

KISKISIK AWASISAK: REMEMBER THE CHILDREN



**UNDERSTANDING THE OVERREPRESENTATION OF FIRST
NATIONS CHILDREN IN THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

CURRENT OVERREPRESENTATION OF ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN CARE*

| Provision of Ongoing Services | % of Children in Care | | % of Total Child Population ^b | | Disparity in Representation of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Children In Care |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|---|
| | Aboriginal Children | Non-Aboriginal Children | Aboriginal Children | Non-Aboriginal Children | |
| British Columbia ^a | 52% | 48% | 8% | 92% | 12.5 |
| Alberta ^b | 59% | 41% | 9% | 91% | 14.6 |
| Saskatchewan ^c | 80% | 20% | 25% | 75% | 12.0 |
| Manitoba ^d | 85% | 15% | 23% | 77% | 19.0 |
| Ontario ^e | 21% | 79% | 3% | 97% | 8.6 |
| Quebec ^f | 10% | 90% | 2% | 98% | 5.4 |
| Nova Scotia ^g | 16% | 84% | 6% | 94% | 3.0 |

* Data for New Brunswick and for Canadian territories were not publicly available.

** Data in this table reflect definitions and data collection protocols which differ by province. (For example, data from some provinces may include children in the care of relatives.) The data demonstrate overrepresentation of First Nations children within jurisdictions, but data for different provinces are not directly comparable.

Based on data from: ^aBritish Columbia Ministry of Children and Family Development, 2009; ^bAlberta Children and Youth Services, 2009; ^cSaskatchewan Ministry of Social Services, 2008; ^dManitoba Family Services and Housing, 2007; ^eOntario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2010; ^fBreton, 2011; ^gMulcahy and Trocmé, 2009; ^hStatistics Canada, 2008

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- **Generations of First Nations children separated from their families/communities**
 - **Residential Schools**
 - **Primary mechanism of efforts to forcibly assimilate First Nations peoples into colonial society**
 - **“Sixties Scoop”**
 - **Extension of provincial/territorial child welfare systems to on-reserve communities begins in 1950s**
 - **First Nations overrepresentation in child welfare system clearly documented by 1980s**
 - **Intergenerational impacts at individual, family and community levels**

CURRENT STRUCTURE OF FIRST NATIONS CHILD WELFARE

- Interpretation of data on child-maltreatment related investigations involving First Nations children must take into account factors such as:
 - Range of situations investigated by child welfare agencies
 - Social and economic context
 - Legislation and standards
 - Scope of First Nations child welfare agencies
 - Jurisdictional models and disputes
 - Funding models
- Must acknowledge variations and commonalities in factors shaping First Nations child welfare

THE FIRST NATIONS COMPONENT OF THE CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY OF REPORTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT 2008



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CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY OF REPORTED CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT (CIS)

- Cyclical national study examining the incidence of reported child abuse and neglect (1998, 2003, 2008)
- The only source of national data on child maltreatment
 - Originally designed for use with provincial/territorial agencies
- Collaboration between the federal government, provinces and territories, child welfare agencies, researchers and child advocates
- Conducted by researchers from the Universities of McGill, Toronto and Calgary.

FIRST NATIONS COMPONENT OF THE CIS (FNCIS)

- Collaborative effort by CIS research team and First Nations organizations to:
 - Support participation of First Nations agencies in the CIS
 - Analyze CIS data on investigations involving First Nations children
 - Ensure appropriate contextualization of findings
 - Disseminate research results
 - Increase the capacity for First Nations child welfare research

FNCIS DEVELOPMENT

- **First two cycles involved partnership with First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada**
 - CIS 1998 - 3 First Nations agencies
 - CIS 2003 - 8 First Nations agencies
- **Current cycle overseen by FNCIS-2008 Advisory Committee**
 - **22 First Nations & urban Aboriginal agencies**
 - (1 Métis agency on a pilot basis)
 - **Potential for analyses comparing First Nations and provincial/territorial agencies**

CURRENT FNCIS-2008 ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEMBERS

MARLYN BENNETT

First People's Child & Family Review Journal

JOCELYN FORMSMA

Assembly of First Nations

ELSIE FLETTE & TARA PETTI

Southern First Nations Network of Care,
Manitoba

RICHARD GRAY

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Caring for First Nations Children Society,
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JUDY LEVI

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Brunswick

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Siksika Children's Services, Alberta

KENN RICHARD

Native Child and Family Services, Toronto

SHELLEY PROKOP THOMAS

Thomas Research, Saskatchewan

PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH IN INDIGENOUS CONTEXTS

- ❑ **Ownership** - members of a First Nation collectively own their cultural knowledge, data and information
- ❑ **Control** - communities aim to gain and maintain oversight over all aspects of information management
- ❑ **Access** - individuals have the right to access information about themselves and their Nations. Communities have the right to decide about access to collective information
- ❑ **Possession** - physical possession of data facilitates the assertion and protection of ownership and control

HONORING OCAP WITHIN THE CIS FRAMEWORK

- **First Nations ownership and control mediated by First Nations advisory committee**

- **Key challenges**
 - **Operationalizing OCAP within each stage of the study**
 - **Building research capacity**
 - **Generating necessary resources**
 - **Negotiating the tensions between First Nations ownership/control and perceived scientific credibility**

THE FIRST NATIONS COMPONENT OF THE CANADIAN INCIDENCE STUDY OF REPORTED ABUSE AND NEGLECT 2008 - METHODS



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CIS-2008 METHODS

- ❑ **Used a case file review process**
- ❑ **Data collected directly from investigating child welfare workers about investigations open 3 month period (Oct 1 – Dec 31, 2008)**
- ❑ **Workers reported on nature of maltreatment, key child and family characteristics and decisions made during the 4-6 week investigation period**
- ❑ **Data reflects CIS definitional framework and workers' clinical assessments**

FNCIS-2008 Sample

Site Selection (N=112)

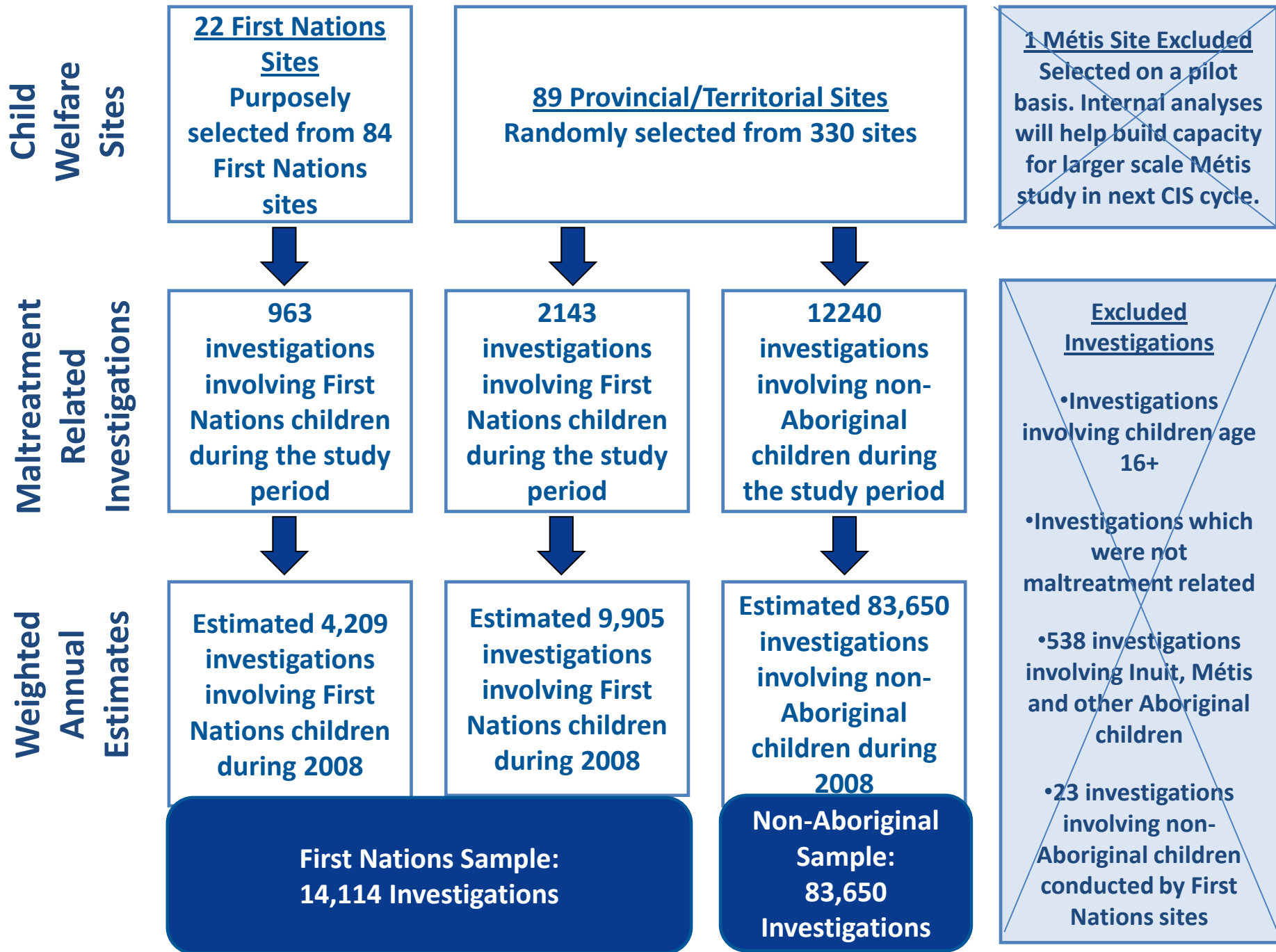
- 22 First Nations/urban Aboriginal sites purposely sampled from 84 sites stratified by region (1 Métis site on a pilot basis)
- 89 sites randomly selected from 330 sites stratified by province/territory, region and agency size

