

Health, Mental Health and Psychosocial Support for Children under the Juvenile Justice Framework

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30.08.2026

Report of Dept. of Health, Medical Education and Family Welfare

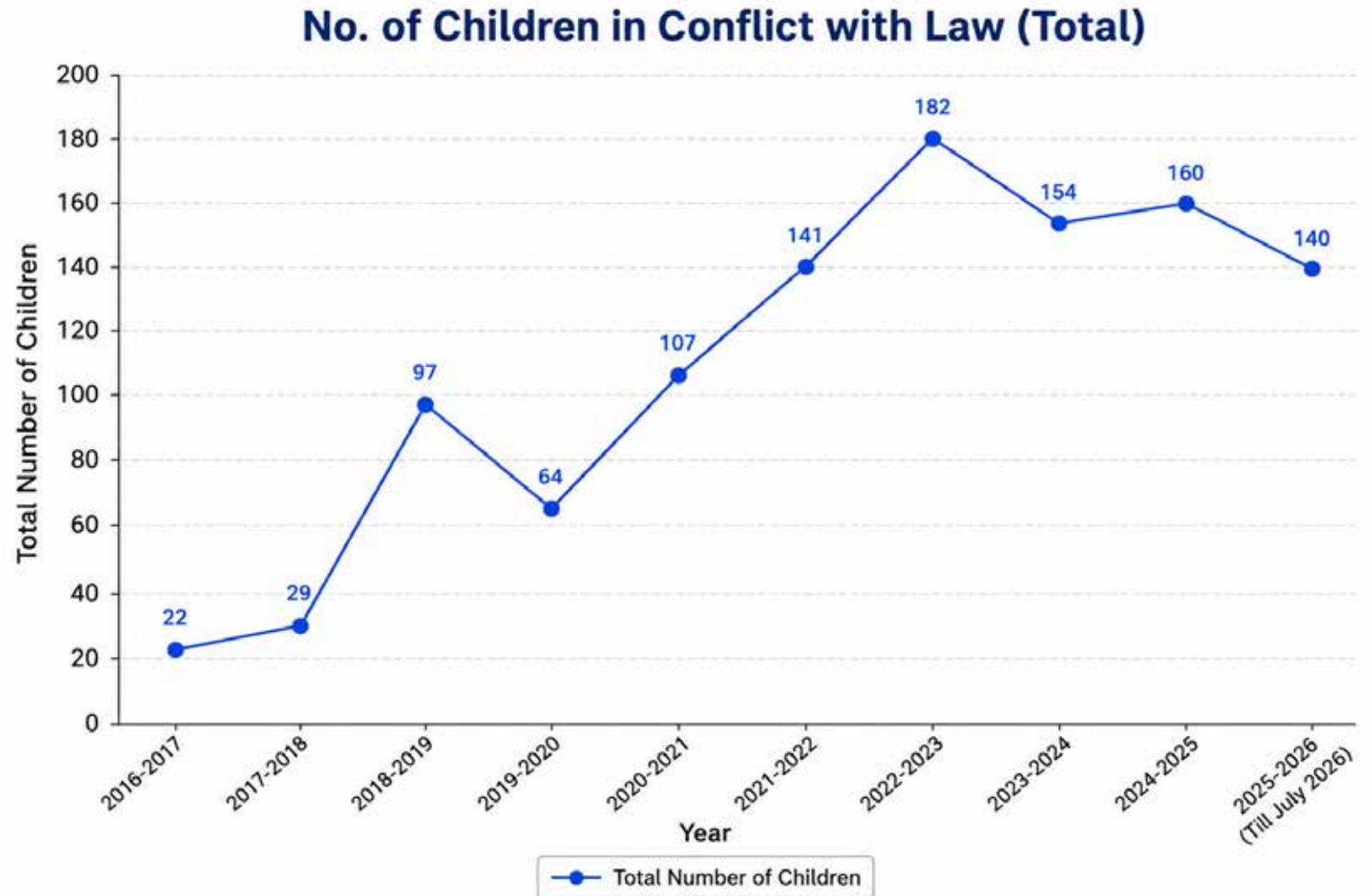
Key Progress:

Progressive achievement:

- Sensitization and awareness have been done regarding mental health services
- Online services have been developed in the form of tele-consultation, e.g., Tele-Manas, Tele Mental Health services of RINPAS. Virtual telephonic and video-conferencing sessions are available.
- Training of professional through digital academy is being done.
- Now there is more clarity for disability certificate after formation of Rules (2024) for rPWD Act.
- Although limited, research is also being undertaken.

