



# Changes and Trends over Ten Years in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina

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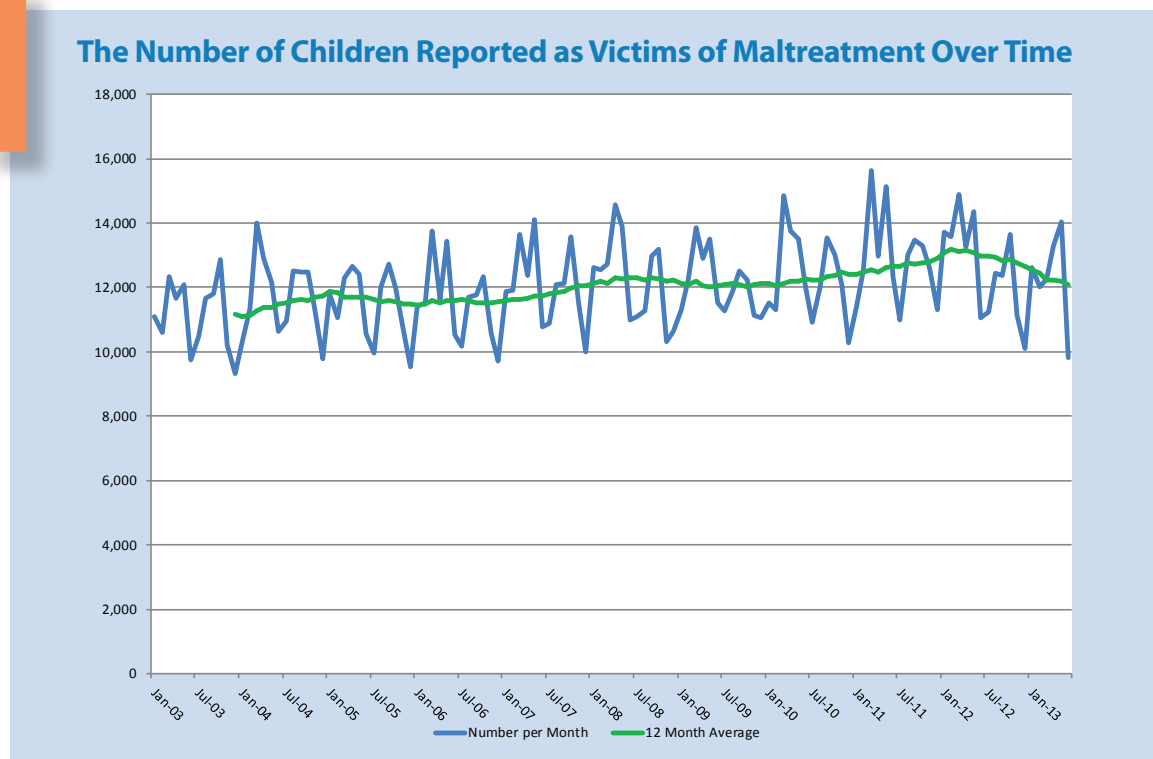


# Changes and Trends over Ten Years in the Child Welfare Caseload in North Carolina: October 2013

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 October 2013. These extracts are used to construct and maintain a longitudinal file that tracks the experiences of children and youth who have been involved with the child welfare system in North Carolina. The analysis explores changes in the number of children reported as victims of maltreatment, the number of those reports which are substantiated, and the number of children entering foster care. Long-term trends are also discussed.

**Figure One** illustrates the changes in the number of reports of maltreatment<sup>1</sup> over time (specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table One). As the figure indicates, the number of reports of maltreatment received monthly increased slightly over time until a recent decline in 2012-

