
Ministry of Children and Family Development

Aboriginal Children in Care Quarterly Report

November 2007 Report

Prepared by Decision Support Branch

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I. Highlights

The Aboriginal Children in Care Quarterly Report is produced by the Decision Support Branch. It presents statistics and analysis of Aboriginal children in care and the steps being taken by the MCFD to reduce the number of Aboriginal Children in Care.

- As of November 2007, there were 9,217 CIC, of which 4,746 (or 51%) were Aboriginal and 4,471 (or 49%) were non-Aboriginal. (*Chart 4*)
- In an effort to reduce the Aboriginal CIC caseload, the ministry has shifted its practices toward providing more community-based and culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children by establishing delegated Aboriginal Agencies.
 - The number of Aboriginal children served by delegated agencies was 1,504 in November 2007, 5.4 per cent higher than in November 2006.
- Along with establishing delegated agencies, the ministry is also trying to reduce the CIC caseload through the introduction of a number of different out of care options (OCO)*. OCOs enable workers to place children outside the family home but within the child's extended family and network of support.
 - As of June 2007, there has been an increase in the Aboriginal caseload under Kith and Kin agreements, other out of care options and youth agreements. This increase may be due to the recent decision by the federal government to fund out of care option programs (effective April 19, 2007).
 - Aboriginal cases now account for more than 60% of the OCO caseload under Kith & Kin agreements, and nearly half of all the caseload under section 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b).
- In general, Aboriginal children spend more time in care than non-Aboriginal children. This is largely due to the fact that there are more Aboriginal CIC under continuing custody orders (CCOs) than non-Aboriginal CIC, particularly among the younger age groups. In this report, there is a special feature that examines the current age structure of Aboriginal CCOs and its implications for the CCO caseload in the coming years.

If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding this report, please feel free to e-mail Teresa Zhuang at teresa.zhuang@gov.bc.ca or Daljit Dhadwal at daljit.dhadwal@gov.bc.ca

* Out-of-Care Options refer to Kith & Kin agreements (also known as Section 8 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*) and orders under Section 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b).

II. Special Feature

Age Profile of Children in Care under Continuing Custody Orders

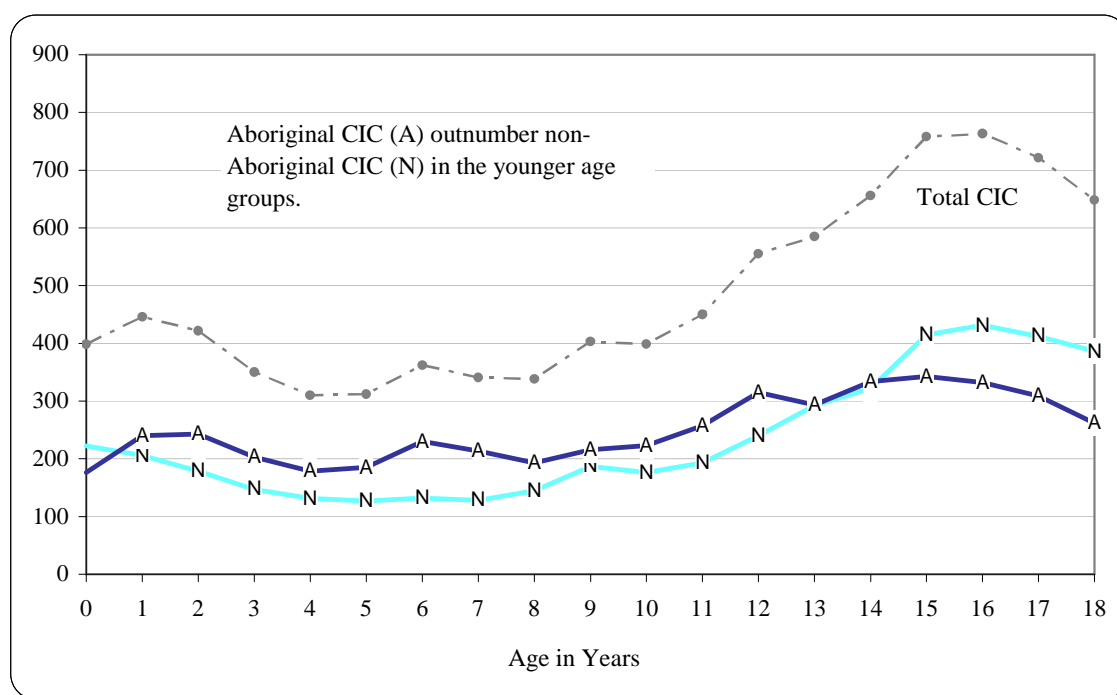
As of the end of November 2007, there were 9,217 children under the ministry’s care. Of these 9,217 children in care (CIC), 4,746 (51%) were Aboriginal. Furthermore, 62% (or 2,951) of the Aboriginal CIC were under continuing custody orders (CCO), compared to 51% of all non-Aboriginal CIC.

A continuing custody order is an order[†] that places a child in the continuing custody of a Director, meaning that the child becomes a permanent ward of the province. The Director shares guardianship responsibilities for the child with the Public Guardian and Trustee. Under a continuing custody order, a Director assumes all parental decision-making and responsibility for a child. A child can remain under a CCO until they turn 18 years of age, at which point they “age out”. They are considered an adult and thus cannot be kept in care.

What is the age structure of the CIC caseload and the CCO caseload?

Since children under CCOs can remain in care until they “age out”, it is important to know how old these children are. A young child under a CCO is likely to remain in care for many years.

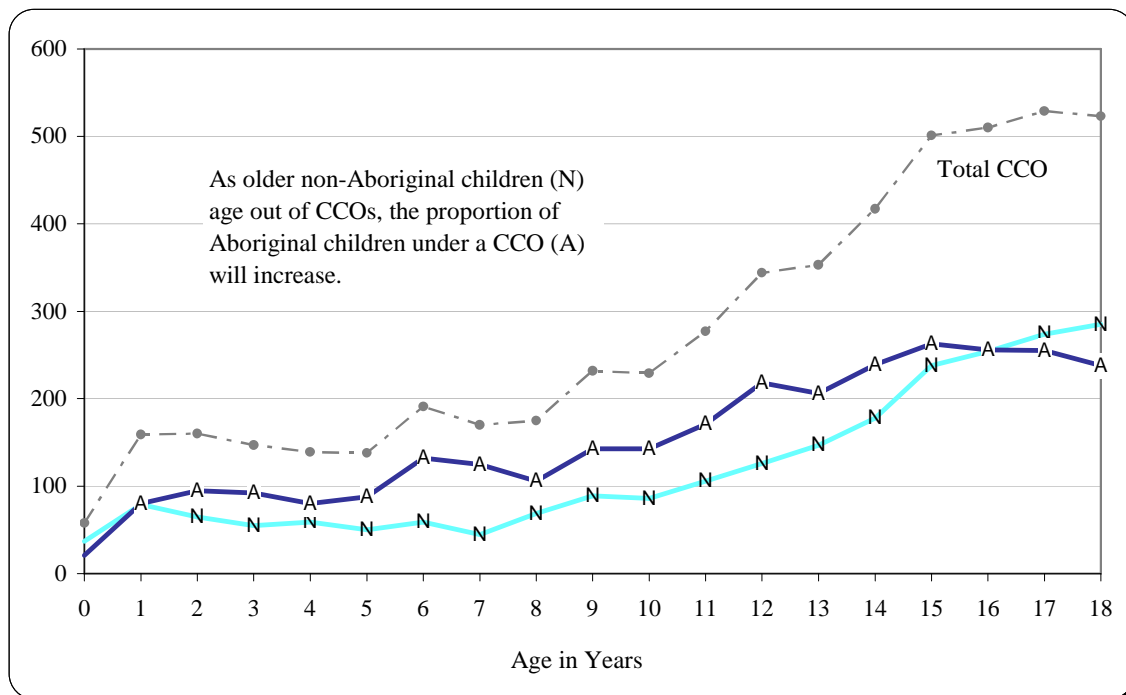
Chart 1: Children in Care (CIC) Age Profile, November 2007



[†] Under section 41(1)(d), 42.2(4)(d) or (7) or 49(4), (5), or 10(a) of the Child, Family & Community Service (CFCS) Act

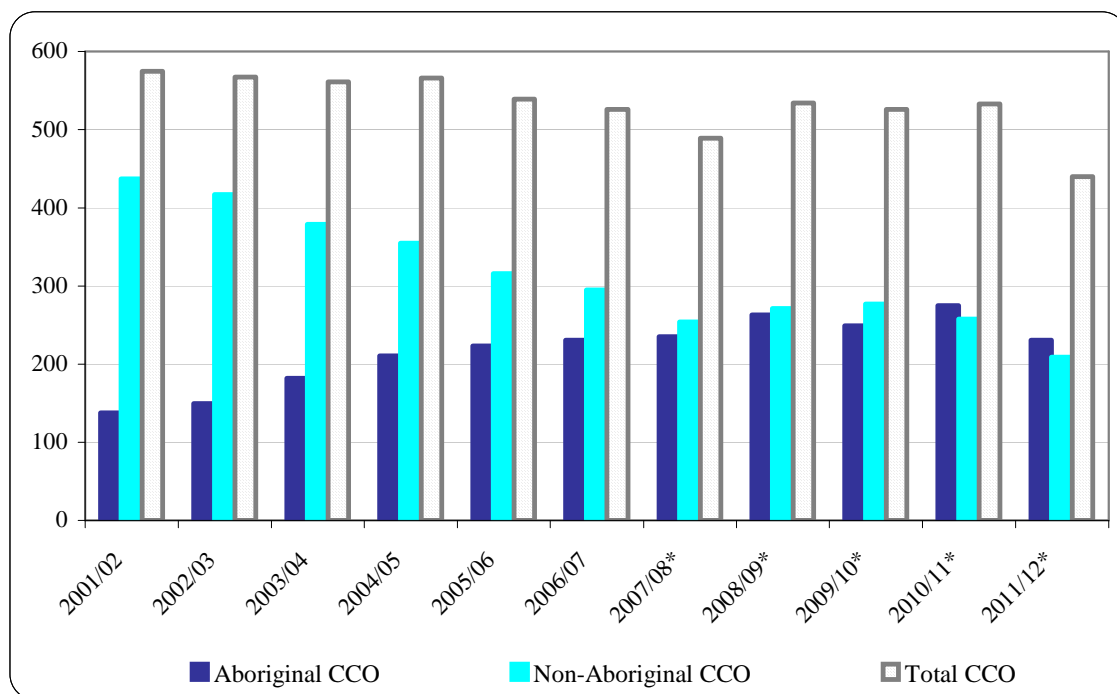
Chart 1 shows the age structure for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CIC at the end of November 2007. Currently, 40% of all CIC are under 10 years of age, while 60% are 10 years of age or older. Aboriginal CIC outnumber non-Aboriginal CIC between ages one and 13. The age structure of children under CCOs is similar (*Chart 2*). Between the ages of one and 16, Aboriginal children outnumber non-Aboriginal children.

