



# Changes and Trends in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina

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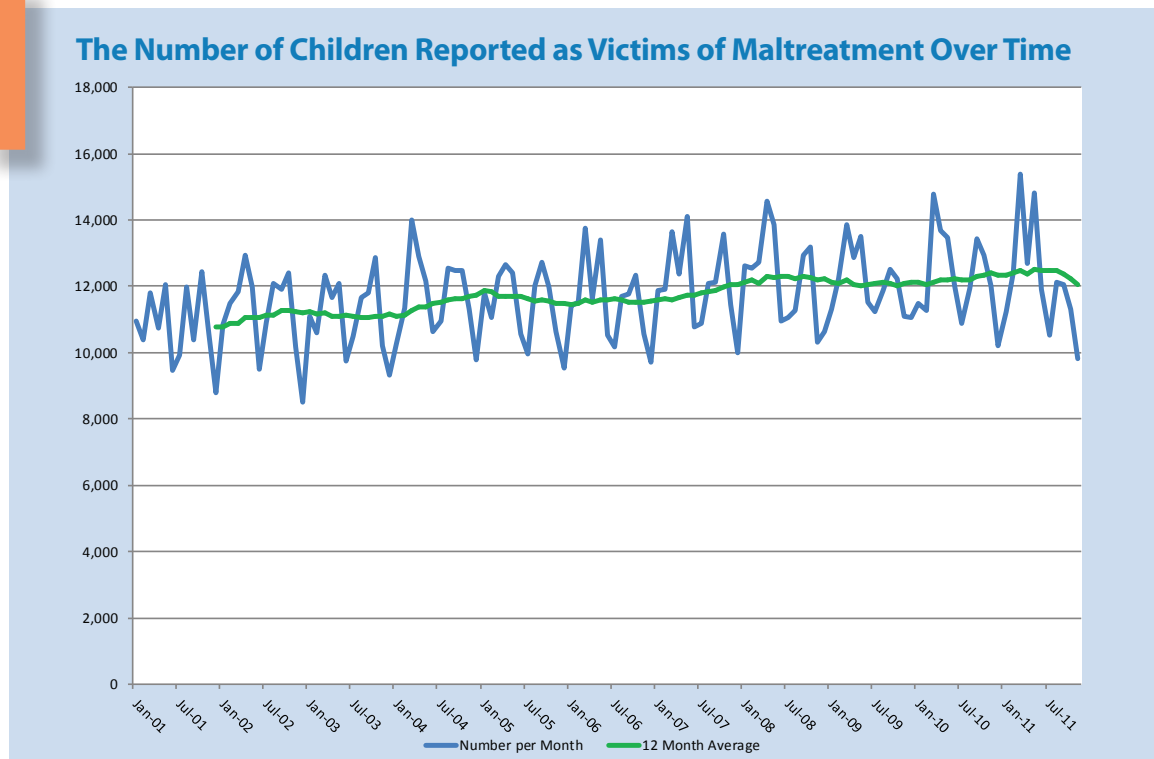
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# Changes and Trends in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina: March 2012

This report explores changes and trends in the child welfare caseload in North Carolina. This analysis is based on data extracted from the Services Information System (SIS) in early March 2012. These extracts are used to construct and maintain a longitudinal file that tracks the experiences of children and youth who have been involved with the child welfare system in North Carolina. The analysis explores changes in the number of children reported as victims of maltreatment, the number of those reports which are substantiated, and the number of children entering foster care. Long-term trends are also discussed.

Figure One illustrates the changes in the number of reports of maltreatment<sup>1</sup> over time (specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table One). As the figure indicates, the number of reports of maltreatment received monthly has increased slightly over time and is illustrated by

