



The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa's Race-Based Data

In 2017, the Ontario Anti-Racism Act came into effect, providing a framework for public sector organizations to identify and eliminate systemic racism. In addition, in 2018, the government of Ontario mandated the collection of race-based data. This data collection allows for public agencies to support the development of fair policies, equitable strategies, culturally appropriate resources for all communities and to help address the racism and discrimination that exist in government structures.

The Children's Aid Society of Ottawa (CASO) is committed to providing services that are equitable and inclusive. Our 5-year strategic plan outlines the various strategies and initiatives in place to support improved services to families from Black, Racialized, First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities.

As our agency releases our race-based data, we recognize the limitations involved in this report. We acknowledge that our data is incomplete, and this work must, and shall, be prioritized. We also commit to sharing this information on a yearly basis hereafter.

Notwithstanding incomplete data collection, evidence reflects disproportionalities among Black, Racialized, First Nation, Inuit and Métis families.

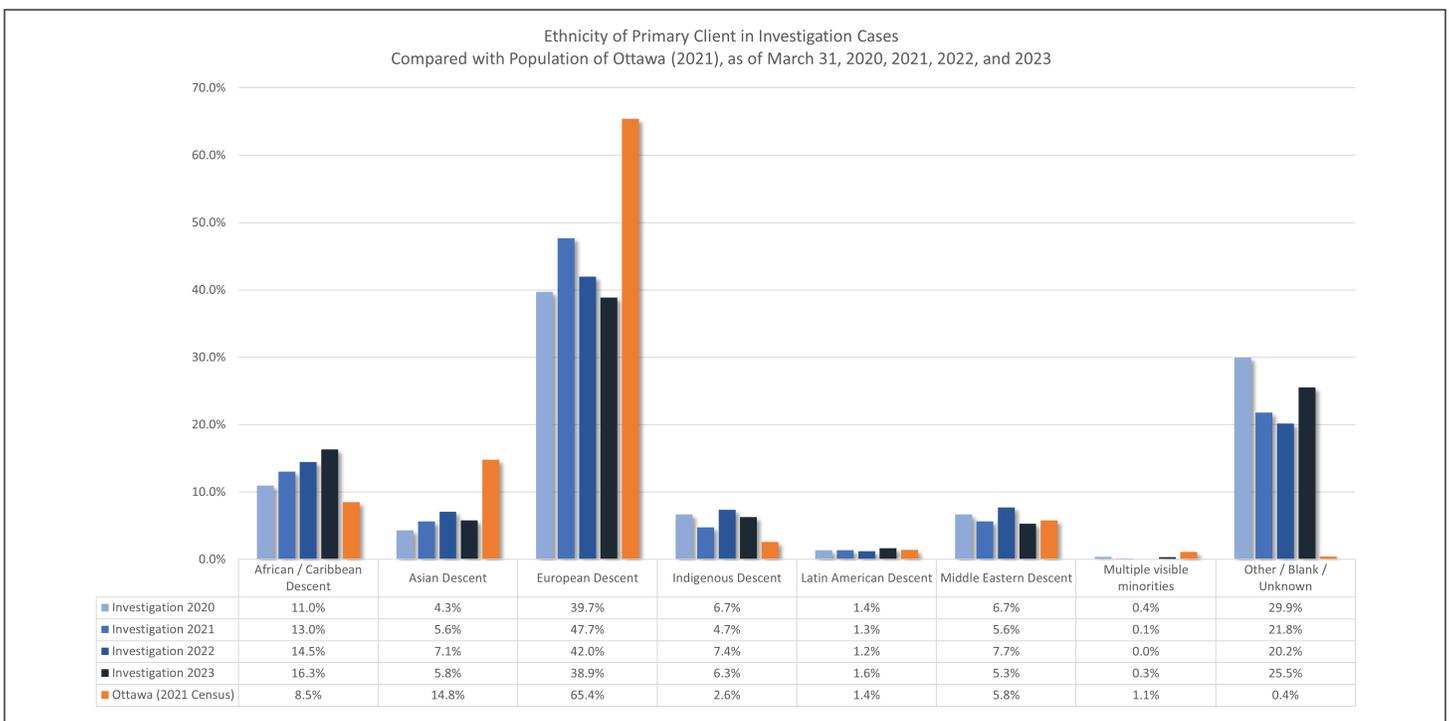
Investigation Data

Protection workers investigate detailed information following a report. Information gathered during an investigation determines if the file is to be closed or if ongoing services are required.

