

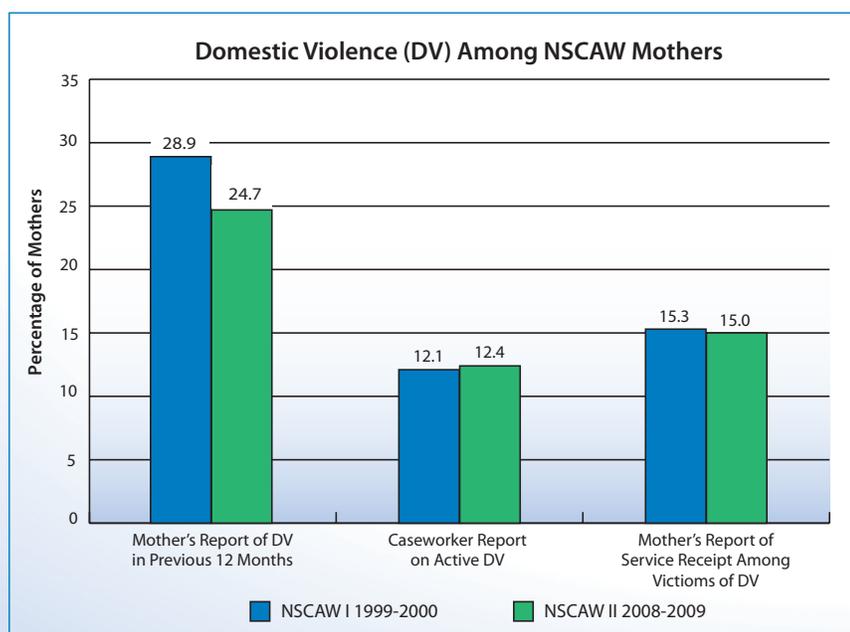
## NATIONAL SURVEY OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT WELL-BEING

March 26, 2014

# Child Well-Being Spotlight

## Mothers of Children Reported for Maltreatment Show Small Decline in Domestic Violence, but No Improvement in Service Access

After a referral to child protective services, most children (more than 87%) who are victims of child maltreatment are not placed in out-of-home care.<sup>1</sup> In a substantial number of these cases, domestic violence is reported in the household.<sup>2,3</sup> A comparison of the two cohorts of the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (1999–2000 and 2008–2009)<sup>4</sup> shows a small<sup>5</sup> but significant decrease in these mothers' self-report of physical<sup>6</sup> domestic violence. In the 2008–2009 cohort, one quarter of mothers whose children remained at home following a maltreatment report experienced physical domestic violence in the past year — a 15% decrease from the rate of 29% in the 1999–2000 cohort. No changes were observed in caseworker identification of domestic violence or reports of victim service receipt. Investigative caseworkers identified active domestic violence for about one in 10 mothers in both NSCAW cohorts.<sup>7</sup> Among the mothers in each cohort who reported physical domestic violence (29% in NSCAW I; 25% in NSCAW II), only 15% of victims received domestic violence services.<sup>8</sup> The decline noted between the two NSCAW cohorts is smaller than that seen in the general population where rates of domestic violence decreased 30% between 1999 and 2010.<sup>9</sup> For the mothers of children reported for maltreatment, access to domestic violence services



has not increased despite the many programs stemming from the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 and its reauthorizations.<sup>10</sup> Domestic violence affects child safety, health, and development, including emotional and behavioral problems. Increasing caseworker identification of domestic violence among children in the child welfare system might facilitate increased service referrals and follow-up to assure needed service supports for those affected by domestic violence.

For more information on the well-being of children and their caregivers in the child welfare system, visit: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/research/project/national-survey-of-child-and-adolescent-well-being-nscaw-1>.

<sup>1</sup> Percentages are from the baseline of the two National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW I in-home children: 88.6%; NSCAW II in-home children: 87.3%). Baseline data collection for NSCAW I began in 1999–2000 and for NSCAW II began in 2008–2009. NSCAW I included 5,501 children aged birth to 14 years old and NSCAW II included 5,872 children ranging from birth to 17.5 years old at the time of sampling.

<sup>2</sup> Kohl, P. L., Barth, R. P., Hazen, A. L., & Landsverk, J. A. (2005). Child welfare as a gateway to domestic violence services. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27(11), 1203–1221. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.04.005

<sup>3</sup> Kohl, P. L., Edleson, J. L., English, D. J., & Barth, R. P. (2005). Domestic violence and pathways into child welfare services: Findings from the National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 27(11), 1167–1182. doi: 10.1016/j.childyouth.2005.04.003

<sup>4</sup> Dolan, M., Smith, K., Casanueva, C., & Ringeisen, H. (2011). *NSCAW II Baseline Report: Introduction to NSCAW II*. OPRE Report #2011-27a, Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>5</sup> The subgroup of in-home female caregivers that reported domestic violence included 3,625 women at NSCAW I, 93.9% biological mothers, and 3,351 women at NSCAW II, 92.6% biological mothers. Other female caregivers were mostly grandmothers and aunts.

<sup>6</sup> Physical domestic violence was reported by mothers of in-home children using the Conflict Tactics Scale. Domestic violence (DV) in the previous 12 months was defined as acts against the parent that occurred up to 12 months before the interview.

<sup>7</sup> During the NSCAW I and II baseline interviews, investigative caseworkers were asked: "At the time of the investigation, was there active domestic violence?"

<sup>8</sup> Mothers of in-home children reported receipt of domestic violence by answering the question: "In the last 12 months, have you stayed in a battered women's shelter or received any other domestic violence services to help you deal with an abusive partner?"

<sup>9</sup> Catalano S. (2012, September). *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993–2010*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics. Available from: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Banks, D., Dutch, N., & Wang, K. (2008). Collaborative efforts to improve system response to families who are experiencing child maltreatment and violence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 23:876–902.

Source: The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being is a nationally representative sample of children reported to child protective services sponsored by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families (ACYF). The survey collects data by administering questionnaires to a representative sample of the population through face-to-face interviews with caseworkers, children, caregivers, and teachers.

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