of Canada has reported that 17.3% of recent immigrants were most at risk of living below the low-income cut-off. This is largely due to language barriers, discrimination, lack of credential recognition, lack of Canadian work experience, and difficulty building social ties in Canada (Government of Canada, 2018). Average earnings vary among visible minority groups; among the lowest were Latin Americans, with an average of $37,282 (Government of Canada, 2014). The Government of Canada also reported in the 2016 census that 15.4% of Latin Americans live below the low-income cut-offs after tax, nearly double the Canadian average at 8.8% (Government of Canada, 2014; Statistics Canada, 2017). In addition to low-income experiences by recently immigrated Latin Americans, a study indicated that Latin Americans in Ontario continue to experience difficulties accessing equal pay. In Ontario, for every dollar made by a non-racialized individual, first-generation Latin Americans made 68 cents, and second-and-third- or more generations earned 62 cents (Block & Galabuzi, 2018). The findings indicate that low-income rates persist even if Latin Americans were born and raised in Canada.

Living in poverty affects overall health due to challenges that may include food insecurity and poor living conditions (Government of Canada, 2014). Challenges to health presented by poverty have become even more glaring during the COVID-19 global pandemic. The Wellesley Institute (2022) published a report that indicated that Latin Americans had a confirmed case number 7.1 times higher than their White counterparts and had the highest rate of confirmed cases among all racialized groups between June 2020 and April 2021. Latin Americans were also more likely to be hospitalized with COVID-19 than any other ethno-racial ground, primarily due to their work in frontline jobs, living in crowded housing, and relying on public transit (Paperny, 2021; Wellesley Institute, 2022).

Systemic racism and low socioeconomic status impacted the health outcomes of Latin Americans. The high rates of confirmed cases and hospitalizations were due to priority vaccinations in higher-income neighbourhoods, lack of workplace policies that protected lower-income workers (i.e., paid sick days), and inequitable access to health services (Wellesley Institute, 2022).

Education

Similarly, race-based data in the education sector is not collected across the province, making it difficult to examine wider scale analyses of Latin American students' trajectories and recognize their educational outcomes across Ontario. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Peel District School Board (PDSB), two of the only school boards in the province collecting disaggregated data, indicate that Latin American youth have disproportionately been labeled and placed in special education programs and applied learning streams compared to other racial-ethnic groupings (Brown & Parekh, 2013; James & Turner, 2017; PDSB, 2022). Latin American students face overrepresentation in special education placements in the PDSB, particularly in language programs, despite youth reporting they completely comprehend English (Parada et al., 2021a; PDSB, 2022). The high school graduation rate for Latin American youth in the TDSB was reported at 76.3%, compared to the overall graduation rate of 86% (TDSB, 2017). For those who complete their secondary education, the 2016 Census indicates that for 26.6% of Latin Americans over the age of 15, this is the highest level of education achieved (Government of Canada, 2017).

Latin American newcomer parents face challenges in supporting their children to navigate the education system due to discrimination, language barriers, and assumptions that they are not interested in their children's academic success (Parada et al., 2021a; Parada et al., forthcoming). Although institutional practices are considered equal and fair, the erasure of Latin American immigrant experiences affects their development.

Child Welfare System

There is limited literature on the experiences of Latin American children in the Ontario child protection system. The Ontario Human Right's Commissions' decision to request the child welfare system collect and release disaggregate data has brought to light the overrepresentation of Latin American children that remained invisible until recently (Fallon et al., 1998, 2003, 2008, 2013). Given that the data was only shared recently, there has been little to no research on why Latin American children and families are overrepresented in the child welfare system.

The child welfare system is based on a Eurocentric model, shaping parenting expectations and family dynamics on Western models (Amponsah & Stephens, 2020). The Eurocentricity firmly rooted and prevalent in the child welfare system serve two primary purposes; (1) to benefit White, upper-middle class people at the expense of the 'other' and (2) to de-centre and re-legitimize other forms of knowledge (Amponsah & Stephens, 2020). As such, racialized groups are not the primary consideration or beneficiaries of the child welfare system. The embedded whiteness remains and has yet to be dismantled to account for diverse parenting styles and Latin American parents' experiences in Canada (Bonnie et al., 2022; Clarke, 2011).

