

Child Abuse
Surveys
of Social Service Professionals
1995 and 2009

conducted by
Hamilton County Family and
Children First Council



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

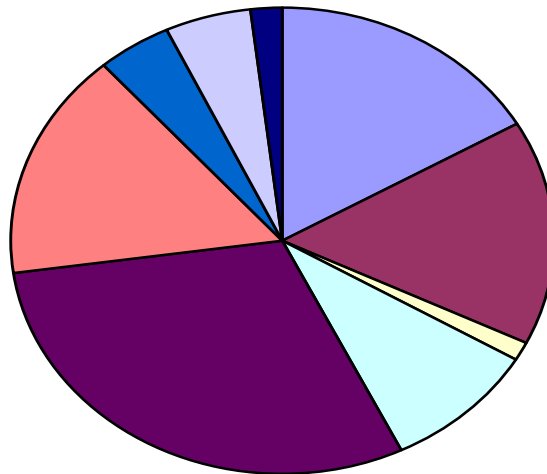
Respondents:

1995: 108 Children's Services
 137 Other Professionals
Total: 245

2009: 48 Children's Services
 166: other Professionals
Total: 314

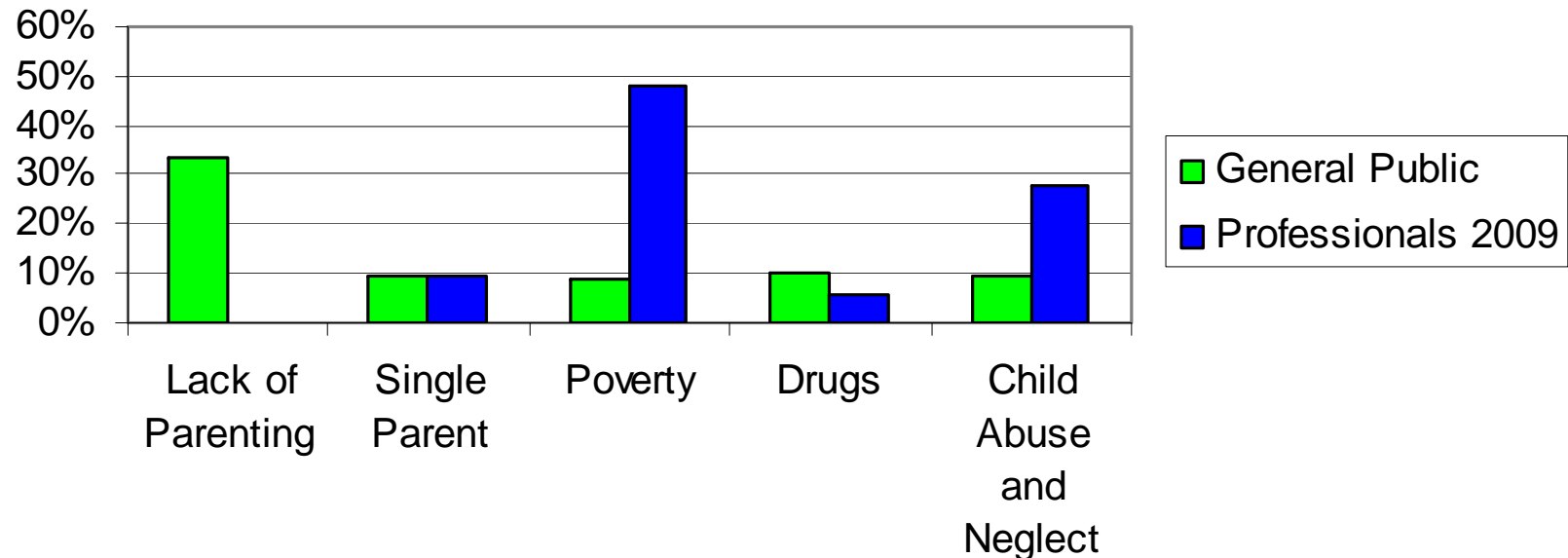