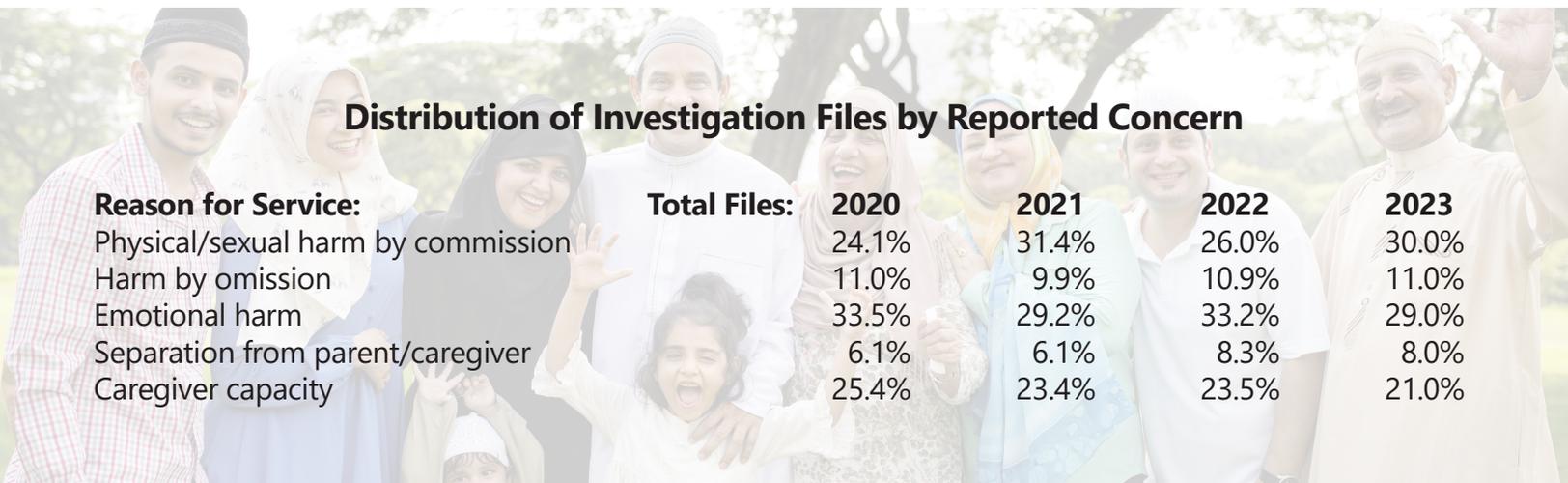
Key Data Findings

CASO's investigation data represents an overrepresentation within the Black, First Nation, Inuit and Métis population groups, while White families are underrepresented among families investigated.

It's important to note that 25.5% of files do not have an identified race, significantly impacting data outcomes.



The data reflects the total open investigation files, as of March 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The columns in orange reflect the Ottawa population, while the blue columns represent the percentage of CASO investigations.



Distribution of Investigation Files by Reported Concern

Reason for Service:

	Total Files:	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical/sexual harm by commission		24.1%	31.4%	26.0%	30.0%
Harm by omission		11.0%	9.9%	10.9%	11.0%
Emotional harm		33.5%	29.2%	33.2%	29.0%
Separation from parent/caregiver		6.1%	6.1%	8.3%	8.0%
Caregiver capacity		25.4%	23.4%	23.5%	21.0%