The low socioeconomic status of Latin Americans may also contribute to increased contact with the child protection system; challenges presented by poverty might lead to instances associated with maltreatment (King et al., 2017). Given the additional socioeconomic, educational, housing, and health barriers for Latin American children living in poverty, 'risk' is an integral part of their everyday lives where risk, coupled with inadequate levels of support offered, can be understood as the increased probability of negative outcomes and involvement with child welfare.

Section III: Service Dispositions

This chapter provides a description of investigations involving Latin American and white children in terms of the characteristics of the children, their caregivers, and their homes. The estimates presented in this chapter are weighted Ontario estimates derived from child maltreatment investigations conducted in 2018 in a sample of Ontario child welfare agencies. The sampling design and weighting procedures specific to the study should be considered before inferences are drawn from these estimates. The estimates do not include (1) incidents that were not reported to child welfare agencies, (2) reported cases that were screened out by child welfare agencies before being fully investigated, (3) new reports on cases already open by child welfare agencies, and (4) cases that were investigated only by the police. Please see Fallon et al. (2020) for a full description of the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

Children in Investigations

An estimated 155,649 child maltreatment-related investigations were conducted in Ontario in 2018 (a rate of 62.89 investigations per 1,000 children) for children and youth 0-17 years of age. Table 1 provides the estimated counts of investigations involving Latin American and white children, the respective rates per 1,000 children, and each group's proportion of total investigations. Almost three percent of child maltreatment-related investigations conducted in Ontario in 2018 involved Latin American children (an estimated 4,369 investigations, representing a rate of 133.75 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children). In comparison, 56 percent of all investigations involved white children (an estimated 86,588 investigations, representing a rate of 57.83 investigations per 1,000 white children).

Based on these incidence rates, Latin American children were 2.3 times as likely as white children to be investigated in Ontario in 2018.

Table 1
Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children (ages 0-17) in Ontario in 2018

Child Ethnicity	Number of Investigations	Rate per 1,000 Children	% of Total Investigations
Latin American	4,369	133.75	3%
White	86,588	57.83	56%
Total	155,649	65.89	100%

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Based on a sample of 191 investigations involving Latin American children (0-17) and 4,119 investigations involving white children (0-17).

Referral Source

Table 2 describes the sources of referral in investigations involving Latin American and white children. Each independent contact with the child welfare agency regarding a child (or children) was counted as a separate referral. The person who actually contacted the child welfare agency was identified as the referral source. For example, if a child disclosed an incident of abuse to a teacher at school, who made a report to child welfare services, the school was counted as a referral source. If both the teacher and the child's parent called the child welfare agency, both would be counted as referral sources.

Non-Professional Referral Sources:

Parent: This includes parents involved as a caregiver to the reported child, as well as non- custodial parents.

Child: A self-referral by any child listed on the Intake Information Section of the OIS-2018 Maltreatment Assessment.

Relative: Any relative of the child in question. Workers were asked to code "other" for situations in which a child was living with a foster parent and a relative of the foster parent reported maltreatment.

Neighbour/Friend: This category includes any neighbour or friend of the children or their family.

Professional Referral Sources:

Community, Health, or Social Services: This includes referrals from social assistance workers; crisis service/shelter workers; community recreation centre staff; community health physicians, nurses, or mental health professionals; or any community agency staff.

Hospital (Any Personnel): This includes referrals that originate from a hospital that are made by a doctor, nurse, or social worker rather than a family physician or nurse working in a family doctor's office in the community.

School: Any school personnel (teacher, principal, teacher's aide, school social worker, etc.).Other Child Welfare Service: Includes referrals from mandated child welfare service providers from other jurisdictions or provinces.

Day Care Centre: Refers to a child care or day care provider.

Police: Any member of a Police Force, including municipal, provincial/ territorial, or RCMP.

Anonymous: A caller who is not identified.

Other Referral Sources: Any referral source that does not fall into one of the pre-existing categories (e.g., legal or dental service provider).

