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## First data set to confirm complex challenges faced by children and families experiencing domestic and family violence in NSW

In a data first, a [new report released by ANROWS](#), in partnership with researchers from The University of Sydney, highlights approximately 33% of all reports to NSW's Child Protection Helpline express concerns about a child experiencing domestic and family violence, either alone or in conjunction with parental mental health and or substance use issues.

The research uses the newly established [NSW Human Services Dataset](#) to see how families interact with a range of services, including police, child protection and health, over time. The analysis focuses on cases reported to the NSW Child Protection Helpline, unveiling the challenges families experience with domestic and family violence, alongside parental mental health or parental substance use issues.

The findings also confirm that domestic and family violence, parental substance use and parental mental health issues are strongly interlinked and contribute to children being placed in out-of-home care, with findings suggesting that the odds of a child being removed double when all three issues are present.

Over 40% of the 127, 884 children reported to the Child Protection Helpline and experiencing domestic and family violence, had a parent (primarily their mother), previously identified in police reports as a domestic and family violence victim. However, only 26% of children identified with parental mental health concerns in their safety reports had a parent with a record of accessing mental health services before the initial report.

**Tessa Boyd-Caine, CEO at ANROWS**, emphasised, "Families can experience intense pressure where this complex constellation of mental illness, drug and alcohol issues and family and domestic violence exists. We need to make sure families are getting the help they need when they need it in a way that is supportive and fit for purpose. These findings show us where it is possible to intervene early and ensure the level of service provision is proportionate to need."

**Betty Luu, lead author, formerly at the Research Centre for Children and Families, The University of Sydney**, stated, "These findings provide a roadmap for enhancing local early intervention systems aimed at supporting families. They also encourage stronger partnerships between child and family services and adult-focused organisations, particularly those addressing substance abuse and mental health issues, to foster more effective collaboration."

Read the [research summary](#) or [download the research report](#).

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### About ANROWS

Australia's National Research Organisation for Women's Safety Limited (ANROWS) is a not-for-profit independent national research organisation.

ANROWS is an initiative of Australia's National Plan to Reduce Violence against Women and their Children 2010-2022. ANROWS was established by the Commonwealth and all state and territory governments of Australia to produce, disseminate and assist in applying evidence for policy and practice addressing violence against women and their children. ANROWS is the only such research organisation in Australia.