



NSW Department of
Community Services

Technical Report 2

CASELOADS IN CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

Revised November 2007

Service System Development Division

Technical Report 2: Caseloads in Child and Family Services was prepared by the
Economics Unit.

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1. Introduction

Determining appropriate caseloads for child and family services is an essential exercise, helping child welfare agencies establish the optimal use and mix of resources required to strengthen families and protect children.

This is a second version of the Technical Report on Caseloads in Child and Family Services. This version presents an updated review of the available literature on caseworker caseloads (actual and recommended) in child and family services including early intervention, child protection, family preservation and out-of-home care services. Supervisor to caseworker ratios are also presented.

Depending on the nature of the service, 'caseload' is defined as the number of cases/clients/families handled by a full-time equivalent direct worker (e.g. caseworker) at any point in time or over a stated period. Generally, caseworker activities include implementation of the case plan, conducting assessments, coordination of services and supports, and monitoring (AHA et al., 2006).

2. Caseloads in Child and Family Services

Child and family welfare agencies are about providing a continuum of services designed to safeguard and promote the well-being of children and young people as well as strengthen families to successfully care for them. This paper presents the actual and recommended caseloads for caseworkers in different jurisdictions for each of these services along the continuum. Actual and recommended supervisor to caseworker ratios are also shown, which apply to all service types.

Prevention/Early Intervention	Child Protection	Family Preservation	Out-of-Home Care
Supervisor: Caseworker Ratios			

Agencies provide early intervention and prevention services to families where children may be at risk of harm or abuse in the absence of assistance and support. Where children have been identified as being at some risk of harm, agencies assess their needs and provide the appropriate mix of child protection services. Where risk of harm has been identified and the child is at imminent risk of being placed in out-of-home care, family preservation services aim to keep families together and deal with the child protection issues in the home. In some cases, out-of-home care services are needed to provide placement and support to children and their families where the parents/guardians are unable, for a period of time, to care for them.

2.1 Early Intervention and Prevention

Early intervention and prevention (EI&P) services provide families with the necessary support and services to help prevent the entry of children into the child protection system. A growing body of research shows that supporting families before problems reach a crisis improves family resilience, promotes healthy child development, and reduces child abuse and neglect (DoCS, 2005).

Actual and recommended caseloads identified in the literature for EI&P services are summarised in Table 1 and discussed in detail below.

Table 1: Actual and recommended caseloads for EI&P services

Early Intervention and Prevention Services	Recommended	Actual	Units
UNITED STATES			
Council on Accreditation (COA)	15 - 25		families per home visitor
Early Head Start Program		6-10 (Region V)	families with children with special needs per home visitor
		10-15 (National)	families per home visitor
Head Start Program		10-25	families per home visitor
UNITED KINGDOM			
Sure Start Plus		29	active cases per advisor

United States

The Council on Accreditation (COA) recommends a caseload range of 15 - 25 families per home visitor for Child and Family Development and Support services which includes early intervention. These services attempt to address the needs of the family as a whole and are based in the homes and communities of families who need help promoting positive development, meeting challenges, and preventing adverse outcomes (COA, n.d.).

Early Head Start (EHS) is a federally funded, community-based, comprehensive early childhood program designed for low-income pregnant women and families with infants and toddlers under age 3. The concept of EHS was derived from the Head Start (HS) program and aims to enhance children's overall development and parental skills. EHS and HS programs in Region V of the US, which includes Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin, were reviewed by the Great Lakes Quality Improvement Center for Disabilities (Kadota et al., 2000). They found each home visitor had a caseload of 6-10 families compared with the reported caseload of 10-15 in *Leading the Way* (Mathematica Policy Research Inc, 1999).

The Head Start Program in the US was evaluated in 1997. The evaluation indicated that caseload sizes of home visitors varied, in part depending on the number of visits the program planned to complete each month. Home visitors in about half the home-based and mixed-approach programs had caseloads of 10 or 12 families. Home visitors in three programs had slightly higher caseloads (13 to 15 families), and home visitors in three others had even higher caseloads (20 to 25 families) (Mathematica Policy Research Inc, 1999).