Chart 2: Age Profile for CIC under Continuing Custody Orders (CCOs), November 2007



Since non-Aboriginal children under CCOs are concentrated in the older age groups, more of them age out of the CCO caseload each year (*Chart 3*) than Aboriginal children. This trend is expected to continue until 2010, at which point more Aboriginal children will age out than non-Aboriginal children.

**Chart 3: CCO Aging Out
Fiscal 2001/02 – 2011/12**



* Estimate December 2007 - March 2012 based on November 2007 caseload

How will the age structure affect the proportion of Aboriginal children under CCOs in the coming years?

Two key trends emerge from examining the age structure of the CCO caseload:

- (1) Aboriginal children outnumber non-Aboriginal children in the younger age groups, and
- (2) More non-Aboriginal children are aging out than Aboriginal children and this trend will continue for a few more years.

These trends have implications for the proportion of Aboriginal children under a CCO over time. Currently 56% of all children under a CCO are Aboriginal. (Chart 15 (see page 16) shows the total number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children under a CCO by month.) The current age structure of the CCO caseload suggests that the percentage of all children under a CCO who are Aboriginal will be even higher in the coming years. As non-Aboriginal children age out of the CCO caseload, the proportion of Aboriginal CCOs will rise.

III. Aboriginal Children in Care

As of November 2007, there were 9,217 CIC, of which 4,746 (or 51%) were Aboriginal and 4,471 (or 49%) were non-Aboriginal. (Chart 4)

The total CIC caseload has remained relatively stable at around 9,200 CIC since November 2006. The Aboriginal CIC caseload has stayed relatively unchanged during the current fiscal year. The non-Aboriginal CIC caseload has show more monthly fluctuation.

Compared to the same month in the previous year, the Aboriginal CIC caseload increased by 0.6%, while the non-Aboriginal CIC caseload decreased by 1.8%. (Table 1).

**Chart 4: CIC Caseload
Actual Caseload for April 2001 – November 2007**

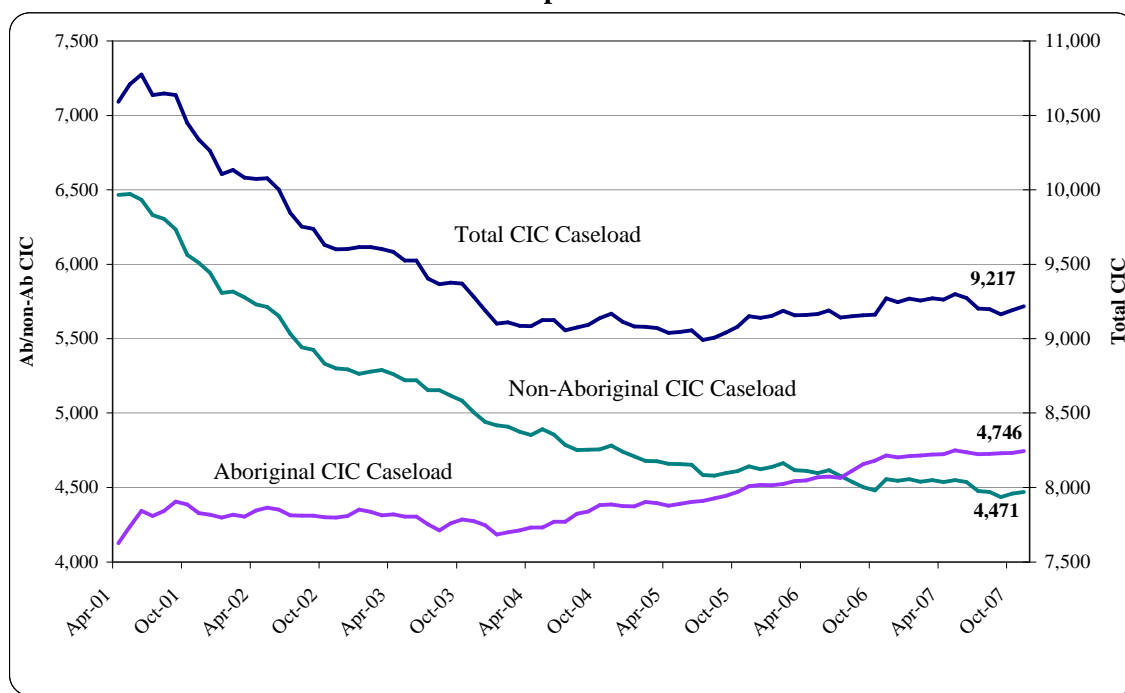
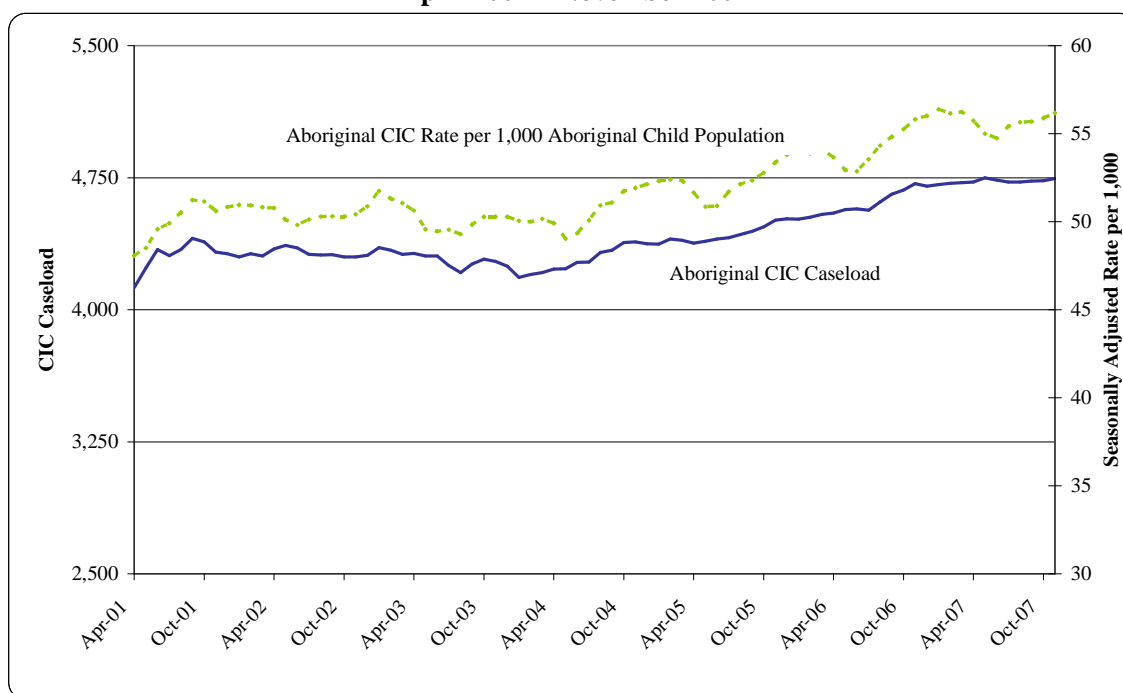


Table 1: CIC Month over Month and Month over Same Month of Previous Year Growth November 2007

Month	Aboriginal CIC	Non-Aboriginal CIC
November 2007	4,746	4,471
October 2007	4,733	4,459
Monthly % Change	0.3%	0.3%
November 2006	4,716	4,555
Annual % Change	0.6%	-1.8%

When the caseload is compared to the Aboriginal child population, 56 out of every 1,000 Aboriginal children were in care, as of November 2007. (Chart 5)

Chart 5: Aboriginal CIC Caseload & Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 Aboriginals (0 to 18) April 2001 – November 2007



What factors are influencing the Aboriginal CIC caseloads?

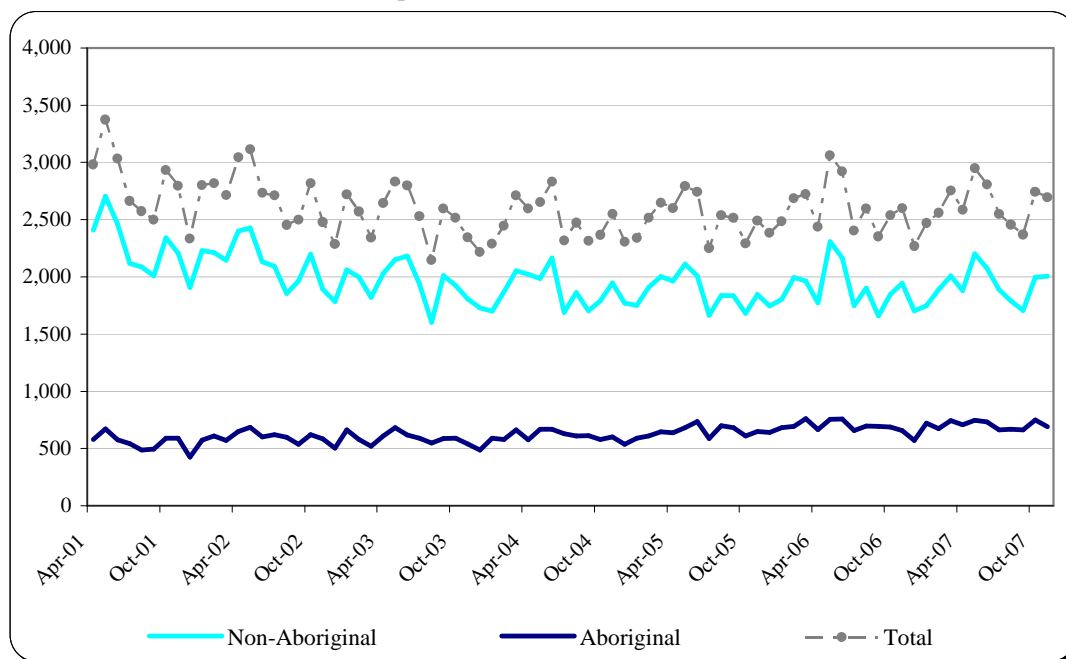
Placing a child in care is the result of an involved process that starts with a call to the ministry concerning the possible protection needs of a child (e.g., abuse, neglect or other needs). After an assessment, these phone calls can result in the creation of a protection report which, after further assessment, may become a child protection investigation if that is determined to be the appropriate response. If the child protection worker then determines that a child is need of protection, then the child will be taken into care unless other solutions are available.

