

Changes and Trends in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina

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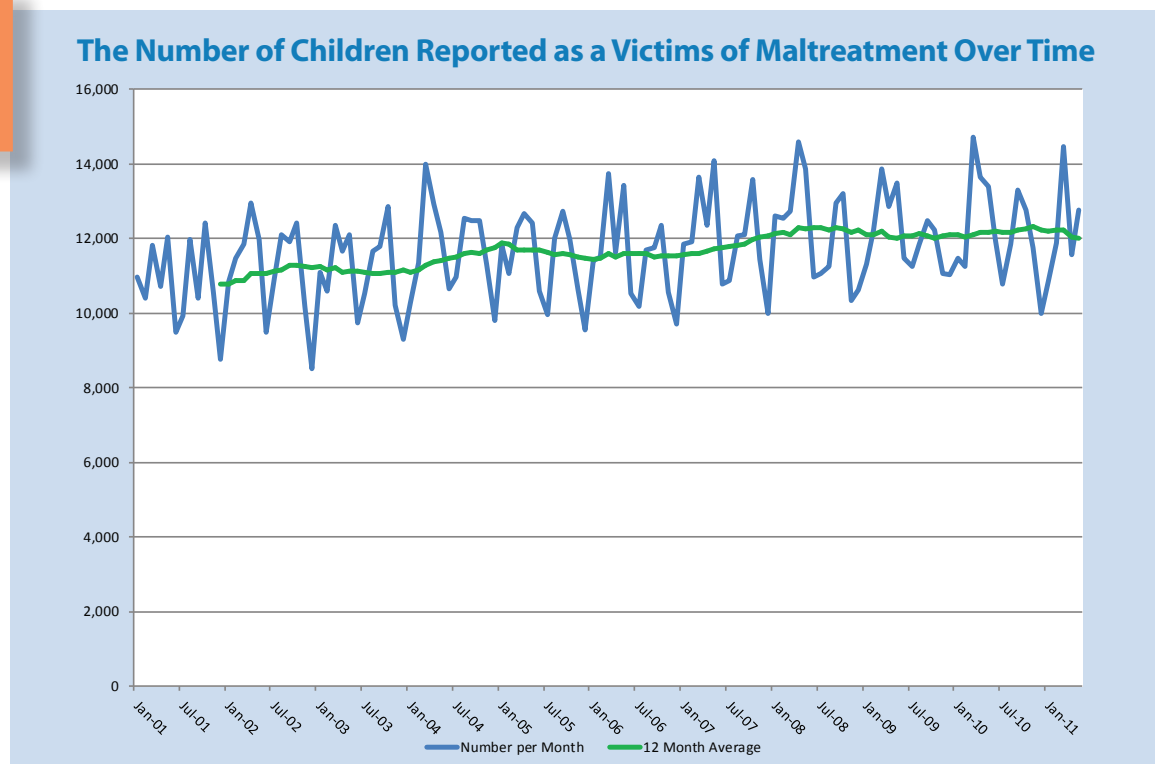
Changes and Trends in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina: September 2011



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 September 2011. 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 maltreatment¹ 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



¹ 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 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 a calendar month. 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 size 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 has remained slightly above 12,000 throughout 2010 and into 2011. The monthly number of reports for April and May 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 May 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. One purpose of this figure is to gauge whether there has been a rise in the number of reports received corresponding to the downturn in the state's economy. The figure does not suggest that there has been a consistent and sustained increase in the number of reports, although the number of reports received in April 2008 and March 2010 was higher than that for previous years. The number of reports received in May in the years 2008, 2009, and 2010 was slightly lower than that for May 2007. The patterns for 2010 and early 2011 appear to follow those of prior years.

