

Ministry of Children and Family Development

# Aboriginal Children in Care

May 2009 Report

*Prepared by Research, Analysis and Evaluation Branch*

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## I. Summary

The Aboriginal Children in Care Report is produced by the Research, Analysis and Evaluation Branch and it presents statistics and analysis of Aboriginal children in care and the steps being taken by the ministry of Children and Family Development to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care (CIC).

- In May 2009, there were 4,666 Aboriginal children in care, a decrease of 2.9% compared to May 2008. *(Chart 1)*
- It is 12.3 times more likely for an Aboriginal child to be in care than a non-Aboriginal child in fiscal 2009/10 YTD, compared to 12.4 times in 2008/09. *(Chart 10)*
- On average, Aboriginal children discharged from care in May 2009 had spent more time in care (30.5 months) than non-Aboriginals (25.2 months). *(Chart 11)*
- As of May 2009, 1,883 Aboriginal CICs were served by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, representing 40.4% of the total Aboriginal CIC caseload.
- The Proportion of Aboriginal children placed in non-Aboriginal adoptive homes decreased from 54% in 2008/09 to 31% in fiscal 2009/10 YTD. *(Chart 21)*

- In fiscal 2009/10 YTD, an Aboriginal child is 4.0 times more likely to have a protection concern reported than a non-Aboriginal child, 5.3 times more likely to be investigated, 8.0 times more likely to be found in need of protection, 5.6 times more likely to be admitted into care, and 12.3 times more likely to remain in care. These likelihood ratios are higher than previously published ratios by the Research, Analysis and Evaluation Branch. The change in likelihood ratios resulted from changing the source for Aboriginal child population numbers. This report uses the BC Stats Aboriginal Identity Projection model (medium scenario). This model estimates and forecasts Aboriginal population based on Aboriginal Identity Census information. The Aboriginal child population in the July 2008 and earlier reports was estimated by the Research, Analysis, and Evaluation Branch based on 2001 Census Aboriginal ancestry results and BC Vital Statistics Agency birth and death rates of status Aboriginals.

## II. Aboriginal Children in Care

As of May 2009, there were 8,895 children in care (CIC), of which 4,666 (52.5%) were Aboriginal and 4,229 (47.5%) were non-Aboriginal. (Chart 1)

The total CIC caseload decreased by 322 (3.5%) from May 2008. There were 139 (2.9%) fewer Aboriginal CICs than the same month in the previous year, while the non-Aboriginal CIC caseload decreased by 183 (4.1%). (Table 1)

Chart 1: CIC Caseload  
Actual Caseload for April 2001 - May 2009

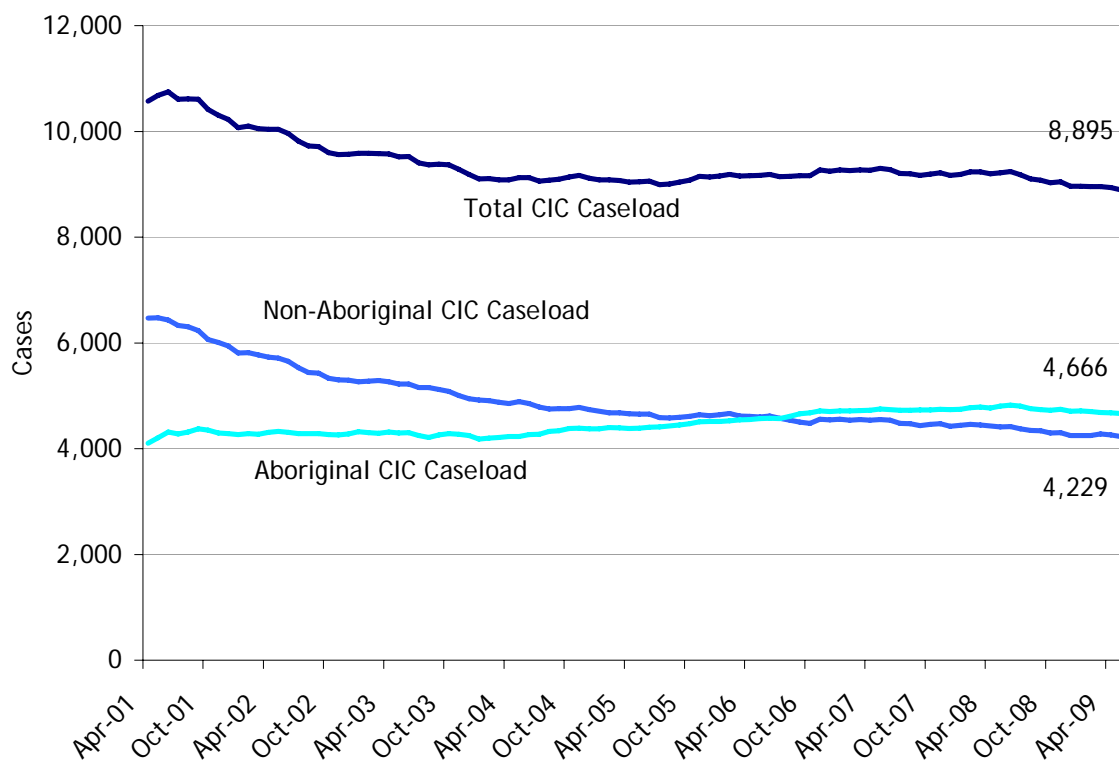
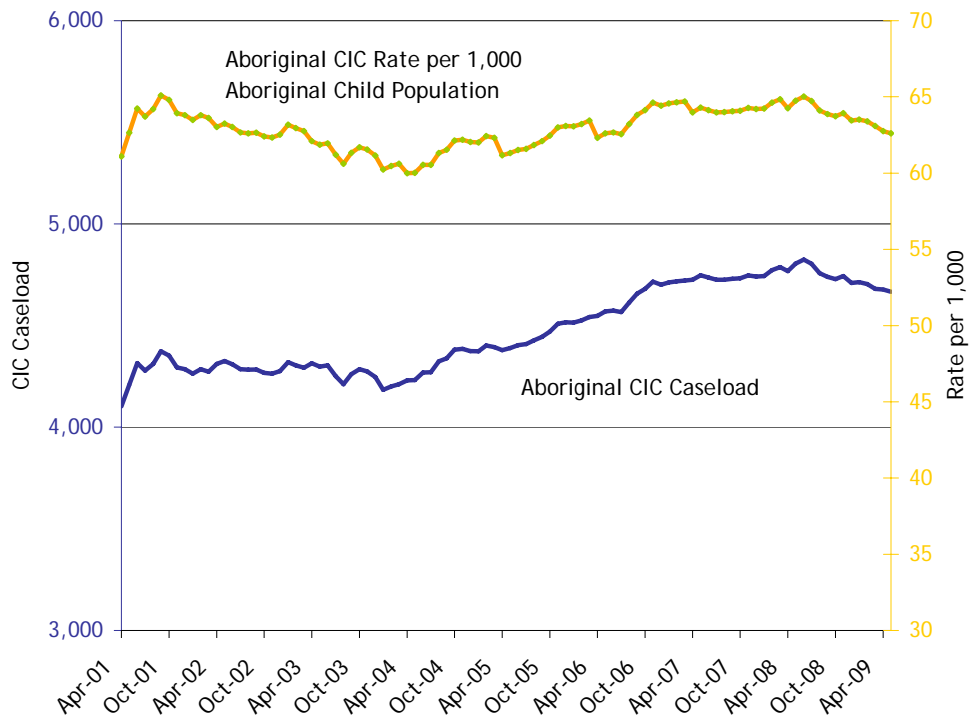


Table 1: CIC Monthly and Annual Growth

May 2009

Month	Aboriginal CIC	Non-Aboriginal CIC
May 2009	4,666	4,229
Apr 2009	4,678	4,260
Monthly % Change	-0.3%	-0.7%
May 2008	4,805	4,412
May 2009 vs. May 2008 % Change	-2.9%	-4.1%

Chart 2: Aboriginal CIC Caseload & Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 Aboriginals (0 to 18) April 2001 - May 2009