The sections that follow look at protection reports, investigations and investigation findings, as these have a significant effect on admissions into care and the CIC caseload.

Protection Reports:

While the number of protection reports has fluctuated slightly for non-Aboriginal children, it has remained fairly stable for Aboriginal children since late 2003. (Chart 6)

Chart 6: Protection Reports
April 2001 – November 2007

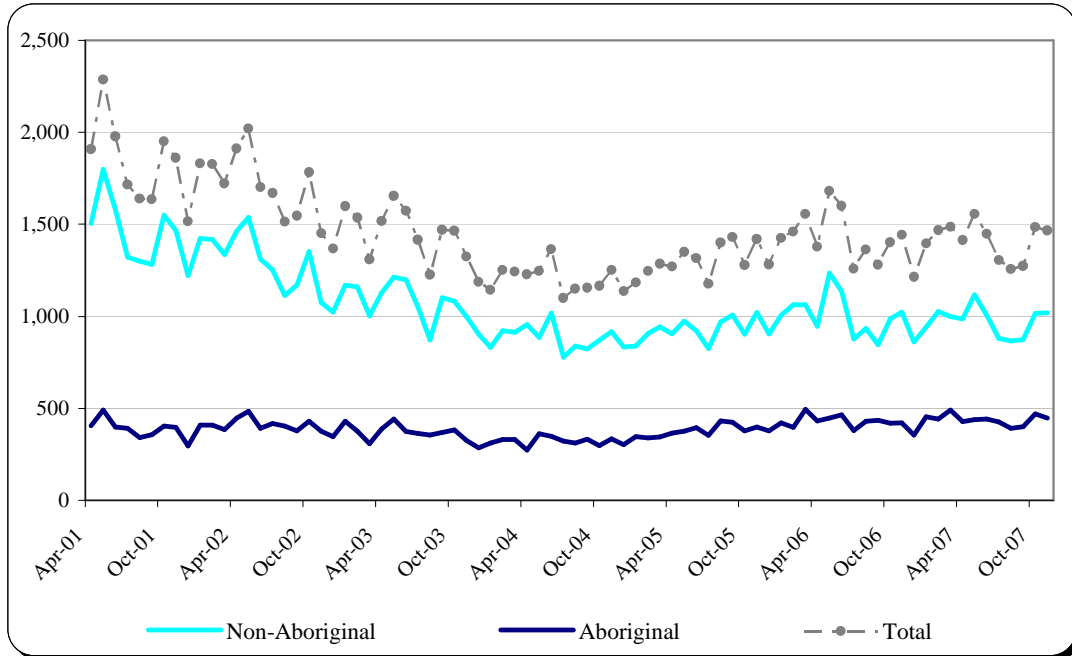


Note:

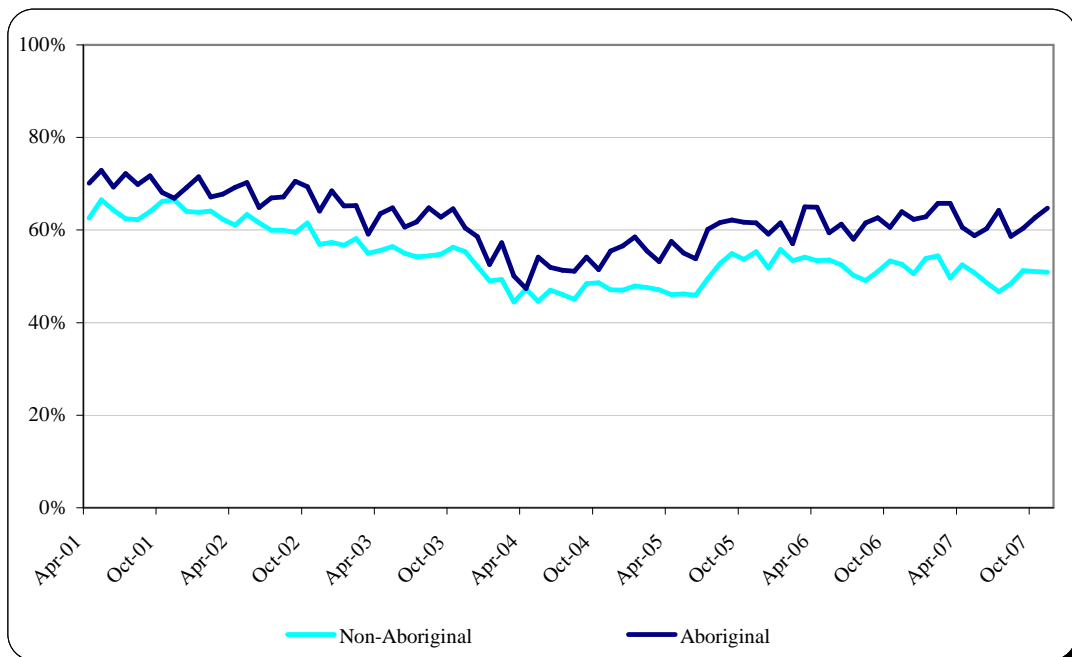
1. The Aboriginal flag used at this stage is solely based on information provided by callers before any formal investigations take place, and therefore, the actual counts may be underestimated.

Protection Reports Investigated:

**Chart 7: Protection Reports Investigated
April 2001 – November 2007**



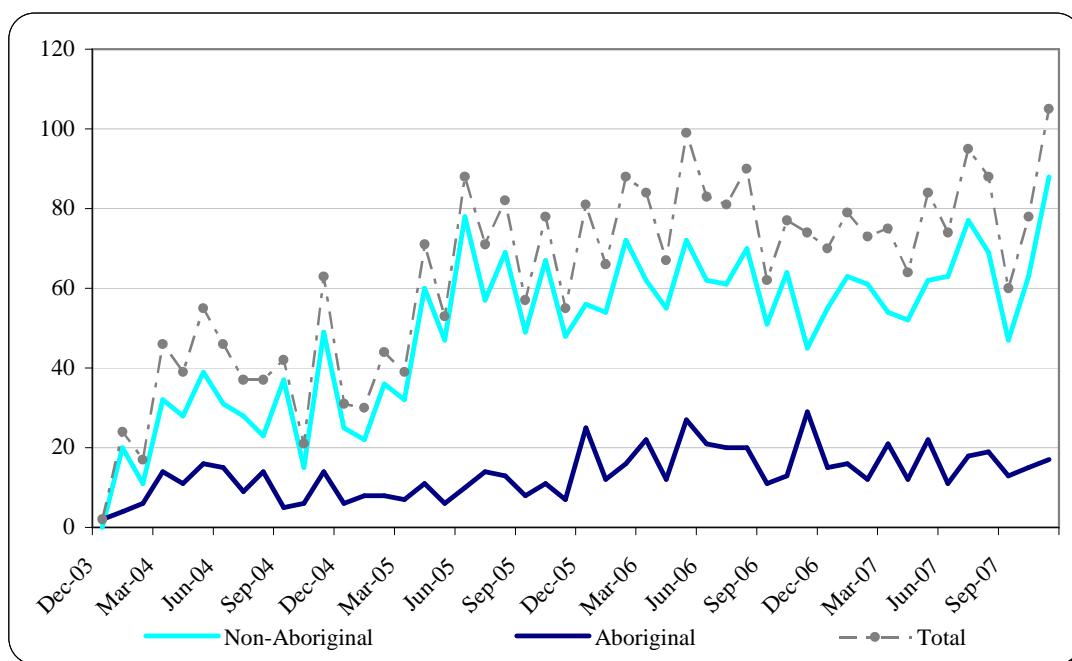
**Chart 8: Percentage of Protection Reports Investigated
April 2001 – November 2007**



The number of protection reports investigated for Aboriginal children has remained fairly constant since fiscal 2006/07 (*Chart 7*), however the proportion of protection reports that were investigated for Aboriginal children has been consistently higher than for non-Aboriginal children (*Chart 8*). Protection reports on Aboriginal children are often of a more serious nature (e.g., severe physical abuse or severe physical neglect). Such reports are managed through child protection investigations rather than other less intrusive types of interventions.

Prior to March 2004, there was a downward trend in protection reports investigated, reflecting a shift in practice towards handling lower risk cases through referrals to community services or family development response (FDR). FDR is a less intrusive and coercive alternative to a regular child protection investigation. *Chart 9* shows the number of FDRs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. The use of FDR for Aboriginal children has remained relatively flat since fiscal year 2006/07. For the four years shown in the graph the number of FDRs has remained between 0 and 30 cases per month. There have been larger fluctuations for non-Aboriginal children, particularly in recent months. Most of the variation occurred in the Fraser and Vancouver Coastal regions. Overall, the FDR caseload is still small compared to the number of protection reports investigated.

