

AN EXAMINATION OF DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES AND PATHWAY OF  
OUTCOMES FOR CHILD MALTREATMENT REFERRALS IN MADERA COUNTY

Executive Summary

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

Existing literature suggests that there are many barriers that contribute to problematic decision making in child welfare practice, such as worker's knowledge and bias, the agency's culture, and client engagement. There is a large amount of research regarding child welfare practice, yet the research on decision making processes are limited, inconsistent, and lacking in structure. This study sought to provide descriptive findings to administrators, policy makers, and practitioners, so that they may gain a better understanding of decision making processes in front-line child welfare work. Subjects for this study were primarily children in Madera County and California who are between 0 to 17 years of age, who have come to the attention of the Child Welfare System for maltreatment. This study was executed using secondary data from the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) database and the Children's Research Center (CRC) SDM Combined California Counties Comparison Data reports. The study identifies the various pathways of decision making in front-line child welfare work. This study found more children are being removed and placed in out-of-home care reversing a previous downward trend, referrals are being evaluated out less often, and there is a substantial increase in the number of allegations that are determined unfounded at disposition since 2009.

## *Problem Statement*

Everyday child welfare workers face the task of making decisions that greatly effect family's lives. In the past, the decision-making process was done with much uncertainty and no uniformity. Presently, there are decision-making tools to assist child welfare workers with this process. These tools are based on predictive factors that are proven to be associated with child maltreatment. Although this is a great improvement from past decision-making methods, decision making tools are still vulnerable to error and could impair a worker's capacity for good decision making, which may further child endangerment. One of these decisions is evaluating-out a child maltreatment referral made to child welfare services. This decision presents itself at the front-end of the child welfare process; the individual reporting the suspected abuse calls the agency and a referral is developed. The level of risk is then evaluated through a decision-making model and if the level is low or non-existent, it is usually evaluated out. If the decision to evaluate-out a referral is made, an in-person investigation of the suspected maltreatment does not occur.

The problem is that there are other factors that may be associated with the decision-making processes in child welfare. If a decision to evaluate-out a referral is not accurate the worker may overlook an opportunity to remove a child from a situation where child maltreatment may be present and potentially put the child at further risk. Current literature suggests that there are a number of barriers that contribute to problematic decision-making in child welfare practice. Gambrill, E. (1997).

In their daily work, child welfare workers are expected to exercise well-informed and consistent judgments in order to protect vulnerable children. And yet, too often the caseworker is called upon to untangle complex and emotionally difficult situations with limited information, time, administrative support, and resources (Kim, Brooks, Hansung, & Nissly, 2008). These conditions can impair a caseworker's capacity for good decision making and unfortunately, the consequences for poor decision

making can lead to unnecessarily broken families, and in the worst case scenarios, further child endangerment and death (Drury-Hudson, J. 1999).

### *Methodology*

This study was executed using secondary data from the Center for Social Services Research (CSSR) and the National Council on Crime and Delinquency's (NCCD) Children's Research Center (CRC). Research subjects were children in California who were between the ages of 0 to 17, who had come to the attention of the Child Welfare System for maltreatment and had been removed from their primary caretaker. An inclusion criterion for this study included children who were involved in the child welfare system and whose allegations had been evaluated and assessed by child welfare workers. The secondary data was analyzed to explore the potential indicators of decision making processes in child welfare and the differential responses to child maltreatment referrals by child welfare services.

### *Findings*

Within the past four years, Madera County has seen a number of changes in regards to population, child maltreatment referrals, practice decisions to evaluate-out referrals, and the most prevalent needs of children and families.

- Since 2009, Madera County has seen a decrease in total child population (Table 1).
- Allegations of child maltreatment have risen slightly, even among children who fall into age groups where their population is in decline (Table 2).
- There is a consistent decline in the number of child maltreatment referrals that are being evaluated out and overridden to be evaluated out (Table 3, Table 13 and Table 15).
- Since 2009, there has been an increase in the number of child maltreatment referrals that at disposition, were determined unfounded (Table 3).

