

# **ROCKWOOL-Duke Comparative Indigenous Child Welfare Contact Database**

## **NDACAN Dataset Number 307 USER'S GUIDE**



National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

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## Preface

The data for the *ROCKWOOL–Duke Comparative Indigenous Child Welfare Contact Database* have been given by the authors to the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) for public distribution. The data were either collected by the authors from publicly available sources, or compiled by the authors from restricted data and reported in aggregate form, preventing disclosure risk. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from the ROCKWOOL Foundation (grant no.1261). The research was carried out in complete independence of the funding sources, and the authors accept responsibility for the data.

## Acknowledgement of Source

Authors should acknowledge the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) and the original collector(s) of the data when publishing manuscripts that use data provided by the Archive. Users of these data are urged to follow some adaptation of the statement below.

The data used in this publication were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and have been used with permission. The data were either collected by the authors from publicly available sources, or compiled by the authors from restricted data and reported in aggregate form, preventing disclosure risk. Funding for the project was provided by grants from the ROCKWOOL Foundation. The collector(s) and distributors of the original data, the funder(s), NDACAN, Duke University, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

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## Publication Submission Requirement

In accordance with the terms of the *Data License* for this dataset, users of these data are required to notify the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect of any published work or report based wholly or in part on these data. A copy of any completed manuscript, thesis abstract, or reprint should be emailed to [NDACANsupport@cornell.edu](mailto:NDACANsupport@cornell.edu). Such copies will be used to provide our funding agency with essential information about the use of NDACAN resources and to facilitate the exchange of information about research activities among data users and contributors.

## **Abstract**

The ROCKWOOL-Duke Comparative Indigenous Child Welfare Contact dataset compiles cross-national aggregate information about child welfare contact of indigenous (or native, aboriginal) children compared to non-indigenous children, between 2010 and 2023, from 3 countries who have a history of colonial rule: Denmark, Greenland (Kalaallit Nunaat), and the United States. This dataset is a new and unique resource for comparative and longitudinal research of how indigenous children's child welfare outcomes differ to those of non-indigenous children.

Data were collected from national child welfare or national statistical agencies, and measures include notifications of child maltreatment, investigations of maltreatment, confirmed cases of maltreatment, placements in out-of-home care, and the number of children in out-of-home care. Population data are also included for the measurement of incidence and prevalence of system contact. It is important to note that child welfare definitions and the administration of child welfare and protective service vary between countries and caution is warranted in the interpretation of variation and change in system contact. Users should read the User's Guide carefully before using the data.

## **Study Overview**

### **Study Identification**

*ROCKWOOL–Duke Comparative Indigenous Child Welfare Contact*

#### **Investigator(s):**

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**Funded By:** The ROCKWOOL Foundation

**Award Number(s):** Grant no. 1261

### **Purpose of the Study**

Research objectives for the study:

- Understand cross-national variation in child welfare system (CWS) and child protective services (CPS) contact of indigenous children compared to non-indigenous children.
- Develop a data resource to support comparative and longitudinal child welfare research of indigenous children.

### **Study Design**

This is a compilation of administrative data collected by Denmark, Greenland, and the United States

### **Date(s) of Data Collection**

Denmark and Greenland have data from calendar years (CY) 2010-2023.

The United States has data from federal fiscal years (FFY) 2000-2021.

## **Geographic Area**

Denmark, Greenland, and the United States

## **Unit of Observation**

Country-years are in long format, by child welfare measures. Each row is uniquely defined by country, year, type of system contact (e.g. maltreatment report, out-of-home-care), the measure of that contact (e.g. incidence, prevalence), and Indigenous status.

Some countries provided data by age, boarding, or placement type, thus some measures are further uniquely defined by year of age, age groups, boarding, placement type, or placement type groups.

## **Sample**

The data are aggregated from nationally maintained administrative records of child maltreatment reports and investigations; investigations resulting in the confirmation of child maltreatment; and children in out-of-home care.

## **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected from national registry data or obtained by request directly from national statistics agencies. Data collection was conducted between 2023 and 2025. Population data for children, by indigeneity status and age, are included as well.

Data was sought from each country regarding notices of maltreatment, investigations of maltreatment, confirmed maltreatment, and out-of-home placements (interchangeably referred to as foster care in the US). There are multiple ways to approach counting child welfare related events though, for example, number of distinct children who had an event over a year, number of reports over a year, number of children experiencing their first event in a year, or point in time measures.