Child Abuse Professionals Survey

**2009 Survey
Respondents
n=318**



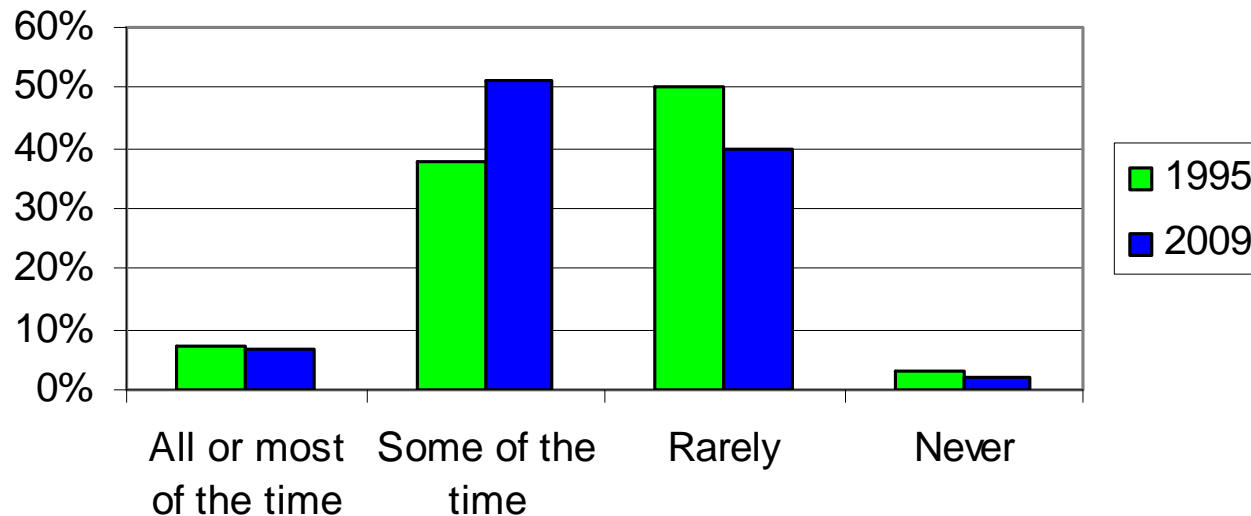
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#1 Problem Facing Children Today



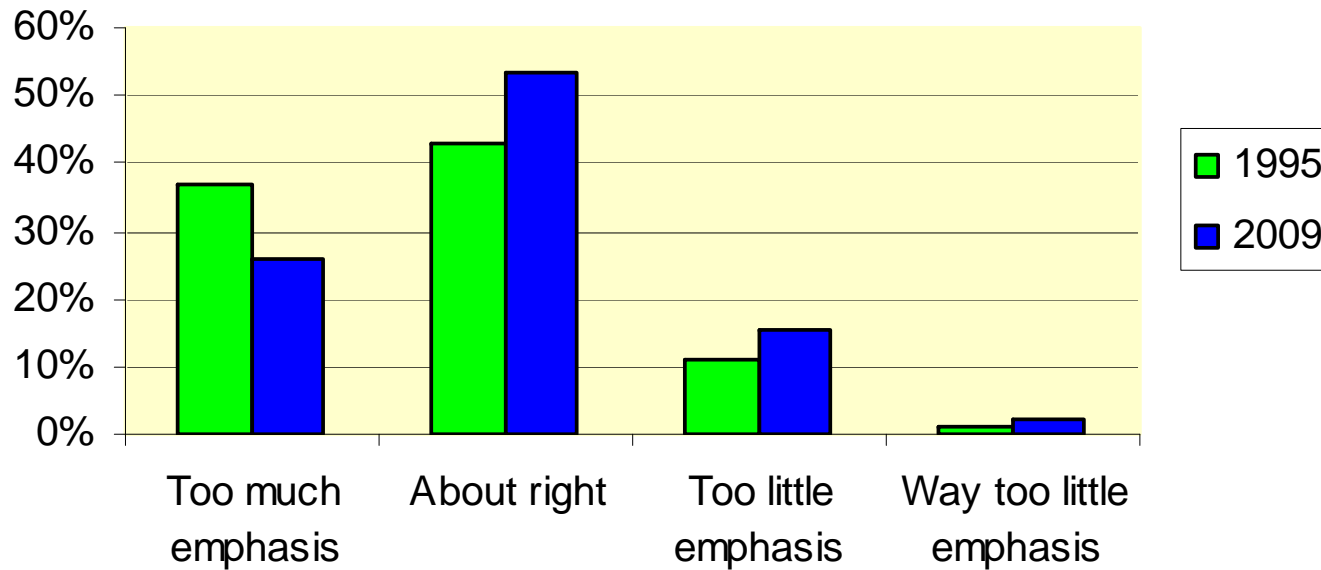
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How often children are removed when more attempts could have been made to keep family together