- Since 2010, the majority of child maltreatment referrals reported and substantiated by Madera County Department of Social Services have been allegations of general neglect and sexual abuse (Table 5).
- General neglect and sexual abuse were evaluated out more frequently from 2009 through 2011 (Table 5).
- Rates of substantiated allegations are higher when professionals submit a referral to Madera County Department of Social Services (Table 6).
- Child maltreatment referrals made by professionals are also evaluated out at a higher rate compared to other reporter types (Table 6).
- Child maltreatment referrals made by professionals that include allegations of emotional abuse have significantly risen since 2012 (Table 9).
- Total child maltreatment referrals made by paraprofessionals saw a significant decline between 2009 and 2012 (Table 6) and non-professionals have reported more instances of physical, sexual and emotional abuse since 2009 (Table 9).
- Madera County's percentage of allegations for general neglect was slightly higher compared to that of California (Table 7).
- Madera County seems to have a somewhat higher percentage in recurrence of maltreatment compared to California (Table 11 and 12).
- Between 2011 and 2012, the decision to screen in a referral for local protocol increased by more than half (Table 14).
- With the use of the SDM safety assessment, about fifty percent more children were removed from their home in 2012 from the previous year (Table 16).

- From data collected at assessment, it is reported that the largest growing safety threat in Madera County is caretaker substance abuse (Table 17).
- Family's needs have shifted since 2011, leaving substance abuse services at the forefront in 2012 (Table 18).

### *Discussion*

The results from this study indicate that there is a consistent decline in the number of referrals that are being evaluated out, and overridden to be evaluated out, in Madera County since 2009. As evaluated out referrals of child maltreatment are consistently declining, allegations that are determined unfounded at disposition, have risen. Again, allegations determined to be unfounded at disposition, have shown a lack of sufficient or legitimate evidence needed to conclude that a child experienced maltreatment. The decline in evaluated out referrals since 2009 could be reflective of the practice that is now being implemented at Madera Child Welfare Services in 2012. The agency may be more cautious in its referral intake process, in that, more referrals are being investigated and determined unfounded rather than evaluated out without an investigation of the allegations. This finding could mean that the agency is taking the more precautions to insure that any form of child maltreatment is not occurring.

Total referrals made by paraprofessionals saw a significant decline between 2009 and 2012. This decline is present in all allegation types reported by paraprofessionals. Non-professionals reported more instances of physical and sexual abuse since 2009. Allegations of abuse that is more palpable, such as sexual and physical abuse, may be easier to report for individuals who are not aware of other types of maltreatment, including emotional abuse, neglect and caretaker incapacity. This coincides with Gambrell's (1997) premise that limited information could be a barrier to good decision making.

Referrals made by professionals that include allegations of emotional abuse have significantly risen by 74% since 2009. According to the SDM decision making tool and the screening criteria for emotional abuse, children who have come to the attention of child welfare services due to their parent's use of illegal drugs, are considered children who have been emotionally abused. In comparison to the state, Madera County has a slightly higher rate of emotional abuse allegations, which may indicate that the county may be facing an increased rate of caretaker's who use illegal substances and come to the attention of child welfare services. This is also supported in the data retrieved from CRC; according to data collected at assessment, it is reported that the largest growing safety threat in Madera County is caretaker substance abuse. Family's needs have also shifted since 2011, leaving substance abuse services at the forefront in 2012.

Madera County seems to have a somewhat higher percentage in recurrence of maltreatment compared to California. Madera accounts for .5% of California's total child population. In 2001, Fluke, Edwards, Bussey, Wells, and Johnson, (2001) stated the recurrence of indicated maltreatment for at-risk youth in California was significantly reduced (28.6%) following the implementation of the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) and thereafter for the next two years. CERAP is similar to SDM, in that it is designed to provide workers with a tool to assess the potential for moderate to severe harm to children in the near future. There may be other factors that contribute to the recurrence of maltreatment even with the implementation of SDM that are specific to the region such as high poverty, high unemployment and drug use. It is then suggested that the recurrence of maltreatment should be examined in the context of SDM to identify the contributing factors.

On the other hand, in the same study, Fluke et al., (2001) also hypothesized that a drop in recurrence might be due to increased use of out-of-home placement early on in the investigation, rather than as a result of safety planning. This study found that, according to SDM safety assessment results,

about fifty percent more children were removed from their home between 2011 and 2012 in Madera County. Therefore the increased rates of recurrence of maltreatment often result in increased removal.