Table 2

Referral Source in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and
White Children in Ontario in 2018

Referral Source	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Non Professional						
Custodial or Non Custodial Parent	385	9%	11.79	14,176	16%	9.47
Child (subject of referral)	--	--	--	1,356	2%	0.91
Relative	121	3%	3.70	3,767	4%	2.52
Neighbour/friend	211	5%	6.46	5,291	6%	3.53
Professional						
Community, Health or Social Services	457	10%	13.99	9,453	11%	6.31
Hospital (any personnel)	107	2%	3.28	4,915	6%	3.28
School	1,343	31%	41.11	24,103	28%	16.10
Other child welfare service	106	2%	3.25	1,757	2%	1.17
Day care centre	--	--	--	649	1%	0.43
Police	1,484	34%	45.43	19,933	23%	13.31
Other/Anonymous	308	7%	9.43	7,508	9%	5.01
Total Investigations	**4,369**	**100%**	**133.75**	**86,588**	**100%**	**57.83**

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% because an investigation could have had more than one referral source. Detailed referral source data do not add up to sub-category totals as the sub-category totals account for one referral from the category.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information on referral source.

-- Estimate was <100 investigations.

In 2018, 17 percent of investigations, or an estimated 752 investigations, involving Latin American children and 27 percent of investigations, or an estimated 23,765 investigations, involving white children were referred by non-professional sources (rates of 23.02 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children and 15.87 investigations per 1,000 white children). Eighty percent of investigations involving Latin American children were referred by professionals (an estimated 3,508 investigations or 107.39 investigations per 1,000 children), and 68 percent of investigations involving white children were referred by professional sources (an estimated 59,209 investigations or 39.54 investigations per 1,000 children). In seven percent of investigations involving Latin American children and nine percent of investigations involving white children, the referral source was either anonymous or categorized as an "other" source of referral. Investigations involving Latin American children were 18 percent more likely to be initiated by professional referral sources than those involving white children.

Transfers to Ongoing Services

Table 3
Provision of Ongoing Services Following Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Provision of Ongoing Services	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Case to Stay Open for Ongoing Services	1,061	24%	32.48	17,962	21%	12.00
Case to be Closed	3,309	76%	101.30	68,626	79%	45.83
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about ongoing services.

Investigating workers were asked whether the investigated case would remain open for further child welfare services after the initial investigation. As seen in Table 3, the proportion of cases that were transferred to ongoing services were similar in investigations involving Latin American children and investigations involving white children. In Ontario in 2018, 24% of investigations involving Latin American children were transferred to receive ongoing services; 21% of investigations involving white children were transferred to ongoing services.

Child Welfare Court

Workers were asked to indicate any applications made to child welfare court during the investigation period. Applications to child welfare court can be made for a number of reasons, including orders of supervision with the child remaining in the home, as well as out-of-home placement orders ranging from temporary to permanent. Although applications to court can be made during the investigation period, where possible, non-court ordered services should be offered before an application is made to court. Because the OIS can only track applications made during the investigation period, the OIS court application rate does not account for applications made at later points of service.

Investigating workers were asked about three possible statuses for court involvement during the initial investigation:
No Application: Court involvement was not considered.

Application Considered: The child welfare worker was considering whether or not to submit an application to child welfare court.

Application Made: An application to child welfare court was submitted.
Table 4 collapses "no application" and "application considered" into a single category (No Application to Court). In five percent of investigations involving Latin American children and one percent of investigations involving white children the worker indicated they made a child welfare court application.

Table 4
Applications to Child Welfare Court in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Child Welfare Court Application Status	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
No Application to Court	4,166	95%	127.54	85,327	99%	56.99
Application Made	203	5%	6.21	1,262	1%	0.84
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about child welfare court applications.

Out-of-Home Placement

The OIS tracks placements in out-of-home care that occur at any time during the investigation. Investigating workers are asked to specify the type of placement. In cases where there may have been more than one placement, workers are asked to indicate the setting where the child had spent the most time. The following placement classifications were used:

No Placement Required: No placement is required following the investigation.

Placement Considered: An out-of-home placement is still being considered, but the child remained at home at this point of the investigation.

Kinship Out of Care: An informal placement has been arranged within the family support network; the child welfare authority does not have temporary custody.

Kinship in Care: A formal placement has been arranged within the family support network; the child welfare authority has temporary or full custody and is paying for the placement.