Case Selection (N=9,933)

- Cases opened October 1 to December 31, 2008
- Maximum of 250 cases per agency
- Cases represent investigated families (except in Quebec)
- Cases already open at the start of the study excluded
- For cases opened multiple times during study period, 1st opening was included

Identification of FNCIS-2008 Sample (N=15,346)

- Maltreatment related investigations
- Children 15 years of age and younger
- First Nations/urban Aboriginal and Provincial/Territorial agencies
- Investigations involving First Nations and non-Aboriginal children



FNCIS-2008: STUDY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

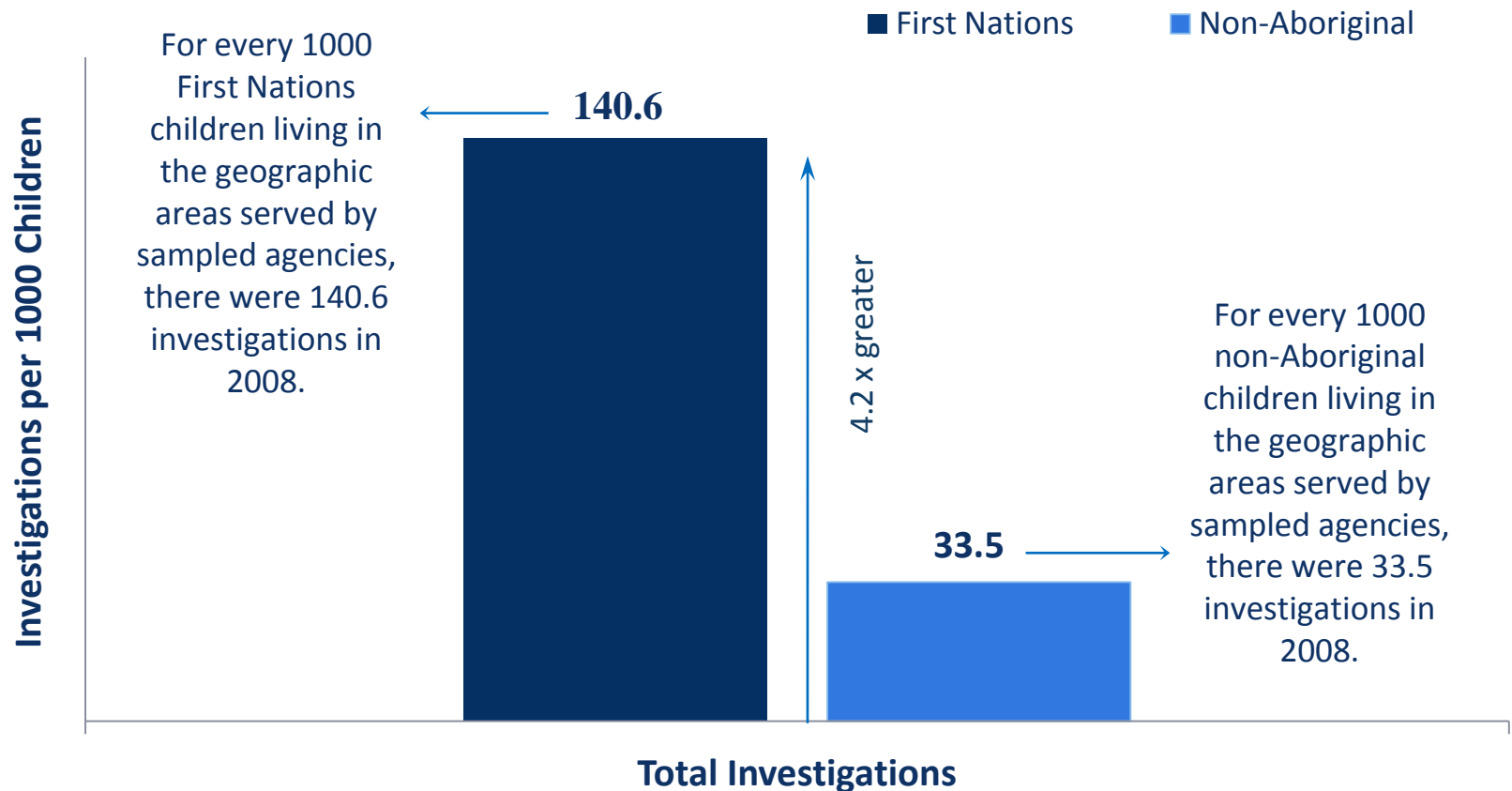
- ❑ Purposive selection of First Nations agencies
- ❑ Focus on “new” maltreatment-related investigations conducted by child welfare agencies
- ❑ Annual estimates cannot account for seasonal fluctuation in investigation type
- ❑ Information collected for initial 4-6 week investigations
- ❑ Use of census data likely results in some overestimation of the rate of investigations for the First Nations population.

MAJOR FINDINGS



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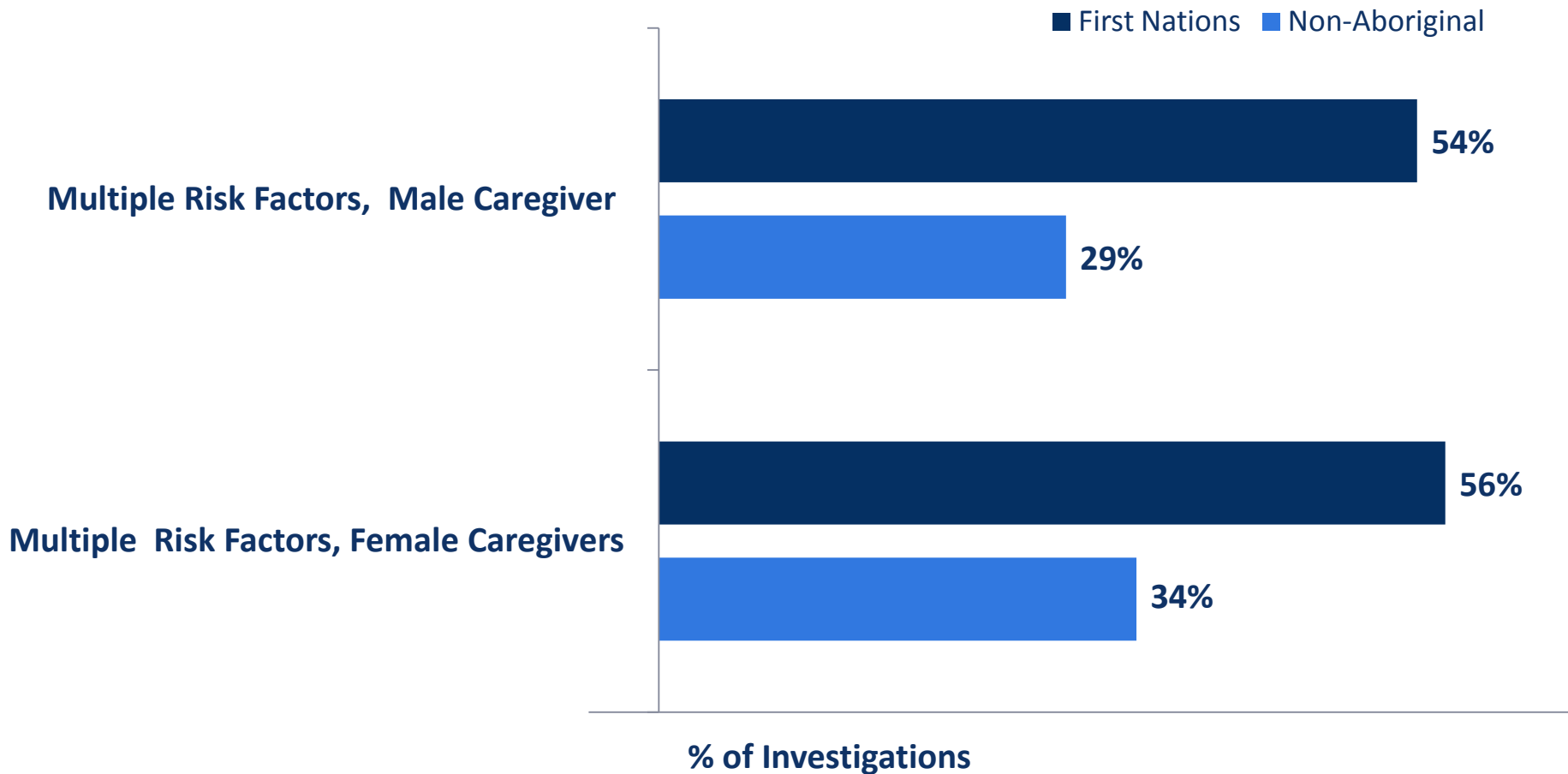
RATES OF FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL CHILD INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES IN 2008