United Kingdom

The Sure Start Plus program is a UK government pilot that aims to reduce the risk of long-term social exclusion resulting from teenage pregnancy. The program provides pregnant teenagers and young parents under 18 years with necessary emotional and practical support including counselling and referrals to mainstream services. The work is carried out by advisers over a period of 18 weeks. The average caseload for the advisers is 29 active cases where there has been contact with a young person at least once in the previous six weeks (Wiggins et al., 2005)

2.2 Child Protection

Child protective services aim to provide child-centered, family-focused services to protect children and young people from significant harm as a result of abuse or neglect. The core components of child protection services are intake, assessment, investigation, and case management. Actual and recommended caseloads identified in the literature for child protection services are summarised in Table 2 and discussed in detail below.

Table 2: Actual and recommended caseloads for child protection services

Child Protection	Recommended	Actual	Units
AUSTRALIA			
Western Australia	15		cases at any given time
The Tasmanian Child and Family Services Unit	10-12	14-19	cases at any given time (assessment)
		8-16	cases at any given time (case management)
UNITED STATES			
Council on Accreditation (COA)	15		investigations at any given time
	15-30		open cases at any given time
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)	12		active cases per month
	17		active families at any given time
American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)		24	children at any given time
		range: 11-51	families at any given time
The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)		3 - 57	families at any given time
		2 - 37	families at any given time (in-home)
Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families	16	24	cases per month

Child Protection	Recommended	Actual	Units
California Department of Social Services (CDSS)	69-116	149	screenings per month
	10-13	16	emergency response cases per month
New York Workload Study	12	20 (Govt) 27 (NGO)	investigations per month
Washington DC	12		Investigations at any given time
Westchester County (cited in NY Workload Study)	11		cases per month
Massachusetts Union for Human Services	12		cases per month
	18		ongoing cases per month
	75		screening events per month

Australia

Murray (2005) reviewed cases of substantiated abuse of children in care in Western Australia and made recommendations for good practice in child protection. Her report recommended that the Department for Community Development build strategies so that caseworkers can meet caseload benchmarks of 1 worker to 15 cases. Benchmarks need to have some flexibility in consideration of the circumstances of the case, the needs of the child and their family, their location and the experience of the worker. These recommendations have been accepted by the WA government.

The Child and Family Services Unit of the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services produced a "Staff Consultation, Child and Family Services" report in June 2005. The report identified issues associated with workload and employment conditions of child and family services staff. It was recommended that caseloads in the assessment/case management area be limited to 10 children or 12 if there is a sibling group or low complexity cases. Caseload audits revealed that caseloads were 14, 19 and 17 in North-Western, Northern and Southern regions respectively. For Assessment, the audit found caseloads to be 8, 16 and 15 respectively for the three regions.

United States

The COA defines a child protective service case as a child, unless a family assessment model or equivalent is used. The maximum caseloads for child protective workers are:

- 15 cases at one time that involve intensive intervention or investigation;
- 15 - 30 open cases at one time that involve case coordination, continuing services, or follow-up; and or
- a proportionate mix of the above (COA, n.d.)

The CWLA (1999) recommends that caseworkers investigating allegations of abuse and neglect have at most 12 active cases per month. Caseworkers with ongoing monitoring of at-risk families should have no more than 17 active families or where a caseworker does both, no more than 10 ongoing and 4 investigations at any given time.

Results from the 2004 country-wide Child Welfare Workforce Survey conducted by the American Public Human Services Association (APSHA, 2005) revealed an average caseload of 24 children per Child Protective Service (CPS) Worker and a caseload range of 11 to 51 children. When the family is defined as a case, CPS workers had an average caseload of 28 families per CPS worker and a range of 12 to 100¹ families.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Public Policy Department reported an average caseload range between 3 and 57 families per worker for child protection investigators. Workers with in-home protective services reported average caseloads range between 2 and 37 families per worker (AFSCME, 1998).