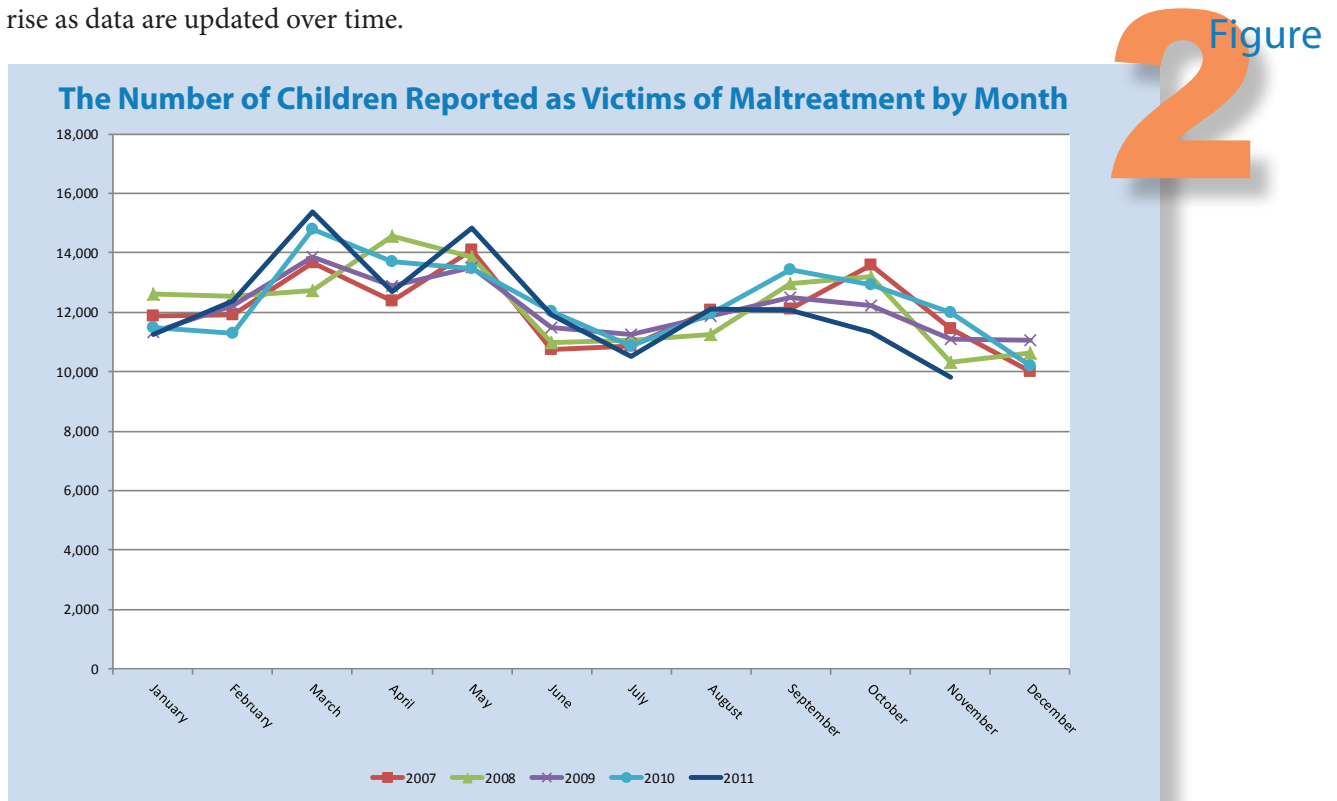
Figure 1



<sup>1</sup> The reports of maltreatment tracked in Figures One through Five of this report do not provide a unique count of children per year. There are a number of instances in which a child may be counted more than once in the analyses for this report. For example, a child may have more than one report investigated within a calendar year. Also, there are some instances where two separate investigations—as indicated by date of case decision on the DSS-5104 form—about an individual child are concluded within the same calendar month. However, instances where there are separate allegations of maltreatment for an individual child—as indicated by the form identification number—with the same case decision date are collapsed into a single report. Also, state policies require that when a report of maltreatment is received, all children living in the home must be assessed as a possible victim of maltreatment. As a result, the number of children reported as victims of maltreatment could fluctuate based upon the sizes of families involved, even as the number of reports remains steady.

the twelve month average trend line. In 2002, the number of children reported rose above 11,000 to about 11,800 at the end of 2004. The number of reports settled around 11,500 in 2005 and 2006 before rising above 12,000 beginning in 2007 to 2009. The monthly number of reports remained slightly above 12,000 throughout 2010 and has risen to about 12,400 in 2011. In March 2011, the monthly number of reports reached its highest point in the past ten years at about 15,371 children. The monthly numbers of reports for October and November 2011 will likely increase as data are updated over time.

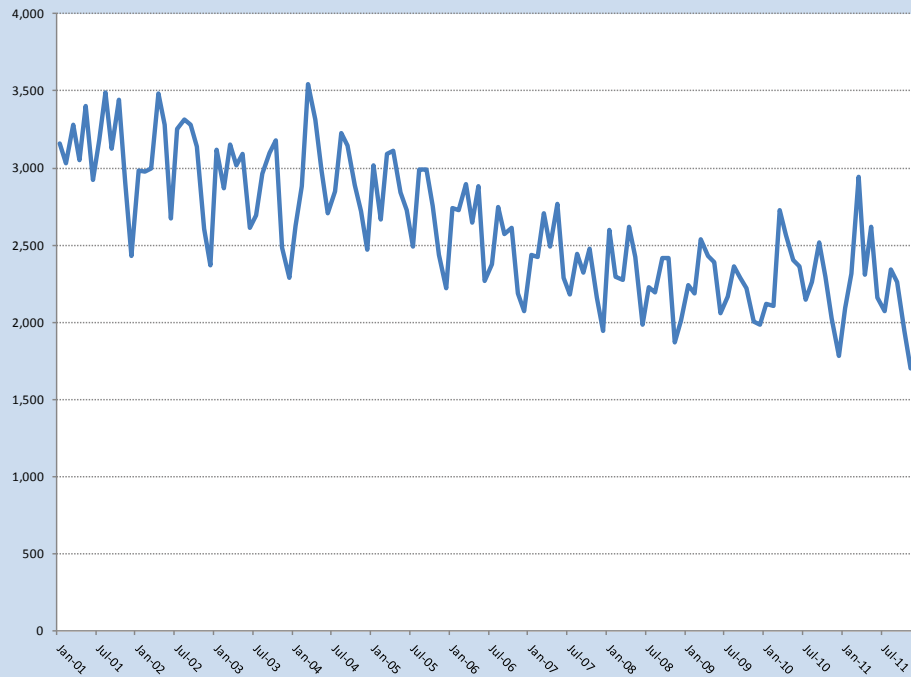
Figure One also indicates that there is variation from month to month in the number of children reported. That variation is further illustrated in **Figure Two** which shows the pattern of the number of reports received each month by year from January 2007 through November 2011. As the figure indicates, the number of reports received generally peaks around May, then falls in June and July before beginning a slight rise through October. The number of reports then declines through December. The patterns for 2010 and 2011 appear to follow those of prior years; however, the peaks for these years occurred in March. Reports for October and November 2011 will likely rise as data are updated over time.



**Figure Three** illustrates the number of children whose reports of maltreatment were substantiated. Specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table Two. A report is considered substantiated if it has a finding of abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, dependency, or services needed. It does not include instances where the finding was services provided, child protective services no longer needed. Again, these reports are not based on a unique count of children per year. As the figure indicates, the number of children whose report is substantiated has declined over time, from around 3,100 per month in 2001 to around 2,300 per month in 2009-2011. The decline generally corresponds to the implementation of the Multiple Response System (MRS) between 2001 and 2006 (see Appendix B for a longer description of MRS).