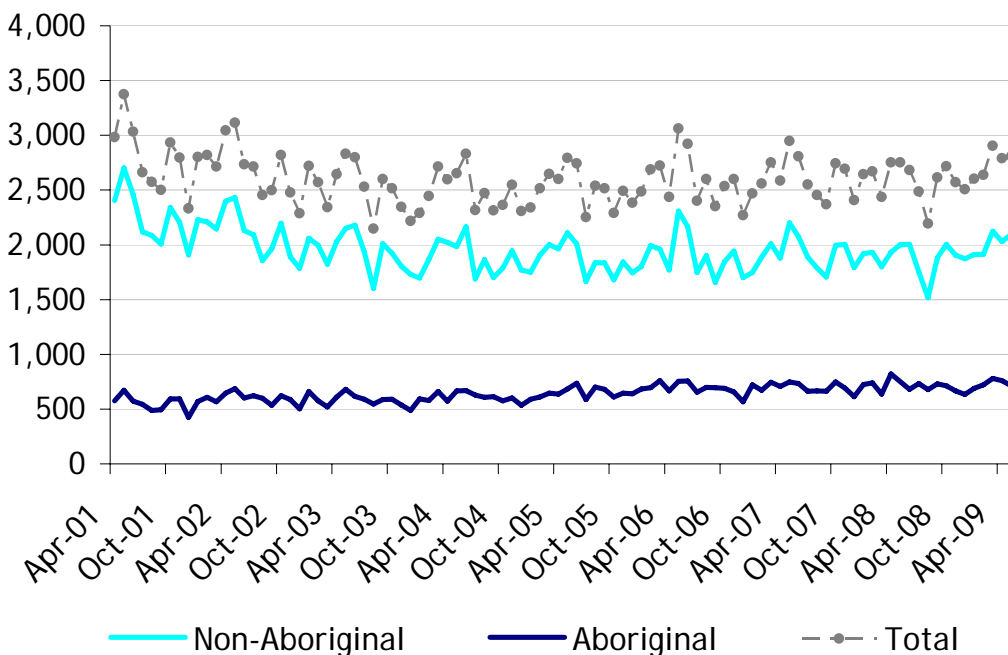
***What factors are influencing the Aboriginal CIC caseloads?***

Placing a child in care is the result of an involved process that starts with a call to the ministry concerning possible abuse, neglect or other protection needs of a child. These phone calls often result in protection reports and then some of these protection reports become child protection investigations. If the child protection worker determines that a child is in need of protection, then the child will be taken into care unless other solutions are available. What follows is a look at protection reports, investigations and investigation findings, as these have a significant effect on admissions into care and the CIC caseload.

**Protection Reports**

The number of monthly protection reports received by the ministry has remained relatively constant for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginals over the past three years, despite proportionately more variability in non-Aboriginal figures from month-to-month. (Chart 3)

**Chart 3: Protection Reports  
April 2001 - May 2009**



**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 4: Protection Reports Investigated  
April 2001 - May 2009

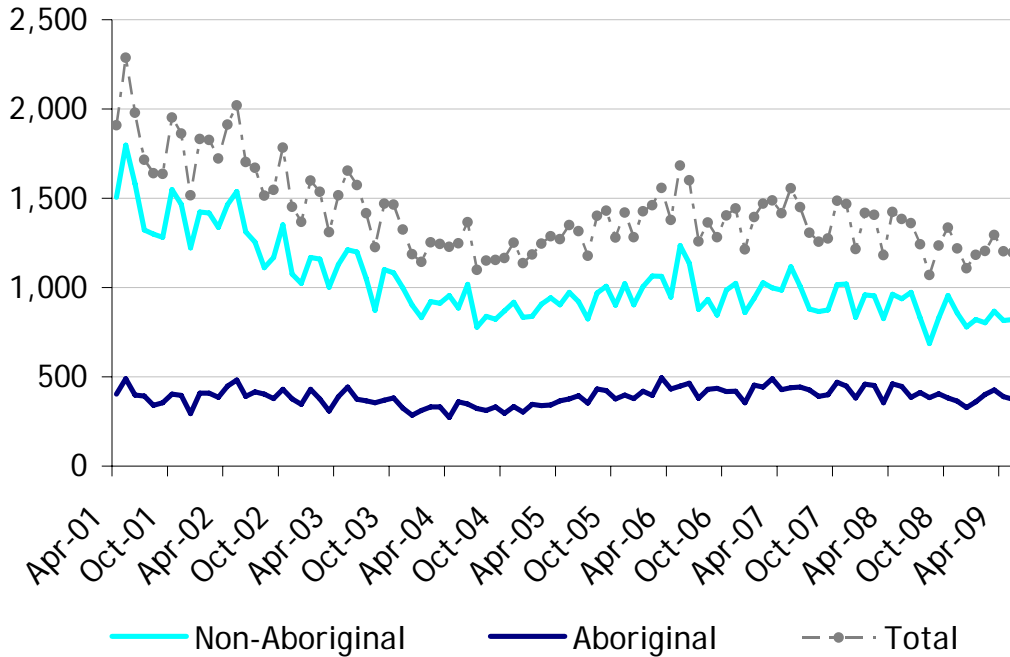
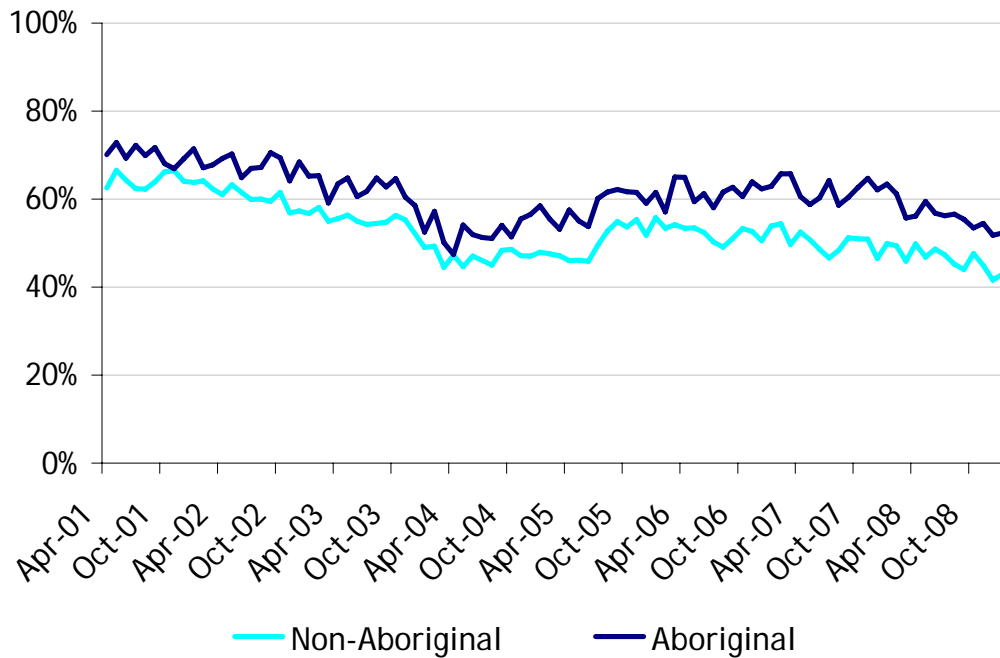


Chart 5: Percentage of Protection Reports Investigated  
April 2001 - May 2009

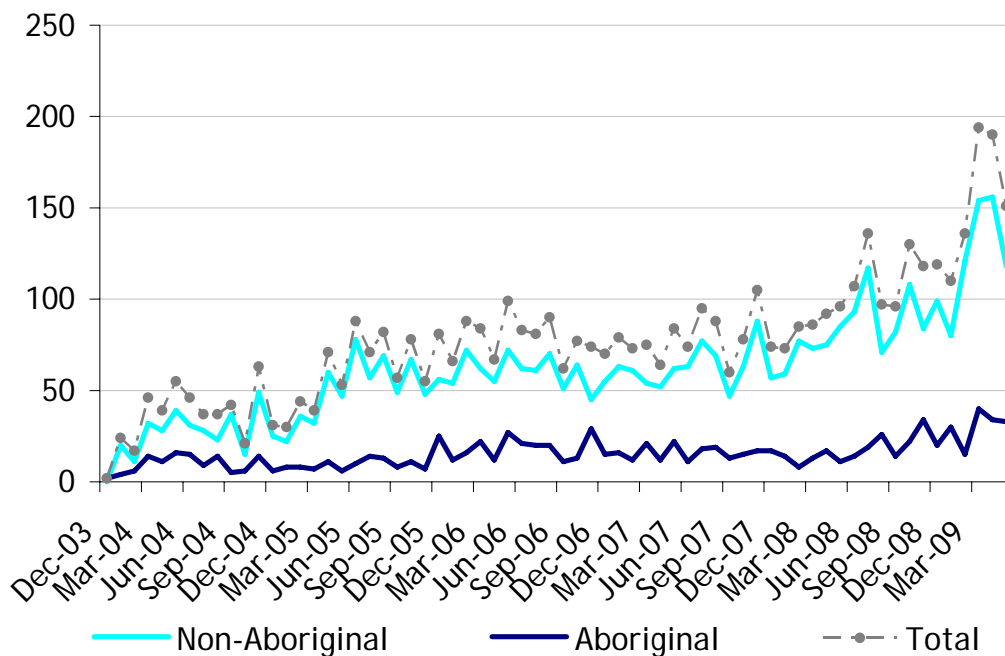


The number of protection reports investigated for Aboriginal children has remained fairly consistent since fiscal 2006/07 (*Chart 4*), however the proportion of protection reports that were investigated for Aboriginal children has consistently been higher than non-Aboriginal children (*Chart 5*).