Foster Care (Non-Kinship): Includes any family-based care, including foster homes, specialized treatment foster homes, and assessment homes.

Group Home: Out-of-home placement required in a structured group living setting.

Residential/Secure Treatment: Placement required in a therapeutic residential treatment centre to address the needs of the child.

For the purposes of Table 5, the placement categories were combined into four broader categories: child remained at home (no placement required and placement considered), informal kinship care (kinship out of care), foster care (kinship in care and non-family foster care), and group home/residential (group home and residential/secure treatment). In 91 percent of investigations involving Latin American children (an estimated 3,993 investigations or 122.24 investigations per 1,000 children) and 97 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 84,332 investigations or 56.32 investigations per 1,000 children), the child remained at home. Of the remaining proportion of investigations involving Latin American children, five percent resulted in placement with a relative in an informal arrangement and another three percent were placed in foster care (Table 5).

Table 5
Out-of-Home Placements in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Placement Status	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Child Remained at Home	3,993	91%	122.24	84,332	97%	56.32
Child with Relative (Not a Formal Child Welfare Placement)	206	5%	6.31	1,446	2%	0.97
Foster Care (Includes Foster and Kinship Care)	139	3%	4.26	682	1%	0.46
Group Home/Residential Secure Treatment	--	--	--	980	1%	0.65
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018.

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about placement.

-- Estimate was <100 investigations.

Section IV: Investigation Reason

Investigation Reason

The nature of investigations involving Latin American and white children is described in Table 6. The OIS-2018 tracks two types of investigations: those conducted because of a concern about a maltreatment incident that may have occurred and those conducted to assess whether there is a significant risk of future maltreatment where there is no alleged or suspected maltreatment. Where there is a concern about maltreatment incidents, the OIS-2018 identifies five major sub- types: physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, emotional maltreatment, and exposure to intimate partner violence. Of the 4,369 estimated investigations involving Latin American children conducted in Ontario in 2018, 65 percent were maltreatment investigations which focused on a concern of abuse or neglect (an estimated 2,853 child maltreatment investigations or 87.34 investigations per 1,000 children), and 35 percent of investigations involved concerns about risk of future maltreatment (an estimated 1,516 investigations or 46.41 investigations per 1,000 children). Sixty percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 51,860 investigations or 34.64 investigations per 1,000 children) were focused on concerns of abuse or neglect, and 40 percent of investigations involving white children were focused on assessing the risk of future maltreatment (an estimated 34,729 investigations, or 23.19 investigations per 1,000 children).

Among maltreatment investigations involving Latin American children, the most common primary concern was exposure to intimate partner violence in 24 percent of investigations (an estimated 1,062 investigations, or 32.51 investigations per 1,000 children), followed by physical abuse was the primary concern in 20 percent of investigations (an estimated 871 investigations or 26.66 investigations per 1,000 children), and neglect in 10 percent of investigations (an estimated 444 investigations or 13.59 investigations per 1,000 children). In comparison, among investigations involving white children, physical abuse was the primary concern in 17 percent of investigations, followed closely by exposure to intimate partner violence in 17 percent of investigations and neglect in 16 percent of investigations.

Table 6

Referral Source in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Nature of Investigation	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Physical Abuse	871	20%	26.66	14,120	16%	9.43
Sexual Abuse	238	5%	7.29	2,525	3%	1.69
Neglect	444	10%	13.59	14,130	16%	9.44
Emotional Maltreatment	237	5%	7.26	6,875	8%	4.59
Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence	1,062	24%	32.51	14,209	16%	9.49
Subtotal: All Maltreatment Investigations	*2,853*	*65%*	*87.34*	*51,860*	*60%*	*34.64*
Risk of Future Maltreatment Investigations	1,516	35%	46.41	34,729	40%	23.19
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the nature of the investigation.

Substantiation Decisions

Table 7 describes types of investigations and substantiation decisions resulting from maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American and white children conducted across Ontario in 2018.