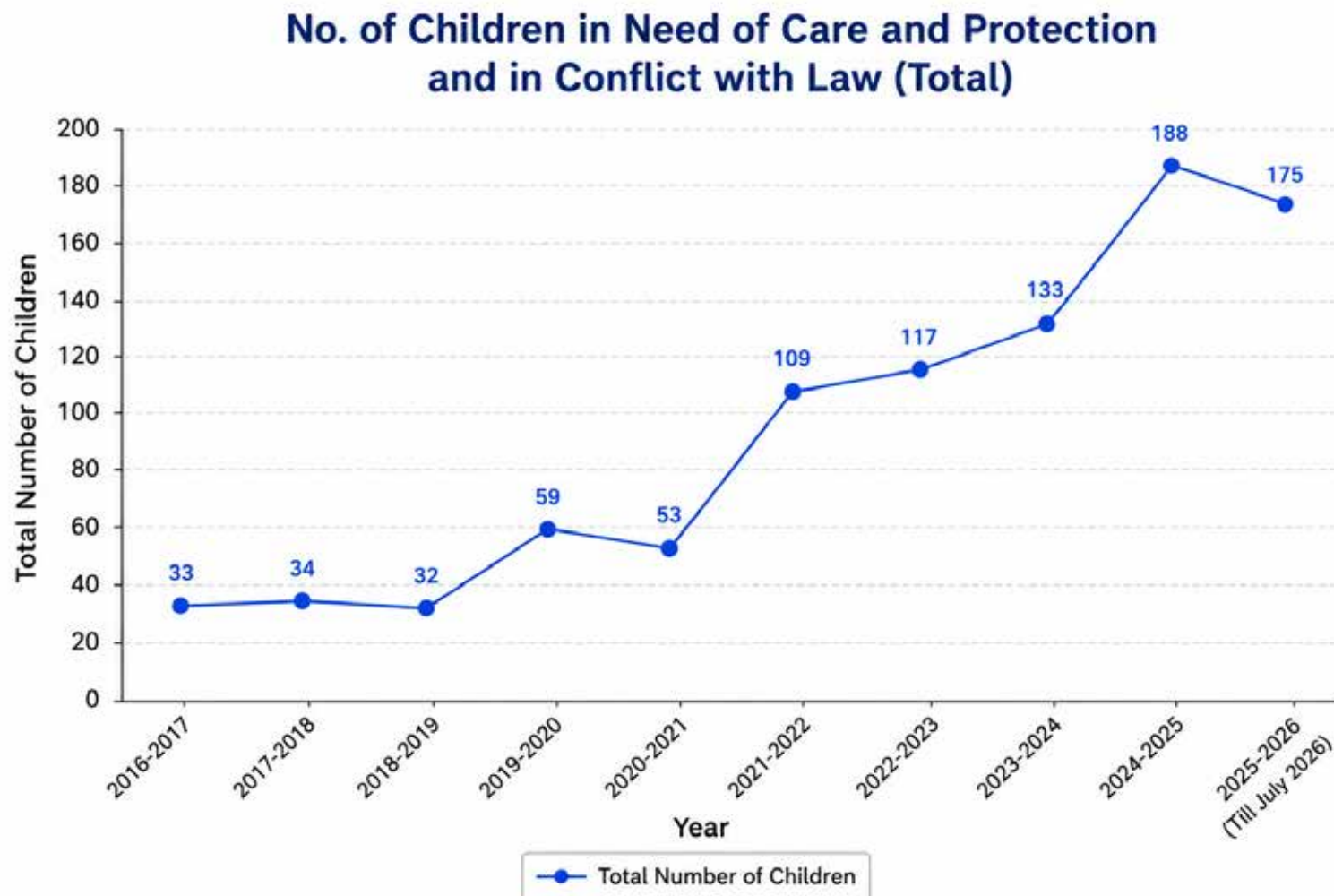
Year-wise No. of children/ adolescents (2017-2026) for whom preliminary assessment was done

