

Neglected children possibilities for help in Estonia

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**Tartu Child Support Center for
Abused Children**

**There are 331 489
children (<18 y) in
Estonia (in 2003)**

Demographic description of Estonia

- Population in 2003 1 356 045
- natural increase - 5,3
- 80% of the population are Estonian citizens
- 68% of the population are Estonians
- 26% Russians and 6% represent other nations

Social problems of Estonian families

Families face socio-economical problems:

- **Unemployment**
 - official unemployment rate 2,7 %
 - unofficial unemployment rate 7%
- **Alcohol addiction**
- **Substance abuse**
- **Problematic family relationships: 2/3 of marriages are divorced in the year of getting married (2003).**

Child protection work in Estonia

- Child protection work is relatively new in Estonia, mostly developed in previous decade
- There are social workers in all local governments (their duties include also handling problems of children)
- In total there are 139 child protection workers in Estonia – this number is planned to be doubled in 2006
- Professions of Social Work and Child Protection Work could be studied in 6 universities.

Neglected children in Estonia (2005)

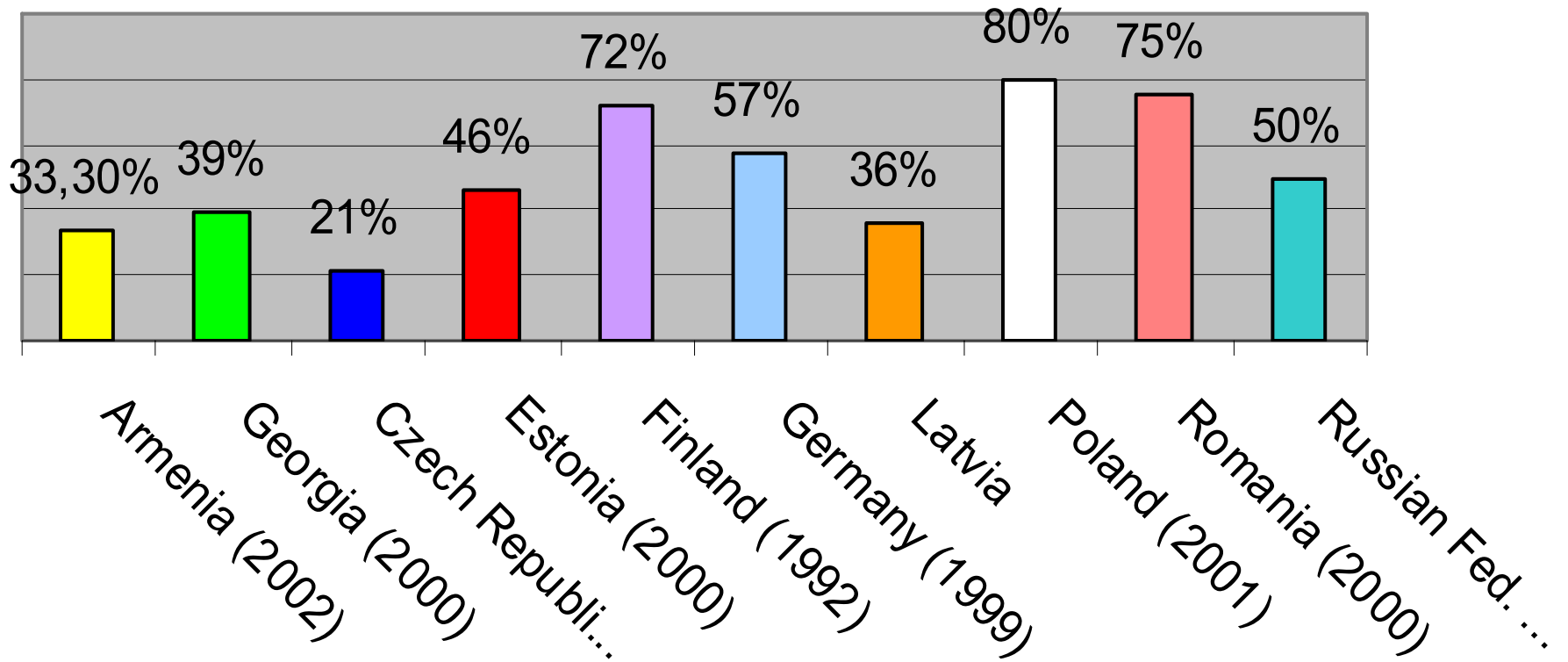
**Neglected children, total number - 4205
(1.2%)**

- **In wardship - 1647**
- **In custody in families 971**
- **Orphanages 1588 (0,5%)**

Domestic Violence and Abuse

- Domestic violence –285 women become victims of physical or sexual abuse each day in Estonia
- Various forms of child abuse (emotional, physical and sexual maltreatment) as well as neglect take place in families.