Survey results from the Workload Assessment Study undertaken by the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (Yamatani and Engel, 2002) determined an actual caseload of 24 cases per worker. A caseload of 16 cases per worker based on the total number of hours actually needed per case was recommended.

The Child Welfare Services Workload Study produced by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS, 2000) classified child protection caseworker caseloads into intake and emergency response. Based on an analysis of time data from 16,000 social services staff, the study recommended caseloads of 69-116 reports per intake caseworker per month and determined the actual caseload to be 149. Emergency response caseworkers have a recommended caseload of 10-13 cases and actual caseloads of 16 cases per worker per month.

Based on time log data collected from over 2,200 caseworkers, and the review of State policies, best practice guidance, indicators of current performance, national standards, and findings of other workload studies, the NY Child Welfare Workload Study (2006) recommends a caseload of 12 active Child Protective Services Investigations per caseworker. This compares with an actual current estimated caseload (based on time spent per case) of 20 investigations per month for Administration for Children's Services and 27 for the other 10 participating districts.

The NY Child Welfare Workload Study also cites a draft workload study report for Westchester County in New York which recommended 11 cases per worker per month in that county (AHA, et al., 2006).

A class action legal suit in Washington DC in 1989 led to the development of caseload standards for the District of Columbia's child welfare system. These standards, specified in the Modified Final Order (MFO) of 1994 and amended in

¹ Two states were outliers with 100 and 77 cases, with the next highest being 30 cases.

2007, stipulate that the caseload of each worker conducting investigations of reports of abuse and/or neglect shall not exceed 12 investigations (CSSP, 2007).

A collective bargaining agreement between the Massachusetts government and an alliance of human services unions in 2001 specifies caseload standards for department caseworkers with specialist functions (assessment workers and investigators) are assigned 12 cases per month and ongoing workers are assigned 18 cases per month. The caseload/workload in the agreement is 75 screening events per worker per month (DSS, 2001). A new agreement is being considered for 2007.

2.3 Family Preservation

Originally applied to the Homebuilders Model in 1974, family preservation services (FPS) teach skills and provide supports to families in which a child is at imminent risk of out-of-home care placement. In addition to out-of-home care placement prevention, FPS work cooperatively with the family to improve its functioning and ensure child safety (Tully, 2007; National Family Preservation Network, n.d.).

The Child Welfare Information Gateway notes that “[s]ince the term ‘family preservation services was coined in the 1980s, there has been considerable confusion about the essential elements of these services and which types of programs fall into this category. Although family preservation programs share many common characteristics, they vary considerably with respect to auspices (public or private agencies), theoretical orientation, target population, identified problem, and primary location of service. Programs also vary dramatically in terms of intensity, duration, caseloads, and teaming with other professionals”.

Actual and recommended caseloads identified in the literature for family preservation are summarised in Table 3 and discussed in detail below.

Table 3: Actual and recommended caseloads for FPS

Family Preservation	Recommended	Actual	Units
AUSTRALIA			
DoCS Family Preservation/ Intensive Support Model	2-3		families at any given time (high intensity)
	10-15		families at any given time (moderate intensity)
DoCS Aboriginal Intensive Family Based Service	2		families per worker at any given time
NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) Intensive Family Support Initiative (IFS)	2-3		families per worker at any given time
Victorian Families First Program	2		families at any given time (intensive)