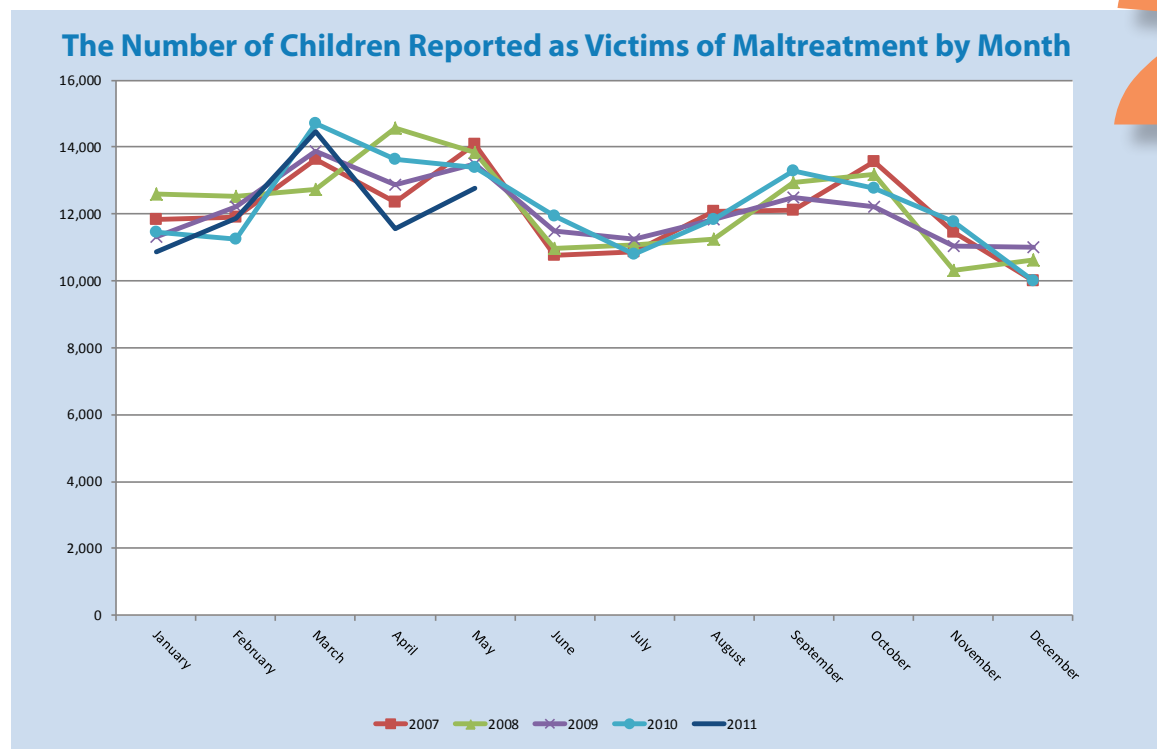


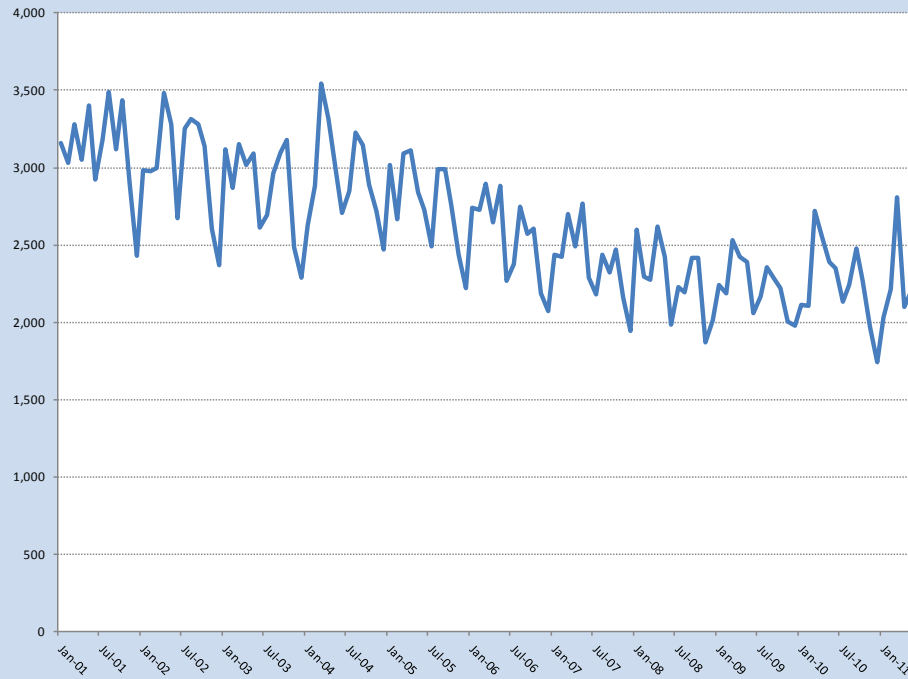
Figure 2

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 2,200 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 greater description of MRS).

Figure 3

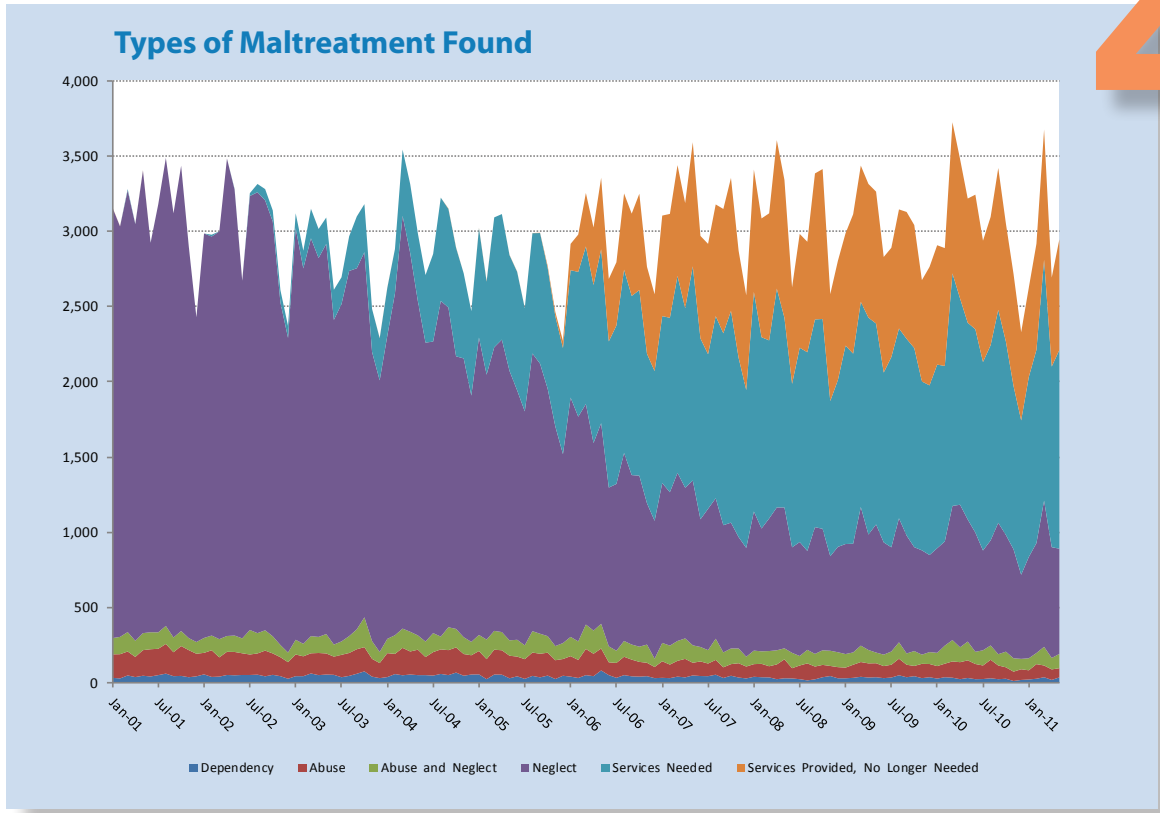
The Number of Children with Substantiated Reports of Maltreatment Over Time



