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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
RESEARCH AGENCY

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June 21, 1985

NCJRS

OCT 17 1986

ACQUISITIONS

TO:

FROM: Gretchen Keiser *G. Keiser*  
Legislative Analyst

RE: Child Sexual Abuse: The Incidence, Victims and Perpetrators  
Research Request 85-339

You requested this agency to compile general information on child sexual abuse. This memorandum summarizes the information we obtained as follows:

- I. The Incidence of Child Sexual Abuse - in Alaska and nationwide (pages 1 - 3);
- II. The Victims of Child Sexual Abuse - their characteristics, the long-term effects, and treatment services (pages 4 - 8); and
- III. The Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse - their characteristics, Alaska statistics, pedophile associations, and treatment (pages 8 - 12).

The Incidence of Child Sexual Abuse

The reporting of child sexual abuse in Alaska has dramatically increased in recent years.<sup>1</sup> The Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) received 1,167 reports of child sexual abuse in FY 84, a 90 percent increase over the 613 reports in FY 83.<sup>2</sup> Additional data from the Council on Domestic

<sup>1</sup>Child sexual abuse commonly refers to acts of incest, exploitation, rape, intercourse and molestation perpetrated against children under 18 years of age.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted, however, that reports of other forms of child maltreatment in Alaska are much more common than those of sexual abuse. According to the DFYS, the 5,574 child maltreatment cases reported in FY 83 fall into three categories: neglect (63 percent), physical abuse (26 percent) and sexual abuse (11 percent) (see Attachment A).

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Violence and Sexual Assault, although not strictly limited to cases of sexual abuse, indicate that about 12 percent of the 2,811 new victims served by the 18 funded programs statewide during FY 84 were children under 18 years of age.

How do the above mentioned cases of child sexual abuse in Alaska reported to the State's primary child protective service agency (DFYS) compare with national information? What is the relationship between the reporting statistics and the actual incidence of child sexual abuse? In other words, how prevalent is child sexual abuse? Answers to these questions are often not straightforward, but are provided to some degree as follows:

1. According to a recent national study, only about one-third of the cases of child maltreatment known to professionals were reported to Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies.<sup>3</sup> These professionals include those in juvenile probation, law enforcement, public health departments, schools, hospitals, and mental health and social service agencies.
2. According to the national and DFYS child protective services data, roughly 45 percent (national) to 55 percent (DFYS; FY 83) of the reported cases are eventually substantiated. Nationally, however, roughly half of the reports were determined to be unsubstantiated by CPS agencies because of insufficient evidence or an inability to investigate or because the report was not considered sufficiently serious.
3. According to available data, Alaska appears to have a higher reporting of child sexual abuse than nationwide. Reported and substantiated incidence rates of child sexual abuse in Alaska and nationwide are:

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<sup>3</sup>Study Findings: National Study on the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1981.

	<u>Alaska<sup>a</sup></u>	<u>Nationwide</u>
Reported cases	3.4/1,000 children	1.2/1,000 <sup>b</sup>
Substantiated reports	1.9/1,000	0.7/1,000 <sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>FY 83 records from the Division of Family and Youth Services.

<sup>b</sup>Highlights of Official Child Neglect and Abuse Reporting, 1983. American Association for Protecting Children, Denver, Colorado, 1985.

<sup>c</sup>Includes estimated cases known to a wide array of professionals, as indicated in Study Findings: National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1981.

4. Reports of child sexual abuse to the DFYS in FY 84 nearly doubled to 6.7 reports/1,000 children. As public and professional awareness of child sexual abuse has grown nationwide, it is generally believed that people are more likely to recognize and report child abuse than in the past. This awareness and willingness to report suspected child abuse cases probably accounts for much of the increased reporting, rather than an actual increase in incidence rates.
5. The actual incidence of child sexual abuse is undoubtedly higher, both in Alaska and nationally, than the incidences reported to professionals. The previously discussed reporting statistics based on cases known to Child Protective Services agencies and other professionals do not include those unreported child sexual abuse cases known to other individuals or family members. It is impossible to estimate the extent of these unreported cases. Furthermore, there is an indeterminate number of cases unknown to anyone but the victim and the perpetrator. In very rough numbers based on DFYS data and national assumptions regarding nonreporting, we estimate that between 1,000 and 2,000 Alaska children were victims of sexual abuse in 1984. This represents less than one percent of Alaska children under the age of 18.
6. Viewed from another perspective, national statistics reported at the U.S. Judicial Conference in October 1984, indicate that 40 percent of the nation's children will be sexually molested before they reach the age of 18. This estimate appears to be much higher than our above estimate of the recent incidence of child sexual abuse in Alaska would indicate, despite the fact that Alaska appears to have higher reporting than nationwide.