Although the findings from this study did not allow for a clearer understanding as to why the average rates of substantiated recurrence of maltreatment is slightly higher in Madera County compared to the state, they do lead to a hypothesis presented earlier in this study, through the works of Stokes, J., Schmidt, G. (2012). According to Stokes et al., (2012) no matter what emphasis is made on utilizing a risk assessment tool, social worker's placement decisions are largely influenced by their experience and personal values. Similarly, Rossi, P.H., Schuerman, J., Budde, S. (December 1999) found that both novice and seasoned child welfare workers place a great deal of weight on cases where there were prior complaint records. Similarly, Stokes et al., (2012) state no matter what emphasis is made on utilizing a risk assessment tool, social worker's placement decisions are largely influenced by their experience and personal values, which may a larger role in subsequent child maltreatment referrals.

### *Policy Implications*

This research may potentially benefit the community served by Madera County Child Welfare Services, in that the agency has a better understanding of the decision making pathways taking place in the agency. For example, the availability of substance abuse services should also be considered in Madera County as it seems that the rise in allegations of emotional abuse and the needs of family's and children's in the community are largely centered on illegal substance abuse.

This study contributes to the existing knowledge of decision making processes and it could possibly influence further research in this topic area. Madera County will benefit from further research along with surrounding counties in the San Joaquin Valley as their demographics may reflect similar characteristics. This research could potentially benefit children and child welfare agencies alike in that it



could affirm current best practices or influence the adoption of a best practice model that will increase the efficiency of decision making processes.

County administrators should use the results of this study to further explore the extent that substance abuse has on the involvement of child welfare in the families of Madera County and its neighboring counties. Research that specifically identifies the extent to which substance abuse plays a role in child welfare involvement with families could provide county administrators with the evidence they need to rationalize the provision of more substance abuse services. If counties are able to tailor service provisions to meet the current needs of their clients then healthier, educated, and more self-efficient communities could develop.

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Table 1

## Total Child Population

Age Group	Madera County				California
	JAN2009- DEC2009	JAN2010- DEC2010	JAN2011- DEC2011	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2012- DEC2012
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<b>0-5</b>	14,353 (33.3)	14,404 (33.5)	14,331 (33.6)	14,117 (33.6)	3,027,523 (33)
<b>6-10</b>	11,673 (27.1)	11,727 (27.3)	11,754 (27.6)	11,729 (27.9)	2,492,024 (27.2)
<b>11-17</b>	17,118 (39.7)	16,766 (39)	16,521 (38.8)	16,191 (38.5)	3,650,978 (39.8)
<b>Total</b>	43,143 (100)	42,995 (100)	42,605 (100)	42,036 (100)	9,170,526 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 2

California Child Population (0-17) and Children with Child Maltreatment Allegations:  
Incidences per 1,000 children

Age Group	Madera County		California
	JAN2011- DEC2011	JAN2012- DEC2012	JAN2012- DEC2012
	Per 1,000	Per 1,000	Per 1,000
<b>Under 1</b>	87.8	77.4	64.5
<b>1-2</b>	65.4	67.2	52.4
<b>3-5</b>	71.9	81.7	58.1
<b>6-10</b>	69.9	70.7	55.6
<b>11-15</b>	56.9	66.9	49.9
<b>16-17</b>	56.4	57.5	43.2
<b>Total</b>	65.7	70.0	53.1

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 3

Disposition Type; Children with one or more Allegations

Disposition Type	Madera County				California
	JAN 2009- DEC 2009	JAN 2010- DEC 2010	JAN 2011- DEC 2011	JAN 2012- DEC 2012	JAN 2012- DEC 2012
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<b>Substantiated</b>	508 (18.7)	442 (16)	390 (14)	493 (18)	81,764 (17.4)
<b>Inconclusive</b>	406 (15)	456 (16)	340 (12)	417 (14)	80,241 (17.1)
<b>Unfounded</b>	1,030 (38)	1,074 (38)	1,630 (58)	1,554 (56)	208,047 (44.3)
<b>Evaluate Out</b>	766 (28.3)	851 (30)	439 (16)	327 (12)	99,370 (21.2)
<b>Total</b>	2,710 (100)	2,823 (100)	2,799 (100)	2,791 (100)	469,422 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 4

