



# 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 the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (CCJS) from 2010 to 2015.<sup>2</sup>

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

There were 4,532 sexual violations against children<sup>4</sup> in 2015, which represents a 23% increase (+848 incidents) from 2010. The rate of 11 incidents per 100,000 population in 2010 increased to 13 incidents per 100,000 population in 2015. 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). Luring a child increased from 511 incidents in 2010 to 1,060 incidents in 2015. Various factors could account for the increase in sexual violations against children, including 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 4,310 incidents of child pornography in 2015, which represents a 156% increase (+2,629

<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 252-0051, Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violation, CANSIM* (database).

<sup>4</sup> Similar to sexual assaults in general, the number of sexual violations against children is also expected to be an underestimate 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 252-0051, Incident-based crime statistics, by detailed violation, CANSIM* (database).





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incidents) from 2010. Accordingly, the rate of 5 incidents per 100,000 population in 2010 rose to 12 incidents per 100,000 population in 2015.

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

There were 3,204 “other sexual offences” cases in 2014/2015, which represents a 37% 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 and cases stayed or withdrawn is increasing

In 2014/2015, 56% of “other sexual offences” cases resulted in a guilty verdict compared to 68% in 2010/2011. In 2014/2015, 35% 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 2014/2015, out of the 1,808 “other sexual offences” cases that resulted in a guilty verdict, 67% received custody as the most serious sentence, 18% received probation, 11% received an “other” sentence<sup>11</sup>, 3% received a conditional sentence and 1% received a fine. In 2010/2011, 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 321 days to complete a case of “other sexual offence” in adult court in 2014/2015, which is 53 days longer than in 2010/2011. For comparison, in 2014/2015, it took a median of 120 days to complete a *Criminal Code* case, which is 2 days longer than in 2010/2011.

<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, *Table 252-0053 - Adult criminal courts, number of cases and charges by type of decision, annual (number unless otherwise noted)*, CANSIM (database).

<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 252-0057 - Adult criminal courts, guilty cases by most serious sentence, annual (number unless otherwise noted)*, CANSIM (database).

<sup>11</sup> Other most serious sentences 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 252-0055 - Adult criminal courts, cases by median elapsed time in days, annual (number unless otherwise noted)*, CANSIM (database).

<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.