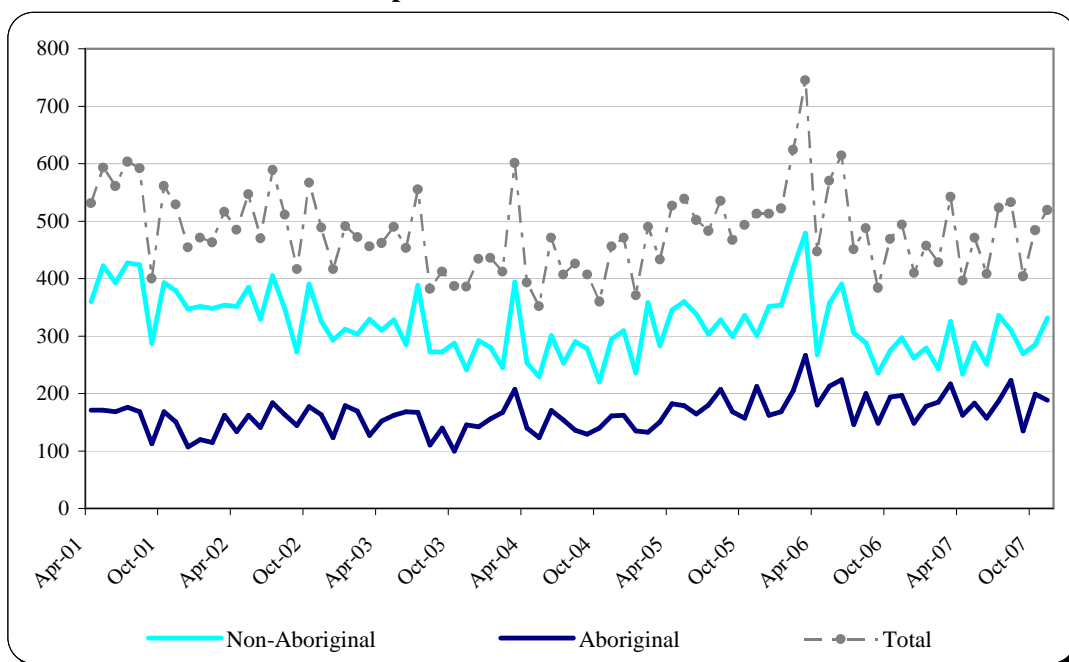
**Chart 9: Family Development Response
December 2003 – November 2007**



Investigations Found in Need of Protection:

The number of investigations with a protection need finding has remained relatively stable since 2006/07. A noticeable spike around April 2006 coincides with the release of the Hughes Review, a high-profile coroner’s inquest, and the release of issue papers by the Child and Youth Officer (early 2006).

**Chart 10: Investigations Found in Need of Protection
April 2001 – November 2007**

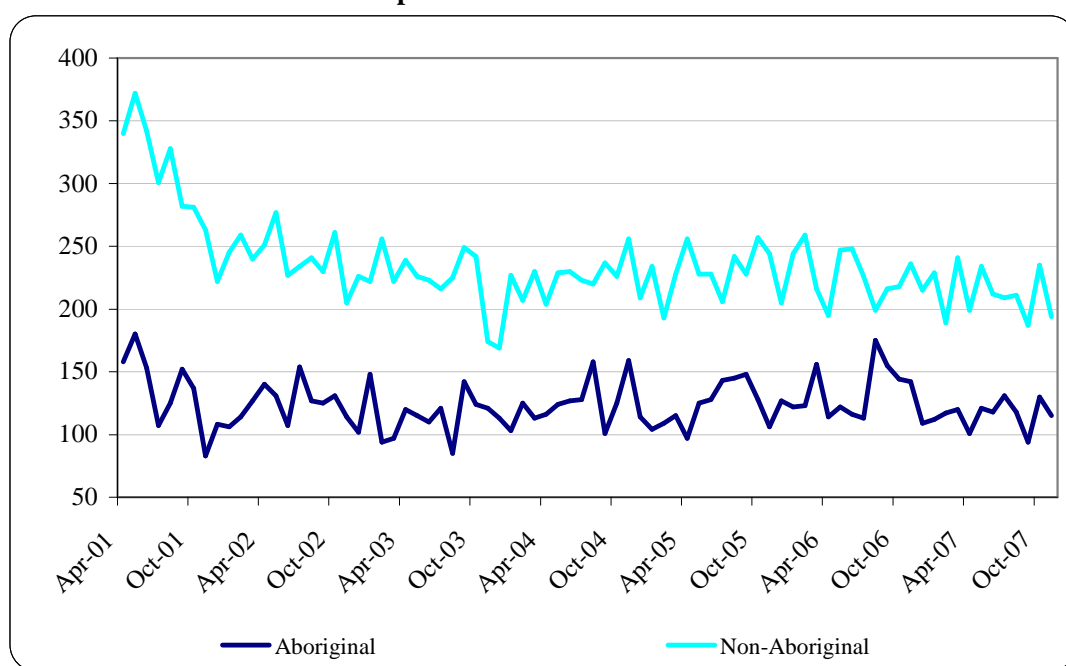


Admissions:

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal admissions into care have exhibited flat trends since early 2002. This mirrors recent trends in protection reports during the last fiscal year.

We note that the spike in investigations with an “in need of protection finding” in early 2006 was not reflected in the admission series. In other words, admissions into care are more stable than protection findings. (*Chart 11*) This is likely because of the ministry’s commitment to keeping children with their families. The ministry looks for alternatives such as Out-of-Care Options (OCO’s) before placing a child in care.

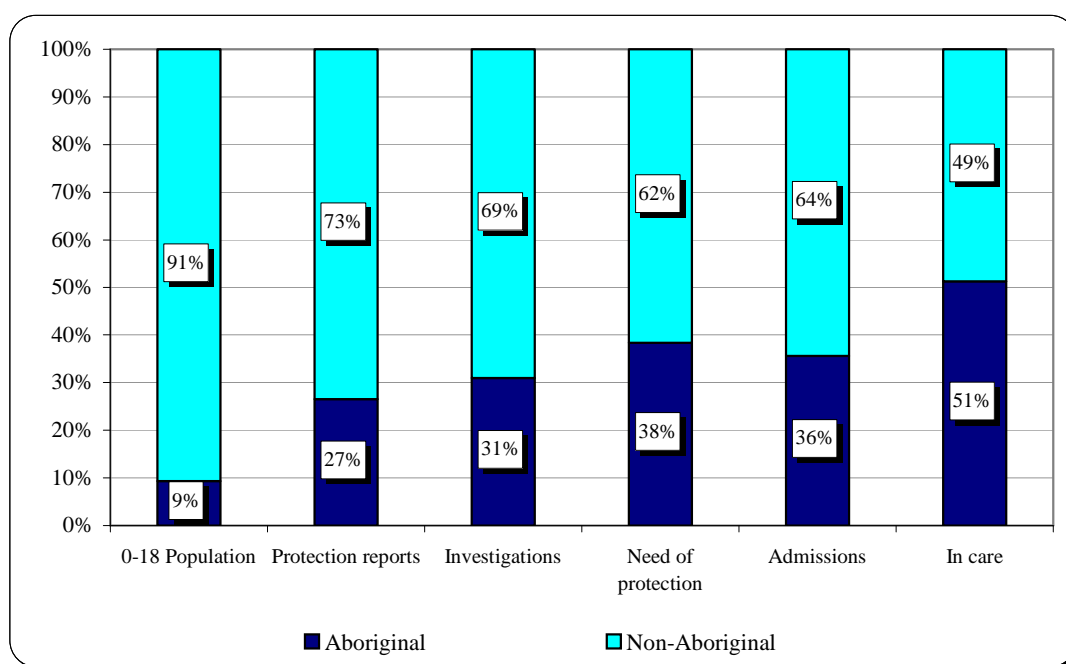
**Chart 11: Admissions
April 2001 – November 2007**



What does this tell us?

It is clear that there is an over-representation of Aboriginal children in care compared to the overall percentage of Aboriginal children in the BC child population. Chart 12 shows that Aboriginal cases account for 27% of protection reports[‡], 31% of investigations, 38% of investigations in need of protection, 36% of admissions, and 51% of children in care, while only 9% of the BC child population is Aboriginal.

**Chart 12: Percentage of Aboriginal Children through Child Protection System
Fiscal 2007/08 YTD**



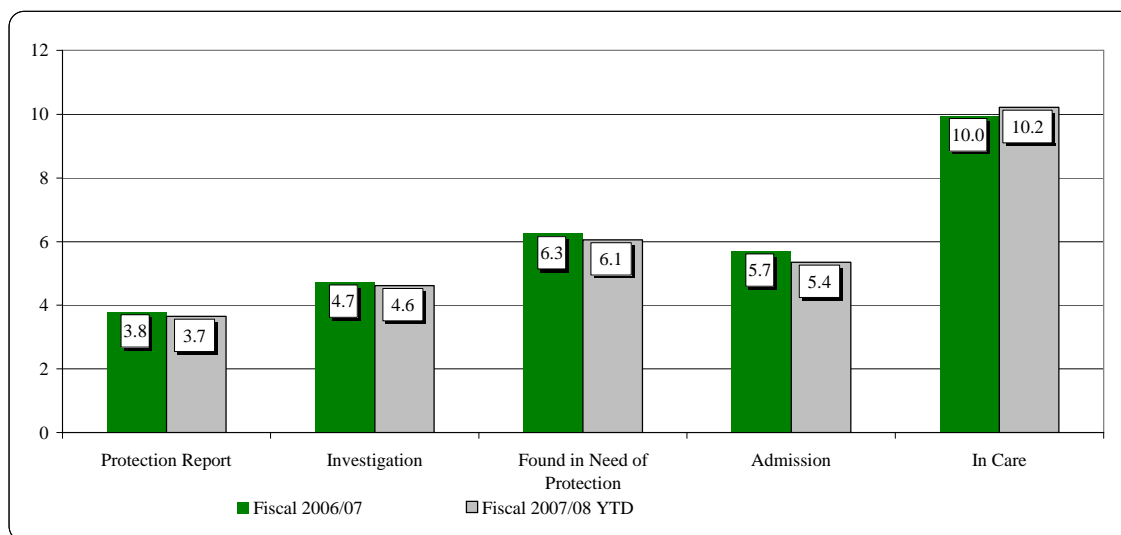
In short, Aboriginal children have typically required more child protection services than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In fiscal 2007/08 YTD, an Aboriginal child is:

- 3.7 times more likely to have a protection concern reported than a non-Aboriginal child;
- 4.6 times more likely to be investigated;
- 6.1 times more likely to be found in need of protection;
- 5.4 times more likely to be admitted into care, and
- 10.2 times more likely to remain in care

Compared to fiscal 2006/07, the likelihood of Aboriginal children receiving child protection services has decreased slightly in fiscal 2007/08, except for the likelihood of Aboriginal children remaining in care. In fiscal 2007/08, an Aboriginal child, once admitted into care, is 10.2 times more likely to remain in care than a non-Aboriginal child, compared to 10.0 times in 2006/07. (Chart 13) This implies a longer duration in care for Aboriginal children, which is discussed in the following section.

