

More sex abuse being reported to police, stats show

By **KAREN SMITH**
The Champion

Violent crimes in Milton rose last year in part due to an increase in reported cases of sexual abuse, a police official said.

Sex offences alone rose about 75 per cent, mostly because more cases of abuse were reported by youths, said Det. Sgt. Jackie Gordon of Halton Regional Police.

She said she doesn't know if more youths are being sexually abused or more are reporting incidents.

"I can't speculate on why, but I can tell you that's what's happening," she said.

If more youths are reporting incidents, Det. Sgt. Gordon said it's because police have developed better relationships with the Halton Children's Aid Society and school boards.

"We're getting more reports through the schools," she said.

Many of the cases involved youths being assaulted by relatives and babysitters, she noted.

Robberies and assaults were also included in the category of violent crimes, which along with sexual assaults overall

rose 9.5 per cent — from 240 incidents as of the end of November, 1997 to 263 at the same time in 1998.

The number of local robberies declined by 22 per cent, but police saw more incidents of youths forcefully stealing from people on the street, Det. Sgt. Gordon said.

"We've seen an increase of youths committing robbery," she said.

Assaults rose a minimal 4.6 per cent from 192 in 1997 to 201 in 1998, while domestic assaults increased by 13 per cent from 23 in 1997 to 26 in 1998.

Property crimes — including break-ins, thefts and frauds — dropped 12.5 per cent.

While 101 cars were stolen in Milton from January to November, 1997, thieves had only driven off with 75 vehicles by the same time last year.

"That's because some of the people who are known auto thieves in this jurisdiction are currently incarcerated," Det. Sgt. Gordon said.

Property damage declined 10.5 per cent, she noted.

"I think we put more



Det. Sgt. Jackie Gordon

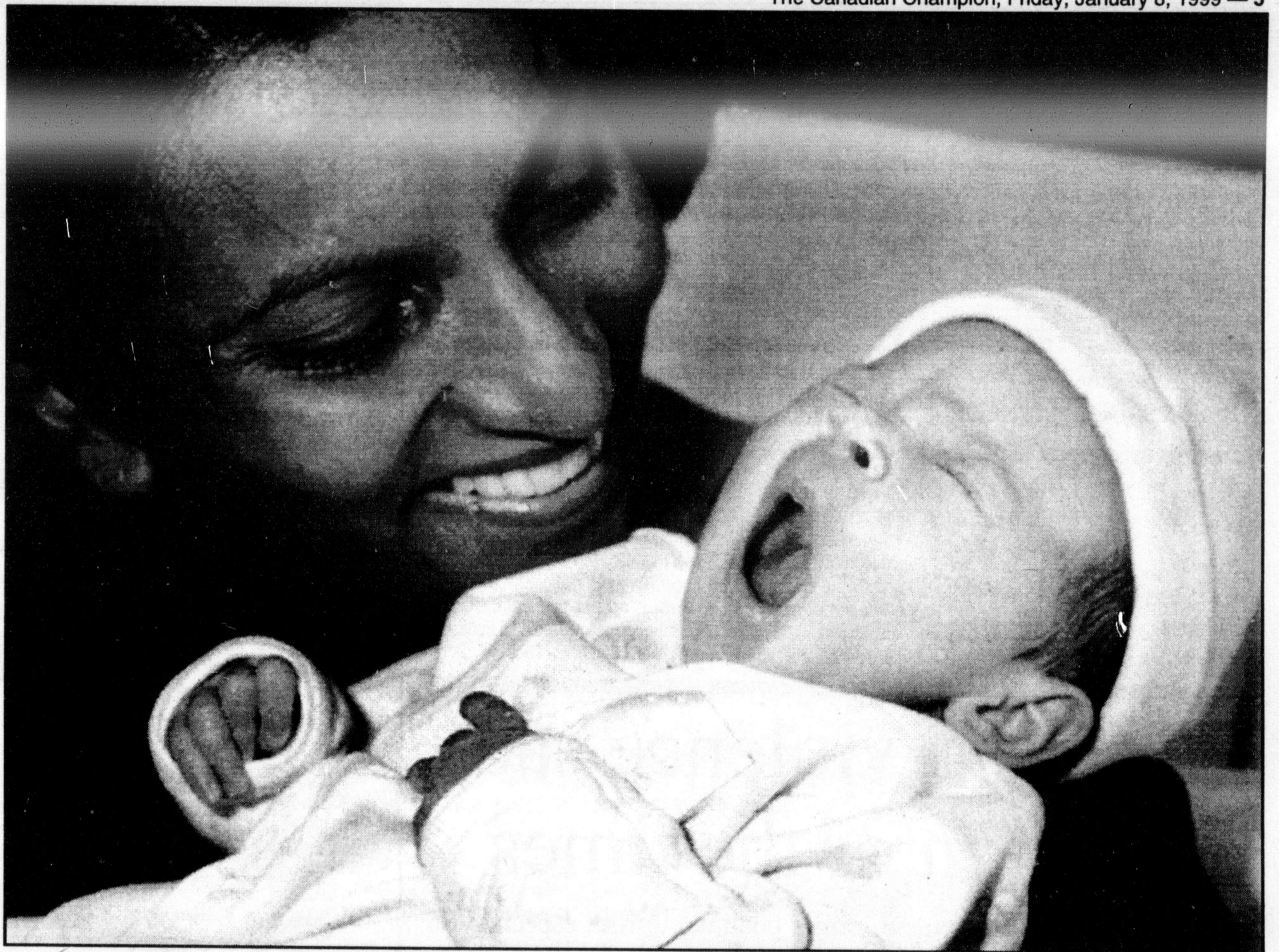


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Oriana Naidoo-Harris lets out a mighty yawn as proud mother Indira looks on. Oriana was Milton's first baby of 1999. She was born at 3:26 p.m. on New Year's Day.

Mother felt strange going to Oakville

• from MILTON'S on page 1

She said, "I guess it was nice to be indoors, but Randy had some trouble getting to and from the hospital yesterday."

Ms Naidoo-Harris and others have been forced to go out of town to have their babies since Milton District Hospital's obstetrics department closed in November.

"Living only a couple of blocks away from Milton District Hospital, it felt strange driving past it to Oakville for the delivery," she said.

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