



Appendix G: Child Sexual Abuse



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The Family Advocacy Program (FAP) is the congressionally mandated Department of Defense (DoD) program responsible for providing clinical assessment, support, and treatment services in response to reported incidents of child abuse and neglect in military families. Child sexual abuse by a parent or other caregiver is a subset of child abuse.

Oversight Responsibilities

Under the authority, direction, and control of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, DoD FAP has broad responsibility for promoting public awareness and prevention of domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect, ensuring mandated reporting of all suspected child abuse and neglect (to include child sexual abuse) by covered professionals and members of the military, and coordinating comprehensive intervention, assessment, and support to victims.

Definition of Child Sexual Abuse

DoD Instruction (DoDI) 6400.01, “Family Advocacy Program (FAP),” defines “child abuse” as, “[t]he physical or sexual abuse, emotional abuse, or neglect of a child by a parent, guardian, foster parent, or by a caregiver, whether the caregiver is intrafamilial or extrafamilial, under circumstances indicating the child’s welfare is harmed or threatened. Such acts by a sibling, other family member, or other person shall be deemed to be child abuse only when the individual is providing care under express or implied agreement with the parent, guardian, or foster parent.” DoDI 6400.03, “Family Advocacy Command Assistance Team (FACAT),” defines “child sexual abuse” as, “[t]he employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing a visual depiction of such conduct; or the rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.”

As a result of the expanded reporting requirements in Section 575 of Public Law 114-328, the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017, all individuals within the chain of command of a Service member are required to immediately report suspected child abuse to the installation FAP. In addition, all covered professionals are required to report suspected child abuse directly to local civilian child welfare services. The installation FAP provides comprehensive safety planning, victim advocacy and support, and treatment when appropriate.

Data

Comprehensive data and analysis of all reported child abuse and neglect is included in the *Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2021*, released September 2022, and in accordance with Section 574 of the NDAA for FY 2017 (Public Law 114-328), as amended by Section 549 of NDAA for FY 2022 Public Law (117-81).

Data Collection

FAP incident data are tracked by the Military Departments and reported to the Department through the FAP Central Registry, maintained by the Defense Manpower Data Center. The

FAP Central Registry contains information pertaining to incidents that met criteria for abuse, as defined by DoD, and set forth by a standardized algorithm that indicates the need for more rigorous treatment, intervention, support, safety planning, and protection.

Victim Characteristics

FAP Central Registry data indicate that, in FY 2021, there were 247 unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services. Figure 1 shows the number of unique victims of child sexual abuse who received FAP services since FY 2018, the first year FAP provided DoD Sexual Assault Response and Prevention Office (SAPRO) with child sexual abuse data. Following an initial decline from FY 2018 to FY 2019, the number of unique victims of child sexual abuse increased slightly from FY 2019 to FY 2020, and then increased more dramatically from FY 2020 to FY 2021. The increases in unique victims of child sexual abuse correspond to the coronavirus pandemic—a period where researchers have noted mixed findings on the impact of the pandemic on child maltreatment in the civilian sector.¹ A more robust analysis of child sexual abuse reported to FAP is contained in *Report on Child Abuse and Neglect and Domestic Abuse in the Military for Fiscal Year 2021*, including an analysis of the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic on FAP Central Registry data.

