Child Welfare Decision-Making Processes: Understanding Screening Practices in Calaveras and Kings Counties

Executive Summary

By

Maria Bravo, MSW

A project
submitted in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Social Work
in the College of Health and Human Services
California State University, Fresno
May 2013

Abstract

Child maltreatment typically comes to the attention of child welfare agencies via telephone hotlines that are staffed by emergency response (ER) workers who must process complex information before deciding whether to refer clients for investigation or to evaluate out reports. It is crucial for decisions in screening practices to be correct as ER workers may overlook existing child maltreatment, and thus fail to ensure children's well-being and safety. Using child welfare decision-making constructs and organizational theoretical concepts as a framework, this study examined child welfare decision-making outcomes that occur when a county receives a child maltreatment referral. This study examined decision-making outcomes in Calaveras and Kings Counties, California, and used secondary data analysis to examine outcomes of child maltreatment referrals. Descriptive results of the study will be discussed.

Problem Statement

The ultimate goal of the child welfare system is to promote and ensure the safety and well-being of all children. Ideally, all reports that constitute child abuse or neglect should be screened in for investigation. However, errors in decision-making are inevitable (Gambrill, 2005). Studies have pointed to the stressful and complex environments in which child welfare decision-making occurs. Screening errors in child welfare, including individual misjudgments and problems with organizational processes, have at times led to severe injury or death of children who have been subjects of maltreatment (Rzepnicki & Johnson, 2005). Such screening errors are sometimes manifested in evaluated out reports of child maltreatment. In the U.S., child fatalities due to maltreatment encompass about 1,200 per year (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2002). As supported by Rzepnicki and Johnson (2005), when the child welfare system fails to accomplish its goal of safeguarding the well-being of children, this

problem is intensified. The unintended consequences that result when high-risk reports of child maltreatment are evaluated out can lead to public turmoil, private distress, and a loss in public confidence in child protective services. It is therefore imperative to address the possible harms children reap as a result of inaccurate decisions in current screening practices.

Methodology

This study assessed child welfare decision-making pathways that occur when a county receives a child maltreatment referral. This project examined data from Calaveras and Kings Counties in California. The project was supported by the Calaveras Works and Human Services Agency and Kings County Human Services Agency. This study was guided by the following research questions:

(1) Does Calaveras County have a higher incidence of evaluate-out referrals in comparison to California?

(2) Does Kings County have a higher incidence of evaluate-out referrals in comparison to California?

This study used secondary analysis given that high quality data already existed in publicly available sites. Results were descriptive and explanatory.

Participants included children aged, 0 to 18 years of age, who were brought to the attention of the child welfare system, and whose data and information were entered into a publicly available data base. A data indicator in these data sets reflected whether these children were referred to a child welfare agency in California, and the outcome of the decision as to further investigate the allegation or evaluate out the referral. These children were identified by community members on the basis of suspected child maltreatment. These data reside in an openly available website made public by the Center for Social Science Research (CSSR) at the

University of California at Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services. These data were quarterly extracts from child welfare services (CWS) and case management system (CMS). Children housed in this database formed part of California's aggregate administrative child welfare and foster care data from 1998 to 2012. Additional data for this study was collected from the Children's Research Center (CRC), Combined California Counties Comparison Data Reports. These data were used for this study to explore screening decisions in the child welfare system.

The following variables, from the CSSR, were selected for this study: (1) child maltreatment allegation and substantiation rates, (2) child maltreatment allegations/child count, and (3) recurrence of allegation—assessment only. The first variable of child maltreatment allegation and substantiation provided information regarding the total child population and the amount of children with allegations. The second variable of child maltreatment allegations/child count provided disposition information of child maltreatment allegations. The third variable of recurrence of allegation—assessment only—provided statistics about children who were subjects of a maltreatment allegation during a six-month base time period, and who were subjects of a maltreatment allegation for the second time within 12 months of the first allegation.

Additional variables from the CRC, Combined California Counties Comparison Data Reports, included decision-making outcomes involving the following: (1) Child Welfare Services (CWS)/Case Management System (CMS) screening decision, (2) final Structured Decision Making (SDM) hotline screening decision, (3) SDM hotline screening overrides, (4) SDM safety assessment results, (5) the three most prevalent safety threats in removal households, (5) the three most frequent priority family needs, and (6) the three most frequent child needs.