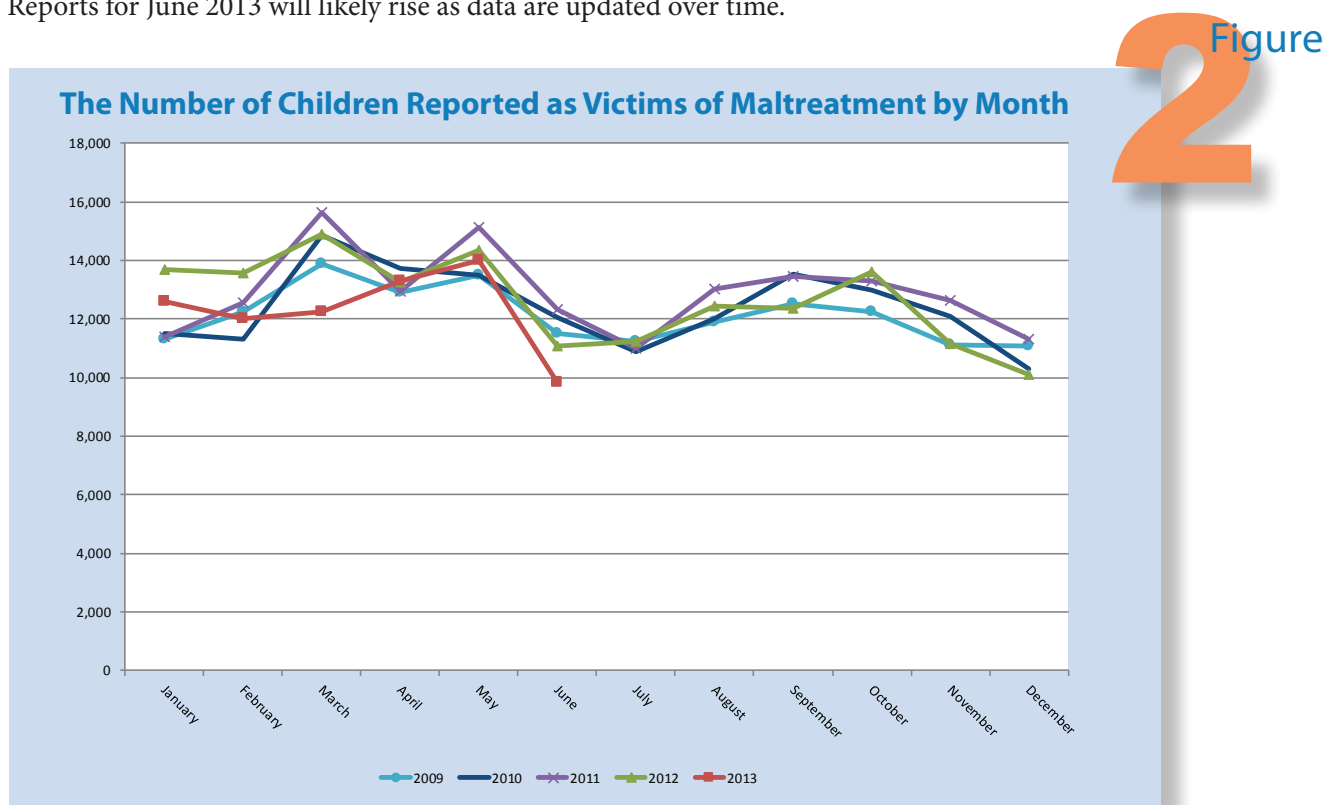
Figure 1



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

2013 and is illustrated by the twelve month average trend line. In 2003, the monthly number of children reported was more than 11,000 and rose to about 11,800 at the end of 2004. The monthly number of reports settled around 11,500 in mid-2005 and 2006 before rising above 12,000 beginning in 2007 to 2010. The monthly number of reports continued to increase throughout 2011 and reached 13,000 reports in early 2012. The monthly number of reports declined slightly to just under 13,000 reports in the latter part of 2012 and continued to decline to about 12,200 in mid-2013. In March 2011, the monthly number of reports reached its highest point in the past twelve years at 15,622 children. The monthly number of reports for June 2013 will likely increase as data are updated over time.