[‡] This figure may be an undercount because Aboriginal status at this stage is solely based on information provided by callers rather than through an investigation by a child protection worker.

**Chart 13: Likelihood of Aboriginal Children Receiving Child Protection Services
Fiscal 2006/07 & 2007/08YTD**

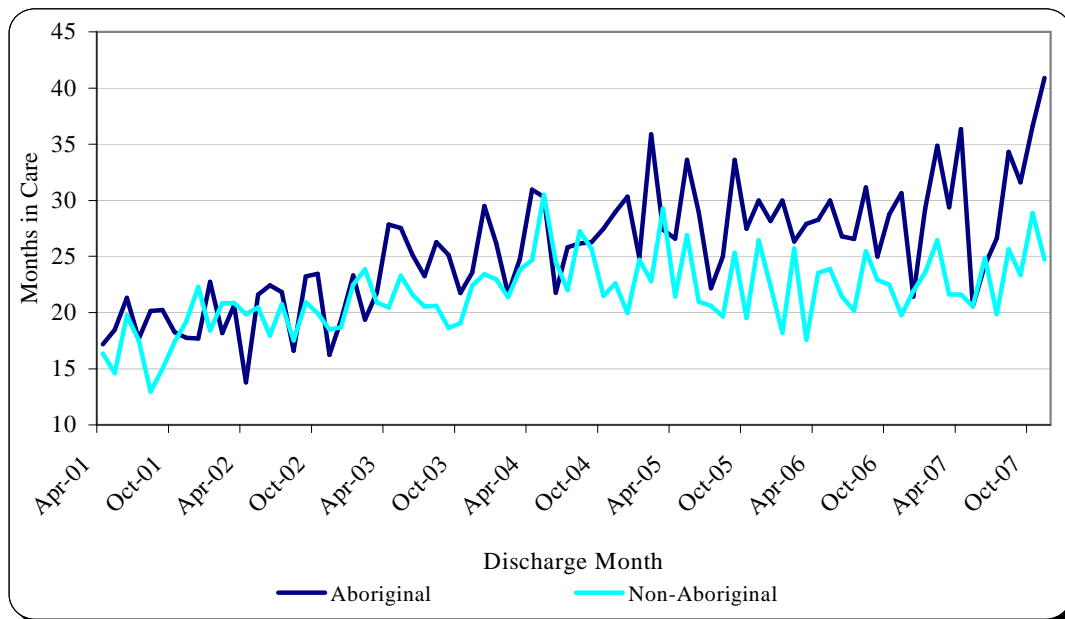


Duration in Care

Once admitted into care, Aboriginal children tend to spend more time in care than non-Aboriginal children. This is particularly true in recent years, when the average time spent in care by Aboriginal children is consistently longer than that spent by non-Aboriginal children (Chart 14).

Among the children who were discharged in November 2007, the average duration in care was 40.9 months for an Aboriginal CIC, compared to 24.7 months for a non-Aboriginal CIC. There were 15 Aboriginal CIC who had been placed under a CCO for over 10 years before being discharged in November 2007. The one with the longest duration had stayed in care for 198 months (approximately 16 years) before discharge.

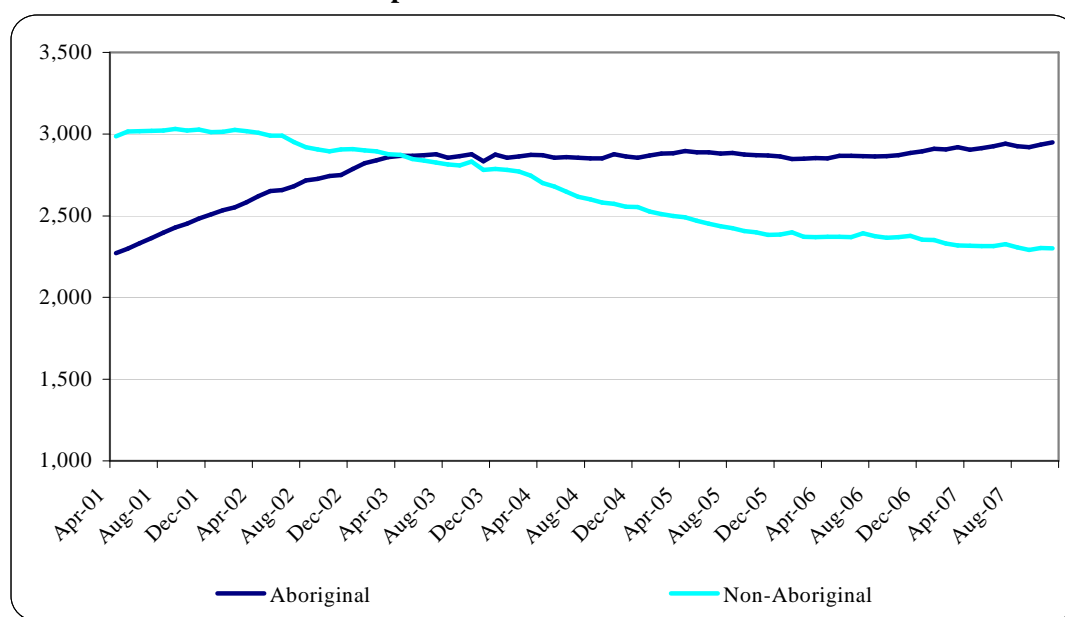
Chart 14 Average Time in Care for CIC Discharged Each Month



Note: The average time in care is calculated at time of discharge. The following example is provided for illustrative purpose, and does not represent the actual statistics.
 e.g. If there were 5 CIC discharged in July 2005, and the time spent in care by each one of them was 3 months, 4 months, 6 months, 3 months and 2 months, then the average time in care for CIC discharged in July 2005 is calculated as: $(3+4+6+3+2)/5 = 3.6$ months

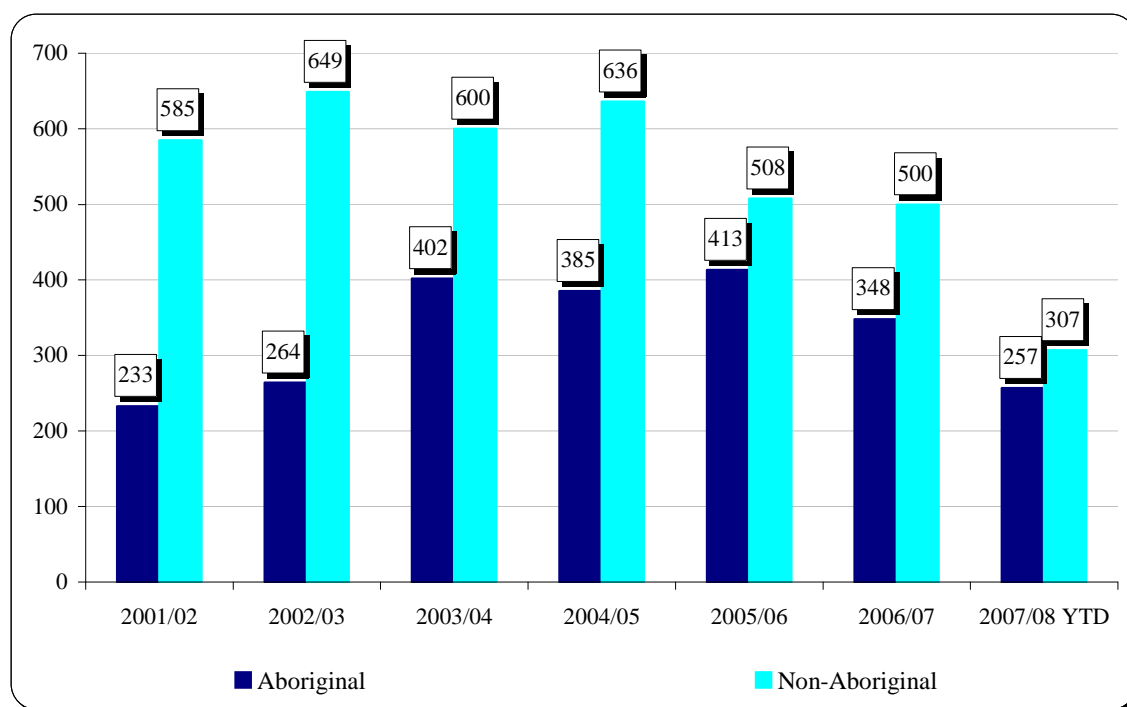
One possible reason for longer duration in care for Aboriginal children is that there have been more Aboriginal children placed under a CCO than non-Aboriginal children since May 2003. (Chart 15)

**Chart 15: Continuing Custody Order
April 2001 – November 2007**



The gap between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CCO caseloads shown in the graph is largely due to the higher number of discharges of non-Aboriginal CCOs (*Chart 16*). There is not a significant difference in the admission of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children into CCOs.

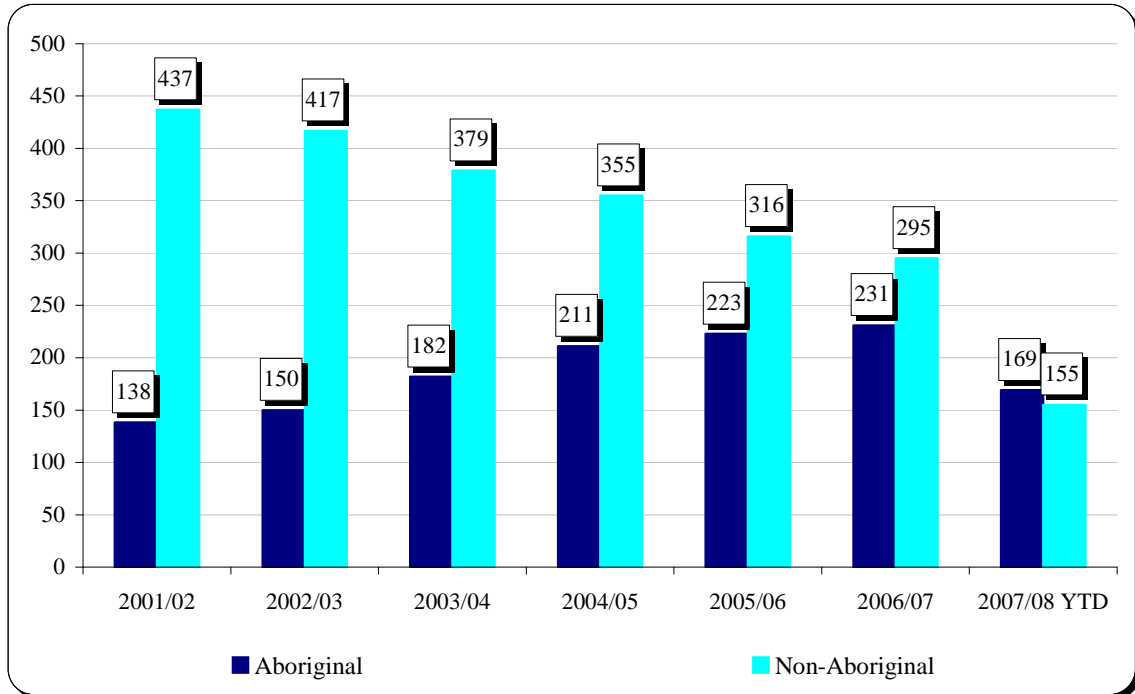
**Chart 16: Total CCO Discharges (including aging out)
Fiscal 2001/02 – Fiscal 2007/08**



Since 2001/02, the number of non-Aboriginal CCO's discharged due to aging out has been decreasing, while the trend is opposite for Aboriginal CCO's (*Chart 17*). As discussed earlier in the Special Feature section, given the age structure of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal CCOs in the current caseload, these trends are expected to continue until fiscal 2010/11, when more Aboriginal CCOs will age out than non-Aboriginal CCOs.