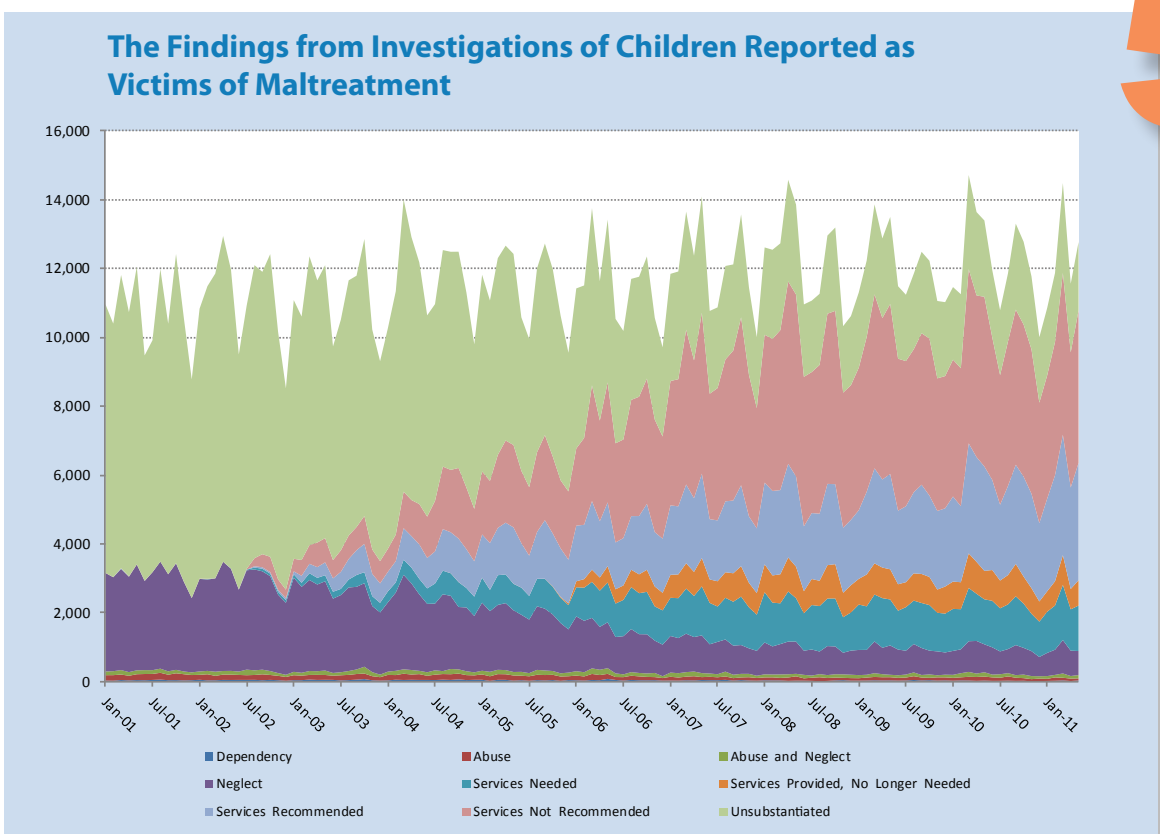
The changes in the type of maltreatment found over time are shown in **Figure Four**. In addition to the types presented in Figure Three (e.g., abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, dependency, and services needed), this figure contains the count of children whose maltreatment investigation found that services 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 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