Family Preservation	Recommended	Actual	Units
Victorian Aboriginal Family Preservation Program	2		families at any given time (intensive)
UNITED STATES			
Council on Accreditation (COA)	12 - 18 2 - 6		families at any given time (standard) families at any given time (intensive)
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)	12 2 - 4		families at any given time (standard) families at any given time (intensive)
American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)		42 range: 18-80 18 range: 5-30	children at any given time families at any given time
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)		2 - 37	families at any given time (intensive)
Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families	17	24	cases per month
California Department of Social Services (CDSS)	7-10	29	cases per month
New York Workload Study	12-16	27 (Govt) 22 (NGO)	families per month
Westchester County (cited in NY Workload Study)	11		cases per month
Washington DC	15		families at any given time
US Homebuilders Model: eg Michigan	2		families at any given time (intensive)
eg Maryland	6		families at any given time (intensive)

Australia

Based on the United States Homebuilders model, the Family Preservation/Intensive Support (FP/IS) Model of the NSW Department of Community Services (DoCS) Family is designed to support children and their families who are subject to ongoing child protection intervention, with the aim of preventing imminent placement in out-of-home care. Intensity of support ranges from 24 hour per day 7 days per week on-call support for high intensity cases, to 5-20 hours support per family per week for moderate intensity cases. Duration of support ranges from 6 weeks to a maximum of 18 months. Caseload per worker

range from 2-3 cases for high intensity cases to 10-15 cases for medium intensity cases, at any one time (DoCS 2007a).

DoCS also provides a population-specific family preservation program - the Aboriginal Intensive Family-Based Service (IFBS). Similar to the FP/IS model, IFBS is an intensive, time-limited (up to three months), home-based program for Aboriginal families in crisis (including extended family), whose children are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement due to protective concerns. The services may sometimes reunite children who are in out-of-home care with their families, if the goal is reunification. IFBS caseworkers (who are also Aboriginal) are available to families 24 hours a day seven days a week. The case limit for IFBS will be a ratio of one full-time worker to two families (DoCS, 2007b).

The Intensive Family Support Initiative (IFS) by the NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care (DADHC) provides short-term, intensive and flexible in-home support to families that have a child with a disability, where there is a risk of out-of-home placement and/or family breakdown. The services provide a 24-hour on call therapeutic support to families for a short-term period of 6 to 12 weeks for generalist and culturally and linguistically diverse services, and between 6 to 16 weeks for Aboriginal services (DADHC, 2005, 2006). Caseloads are low at a recommended 2-3 families per worker at any given time.

The Families Preservation - Families First Program operating under the Office for Children in the Victorian Department of Human Services (DHS) is an intensive (24 hour a day, 7 days a week), short term (6 to 8 weeks) home-based, family-centred service. The program aims to strengthen the ability of families to protect and care for their 'at risk' children, thereby avoiding child removal and placement in out-of-home care. The Program may also provide reunification services, to restore a child in out-of-home care to their family. Caseworkers each work with no more than two families at a time (DHS, 1995).

The Victorian Aboriginal Family Preservation Program (AFPP) provides intensive home-based support to families who are at imminent risk of having their child/ren removed due to reports of child abuse/neglect or to facilitate the safe return of children to their families. Services include crisis counselling, skills education, parenting skills and increasing coping abilities. The AFP Program has a case limit ratio of one full-time worker to two families at any given time and is available to these families 24 hours a day 7 days a week for a period of 3 to 4 months (DHS et al., 2002)

United States

The COA recommends that an organisation limit its caseloads to 12-18 families per worker for standard cases, and approximately 2 to 6 families per worker for intensive family preservation services, adjusted according to the duration and intensity of the casework (COA, n.d.)

The CWLA (2003) recommends a caseload of 12 families per worker for standard family preservation work and 2-4 families per worker for intensive family preservation services at any given time.

The APHSA Child Welfare Workforce Survey (APSHA, 2005) revealed an average caseload of 42 children per In-Home Protective Service (HPS) Worker and a caseload range of 18 to 80 children. When the family is defined as a case, HPS workers had an average caseload of 18 families per worker and a range of 5 to 30 families.

The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Public Policy Department reported actual caseloads range between 2 and 37 families per worker for intensive family preservation services (AFSCME, 1998).