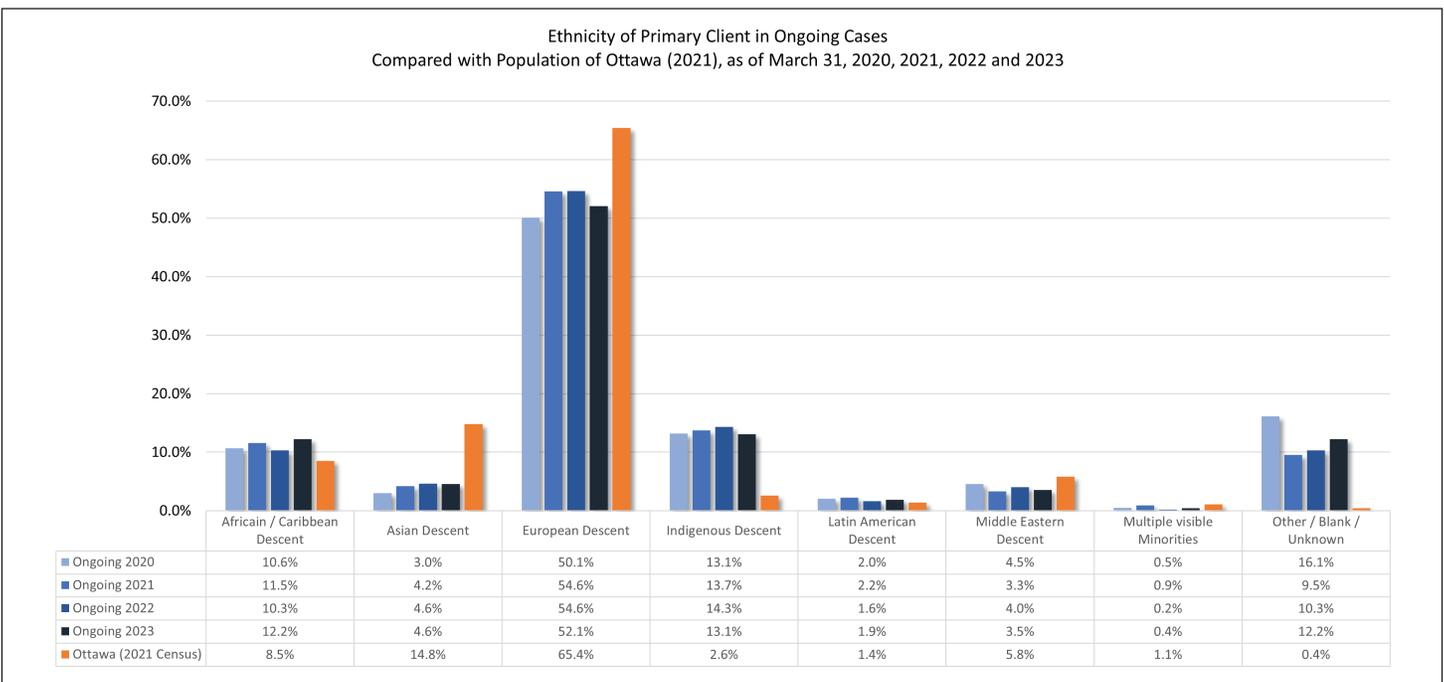
Ongoing Data

An ongoing file is opened when CASO determines a client is in need of additional support services following an investigation.

Key Data Findings

CASO's ongoing service data represents an overrepresentation with the First Nation, Inuit and Métis population group. In contrast, White families are underrepresented among families receiving ongoing services.

Important to note that 12.2% of files (as of March 2023) do not have an identified race, impacting data outcomes.



The data reflects the total ongoing files, as of March 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The columns in orange reflect the Ottawa population, while the blue columns represent the percentage of CASO ongoing files.