### The Victims of Child Sexual Abuse

Characteristics. Nationwide data for the period 1976 - 1982 indicate a consistent pattern of sexual abuse reported among older children (12 - 17-year-olds) in contrast to a higher incidence of neglect in very young children (0 - 2-year-olds).<sup>4</sup> Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of sexual abuse victims, their families and abusers in comparison with those of victims of all types of maltreatment and the U.S. population as a whole.

Sexually abused children are a relatively distinct group of child victims who generally experience little additional maltreatment (e.g. neglect or physical abuse). As indicated in Table 1, the sexually abused child tends to be older than other maltreated children or U.S. children in general and is predominately female (85 percent) and white. The family of a sexually abused child experiences a lower incidence of female head of household and public assistance than families of all maltreated children. The American Humane Association suggests that as reporting of child sexual abuse has increased in recent years, more "average" American families--less tied to the public welfare system and with fewer socially defined problems of alcohol or drug dependency--are being identified as sexually abusive.

It is important to note that the average age of caretakers of sexually abuse children, as well as that of caretakers of all maltreated children, tends to be lower than that of caretakers in the U.S. population in general. These caretakers tend to have their children at a younger age. According to these national data, persons who become parents at younger ages clearly are at greater risk of later being involved in child abuse and neglect situations.

Effects on the Victim. The literature contains numerous summaries of the devastating short and long-term effects that sexual abuse has upon children. Researchers have documented the following effects:

- Immediate reactions of guilt, depression, shame and loss of self-esteem. A common response is that the victim believes he/she is the offender.
- Disruption of the child's normal psychosexual development and, in very young children, possible long-term retardation of physical and intellectual development.

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<sup>4</sup>Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective. The American Humane Association, 1984.

TABLE 1  
 CHARACTERISTICS OF VICTIMS, THEIR FAMILIES AND PERPETRATORS IN REPORTED CASES OF SEXUAL ABUSE AND ALL TYPES OF  
 MALTREATMENT AND THE U.S. POPULATION (Composite Data: 1976 - 1982)

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Sexual Abuse Only</u>	<u>All Types of Child Maltreatment</u>	<u>U.S. Population (1980 Census)</u>
<u>Child Characteristics</u>			
Average Age of Victim (years)	10.5	7.4	9.4
Sex			
% female	84.8	50.3	48.9
% male	15.2	49.7	51.1
Race			
% white	74.7	67.6	78.6
% black	15.3	21.0	14.7
% other	10.0	11.4	6.7
<u>Family Characteristics</u>			
% female-headed families	21.3	40.8	17.0
% receiving public assistance	35.3	45.0	11.9
Average number of children in home	2.4	2.2	1.9
<u>Caretaker Characteristics</u>			
Average age (years)	35.9	31.9	36.5
Sex			
% female	54.7	62.2	--
% male	45.3	37.8	--
Relationship to victim			
% parent	96.8	97.0	--
% other relative	2.4	2.4	--
% other	0.7	0.5	--
% natural parent	77.9	87.4	--
<u>Perpetrator Characteristics</u>			
Average age (years)	35.3	32.0	--
Sex			
% female	21.0	60.8	--
% male	79.0	39.2	--
Relationship to victim			
% parent	77.4	94.2	--
% other relative	16.3	4.0	--
% other	6.3	1.8	--
% natural parent	56.5	85.0	--

Source: Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective, The American Humane Association, 1984.  
 Prepared by the House Research Agency, June 1985.

- Dramatic behavior changes, including sexual promiscuity, runaway behavior, prostitution and hysterical seizures.
- Long-term conditions of substance abuse, sexual dysfunction, delinquency, depression, mental illness, negative self-image and suicidal tendencies.

Evidence suggests that forms of deviant sexual contact that do not involve intercourse can lead to levels of psychological disturbance and long-term damage as severe as those produced by sexual intercourse. Available research also suggests that there is a relationship between childhood abuse or neglect and later adolescent misbehavior. According to one study of 150 adjudicated delinquents, however, child abuse is believed to be a complicating, contributing factor in delinquency rather than the cause of the delinquent behavior.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, it is likely that untreated, sexually abused children perpetuate the abuse cycle through violence toward others (e.g. children) as they grow up and reach adulthood.