Survey results from the Workload Assessment Study undertaken by the Allegheny County Office of Children, Youth and Families (2002) determined an actual caseload of 24 cases per worker. A caseload of 17 cases per worker based on the total number of hours actually needed per case was recommended.

The caseloads identified by the Child Welfare Services Study for Family Preservation and Support-Intensive Home Based Services are 29 cases per worker, per month. Arising from the evaluation conducted by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS, 2000) of its caseload benchmarks, it recommends 7 - 10 cases per worker, per month.

Based upon the time log data collected from over 2,200 caseworkers, and the review of State policies, best practice guidance, indicators of current performance, national standards, and findings of other workload studies, the NY Child Welfare Workload Study (2006) recommends a caseload of 12-16 active family cases per caseworker for Preventive Case Planning Services. This compares with an actual current estimated caseload (based on time spent per case) of 27 cases per month for Administration for Children's Services and its voluntary agencies, and 22 per month for the other 10 participating districts and their voluntary agencies.

The NY Child Welfare Workload Study also cites a draft workload study report for Westchester County in New York which recommended 11 cases per worker per month in that county (AHA, et al., 2006).

A class action legal suit in Washington DC in 1989 led to the development of caseload standards for the District of Columbia's child welfare system. These standards, specified in the Modified Final Order (MFO) of 1994 and amended in 2007, stipulate that the caseload of each worker providing services to children and families in which the child or children in the family are living in their home (i.e. family preservation) shall be no more than 15 families (CSSP, 2007).

The Homebuilders model, developed in 1974, has been used in many states in the US. It emphasises family empowerment and the use of a family crisis as a motivation for change. Services are designed to be short-term, intensive, and available to the family 24 hours a day, seven days a week, for four to six weeks. Families can be referred for either a 4 to 6-week high-intensity intervention (therapist caseload of two) or for a 90-day moderate-intensity intervention (therapist caseload of five to six) (Helping America's Youth, n.d). The Families First of Michigan program is one of the most known and evaluated programs that has very closely followed the Homebuilders model. These specify 2 families per

worker at any time for the short duration (DHS Michigan, 2007). The Maryland Department of Human Resources serve a maximum caseload of 6 families for worker and aide teams providing intensive family preservation services, along the lines of the Homebuilders model.

2.4 Out-of-Home Care

Primary goals for out-of-home care services are to provide children and young people who cannot live with their birth families a safe and nurturing environment temporarily or permanently. This environment should promote family contact and aim to achieve the earliest possible permanent and stable resolution of the child's living situation, be that restoration, permanent care with a relative/kin or foster carer (DoCS, 2004). Actual and recommended caseloads identified in the literature are summarised in Table 4 and discussed in detail below.

Table 4: Actual and recommended caseloads for out-of-home Care

Out-of-Home Care	Recommended	Actual	Units
AUSTRALIA			
The Queensland Department of Child Safety	15	32	cases at any given time
The Tasmanian Child and Family Services Unit	6		young people with challenging behaviours at any given time
Care 2001	5		high needs cases at any time
	6.5		medium-high needs cases at any time
	10		medium needs cases at any time
	20		low needs cases at any time
UNITED STATES			
Council on Accreditation: - <i>Foster care and kinship care</i>	18		children at any given time
	8		therapeutic children at any given time
	12		clients per worker
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA): <i>Foster Care</i> - <i>kinship/relative care</i>	12 -15		children at any given time
	12-15		children at any given time
	10		families at any given time
	15 -18		children at any given time (ongoing)
	12		families at any given time (ongoing)

Out-of-Home Care	Recommended	Actual	Units
American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)		23 14	children at any given time families at any given time
The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)		3-37	Families at any given time
California Department of Social Services (CDSS)	12-16 16-24	23 49	cases per month cases per month (permanent placement)
New York Workload Study	11-12	17 (Govt) 20 (NGO)	children per month
Washington DC	15		children at any given time
Westchester County (cited in NY Workload Study)	16		cases per month