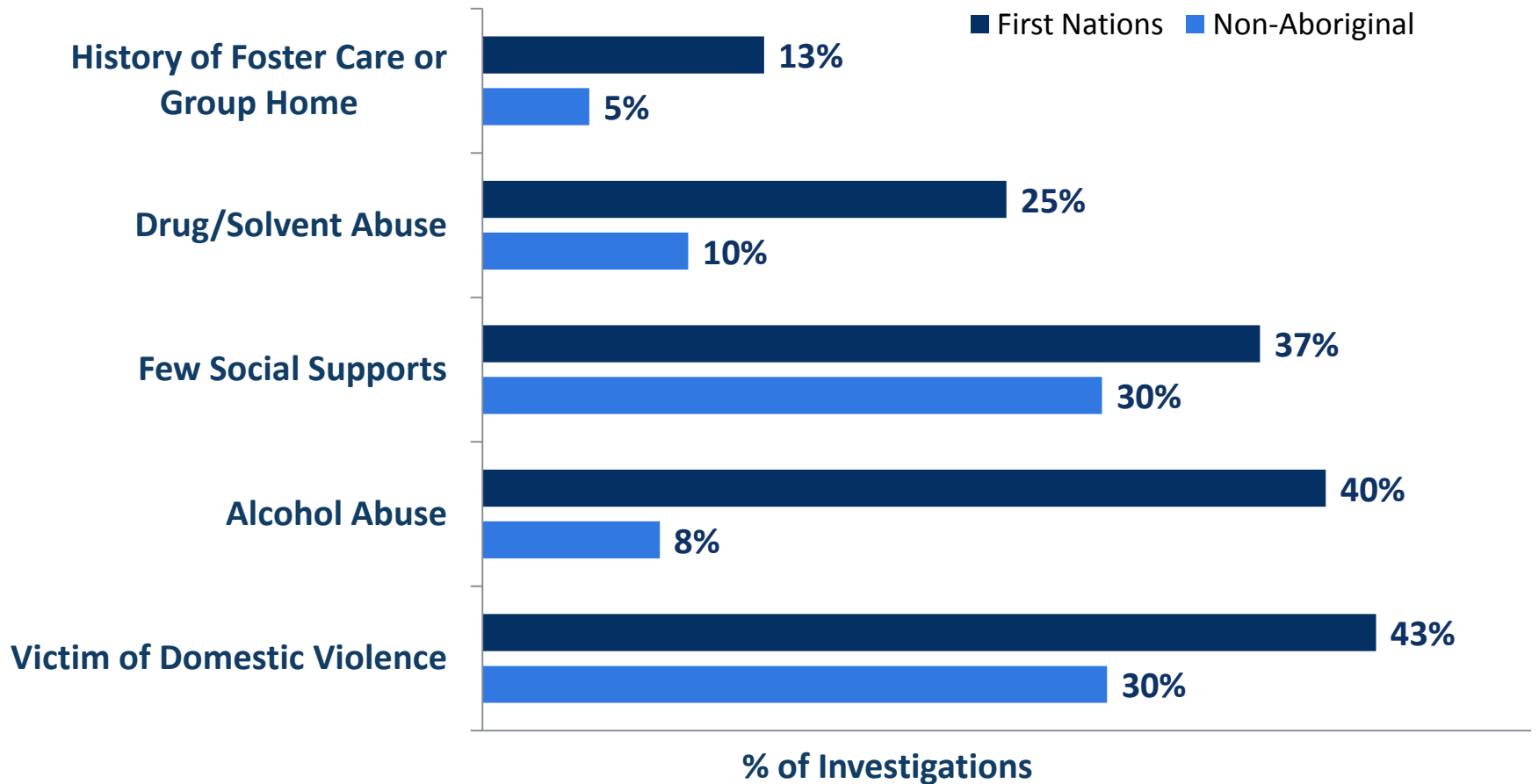
BROAD SPECTRUM OF CHILD MALTREATMENT-RELATED INVESTIGATIONS

- **Maltreatment investigations**
 - **Assessing incidents of**
 - Physical abuse
 - Sexual abuse
 - Emotional maltreatment
 - Exposure to intimate partner violence
 - Neglect
 - **Substantiated, unfounded and suspected cases**
- **Risk investigations**
 - **Assessing risk of future maltreatment**

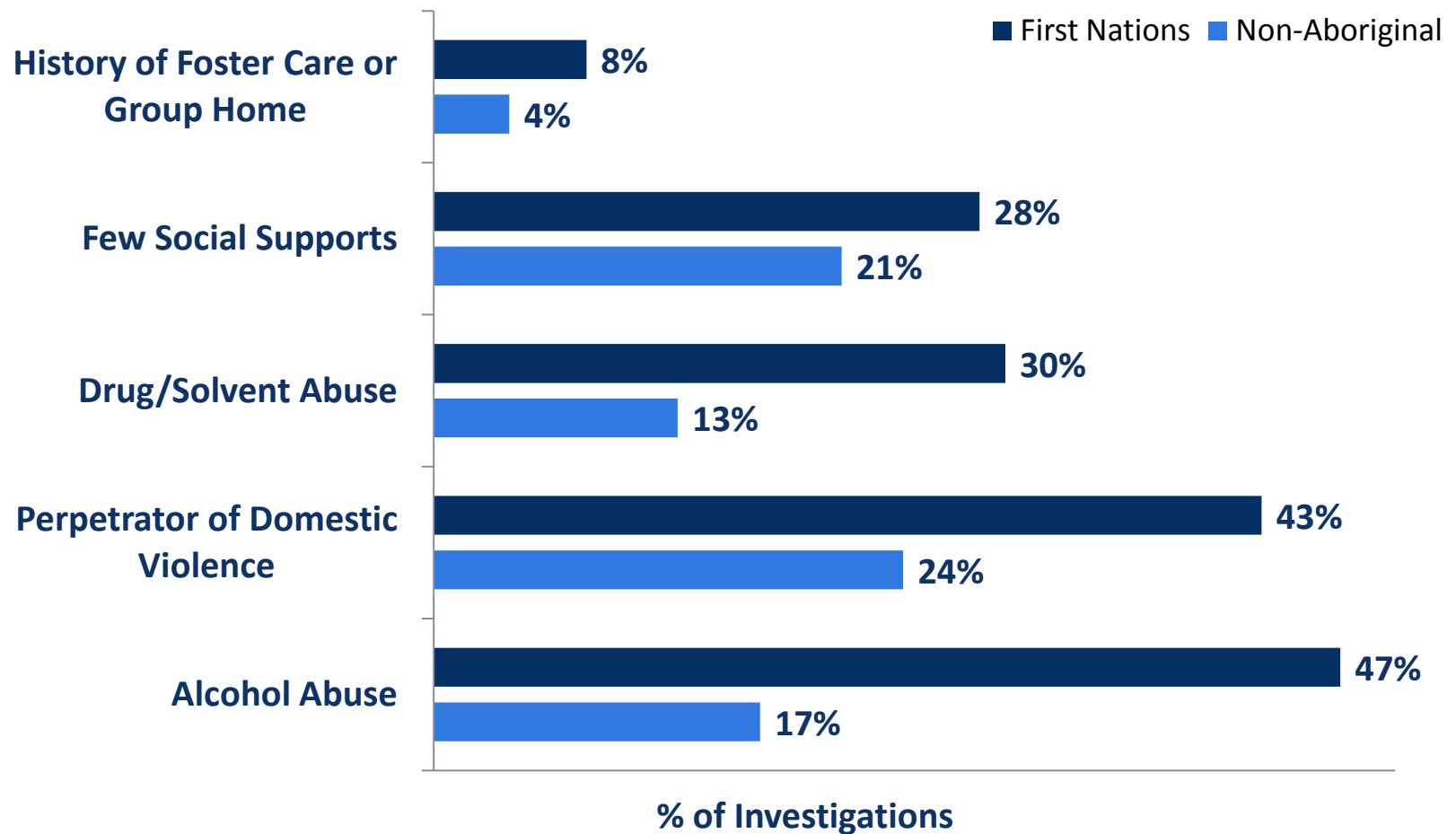
MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS NOTED FOR PRIMARY CAREGIVERS IN FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES



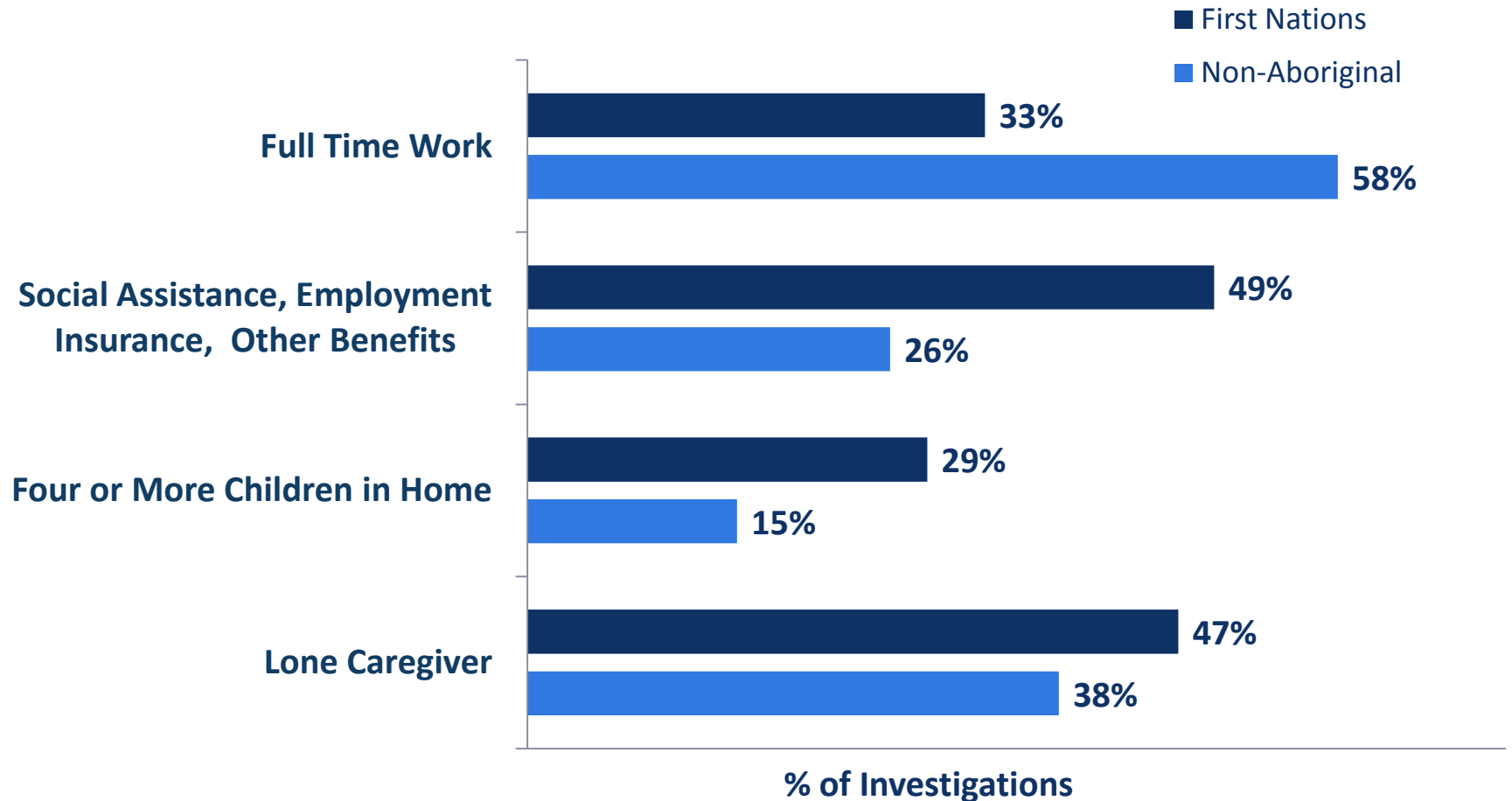
RISK FACTORS NOTED FOR PRIMARY FEMALE CAREGIVERS IN FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES



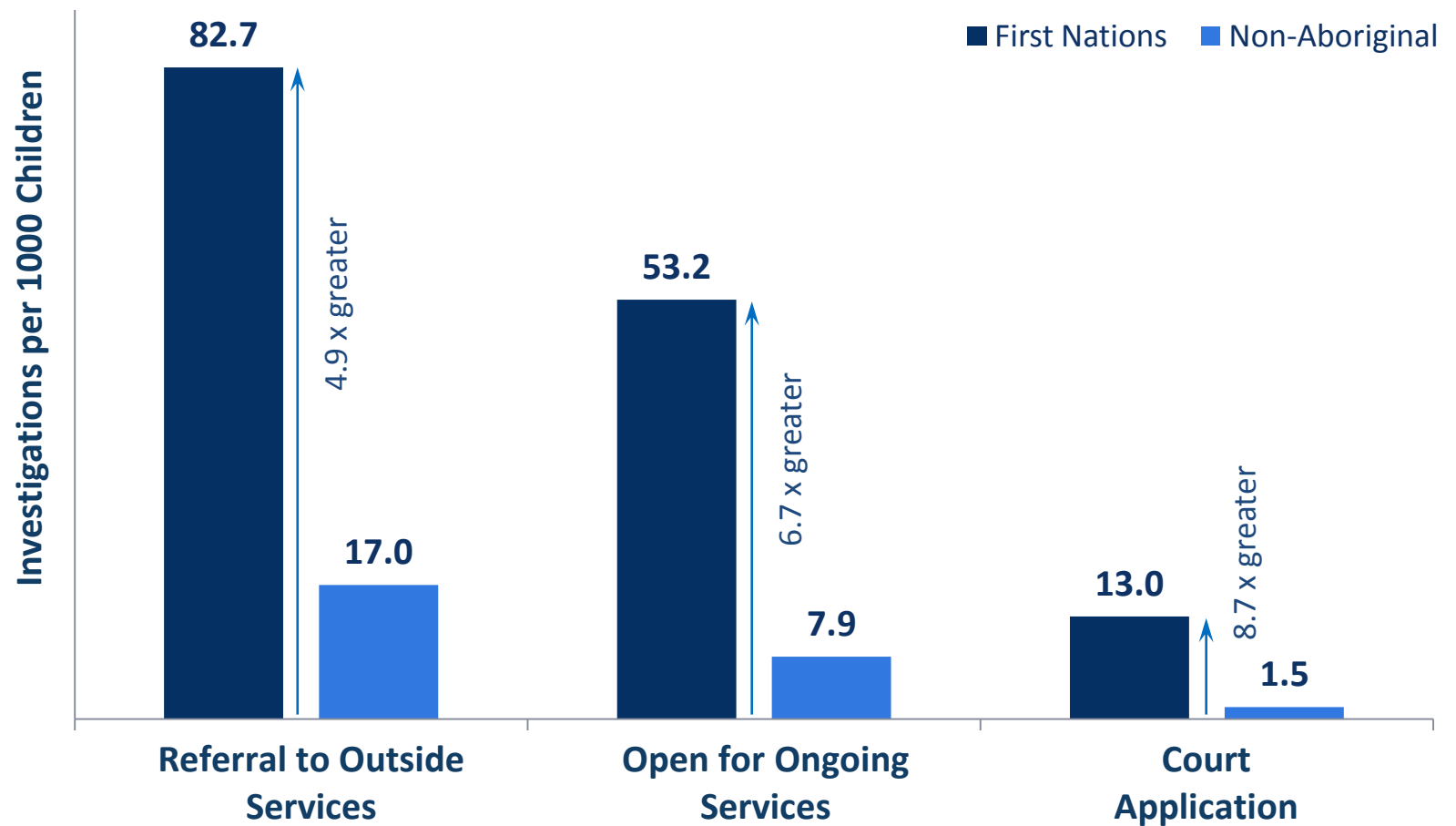
RISK FACTORS NOTED FOR PRIMARY MALE CAREGIVERS IN FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES



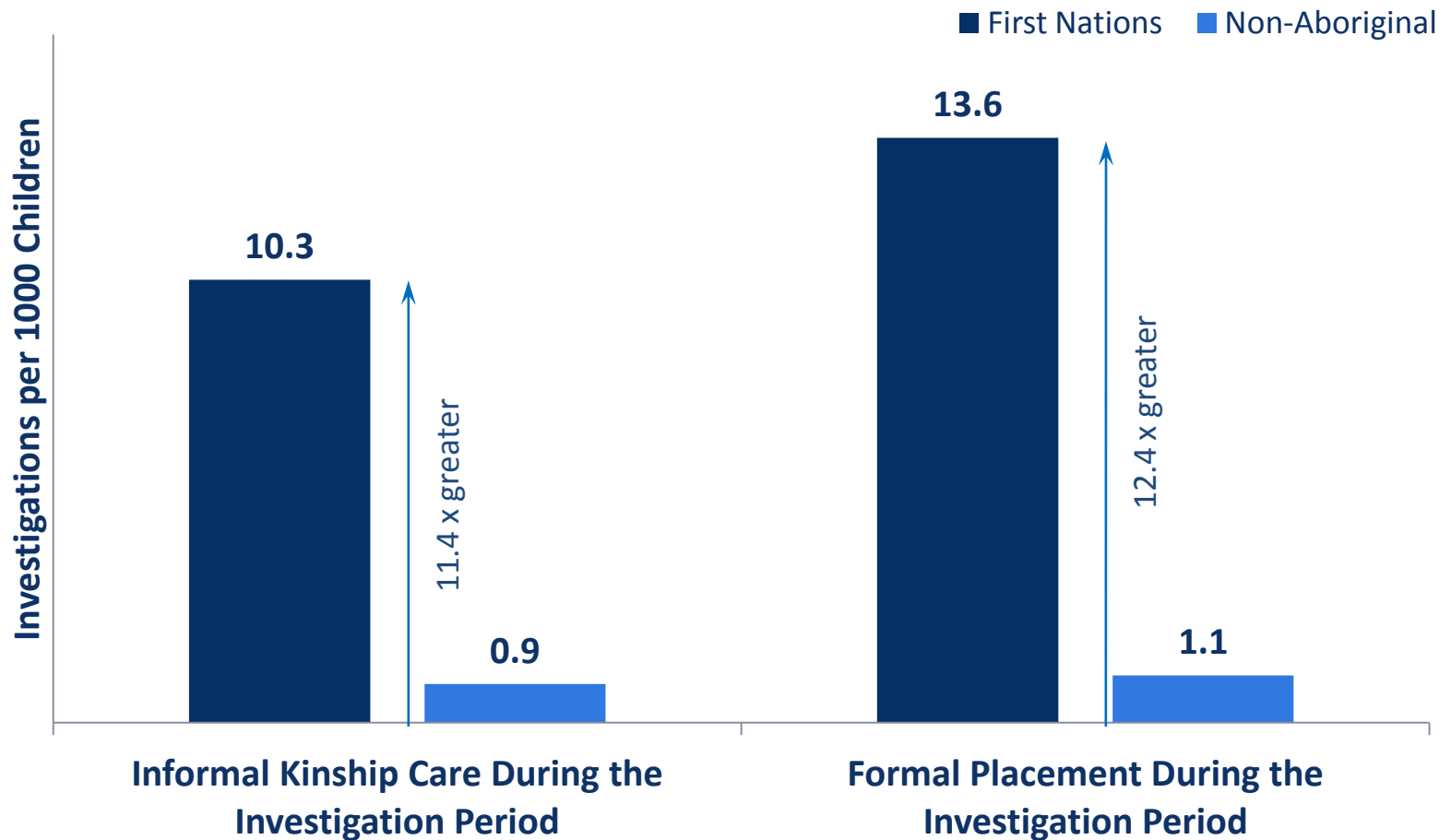
FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS NOTED FOR FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES



CASES REMAINING OPEN FOR SERVICES, REFERRALS TO OUTSIDE SERVICES AND COURT APPLICATIONS FOR INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED IN SAMPLED AGENCIES

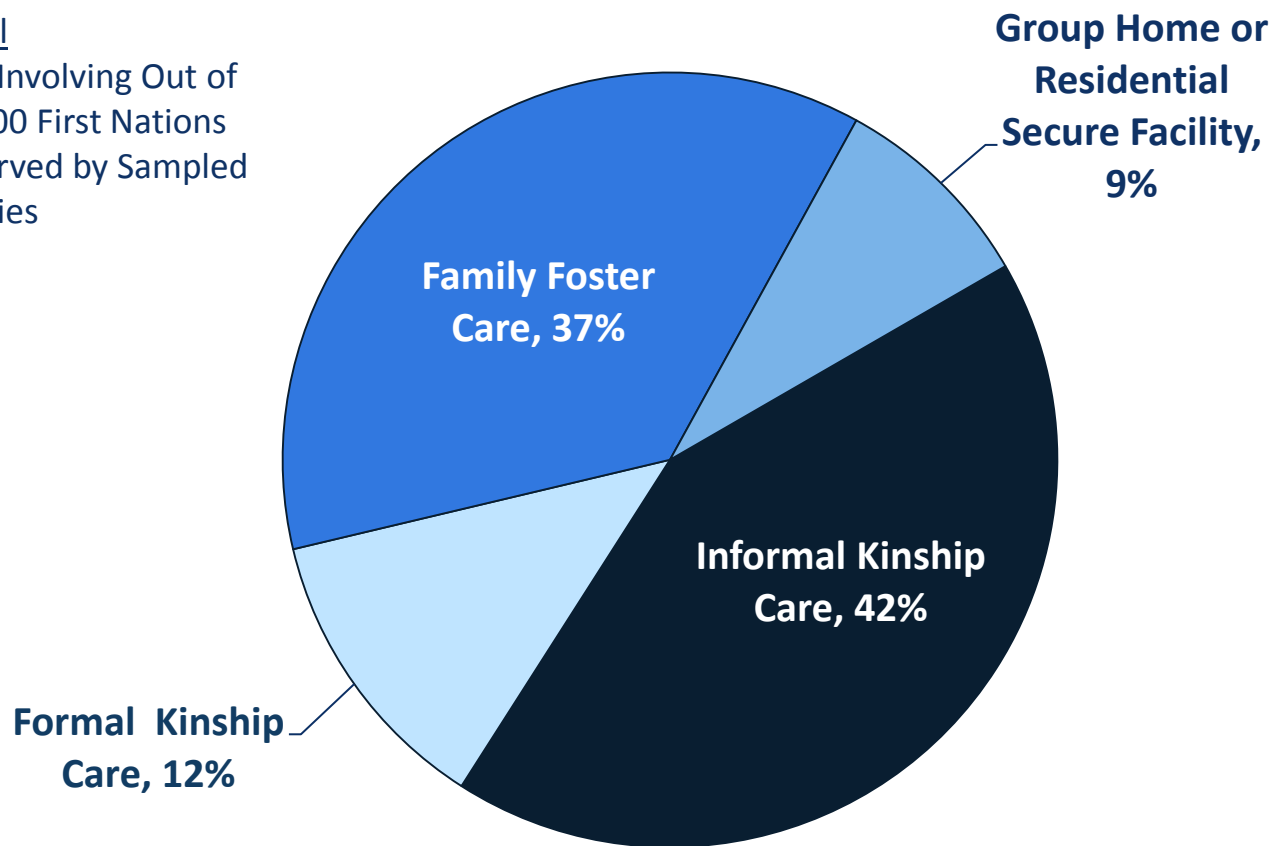


RATE OF INFORMAL KINSHIP CARE AND FORMAL OUT-OF-HOME CARE DURING FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES (FN &P/T)