# Figure 3

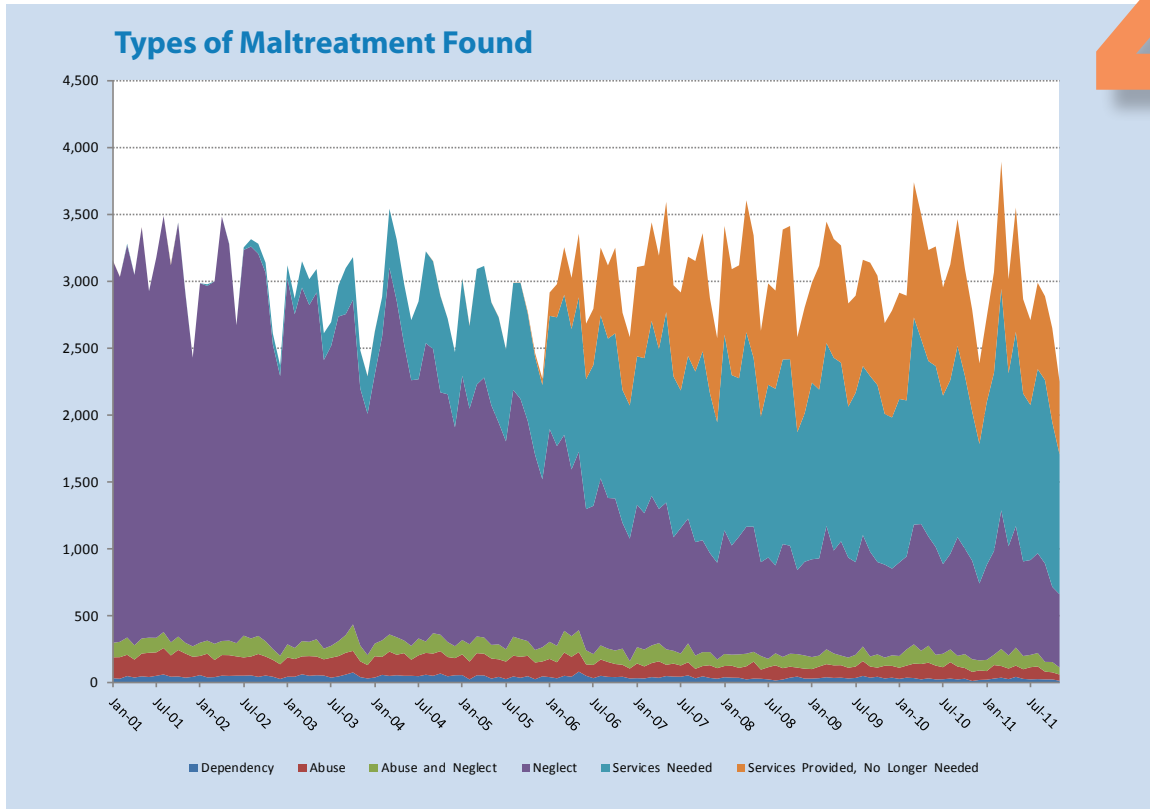
## The Number of Children with Substantiated Reports of Maltreatment Over Time



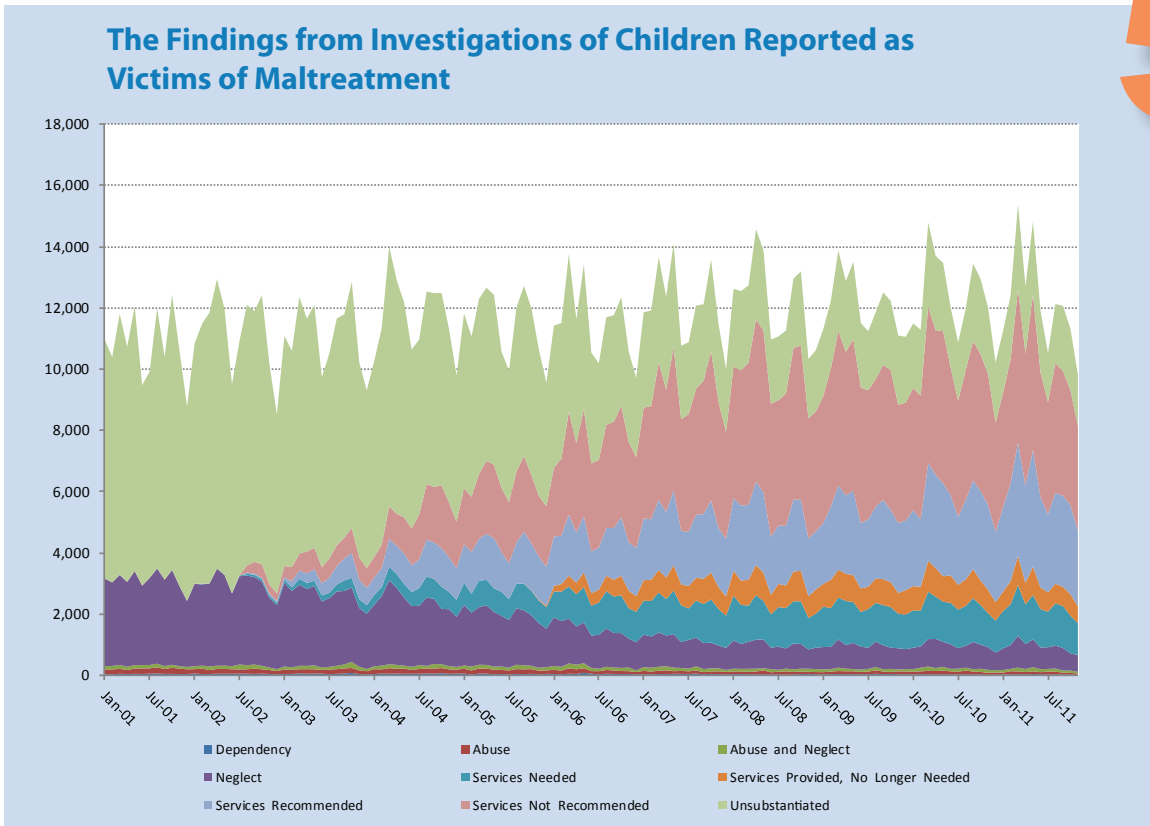
The changes in the type of maltreatment found over time are shown in **Figure Four**. In addition to the types presented in Figure Three (i.e., abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, dependency, and services needed), this figure contains the count of children whose maltreatment investigation found that services were provided to the child or family during the protective services investigation but that child protective services were no longer needed. These reports do not provide a unique count of children per year. Specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table Three. As the figure indicates, there has been a decline in the number of children found to be victims of neglect. This decline corresponds with an increase in the number of children where the investigation into the maltreatment concluded that services were needed. In mid-2006, there also was an increase in the number of maltreatment investigations which concluded that as the result of the services provided during the protective services investigation, no additional services were needed. In addition to the decrease in the number of instances where children and youth were found to be victims of neglect, there is a slight decrease over time in the number of children who were found to be victims of abuse.