## Disposition Type by Age Group

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Disposition Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012</b>
		<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
<b>0-5</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	229 (45.1)	174 (39.4)	176 (45.1)	217 (44)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	352 (34.2)	356 (33.1)	597 (36.6)	532 (34.2)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	151 (37.2)	174 (38.2)	125 (36.8)	170 (40.8)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	217 (28.3)	253 (29.7)	141 (32.1)	95 (29.1)
<b>6-10</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	129 (25.4)	100 (22.6)	90 (23.1)	120 (24.4)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	320 (31)	305 (28.4)	515 (31.6)	457 (29.4)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	104 (25.6)	121 (26.5)	95 (27.9)	114 (27.3)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	196 (25.6)	225 (26.4)	122 (27.8)	89 (27.2)
<b>11-17</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	150 (29.5)	168 (38)	124 (31.8)	156 (31.6)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	358 (34.8)	413 (38.5)	518 (31.8)	565 (36.4)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	151 (37.2)	161 (35.3)	120 (35.3)	133 (31.9)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	353 (46.1)	373 (43.8)	176 (40.1)	143 (43.7)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	508 (100)	442 (100)	390 (100)	493 (100)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	1,030 (100)	1,074 (100)	1,630 (100)	1,554 (100)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	406 (100)	456 (100)	340 (100)	417 (100)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	766 (100)	851 (100)	439 (100)	327 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 5

## Disposition Type by Allegation Type

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Allegation Type</b>	<b>Disposition Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012 n (%)</b>
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	44 (9.1)	48 (10.9)	51 (13.1)	64 (13)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	39 (3.9)	45 (4.2)	102 (6.3)	129 (8.3)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	45 (11.1 )	42 (9.2)	29 (8.5)	41 (10)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	118 (15.5)	149 (17.5)	78 (17.8)	53 (16.2)
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	33 (6.8)	35 (7.9)	33 (8.5)	41 (8.3)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	180 (17.8)	205 (19.1)	292 (17.9)	300 (19.3)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	36 (8.9)	48 (10.5)	46 (13.5)	59 (14.2)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	113 (14.8)	120 (14.1)	65 (14.8)	58 (17.7)
<b>Severe Neglect</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	6 (1.2)	6 (1.4)	10 (2.6)	12 (2.4)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	9 (.9)	1 (.09)	9 (.6)	13 (.8)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	2 (.5)	1 (.2)	2 (.6)	0 (0)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	3 (.4)	1 (.1)	3 (.7)	0 (0)
<b>General Neglect</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	317 (65.2)	287 (64.9)	229 (58.7)	313 (63.5)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	628 (62.2)	635 (59.1)	861 (52.9)	742 (47.7)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	269 (66.4)	318 (69.7)	221 (65)	211 (50.7)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	494 (64.8)	494 (58)	225 (51.3)	170 (52)
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	1 (.2)	7 (1.6)	7 (1.8)	12 (2.4)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	28 (2.8)	38 (3.5)	120 (7.4)	117 (7.5)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	27 (6.7)	28 (6.1)	24 (7.1)	82 (19.7)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	15 (2)	58 (6.8)	45 (10.3)	37 (11.3)
<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	34 (7)	29 (6.6)	28 (7.2)	27 (5.5)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	9 (.9)	13 (1.2)	33 (2)	15 (1)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	2 (.5)	3 (.7)	3 (.9)	4 (1)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	9 (1.2)	7 (.8)	13 (3)	2 (.6)
<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	51 (10.5)	30 (6.8)	32 (8.2)	24 (5)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	116 (11.5)	137 (12.8)	211 (13)	238 (15.3)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	24 (5.9)	16 (3.5)	15 (4.4)	19 (4.6)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	10 (1.3)	22 (2.6)	10 (2.3)	7 (2.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	486 (100)	442 (100)	390 (100)	493 (100)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	1,009 (100)	1,074 (100)	1,628 (100)	1,554 (100)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	405 (100)	456 (100)	340 (100)	416 (100)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	762 (100)	851 (100)	439 (100)	327 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 6