Results (See Attachment—Data Findings in Tables)

This study found that Calaveras County had a larger percentage of evaluate-out child maltreatment referrals in comparison to the State of California. During the 2010 calendar year, Calaveras evaluated out 30.6 percent of referrals, while California evaluated out 19.1 percent. In 2011, Calaveras evaluated out 31.2 percent of referrals, and California evaluated out 18.9 percent (Table 3).

This study also found that Kings County had a larger percentage of evaluate-out child maltreatment referrals in comparison to California. During the 2010 calendar year, Kings evaluated out 24.8 percent of referrals, while California evaluated out 19.1 percent. In 2011, Kings evaluated out 23.5 percent of referrals, and California evaluated out 18.9 percent (Table 27).

During both of these years, both counties had a larger percentage of evaluate-out child maltreatment referrals in comparison to the State of California.

Discussion of Findings for Calaveras County

Several key findings surfaced from this study. First, data regarding total child population reflects an older child/youth population in Calaveras County than in California (Table 1). Conversely, California's data shows a younger child/youth population than Calaveras. Although California has a younger child/youth population, Calaveras' incidences per 1,000 were greater than the state's, as supported by data around allegation incidence (Table 2). Data around disposition type further demonstrates that in comparison to California, Calaveras County has a higher percentage of evaluate-out child maltreatment referrals (Table 3).

For Calaveras, children in age group 11 to 17 constitute nearly half of the total child population and were the highest for substantiated dispositions in 2010 (40.5%); however,

children aged, 0 to 5, were the highest in 2011 (36.9%) (Table 4). Although older children are disproportionately represented in Calaveras, allegations of children aged, 0 to 5, were in close proximity to substantiations of children aged, 11 to 17 (Table 4). Similarly, even though California's child population for age group, 11 to 17, is also larger than children in age group, 0 to 5, substantiation dispositions were likewise prevalent among the younger age group of children during both calendar years (Table 4). Given that children in age group, 11 to 17, constitute the highest percentages of evaluated out dispositions by at least 43.6 percent in Calaveras and California (Table 5), it is possible that child maltreatment allegations for older children may be more difficult to substantiate than those of younger children.

Data regarding disposition type by allegation type shows increased percentages of general neglect allegations within substantiated, inconclusive, unfounded, and evaluated out dispositions (Tables 8 through 11). Cases of general neglect had the most frequency and percentage amounts of all disposition types in Calaveras and California, which is consistent nationally and throughout the state that higher numbers of general neglect allegations come to the attention of child welfare agencies.

Just like with allegations of general neglect, allegations which were made by professional reporters—law enforcement/legal, counselor/therapist, CWS staff, medical, education, or other professional—constituted the largest percentage amounts of all disposition types for both, Calaveras and California (Tables 12 through 15). Professionals are the highest for all categories, including evaluate-out dispositions, which may not be surprising, given they are mandated reporters and required by law to report suspicions of child maltreatment. They also are professional groups who come into contact with families, and have perceptions and concerns about their observations concerning these families.

Recurrence of Allegations – Assessment Only shows that although most allegations had no recurrence, evaluated out recurrence dispositions were more prominent in Calaveras County than in California (Tables 16 and 17). Of the total recurrence dispositions, substantiated recurrences only comprised a small percentage in both, Calaveras and California with an average of 8.4 percent in Calaveras and 6.1 percent in California.

Data from the CRC shows decision pathways associated with evaluated out screening decisions of child maltreatment referrals for Calaveras County. Based on data from the Child Welfare Services (CWS)/Case Management System (CMS), Calaveras evaluated out 39.2 percent of child maltreatment referrals in 2010, and 38.5 percent in 2011 (Table 18). Data around the final SDM hotline screenings show that Calaveras evaluated out 29.9 percent of referrals in 2010, and 23.8 percent in 2011 (Table 19). Data around SDM hotline screening overrides show that 11.4 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out in 2010; while in 2011, 6 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out (Table 20).

SDM safety assessment results for Calaveras County show that most child maltreatment referrals resulted in no safety threats: 72.6 percent in 2010 and 69.7 percent in 2011, followed by in-home services (15.9% in 2010 and 16.6% in 2011), and removal/placement (11.5% in 2010 and 13.8% in 2011) (Table 21). The three most prevalent threats identified in removal households in Calaveras County consisted of (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) caregiver substance abuse, and (3) failure to protect and hazardous living conditions (Table 22). Based on this data, it is possible that prevalent threats may be relational. Chuang, Wells, Bellettiere, and Cross (2013) indicate that substance use significantly increases the risk of child maltreatment. This child maltreatment may be manifested in the threats identified in Calaveras' removals. Data in regard to these prevalent threats suggest that it is possible for the identified family

characteristics to be associated with higher rates of substantiations, given that removal possibly occurred, in part, due to these threats.