**Figure Five** illustrates how findings from the investigation of maltreatment reports have changed over time. As the figure indicates, while there has been a decrease in the findings of abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, and dependency, there has also been a decrease in the number of unsubstantiations. This decline in unsubstantiations is likely due to a decrease in the number of investigations routed through the investigative track. That notion is further supported by the increase in the number of findings of services not recommended, an outcome of the family assessment track. Figure Five also shows an increasing number of findings of services recommended. The increase reflects the growth of MRS. Even after the expansion of MRS

4 Figure



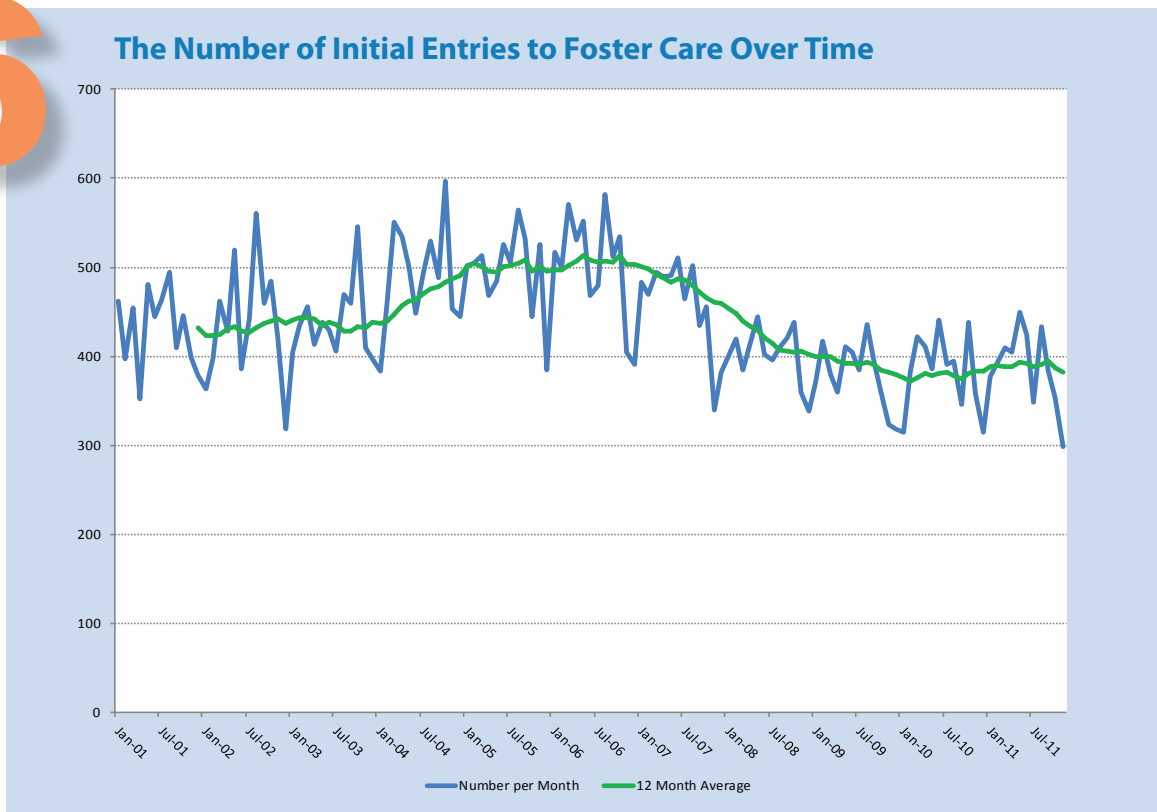
5 Figure



statewide in 2006, the number of findings of services recommended has continued to grow. As Figure Four suggested earlier, the monthly sum of findings of abuse; neglect; abuse and neglect; dependency; services needed; and services provided, protective services no longer needed, has remained fairly steady over time. With the expansion of MRS, there appears to have been an increase in the number of families and children recommended for services above the number of children determined to be victims of maltreatment.

**Figure Six** reports the number of children entering foster care for the first time. Specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table Four. According to the figure, the number of children entering foster care generally ranged between 400 and 500 per month between 2001 and 2004. There appears to have been an increase between 2005 and 2007, when the number of children entering care centered around 500 per month. In mid-2007, the number entering each month began to fall and has ranged between a high of 511 children in June 2007 to a low of 315 in December 2010. For 2011, the number of children entering per month has ranged between 449 in May and 298 in November. The twelve month average trend line suggests that the number of children entering per month stabilized to just below 400 for 2010 and 2011.