Aging out is the major reason for Aboriginal children to leave the CCO caseload, while non-Aboriginal children are more likely to be discharged for other reasons. These other reasons include adoption, out-of-care options or movement into other types of legal arrangements such as adoption act wards and temporary custody orders.

**Chart 17: CCO Aging Out
Fiscal 2001/02 – Fiscal 2007/08**



What is the ministry's progress in reducing the number of Aboriginal CIC?

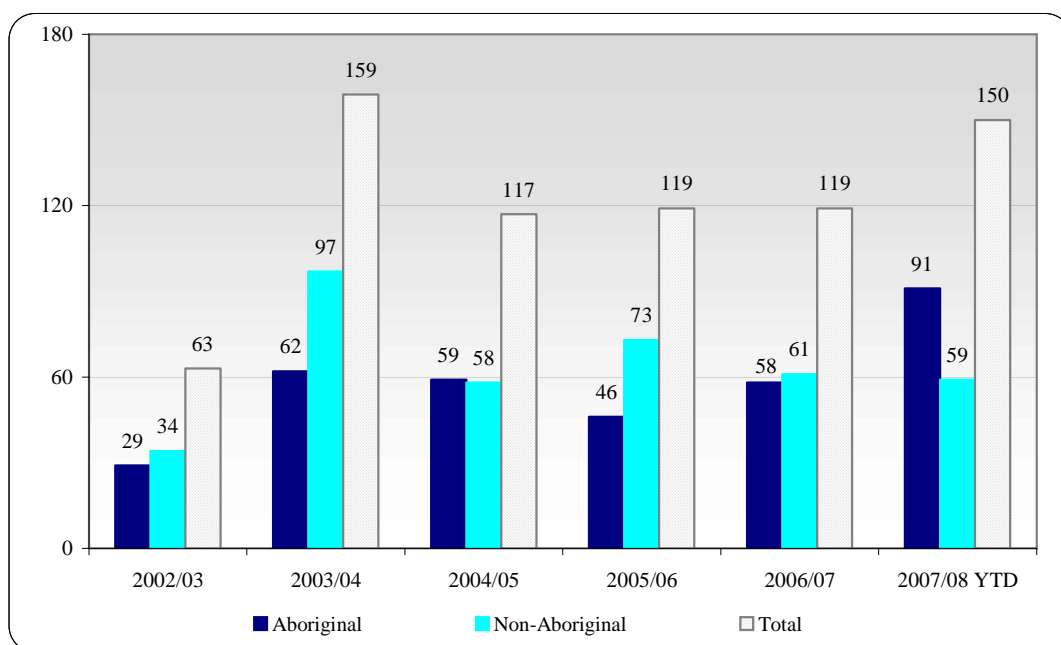
IV. Out of Care Options

To reduce the CIC caseload the ministry has introduced a number of out of care options (OCO) that enable workers to place children outside the family home but within the child's extended family and network of support. These options include Kith & Kin agreements (also known as Section 8 of the *Child, Family and Community Service Act*), and other out of care options (i.e. orders under Section 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b)), and youth agreements).

As of November 2007, the caseload under Kith & Kin agreements increased significantly from the previous fiscal year. This is solely a result of the rise in the Aboriginal caseload, which increased by 33 cases, compared to March 2007. Fiscal year 2007/08 is also the first year, when the Aboriginal caseload under Kith& Kin agreements outnumbered the non-Aboriginal caseload. (*Chart 18*)

The Aboriginal caseload under other out of care options and youth agreements also increased moderately in the current fiscal year. (*Charts 19 & 20*) The increase in the use of out of care options for Aboriginal children can likely be attributed to the new funding stream from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada that became available for those programs in fiscal 2007/08.

**Chart 18: Kith & Kin (Section 8) by Fiscal Year
2002/03 – 2007/08**



**Chart 19: Other OCO's (Sections 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b))
2002/03 – 2007/08**

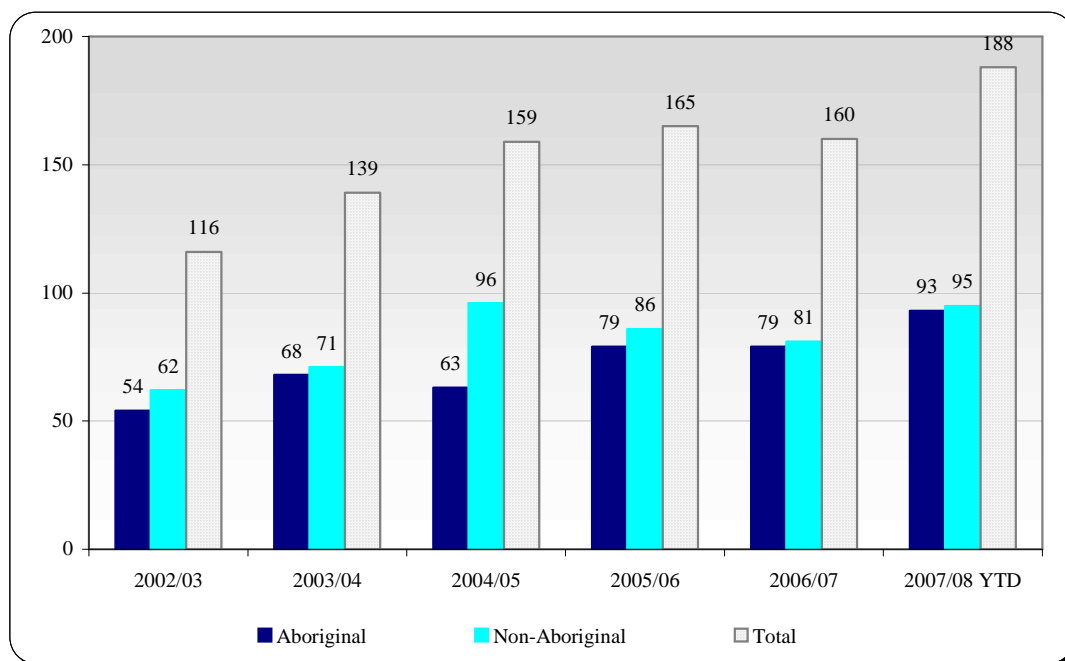
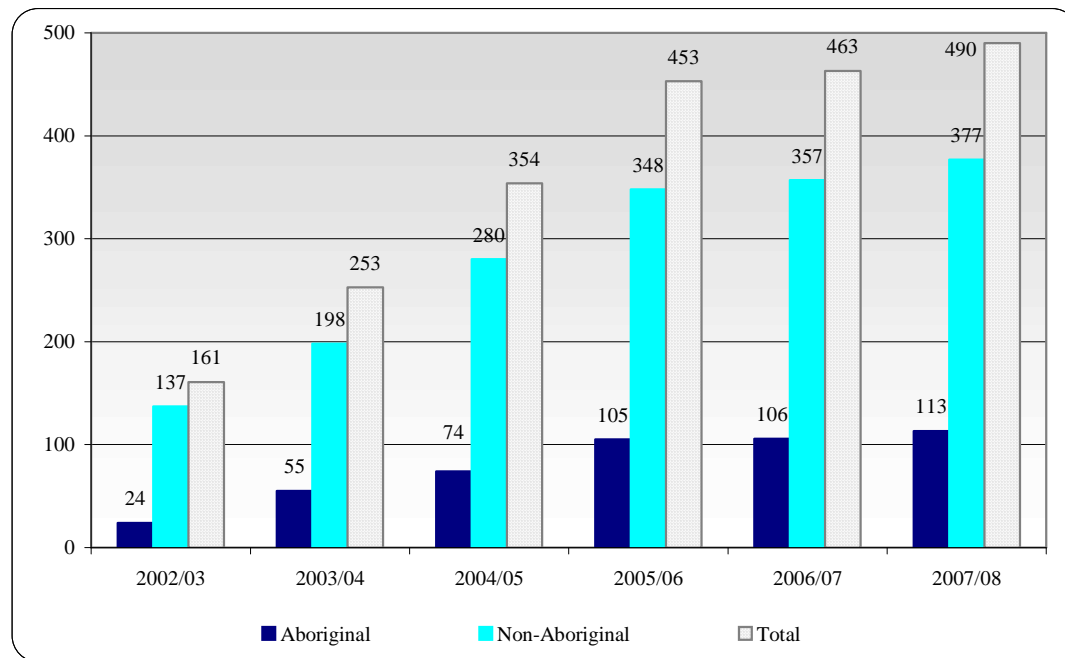