Australia

In Queensland, an audit of foster carers subject to child protection notifications was undertaken in 2003, which found that alternative care (i.e. out-of-home care) Family Service Officer (FSO) caseloads were unacceptably high, having a direct impact on service delivery. Following this audit, and a report by the Crime and Misconduct Commission (Murray, 2003; CMC, 2004), a blueprint for implementing their recommendations was developed (Forster, 2004). The Blueprint identified there are 32 cases per FSO (on average). Caseworker and Team Leader positions are being increased to meet the recommended caseload of 15 cases per caseworker and 6 caseworkers per Team Leader.

The Child and Family Services Unit of the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services produced a "Child and Family Services, Consultation with Staff" report in June 2005. This report recommended that a separate team, including youth workers, be established to handle case management for young people with challenging behaviours, and that each worker has a caseload of no more than 6 young people.

The Care 2001 Reference Group, comprising the NSW Department of Community Services and NGOs, was convened to advise on substitute care services to meet children's needs, including a funding system for out-of-home care. Although there was no agreement or acceptance of the proposed costing and funding models through this process, the Group proposed the following caseloads for non-government and DoCS out-of-home care services, classified according to case type:

- Low intensity ratio: 20 cases per worker at any time
- Medium intensity ratio: 10 cases per worker at any time
- Medium to high needs ratio: 6.5 cases per worker at any time
- High needs ratio: 5 cases per worker at any time

United States

For both foster and kinship out-of-home care services, the Council on Accreditation (COA) recommends maximum caseloads of 18 children per caseworker for standard clients and 8 children per caseworker for children with special therapeutic needs² at any given time. The recommended COA caseloads may be varied if the organisation can demonstrate (1) its workers do not have responsibility for a major, routine component of case work such as planning; (2) a time study has been done to adequately justify the organisation's caseload limits. For 24-hour-a-day residential treatment services, the COA stipulates that direct worker caseloads not exceed 12 clients per worker at any given time (COA, n.d).

According to the CWLA (1995), the caseworker caseload for family foster care should be between 12 and 15 children, depending on the level of service required for each child. Factors to be considered in determining appropriate caseload size include: the complexity of the needs of the child and family, the level of competency of the worker, the functions assigned and the time required for activities related to the case, and the geographic area served. The same caseload of 12-15 children per caseworker is recommended for relative/kinship care; however, a maximum of 10 families is specified (CWLA, 2000). In addition, where a relative/kinship care case is ongoing, the CWLA (2000) recommends a caseload of 15-18 children or a maximum of 12 families per caseworker.

Results from the American Public Human Services Association Child Welfare Workforce Survey (APSHA, 2005) revealed an average caseload of 23 children per Foster Care/Adoption Worker (FCA) with a caseload range of 9 to 80 children. When the family is defined as a case, FCA workers had an average caseload of 14 families per worker with a range of 7 to 18 families.

To learn more about the working conditions of public agency child welfare workers, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Public Policy Department surveyed affiliates in 17 states and found average caseloads ranged between 3 and 37 families per worker for out-of-home care services (AFSCME, 1998).

The Child Welfare Services Workload Study produced by the California Department of Social Services identified OOHHC caseworker caseloads for family reunification and permanent placement. The study recommended caseloads of 12-16 cases per family reunification caseworker, and determined the actual caseload per worker to be 23. Permanency Placement caseworkers have a recommended 16-24 cases, but an actual of 49 cases (CDSS, 2000).

Based upon the time log data collected from over 2,200 caseworkers, and the review of State policies, best practice guidance, indicators of current performance, national standards, and findings of other workload studies, the NY Child Welfare Workload Study (2006) recommends a caseload of 11-12 active child cases per caseworker for Foster Care. This compares with an actual current estimated caseload (based on time spent per case) of 17 children per month for

² Includes children and young people with significant medical, developmental, emotional, or behavioural needs requiring intensive services

Administration for Children’s Services and its voluntary agencies, and 20 per month for the other 10 participating districts and their voluntary agencies.