# Figure 6



# Summary



Since 2000, there has been a gradual increase in the monthly number of children with reports of maltreatment. There has been a gradual decrease in the number of reports that are classified as substantiations. That decrease is not as apparent when MRS assessments with a finding of services provided, services no longer needed are included. Also, following the implementation of MRS, there has been a gradual decrease in the combined number of assessments with a finding of unsubstantiated or services not recommended. There has been an increase in the number of cases with an MRS finding of services recommended. Initial entries into foster care increased until 2006-2007 and then declined before leveling off in 2010-2011 to just below 400 children per month.

This research is funded through a contract with the North Carolina Division of Social Services. The views expressed are those of the authors. Any errors due to the interpretation of the analysis of the data are the authors' alone.

Additional information on the child welfare program at the state or county level is available through the Management Assistance for Child Welfare, Work First, and Food and Nutrition Services web site, <http://ssw.unc.edu/ma/>.

A PDF version of this report can be found at [http://sasweb.unc.edu/cgi-bin/broker?\\_service=default&\\_program=wrkfirst.highlight.sas](http://sasweb.unc.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=default&_program=wrkfirst.highlight.sas)

This report was designed by Rea Gibson of the UNC-CH School of Social Work.

# Appendix A

Table 1

**The Number of Children Reported As Maltreated**

Month	Number of Children Reported
Jan-01	10,961
Feb-01	10,397
Mar-01	11,808
Apr-01	10,728
May-01	12,051
Jun-01	9,475
Jul-01	9,922
Aug-01	11,988
Sep-01	10,403
Oct-01	12,426
Nov-01	10,572
Dec-01	8,779
Jan-02	10,830
Feb-02	11,483
Mar-02	11,850
Apr-02	12,941
May-02	11,964
Jun-02	9,500
Jul-02	10,918
Aug-02	12,094
Sep-02	11,900
Oct-02	12,414
Nov-02	10,164
Dec-02	8,517
Jan-03	11,080
Feb-03	10,602
Mar-03	12,350
Apr-03	11,653
May-03	12,093

Jun-03	9,733
Jul-03	10,509
Aug-03	11,653
Sep-03	11,790
Oct-03	12,853
Nov-03	10,224
Dec-03	9,306
Jan-04	10,269
Feb-04	11,335
Mar-04	14,005
Apr-04	12,907
May-04	12,170
Jun-04	10,637
Jul-04	10,963
Aug-04	12,531
Sep-04	12,483
Oct-04	12,485
Nov-04	11,297
Dec-04	9,795
Jan-05	11,814
Feb-05	11,067
Mar-05	12,296
Apr-05	12,660
May-05	12,421
Jun-05	10,579
Jul-05	9,949
Aug-05	12,008
Sep-05	12,722
Oct-05	11,986
Nov-05	10,634
Dec-05	9,551
Jan-06	11,420
Feb-06	11,505
Mar-06	13,759

Month	Number of Children Reported
Apr-06	11,626
May-06	13,415
Jun-06	10,539
Jul-06	10,185
Aug-06	11,696
Sep-06	11,761
Oct-06	12,347
Nov-06	10,571
Dec-06	9,714
Jan-07	11,858
Feb-07	11,917
Mar-07	13,651
Apr-07	12,369
May-07	14,102
Jun-07	10,766
Jul-07	10,876
Aug-07	12,079
Sep-07	12,119
Oct-07	13,575
Nov-07	11,461
Dec-07	10,001
Jan-08	12,619
Feb-08	12,550
Mar-08	12,733
Apr-08	14,573
May-08	13,875
Jun-08	10,965
Jul-08	11,068
Aug-08	11,263
Sep-08	12,955
Oct-08	13,190
Nov-08	10,329
Dec-08	10,622
Jan-09	11,315
Feb-09	12,234
Mar-09	13,875

Apr-09	12,880
May-09	13,500
Jun-09	11,505
Jul-09	11,240
Aug-09	11,869
Sep-09	12,507
Oct-09	12,224
Nov-09	11,096
Dec-09	11,056
Jan-10	11,488
Feb-10	11,288
Mar-10	14,786
Apr-10	13,700
May-10	13,468
Jun-10	12,014
Jul-10	10,871
Aug-10	11,954
Sep-10	13,448
Oct-10	12,944
Nov-10	12,009
Dec-10	10,213
Jan-11	11,244
Feb-11	12,398
Mar-11	15,371
Apr-11	12,699
May-11	14,813
Jun-11	11,914
Jul-11	10,529
Aug-11	12,125
Sep-11	12,069
Oct-11	11,323
Nov-11	9,810

# Table 2

**The Number of Children Substantiated (including Services Needed)**

Month	Number of Children with a Substantiated Report
Jan-01	3,158
Feb-01	3,032
Mar-01	3,280
Apr-01	3,049
May-01	3,403
Jun-01	2,926
Jul-01	3,178
Aug-01	3,488
Sep-01	3,122
Oct-01	3,439
Nov-01	2,910
Dec-01	2,428
Jan-02	2,985
Feb-02	2,977
Mar-02	2,999
Apr-02	3,483
May-02	3,281
Jun-02	2,671
Jul-02	3,253
Aug-02	3,314
Sep-02	3,280
Oct-02	3,138
Nov-02	2,609
Dec-02	2,370
Jan-03	3,119
Feb-03	2,871
Mar-03	3,149
Apr-03	3,015
May-03	3,091
Jun-03	2,611
Jul-03	2,694
Aug-03	2,966