4 Figure



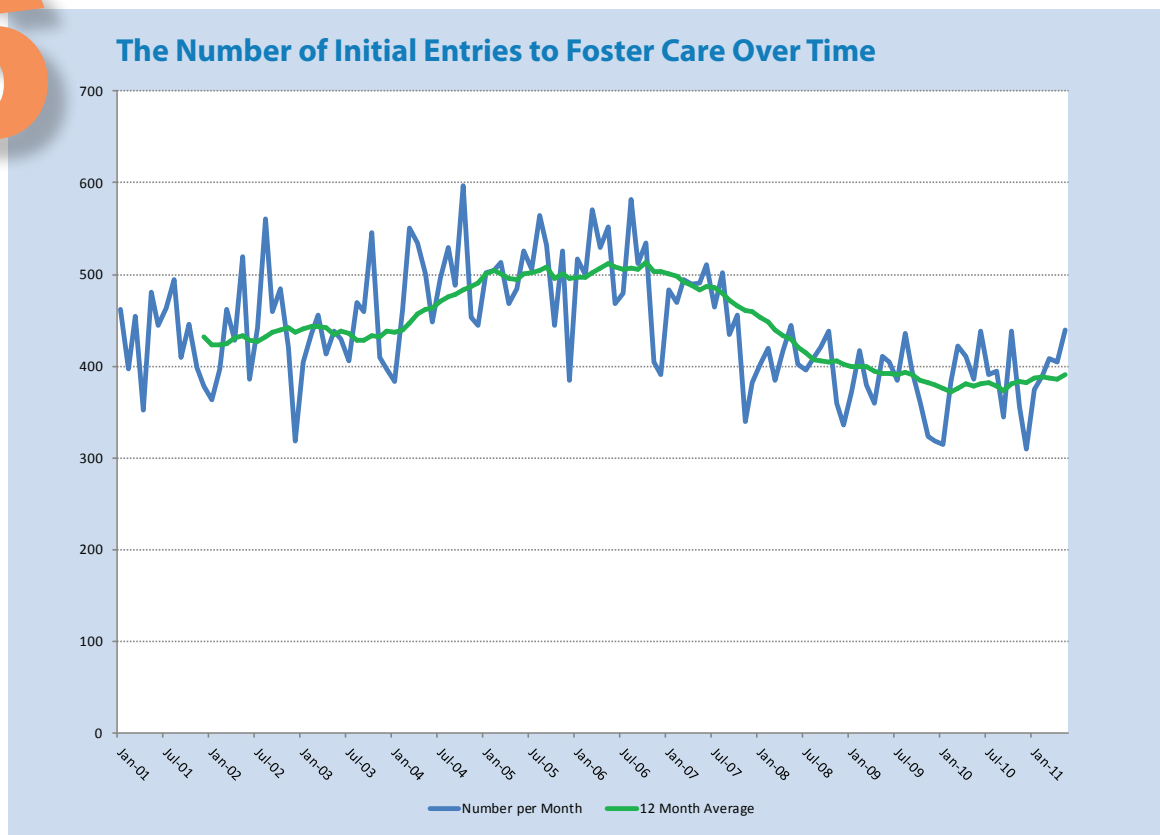
5 Figure



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 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 310 in December 2010. The twelve month average trend demonstrates these variations.

Figure 6

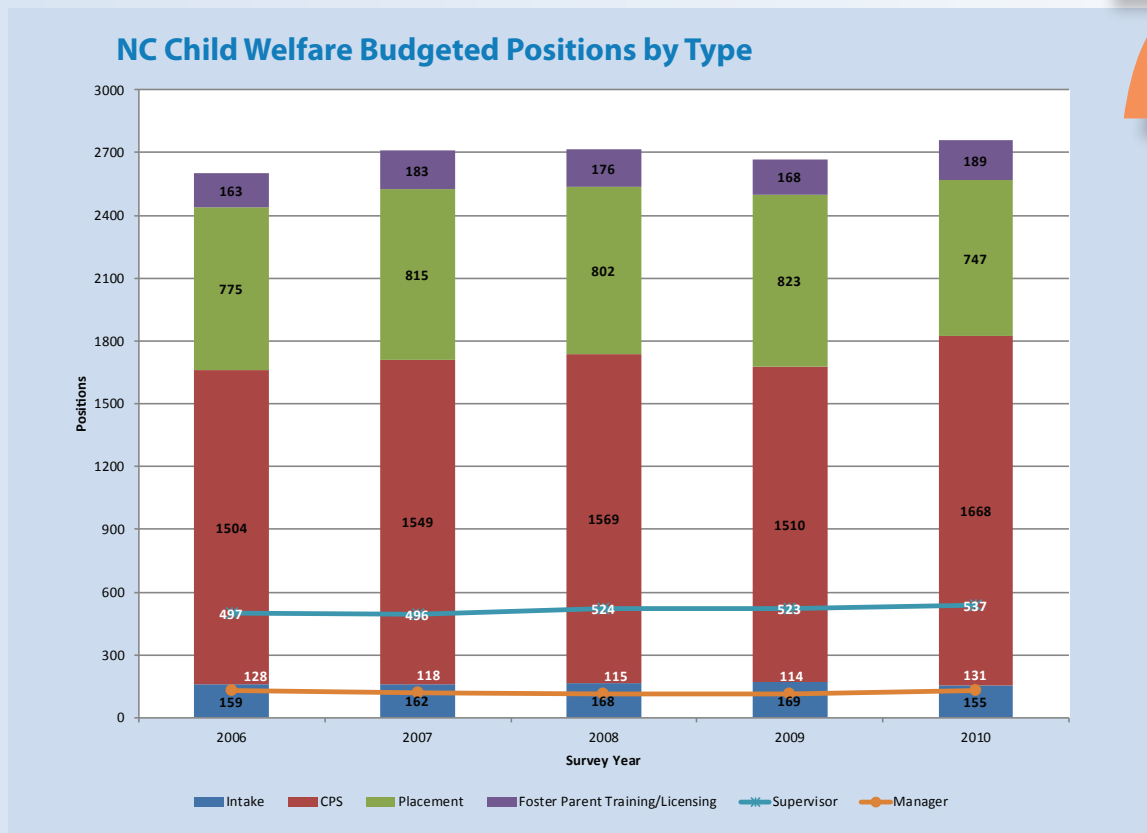


Child Welfare Staffing Survey Data

The North Carolina Division of Social Services (NC-DSS) conducts an annual survey of the county departments of social services concerning child welfare caseload and staffing patterns. The response rate to the survey is high with 97% to 100% of counties completing the survey over the last ten years. Figure Seven shows the total number of budgeted social worker positions for the state by type as well as supervisor and manager positions for survey years 2006 to 2010. The state total was calculated by summing the position data reported by counties.