The higher proportion for Aboriginal children may be because protection reports on Aboriginal children are often of a more serious nature (e.g., severe physical abuse or severe physical neglect) and thus they are managed through child protection investigations rather than other less intrusive types of interventions.

There exists an ongoing shift in practice towards handling lower risk cases through referrals to community services or family development response (FDR). FDR is a less intrusive alternative to a regular child protection investigation. Chart 6 shows the number of closed FDRs for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children. The use of FDR has been more numerous for non-Aboriginal investigations than Aboriginal, and there has been a recent surge in the number of FDRs for non-Aboriginal children. The total number of closed FDR remains fairly small compared to the number of protection reports investigated.

**Chart 6: Closed Family Development Response  
December 2003 - May 2009**

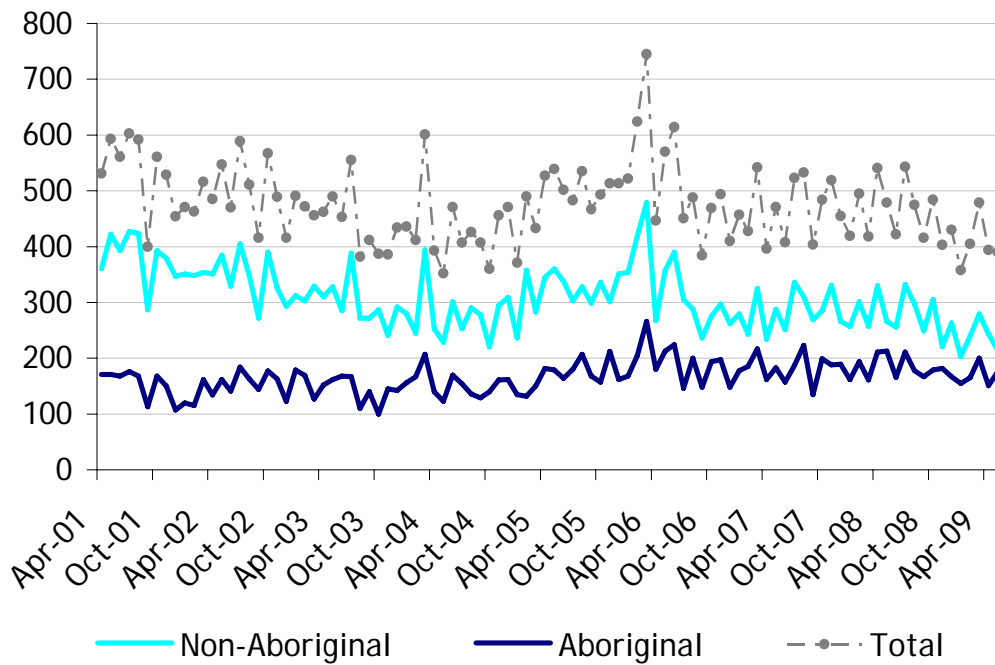




### Investigations Found in Need of Protection

The number of investigations with a protection need finding has remained relatively stable since 2006/07. There was, however, a noticeable spike around April 2006. This can likely be attributed to a high-profile coroner's inquest, the Hughes review and issue papers by the Child and Youth Officer that were released in early 2006.

Chart 7: Investigations Found in Need of Protection  
April 2001 - May 2009

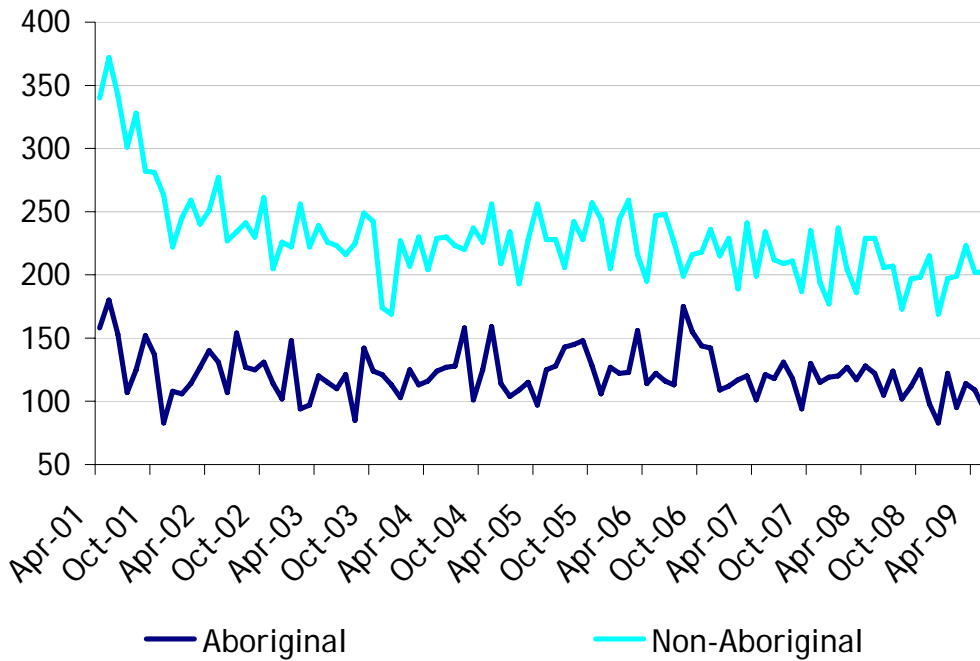


**Admissions**

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal admissions into care have exhibited flat trends since early 2002. This reflects the recent trend in protection reports with a protection need finding.

We note that the spike in investigations with a 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 8) This is likely because of the ministry’s commitment conducting thorough investigations and keeping children with their families where it is safe to do so. The ministry also looks for alternatives such as Out-of-Care Options (OCO’s) before placing a child in care.

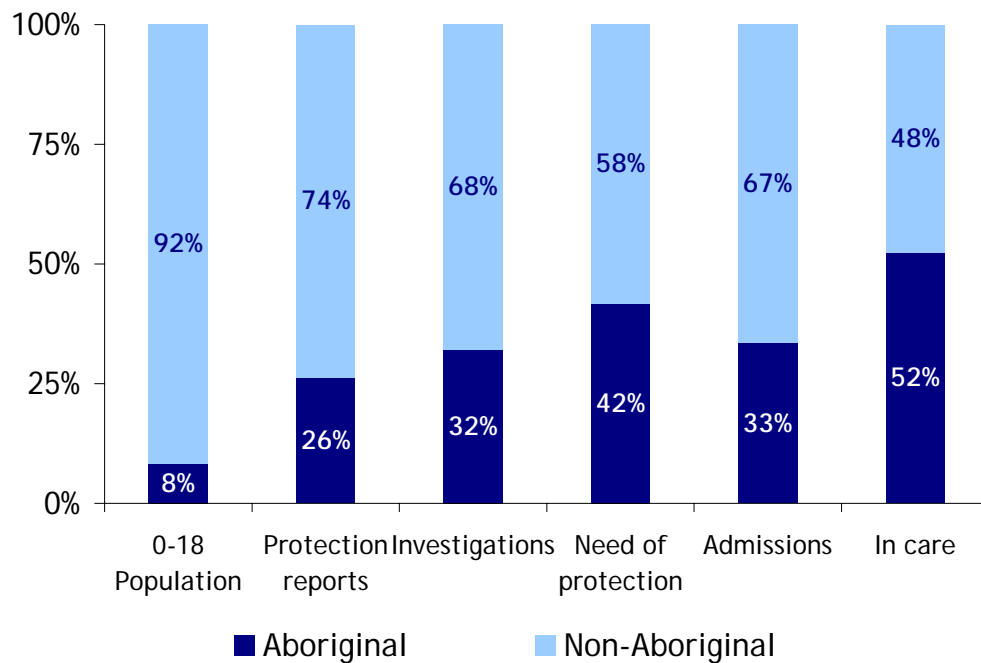
Chart 8: Admissions  
April 2001 - May 2009



### What does this tell us?

There is an over-representation of Aboriginal children at all stages of the ministry involvement when compared to the overall percentage of Aboriginal children in the BC child population. Chart 9 shows that Aboriginal cases account for 26% of protection reports<sup>1</sup>, 32% of investigations, 42% of investigations in need of protection, 33% of admissions, and 52% of children in care, while only 8% of the BC child population is Aboriginal<sup>2</sup>.