Additionally, the most frequent priority family needs identified in Calaveras included the following: (1) mental health/coping skills, (2) substance abuse/use, and (3) parenting skills (Table 23). These family needs suggest that mental health issues and or/substance abuse may be intimately interconnected to coping skills and parenting skills. As supported by a study conducted by Chuang et al. (2013), the most serious type of alleged maltreatment associated with children with substance abusing caregivers was neglect, which constituted lack of supervision or failure to provide for the child's needs. Lack of supervision and failure to provide for the child's needs might require both, coping skills and parenting skills as part of intervention. Furthermore, during 2010, the most frequent child needs in the county included (1) family relationships, (2) emotional/behavioral, and (3) peer/adult social relationships (Table 24). In 2011, the same child needs were identified, with the addition of education, which tied the need for peer/adult social relationships (Table 24). This uncovers a possible relationship between family needs and child needs: it is possible that substance abuse or mental health issues may create barriers for family relationships, emotional or behavioral support, education, and peer or adult social relationships.

Discussion of Findings for Kings County

Data regarding total child population for Kings County shows a nearly equal majority of children belonging to age groups, 0 to 5 (35.9% in 2010 and 36.1% in 2011), and 11 to 17 (37.3% in 2010 and 37% in 2011) (Table 25). This reflects a more proportionate population of younger and older children in Kings County. On the other hand, California's data shows an overall older child population than Kings County. Kings County's allegation incidences per 1,000 children are slightly greater than those of California (Table 26). Data around disposition

type further demonstrates that in comparison to California, Kings County also has a higher percentage of evaluate-out referrals (Table 27).

Although children aged, 11 to 17, constitute the majority of the total child population, next to children aged, 0 to 5, substantiated dispositions were disproportionately higher among the younger children (54% in 2010 and 53.9% in 2010) than among the older children (23.3% in 2010 and 21.3% in 2011) (Table 28). Similarly, even though California's child population for age group, 11 to 17, is also larger than children in age group, 0 to 5, substantiation dispositions were likewise prevalent among the younger age group of children during both calendar years (Table 28). Evaluated out dispositions were also higher for children aged, 11 to 17, in both, Kings County and California (Table 31). Based on these findings, it is possible that a young age may be indicative of higher perceived risks of child maltreatment. In other words, children within the ages of 0 to 5 appear to be associated to higher vulnerability of maltreatment than older children.

Data regarding disposition type by allegation type shows increased percentages of general neglect allegations within substantiated, inconclusive, unfounded, and evaluated out dispositions (Tables 32 through 35). Cases of general neglect had the most frequency and percentage amounts of all disposition types in Calaveras and California, which is consistent nationally and throughout the state that higher numbers of general neglect allegations come to the attention of child welfare agencies.

Just like with allegations of general neglect, allegations which were made by professional reporters—law enforcement/legal, counselor/therapist, CWS staff, medical, education, or other professional—constituted the largest percentage amounts of all disposition types for both, Kings and California (Tables 36 through 39). Professionals are the highest for all categories, including evaluate out dispositions, which is not surprising, given they are mandated reporters and required

by law to report suspicions of child maltreatment. They also are professional groups who come into contact with families, and have perceptions and concerns about their observations concerning these families.

 Recurrence of Allegations – Assessment Only shows that although most allegations had no recurrence, California had a higher percentage of evaluated out recurrence dispositions than Kings County (Tables 40 and 41). Of the total recurrence dispositions, substantiated recurrences only comprised a small percentage in both, Kings and California, with an average of 7.9 percent in Kings and 9.7 percent in California.

Data from the CRC shows decision pathways associated with evaluated out screening decisions of child maltreatment referrals for Kings County. Based on data from the Child Welfare Services (CWS)/Case Management System (CMS), Kings evaluated out 41.3 percent of child maltreatment referrals in 2010, and 40.7 percent in 2011 (Table 42). Data around the final SDM hotline screenings show that Kings evaluated out 41.2 percent of referrals in 2010, and 38.1 percent in 2011 (Table 43). Data around SDM hotline screening overrides show that 0.2 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out in 2010; while in 2011, 3.8 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out (Table 44).