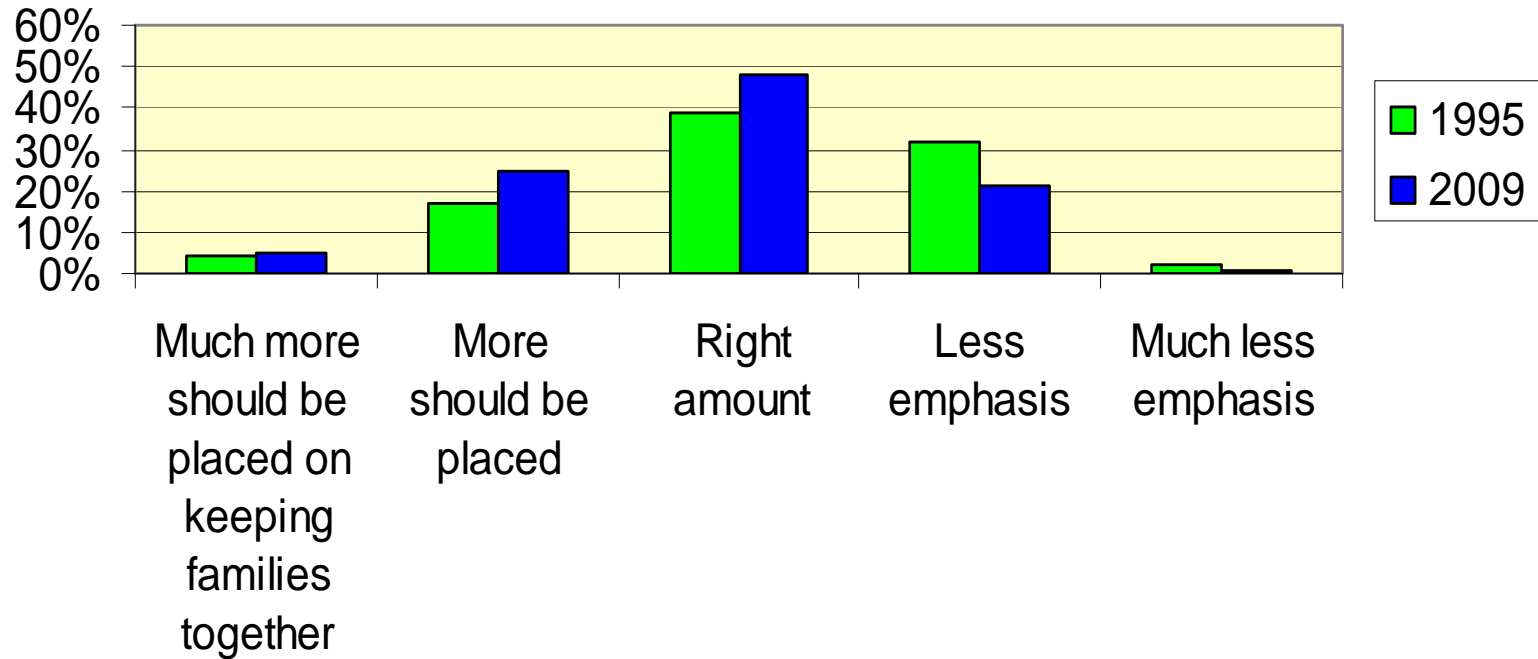
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Emphasis currently placed on keeping families together



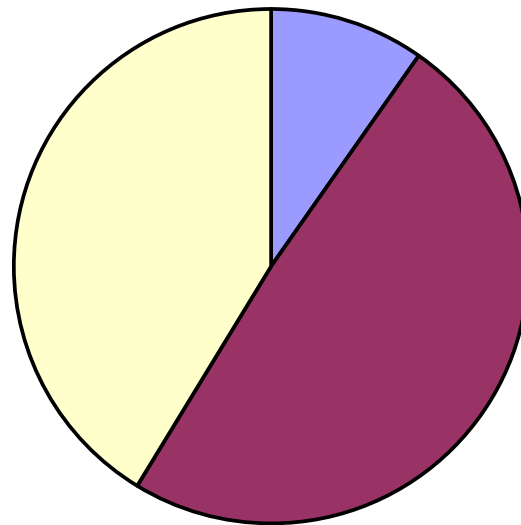
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Emphasis that should be placed on keeping families together