## Disposition Type by Reporter Type

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Reporter Type</b>	<b>Disposition Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012 n (%)</b>
<b>Non-Professional</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	11 (2.2)	25 (5.7)	21 (5.4)	29 (5.8)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	81 (7.9)	109 (10)	199 (12.1)	163 (10.5)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	30 (7.4)	29 (6.4)	44 (12.9)	46 (11.1)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	66 (8.6)	67 (7.9)	51 (11.6)	36 (11)
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	24 (4.7)	7 (1.6)	1 (.3)	1 (.2)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	73 (7.1)	23 (2.1)	9 (.6)	2 (.1)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	39 (9.6)	12 (2.6)	1 (.3)	1 (.2)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	115 (15)	30 (3.5)	1 (.2)	2 (.6)
<b>Professional</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	387 (76.2)	311 (70.4)	295 (75.6)	342 (69.4)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	635 (61.7)	611 (56.9)	101 (62.5)	974 (62.7)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	219 (53.9)	272 (59.6)	208 (61.2)	249 (59.7)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	408 (53.3)	565 (66.4)	294 (67)	222 (67.9)
<b>Other/ Unknown</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	86 (16.9)	99 (22.3)	73 (18.7)	111 (22.5)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	240 (23.3)	331 (30.8)	404 (24.8)	415 (26.7)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	118 (29.1)	143 (31.4)	87 (25.6)	121 (29)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	177 (23.1)	189 (22.2)	93 (21.2)	67 (20.5)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Substantiated</b>	508 (100)	442 (100)	390 (100)	493 (100)
	<b>Unfounded</b>	1,030 (100)	1,074(100)	1,630(100)	1,554(100)
	<b>Inconclusive</b>	406 (100)	456 (100)	340 (100)	417 (100)
	<b>Evaluated Out</b>	766 (100)	851 (100)	439 (100)	327 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.



Table 7

## Allegation Type; Children with one or more Allegations

Allegation Type	Madera County				California
	JAN 2009- DEC 2009	JAN 2010- DEC 2010	JAN 2011- DEC 2011	JAN 2012- DEC 2012	JAN 2012- DEC 2012
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	246 (9.2)	284 (10.1)	260 (9.2)	300 (10.2)	42,133 (8.7)
<b>Physical Abuse</b>	362 (13.6)	408 (14.5)	436 (15.6)	485 (16.5)	94,379 (19.4)
<b>Severe Neglect</b>	20 (.8)	9 (.3)	24 (.9)	25 (.8)	7,498 (1.5)
<b>General Neglect</b>	1,708 (64.2)	1,734 (61.4)	1,536 (54.9)	1,500 (51)	222,366 (45.7)
<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	71 (2.7)	131 (4.6)	196 (7)	281 (9.5)	43,165 (8.9)
<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	54 (2)	52 (1.8)	77 (2.8)	50 (1.7)	8,185 (1.7)
<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	201 (7.5)	205 (7.3)	268 (9.6)	302 (10.3)	69,125 (14.1)
<b>Total</b>	2662 (100)	2823 (100)	2797 (100)	2943 (100)	486,851 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 8

## Allegation Type by Age

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Age</b>	<b>Allegation Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012 n (%)</b>
<b>0-5</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	42 (17.1)	40 (14.1)	67 (25.8)	71 (23.7)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	84 (23.2)	93 (22.8)	105 (24.1)	126 (26)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	16 (80)	7 (77.7)	20 (83.3)	21 (84)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	645 (37.8)	680 (39.2)	635 (41.3)	612 (40.8)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	35 (49.3)	46 (35.1)	74 (37.8)	121 (43.1)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	20 (37)	25 (48.1)	33 (42.9)	12 (24)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	84 (41.8)	66 (32.2)	105 (39.2)	112 (37.1)
<b>6-10</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	57 (23.2)	58 (20.4)	69 (26.5)	76 (25.3)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	110 (30.4)	124 (30.4)	144 (33)	147 (30.3)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	3 (.15)	0 (0)	2 (8.4)	1 (4)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	475 (27.8)	460 (26.5)	448 (29.2)	428 (28.5)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	21 (29.6)	42 (32.1)	57 (29.1)	75 (26.7)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	8 (14.8)	3 (5.8)	19 (24.7)	17 (34)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	66 (32.8)	64 (31.2)	81 (30.2)	85 (28.1)
<b>11-17</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	147 (59.8)	186 (65.5)	124 (47.7)	153 (51)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	168 (46.4)	191 (46.8)	187 (42.9)	212 (43.7)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	1 (.05)	2 (22.2)	1 (4.3)	3 (12)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	588 (34.4)	594 (34.3)	453 (29.5)	460 (30.7)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	15 (21.1)	33 (25.2)	65 (33.2)	85 (30.2)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	26 (48.1)	24 (46.2)	25 (32.5)	21 (42)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	51 (42.9)	75 (36.6)	82 (30.6)	105 (34.8)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	246 (100)	284 (100)	260 (100)	300 (100)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	362 (100)	408 (100)	436 (100)	485 (100)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	20 (100)	9 (100)	24 (100)	25 (100)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	1,708 (100)	1,734 (100)	1,536 (100)	1,500 (100)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	71 (100)	131 (100)	196 (100)	281 (100)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	54 (100)	52 (100)	77 (100)	50 (100)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	201 (100)	205 (100)	268 (100)	302 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 9