SDM safety assessment results for Kings County show that most child maltreatment referrals resulted in no safety threats: 77.4 percent in 2010 and 81.1 percent in 2011, followed by in-home services (14.7% in 2010 and 11.4% in 2011), and removal/placement (7.9% in 2010 and 7.5% in 2011) (Table 45). During the 2010 calendar year, the three most prevalent threats identified in removal households in Kings County consisted of (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) failure to protect, and (3) previous maltreatment (Table 46). In 2011, these prevalent threats shifted to (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) caregiver substance abuse, and (3)

failure to protect (Table 46). In 2011, the threat of previous maltreatment was replaced by caregiver substance abuse.

On the other hand, the most frequent priority family needs identified in Kings included the following: (1) parenting skills, (2) substance abuse/use, and (3) mental health/coping skills (Table 47). These family needs suggest that mental health issues and or/substance abuse may be intimately interconnected to coping skills and parenting skills. As supported by a study conducted by Chuang et al. (2013), the most serious type of alleged maltreatment associated with children with substance abusing caregivers was neglect, which constituted lack of supervision or failure to provide for the child's needs. Lack of supervision and failure to provide for the child's needs might require both, coping skills and parenting skills as part of intervention.

During the years 2010 and 2011, the most frequent child needs in the county included (1) education, (2) emotional/behavioral, and (3) family relationships (Table 48). This uncovers a possible relationship between family needs and child needs: it is possible that substance abuse or mental health issues may create barriers for education, emotional or behavioral support, and family relationships.

Policy Implications

Ideally, all reports that constitute child abuse or neglect should be screened in for investigation. As the outcomes of children maltreatment reports depends largely on the decisions of child welfare officials, it is important to consider the factors that drive, influence, and affect these decisions to improve effectiveness of screening practices in child welfare. Findings from this study suggest that there is a need to further evaluate ER practice and policies to examine whether screening decisions are being made correctly.

The present study further examines how key features of human experiences may influence decisions in screening practices. It pays particular attention to the factors contributing to substantiated and evaluated out dispositions of child maltreatment allegations. Findings derived from this study indicate that it is important for child welfare agencies to further examine how such features of human experience can influence family involvement with child protective services (CPS), or responses to CPS intervention. Increased understanding might strengthen child maltreatment prevention and intervention efforts to reduce the unintended consequences that result from evaluating out legitimate reports of child abuse or neglect.

DATA FINDINGS IN TABLES
(Tables located in Master's Project by Maria Bravo)

List of Tables for Calaveras County

1.　Total Child Population
   - Children aged, 11 to 17, were the largest child population in both, Calaveras County (46.8%) and California (40.2%).

2.　Allegations: Incidence per 1,000
   - The allegation rate was highest for children aged, 0 to 5, and lowest among children aged, 6 to 10, in Calaveras and California.
   - Calaveras's incidences per 1, 000 are greater than the state's.

3.　Disposition Type
   - The leading disposition type in Calaveras County was evaluated out. In California, it was unfounded.
   - In comparison to California, Calaveras had a larger percentage (31.2%) of evaluated out dispositions than California (19.1%).

4.　Substantiated Dispositions by Age Group
   - In 2010, substantiated dispositions were most common among children aged, 11 to 17. In 2011, there was a shift, as substantiated dispositions became most common among children aged, 0 to 5.

5.　Inconclusive Dispositions by Age Group
   - Inconclusive dispositions were most common among children aged, 0 to 5, in both Calaveras and California.
   - Inconclusive dispositions were least common among the 11 to 17 age group in Calaveras, and the 6 to 10 age group in California.

6.　Unfounded Dispositions by Age Group
   - Unfounded dispositions were highest among children aged, 11 to 17, and lowest among children aged, 6 to 10 in both, Calaveras and California.

7.　Evaluated Out Dispositions by Age Group
   - In 2010, Calaveras had a smaller percentage of evaluated out dispositions than California for age group, 0 to 5. In 2011, Calaveras had a larger percentage of evaluated out dispositions than California for the age group, 0 to 5.
   - For age group, 6 to 10, Calaveras had a smaller percentage of evaluated out dispositions than California during both years.

8.	Substantiated Dispositions by Allegation Type
- Substantiated dispositions were highest among allegations of general neglect for both, Calaveras and California.
- Substantiated dispositions were lowest among allegations of sexual abuse in Calaveras, and among allegations of severe neglect in California.