Chart 9: Percentage of Aboriginal Children through Child Protection System  
Fiscal 2009/10 YTD (May 2009)



In short, Aboriginal children have typically required more child protection services than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. In fiscal 2009/10 YTD, an Aboriginal child is:

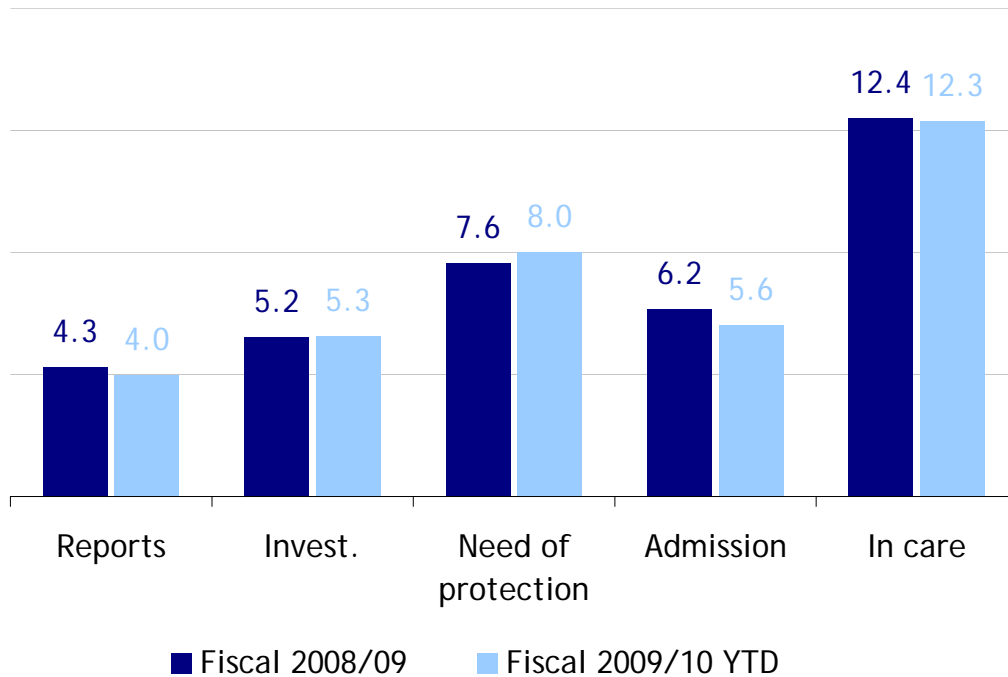
- 4.0 times more likely to have a protection concern reported than a non-Aboriginal child;
- 5.3 times more likely to be investigated;
- 8.0 times more likely to be found in need of protection;
- 5.6 times more likely to be admitted into care, and
- 12.3 times more likely to remain in care

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> BC Stats, under contract from MCFD and other social ministries, developed the Aboriginal Identity Projection model. This model estimates and forecasts Aboriginal population based on Aboriginal Identity Census information. The Aboriginal child population in the July 2008 and earlier Aboriginal Children in Care reports was estimated by the Research, Analysis, and Evaluation Branch based on 2001 Census Aboriginal ancestry results and BC Vital Statistics Agency birth and death rates of status Aboriginals.

Compared to fiscal 2008/09, the likelihood of Aboriginal children remaining in care has slightly decreased in 2009/10 YTD. In fiscal 2009/10 to date, an Aboriginal child, once admitted into care, is 12.3 times more likely to remain in care than a non-Aboriginal child, compared to 12.4 times in 2008/09. (Chart 10)

Chart 10: Likelihood of Aboriginal Children Receiving Child Protection Services  
Fiscal 2008/09 & 2009/10 YTD

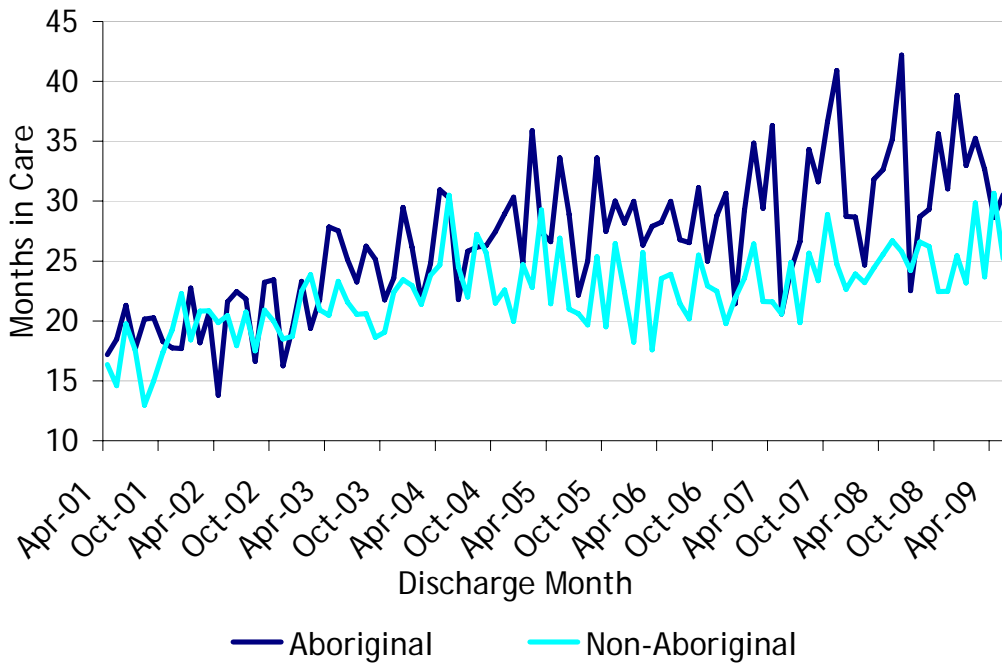


**Duration in Care**

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 11).

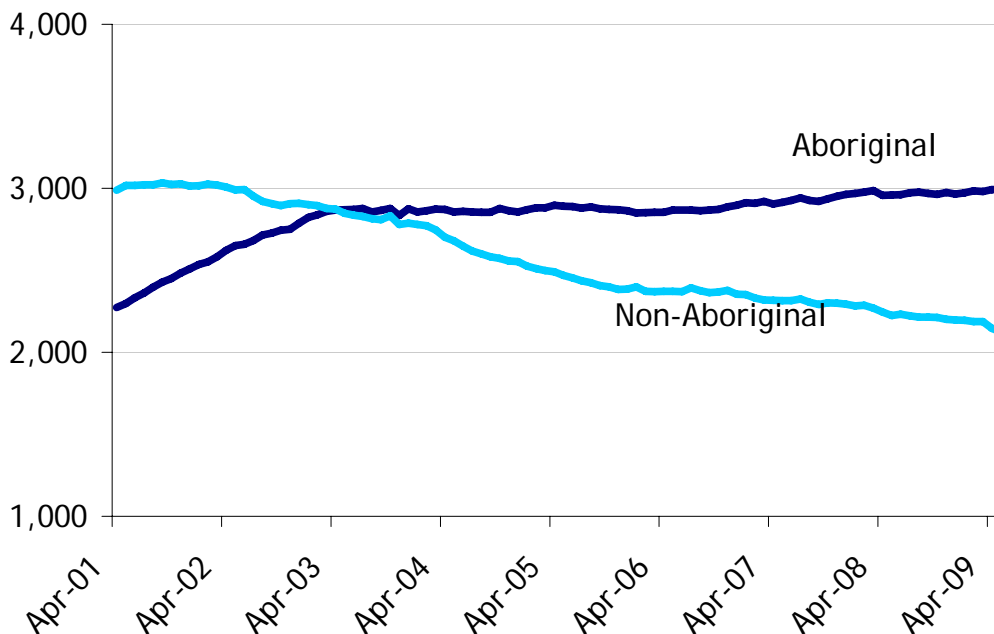
Monthly duration for CIC discharges can vary greatly based on the composition of the children discharged in a given month. For example, a month with a greater proportion of CCOs discharged will show a higher average duration in care compared to a month where fewer CCOs were discharged.