According to the survey data in **Figure Seven**, from 2006 to 2010, the number of social workers increased from approximately 2600 to 2750 positions². Child protective services (CPS) investigator or assessment and in-home services positions increased over the years and in 2010 made up 60% of total positions. This upward trend may reflect counties' responses to a slight increase in the number of maltreatment reports received as well as a change in 2006 to the state's CPS caseload size standard from 12 to 10 cases per worker (thereby increasing the number of workers needed to meet the standard). Placement (foster care or adoption) case management positions have varied over the years and comprised 27% of total positions in 2010, which was down from 30% in prior years and may reflect counties' responses to declining entries into foster care. Foster parent

Figure



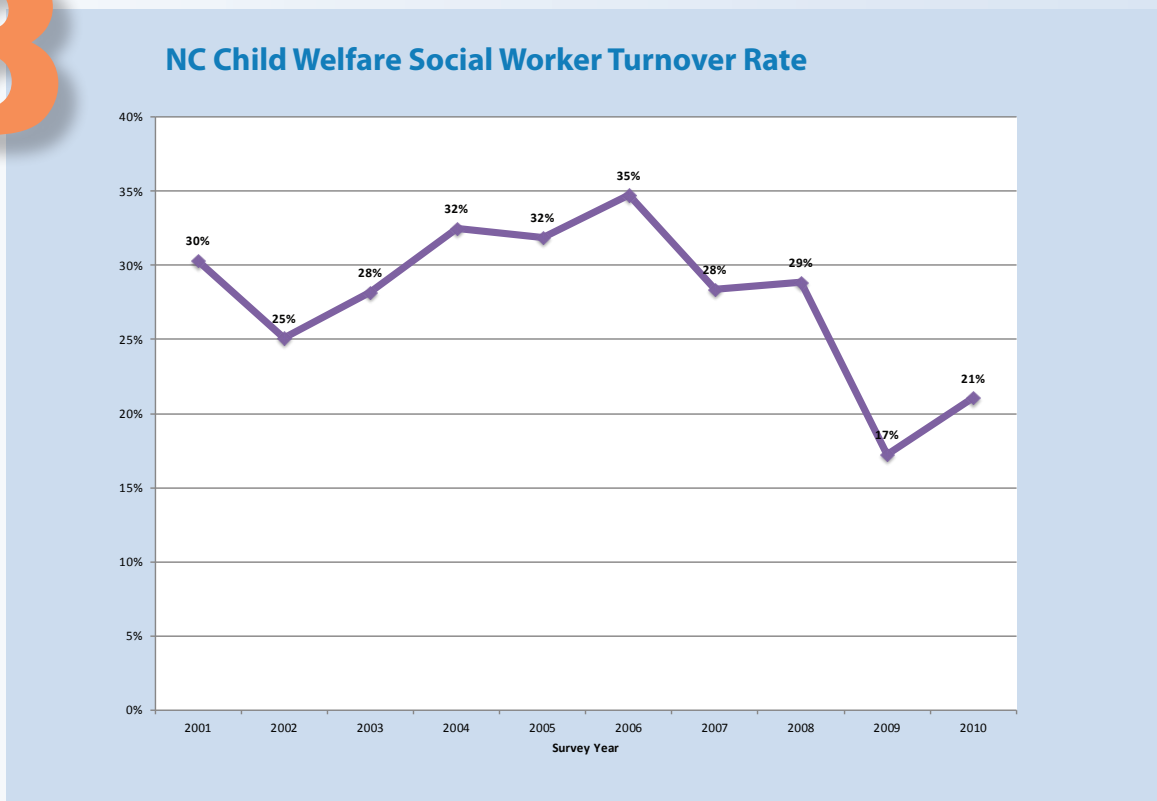
² Please note that this total does not include a small number of social worker positions, such as prevention workers and child and family team facilitators.

training or licensing and home studies positions have remained around 7% of total positions and report intake positions have also been steady at 6% over the years. The number of social work supervisor positions increased slightly from 497 in 2006 to 537 in 2010 while child welfare management positions fluctuated from a low of 114 in 2009 to a high of 131 in 2010.

The staffing survey also provides information about the number of vacancies that counties experience in the calendar year. **Figure Eight** shows the state turnover rate for social workers³ as defined by the number of calendar year vacancies divided by the total number of social worker positions for 2001 to 2010. The state rate was calculated by summing the vacancy and position data reported by counties. All vacancies were included in this rate regardless of type. For example, the rate includes both vacancies from retirements as well as voluntary resignations.

Figure Eight shows that the turnover rate averaged around 30% for 2001 to 2005 before reaching a high of 35% for 2006. The rate declined to just below 30% for 2007 and 2008 before falling considerably to 17% in 2009. In 2010, the rate rose to 21%. The timing of the decline in turnover suggests an impact of the economic recession on depressing the labor market for social workers thereby reducing opportunities to leave current positions. However, other factors may have also affected this trend, such as agency efforts to reduce turnover.

Figure 8



³ Supervisor and management vacancy and position data were not included.

Summary



Since 2000, there has been a gradual increase in the monthly number of children with reports of maltreatment. In comparing patterns across months for the last several years, there does not appear to have been a sharp increase associated with the current economic downturn. 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 declined thereafter. Staffing survey data showed an increase in the number of budgeted social worker positions reported by county agencies. The turnover rate for social workers remained around 30% until a sharp decline to 17% in 2009, which suggests a potential effect of the economic recession on reducing work opportunities for workers.