Distribution of Ongoing Files by Service Reason

Reason for Service:	Total Files:	2020	2021	2022	2023
Physical/sexual harm by commission		10.2%	10.6%	11.5%	9.8%
Harm by omission		10.8%	10.3%	10.7%	11.0%
Emotional harm		26.6%	21.1%	18.3%	19.3%
Separation from parent/caregiver		11.9%	11.7%	15.7%	18.0%
Caregiver capacity		40.4%	46.2%	43.5%	41.9%

For further details regarding each service definition, read the [Ontario Child Welfare Eligibility Spectrum](#)

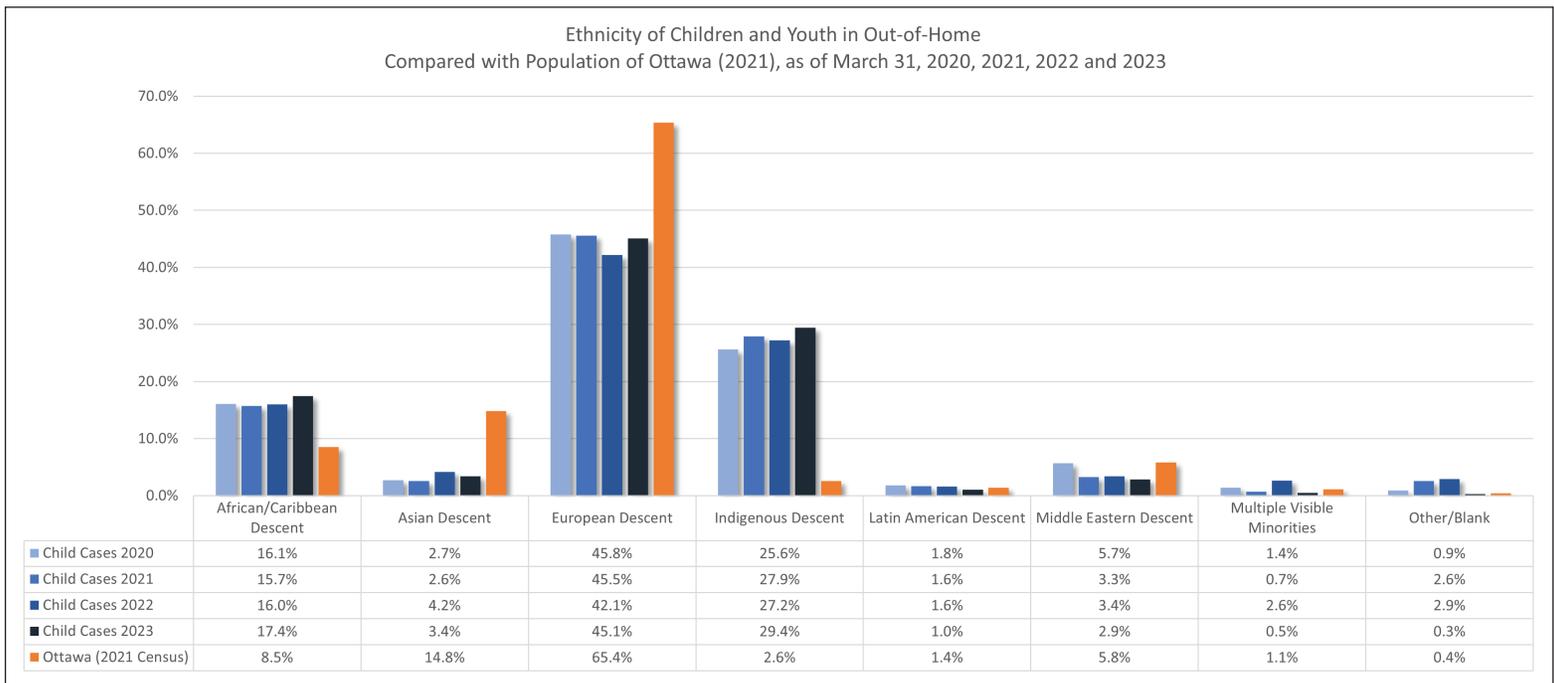
Children in Care (CIC) Data

Key Data Findings

- Black children (African/Caribbean Descent) are admitted into care 2 times more than the proportion of the Black population in Ottawa (*as of 2023*).
- First Nation, Inuit and Métis children are admitted into care 11.3 times more than the proportion of the First Nation, Inuit and Métis population in Ottawa.
- In contrast, White children are underrepresented among children admitted into care.

