

# Family Violence in Canada

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## *Children witnessing family violence*

According to the 1999 General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization

- children heard or saw one parent assaulting the other in an estimated 461,000 households
- this represents 37% of all households with spousal violence in the five year period preceding the survey
- in cases where children witnessed spousal violence, they were more likely to witness assaults against their mothers (70%) than against their fathers (30%)
- assaults witnessed against mothers tended to be more serious
- over half of the female victims in these cases feared for their lives because of the violence

## *Children who witness family violence*

According to the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, children who are exposed to adults or teenagers physically fighting in the home were more likely to

- exhibit physical aggression
- show indirect aggression
- have emotional disorders
- be hyperactive
- commit delinquent acts against property

## *Spousal violence*

There was a decline between 1993 and 1999 in rates of spousal violence against women in most provinces. At the same time there was an upward trend in the use of criminal justice and social services by victims.

## *Marital separation*

- marital separation does not necessarily mark the end of a violent relationship
- according to the 1999 GSS, 37% of women and men with a former violent marriage or common-law relationship reported that the violence continued after the couple separated
- marital separation is a factor that elevates the rate of spousal homicide for women but not for men. Between 1991 and 1999 women were killed by estranged husbands at a rate of 39 per million couples compared to a rate of 5 per million killed by current husbands

## *Children in shelters for abused women*

- the proportion of children in shelters for reasons of abuse increased from 1998 to 2000
- children housed in shelters for reasons of abuse tend to be very young; 41% of the children were under the age of 5 and 32% of the children were between 5 and 9 years

## *Homicide of children and youth*

In 1999, the rate of children and youth killed by family members fell to an all time low in 26 years.

- family members were responsible for 63% of 1,990 solved homicides of children and youth recorded by police in Canada between 1974 and 1999

*Source...*

*Family Violence in Canada:  
A Statistical Profile 2001  
Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics*

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Children's Aid Society  
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La Société d'aide à l'enfance