Treatment Services for Victims. The child protective service (CPS) agencies provide a variety of services to the sexual abused child and his/her family. These services range from less intensive homemaker and day care respite services, social worker counseling or referral to other counseling professionals to more intensive crisis intervention services, out-of-home placement in foster or residential care, or court action. In addition, CPS agencies strive to place sufficient staff resources into preventive and early intervention services. However, the staff resources of CPS agencies have not increased at a pace commensurate with the dramatic increase in reporting of child abuse and neglect cases, both in Alaska and nationwide.

Since FY 78, the Division of Family and Youth Services (DFYS) has witnessed a 173 percent increase in social worker caseloads, while staff resources have increased only 18 percent. As of January 1985, social worker caseloads in 22 of the 33 DFYS offices statewide exceeded a maximum caseload standard of 50. Alaska is not unusual in this regard; according to the American Humane Association, a recent survey indicates that average caseloads have increased in 28 states. As caseloads increase, the amount of in-depth services provided for individual cases decreases.

Ideally, the DFYS would like to emphasize preventive and early intervention services in cases of child abuse and neglect. In practice, however, the agency spends most of its time responding to crisis or mandated services. A great deal of staff time is spent investigating,

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<sup>5</sup>"The Abuse-Delinquency Connection and Juvenile Court Responsibility." D. Sandberg, Justice For Children, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring, 1985.

referring and managing cases, rather than providing direct services to clients. However, it is argued that this approach enables the DFYS to spread limited resources further. The allocation of resources by the DFYS in its FY 83 budget of \$20.7 million was as follows:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Percent of Budget</u>
Residential care	36
Caseload management	32
Foster care	19
Preventive services	8
Preventive licensing	3
Homemaker services	2
Day care services	1

Source: Child Abuse and Neglect in Alaska. Report to the Governor by the Division of Family and Youth Services, Department of Health and Social Services, September 1984.

According to Frank Hickey of the Division of Family and Youth Services, the division's FY 86 budget includes money to hire additional staff. Clerical, administrative and social worker positions will be added throughout the state. However, he does not anticipate a significant shift by the division to preventive and early intervention services as a result of these new staff resources. The new personnel will primarily be directed toward reducing the overwhelming caseloads which currently exist statewide.

Nationwide, child sexual abuse cases tend to receive more services from social agencies than other forms of child maltreatment (e.g. physical abuse or neglect). According to data reported by the American Humane Association, 74 percent of sexual abuse cases reported to CPS agencies during the period 1976 - 1982 received some sort of service.<sup>6</sup> In comparison, only 36 percent of all reported cases of child maltreatment received service, while the majority (54 percent) were closed after investigation. Apparent reasons for the greater emphasis on child sexual abuse cases include: 1) the potential for serious long-term emotional and psychological consequences; 2) the particularly strong reaction, by professionals and the public, to this type of maltreatment; and 3) the laws in many states which mandate service in sexual abuse cases.

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<sup>6</sup>Trends in Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Perspective, The American Humane Association, 1984.

Attachment B (House Research Agency Memorandum 83-202) provides a summary of various treatment services provided by the State and some model treatment and preventive programs nationwide. Most professionals interviewed at that time felt that the DFYS concluded investigations of reported cases rapidly and thoroughly, thereby intervening and protecting children in abusive situations. The division's emphasis on maintaining the family unit, if possible, mirrors the current viewpoint of professionals in general. It should be noted, however, that national statistics indicate a greater use of foster care (out-of-home placements) in sexual abuse cases than in other child maltreatment cases. Clearly, there are cases of particularly abusive families where the only hope may lie with permanent removal of the child. In cases of incest, many professionals believe that it is essential to remove the offender from the home, commonly for six months to a year until satisfactory progress has been made in offender treatment. Child sex offenders are discussed in greater detail in the following section of this memorandum.