The outcomes of maltreatment investigations are classified in terms of three levels of substantiation:

Substantiated: The balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has occurred;

Suspected: Insufficient evidence to substantiate abuse or neglect, but maltreatment cannot be ruled out;

Unfounded: The balance of evidence indicates that abuse or neglect has not occurred (unfounded does not mean that a referral was inappropriate or malicious; it simply indicates that the investigating worker determined that the child had not been maltreated).
The outcomes of risk-only investigations are classified in terms of three categories:

- Significant risk of future maltreatment
- No significant risk of future maltreatment
- Unknown risk of future maltreatment

Thirty-two percent of maltreatment investigations involving Latin American children were substantiated compared to 24 percent of investigations involving white children. Thirty-two percent of investigations involving Latin American children and 32 percent of investigations involving white children were unfounded.

In nine percent of risk-only investigations involving Latin American children and six percent of investigations involving white children, the investigating worker concluded there was a significant risk of future maltreatment. In 23 percent of risk-only investigations involving Latin American children and 31 percent of investigations involving white children, no significant risk of future maltreatment was indicated. In two percent of investigations involving Latin American children and three percent of investigations involving white children, workers did not know whether the child was at significant risk of future maltreatment.

Table 7
Substantiation Decisions in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Substantiation Decision	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Unfounded Maltreatment	1,383	32%	42.34	27,313	32%	18.24
Suspected Maltreatment	--	--	--	3,582	4%	2.39
Substantiated Maltreatment	1,404	32%	42.98	20,965	24%	14.00
Emotional Maltreatment	1,002	23%	30.67	26,642	31%	17.79
No Risk of Future	406	9%	12.43	5,601	6%	3.74
Risk of Future Maltreatment	108	2%	3.31	2,485	3%	1.66
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Estimate was <100 investigations.

Based on a sample of 61 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 998 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about substantiation or risk of future maltreatment.

Characteristics of Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations

Characteristics of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Latin American and white children are described in Table 8 including police involvement, emotional harm, and physical harm.

Police Involvement

Workers were asked to indicate the level of police involvement for each maltreatment code listed. As shown in Table 8, in 60 percent of substantiated investigations involving Latin American children and 56 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there was no police involvement, in 23 percent of substantiated investigations involving Latin American children and 22 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there was a police investigation, and in 17 percent of substantiated investigations involving Latin American children and 21 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children there were charges laid.

Emotional and Physical Harm

Information on emotional harm was collected using a series of questions asking the investigating child welfare workers to describe emotional harm that had occurred because of the maltreatment incident(s). If the maltreatment was substantiated or suspected, workers were asked to indicate whether the child was showing signs of mental or emotional harm (e.g., nightmares, bed-wetting, or social withdrawal following the maltreatment incident[s]). In order to rate the severity of mental or emotional harm, workers indicated whether therapeutic treatment was required to manage the symptoms of mental or emotional harm. Table 8 shows that emotional harm was noted in 41 percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Latin American children and 40 percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving white children. The investigating worker indicated that emotional harm was severe enough to require therapeutic treatment in 12 percent of substantiated investigations involving Latin American children where emotional harm to the child was noted. In 24 percent of substantiated investigations involving white children, emotional harm was severe enough to require therapeutic treatment.

The OIS-2018 tracked physical harm identified by the investigating worker. Workers noted whether physical harm was present during the investigation; this is reported in Table 8. Physical harm was identified in nine percent of substantiated maltreatment investigations involving Latin American children, and five percent of those involving white children.

Table 8

Characteristics of Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Characteristics of Maltreatment	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Police Involvement						
Investigation	319	23%	9.77	4,669	22%	3.12
Charges Laid	245	17%	7.50	4,380	21%	2.93
None	840	60%	25.72	11,690	56%	7.81
Unknown	0	0%	0.00	225	1%	0.15
Emotional Harm						
Emotional Harm, No Therapeutic Treatment	171	12%	5.23	3,461	17%	2.31
Emotional Harm, Therapeutic Treatment Required	403	29%	12.34	5,100	24%	3.41
No Emotional Harm Documented	831	59%	25.44	12,404	59%	8.28
Physical Harm						
Physical Harm Documented	120	9%	3.67	1,117	5%	0.75
No Physical Harm Documented	1,285	92%	39.34	19,847	95%	13.26
Total Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations	*1,404*	*100%*	*42.98*	*20,964*	*100%*	*14.00*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Based on a sample of 61 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 998 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the nature of the investigation.