Black and First Nation, Inuit and Métis children are overrepresented in admissions into care. They are also more likely to be brought into care following an investigation.

It is important to note that 0.3% of files do not have an identified race.



The data reflects the total child in care files, as of March 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. The columns in orange reflect the Ottawa population, while the blue columns represent the percentage of CASO child in care files.

Distribution of Children in Care by Care Type

Reason for Service:	Total Files:	2020	2021	2022	2023
Adoption		10.7%	10.3%	5.5%	9.1%
Child in Care		61.5%	59.2%	58.6%	54.9%
Formal Customary Care		0.7%	0.9%	1.3%	1.8%
Kinship Service		22.9%	24.4%	29.3%	29.7%
Voluntary Youth Services (Youth ages 16-17)		4.3%	5.2%	5.2%	4.4%

Census Data Challenges with Indigenous Populations: Academic Sources (as of January 19, 2023)

Background

“Statistics Canada indicated that across Canada more people are newly identifying as Indigenous on the Census. However, the population counts should be interpreted with caution as the Census generally continues to underrepresent Indigenous populations. For example, in 2016, the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation and the Oneida Nation of the Thames band councils did not give Statistics Canada permission to enter their territory and did not participate in the Census. In addition, less than 50 percent of the members of Munsee-Delaware Nation completed the more detailed questions such as age group” (Middlesex London Health Unit, 2019). **For these reasons, which are likely rooted in a distrust of government due to past and present colonial policies, there is an undercounting of Indigenous people and in particular an undercounting of those with Registered or Treaty Indian status.**

A 2016 urban Indigenous health study led by the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC), Our Health Counts London, indicated that **only 14% of Indigenous adults in London completed the 2011 Census and that the Indigenous population is likely three to four times higher more than that estimated by Statistics Canada**” (Middlesex London Health Unit, 2019).

“Quality issues with census data for Indigenous populations include significant block non-participation by First Nations on-reserve communities; **undercounting of homeless and highly mobile populations (both of which are over-represented in Aboriginal populations); non-participation by Aboriginal people for a variety of additional reasons including a distrust of and/or political disagreement with federal governmental agencies and accessibility with respect to assumed literacy levels.** Finally, some Aboriginal people may participate in the census but not share their Aboriginal identity and/or ancestry information.” (Smylie & Firestone, 2016)

“There is recent evidence that census non-participation in urban areas by Indigenous populations may be especially significant. For example, a health assessment of Inuit living in the City of Ottawa conducted in 2010 using respondent driven sampling found that **only 18% of this self-identified Inuit population reported participating in the 2006 census.**” (Smylie & Firestone, 2016)

Factors Impacting the Reporting of Indigenous Identity in Canada

Over-researching of Indigenous peoples

“First Nations are one of the most studied groups in Canada (Goodman et al., 2018). Colonial governance has meant vast quantities of data and information about First Nations’ citizens, lands, and waters are collected, far beyond what is expected of non-Indigenous Canadians” (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022). **This may cause a reluctance to identify given the bombardment of information.**

Current Data Landscape



Source: (Indigenous Services Canada & The Assembly of First Nations, 2019)

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Consent

First Nations peoples face many challenges regarding consent, including through the Government of Canada's Auditor General, and Indigenous Services Canada. For example, through the Indian Register information, health service providers and pharmacists all submit information to ISC. Therefore "ISC has **direct access to personal information about the health of First Nations individuals without seeking their consent directly**. The presumption is that those who collect the data in the first place have obtained consent. Education, employment, and housing information are likewise collected by service delivery organizations who administer federally funded programs in these fields on behalf of the Crown". **This could result in a distrust regarding identifying as Indigenous to government entities** (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022).

Third Party Data Collection Privacy

"Statistics Canada is empowered to enter into agreements with provinces, other government departments, municipalities, and corporations to collect information for statistical purposes which further expands collection of First Nations data by third parties on behalf of the federal government. A reliance on data security systems of third parties **brings into question the capacity of the Crown to meet its legal obligations to protect First Nation individual's privacy**" (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022).