The NY Child Welfare Workload Study also cites a draft workload study report for Westchester County in New York which recommended 16 cases per worker per month in that county (AHA, et al., 2006).

A class action legal suit in Washington DC in 1989 led to the development of caseload standards for the District of Columbia’s child welfare system. These standards, specified in the Modified Final Order (MFO) of 1994 and amended in 2007, require the caseload of each worker providing services to children in foster care placement, including children in Emergency Care not exceed 15 children.

2.5 Supervisor: Caseworker Ratio

Supervisors have a critical role in ensuring child welfare agencies achieve the desired outcomes for children and families. Sufficient ratios of supervisors to caseworkers are needed so that supervisors can adequately determine priorities, guide caseworkers, and ensure the quality of services provided. In most cases the literature reviewed did not specify a supervisor to caseworker ratio by service type, however in the few cases where this occurred it is mentioned below. Actual and recommended supervisor to caseworker ratios identified in the literature are summarised in Table 5 and discussed in detail below.

Table 5: Actual and recommended supervisor to caseworker ratios

Supervisor: Caseworker Ratio	Recommended	Actual	Units
AUSTRALIA			
The Queensland Department of Child Safety	6		caseworkers at any given time
The Tasmanian Child and Family Services Unit	6		caseworkers at any given time
NSW Department of Community Services - IFBS	4		intensive family preservation caseworkers at any time
UNITED STATES			
Council on Accreditation (COA)	8		caseworkers at any given time
Child Welfare League of America (CWLA)	5		caseworkers at any given time
American Public Human Services Association (APHSA)		6 range: 2-10	caseworkers at any given time
New York Workload Study		3 - 8	caseworkers per supervisor
Washington DC	5		caseworkers at any given time
Massachusetts Union for Human Services	5		caseworkers per supervisor

Australia

The blueprint for implementing recommendations of the Crimes and Misconduct Commission report in Queensland proposes a team leader to caseworker ratio of 1:6 (Forster, 2004).

The Child and Family Services Unit of the Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services produced a "Staff Consultation, Child and Family Services" report in June 2005. This report specified that coordinators were to supervise a maximum of six staff at any given time.

The service specification for DoCS' population-specific family preservation program - the Aboriginal Intensive Family-Based Service (IFBS), stipulates caseworker managers supervise four intensive family preservation caseworkers at any one time (DoCS, 2007b).

United States

According to the COA 8th Edition, supervisor to caseworker ratios should not exceed 1:8 at any given time. This is contingent on (a) the qualifications of the caseworker and the supervisor; (b) the complexity and intensity of activities undertaken and/or service delivered; and (c) other agency responsibilities.

The CWLA (1999, 2000, 2003) stipulates a supervisor to caseworker ratio of 1:5 at any given time. However, this standard should be adjusted in line with the training and experience of both the supervisor and caseworkers.

The American Public Human Services Association (APHSA, 2005) workforce survey results revealed an average supervisor to full-time equivalent caseworker ratio of 1:6 for all worker categories including child protective service workers, in-home protective service workers, foster care, adoption workers and multiple program workers. The range is 2 to 10 caseworkers per supervisor.

Based on survey and interview data, the New York Child Welfare Workload Study (2006) determined that supervisor to caseworker ratios ranged from 1:3 to 1:7 across programs and districts. Voluntary agencies reported supervisor to worker ratios ranging from 1:3 to 1:5, with one large agency reporting a ratio of 1:8.

A class legal action suit in Washington DC in 1989 led to the development of caseload standards for supervisors, amended in 2007. It was determined that supervisors be responsible for supervising 6 social workers who carry a caseload including case aides, or 5 caseworkers, at any given time.

A collective bargaining agreement between the Massachusetts government and an alliance of human services unions in 2001 specifies a supervisor to caseworker ratio of 1:5 (DSS, 2001).

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