## Allegation Type by Reporter Type

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Reporter Type</b>	<b>Allegation Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011 n (%)</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012 n (%)</b>
<b>Non-Professional</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	9 (3.6)	6 (2.1)	24 (9.2)	17 (5.7)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	14 (3.9)	32 (7.8)	45 (10.3)	36 (7.4)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	1 (5)	1 (11.1)	0 (0)	1 (4)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	151 (8.8)	171 (9.9)	214 (13.9)	190 (12.7)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	2 (2.8)	17 (13)	4 (2)	21 (7.5)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	0 (0)	1 (1.9)	7 (9.1)	2 (4)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	7 (3.5)	2 (1)	21 (7.8)	7 (2.3)
<b>Paraprofessional</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	32 (13)	8 (2.8)	0 (0)	1 (.3)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	14 (3.9)	9 (2.2)	4 (.9)	1 (.2)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (4.2)	0 (0)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	174 (10.2)	39 (2.2)	3 (.2)	4 (.3)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	16 (22.5)	10 (7.6)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	11 (5.5)	6 (2.9)	4 (1.5)	2 (.7)
<b>Professional</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	177 (72)	226 (79.6)	186 (71.5)	220 (73.3)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	260 (71.8)	297 (72.8)	305 (70)	345 (71.1)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	15 (75)	7 (77.7)	22 (91.7)	20 (80)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	922 (54)	941 (54.3)	884 (57.6)	820 (54.7)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	38 (53.5)	68 (51.9)	149 (76)	202 (71.9)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	43 (79.6)	34 (65.4)	55 (71.4)	36 (72)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	161 (80.1)	186 (90.7)	214 (79.9)	253 (83.8)
<b>Other/Unknown</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	28 (11.4)	44 (15.5)	50 (19.2)	62 (20.7)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	74 (20.4)	70 (17.2)	82 (18.8)	103 (21.2)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	4 (20)	1 (11.1)	1 (4.2)	4 (16)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	457 (26.8)	583 (33.6)	435 (28.3)	486 (32.4)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	15 (21.1)	36 (27.5)	43 (21.8)	58 (20.6)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	11 (20.4)	17 (32.7)	15 (19.5)	12 (24)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	22 (10.9)	11 (5.4)	29 (10.8)	35 (11.6)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	246 (100)	284 (100)	260 (100)	300 (100)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	362 (100)	408 (100)	436 (100)	485 (100)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	20 (100)	9 (100)	24 (100)	25 (100)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	1,708 (100)	1,734 (100)	1,536 (100)	1,500 (100)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	71 (100)	131 (100)	196 (100)	281 (100)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/Incapacity</b>	54 (100)	52 (100)	77 (100)	50 (100)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	201 (100)	205 (100)	268 (100)	302 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 10