#### The Perpetrators of Child Sexual Abuse

Characteristics. There is no succinct profile which describes the child sex offender. Offenders vary widely in their criminal histories, age, socioeconomic background, personality, psychiatric diagnosis, race and religion. As indicated previously in Table 1, these perpetrators of child sexual abuse are predominately male (79 percent) with an "average" age of 35 years and are usually known to the child. Although less frequently than in other forms of child maltreatment, natural parents commit the majority of sexual abuse acts against children. Stepparents and other relatives are also common offenders, while nonrelated individuals were offenders in only 6 percent of the reported cases of child sexual abuse reviewed by the American Humane Association. Incest is estimated to occur in 14 percent of all American families, with fathers, stepfathers, uncles and brothers the most common perpetrators. It is important to note, however, that a national study indicates that in 46 percent of the reported sexual abuse cases, the mother or mother substitute was at least passively involved because she allowed a known problem to continue without providing help to the child.<sup>7</sup>

According to the literature, a substantial number of child molesters begin their sexually assaultive behavior when they are adolescents. One national study of 400 cases of verified child sexual abuse revealed

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<sup>7</sup>National Study of the Incidence and Severity of Child Abuse and Neglect. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1981.

that 35 percent of the cases were perpetrated by juveniles.<sup>8</sup> Although not specifically identified as sexual acts against children, about 14 percent of the persons arrested for forcible rape and sex offences in Alaska during 1983 were juveniles under 18 years of age.<sup>9</sup>

Sex offenders are only rarely "mentally ill". The "average" offender is diagnosed as having a behavior problem rather than a psychiatric condition. These individuals may be law-abiding citizens in all other respects, while at the same time they possess compulsive thoughts and urges to carry out sexually aggressive behaviors. Many develop an interest in deviant sexual behavior at an early age (11 and 12 years) and learn the behavior primarily through observation and direct experience. One behaviorist and social learning theorist, Richard Laws, notes that early deviant sexual events become learned behaviors. He argues that sex offenders learn how to become pedophiles or child molesters over a period of time.<sup>10</sup>

Although most of these individuals may attempt to control sexually deviant thoughts, their controls break down and they act out their sexual urges. After an initial period of guilt and regaining of control, they often begin to act on resurgent sexual urges again. Often sex offenders start their sexual deviant practices with "nuisance" types of offences (exhibitionism, voyeurism, frottage and obscene phone calls) and then graduate to sexually assaultive behaviors. Sex offenders are often repeat offenders. One study of 411 sex offenders treated as outpatients over a ten-year period indicated that 232 child molesters averaged 76 victims and completed 167 molestations each.<sup>11</sup>

Alaska Statistics. According to Susan Humphrey-Barnett of the Department of Corrections, convicted and pretrial sex offenders make up about 20 percent of the current statewide prison population of 2,000.<sup>12</sup> She also indicated that roughly one-third of the 300 new inmates entering the State's prison system each year are sex offenders. Gayle Horetski, Assistant Attorney General in the Chief Prosecutor's Office, provided

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<sup>8</sup>"Legal Intervention in the Sexual Victimization of Children". D. Lloyd, Change, 1982, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 4.

<sup>9</sup>Crime in Alaska 1983. Alaska Department of Public Safety.

<sup>10</sup>Retraining Adult Sex Offenders. F. H. Knopp, Safer Society Press, p. 10.

<sup>11</sup>Retraining Adult Sex Offenders, p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>Susan Humphrey-Barnett, Director, Division of Statewide Programs, Department of Corrections. Personal communication, May 24, 1985.

the following information which demonstrates the dramatic increase in recent years in the number of child sexual assault cases prosecuted in Alaska:

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Number of Child Sexual Assault Cases Accepted for Prosecution</u>	<u>Conviction Rate in Child Sexual Assault Cases</u>
1980	34	69 percent
1981	55 (62 percent annual increase)	69 "
1982	76 (38 " " " )	79 "
1983	121 (59 " " " )	72 "
1984	226 (46 " " " )	76 "

Source: Chief Prosecutor's Office, Alaska Department of Law.

Many convicted sex offenders are now receiving the eight-year presumptive sentence in effect in Alaska since 1980. A convicted sex offender may be paroled after serving six years. As is discussed in greater detail later in this memorandum, the State has targeted sex offenders for treatment during the second three years of the average six-year prison term.

Pedophile Associations. You requested that we obtain some information regarding national or regional pedophile organizations which actively promote the early sexualization of children. Several such organizations exist, including the North American Man-Boy Love Association, Rene Guyon Society, Pedophile Information Exchange, and Wonder Girl. According to Officer Frank Feichtinger of the Anchorage Police Department (who is also a member of the Child Sexual Abuse Unit consisting of five APD officers and one State Trooper), these organizations each have from 3,000 to 5,000 members nationwide. The associations have been in existence for years, although Officer Feichtinger suggests that their membership may be increasing because he has observed more advertising in pornographic publications during recent years.