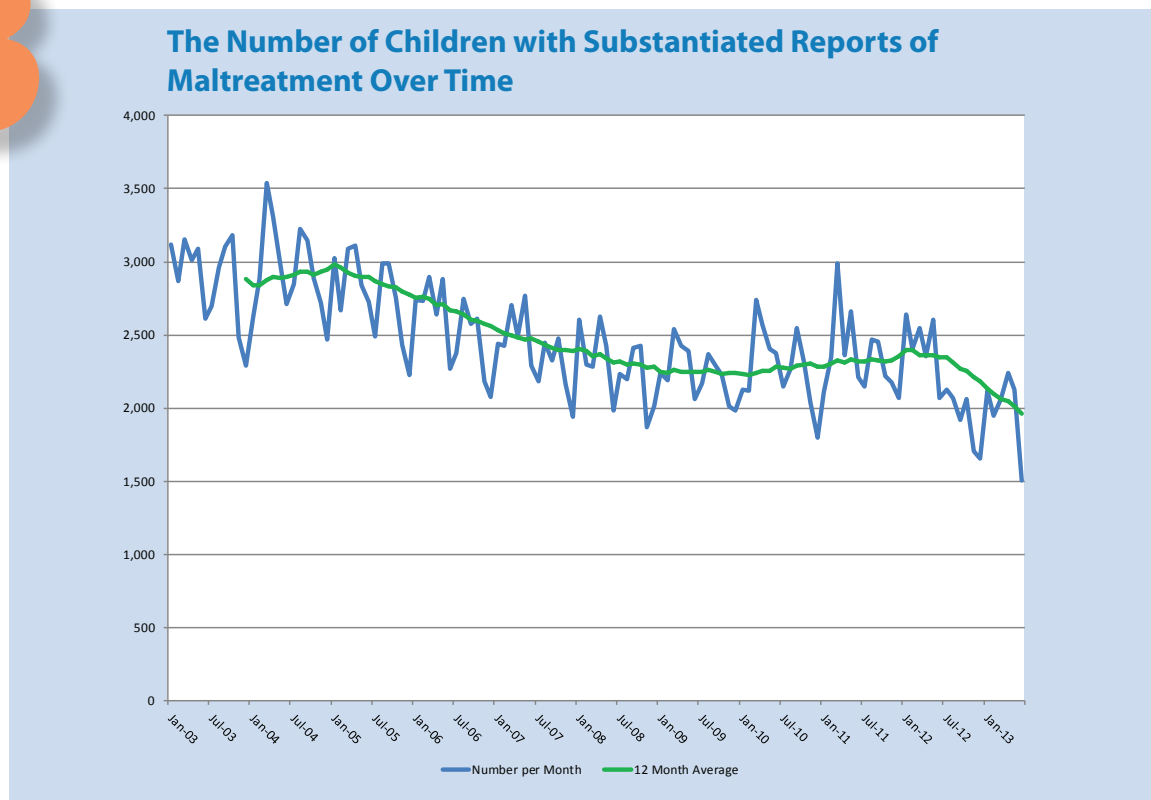
Figure One also indicates that there is variation from month to month in the number of children reported. That variation is further illustrated in **Figure Two** which shows the pattern of the number of reports received each month by year from January 2009 through June 2013. As the figure indicates, the number of reports received generally peaks in March or May, then falls in June and July before beginning a slight rise through October. The number of reports then declines through December. The patterns for 2011 and 2012 appear to follow those of prior years; however, the peaks for reports for January and February in 2012 were higher than other years. The pattern for 2013 differs with reports in March much lower than that of prior years. The reason for that decline is not clear. The number of reports for April and May are in line with those for prior years. Reports for June 2013 will likely rise as data are updated over time.



**Figure Three** illustrates the number of children whose reports of maltreatment were substantiated. Specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table Two. A report is considered substantiated if it has a finding of abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, dependency, or services needed. It does not include instances where the finding was services provided, child protective services no longer needed. Again, these reports are not based on a unique count of children per

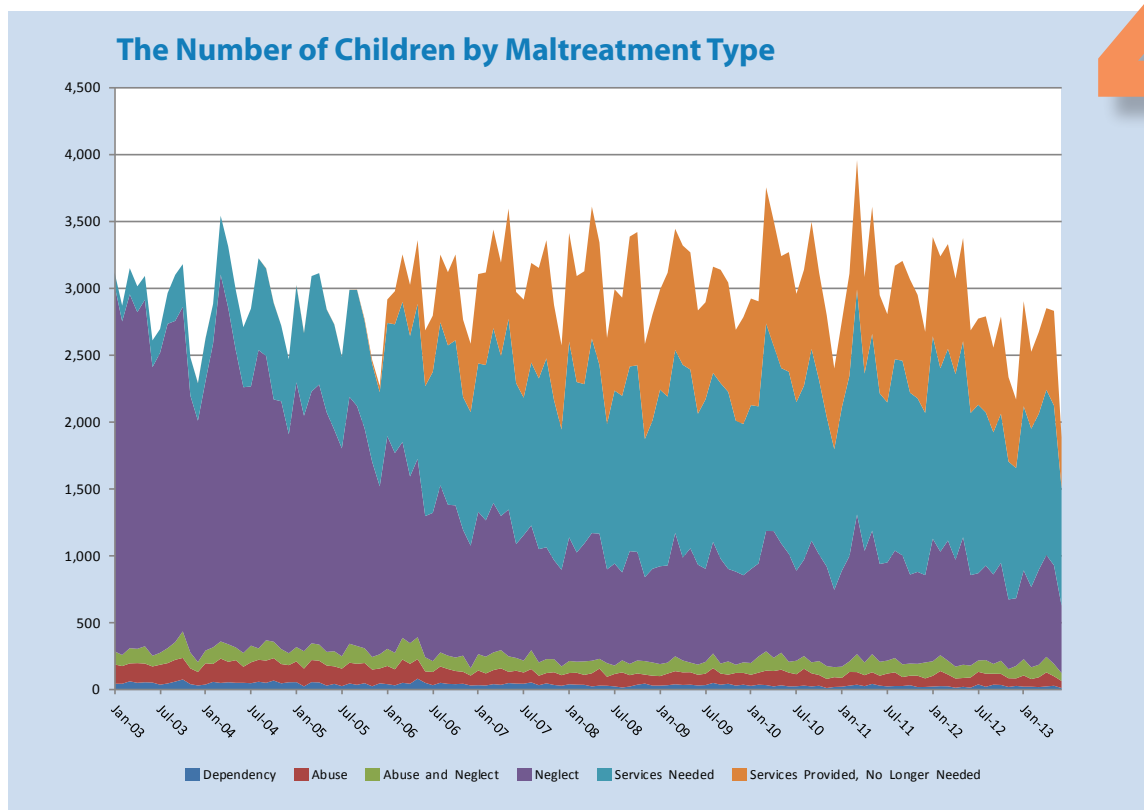
year. As the figure indicates, the number of children whose report is substantiated has declined over time, from around 3,000 per month in 2003 to around 2,300 per month in early 2008. The decline generally corresponds to the implementation of the Multiple Response System (MRS) between 2001 and 2006 (see Appendix B for a fuller description of MRS). The average number per month remained at about 2,300 until early 2011. In mid-2011, the number per month rose sharply and then declined through mid-2012. The average number per month stayed around 2,100 through early 2013, somewhat lower than the average from 2008 to 2011. The monthly number of children with substantiated reports for June 2013 will likely increase as data are updated over time.