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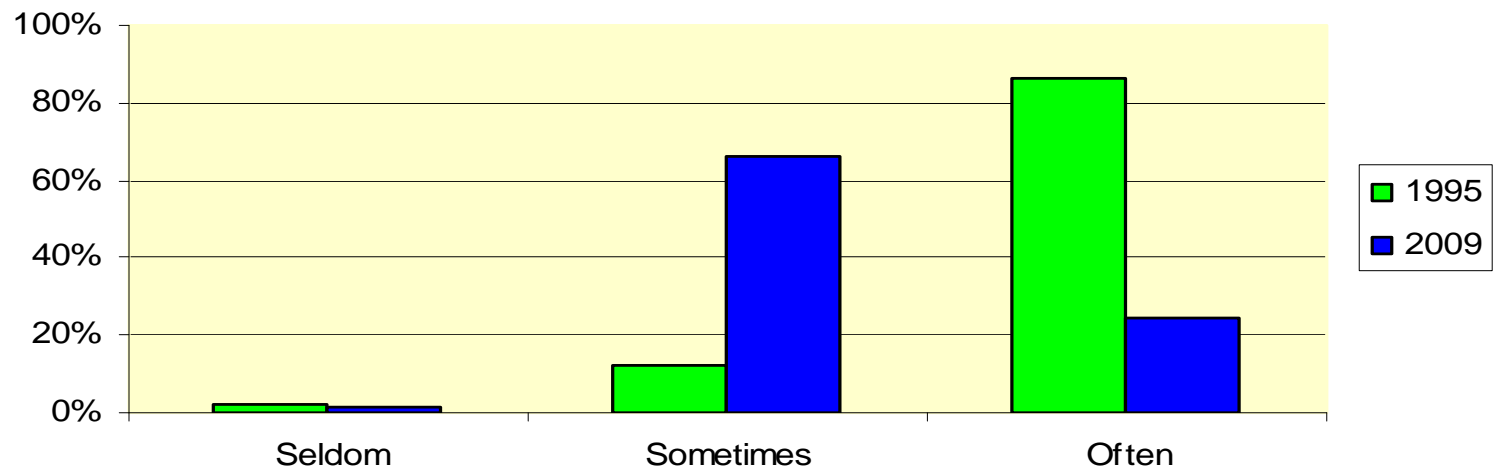
**Describe the pace at which children are removed from their homes
2009 only**



- Too Quickly
- Too slowly
- About right

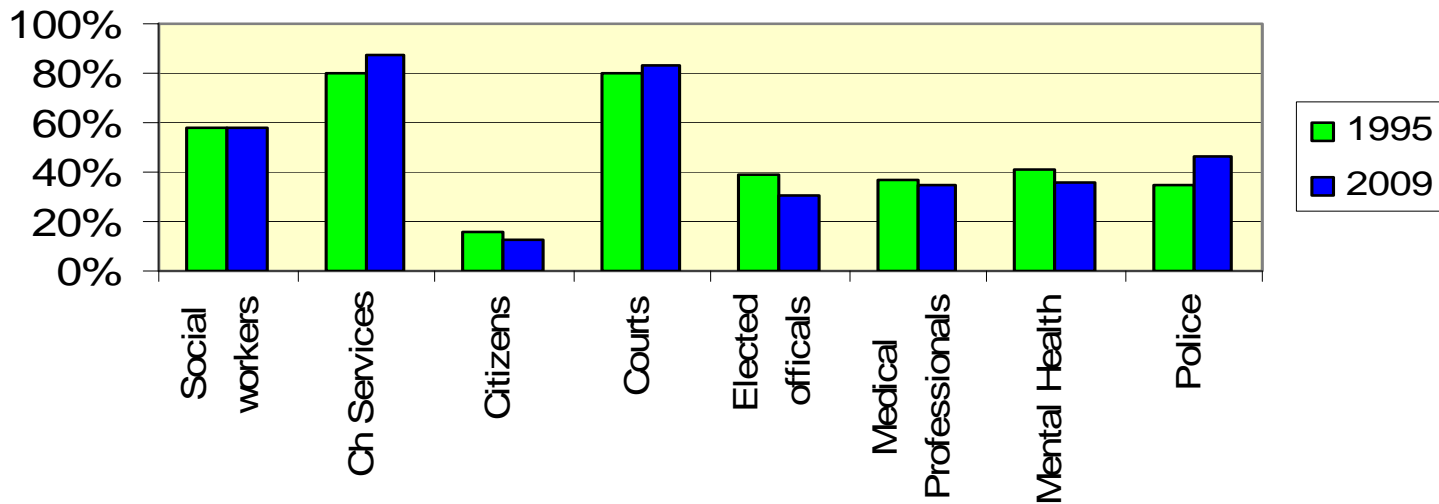
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How often are children left in unsafe homes?