Sep-03	3,098
Oct-03	3,180
Nov-03	2,484
Dec-03	2,289
Jan-04	2,624
Feb-04	2,882
Mar-04	3,542
Apr-04	3,312
May-04	2,985
Jun-04	2,709
Jul-04	2,849
Aug-04	3,223
Sep-04	3,148
Oct-04	2,890
Nov-04	2,720
Dec-04	2,469
Jan-05	3,019
Feb-05	2,665
Mar-05	3,091
Apr-05	3,114
May-05	2,841
Jun-05	2,730
Jul-05	2,489
Aug-05	2,987
Sep-05	2,988
Oct-05	2,757
Nov-05	2,435
Dec-05	2,224
Jan-06	2,741
Feb-06	2,730
Mar-06	2,899
Apr-06	2,643
May-06	2,880
Jun-06	2,268
Jul-06	2,374
Aug-06	2,745
Sep-06	2,571
Oct-06	2,610
Nov-06	2,187

Month	Number of Children with a Substantiated Report
Dec-06	2,071
Jan-07	2,438
Feb-07	2,425
Mar-07	2,704
Apr-07	2,492
May-07	2,769
Jun-07	2,289
Jul-07	2,183
Aug-07	2,441
Sep-07	2,325
Oct-07	2,476
Nov-07	2,163
Dec-07	1,945
Jan-08	2,601
Feb-08	2,298
Mar-08	2,275
Apr-08	2,619
May-08	2,426
Jun-08	1,987
Jul-08	2,226
Aug-08	2,196
Sep-08	2,415
Oct-08	2,417
Nov-08	1,872
Dec-08	2,011
Jan-09	2,242
Feb-09	2,190
Mar-09	2,538
Apr-09	2,428
May-09	2,391
Jun-09	2,062
Jul-09	2,166
Aug-09	2,366
Sep-09	2,291
Oct-09	2,224
Nov-09	2,008

Dec-09	1,982
Jan-10	2,120
Feb-10	2,109
Mar-10	2,729
Apr-10	2,567
May-10	2,403
Jun-10	2,366
Jul-10	2,145
Aug-10	2,261
Sep-10	2,516
Oct-10	2,295
Nov-10	2,027
Dec-10	1,784
Jan-11	2,095
Feb-11	2,316
Mar-11	2,944
Apr-11	2,312
May-11	2,622
Jun-11	2,161
Jul-11	2,075
Aug-11	2,343
Sep-11	2,262
Oct-11	1,947
Nov-11	1,705

# Table 3

**The Number of Children by Type of Finding (Not Based on a Unique Count of Children; Some Children May Have Multiple Reports Investigated at the Same Time)**

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
Jan-01	33	156	108	2,861	0	2	1	0	7,800
Feb-01	29	161	115	2,727	0	1	3	0	7,361
Mar-01	49	159	129	2,934	9	0	9	8	8,511
Apr-01	38	134	107	2,768	2	0	2	10	7,667
May-01	47	170	113	3,073	0	2	1	4	8,641
Jun-01	42	181	113	2,589	1	0	4	6	6,539
Jul-01	51	175	109	2,843	0	0	0	10	6,734
Aug-01	61	197	120	3,110	0	0	3	1	8,496
Sep-01	44	159	98	2,818	3	7	0	3	7,271
Oct-01	46	198	100	3,091	4	0	6	4	8,977
Nov-01	37	180	80	2,607	6	0	2	8	7,652
Dec-01	43	150	78	2,157	0	0	0	6	6,345
Jan-02	56	143	99	2,687	0	0	0	9	7,836
Feb-02	39	177	98	2,651	12	0	0	10	8,496
Mar-02	41	128	121	2,709	0	0	0	3	8,848
Apr-02	52	154	105	3,172	0	0	0	0	9,458
May-02	50	155	109	2,963	4	0	4	2	8,677
Jun-02	52	144	99	2,376	0	0	4	4	6,821
Jul-02	52	136	163	2,883	19	0	0	25	7,640
Aug-02	54	141	135	2,929	55	0	38	234	8,508
Sep-02	43	171	135	2,856	75	0	42	380	8,198
Oct-02	53	142	114	2,755	74	0	44	445	8,787
Nov-02	44	126	81	2,276	82	0	62	302	7,191
Dec-02	27	110	64	2,090	79	0	53	249	5,845
Jan-03	44	144	98	2,735	98	0	84	366	7,511
Feb-03	44	132	83	2,494	118	0	204	457	7,070
Mar-03	62	134	114	2,643	196	0	274	543	8,384
Apr-03	51	147	107	2,517	193	0	311	714	7,613
May-03	55	140	129	2,592	175	0	374	704	7,924
Jun-03	53	121	80	2,157	200	0	389	531	6,202
Jul-03	37	149	89	2,241	178	0	495	624	6,696
Aug-03	46	152	112	2,426	230	0	596	682	7,409