Chart 11: Average Time in Care for CIC Discharged Each Month  
April 2001 - May 2009



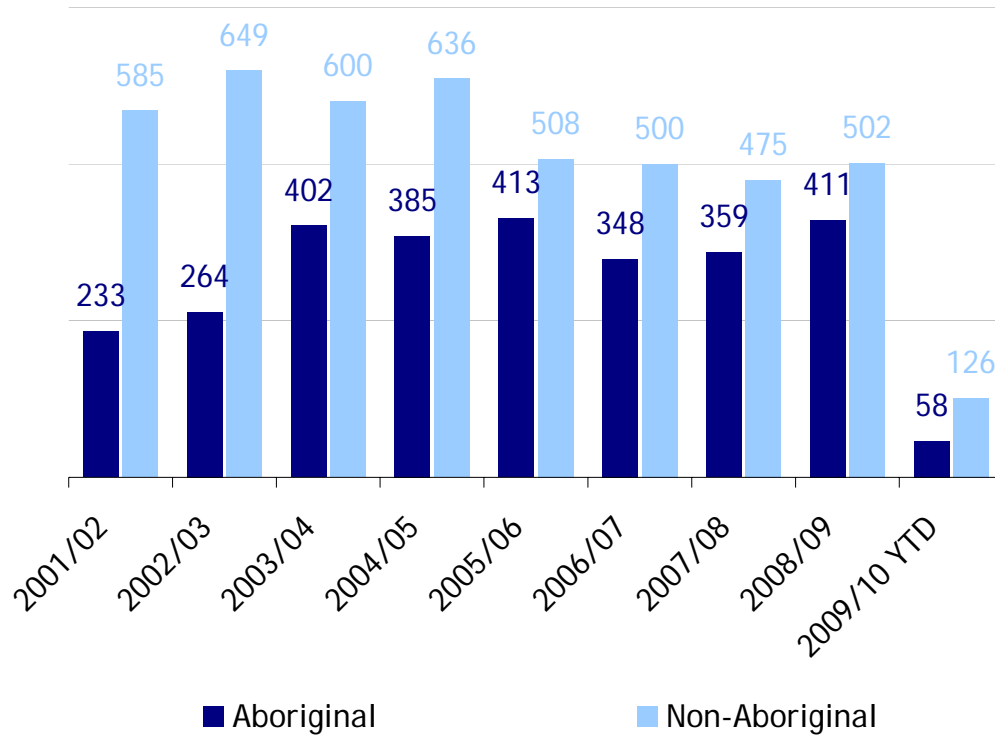
The Aboriginal CCOs have been going up slightly since May 2003 while the non-Aboriginal CCOs have been decreasing at a higher rate. As a result, there are more Aboriginal children under a CCO than non-Aboriginal children. (Chart 12)

Chart 12: Continuing Custody Order  
April 2001 - May 2009



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 13*).

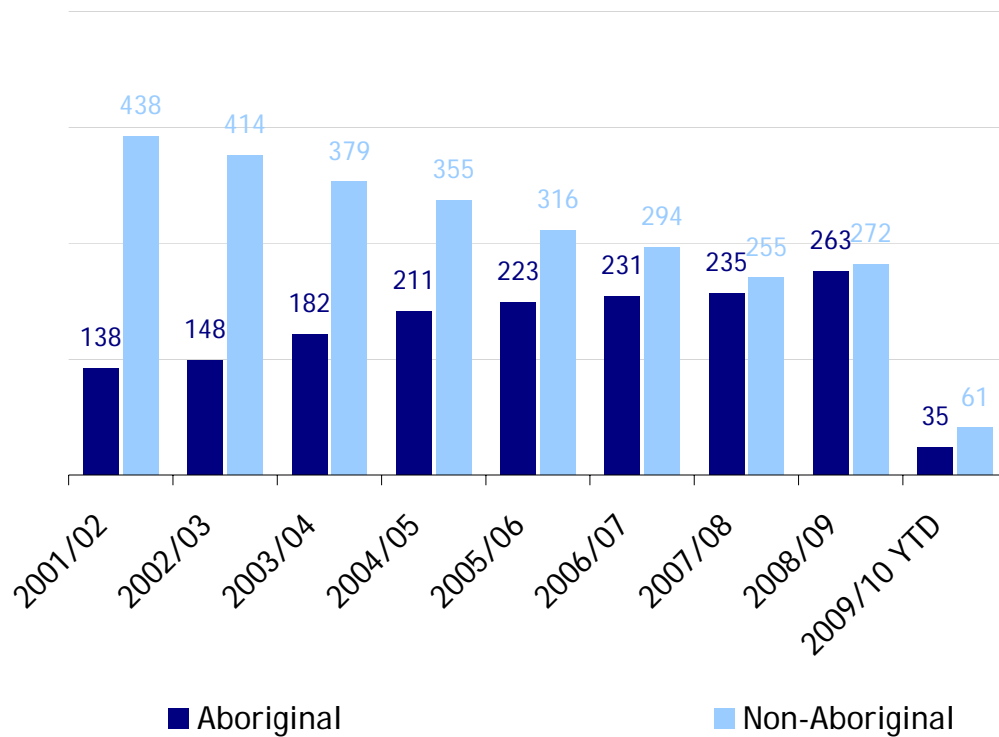
Chart 13: Total CCO Discharges (including aging out)  
Fiscal 2001/02 - Fiscal 2009/10 YTD



The number of non-Aboriginal CCOs discharged due to aging out decreased between 2001/02 and 2007/08. The number of Aboriginal CCOs aging out has increased since 2001/02 (*Chart 14*), and this trend is expected to continue as the average age of Aboriginal CCOs as a group increases. It is expected that by 2010/11, 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 14: CCO Aging Out**  
Fiscal 2001/02 - Fiscal 2009/10 YTD



### III. Out of Care Options

To reduce the CIC caseload, the ministry has introduced a number of out of care options (OCO) that enable social 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*), other out of care options (i.e. orders under Section 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b)), and youth agreements.

The caseload under Kith & Kin agreements remains high compared to 2006/07. Aboriginal Kith & Kin cases continue to outnumber non-Aboriginal cases, a characteristic that was first seen in 2007/08. (Chart 15)

Non-Aboriginal cases under other out of care options outnumbered Aboriginal cases since 2002/03, except in fiscal 2007/08. The increase in the use of out of care options for Aboriginal children in 2007/08 can likely be attributed to a new funding stream from Indian and Northern Affairs Canada that became available for those programs at that time. The numbers of both Aboriginal children and non-Aboriginal children under youth agreements have continued to increase since 2002/03. (Charts 16 & 17)

Chart 15: Kith & Kin (Section 8) by Fiscal Year  
2002/03 - 2009/10 YTD (May 2009)