Section V: Child and Caregiving Functioning

Child Characteristics

Child characteristics including age and functioning was documented by investigating workers.
Child functioning was documented on the basis of a checklist of challenges that child welfare workers were likely to be aware of as a result of their investigations. The child functioning checklist was developed in consultation with child welfare workers and researchers to reflect the types of concerns that may be identified during an investigation. The checklist is not a validated measurement instrument for which population norms have been established.

The checklist only documents problems that are known to investigating child welfare workers and, therefore, may undercount the occurrence of some child functioning problems.

Investigating workers were asked to indicate problems that had been confirmed by a diagnosis, directly observed by the investigating worker or another worker, and/or disclosed by the parent or child, as well as issues that they suspected were concerns but could not fully verify at the time of the investigation. The six-month period before the investigation was used as a reference point where applicable. Child functioning classifications that reflect physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural issues were documented with a checklist that included the following categories:

Positive Toxicology at Birth: When a toxicology screen for a newborn tests positive for the presence of drugs or alcohol.

FASD: Birth defects, ranging from mild intellectual and behavioural difficulties to more profound problems in these areas related to in-utero exposure to alcohol abuse by the biological mother.

Failure to Meet Developmental Milestones: Children who are not meeting their developmental milestones because of a non-organic reason.

Intellectual/Developmental Disability: Characterized by delayed intellectual development, it is typically diagnosed when a child does not reach his or her developmental milestones at expected times. It includes speech and language, fine/gross motor skills, and/or personal and social skills (e.g., Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder).

Attachment Issues: The child does not have physical and emotional closeness to a mother or preferred caregiver. The child finds it difficult to seek comfort, support, nurturance, or protection from the caregiver; the child's distress is not ameliorated or is made worse by the caregiver's presence.

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a persistent pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity/impulsivity that occurs more frequently and more severely than is typically seen in children at comparable stages of development. Symptoms are frequent and severe enough to have a negative impact on the child's life at home, at school, or in the community.

Aggression/Conduct Issues: Aggressive behaviour directed at other children or adults (e.g., hitting, kicking, biting, fighting, bullying) or violence to property at home, at school, or in the community.

Physical Disability: Physical disability is the existence of a long-lasting condition that substantially limits one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying. This includes sensory disability conditions such as blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment that noticeably affects activities of daily living.

Academic/Learning Difficulties: Difficulties in school including those resulting from learning difficulties, special education needs, behaviour problems, social difficulties, and emotional or mental health concerns.

Depression/Anxiety/Withdrawal: Feelings of depression or anxiety that persist for most of the day, every day for two weeks or longer, and interfere with the child's ability to manage at home and at school.

Self-harming Behaviour: Includes high-risk or life-threatening behaviour and physical mutilation or cutting.

Suicidal Thoughts: The child has expressed thoughts of suicide, ranging from fleeting thoughts to a detailed plan.

Suicide Attempts: The child has attempted to commit suicide.

Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour: Child displays inappropriate sexual behaviour, including age-inappropriate play with toys, self, or others; displaying explicit sexual acts; age-inappropriate sexually explicit drawings and/or descriptions; sophisticated or unusual sexual knowledge; or prostitution or seductive behaviour.

Running (Multiple Incidents): The child has run away from home (or other residence) on multiple occasions for at least one overnight period.

Alcohol Abuse: Problematic consumption of alcohol (consider age, frequency, and severity).

Drug/Solvent Abuse: Includes prescription drugs, illegal drugs, and solvents.

Youth Criminal Justice Act involvement: Charges, incarceration, or alternative measures with the youth justice system.

Other: Any other conditions related to child functioning.

Table 9 presents child characteristics including child age and the types of problems associated with physical, emotional, and/or cognitive health, or with behaviour-specific concerns for Latin American and white children in maltreatment-related investigations in Ontario in 2018.

Forty-four percent of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children involved children 11-17 years old (an estimated 58.90 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children) and 29 percent involved children 6-10 years old (an estimated 38.24 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children). Similarly, the greatest proportion of investigations involving white children involved children 11-17 years old (35 percent, an estimated 20.18 investigations per 1,000 white children) and 6-10 years old (34 percent, an estimated 19.66 investigations per 1,000 white children).