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

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 | 12,049 |
| Jun-01 | 9,473 |
| Jul-01 | 9,914 |
| Aug-01 | 11,983 |
| Sep-01 | 10,393 |
| Oct-01 | 12,417 |
| Nov-01 | 10,552 |
| Dec-01 | 8,775 |
| 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 | 11,788 |
| Oct-03 | 12,853 |
| Nov-03 | 10,224 |
| Dec-03 | 9,304 |
| 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 | 12,297 |
| Apr-05 | 12,660 |
| May-05 | 12,421 |
| Jun-05 | 10,579 |
| Jul-05 | 9,949 |
| Aug-05 | 12,004 |
| Sep-05 | 12,721 |
| Oct-05 | 11,981 |
| Nov-05 | 10,630 |
| Dec-05 | 9,551 |
| Jan-06 | 11,419 |
| Feb-06 | 11,505 |
| Mar-06 | 13,747 |

| Month | Number of Children Reported |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| Apr-06 | 11,626 |
| May-06 | 13,415 |
| Jun-06 | 10,535 |
| Jul-06 | 10,184 |
| Aug-06 | 11,696 |
| Sep-06 | 11,758 |
| Oct-06 | 12,346 |
| Nov-06 | 10,564 |
| Dec-06 | 9,707 |
| Jan-07 | 11,842 |
| Feb-07 | 11,910 |
| Mar-07 | 13,647 |
| Apr-07 | 12,365 |
| May-07 | 14,089 |
| Jun-07 | 10,765 |
| Jul-07 | 10,868 |
| Aug-07 | 12,071 |
| Sep-07 | 12,115 |
| Oct-07 | 13,566 |
| Nov-07 | 11,448 |
| Dec-07 | 10,001 |
| Jan-08 | 12,609 |
| Feb-08 | 12,541 |
| Mar-08 | 12,727 |
| Apr-08 | 14,573 |
| May-08 | 13,853 |
| Jun-08 | 10,954 |
| Jul-08 | 11,064 |
| Aug-08 | 11,262 |
| Sep-08 | 12,953 |
| Oct-08 | 13,187 |
| Nov-08 | 10,323 |
| Dec-08 | 10,617 |
| Jan-09 | 11,305 |
| Feb-09 | 12,225 |
| Mar-09 | 13,858 |

| | |
|--------|--------|
| Apr-09 | 12,870 |
| May-09 | 13,493 |
| Jun-09 | 11,483 |
| Jul-09 | 11,235 |
| Aug-09 | 11,844 |
| Sep-09 | 12,482 |
| Oct-09 | 12,220 |
| Nov-09 | 11,054 |
| Dec-09 | 11,020 |
| Jan-10 | 11,458 |
| Feb-10 | 11,250 |
| Mar-10 | 14,711 |
| Apr-10 | 13,635 |
| May-10 | 13,391 |
| Jun-10 | 11,952 |
| Jul-10 | 10,786 |
| Aug-10 | 11,849 |
| Sep-10 | 13,298 |
| Oct-10 | 12,772 |
| Nov-10 | 11,767 |
| Dec-10 | 10,000 |
| Jan-11 | 10,850 |
| Feb-11 | 11,867 |
| Mar-11 | 14,478 |
| Apr-11 | 11,555 |
| May-11 | 12,767 |

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 | 2,924 |
| Jul-01 | 3,178 |
| Aug-01 | 3,487 |
| Sep-01 | 3,119 |
| Oct-01 | 3,435 |
| Nov-01 | 2,900 |
| 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 | 3,092 |
| 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 | 2,756 |
| 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 | 2,570 |
| Oct-06 | 2,609 |
| Nov-06 | 2,186 |

| Month | Number of Children with a Substantiated Report |
|--------|--|
| Dec-06 | 2,071 |
| Jan-07 | 2,436 |
| Feb-07 | 2,425 |
| Mar-07 | 2,703 |
| Apr-07 | 2,489 |
| May-07 | 2,767 |
| Jun-07 | 2,288 |
| Jul-07 | 2,183 |
| Aug-07 | 2,436 |
| Sep-07 | 2,322 |
| Oct-07 | 2,471 |
| Nov-07 | 2,159 |
| Dec-07 | 1,945 |
| Jan-08 | 2,597 |
| Feb-08 | 2,296 |
| Mar-08 | 2,275 |
| Apr-08 | 2,619 |
| May-08 | 2,425 |
| Jun-08 | 1,986 |
| Jul-08 | 2,226 |
| Aug-08 | 2,196 |
| Sep-08 | 2,414 |
| Oct-08 | 2,417 |
| Nov-08 | 1,872 |
| Dec-08 | 2,011 |
| Jan-09 | 2,240 |
| Feb-09 | 2,187 |
| Mar-09 | 2,531 |
| Apr-09 | 2,426 |
| May-09 | 2,387 |
| Jun-09 | 2,061 |
| Jul-09 | 2,164 |
| Aug-09 | 2,354 |
| Sep-09 | 2,285 |
| Oct-09 | 2,224 |
| Nov-09 | 2,002 |

| | |
|--------|-------|
| Dec-09 | 1,976 |
| Jan-10 | 2,114 |
| Feb-10 | 2,105 |
| Mar-10 | 2,720 |
| Apr-10 | 2,553 |
| May-10 | 2,392 |
| Jun-10 | 2,349 |
| Jul-10 | 2,131 |
| Aug-10 | 2,243 |
| Sep-10 | 2,478 |
| Oct-10 | 2,267 |
| Nov-10 | 1,972 |
| Dec-10 | 1,743 |
| Jan-11 | 2,032 |
| Feb-11 | 2,212 |
| Mar-11 | 2,811 |
| Apr-11 | 2,101 |
| May-11 | 2,211 |