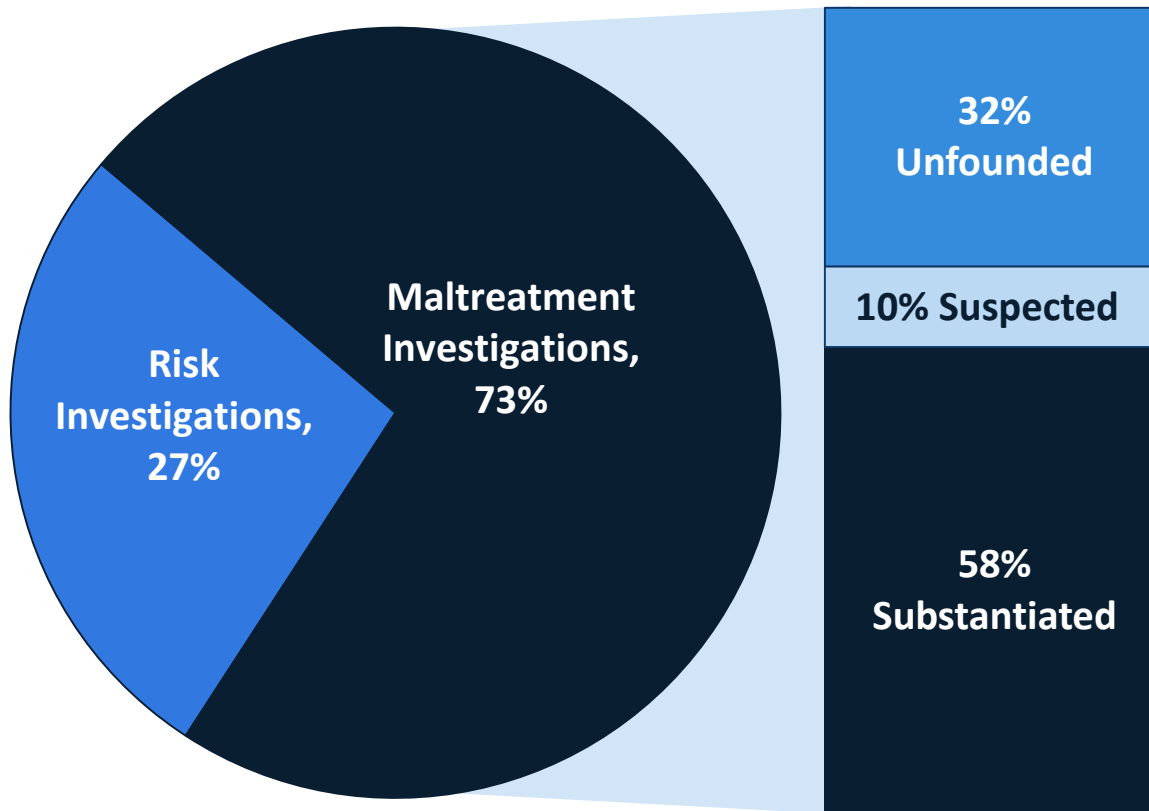


TYPE OF OUT OF HOME CARE DURING THE INVESTIGATION PERIOD – FOR FIRST NATIONS INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES

Total
23.9 Investigations Involving Out of Home Care per 1000 First Nations Children in Areas Served by Sampled Agencies



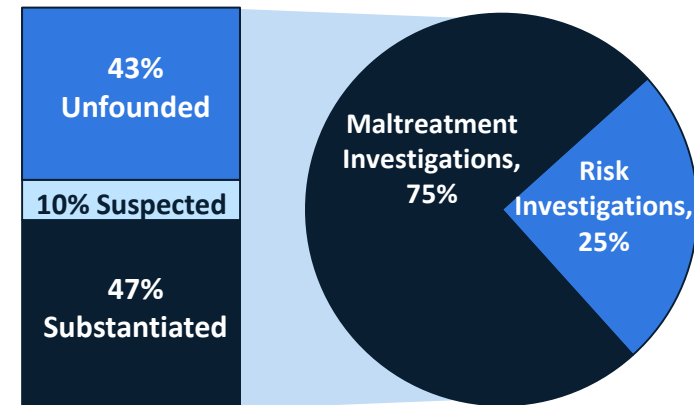
TYPE OF INVESTIGATION AND LEVEL OF SUBSTANTIATION FOR INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES



First Nations

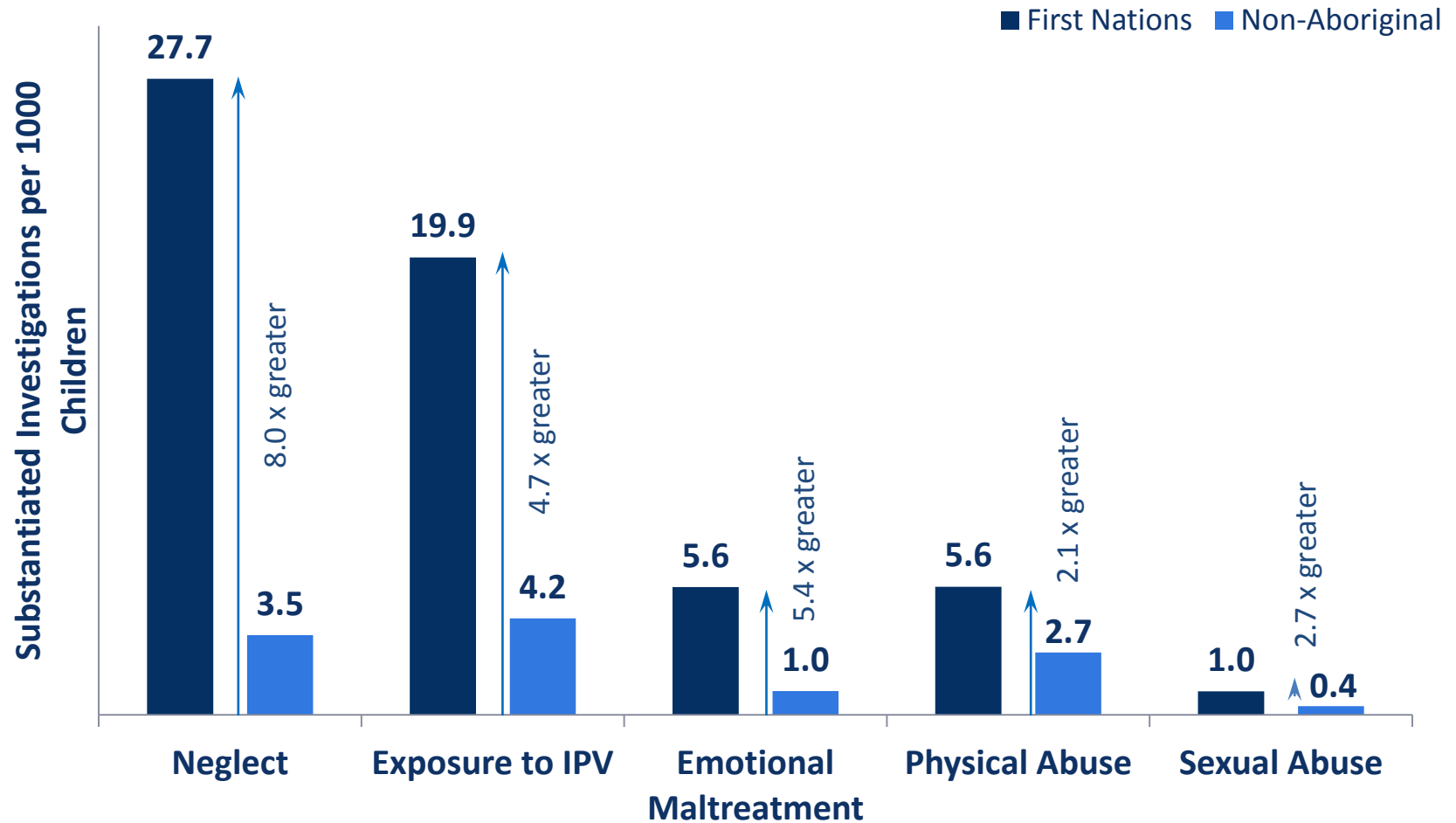
Total Investigations per 1000 Children in Areas Served by Sampled Agencies