We sought any and all data or measure(s) that a country could provide, and collated measures of:

- **Incidence**: (variable measure = “inc”) Counts at the incident-level, i.e. report, placement, investigation.
- **Annual prevalence**: (variable measure = “prev”) Counts of distinct children experiencing the related child welfare event (e.g. maltreatment, removal from home) over the administrative year.
- **Cumulative prevalence**: (variable measure = “prev\_first”) Count of distinct children experiencing the related child welfare event (e.g. maltreatment, removal from home), for the first time in their life, over the administrative year.



- **Point prevalence:** (variable measure = “prev\_point”) Count of distinct children experiencing the related child welfare event on a specific date.

*Table 1. Table that shows what counts are available in at least one year, for each country and child welfare measure.*

<b>Notices of concern</b>				
	Incidence	Annual prevalence	Cumulative prevalence (first)	Point prevalence
Denmark		X		
Greenland				
United States				
<b>Investigations of maltreatment</b>				
	Incidence	Annual prevalence	Cumulative prevalence (first)	Point prevalence
Denmark				
Greenland				
United States	X	X	X	
<b>Children with confirmed maltreatment</b>				
	Incidence	Annual prevalence	Cumulative prevalence (first)	Point prevalence
Denmark				
Greenland				
United States	X	X	X	
<b>Out-of-home placement</b>				
	Incidence	Annual prevalence	Cumulative prevalence (first)	Point prevalence
Denmark		X		
Greenland				X
United States	X	X	X	X

#### *Denmark*

Danish child welfare data was obtained from the administrative register on all Danish out-of-home placements from 1977-2023, called [BUAF](#), maintained by Statistics Denmark. Population data was constructed using the population registry data of children aged 0-17 from 2010-2023 from the population register [BEF](#). Data are by single-year age and Indigenous status.

#### *Greenland*

Child welfare data from Greenland was obtained directly from Statistics Greenland by commissioned request. Population data come from the [Statistic Greenland's data bank](#). Child maltreatment data was provided by age groups, except for the placement type groups which is provided for children age 0. Population data include the total child population, grouped aged population, and population at age 0.

Greenland also provided a breakdown, and groupings, of the types of out-of-home placement, indicated with the variables “placement\_type” and “placement\_type\_grps”.

### *United States*

American child welfare data was obtained through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect ([NDACAN](#)) who provided child maltreatment data from the [National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System \(NCANDS\)](#), and out-of-home (i.e. foster care) data from the [Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System \(AFCARS\)](#). Population data come from the Census Bureau and can be obtained through the [CDC Wonder Database](#). Data are by single-year age and Indigenous status.

## **Response Rates**

The authors sought data from five countries who had a history of colonial rule for the years 2000-2023, and obtained data on at least one outcome from four of them. Of the 120 possible country–year observations for any given outcome, we obtained at least one measure of child welfare system contact in 60 country-years. One country did not authorize NDACAN to archive provided data, however, and so we archive at least one measure of child welfare system contact in three countries and 50 country-years.

## **Sources of Information**

National and transnational child welfare and statistical agencies.

## **Type of Data Collected**

Administrative data.

## **Related Publications and Final Reports**

Roehrkasse, A. F., Becker, L., Wildeman, C., & Fallesen, P. (2023). Introducing a new data resource for comparative child welfare research: The ROCKWOOL-Duke global child welfare database. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 152, 107075.

Wildeman, C., Roehrkasse, A.F., Becker, L., & Fallesen, P. (2022).

“Child Welfare System Contact in the Global North: Trends from 44 Countries.” Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4139385> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.4139385>

Ankestyrelsen (2011). Brugen af eget værelse som anbringelsesform. København. ISBN: 978-87-7811-154-8

Users are strongly encouraged to review published works, based upon these data, before doing analyses. To view a complete list of publications for this dataset, please visit our online citations

collection called “canDL” (Child Abuse and Neglect Digital Library):  
<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/candl/candl.cfm>.

### **Analytic Considerations**

The ROCKWOOL–Duke Comparative Indigenous Child Welfare Contact Database provides a basis for both cross-sectional and longitudinal comparative analysis of CWS/CPS contact. However, the data have significant limitations that users are strongly urged to consider before conducting analyses.

#### ***Limitations of the data:***

##### *Reliability:*

- Users should consider carefully which issues are pertinent to their analytic goals, whether making comparisons across countries, within countries across years, or by linking data to other sources. Users can also refer to a detailed analyses of the reliability of child welfare data from different countries from the literature listed in the Related Publications and Reports.