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 | 2 | 8,641 |
| Jun-01 | 42 | 181 | 113 | 2,587 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 6 | 6,539 |
| Jul-01 | 51 | 175 | 109 | 2,843 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6,734 |
| Aug-01 | 61 | 197 | 120 | 3,109 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8,496 |
| Sep-01 | 44 | 159 | 98 | 2,818 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7,271 |
| Oct-01 | 46 | 198 | 100 | 3,091 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 8,975 |
| Nov-01 | 37 | 180 | 80 | 2,602 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 7,645 |
| Dec-01 | 43 | 150 | 78 | 2,157 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 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 |
| Sep-03 | 60 | 163 | 132 | 2,399 | 344 | 0 | 719 | 674 | 7,297 |

| Month | Dependency | Abuse | Abuse and Neglect | Neglect | Services Needed | Services Provided, No Longer Needed | Services Recommended | Services Not Recommended | Unsubstantiated |
|---------------|------------|------------|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 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 | 5,804 |
| 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 | 1,884 | 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 | 2,316 | 5,342 |
| Sep-05 | 36 | 157 | 133 | 1,794 | 868 | 2 | 1,699 | 2,472 | 5,560 |
| Oct-05 | 48 | 152 | 110 | 1,643 | 803 | 13 | 1,535 | 2,234 | 5,443 |
| Nov-05 | 25 | 125 | 94 | 1,459 | 732 | 28 | 1,409 | 1,978 | 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 | 2,241 | 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 | 1,991 | 3,362 | 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 | 2,879 | 3,613 |
| Jul-06 | 33 | 99 | 81 | 1,108 | 1,053 | 420 | 1,375 | 2,863 | 3,152 |
| Aug-06 | 51 | 122 | 105 | 1,249 | 1,218 | 506 | 1,556 | 3,375 | 3,514 |

| Month | Dependency | Abuse | Abuse and Neglect | Neglect | Services Needed | Services Provided, No Longer Needed | Services Recommended | Services Not Recommended | Unsubstantiated |
|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Sep-06 | 43 | 111 | 100 | 1,126 | 1,190 | 547 | 1,693 | 3,464 | 3,484 |
| Oct-06 | 41 | 98 | 101 | 1,136 | 1,233 | 640 | 1,915 | 3,637 | 3,545 |
| Nov-06 | 44 | 89 | 121 | 939 | 993 | 578 | 1,579 | 3,268 | 2,953 |
| Dec-06 | 31 | 74 | 55 | 916 | 995 | 510 | 1,571 | 2,967 | 2,588 |
| Jan-07 | 33 | 110 | 122 | 1,062 | 1,109 | 668 | 2,016 | 3,610 | 3,112 |
| Feb-07 | 31 | 90 | 126 | 1,019 | 1,159 | 690 | 1,976 | 3,692 | 3,127 |
| Mar-07 | 41 | 105 | 132 | 1,117 | 1,308 | 736 | 2,287 | 4,497 | 3,424 |
| Apr-07 | 36 | 123 | 136 | 1,001 | 1,193 | 698 | 2,139 | 4,003 | 3,036 |
| May-07 | 49 | 84 | 116 | 1,095 | 1,423 | 824 | 2,451 | 4,672 | 3,375 |
| Jun-07 | 45 | 97 | 96 | 848 | 1,202 | 681 | 1,750 | 3,642 | 2,404 |
| Jul-07 | 44 | 84 | 89 | 939 | 1,027 | 733 | 1,767 | 3,842 | 2,343 |
| Aug-07 | 54 | 98 | 141 | 933 | 1,210 | 742 | 2,058 | 4,119 | 2,716 |
| Sep-07 | 32 | 71 | 99 | 845 | 1,275 | 826 | 2,112 | 4,354 | 2,501 |
| Oct-07 | 47 | 77 | 104 | 836 | 1,407 | 883 | 2,350 | 4,876 | 2,986 |
| Nov-07 | 35 | 95 | 98 | 740 | 1,191 | 711 | 1,930 | 4,113 | 2,535 |
| Dec-07 | 29 | 79 | 65 | 723 | 1,049 | 629 | 1,877 | 3,492 | 2,058 |
| Jan-08 | 40 | 84 | 90 | 924 | 1,459 | 812 | 2,371 | 4,293 | 2,536 |
| Feb-08 | 37 | 89 | 83 | 816 | 1,271 | 789 | 2,453 | 4,414 | 2,589 |
| Mar-08 | 36 | 74 | 101 | 881 | 1,183 | 844 | 2,444 | 4,645 | 2,519 |
| Apr-08 | 24 | 98 | 94 | 949 | 1,454 | 986 | 2,721 | 5,297 | 2,950 |
| May-08 | 30 | 126 | 73 | 936 | 1,260 | 916 | 2,619 | 5,281 | 2,612 |
| Jun-08 | 29 | 68 | 102 | 701 | 1,086 | 641 | 1,883 | 4,341 | 2,103 |
| Jul-08 | 24 | 91 | 63 | 757 | 1,291 | 756 | 1,914 | 4,094 | 2,074 |
| Aug-08 | 16 | 113 | 90 | 657 | 1,320 | 734 | 1,948 | 4,319 | 2,065 |
| Sep-08 | 23 | 85 | 84 | 842 | 1,380 | 970 | 2,360 | 4,940 | 2,269 |
| Oct-08 | 37 | 82 | 97 | 807 | 1,394 | 996 | 2,322 | 5,033 | 2,419 |
| Nov-08 | 45 | 67 | 101 | 628 | 1,031 | 710 | 1,888 | 3,923 | 1,930 |
| Dec-08 | 30 | 74 | 99 | 700 | 1,108 | 792 | 1,898 | 3,909 | 2,007 |
| Jan-09 | 30 | 71 | 90 | 731 | 1,318 | 746 | 1,994 | 4,139 | 2,186 |
| Feb-09 | 33 | 87 | 82 | 722 | 1,263 | 926 | 2,400 | 4,494 | 2,218 |
| Mar-09 | 40 | 98 | 109 | 921 | 1,363 | 905 | 2,759 | 5,052 | 2,611 |
| Apr-09 | 35 | 94 | 89 | 767 | 1,441 | 888 | 2,558 | 4,686 | 2,312 |
| May-09 | 37 | 93 | 71 | 851 | 1,335 | 876 | 2,769 | 4,936 | 2,525 |
| Jun-09 | 31 | 80 | 76 | 746 | 1,128 | 768 | 2,136 | 4,413 | 2,105 |
| Jul-09 | 35 | 85 | 88 | 692 | 1,264 | 726 | 2,204 | 4,215 | 1,926 |