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
Sep-03	60	163	132	2,399	344	0	719	674	7,299
Oct-03	76	161	198	2,426	319	0	822	810	8,041
Nov-03	41	118	118	1,921	286	0	648	709	6,383
Dec-03	31	100	74	1,804	280	2	563	646	5,806
Jan-04	38	159	95	2,014	318	2	565	669	6,409
Feb-04	58	134	124	2,271	295	0	618	769	7,066
Mar-04	50	182	128	2,742	440	0	915	1,060	8,488
Apr-04	55	153	131	2,515	458	0	915	1,047	7,633
May-04	51	169	95	2,220	450	0	1,001	1,172	7,012
Jun-04	51	120	103	1,986	449	0	884	1,200	5,844
Jul-04	48	156	126	1,937	582	0	933	1,466	5,715
Aug-04	59	163	85	2,230	686	0	1,206	1,816	6,286
Sep-04	51	166	152	2,124	655	3	1,188	1,811	6,333
Oct-04	68	167	123	1,811	721	3	1,263	2,050	6,279
Nov-04	47	144	112	1,852	565	0	1,127	1,790	5,660
Dec-04	55	128	89	1,636	561	0	1,027	1,522	4,777
Jan-05	56	155	107	1,976	725	3	1,253	1,829	5,710
Feb-05	24	133	130	1,760	618	4	1,358	1,803	5,237
Mar-05	55	165	125	1,883	863	0	1,373	2,118	5,714
Apr-05	54	162	121	1,943	834	0	1,503	2,386	5,657
May-05	30	150	102	1,790	769	2	1,638	2,392	5,548
Jun-05	43	131	112	1,657	787	2	1,292	2,100	4,455
Jul-05	26	131	92	1,554	686	1	1,169	1,989	4,301
Aug-05	46	155	142	1,845	799	1	1,358	2,320	5,342
Sep-05	36	157	133	1,794	868	2	1,699	2,473	5,560
Oct-05	48	152	110	1,644	803	13	1,535	2,237	5,444
Nov-05	25	125	94	1,459	732	28	1,409	1,982	4,780
Dec-05	47	111	106	1,255	705	47	1,271	1,982	4,027
Jan-06	41	136	128	1,590	846	175	1,615	2,242	4,647
Feb-06	32	120	123	1,493	962	248	1,578	2,520	4,429
Mar-06	51	174	162	1,465	1,047	355	1,993	3,372	5,140
Apr-06	44	149	154	1,246	1,050	382	1,633	2,923	4,045
May-06	82	146	164	1,333	1,155	475	1,852	3,485	4,723
Jun-06	51	85	106	1,055	971	415	1,360	2,881	3,615

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
Jul-06	33	99	81	1,108	1,053	420	1,375	2,864	3,152
Aug-06	51	122	105	1,249	1,218	506	1,556	3,375	3,514
Sep-06	43	111	100	1,126	1,191	547	1,693	3,466	3,484
Oct-06	41	98	101	1,136	1,234	640	1,915	3,637	3,545
Nov-06	44	89	121	940	993	578	1,581	3,270	2,955
Dec-06	31	74	55	916	995	511	1,571	2,973	2,588
Jan-07	33	110	122	1,064	1,109	668	2,016	3,622	3,114
Feb-07	31	90	126	1,019	1,159	692	1,976	3,697	3,127
Mar-07	41	105	132	1,118	1,308	736	2,288	4,499	3,424
Apr-07	36	123	136	1,003	1,194	699	2,139	4,003	3,036
May-07	49	84	116	1,097	1,423	824	2,451	4,680	3,378
Jun-07	45	97	96	848	1,203	681	1,750	3,642	2,404
Jul-07	44	84	89	939	1,027	733	1,767	3,843	2,350
Aug-07	54	98	141	933	1,215	742	2,060	4,120	2,716
Sep-07	32	71	99	848	1,275	826	2,113	4,354	2,501
Oct-07	47	77	104	836	1,412	883	2,354	4,876	2,986
Nov-07	35	95	98	740	1,195	711	1,936	4,116	2,535
Dec-07	29	79	65	723	1,049	629	1,877	3,492	2,058
Jan-08	40	84	90	924	1,463	812	2,371	4,299	2,536
Feb-08	37	89	83	816	1,273	792	2,453	4,418	2,589
Mar-08	36	74	101	881	1,183	844	2,444	4,651	2,519
Apr-08	24	98	94	949	1,454	986	2,721	5,297	2,950
May-08	30	127	73	936	1,260	916	2,622	5,293	2,618
Jun-08	29	68	102	701	1,087	642	1,887	4,346	2,103
Jul-08	24	91	63	757	1,291	757	1,914	4,094	2,077
Aug-08	16	113	90	657	1,320	734	1,949	4,319	2,065
Sep-08	23	85	84	843	1,380	971	2,360	4,940	2,269
Oct-08	37	82	97	807	1,394	996	2,322	5,035	2,420
Nov-08	45	67	101	628	1,031	710	1,888	3,929	1,930
Dec-08	30	74	99	700	1,108	792	1,900	3,911	2,008
Jan-09	30	71	90	731	1,320	746	1,994	4,147	2,186
Feb-09	33	87	82	726	1,262	926	2,400	4,500	2,218
Mar-09	40	98	111	922	1,367	907	2,759	5,052	2,619
Apr-09	35	94	89	769	1,441	888	2,558	4,689	2,317

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
May-09	37	93	72	854	1,335	876	2,769	4,939	2,525
Jun-09	31	80	76	747	1,128	772	2,136	4,423	2,112
Jul-09	35	85	88	692	1,266	726	2,204	4,215	1,929
Aug-09	50	111	109	833	1,263	794	2,357	4,161	2,191
Sep-09	37	83	75	783	1,313	848	2,591	4,408	2,369
Oct-09	44	68	99	690	1,323	817	2,362	4,564	2,257
Nov-09	31	95	61	695	1,126	679	2,288	3,863	2,258
Dec-09	37	88	79	648	1,130	799	2,273	3,852	2,150
Jan-10	28	83	88	699	1,222	794	2,478	3,987	2,109
Feb-10	37	90	121	695	1,166	783	2,209	4,031	2,156
Mar-10	34	108	144	895	1,548	1,010	3,200	5,097	2,750
Apr-10	24	115	99	947	1,382	932	3,051	4,716	2,434
May-10	32	117	127	816	1,311	830	3,036	4,970	2,229
Jun-10	24	103	81	805	1,353	894	2,627	4,160	1,967
Jul-10	25	90	101	670	1,259	809	2,215	3,800	1,902
Aug-10	30	123	95	714	1,299	864	2,594	4,234	2,001
Sep-10	24	96	80	887	1,429	948	2,903	4,554	2,527
Oct-10	29	80	104	788	1,294	800	2,922	4,468	2,459
Nov-10	12	68	95	737	1,115	761	2,774	4,275	2,172
Dec-10	20	71	75	575	1,043	602	2,297	3,565	1,965
Jan-11	22	64	84	709	1,216	635	2,749	3,748	2,017
Feb-11	30	101	77	776	1,332	753	3,201	4,032	2,096
Mar-11	37	87	127	1,037	1,656	949	3,716	5,007	2,755
Apr-11	26	79	98	816	1,293	703	3,177	4,309	2,198
May-11	43	84	135	908	1,452	928	3,820	5,084	2,359
Jun-11	28	72	99	707	1,255	705	2,955	4,077	2,016
Jul-11	24	91	92	709	1,159	634	2,552	3,655	1,613
Aug-11	26	95	100	746	1,376	645	2,978	4,228	1,931
Sep-11	24	58	73	735	1,372	626	2,972	4,079	2,130
Oct-11	24	53	77	562	1,231	702	2,913	3,758	2,003
Nov-11	14	46	53	547	1,045	544	2,457	3,432	1,672