Physical violence, incl corporal punishment (both mild & severe)



Epidemiological study to prevent child abuse in Estonia

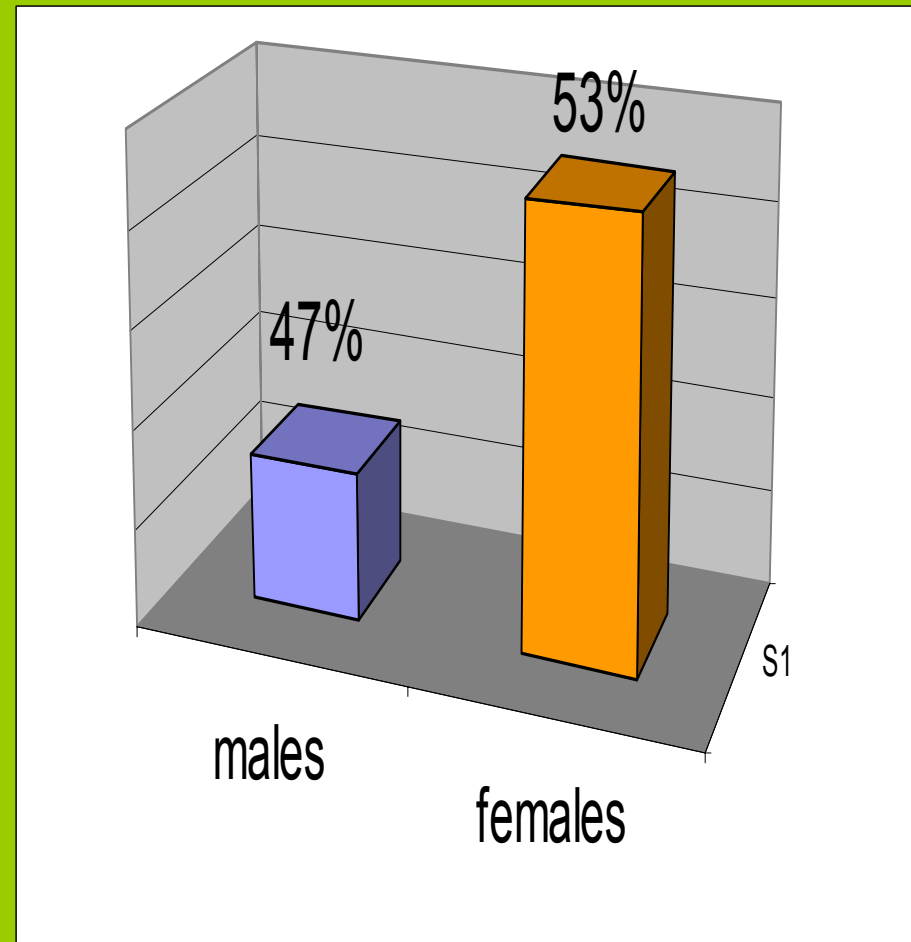
Sample: 874 students

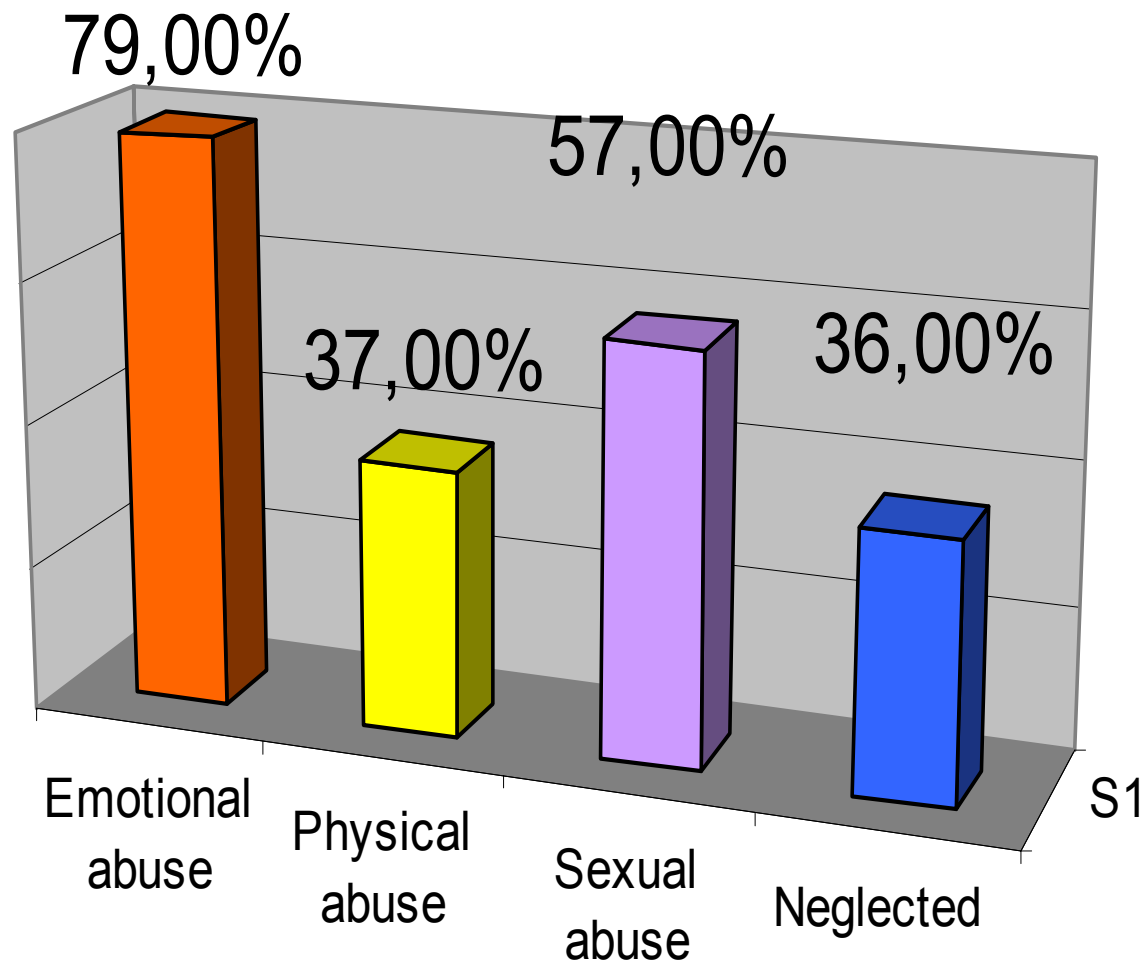
- Aged 14 – 16

of them

- Males **47%**
- Females **53%**

*Kadri & Indrek Soo,
Tartu University, 2000*





Ways of helping neglected children

1. Prevention and treatment

- of family at risk
- of abusive family

2. Outplacement of child (taking the child away from unsafe family setting)

Abused and neglected children in Estonia

- Shelter
 - ↓
- 1. Orphanage
- Support family
- 2. Foster family
- Custody family
 - Step family
- 3. Adoption

Estonia lacks family care types that are common in Europe or these are inadequately developed.

- Crisis - reception family
- Boarding foster family
- Holiday foster family

Subordination of orphanages

(2003)

1. Orphanages - 37

- Public (state) institutions
- Non-governmental organisations (NGO)

Orphanage as an NGO

- Greater freedom in making decisions
- Workers can realize their ideas more promptly
- Possibility to get extra money by writing projects
- Direct contacts to other organisations or partners
- Greater flexibility, based on needs (family type care, adjustment settings for young people)

Children who miss parental care

Children that miss parental care are
children of special needs



Experiences of abuse and neglect
+ unsafe attachment relationship

Attachment Theory

(by John Bowlby)

- Attachment is a lasting psychological bond between human beings, formed in infancy, as an infant will establish a strong attachment with its primary caregiver (mom).
- Attachment relationship could be safe or unsafe.
- Deprivation of person whom the child has become attached to will cause different problems and have consequences for the future of child.

Attachment relationship

J.Bowlby: The affect of early years deprivation (lack of warm feelings and love) are, both mentally and biologically, as devastating as that of rachitis...