Chart 20: Youth Agreements

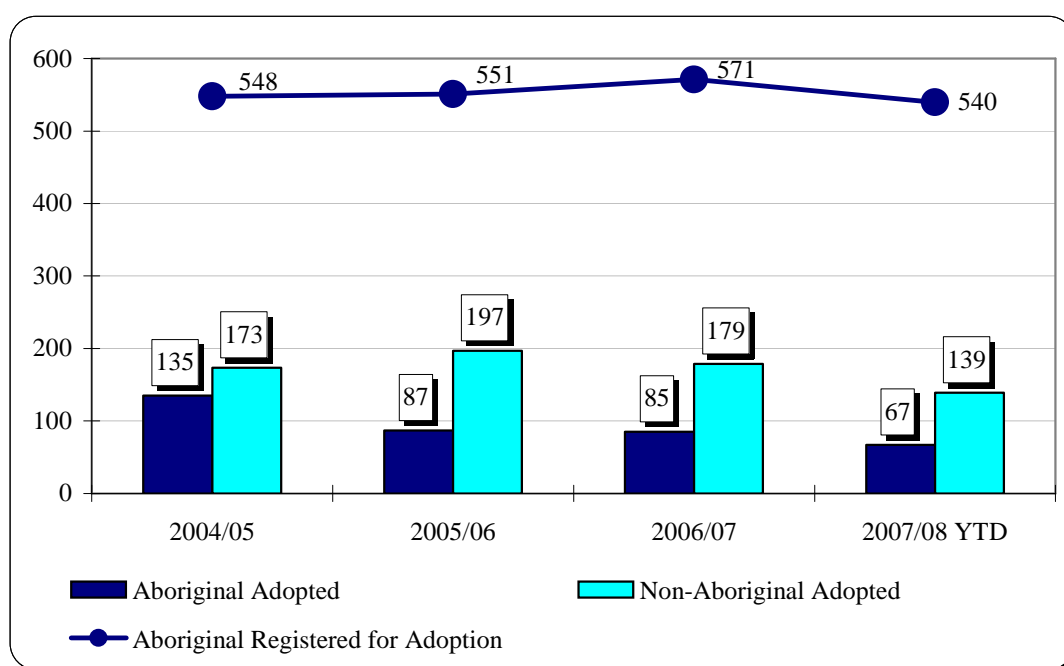


Note: Statistics based on fiscal-year-end March figures. Fiscal 2007/08 based on November 2007 data.

V. Permanency Planning

When it is not possible for a child to stay with their parents or extended family, the ministry seeks stable and life-long attachments for the child through adoptions. Chart 21 shows the number of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children that have been adopted and the number of Aboriginal children that are registered for adoption. Compared to March 2007, there were fewer Aboriginal children registered for adoption in November 2007. Since 2005/06 twice as many non-Aboriginal children have been adopted as Aboriginal children each year, and this has also been the case in the current fiscal year.

Chart 21: Adoptions
Fiscal 2004/05 – 2007/08 YTD



VI. Culturally Appropriate Services

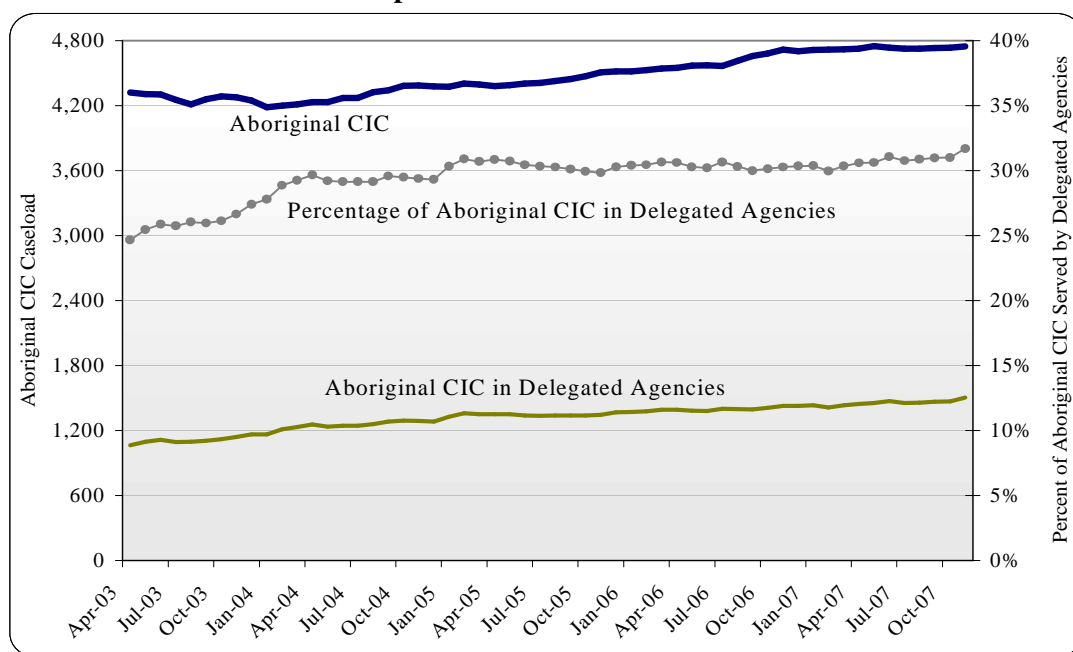
In the midst of the increasing trend in Aboriginal CIC caseload, the ministry has shifted its practices toward providing more community-based and culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children. Currently there are 24 delegated agencies in the province to provide child welfare services to Aboriginal children. (Table 2)

Table 2: Delegated Agencies by Operational Stage

Operational Stage	Number of Agencies
Planning stage	3
Start-up (with signed DEA)	2
Voluntary Services C3	3
Guardianship Services C4	11
Child Protection C6	8
Total (Planning stage is not yet an agency)	24

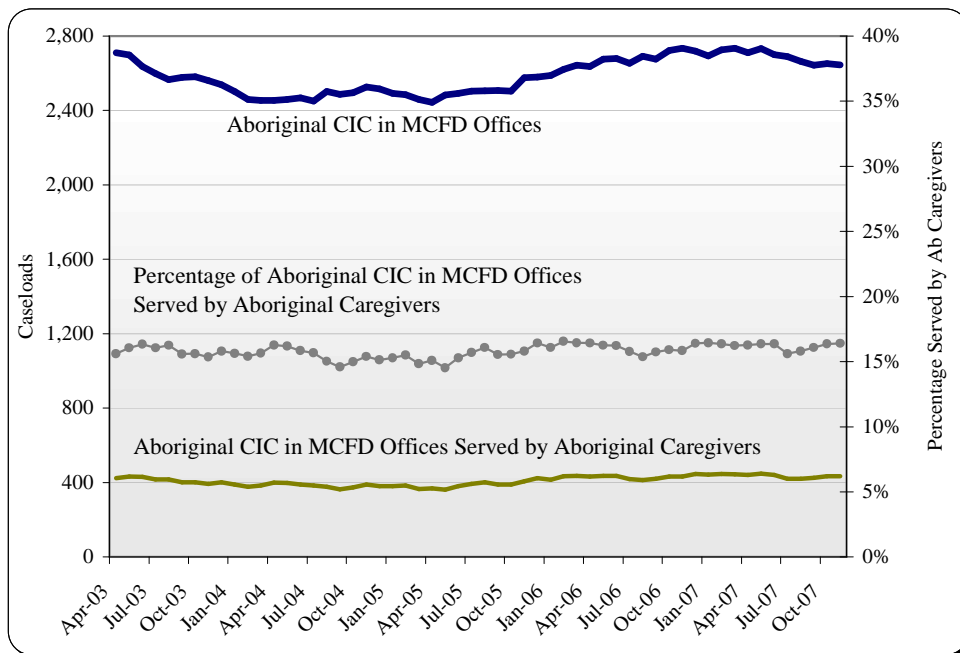
While the total Aboriginal CIC caseload has remained relatively stable in the current fiscal year, the number of Aboriginal CIC served by delegated agencies has grown slightly. In November 2007, 1,504 Aboriginal CIC were served by delegated agencies, representing 32% of the total November Aboriginal CIC caseload. We note that Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS), which is currently at Level C4, is scheduled to move up to the next level to provide full child protection services in April 2008. When this happens, a moderate increase in the agency-served Aboriginal caseload is expected.

**Chart 22: Aboriginal CIC and Percentage Served by Delegated Agencies
April 2003 – November 2007**



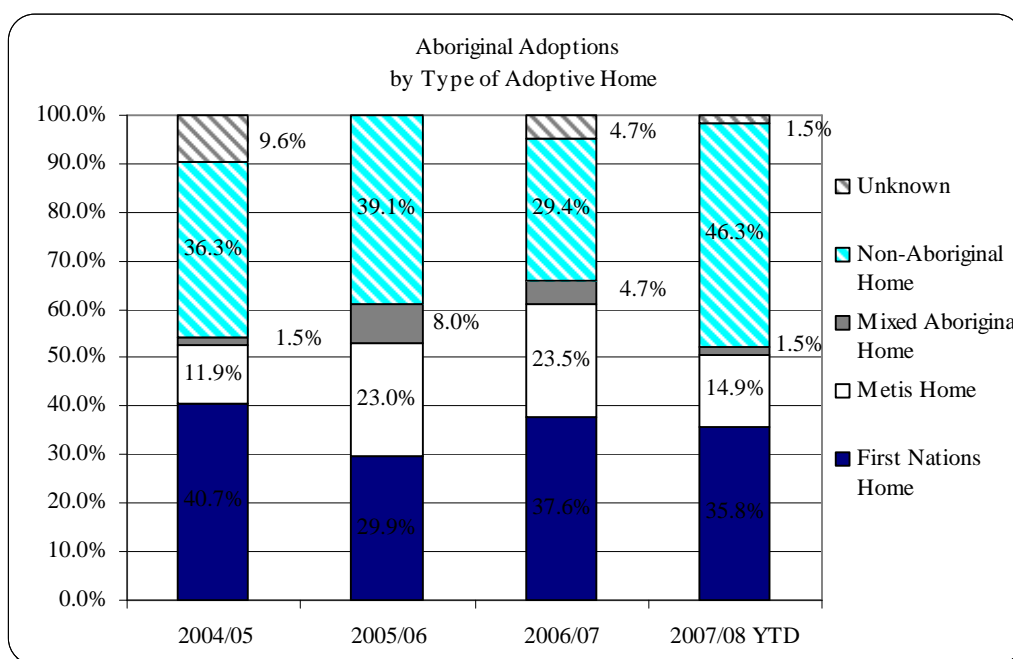
Contrary to the rise in the Aboriginal CIC caseload in delegated agencies, the number of Aboriginal CIC served in MCFD offices has decreased this fiscal year. Within this group, however, the number of Aboriginal CIC served by Aboriginal caregivers remained relatively unchanged. As a result, the proportion of Aboriginal CIC served by Aboriginal caregivers within MCFD offices rose slightly in recent months. Note that the data shown in Chart 23 below is for Aboriginal CIC served in MCFD offices only, as data from delegated agencies are not available.