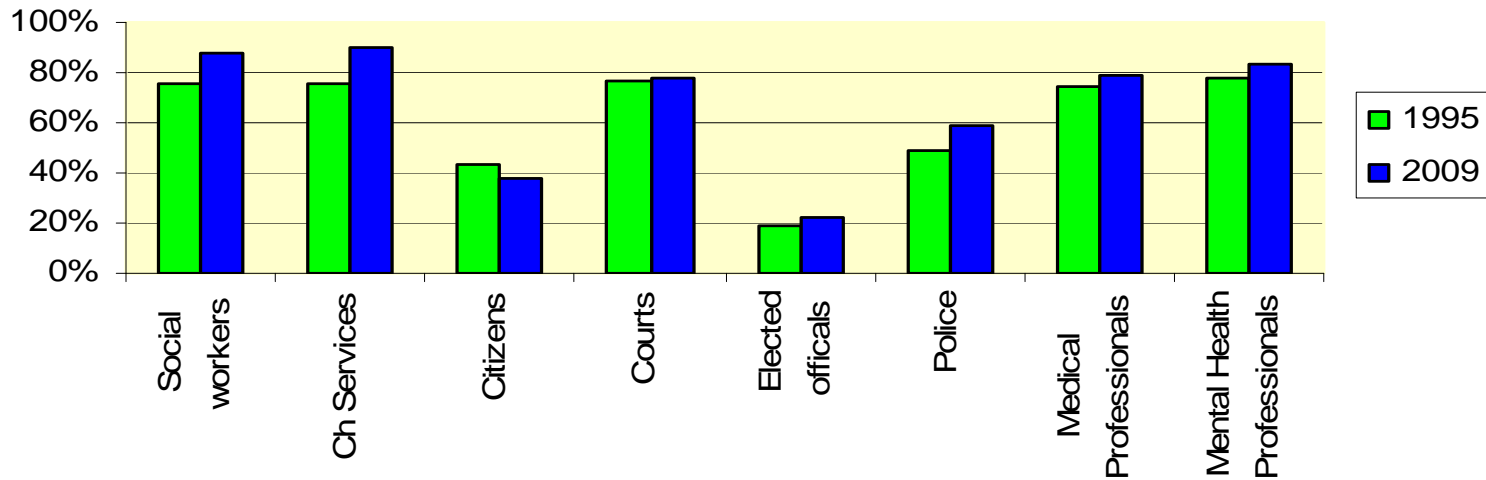
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Who currently sets the standards for removal?



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Who should set the standards for removal?





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- In both surveys, respondents were given a variety of case scenarios and asked what action they would take
- Scenarios ranged from situations with physical abuse, parental substance abuse, neglect and sexual abuse of varying degrees of severity



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- Most notable in differences in responses was the fact that in 1995 “Place children with relatives temporarily while parents retain custody and are offered social services” was not even an option
- In 2009 placing with relatives was not only an option but was the most frequent response to most situations

Child Abuse Professional Survey

- Only situations in which placing with relatives was NOT selected by the majority of 2009 respondents were:
 - sexual abuse
 - drug abuse
 - severe physical abuse

In those instances, temporary removal to foster homes was recommended.
- The scenario describing parents not providing adequate medical care for child was the only one where a large percentage (40%) said child should remain in the home with social services for parents.



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- In the 2009 survey there was a place for respondents to put optional comments about Children's Services
- Received 105 comments
- Overall, the comments were mixed, with some saying Children's Services does the best they can and others being very critical
- Most frequent criticism was the slowness of Children's Services to investigate or remove children and lack of responsiveness to other professionals.



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- Both surveys asked under what circumstances reunification should NOT be attempted
- The most frequent responses in both surveys were:
 - Sexual abuse
 - Severe physical abuse
 - Substance abusing parents who refuse treatment
 - Parents who refuse to comply with Children's Services recommendations



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

Conclusions

- Poverty seen as the biggest problem for youth today by professionals but identified by a small number of general public.
- Illustrates there is a need for community education about the impact of poverty on children and families.



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- In 2009 the most frequently selected option for children requiring temporary removal was relative placement.
- In 1995 relative placement was not even an option for respondents to consider.
- Shows in 14 years, relative placement has become an acceptable and desirable option for children needing temporary placement.



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- Due to budget problems, support services for relatives has been cut significantly.
- There is concern among the professional community about what impact these cuts will have on the quantity and quality of relative placements.
- Concern that we will be going backwards if relative placements become less available.



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- When asked under what circumstances family reunification should not be considered, neglect was rarely mentioned
- Sexual and physical abuse are considered much more serious than neglect



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- Overall, 2009 survey reflected more positive impression of Children's Services than in 1995 in respect to:
 - How often children are removed too quickly
 - How often children are left in unsafe homes
 - Amount of emphasis put on keeping families together



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- Professional community has become more comfortable with efforts to keep families together
- Professional community less critical of Children's Services but concerns remain around perceived lack of responsiveness



Child Abuse Professionals Survey

- Need to educate the public about the importance of children remaining in their homes or with relatives if at all possible.