| Month | Dependency | Abuse | Abuse and Neglect | Neglect | Services Needed | Services Provided, No Longer Needed | Services Recommended | Services Not Recommended | Unsubstantiated |
|--------|------------|-------|-------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Aug-09 | 50 | 110 | 109 | 824 | 1,261 | 791 | 2,357 | 4,150 | 2,192 |
| Sep-09 | 37 | 83 | 75 | 783 | 1,307 | 843 | 2,591 | 4,398 | 2,365 |
| Oct-09 | 44 | 68 | 99 | 690 | 1,323 | 817 | 2,362 | 4,561 | 2,256 |
| Nov-09 | 31 | 95 | 61 | 693 | 1,122 | 673 | 2,283 | 3,849 | 2,247 |
| Dec-09 | 37 | 88 | 79 | 645 | 1,127 | 787 | 2,271 | 3,840 | 2,146 |
| Jan-10 | 28 | 83 | 88 | 695 | 1,220 | 793 | 2,470 | 3,974 | 2,107 |
| Feb-10 | 37 | 90 | 120 | 692 | 1,166 | 783 | 2,207 | 4,006 | 2,149 |
| Mar-10 | 34 | 108 | 142 | 891 | 1,545 | 1,004 | 3,196 | 5,058 | 2,733 |
| Apr-10 | 24 | 113 | 99 | 947 | 1,370 | 926 | 3,043 | 4,693 | 2,420 |
| May-10 | 32 | 117 | 125 | 811 | 1,307 | 825 | 3,031 | 4,927 | 2,216 |
| Jun-10 | 24 | 101 | 81 | 792 | 1,351 | 894 | 2,618 | 4,139 | 1,952 |
| Jul-10 | 25 | 90 | 101 | 663 | 1,252 | 806 | 2,201 | 3,763 | 1,885 |
| Aug-10 | 30 | 123 | 95 | 698 | 1,297 | 852 | 2,585 | 4,194 | 1,975 |
| Sep-10 | 24 | 91 | 75 | 873 | 1,415 | 942 | 2,879 | 4,504 | 2,495 |
| Oct-10 | 27 | 76 | 104 | 775 | 1,285 | 784 | 2,901 | 4,416 | 2,404 |
| Nov-10 | 12 | 62 | 89 | 724 | 1,085 | 744 | 2,740 | 4,192 | 2,119 |
| Dec-10 | 19 | 71 | 69 | 559 | 1,025 | 586 | 2,274 | 3,498 | 1,899 |
| Jan-11 | 22 | 61 | 80 | 673 | 1,196 | 593 | 2,690 | 3,579 | 1,956 |
| Feb-11 | 27 | 97 | 74 | 730 | 1,284 | 705 | 3,077 | 3,872 | 2,001 |
| Mar-11 | 37 | 78 | 124 | 971 | 1,601 | 864 | 3,497 | 4,696 | 2,610 |
| Apr-11 | 19 | 70 | 76 | 736 | 1,200 | 591 | 2,946 | 3,924 | 1,993 |
| May-11 | 36 | 61 | 95 | 699 | 1,320 | 735 | 3,406 | 4,429 | 1,986 |

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 | 530 |
| 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 | 336 |
| 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 | 438 |
| Jul-10 | 391 |
| Aug-10 | 394 |
| Sep-10 | 345 |
| Oct-10 | 438 |
| Nov-10 | 356 |
| Dec-10 | 310 |
| Jan-11 | 375 |
| Feb-11 | 390 |
| Mar-11 | 408 |
| Apr-11 | 404 |
| May-11 | 439 |

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. The apparent decline also could be associated with an increase in the number of instances where the finding is services provided, child protective services no longer needed.

Counties have some flexibility in whether to use the investigative or the family assessment track. According to policy⁴, the choice of response should be based on the approach that best provides for the child's safety, permanence, and well being. 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.

⁴ 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/>.