## Allegation by Disposition Type

		<b>Madera County</b>			
<b>Disposition Type</b>	<b>Allegation Type</b>	<b>JAN2009- DEC2009</b>	<b>JAN2010- DEC2010</b>	<b>JAN2011- DEC2011</b>	<b>JAN2012- DEC2012</b>
		<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
<b>Substantiated</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	44 (17.9)	48 (16.9)	51 (19.6)	64 (22.3)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	33 (9.1)	35 (8.6)	33 (7.6)	41 (9)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	6 (30)	6 (66.7)	10 (41.7)	12 (48)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	317 (18.6)	287 (16.6)	229 (14.9)	313 (21.8)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	1 (1.4)	7 (5.3)	7 (3.6)	12 (4.8)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	34 (63)	29 (55.8)	28 (36.4)	27 (56.3)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	51 (25.4)	30 (14.6)	32 (11.9)	24 (8.3)
<b>Unfounded</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	39 (15.9)	45 (15.8)	102 (39.2)	129 (44.9)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	180 (49.7)	205 (50.2)	292 (67)	300 (65.5)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	9 (45)	1 (11.1)	9 (37.5)	13 (52)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	628 (36.8)	635 (36.6)	861 (56.1)	742 (51.7)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	28 (39.4)	38 (29)	120 (61.2)	117 (47.2)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	9 (16.7)	13 (25)	33 (42.9)	15 (31.3)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	116 (57.7)	22 (66.8)	10 (78.7)	7 (2.4)
<b>Inconclusive</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	45 (18.3)	42 (14.8)	29 (11.2)	41 (14.3)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	36 (9.9)	48 (11.8)	46 (10.6)	59 (12.9)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	2 (10)	1 (11.1)	2 (8.3)	0 (0)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	269 (15.7)	318 (18.3)	221 (14.4)	211 (14.7)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	27 (38)	28 (21.4)	24 (12.2)	82 (33.1)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	2 (3.7)	3 (5.8)	3 (3.9)	4 (8.3)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	24 (11.9)	16 (7.8)	15 (5.6)	19 (6.6)
<b>Evaluated Out</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	118 (48)	149 (52.5)	78 (30)	53 (18.5)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	113 (31.2)	120 (29.4)	65 (14.9)	58 (12.7)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	3 (15)	1 (11.1)	3 (12.5)	0 (0)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	494 (28.9)	494 (28.5)	225 (14.6)	170 (11.8)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	15 (21.1)	58 (44.3)	45 (23)	37 (14.9)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	9 (16.7)	7 (13.5)	13 (16.9)	2 (4.2)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	10 (5)	22 (10.7)	10 (3.7)	7 (2.4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>Sexual Abuse</b>	246 (100)	284 (100)	260 (100)	287 (100)
	<b>Physical Abuse</b>	362 (100)	408 (100)	436 (100)	458 (100)
	<b>Severe Neglect</b>	20 (100)	9 (100)	24 (100)	25 (100)
	<b>General Neglect</b>	1,708 (100)	1,734 (100)	1,536 (100)	1,436 (100)
	<b>Emotional Abuse</b>	71 (100)	131 (100)	196 (100)	248 (100)
	<b>Caretaker Absence/ Incapacity</b>	54 (100)	52 (100)	77 (100)	48 (100)
	<b>At Risk, Sibling Abused</b>	201 (100)	205 (100)	268 (100)	288 (100)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 11

## Recurrence of Allegation-Assessment Only; Madera County

<b>Madera County</b>						
<b>Recurrence of Disposition within 12 months</b>	<b>Jan2009- Jun2009</b>	<b>Jul2009- Dec2009</b>	<b>Jan2010- Jun2010</b>	<b>Jul2010- Dec2010</b>	<b>Jan2011- Jun2011</b>	<b>Jul2011- Dec2011</b>
	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
<b>Base</b>	585 (100)	466 (100)	584 (100)	563 (100)	331 (100)	284 (100)
<b>Substantiated</b>	30 (5.1)	42 (9.0)	39 (6.7)	40 (7.1)	24 (7.3)	20 (7.0)
<b>Inconclusive</b>	42 (7.2)	38 (8.2)	42 (7.2)	38 (6.7)	18 (5.4)	18 (6.3)
<b>Unfounded</b>	90 (15.4)	47 (10.1)	63 (10.8)	91 (16.2)	43 (13.0)	41 (14.4)
<b>Evaluated Out</b>	62 (10.6)	48 (10.3)	62 (10.6)	54 (9.6)	25 (7.6)	25 (8.8)
<b>No Recurrence</b>	361 (61.7)	291 (62.4)	378 (64.7)	340 (60.4)	221 (66.8)	180 (63.4)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 12

## Recurrence of Allegation-Assessment Only; California

<b>California</b>						
<b>Recurrence of Disposition within 12 months</b>	<b>Jan2009- Jun2009</b>	<b>Jul2009- Dec2009</b>	<b>Jan2010- Jun2010</b>	<b>Jul2010- Dec2010</b>	<b>Jan2011- Jun2011</b>	<b>Jul2011- Dec2011</b>
	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
<b>Base</b>	59,160 (100)	56,194 (100)	62,228 (100)	57,102 (100)	57,697 (100)	58,615 (100)
<b>Substantiated</b>	3,350 (5.7)	3,331 (5.9)	3,799 (6.1)	3,565 (6.2)	3,379 (5.9)	3,594 (6.1)
<b>Inconclusive</b>	2,706 (4.6)	2,699 (4.8)	2,881 (4.6)	2,805 (4.9)	2,756 (4.8)	3,003 (5.1)
<b>Unfounded</b>	6,976 (11.8)	6,654 (11.8)	7,470 (12.0)	6,845 (12.0)	6,847 (11.9)	6,830 (11.7)
<b>Evaluated Out</b>	5,249 (8.9)	5,369 (9.6)	5,943 (9.6)	5,453 (9.5)	5,490 (9.5)	5,914 (10.1)
<b>No Recurrence</b>	40,879 (69.1)	38,141 (67.9)	42,135 (67.7)	38,434 (67.3)	39,225 (68.0)	39,274 (67.0)

Source: Needell, et al., 2013.