In 21 percent of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children (an estimated 27.58 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children) and in 39 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 22.37 investigations per 1,000 white children), at least one child functioning issue was indicated by the investigating worker.

Internalizing and externalizing issues were the most frequently reported child functioning concern in investigations involving Latin American children (9 percent of investigations involving Latin American children). The second most frequently noted child functioning concern in investigations involving Latin American children was academic difficulties (6 percent of investigations involving Latin American children). In general, workers noted concerns at lower rates in investigations involving Latin American children than in those involving white children.

Table 9
Child Functioning Concerns in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Child Characteristic	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Child Age						
Under 1 year	292	7%	8.94	4,135	5%	2.76
1-5 years	904	21%	27.67	22,803	26%	15.23
6-10 years	1,249	29%	38.24	29,439	34%	19.66
11-17 years	1,924	44%	58.90	30,211	35%	20.18
Child Functioning Concerns						
Intellectual/developmental/ physical disability	180	4%	5.51	12,389	14%	8.27
Attachment issues	95	2%	2.91	5,802	7%	3.88
Academic difficulties	255	6%	7.81	14,673	17%	9.80
Internalizing issues	406	9%	12.43	14,325	17%	9.57
Externalizing issues	402	9%	12.31	17,819	21%	11.90
Substance abuse	92	2%	2.82	2,040	2%	1.36
At least one functioning concern	901	21%	27.58	33,491	39%	22.37
Total Investigations	*4,369*	*100%*	*133.75*	*86,588*	*100%*	*57.83*

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

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Caregiver Risk Factors

Caregiver characteristics including primary language in the household, whether they moved to Canada in the last 5 years and risk factors were documented by investigating workers.

Concerns related to documented caregiver risk factors were reported by investigating workers using a checklist of nine items that were asked about each caregiver. Where applicable, the reference point for identifying concerns about caregiver risk factors was the previous six months. The checklist is not a validated measurement instrument. The checklist only documents problems that are known to investigating child welfare workers.

The checklist included:

Alcohol Abuse: Caregiver abuses alcohol.

Drug/Solvent Abuse: Abuse of prescription drugs, illegal drugs, or solvents.

Cognitive Impairment: Caregiver has a cognitive impairment.

Mental Health Issues: Any mental health diagnosis or problem.

Physical Health Issues: Chronic illness, frequent hospitalizations, or physical disability.

Few Social Supports: Social isolation or lack of social supports.

Victim of Intimate Partner Violence: During the past six months the caregiver was a victim of intimate partner violence including physical, sexual, or verbal assault.

Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence: During the past six months the caregiver was a perpetrator of intimate partner violence including physical, sexual, or verbal assault.

History of Foster Care or Group Home: Caregiver was in foster care and/or group home care during his or her childhood.

Table 10 presents primary caregiver characteristics that were noted by investigating workers.

Almost 50 percent of child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children involved households in which English or French was not the primary language (an estimated 2,052 investigations, representing a rate of 62.82 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children). Only 3 percent of investigations involving white children involved households in which English or French was not the primary language. In almost one fifth of investigations involving Latin American children, the worker noted that the primary caregiver had moved to Canada in the last five years (18 percent, an estimated rate of 23.69 investigations per 1,000 Latin American children). A lower proportion of investigations involving white children involved primary caregivers that had moved to Canada in the last 5 years (2 percent, an estimated rate of 1.01 investigations per 1,000 white children).

At least one primary caregiver risk factor was identified in 46 percent of maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children (an estimated 2,005 child investigations), and at least one primary caregiver risk factor was identified in 55 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 47,594 child investigations). The most frequently noted primary caregiver risk factors in investigations involving Latin American children were being a victim of intimate partner violence (27 percent), having few social supports (18 percent), and mental health issues (10 percent). These proportions were fairly similar for investigations involving white children, except for primary caregiver mental health issues, which was noted in 28 percent of investigations involving white children (compared to 10 percent of investigations involving Latin American children).