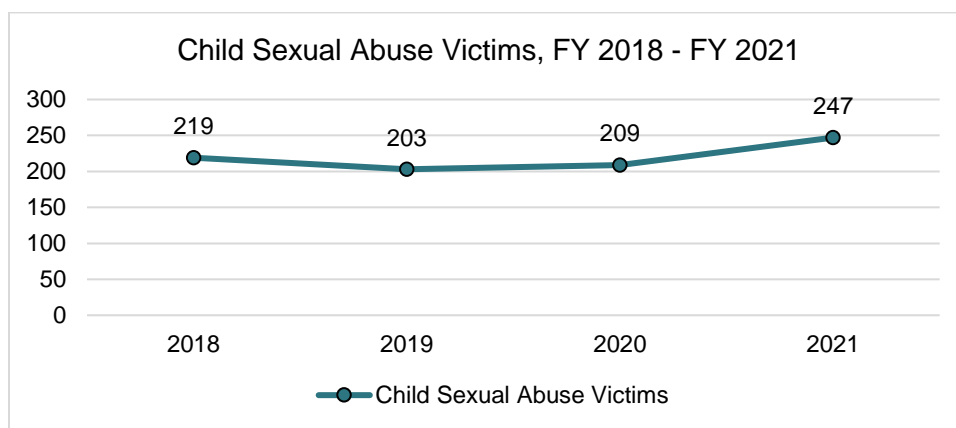


Figure 1. Child Sexual Abuse Victims, FY 2018 – FY 2021

Of the 247 victims, 220 (89.1 percent) were female and 27 (10.9 percent) were male. The number and age ranges of victims of child sexual abuse were: 3 victims (1.2 percent) ages 0 to 1; 42 victims (17.0 percent) ages 2 to 5; 46 victims (18.6 percent) ages 6 to 10; and 154 victims (62.3 percent) ages 11 to 17. Of the 247 victims, 2 victims (0.8 percent)² were between the ages of 18 and 24 when the report was made, but in a dependent status when the abuse occurred.

¹ Rapp A, Fall G, Radomsky AC, Santarossa S. (2021). Child Maltreatment During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Systematic Rapid Review. *Pediatr Clin North Am*, 68(5), 991-1009. doi: 10.1016/j.pcl.2021.05.006. PMID: 34538308; PMCID: PMC8445758. Retrieved from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8445758/>

² Due to rounding, the sum of the percentages is 99.9.

Alleged Offender Characteristics

Of the 220 known alleged offenders,³ 209 (95.0 percent) were male and 11 (5.0 percent) were female. Of those known alleged offenders, 105 (47.7 percent) were Service member parents, 48 (21.8 percent) were civilian parents, 38 (17.3 percent) were other family member caregivers, and 29 (13.2 percent) were extrafamilial caregivers. Service members represented 58.2 percent (128 of 220) and civilians represented 41.8 percent (92 of 220) of the known alleged offenders.

Of the 128 alleged offenders who were Service members, 125 (97.7 percent) were active duty members, while 3 were members of the Reserves or Guard (2.3 percent). Of the 128 Service members, 113 (88.3 percent) were enlisted members, 10 (7.8 percent) were officers, and 5 (3.9 percent) were warrant officers.

Accountability

The mission and scope of FAP is to provide comprehensive clinical assessment and support services to individuals and families impacted by domestic abuse and child abuse and neglect. FAP's primary focus is to assess the risk to, and safety of, victims; provide support and clinical services for the victim; and provide treatment and rehabilitation for the alleged offender when appropriate. By responsibilities set forth in DoD Manual 6400.01, Volume 1, "Family Advocacy Program (FAP): FAP Standards," FAP reports all suspected incidents of child abuse to civilian child welfare services and law enforcement within 24 hours. As part of the Coordinated Community Response model employed by DoD, first responder law enforcement (military or civilian, depending on jurisdiction) and military criminal investigative personnel have responsibility for investigating reports of suspected child sexual abuse. Investigation, command action, and legal adjudication, as appropriate, are addressed by other organizations outside of FAP.

FAP social workers, prevention specialists, victim advocates, and nurses provide critical clinical and support services to families impacted by these often complex incidents and are bound ethically to promote the well-being of clients and support their self-determination foremost. Responsibility for holding alleged offenders appropriately accountable and tracking associated outcomes falls to applicable command, law enforcement, and civilian and military justice systems, as appropriate.

³ In FY 2021, there were 5 met criteria incidents of child sexual abuse where the alleged offender was unknown.