# Table 4

## The Number of Children Initially Entering Foster Care

Month	Number of Children Initially Entering Care
Jan-01	462
Feb-01	397
Mar-01	455
Apr-01	352
May-01	481
Jun-01	445
Jul-01	463
Aug-01	495
Sep-01	410
Oct-01	446
Nov-01	398
Dec-01	378
Jan-02	363
Feb-02	397
Mar-02	462
Apr-02	428
May-02	520
Jun-02	386
Jul-02	442
Aug-02	561
Sep-02	459
Oct-02	484
Nov-02	421
Dec-02	318
Jan-03	405
Feb-03	435
Mar-03	456
Apr-03	413
May-03	438
Jun-03	430
Jul-03	406
Aug-03	469

Sep-03	459
Oct-03	545
Nov-03	410
Dec-03	397
Jan-04	383
Feb-04	462
Mar-04	550
Apr-04	534
May-04	501
Jun-04	448
Jul-04	496
Aug-04	529
Sep-04	488
Oct-04	597
Nov-04	453
Dec-04	444
Jan-05	502
Feb-05	505
Mar-05	513
Apr-05	468
May-05	485
Jun-05	526
Jul-05	506
Aug-05	564
Sep-05	532
Oct-05	444
Nov-05	526
Dec-05	384
Jan-06	517
Feb-06	499
Mar-06	570
Apr-06	531
May-06	552
Jun-06	468
Jul-06	479
Aug-06	582
Sep-06	512
Oct-06	535

Month	Number of Children Initially Entering Care
Nov-06	404
Dec-06	391
Jan-07	483
Feb-07	470
Mar-07	494
Apr-07	489
May-07	491
Jun-07	511
Jul-07	465
Aug-07	502
Sep-07	435
Oct-07	456
Nov-07	340
Dec-07	382
Jan-08	402
Feb-08	419
Mar-08	384
Apr-08	417
May-08	445
Jun-08	402
Jul-08	396
Aug-08	410
Sep-08	421
Oct-08	438
Nov-08	360
Dec-08	338
Jan-09	372
Feb-09	417
Mar-09	379
Apr-09	360
May-09	411
Jun-09	405
Jul-09	384
Aug-09	436
Sep-09	394

Oct-09	361
Nov-09	323
Dec-09	318
Jan-10	315
Feb-10	383
Mar-10	422
Apr-10	411
May-10	386
Jun-10	441
Jul-10	391
Aug-10	395
Sep-10	346
Oct-10	438
Nov-10	359
Dec-10	315
Jan-11	377
Feb-11	392
Mar-11	409
Apr-11	404
May-11	449
Jun-11	424
Jul-11	349
Aug-11	433
Sep-11	383
Oct-11	353
Nov-11	298

# Appendix B

## Multiple Response System (MRS) Description

MRS was implemented as a pilot program in ten counties in 2001. In 2003, 42 additional counties began applying MRS policies. MRS was expanded statewide in January 2006. Under MRS, investigations of reports of maltreatment can follow one of two tracks: investigative or family assessment. The investigative track is similar in most respects to the way maltreatment reports were handled prior to the implementation of MRS. The family assessment track, on the other hand, allows and encourages the provision of services to families that would build on their strengths and eliminate the risk of harm to their children.

Counties have some flexibility in whether to use the investigative or the family assessment track. According to policy<sup>2</sup>, the choice of response should be based on the approach that best provides for the child's safety, permanence, and wellbeing. State policies require that all reports of abuse follow the investigative track. In addition, the policies require that certain reports of neglect—such as those involving a child fatality or where there is medical neglect of a disabled infant—follow the investigative track as well. For other neglect or dependency reports, county departments of social services may use the family assessment response. The family assessments incorporate System of Care (SOC) principles such as involving the family in decisions, developing an individualized plan which builds on the family's strengths, fostering interagency collaboration to address the family's needs, and developing culturally appropriate responses.

Just as the tracks differ in their approach, the findings differ as well. Under the investigative track, findings for abuse, neglect, or dependency are classified as either substantiated or unsubstantiated. For reports handled through the family assessment track, the findings can be services needed; services recommended; services provided, protective services no longer needed; and services not recommended. The finding of services needed is made when there are questions about the frequency and severity of maltreatment, current safety issues, if there is a risk of harm in the future, or if the child is in need of protective services. The finding of services provided, protective services no longer needed is used if, during the assessment, a determination was made that the threat to the child's safety or the risk of future harm were great enough to require the provision of involuntary services, but the problems were addressed and services were no longer required at the end of the assessment period.

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<sup>2</sup> The policies for investigations are found in Volume 1: Children's Services, Chapter VIII: Child Protective Services, of the NC-DSS Family Services Manual available at <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/>.