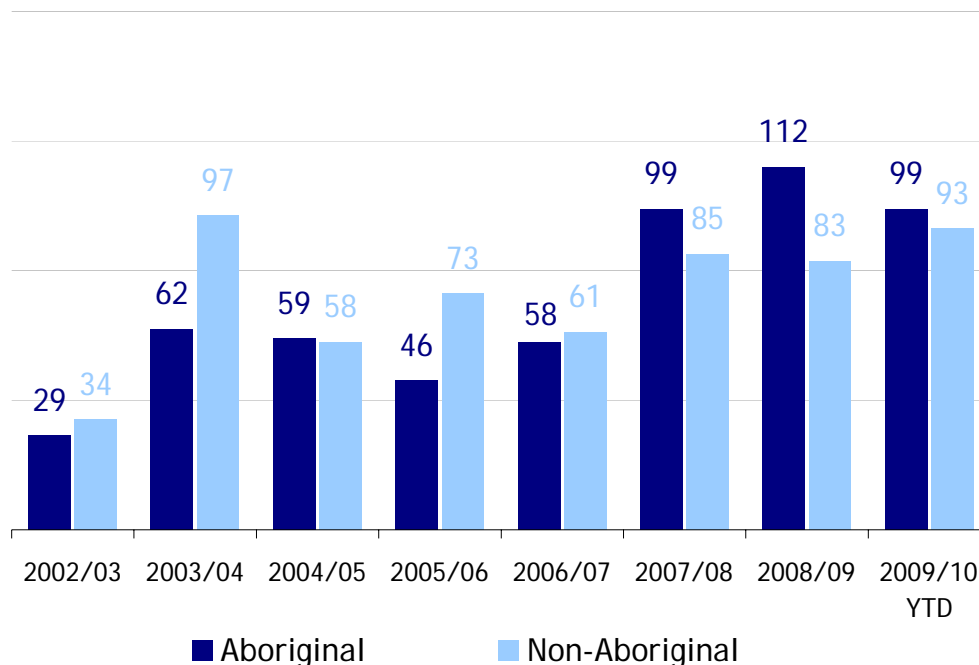




Chart 16: Other OCO's (Sections 35(2)(d) and 41(1)(b))  
2002/03 - 2009/10 YTD

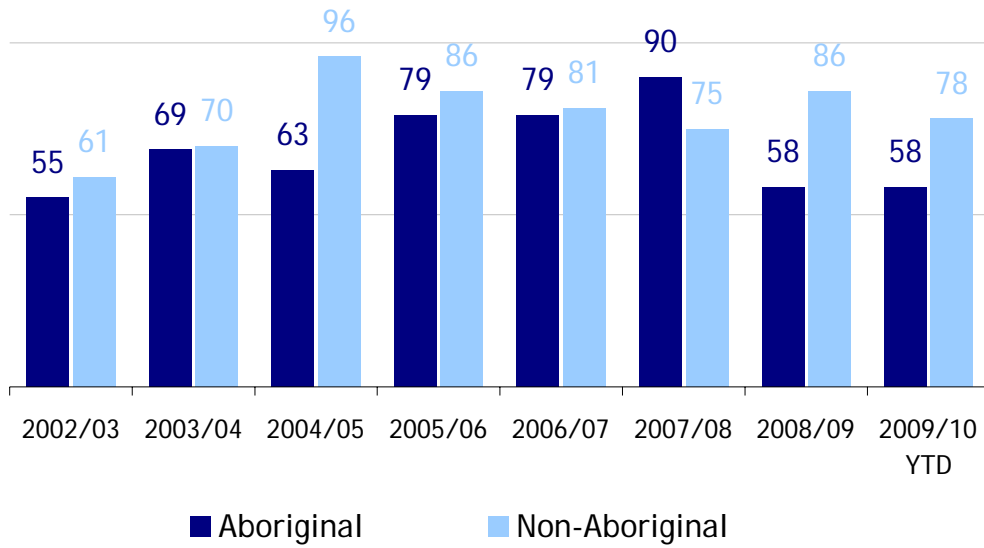
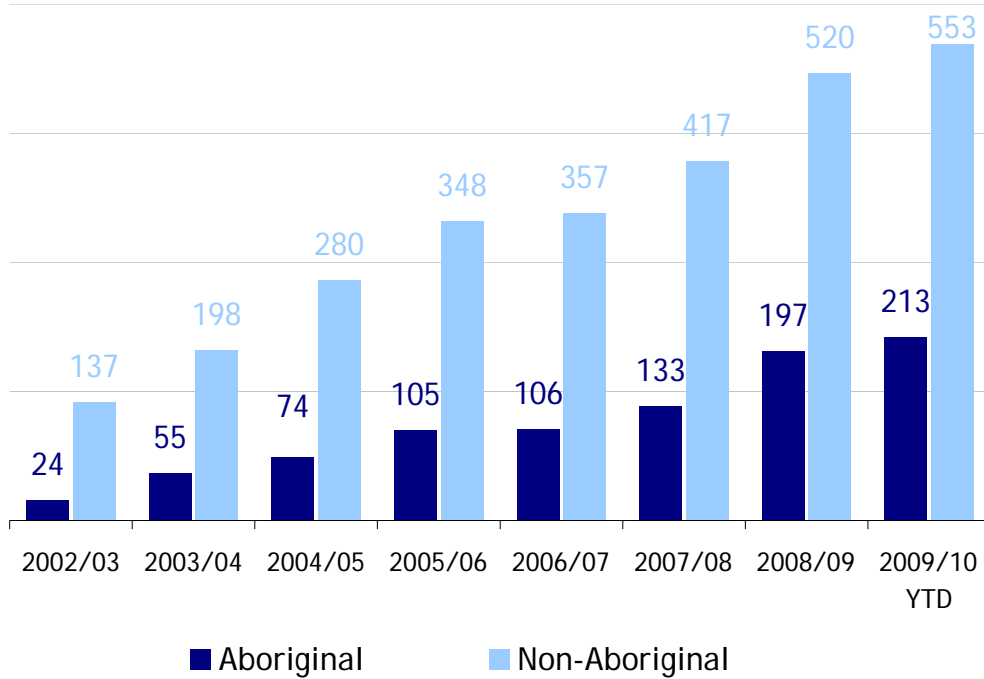


Chart 17: Youth Agreements  
2002/03 - 2009/10 YTD

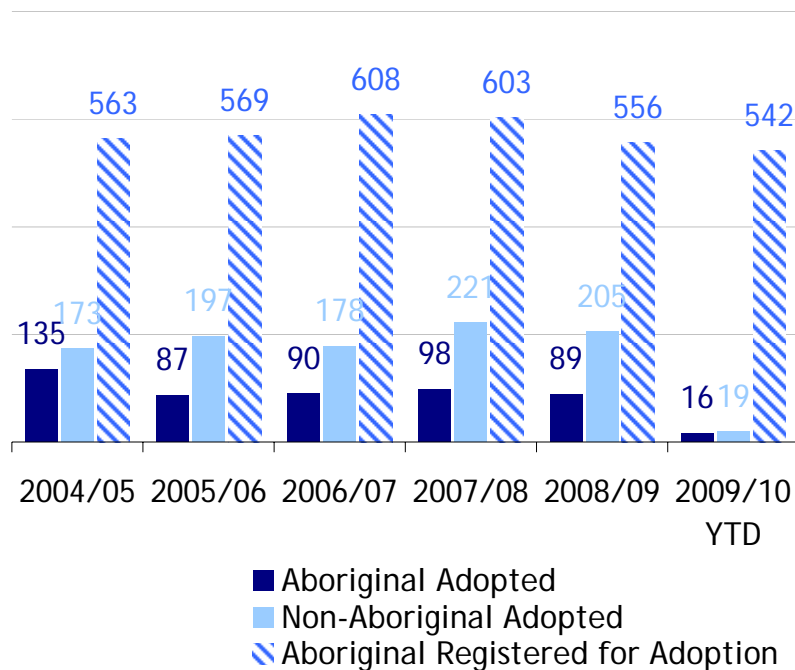


## IV. Permanency Planning

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 18 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 2007/08, there were 9 less adoptions of Aboriginal children and 16 less of non-Aboriginal children in 2008/09. The number of non-Aboriginal children who have been adopted is higher than that of Aboriginal children each year.

The number of Aboriginal children registered for adoption has decreased since fiscal 2006/07.

Chart 18: Adoptions  
Fiscal 2004/05 - 2009/10 YTD



## V. Culturally Appropriate Services

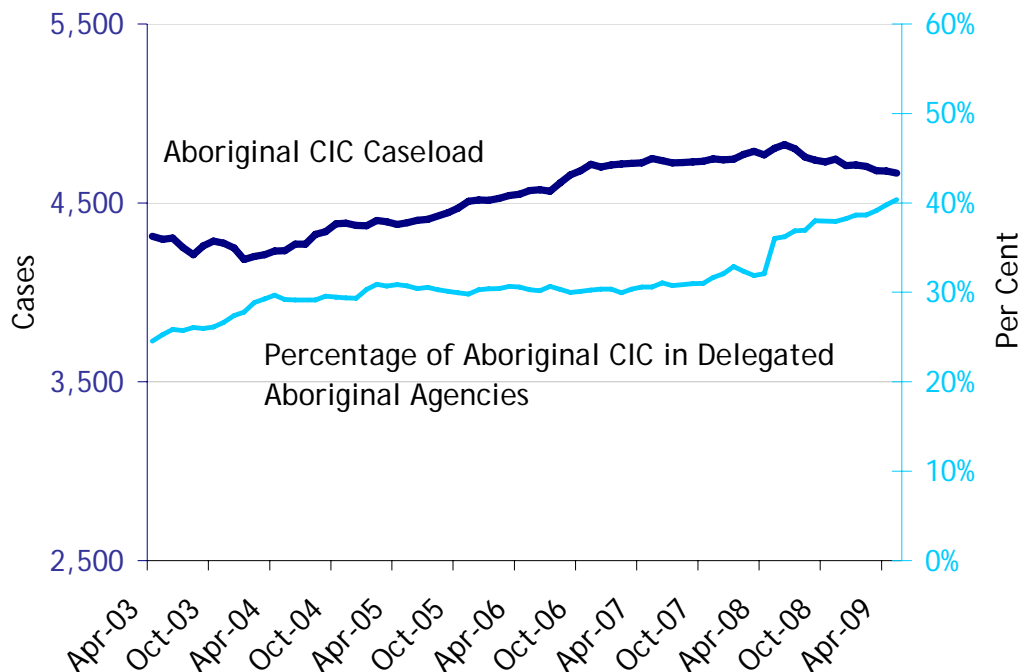
In the midst of the increasing trend in Aboriginal CIC caseload, the ministry has shifted its practices toward providing more community-based and culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal children. There are currently 24 delegated agencies in the province able to provide child welfare services to Aboriginal children, plus 5 agencies that are in the planning stage. (*Table 2*)

