

# Just Facts

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Research and Statistics Division

## Sexual Violations against Children<sup>1</sup> and Child Pornography

This fact sheet is based on publicly available data from 2010 to 2017<sup>2</sup> from the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS).

### Police-reported incidents of sexual violations against children continue to increase<sup>3</sup>

There were 8,046 sexual violations against children<sup>4</sup> in 2017, which represents a 118% increase (+4,362 incidents) from 2010. The rate of 11 incidents per 100,000 population in 2010 increased to 22 incidents per 100,000 population in 2017. This increase is primarily attributable to significant increases in incidents of luring a child via computers (including the agreement or arrangement to commit a sexual offence against a child). Reports of 'luring a child' increased from 511 incidents in 2010 to 1,310 incidents in 2017. Another factor that could account for the increase in reports of sexual violations against children is the establishment of specialized units in a police service proactively investigating this type of crime.

### Police-reported incidents of child pornography<sup>5</sup> continue to rise<sup>6</sup>

There were 6,521 police-reported incidents of child pornography in 2017, which represents a 288% increase

<sup>1</sup> Under the age of 18.

<sup>2</sup> Definitions of sexual violations against children have evolved and therefore, data comparisons before 2010 are not recommended.

<sup>3</sup> Police-reported "sexual violations against children" include: luring a child via a computer or the agreement/arrangement by means of telecommunication to commit a sexual offence against a child; sexual exploitation; sexual interference; invitation to sexual touching; and, making sexually explicit material available to a child. Due to the complexity of these incidents, the data likely reflect the number of active or closed investigations for the year rather than the total number of incidents reported to police. Source: Statistics Canada, *Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations*, CANSIM (database).  
<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510017701>

<sup>4</sup> Similar to sexual assaults in general, reports of sexual violations against children are expected to be an underestimate of the true number of incidents due to compounding factors that are likely to impact reporting, such as reliance on an adult to bring the incident to the attention of police (Kuoppamäki, S.-M., J. Kääriäinen and N. Ellonen. 2011. "Physical violence against children reported to the police: Discrepancies between register-based data and child victim survey." *Violence and Victims*. Vol. 26, no. 2. p. 257-268).

<sup>5</sup> Includes offences under section 163.1 of the *Criminal Code*; access, possess, make, print, or distribute child pornography.

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, *Table 35-10-0177-01 Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violations*, CANSIM (database).

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510017701>



(+4,840 incidents) from 2010. Accordingly, the rate of 5 incidents per 100,000 population in 2010 rose to 18 incidents per 100,000 population in 2017.

### Number of criminal court cases for “other sexual offences” has increased<sup>7</sup>

There were 3,650 “other sexual offences” cases in 2015/2016, which represents a 56% increase from 2010/2011 (2,338 cases). Of note, not all “other sexual offences” are strictly offences against children.<sup>8</sup>

### Percentage of “other sexual offences”<sup>9</sup> cases resulting in a finding of guilt is decreasing while the number of cases stayed or withdrawn is increasing

In 2015/2016, 59% of “other sexual offences” cases resulted in a guilty verdict compared to 68% in 2010/2011. In 2015/2016, 34% of “other sexual offences” cases were stayed or withdrawn compared to 26% in 2010/2011.

### The percentage of guilty cases resulting in custody sentences is increasing<sup>10</sup>

In 2015/2016, out of the 2,142 “other sexual offences” cases that resulted in a guilty verdict, 68% received custody as the most serious sentence, 17% received probation, 12% received an “other” sentence<sup>11</sup>, 2% received a conditional sentence and 1% received a fine. This can be compared to 2010/2011 when out of the 1,597 “other sexual offences” cases that resulted in a guilty verdict, 63% of guilty cases received custody as the most serious sentence, 23% received probation, 9% received an “other” sentence, 4% received a conditional sentence and 2% received a fine.

### It takes about 11 months to complete<sup>12</sup> an “other sexual offences” case compared to 4 months for a *Criminal Code* case<sup>13</sup>

It took about 325 days to complete a case of “other sexual offence” in adult court in 2015/2016, which is 57 days longer than in 2010/2011. For comparison, in 2016/2017, it took a median of 141 days<sup>14</sup> to complete a *Criminal Code* case, which is 22 days longer than in 2010/2011.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, *Table 35-10-0027-01 Adult criminal courts, number of cases and charges by type of decision*, CANSIM (database). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510002701>

<sup>8</sup> In the Adult Criminal Court data, the “other sexual offences” category includes more offences than in the police-reported data category of “sexual violations against children.” The following is a non-exhaustive list of offences that are included: sexual interference, sexual exploitation, voyeurism, incest, making, distributing, possessing or accessing child pornography, and child luring.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, *Table 35-10-0031-01 Adult criminal courts, guilty cases by most serious sentence*, CANSIM (database). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510003101>

<sup>11</sup> ‘Other’ sentences may include restitution, absolute and conditional discharge, suspended sentence, community service order and prohibition orders among others. Figures for “other” as the most serious sentence are among the least serious sentence types, and are often used in combination with other more serious sentences.

<sup>12</sup> Based on the median elapsed time, i.e., the mid-point of the number of days taken to complete a case, from first to last court appearance. Statistics Canada, *Table 35-10-0029-0 Adult criminal courts, cases by median elapsed time in days*, CANSIM (database). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510002901>

<sup>13</sup> Includes all *Criminal Code* cases under the Common Offence Classification (COC) which is a standard grouping of offences (for example, major assault, impaired driving) involving 32 offence categories.

<sup>14</sup> Statistics Canada. *Table 35-10-0029-01 Adult criminal courts, cases by median elapsed time in days*. CANSIM (database). <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=3510002901>