Year	No. of children in conflict with law
	Total
2016-2017	22
2017-2018	29
2018-2019	97
2019-2020	64
2020-2021	107
2021-2022	141
2022-2023	182
2023-2024	154
2024-2025	160
2025-2026 (Till July 2026)	140



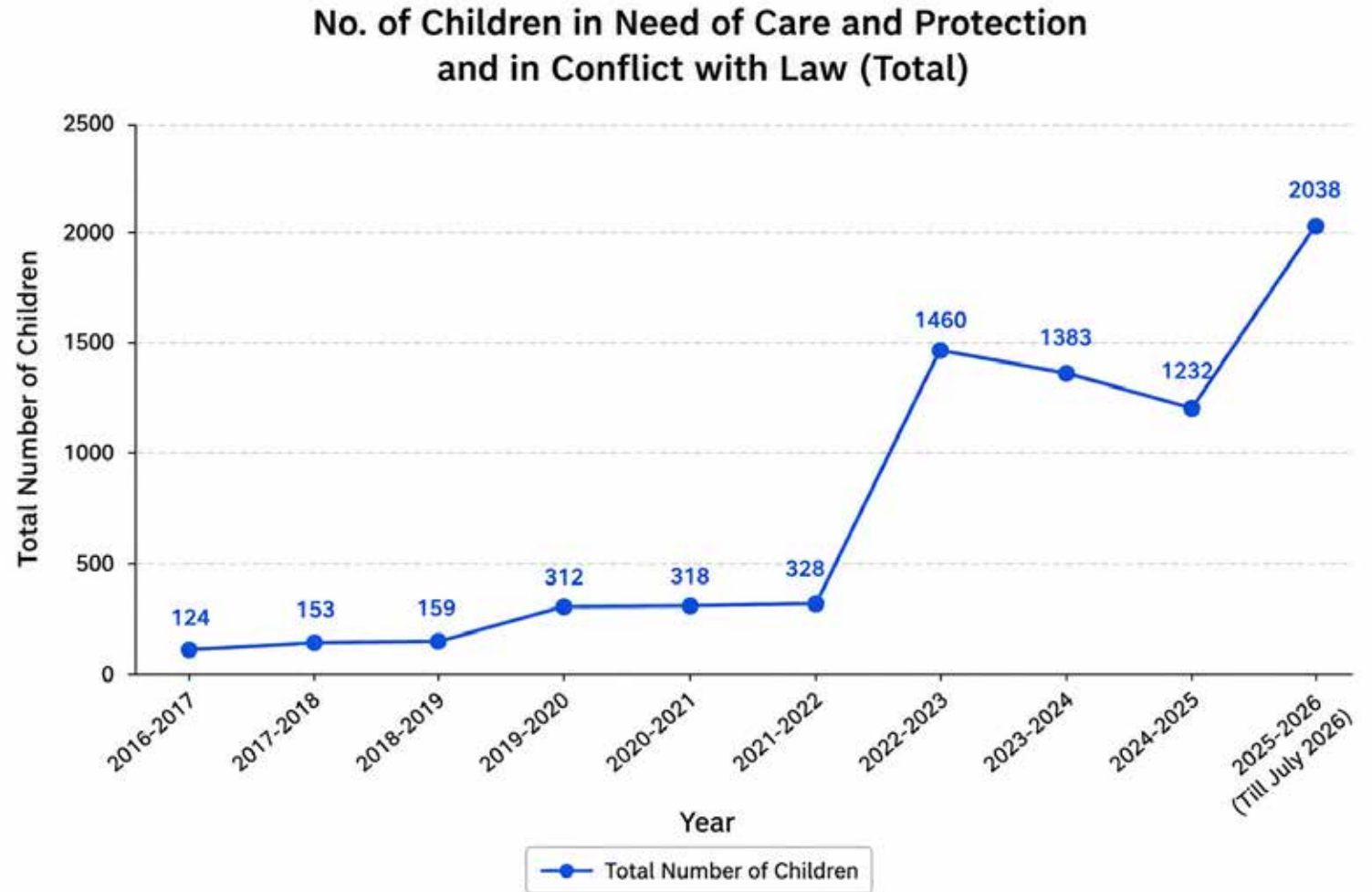
Year-wise No. of children/ adolescents (2017-2026) for whom psychological assessment was done