Table 2: Delegated Agencies by Operational Stage  
 May 2009

Operational Stage	Number of Agencies
Start-up: Planning stage	5
Start-up	1
Voluntary services (C3)	4
Guardianship (C4)	10
Child protection (C6)	9
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>29</b>

The total Aboriginal CIC caseload has continued its gradual decrease since June 2008. More recently, the percentage of Aboriginal CICs served by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies climbed significantly in May 2008 with the transfer of a number of CICs from MCFD offices into Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society (VACFSS) offices. (Chart 19) As of May 2009, 1,883 Aboriginal CICs were served by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies, representing 40.4% of the total Aboriginal CIC caseload.

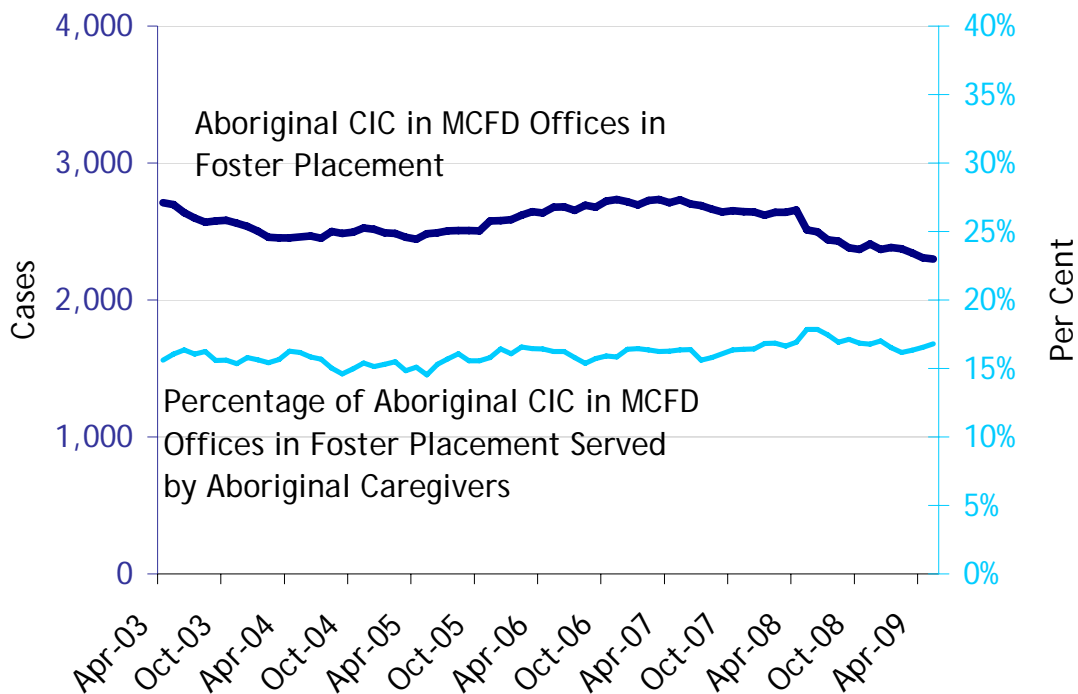
Chart 19: Aboriginal CIC and Percentage Served by Delegated Aboriginal Agencies  
 April 2003 - May 2009



With more Aboriginal CICs being served by delegated agencies, it is not surprising that the number of Aboriginal CICs served in MCFD offices has decreased since 2007/08.

The data shown in Chart 20 below is only for Aboriginal CICs served in MCFD offices in foster placements, as placement data from delegated agencies are not available. The percentage of Aboriginal CICs in MCFD offices in foster placements<sup>3</sup> served by Aboriginal caregivers had increased slightly in 2007/08, but decreased slightly in 2008/09.

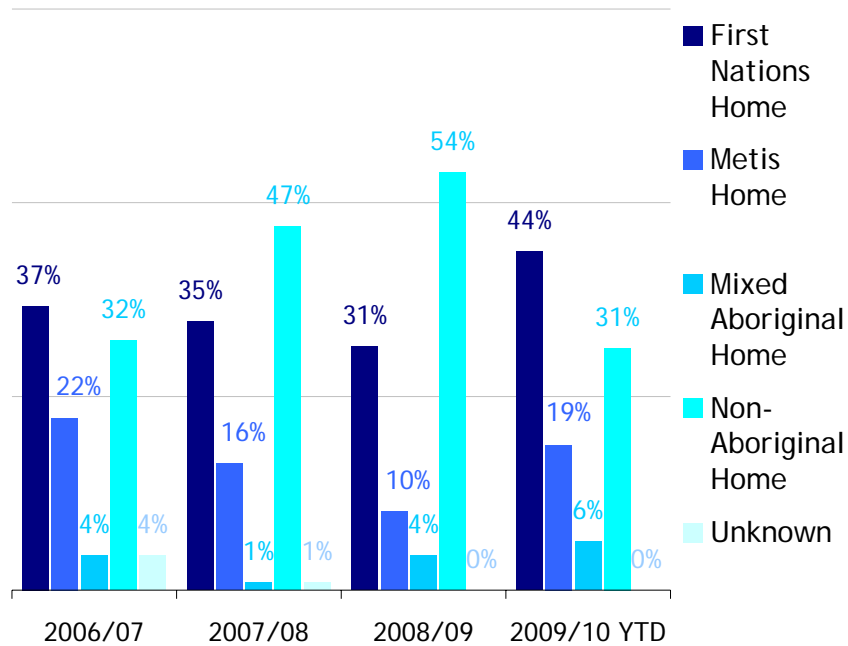
**Chart 20: Aboriginal CIC in MCFD Offices & Percentage Served by Aboriginal Caregivers  
April 2003 - May 2009**



<sup>3</sup> Foster Placements include Contracted Resources, Level 1 Care, Level 2 Care, Level 3 Care, Regular Family Care, Restricted Family Care and Support Services.

Compared to the two previous fiscal years, the proportion of Aboriginal children placed in non-Aboriginal adoptive homes has decreased in 2009/10 YTD (*Chart 21*). The proportion of Aboriginal children placed in aboriginal homes<sup>4</sup> decreased between 2006/07 and 2008/09 but has increased in 2009/10 YTD.