9.	Inconclusive Dispositions by Allegation Type
- (See Table 11)

10.	Unfounded Dispositions by Allegation Type
- (See Table 11)

11.	Evaluated Out Dispositions by Allegation Type
- Inconclusive (Table 9), unfounded (Table 10), and evaluated out (Table 11) dispositions were highest among allegations of general neglect, and lowest among allegations of severe neglect in both, Calaveras and California.

12.	Substantiated Dispositions by Reporter Type
- (See Table 15)

13.	Inconclusive Dispositions by Reporter Type
- (See Table 15)

14.	Unfounded Dispositions by Reporter Type
- (See Table 15)

15.	Evaluated Out Dispositions by Reporter Type
- Allegations made by professional reporters accounted for the highest percentages of substantiated (Table 12), inconclusive (Table 13), unfounded (Table 14), and evaluated out (Table 15) dispositions in Calaveras and California.
- Allegations made by para-professional reporters had the lowest percentages of all disposition types in both, Calaveras and California.

16.	Recurrence of Allegations-Assessment Only for Calaveras County
- The majority of allegations resulted in no recurrence for Calaveras, followed by inconclusive and assessment only/evaluated out. The least common recurrence disposition types were substantiated and unfounded.

17.	Recurrence of Allegations-Assessment Only for California
- The majority of allegations resulted in no recurrence for California, followed by unfounded.
- Evaluated out recurrence dispositions were more prominent in Calaveras than in California.

18. CWS/CMS Screening Decision for Calaveras County
    - Calaveras accepted over 60 percent of screenings, and evaluated out close 40 percent of screenings during 2010 and 2011.

19. Final SDM Hotline Screening Decision for Calaveras County
    - Calaveras evaluated out 29.9 percent of referrals in 2010, and 23.8 percent in 2011.

20. SDM Hotline Screening Overrides for Calaveras County
    - 11.4 percent and 6 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

21. SDM Safety Assessment Results for Calaveras County
    - Most child maltreatment referrals resulted in no safety threats: 72.6 percent in 2010 and 69.7 percent in 2011, followed by in-home services (15.9% in 2010 and 16.6% in 2011), and removal/placement (11.5% in 2010 and 13.8% in 2011).

22. Most Prevalent Threats Identified in Removal Households in Calaveras County
    - The three most prevalent threats identified in removal households consisted of (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) caregiver substance abuse, and (3) failure to protect and hazardous living conditions.

23. Most Frequent Priority Family Needs in Calaveras County
    - The most frequent priority family needs identified included the following: (1) mental health/coping skills, (2) substance abuse/use, and (3) parenting skills.

24. Most Frequent Child Needs in Calaveras County
    - In 2010, the most frequent child needs in the county included (1) family relationships, (2) emotional/behavioral, and (3) peer/adult social relationships. In 2011, the same child needs were identified, with the addition of education, which tied the need for peer/adult social relationships

List of Tables for Kings County

25. Total Child Population
    - Children aged, 11 to 17, were the largest child population in both, Kings County (37%) and California (40.2%).

26. Allegations: Incidence per 1,000
    - The allegation rate was highest for children aged, 0 to 5, and lowest among children aged, 6 to 10, in Kings County and California.
    - Kings County's allegation incidences per 1,000 children are slightly greater than the state's.

27. Disposition Type
   - The most common disposition type in Kings and California was unfounded.
   - In comparison to California, Kings had a larger percentage (23.5%) of evaluated out dispositions than California (18.9%).

28. Substantiated Dispositions by Age Group
   - Substantiated dispositions were most common among children aged, 0 to 5, in both, Kings and California.

29. Inconclusive Dispositions by Age Group
   - Inconclusive dispositions were most common among children aged, 0 to 5, in both, Kings and California.
   - During 2011, inconclusive dispositions were least common among children aged, 11 to 17, in Kings and among children aged, 6 to 10, in California.

30. Unfounded Dispositions by Age Group
   - Unfounded dispositions were highest among children aged, 0 to 5, in Kings County, and among children aged, 11 to 17, in California.
   - In 2011, unfounded dispositions were lowest among children aged 11 to 17 in Kings, and among children aged, 6 to 10, in California.