Year	No. of children in need of care and protection and in conflict with law
2016-2017	33
2017-2018	34
2018-2019	32
2019-2020	59
2020-2021	53
2021-2022	109
2022-2023	117
2023-2024	133
2024-2025	188
2025-2026 (Till July 2026)	175



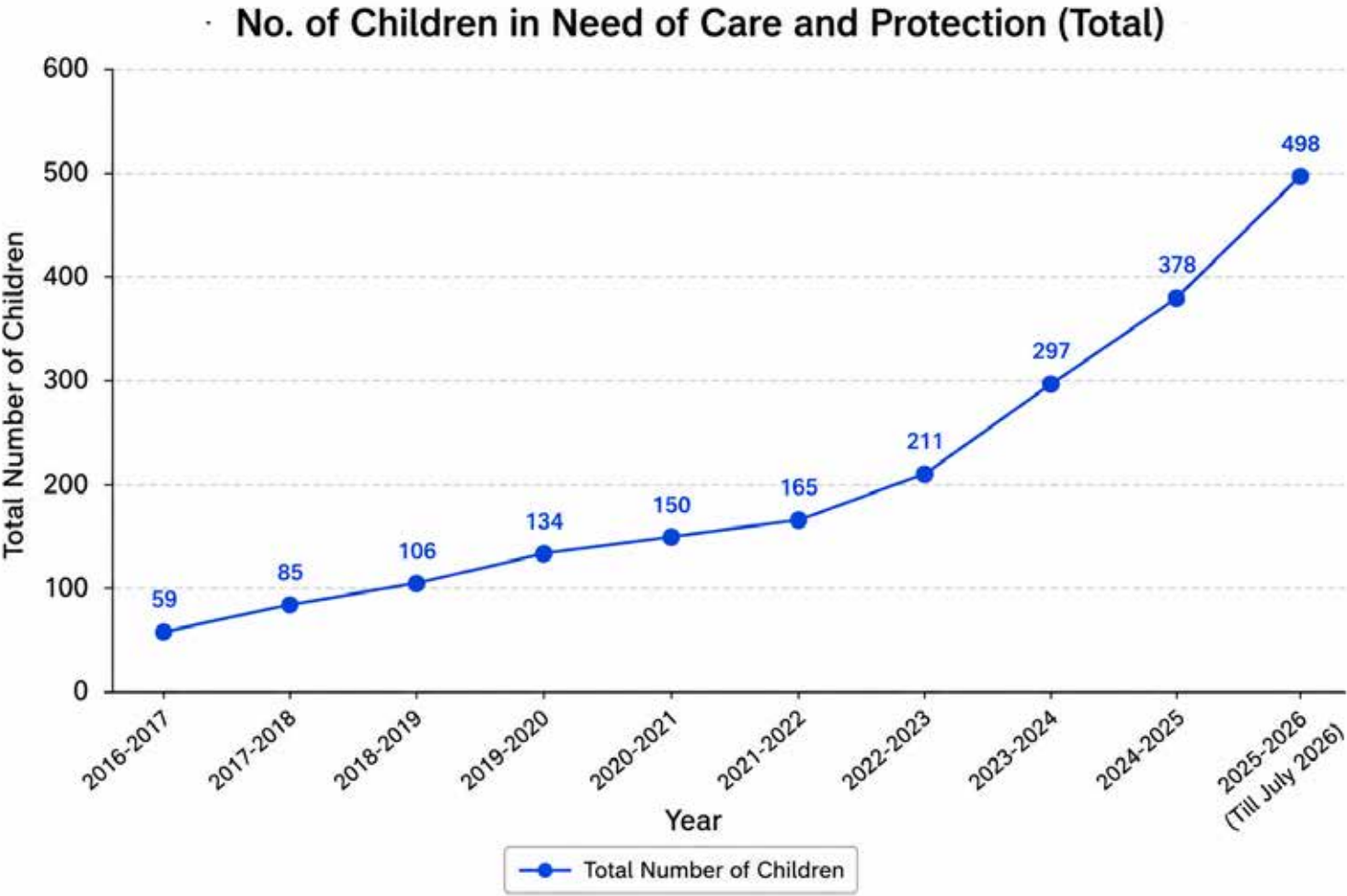
Year-wise No. of children/ adolescents (2017-2026) for whom counselling services were provided