First Nations: 140.6
Non-Aboriginal: 33.5



Non-Aboriginal

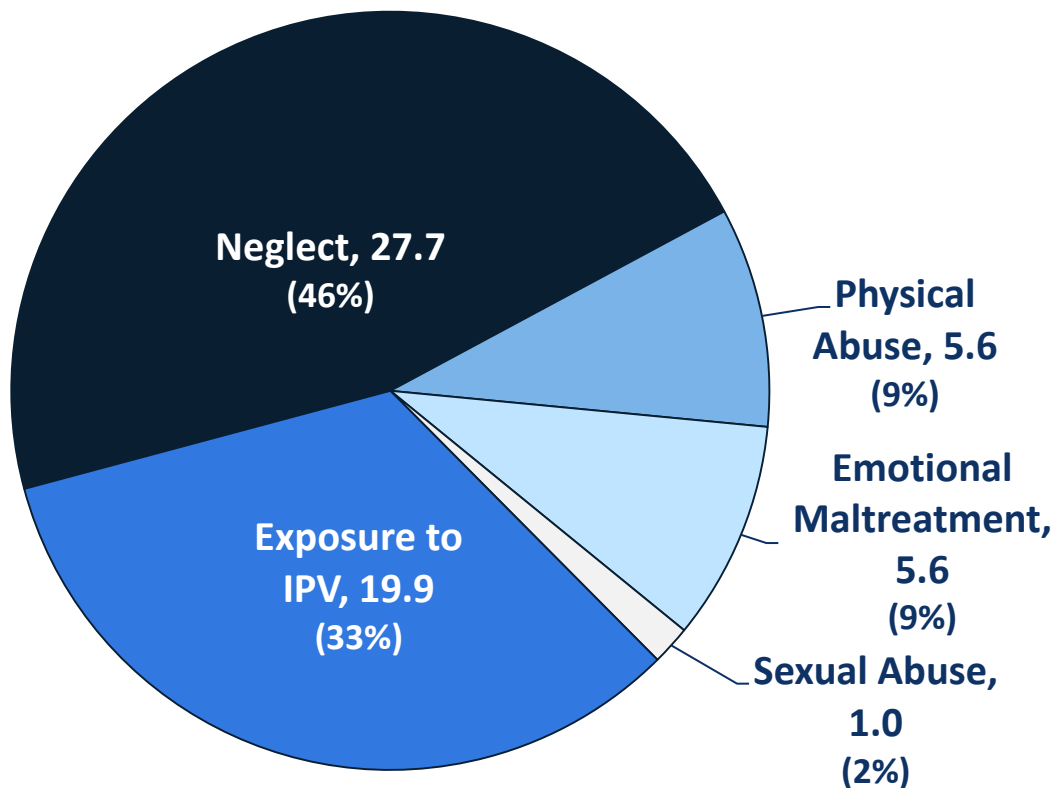
PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF MALTREATMENT IN SUBSTANTIATED FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL MALTREATMENT INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES



PRIMARY CATEGORIES OF MALTREATMENT IN SUBSTANTIATED FIRST NATIONS AND NON-ABORIGINAL MALTREATMENT INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES

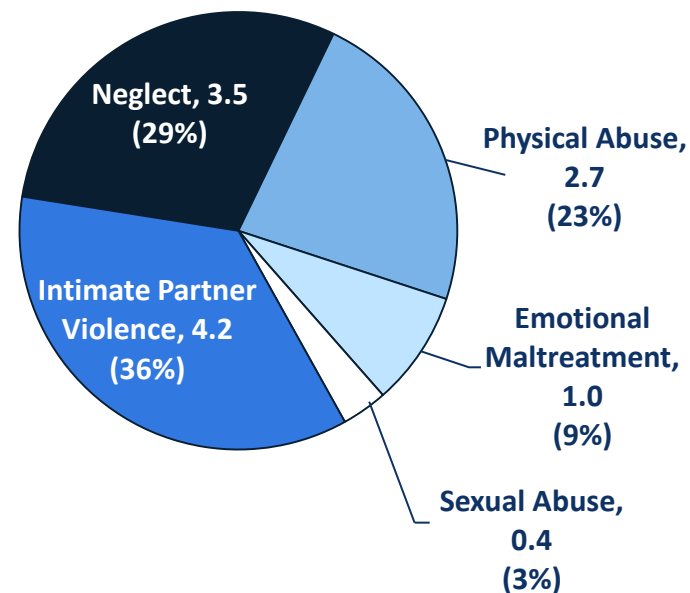
First Nations

59.8 Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations per 1,000 Children