**Chart 23: Aboriginal CIC in MCFD Offices & Percentage Served by Aboriginal Caregivers
April 2003 – November 2007**



Compared to the two previous years, the proportion of Aboriginal children placed in Metis and Mixed Aboriginal adoptive homes has decreased in 2007/08 (Chart 24). So far this year, only 15% of placements have been with Metis homes compared to approximately 23% in the previous year. The decrease in Metis and Mixed Aboriginal home placements has been offset by an increase in non-Aboriginal home placements. The placement of Aboriginal children in non-Aboriginal homes can sometimes result from the wishes of the community. For example, in the North region, Aboriginal communities generally want a home that is local, whether it is Aboriginal or not, rather than place their children in a geographically distant location in an Aboriginal home. There may also be adoptions that have taken place, but have not been recorded in the computer. Once entered, this new information may change the proportion of Aboriginal children placed in Aboriginal homes.[§]

**Chart 24: Aboriginal Adoptions by Type of Adoptive Home
Fiscal 2004/05 – 2007/08**



[§] Aboriginal homes refer to First Nations homes, Metis homes and mixed Aboriginal homes.

Appendix 1

This is a 2-page Monthly Summary prepared for the Aboriginal Regional Support Services Team to provide an overview of Aboriginal CIC caseload at both the provincial and the regional level.

Aboriginal Children in Care

Children in Care - March fiscal year end	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	November 2007
Total Number of Children in Care	10,082	9,603	9,086	9,071	9,157	9,271	9,217
Non-Aboriginal CIC	5,776	5,289	4,875	4,677	4,615	4,550	4,471
Aboriginal CIC*	4,306	4,314	4,211	4,394	4,542	4,721	4,746
<i>% of CIC that are Aboriginal</i>	<i>43%</i>	<i>45%</i>	<i>46%</i>	<i>48%</i>	<i>50%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>51%</i>
Aboriginal CIC by Aboriginal Affiliation	4,306	4,314	4,211	4,394	4,542	4,721	4,746
First Nations	3,724	3,695	3,532	3,654	3,745	3,925	3,927
Metis	472	515	554	613	683	677	702
Nisga'a	15	17	55	48	43	45	46
Inuit	34	26	21	23	23	26	23
Not Coded	61	61	49	56	48	48	48
Total Children in Care in Delegated Agencies*	648	1,033	1,232	1,349	1,392	1,433	1,504
<i>% of Aboriginal CIC served by Delegated Agencies</i>	<i>15%</i>	<i>24%</i>	<i>29%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>31%</i>	<i>30%</i>	<i>32%</i>
<i>Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 (0 to 18)</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>50.9</i>	<i>49.8</i>	<i>52.2</i>	<i>54.0</i>	<i>55.7</i>	<i>56.0</i>
<i>Non-Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 (0 to 18)</i>	<i>6.8</i>	<i>6.3</i>	<i>5.9</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>5.6</i>	<i>5.4</i>

* Children coded with an Aboriginal origin or served by a Delegated Aboriginal Agency are counted as Aboriginal

Notes:

1. Some CICs are coded as First Nations but no information about their INAC status is entered so is noted here as 'First Nations Not Coded'.
2. CICs in Delegated Agencies are counted as Aboriginal but some have no Aboriginal Affiliation noted. These children are reported as Not Coded.

Figure 1

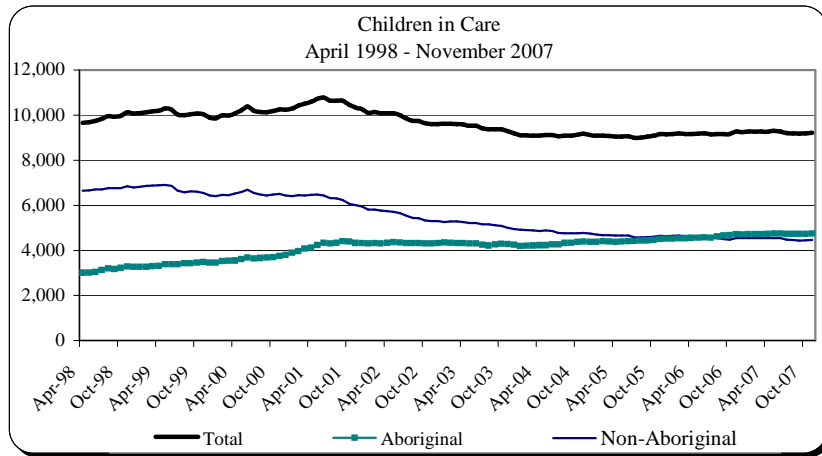


Figure 2

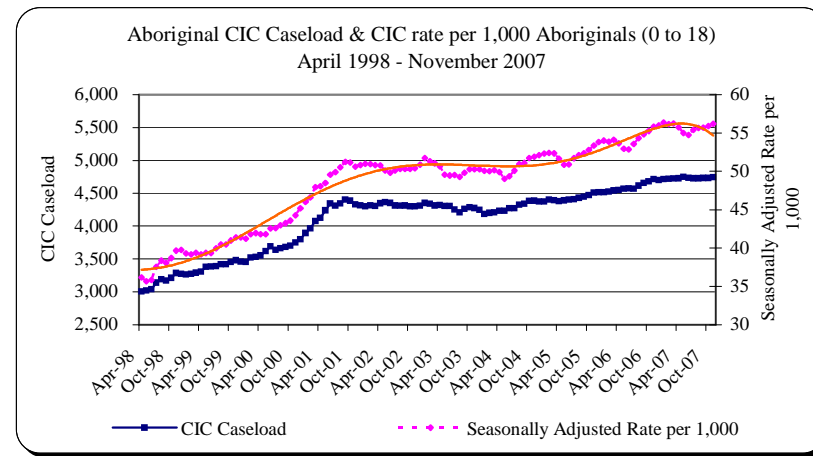


Figure 3

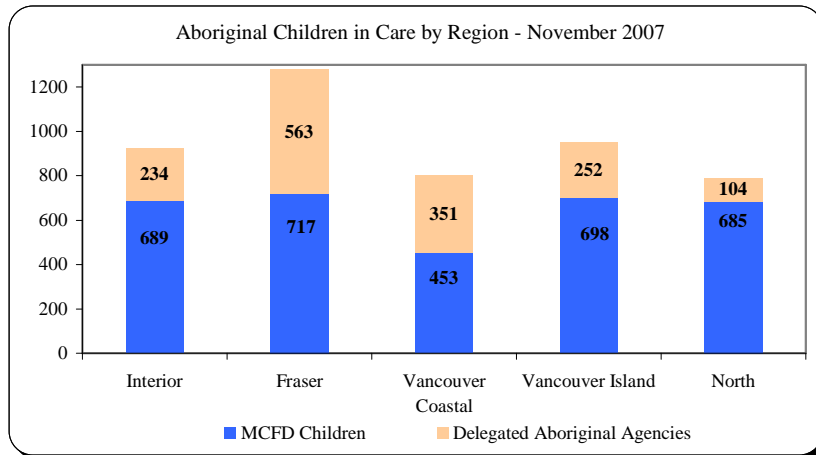
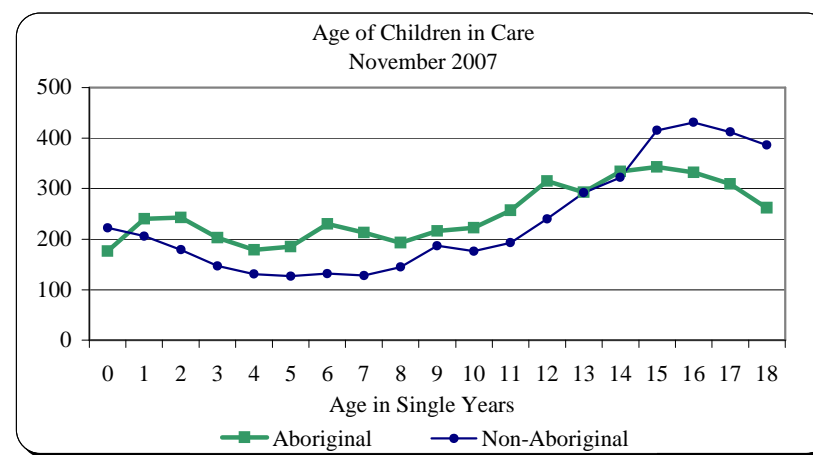


Figure 4



Appendix 2

Aboriginal Children in Care – Funding Sources

	PROVINCE ²		INTERIOR		FRASER		VANCOUVER COASTAL		VANCOUVER ISLAND		NORTH	
	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007	Fiscal 2006/07	Nov. 2007
Non-delegated Aboriginal CIC	3,288	3,242	731	689	720	717	425	453	687	698	725	685
MCFD Funded	2,548	2,441	551	524	628	597	295	304	522	525	552	491
Paid by MCFD and recovered from INAC	250	253	70	67	12	14	26	30	54	55	88	87
Non-Funded ³	490	548	110	98	80	106	104	119	111	118	85	107
Delegated Aboriginal CIC	1,433	1,504	206	234	501	563	385	351	263	252	78	104
MCFD Funded	898	930	92	90	393	449	295	278	104	98	14	15
Paid by MCFD and recovered from INAC	2	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	1
Non-Funded ³	533	571	114	144	108	114	90	71	159	154	62	88
TOTAL ABORIGINAL CHILDREN IN CARE	4,721	4,746	937	923	1,221	1,280	810	804	950	950	803	789

Notes:

1. Children coded with an Aboriginal origin or served by a Delegated Aboriginal Agency are counted as Aboriginal.

2. Migrant children are counted in the provincial total but are not included in the regions.

3. 'Non-Funded' children include those paid directly by INAC as well as those in the following placement types: parents, relatives, adoption residency period, hospital. At time of reporting, there is not enough information to allow for further breakdown within this group.

4. Caseloads include CLBC children in care