Year	No. of children and adolescents for whom counselling services were provided
	Total
2016-2017	124
2017-2018	153
2018-2019	159
2019-2020	312
2020-2021	318
2021-2022	328
2022-2023	1460
2023-2024	1383
2024-2025	1232
2025-2026 (Till July 2026)	2038



Year-wise No. of children/ adolescents (2017-2026) for whom psychosocial supports were provided

Year	No. of children in need of care and protection
	Total
2016-2017	59
2017-2018	85
2018-2019	106
2019-2020	134
2020-2021	150
2021-2022	165
2022-2023	211
2023-2024	297
2024-2025	378
2025-2026 (Till July 2026)	498



Number of available trained mental health professionals to provide services

Profession	Number
Psychiatrist	13
Clinical Psychologist	5
Psychiatric Social Worker	6
Psychiatric Nurse	18
Nurse trained in Mental Health Care	48

Implementation Challenges

- Due to the unavailability of a Trained Clinical Psychologist in certain Districts, psychological testing and assessment services for patients are currently not available in those districts. This has created difficulties in the proper assessment and diagnosis of mental health conditions, as well as in providing appropriate therapeutic interventions .
- There is a shortage of standardized tool to be administered for preliminary assessment particularly in the local language. There is also a lack of guidance on the appropriate tools that can be used for the assessment.
- There is a timeline of three months for the preliminary assessment, which directs the concerned authorities to complete the due process even if it means testing is compromised.

- Family members are sometime not available and it becomes difficult to establish or corroborate few parameters during the psychological testing
- Sometimes assessments rely on Social Investigation Reports (SIRs) and poor background checks compromise the evaluation.
- Children from backgrounds of chronic trauma may struggle to understand the consequences of the assessment. Sometimes, regardless of reassurance, they may also be apprehensive of the purpose of the testing and therefore may choose not to respond appropriately.
- It has also been observed that at times the child will fake bad after being convinced by adults.
- Research in this field is scanty.

Reforms introduced

- For juvenile, assessment is being done in extended hours also so that report can be completed timely.
- For smooth process of preliminary assessment, RINPAS has developed a SOP that is now being followed.
- Although limited, research is being conducted for development of assessment tools.

Data/Evidence/Best Practice(s)

Few guidelines are available:

- National Commission for Protection of Child Rights. (2023). Guidelines for conducting preliminary assessment under section 15 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015. Government of India. https://ncpcr.gov.in/public/viewPdf/16813797786437d1c2bea2a_guidelines-for-conducting-preliminary-assessment.pdf
- SAMVAD. (n.d.). Guidance notes on preliminary assessment report for children in conflict with law. Department of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS) & Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.

Way Forward

- **A dedicated District Mental Health Unit Clinic with trained Mental Health Professional should be** established at each Sadar Hospital, where patients can receive integrated Psychiatry, Clinical Psychology, and Psychiatric Social Work services under one roof and **need based Counseling Services should be available in all health facilities (DH, CHCs, PHCs, AAMs) etc. Trained Human Resource should be in Place.**
- **Longitudinal assessment** involving comprehensive assessment, which will provide proper time and space to the child as well as the expert to justice with the preliminary assessment.
- **The experts or professionals** who have the required qualification to assist the JJB in conducting the preliminary assessment must undergo a **training** with respect to Section 15 of the Act. Research is required to develop suitable tools and intervention strategies.
- **Virtual services** should be developed in various homes so that existing tele-services can be accessed.

Priority recommendation for next decade

- Recruitment of trained mental health professionals and professionals mentioned in JJ Act so that assessment may be done timely.
- Developing indoor facilities for proper assessment and management; mainly for mental health
- Developing a portal to centrally access data
- Dedicated research fund is required so that assessment tools considering culture-specific perspective and evidence-based psychotherapeutic modules may be developed

Thank you