Table 10
Primary Caregiver Risk Factors in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Primary Caregiver Characteristic	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Moved to Canada in the last 5 years	774	18%	23.69	1,510	2%	1.01
Primary Language is not English or French	2,052	47%	62.82	2,503	3%	1.67

Caregiver Risk Factor

	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Alcohol Abuse	102	2%	3.12	6,741	8%	4.50
Drug/solvent Abuse	219	5%	6.70	7,965	9%	5.32
Cognitive Impairment	--	--	--	3,586	4%	2.40
Mental Health Concerns	426	10%	13.04	24,171	28%	16.14
Physical Health Issues	125	3%	3.83	6,444	7%	4.30
Few Social Supports	765	18%	23.42	18,072	21%	12.07
Victim of Intimate Partner Violence	1,178	27%	36.06	21,676	25%	14.48
Perpetrator of Intimate Partner Violence	243	6%	7.44	6,188	7%	4.13
History of Foster Care/Group Home	--	--	--	3,688	4%	2.46
At least one caregiver risk factor	2,005	46%	61.38	47,594	55%	31.79
Total Investigations	**4,369**	**100%**	**133.75**	**86,588**	**100%**	**57.83**

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

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Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the nature of the investigation.

-- Estimate was <100 investigations.

Section VI: Household Characteristics

Investigating workers were requested to choose the income source that best described the primary source of the household income. Income source was categorized by the investigating worker using nine possible classifications:

Full-time Employment: Family income is derived from at least one permanent, full-time position.

Part-time (fewer than 30 hours/week): Family income is derived primarily from at least one part-time position.

Multiple Jobs: Caregiver(s) has more than one part-time or temporary position.

Seasonal: Caregiver(s) works either full- or part-time positions for temporary periods of the year.

Employment Insurance (EI): Caregiver(s) is temporarily unemployed and is receiving employment insurance benefits.

Social Assistance: Caregiver(s) is currently receiving social assistance benefits.

Other Benefit: Refers to other forms of benefits or pensions (e.g., family benefits, long-term disability insurance or child support payments).

None: Household has no source of legal income.

Unknown: Household source of income was not known.

In Table 11 household income sources are collapsed into full-time employment, part- time employment (which includes seasonal and multiple jobs), benefits/employment insurance/social assistance and no/unknown income. Table 11 shows the household income source in investigations involving Latin American and white children. Investigations involving Latin American children were slightly more likely to involve households whose primary income source was from full-time work. In 61 percent of investigations involving Latin American children the household's source of income was from full-time work, while in 54 percent of investigations involving white children the household's source of income was from full-time work.

Workers were asked whether the household had run out of the money for any of the following in the six months prior to the investigation: food, housing, utilities, telephone/cell phone, or transportation. Table 11 shows that an equivalent proportion (9 percent) of investigations involving Latin American and white children involved a household that ran out of money for at least one of these basic necessities. Workers were also asked whether the family had experienced any housing issues including overcrowding, unsafe conditions, or moving two or more times in the last year. Table 11 shows that investigations involving Latin American children were less likely than those involving white children to involve any housing issues. In an estimated 645 investigations, representing fifteen percent of investigations involving Latin American children, workers indicated that the family had experienced at least one housing issue. In 23 percent of investigations involving white children (an estimated 20,345 investigations), workers noted at least one housing issue.

Table 11

Substantiation Decisions in Child Maltreatment-Related Investigations Involving Latin American and White Children in Ontario in 2018

Household Characteristic	Latin American Children			White Children		
	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children	#	%	Rate per 1,000 children
Household Income Source						
Full-time Employment	2,655	61%	81.28	46,760	54%	31.23
Part-time/Multiple Jobs/Seasonal Employment	288	7%	8.82	9,449	11%	6.31
Benefits/EI/Social Assistance	972	22%	29.76	21,594	25%	14.42
None/Unknown Income	454	10%	13.90	8,786	10%	5.87
Ran out of money for basic necessities	403	9%	12.34	7,787	9%	5.20
Housing issues	645	15%	19.75	20,345	23%	13.59
Total Investigations	**4,369**	**100%**	**133.75**	**86,588**	**100%**	**57.83**

Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2018

Percentages are column percentages. Columns do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Estimate was <100 investigations.

Based on a sample of 191 child maltreatment-related investigations involving Latin American children and 4,119 child maltreatment-related investigations involving white children with information about the nature of the investigation.

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