Nonparticipating Communities in Census

"There is also incomplete coverage for certain surveys because some reserves choose not to participate in surveys. The Census is the largest source of population and socio-economic data on Indigenous people in Canada, however, some communities choose not to be enumerated. Non-participation isn't evenly spread across Canada and limits availability of socio-economic and health indicators in these communities, as well as the accuracy of national statistics. The 2016 Census had the best participation it has ever had, with 14 out of 984 reserves not enumerated. **The reason for not participating is often that there is a lack of trust in government agencies collecting data on First Nations**. Even if a reserve participates in a survey, there may still be gaps in residents choosing to participate which may result in data quality issues with on-reserve data (i.e., those who participate may differ from those who do not)." (Indigenous Services Canada & The Assembly of First Nations, 2019)

Prejudice/Disaggregation of Data within the Census

"It is a great system [the Census] when looking at a population the size of Canada, roughly 37 million (Statistics Canada, 2020a). The total estimated First Nations population is about one million (Statistics Canada, 2019a). As a result, when First Nations' data is separated from data concerning others, **the First Nations' data becomes less anonymous**. In some communities the populations are **so small it would be easy to identify individuals from so called anonymized data**. **Even if First Nations anonymized data is broken out by larger groupings, there are so few communities in some provinces that it would be easy to determine what community the data identifies**. **This could expose an entire community to prejudice**. Statistics Canada has policies to suppress some data, which limit disclosure of personal information (Statistics Canada, 2019b). Researchers have concluded, however, that it is possible to de-anonymize data (Rocher, 2019). The use of anonymized data therefore raises serious questions about the protection of First Nations' rights to privacy and the capacity of the Crown to prevent a breach of these rights" (First Nations Information Governance Centre, 2022).

Census Data Challenges with Indigenous Populations: Academic Sources (as of January 19, 2023)

Historically Politicizing Data

"Data is inherently political and can help identify priorities, set targets, and hold government accountable. Many First Nations people and communities **have experienced data being used for political purposes, but not their own.** The content and purposes of data have historically been determined outside of First Nations communities (Otim, 2015), and the **misuse of data has led to situations of misappropriation and broken trust**" (Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre, n.d.).

Colonial Approach to Data Collection

"In the past, data collection efforts such as the census and broad reaching surveys "were conducted with little input from Indigenous communities and peoples" (Steffler, 2016, p. 151). In fact, Western 'science' has been a major tool to justify and sustain processes of colonization, serving as a tool to justify racist policies of subjugation (Kovach, 2010). Additionally, **data collection through government agencies has even been used against communities to pathologize and take action against them, such as when it has been used to extract children from their families in the residential school system and the '60's scoop.**" (McBride, n.d.).

"The lack of involvement of communities in the development and use of data, and the drive for data collection from outside authorities, has led to a situation where **Indigenous communities do not trust the data collection process and are often resistant to sharing their information** (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1997). "This approach has created a situation in which there is a lack of trust, 'buy-in,' and participation on the part of Indigenous communities – inevitably affecting the overall quality of the data" (Steffler, 2016, p. 151)" (McBride, n.d.).

Housing Instability/Literacy

"Non-response bias arises when persons who do not participate in a survey have different characteristics than survey participants and as a result reported estimates do not represent the true population values. Non-participation of Indigenous people in the 2001 and 2006 census included block non-participation by multiple First Nations on-reserve communities, [therefore] **a disproportionate number of highly mobile and homeless Indigenous individuals, individuals who do not have the assumed literacy skills required to complete the census, and Indigenous people who chose not to participate based for person or political reasons were not counted in the census**" (Smiley & Firestone, 2016).

"Indigenous peoples are at risk of non-participation in the Census due to factors such as **increased rates of mobility and its associated lack of living at a fixed address, historical distrust of government due to past and present colonial policies and migration between geographical locations**" (Ministry of Health and Long-term Care, 2018).

Census Data Challenges with Indigenous Populations: Academic Sources (as of January 19, 2023)

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