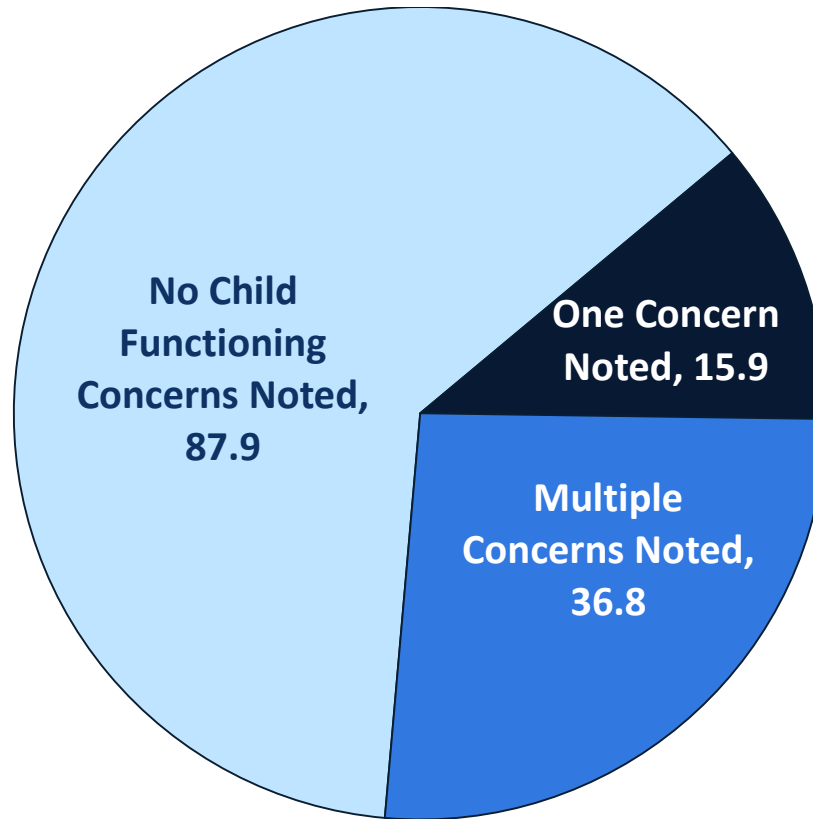


Non-Aboriginal

11.8 Substantiated Maltreatment Investigations per 1,000 Children

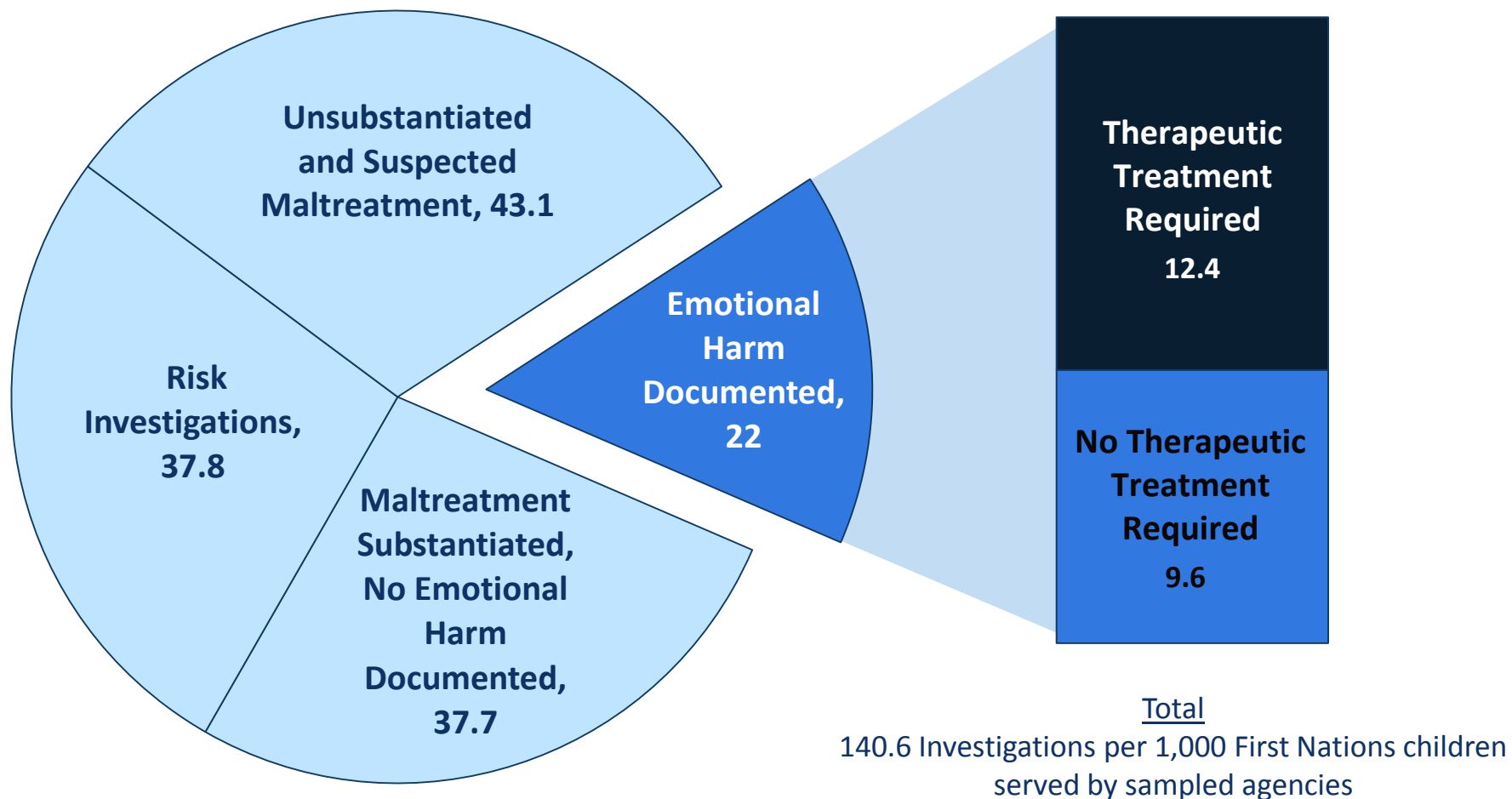


CHILD FUNCTIONING CONCERNS IN FIRST NATIONS INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES

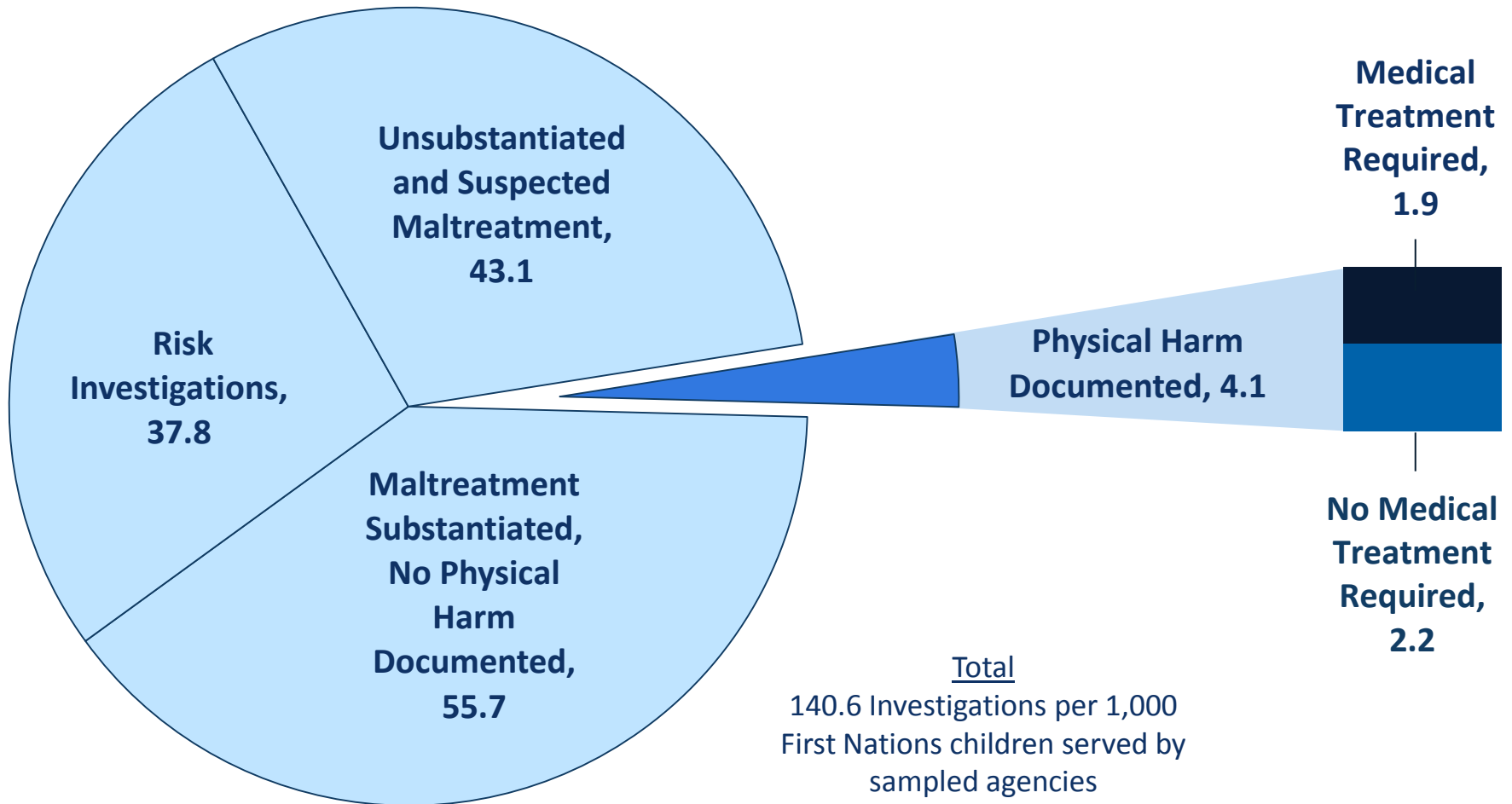


Total
140.6 Investigations per 1,000
First Nations children served by
sampled agencies

DOCUMENTED EMOTIONAL HARM IN FIRST NATIONS INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES



DOCUMENTED PHYSICAL HARM IN FIRST NATIONS INVESTIGATIONS CONDUCTED BY SAMPLED AGENCIES



FNCIS-2008 KEY FINDINGS

- **In the agencies included in the CIS-2008 sample:**
 - **Overrepresentation began at first contact with agencies and was amplified with every major case disposition during investigation period.**
 - **Caregiver risk and household structural concerns were identified in a greater percentage of First Nations than non-Aboriginal investigations.**
 - **52% of First Nations substantiated maltreatment investigations involved neglect.**

FNCIS-2008 KEY FINDINGS

- **In the agencies included in the CIS-2008 sample:**
 - **The First Nations rate of out of home care during the investigation period was more than 10 times the non-Aboriginal rate. Still,**
 - most investigated First Nations children remained at home
 - most of those who experienced out of home care were in kinship care
 - **Most First Nations investigations did not involve concerns about:**
 - Multiple child functioning issues
 - Severe physical harm
 - Severe emotional harm

FNCIS-2008 CONCLUSIONS & NEXT STEPS

- **Many First Nations families involved in child welfare investigations may require programs offering longer term, comprehensive services designed to help them address the multiple factors – such as poverty, substance abuse, domestic violence and social isolation – which pose chronic challenges to their abilities to ensure the well being of First Nations children.**
- **Next Steps**
 - **Dissemination of Kiskisik Awasisak findings**
 - **Engagement of First Nations child welfare organizations in analyses comparing data from provincial/territorial and First Nations agencies**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- **Full report to be released this evening on CWRP.CA**
 - **Soon to be available on AFN website**
- **English version briefing document currently available from www.cwrp.ca**
 - **French version to be posted soon**
- **For questions about the report or study, contact: vandna.sinha@mcgill.ca**
- **FNCIS-2008 advisory committee members working on provincial – level dissemination efforts**

KEY CIS-2008 RESEARCH TEAM MEMBERS & CURRENT FNCIS-2008 ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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