The most frequent problems of step children

By A. Siplane (2002)

- Clashing characters, hyperactivity
- Stealing, lying
- Jealousy
- Difficulties in following/obeying the rules
- Different valuation (does not understand the values, the importance of privacy)

Official registration proceedings

- All step families (incl. registering custody families and wardship families) must complete special training.
- Custody family and wardship family get benefit from state:
57,7 EUR in month → 96 EUR (2007)

Aims of family assessment in Estonia

- To secure better adjustment of family and child
- To prevent abuse
- To provide consistent development and integrity of child

Family assessment methods in Tartu Child Support Center

Both content and process are essential:

- Observation (eye contact, touches, way of sitting, support to each other)
- Interview (general questions, relations as a family and as a couple abuse experiences of adopting parents)
- Genogram
- Questionnaires and tests

Helping children of risk families in Tartu County

- Population of Tartu city 100 000
- Tartu has: shelter for children, shelter for moms with babies, shelter for battered women, 5 orphanages.
- There is a special Child Support Centre in Tartu
- All Tartu schools have social pedagogues and psychologists.
- There are 11 child protection workers in Tartu, and social workers in institutions for children.
- There is a multidisciplinary network in town, aimed to solve complicated abuse and neglect problems.

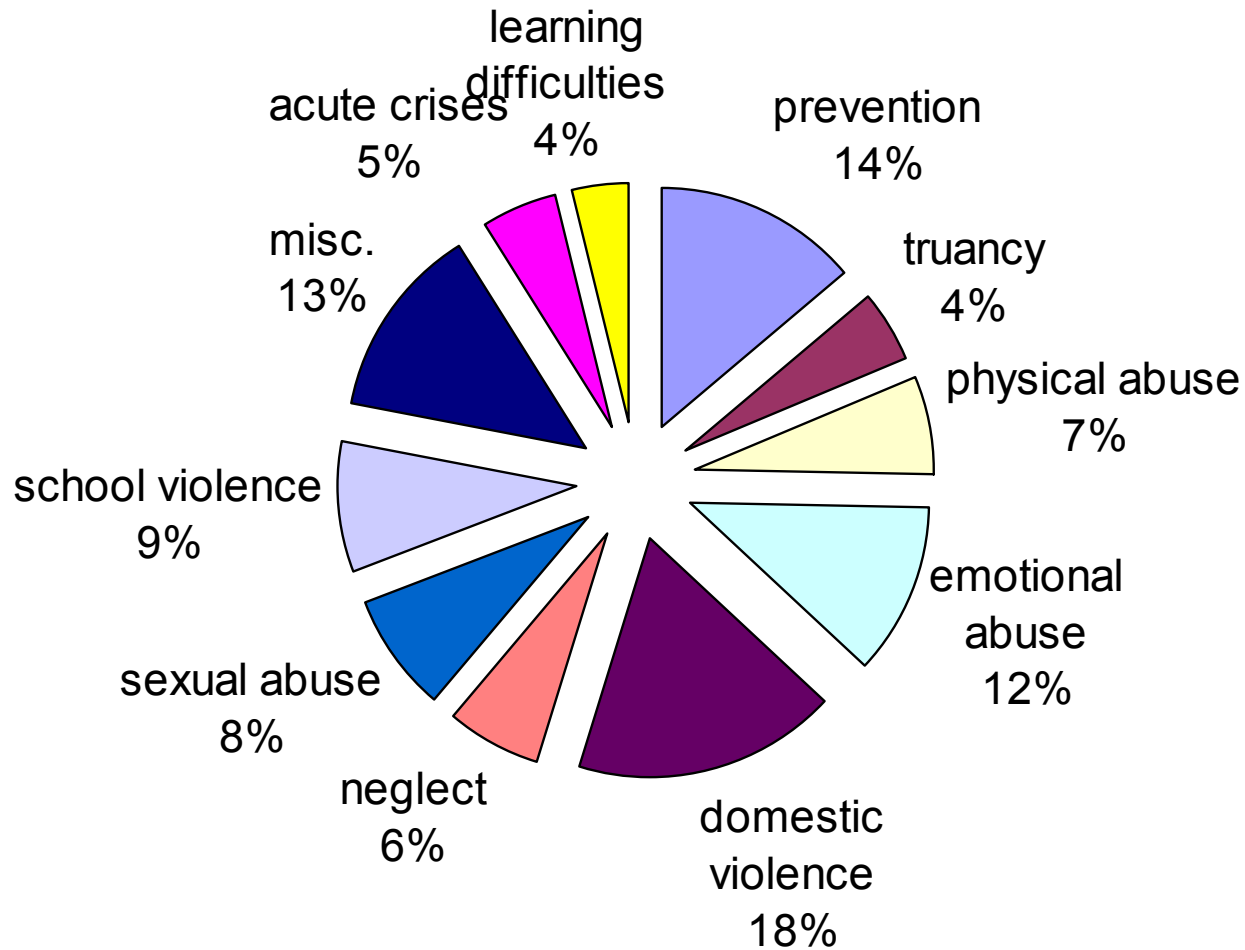


**Tartu Child
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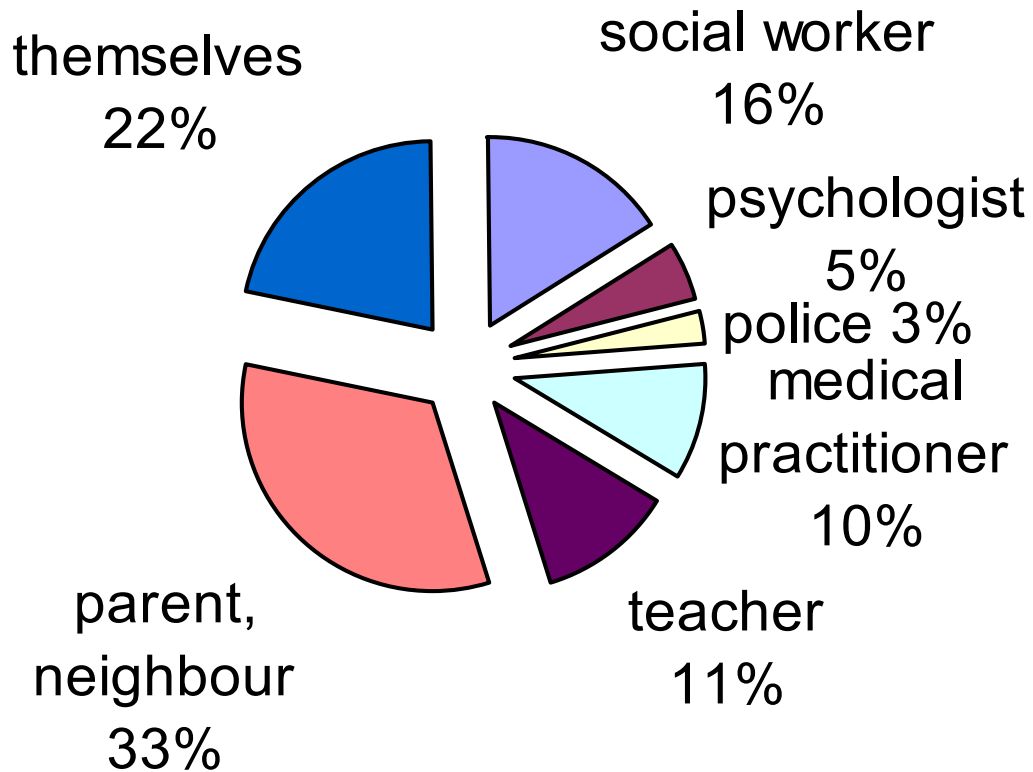
Tartu Child Support Center

- established as NGO in 1995
- the first of its kind in Estonia
- multidisciplinary team to help abused or/and neglected children and their family members
- aims to prevent child abuse and domestic violence in Estonia

First referrals 2004 (n357)



Referral structure (~4000 individuals have been provided with help during last decade)



Services

For children (0-18) and their family members.

We provide them with:

- acute aid
- counselling
- psychotherapy (individual, group and family therapy)
- psychosocial and medical rehabilitation
- support person service

Activities of Tartu Child Support Centre (1)

1. Counselling and treatment centre for abused children and their families

For children (0-18) and their family members.

We provide them with:

- acute aid
- counselling
- psychotherapy (individual, group and family therapy)
- psychosocial and medical rehabilitation
- support person service
- Family study for step families

Activities of Tartu Child Support Centre (2)

2. Training centre (providing professionals with training)
3. Prevention projects:
 - Big Brother Big Sister
 - CAP
 - Anti-trafficking project
 - Mothers–and–children groups

Mothers-and-children groups

- Groups for toddlers (aged 1 - 3) and their mothers
- Groups for babies (0 – 12 months) and their mothers
- Moms-and-daughters group (girls of 9-12 y)