31. Evaluated Out Dispositions by Age Group
   - Kings County had more evaluated out dispositions than California for age group, 0 to 5 during 2010 and 2011, and for age group, 6 to 10 in 2010.
   - Kings also had fewer evaluated out dispositions than California for age groups, 6 to 10 in 2011, and 11 to 17 during both years.

32. Substantiated Dispositions by Allegation Type
   - Substantiated dispositions were highest among allegations of general neglect in both, Kings County and California.
   - Substantiated dispositions were lowest among allegations of emotional abuse in Kings, and among allegations of severe neglect in California.

33. Inconclusive Dispositions by Allegation Type
   - Inconclusive dispositions were highest among allegations of general neglect in both, Kings and California.
   - Inconclusive dispositions were lowest among allegations of severe neglect in 2010, and among allegations of caretaker absence/incapacity in 2011 in both, Kings and California.

34. Unfounded Dispositions by Allegation Type
   - (See Table 35)

35. Evaluated Out Dispositions by Allegation Type
   - Unfounded (Table 34) and evaluated out (Table 35) dispositions were highest among allegations of general neglect, and lowest among allegations of severe neglect in both, Kings and California.

36. Substantiated Dispositions by Reporter Type
   - (See Table 39)

37. Inconclusive Dispositions by Reporter Type
   - (See Table 39)

38. Unfounded Dispositions by Reporter Type
   - (See Table 39)

39. Evaluated Out Dispositions by Reporter Type
   - Allegations made by professional reporters accounted for the highest percentages of substantiated (Table 36), inconclusive (Table 37), unfounded (Table 38), and evaluated out (Table 39) dispositions in Kings and California.
   - Allegations made by para-professional reporters had the lowest percentages of all disposition types in both, Kings and California.

40. Recurrence of Allegations-Assessment Only for Kings County
   - The majority of allegations resulted in no recurrence for Kings, followed by unfounded and inconclusive. The least common recurrence disposition type was substantiated.

41. Recurrence of Allegations-Assessment Only for California
   - The majority of allegations resulted in no recurrence for California, followed by unfounded.
   - Evaluated out recurrence dispositions were more prominent in California than in Kings.

42. CWS/CMS Screening Decision for Kings County
   - Kings evaluated out 41.3 percent of child maltreatment referrals in 2010, and 40.7 percent in 2011.

43. Final SDM Hotline Screening Decision for Kings County
   - Kings evaluated out 41.2 percent of referrals in 2010, and 38.1 percent in 2011.

44. SDM Hotline Screening Overrides for Kings County
   - 0.2 percent and 3.8 percent of screenings had an override to evaluate out in 2010 and 2011, respectively.

45. SDM Safety Assessment Results for Kings County
- Most child maltreatment referrals resulted in no safety threats: 77.4 percent in 2010 and 81.1 percent in 2011, followed by in-home services (14.7% in 2010 and 11.4% in 2011), and removal/placement (7.9% in 2010 and 7.5% in 2011).

46. Most Prevalent Threats Identified in Removal Households in Kings County
- In 2010, the three most prevalent threats identified in removal households consisted of (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) failure to protect, and (3) previous maltreatment.
- In 2011, these prevalent threats shifted to (1) child immediate needs not met, (2) caregiver substance abuse, and (3) failure to protect.

47. Most Frequent Priority Family Needs in Kings County
- The most frequent priority family needs identified in Kings included the following: (1) parenting skills, (2) substance abuse/use, and (3) mental health/coping skills.

48. Most Frequent Child Needs in Kings County
- The most frequent child needs in the county included (1) education, (2) emotional/behavioral, and (3) family relationships

References

Combined California Counties Comparison Data. (2011, 2012). The Structured Decision Making

    System Case Management in Child Welfare Services Case Management Report.

    Children's Research Center.

Children's Research Center. (2012). NCCD. *National Council on Crime and Delinquency*.

    Retrieved from http://www.nccdglobal.org/what-we-do/children-s-research-center

Chuang, E. , Wells, R. , Bellettiere, J. , & Cross, T. (2013). Identifying the substance abuse

    treatment needs of caregivers involved with child welfare. *Journal of Substance Abuse

    Treatment*, *45*(1), 118.

Gambrill, E. (2005). Decision making in child welfare: Errors and their context. *Children

    and Youth Services Review*, *27*(4), 347-352.

Rzepnicki, T. , & Johnson, P. (2005). Examining decision errors in child protection: A

    new application of root cause analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *27*(4), 393-

    407.