**Chart 21: Aboriginal Adoptions by Type of Adoptive Home  
Fiscal 2006/07 - 2009/10 YTD**



<sup>4</sup> Aboriginal homes refer to First Nations homes, Métis 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

Table 1

<b>Children in Care - March fiscal year end</b>	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	May 2009
<b>Total Number of Children in Care</b>	<b>10,049</b>	<b>9,581</b>	<b>9,086</b>	<b>9,071</b>	<b>9,157</b>	<b>9,271</b>	<b>9,237</b>	<b>8,959</b>	<b>8,895</b>
Non-Aboriginal CIC	5,776	5,289	4,875	4,677	4,615	4,550	4,449	4,278	4,229
Aboriginal CIC*	4,273	4,292	4,211	4,394	4,542	4,721	4,788	4,681	4,666
<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>52%</i>	<i>52%</i>	<i>52%</i>
<b>Aboriginal CIC by Aboriginal Affiliation</b>	4,273	4,292	4,211	4,394	4,542	4,721	4,788	4,681	4,666
<b>First Nations</b>	3,724	3,695	3,532	3,654	3,745	3,925	3,958	3,856	3,855
<b>Metis</b>	472	515	554	613	683	677	709	686	671
<b>Nisga'a</b>	15	17	55	48	43	45	45	53	50
<b>Inuit</b>	34	26	21	23	23	26	25	25	26
<b>Not Coded*</b>	28	39	49	56	48	48	51	61	64
<b>Total Children in Care in Delegated Agencies</b>	648	1,033	1,232	1,349	1,392	1,433	1,527	1,832	1,883
<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>39%</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 (0 to 18)</i>	<i>63.6</i>	<i>62.8</i>	<i>60.6</i>	<i>62.3</i>	<i>63.4</i>	<i>64.7</i>	<i>64.8</i>	<i>63.4</i>	<i>62.9</i>
<i>Non-Aboriginal CIC rate per 1,000 (0 to 18)</i>	<i>6.6</i>	<i>6.1</i>	<i>5.7</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>5.5</i>	<i>5.4</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>5.0</i>

**Note:**

\*CICs in Delegated Agencies without Aboriginal Affiliation noted are reported as Not Coded.

Aboriginal population source: Aboriginal Identity Projection Model (middle scenario) Population Section, BC Stats, Ministry of Labour and Citizen's Services

Child Population data from PEOPLE 33R file from BC Stats

Figure 1

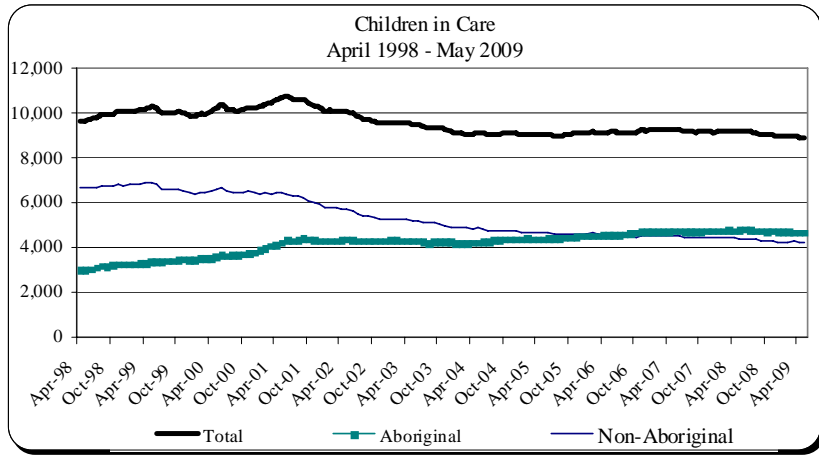


Figure 2

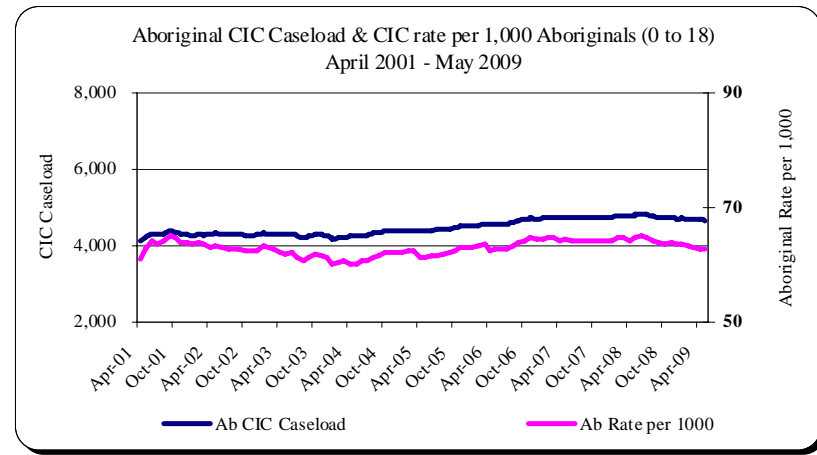


Figure 3

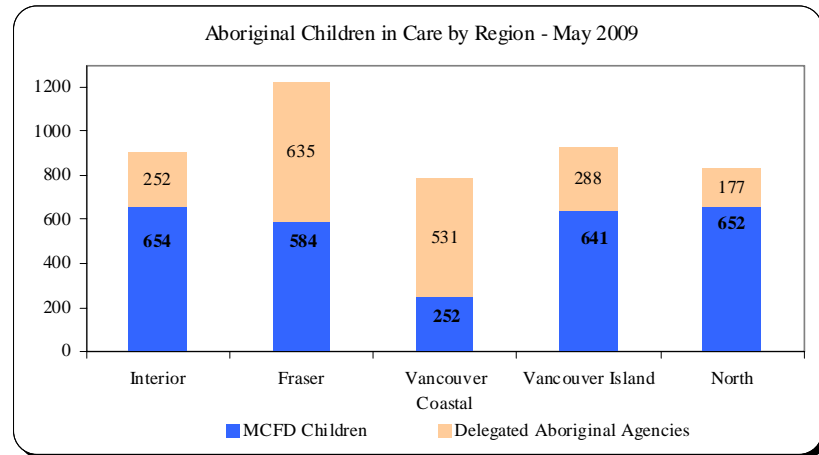
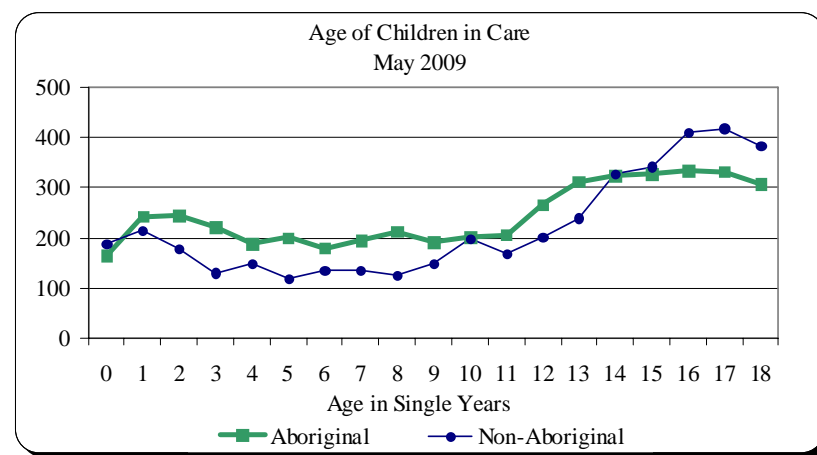


Figure 4



## Appendix 2

### Aboriginal Children in Care - Funding Sources

Children in Care - May 2009							
		Interior	Fraser	Vancouver Coastal	Vancouver Island	North	HQ
<b>(1) TOTAL CIC</b>	<b>8,895</b>	<b>1,943</b>	<b>2,764</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>1,846</b>	<b>1,056</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>(2) NON-ABORIGINAL CIC</b>	<b>4,229</b>	<b>1,037</b>	<b>1,545</b>	<b>492</b>	<b>917</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>11</b>
<i>(3) Funded by MCFD</i>	3,535	823	1,330	420	782	169	11
<i>(4) Non-Funded</i>	694	214	215	72	135	58	0
<b>(5) ABORIGINAL CIC</b>	<b>4,666</b>	<b>906</b>	<b>1,219</b>	<b>783</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>829</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>(6) Delegated Aboriginal CIC</b>	<b>1,883</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>635</b>	<b>531</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>(7) Paid by MCFD &amp; recovered from INAC</i>	8	0	0	2	0	6	0
<i>(8) Funded by MCFD</i>	1,313	106	549	434	126	98	0
<i>(9) Non-Funded</i>	562	146	86	95	162	73	0
<b>(10) Non-Delegated (MCFD) Aboriginal CIC</b>	<b>2,783</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>652</b>	<b>0</b>
<i>(11) Paid by MCFD &amp; recovered from INAC</i>	275	64	23	29	62	97	0
<i>(12) Funded by MCFD</i>	2,115	505	484	177	508	441	0
<i>(13) Non-Funded</i>	393	85	77	46	71	114	0
<b>(14) Total funded by MCFD</b>							
<b>(Line 14 = 3 + 8 + 12)</b>	<b>6,963</b>	<b>1,434</b>	<b>2,363</b>	<b>1,031</b>	<b>1,416</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>11</b>

#### 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 and hospital. At time of reporting, there is not enough information to allow further breakdown within this group
4. Caseloads include CLBC children in care