Table 13

## CWS/CMS Screening Decision

<b>Madera County CWS/CMS Screening Decision</b>					
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>			<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>		
<b>Accept</b>	<b>Evaluate Out</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Accept</b>	<b>Evaluate Out</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
1,537	679	2,216	1,645	512	2,157
(69.4)	(30.6)	(100)	(76.3)	(23.7)	(100)

Source: Children's Research Center. 2013.

Table 14

Final SDM Hotline Screening Decision

<b>Madera County</b>									
<b>Final SDM Hotline Screening Decision</b>									
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>					<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>				
<b>Screen In</b>	<b>Screen In: Local Protocol</b>	<b>Screen Out</b>	<b>Screening Not Required</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Screen In</b>	<b>Screen In: Local Protocol</b>	<b>Screen Out</b>	<b>Screening Not Required</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
1,599	21	426	109	2,155	1,620	45	349	123	2,137
(74.2)	(1.0)	(19.8)	(5.1)	(100)	(75.8)	(2.1)	(16.3)	(5.8)	(100)

Source: Children’s Research Center. 2013.

Table 15

SDM Hotline Screening Overrides in Madera County

<b>Madera County</b>								
<b>SDM Hotline Screening Overrides</b>								
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>				<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>				
<b>Not Overridden</b>	<b>Override to Screen In</b>	<b>Override to Evaluate Out</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Not Overridden</b>	<b>Override to Screen In</b>	<b>Override to Evaluate Out</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
2,039	21	95	2,155	2,031	45	61	2,137	2,137
(94.6)	(1.0)	(4.4)	(100)	(95)	(2.1)	(2.9)	(100)	(100)

Source: Children’s Research Center. 2013.

Table 16

## SDM Safety Assessment Results by Madera County

<b>Madera County SDM Safety Assessment Results</b>							
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>				<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>			
<b>No Safety Threats</b>	<b>In-home Services</b>	<b>Removal/ Placement</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>No Safety Threats</b>	<b>In-home Services</b>	<b>Removal/ Placement</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
989	178	52	1,219	988	232	105	1,325
(81.1)	(14.6)	(4.3)	(100)	(74.6)	(17.5)	(7.9)	(100)

Source: Children's Research Center. 2013.

Table 17

## Three Most Prevalent Safety Threats Identified in Removal Households

<b>Madera County Three Most Prevalent Safety Threats</b>					
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>			<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>		
<b>n= 52</b>			<b>n= 105</b>		
<b>Child Immediate Needs Not Met</b>	<b>Caregiver Substance Abuse</b>	<b>Failure to Protect</b>	<b>Caregiver Substance Abuse</b>	<b>Failure to Protect</b>	<b>Child Immediate Needs Not Met</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
28	21	20	51	42	40
(53.8)	(40.4)	(38.5)	(48.6)	(40)	(38.1)

Source: Children's Research Center. 2013.



Table 18

## Three Most Frequent Priority Family Needs in Madera County

<b>Madera County</b>					
<b>Three Most Frequent Priority Family Needs</b>					
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>			<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>		
<b>n= 89</b>			<b>n= 88</b>		
<b>Parenting Skills</b>	<b>Mental Health/ Coping Skills</b>	<b>Substance Abuse/Use</b>	<b>Substance Abuse/Use</b>	<b>Mental Health/ Coping Skills</b>	<b>Parenting Skills</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
42	40	36	49	43	37
(47.2)	(44.9)	(40.4)	(55.7)	(48.9)	(42)

Source: Children's Research Center. 2013.

Table 19

## Three Most Frequent Child Needs in Madera County

<b>Madera County</b>					
<b>Three Most Frequent Child Needs</b>					
<b>JAN-DEC 2011</b>			<b>JAN-DEC 2012</b>		
<b>n= 197</b>			<b>n= 193</b>		
<b>Emotional/ Behavioral</b>	<b>Family Relationships</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Family Relationships</b>	<b>Emotional/ Behavioral</b>	<b>Child Development</b>
<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>	<b>n (%)</b>
45	45	39	43	37	31
(22.8)	(22.8)	(19.8)	(22.3)	(19.2)	(16.1)

Source: Children's Research Center. 2013.