##### *Miscellaneous sources of variation:*

- Countries vary in the 12-month periods over which investigations, confirmed maltreatments, and entrances into out-of-home care were measured and the dates on which children residing in out-of-home care were measured.
- Denmark
  - o In Denmark, social services may offer older children a place at a boarding school, ship project, hall of residence, or an own room for increased independence, a change of environment, or as a preventive measure. Although these are not legally considered out-of-home placements (OOHP), they are often included in Danish OOHP statistics. Since these placement types are specific to Denmark, two sets of measures are provided for comparative flexibility: 1) one set that includes placements in boarding schools, ship projects and own rooms or halls of residence and 2) one set that excludes these specific placement types. Excluding them reduces OOHP numbers in the older age categories which are the target groups for these placement types, resulting in lower counts than in other Danish OOHP statistics. Including them may lead to an overestimation of the extent of OOHP in Denmark comparative to other countries for the older age groups. Users of this data should make an informed decision about whether it is meaningful to include these placement categories in their analysis, based on the countries being compared and their respective OOHP policies.
- United States

- Data for investigations and confirmed maltreatments in the United States (US) come from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Series (NCANDS). A small number of states did not report data to NCANDS through 2011. As a result, the geographic range of US investigations and confirmed maltreatment varies across years between 2005 and 2011 and differs from the geographic range of out-of-home care measures in those years. The included population data are adjusted to account for this issue.

#### *Definitional variation:*

- Countries have varying definitions of child maltreatment investigations, confirmed maltreatment, or out-of-home care. Additionally, the definition and identification of indigenous populations within each country inherently varies.

#### *Indigeneity:*

- Greenland indigenous populations
  - No distinctions were made in terms of indigeneity within Greenland as the Greenlandic population historically has been composed of Greenlandic Inuit. Instead, we count all children in Greenland as indigenous based on estimates from Statistics Greenland showing that approximately 95% of children between ages 0-17 residing in Greenland are born in Greenland.
- Denmark indigenous populations
  - Children of Greenlandic Inuit descent in Denmark are defined as children with *at least* one parent born in Greenland, regardless of the child's own place of birth.
- United States indigenous populations
  - Indigeneity is self-reported in the datasets as Native American or Native Alaskan, i.e. children "having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South (including Central America) who maintains tribal affiliation or tribal community attachment."<sup>1</sup> This includes people who indicate their race as "American Indian or Alaska Native", report the name of their enrolled or principal tribe, or report the name of their Indian group. Our indigenous measure includes children who identify as Native American/Native Alaskan, Non-Hispanic, and have no other race identified (i.e. not multiracial).

#### *Missing and imputed data:*

- For the United States, in NCANDS and AFCARS there was some missingness in the data for age, indigenous indicator, and the status of a prior maltreatment report. Multiple imputation was used at the individual-level in order to fill in missing values. Counts were then taken over each imputation set and the average over the results was taken as the point estimate<sup>2</sup>. Standard errors for the imputed estimates are also included.

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<sup>1</sup> As defined by the Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>.

<sup>2</sup> The average was rounded to an integer value to accurately reflect count data.

### **Confidentiality Protection**

The dataset underwent a confidentiality review by NDACAN and it was determined that no recodes were necessary since data are aggregated at national levels. There are no primary or secondary identifiers in the dataset.

In Denmark's data, NA values reflect masked cells due to data suppression criteria from Statistics Denmark prevents the publication of cell counts below 5.

### **Extent of Collection**

This dataset contains a User's Guide, Codebook, and a dataset named "DS307" in file formats native to Excel (.xlsx), SPSS (.sav), Stata (.dta), and SAS (.sas7bdat). There are also import program files for SAS (.sas), SPSS (.sps), and Stata (.do) to read in the text (.dat) data file, and comma-delimited (.csv) data file for use with spreadsheet programs.

### **Extent of Processing**

The data contributor conducted all data recodes and deletions prior to depositing the data with NDACAN, and created the User's Guide, Codebook. NDACAN finalized documentation and created data files formatted for SAS, SPSS, Stata, and a text and a comma-delimited data file.

## **Data File Information**

### **File Specifications**

This dataset contains one data file containing 9,554 observations (rows) and 13 variables (columns).

### **Data File Notes**

Data are organized in a long format by country-year, contact, measure, indigeneity, age, boarding, and placement type where available.

## **Acronyms & Abbreviations**

*The following abbreviations and acronyms are used in this document:*

CPS - Child Protective Services

CP-NMDS – Child Protection National Minimum Dataset

CWS - Child Welfare System

NCANDS - National Child Abuse and Neglect Data Series

NDACAN - National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect

US - United States

**Technical support for this dataset is provided by NDACAN.**

**Please send your inquiries to [NDACANsupport@cornell.edu](mailto:NDACANsupport@cornell.edu)**

**Visit the User Support page of the NDACAN website for help documents and videos (<https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/user-support/user-support.cfm>).**