As time permits, Officer Feichtinger cooperates with an informal network of law enforcement personnel throughout the country in tracking the activities of these pedophile organizations. He is not aware of any active chapters of these associations in Alaska, although he has received addresses of Alaska members on association mailing lists confiscated during police raids around the country.

The pedophile associations advertise in adult pornographic magazines and publish their own magazines and books. Their publications are generally for sale in "adult" book stores or through mail order.<sup>13</sup> The associations commonly act as conduits for the member exchange of child pornographic material. Their publications contain personal advertisement sections which allow for the one-to-one exchange of child pornographic material, and in rare cases, the exchange of children. In the rare cases of child exchange which are intercepted by law enforcement officials, the children are typically from broken homes or living on the streets.

Treatment. The majority of sex offender treatment specialists believe that many sex offenders can be treated successfully, provided that:

- the evaluation of the offender is competent;
- the placement is appropriate;
- the treatment mode meets the needs of the client; and
- the offender wants to change.

Sex offenders are treated, not cured. In a general sense, a sex offender receives treatment for his highly habitual (and deviant) sexual preference, similar in concept to the treatment provided to a chronic alcoholic. Once the sex offender accepts responsibility for his deviant behavior, the treatment specialist attempts to teach the individual to control and reduce this behavior. The offender is taught self-control skills and new behavior patterns which in effect suppress the deviant ones.

Additional treatment includes teaching the sex offender to restructure his life in order to maintain self-control over his deviant behavior. In other words, a child molester must avoid situations where children congregate, such as schools, movies and video arcades, much the same way a recovered alcoholic must avoid situations which encourage drinking. A "recovered" sex offender cannot expect to resume a "normal" life. The individual must essentially maintain a life-long vigilance in order to maintain their self-control and to avoid repeating the sex offences.

According to one sex offender treatment specialist, Roger Wolfe of the community-based Northwest Treatment Associates in Seattle, treatment can be successful provided that the offender and counselor realize that major behavioral changes are needed. Sexual offences are not accidents,

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<sup>13</sup>According to Officer Feichtinger, the North American Man-Boy Love Association publications are available in Anchorage.

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but stem from an individual's whole developmental history.<sup>14</sup> Dr. Wolfe reports only a 10 percent failure rate at their sex offender treatment program in Seattle. They encounter some individuals who will not change their deviant behavior regardless of the type or intensity of treatment.

Most professionals in the field would argue that, given the degree of risk a child sexual abuser poses to a community, the best protection for society is some form of treatment for these offenders. Incarceration without treatment is viewed as a temporary solution, at best, and may be unproductive in many cases since the offender can come out of prison with more anger, violent tendencies and deviant sexual fantasies. In cases where the offender is not convicted or criminal charges are not filed, treatment is still indicated. As mentioned in a previous section, for example, an incest offender should be removed from the family for six months to a year until progress has been made in treatment. This issue is discussed in greater detail in a recent House Research Agency memorandum attached for your information (Attachment C).

According to Susan Humphrey-Barnett of the Department of Corrections, the State currently provides treatment to about 100 convicted sex offenders at any one time, roughly one-quarter of the current sex offender prison population in Alaska. Approximately \$340,000 will be spent in FY 85 on sex offender treatment programs at the Hiland Mountain (Eagle River) and the Fairbanks Correctional Centers. Ms. Humphrey-Barnett estimates that the department will spend about \$680,000 in FY 86 for expanded sex offender treatment programs at Eagle River and Fairbanks and an additional program tentatively scheduled to begin at the Lemon Creek Correctional Center in Juneau.

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We hope that this information is useful. Please contact us if we can answers any questions.

GK

Attachments

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<sup>14</sup>Retraining Adult Sex Offenders, p. 18.

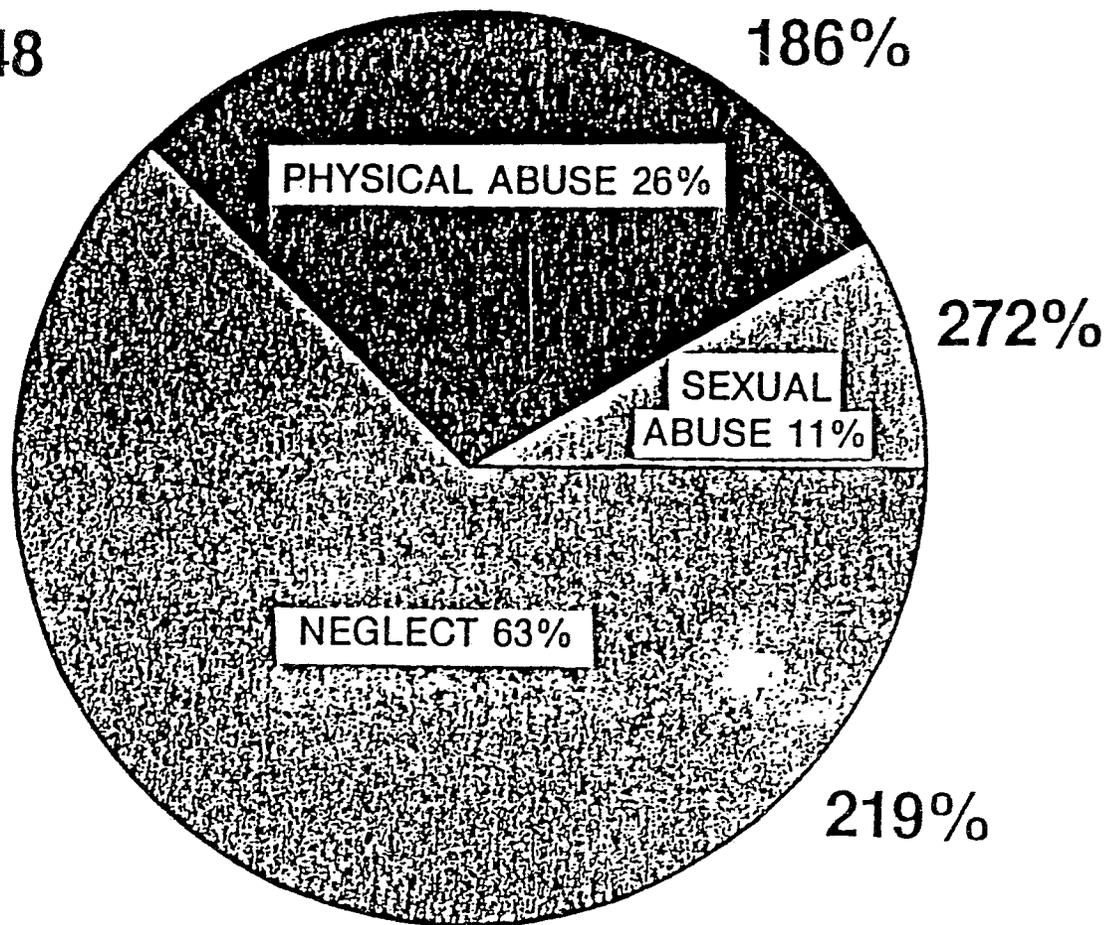
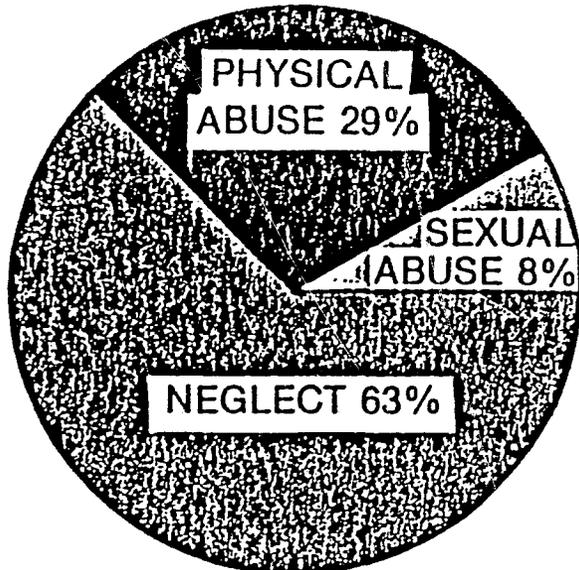
ATTACHMENT A

Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect in Alaska

# REPORTS OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN ALASKA

FY83 Total Reports: 5,574

FY78 Total Reports: 1,748



Source: Child Abuse and Neglect in Alaska.  
Department of Health and Social Services, September 1984.