## Figure 3

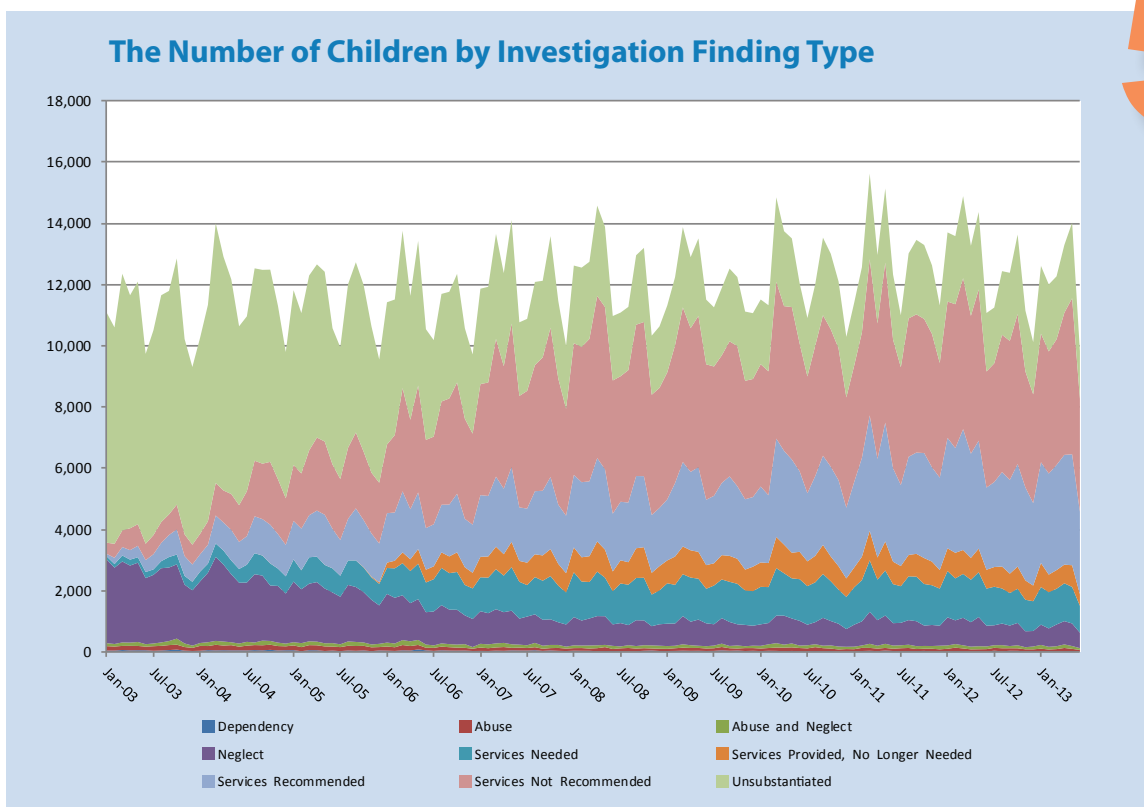


The changes in the type of maltreatment found over time are shown in **Figure Four**. In addition to the types presented in Figure Three (i.e., abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, dependency, and services needed), this figure contains the count of children whose maltreatment investigation found that services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

4 Figure



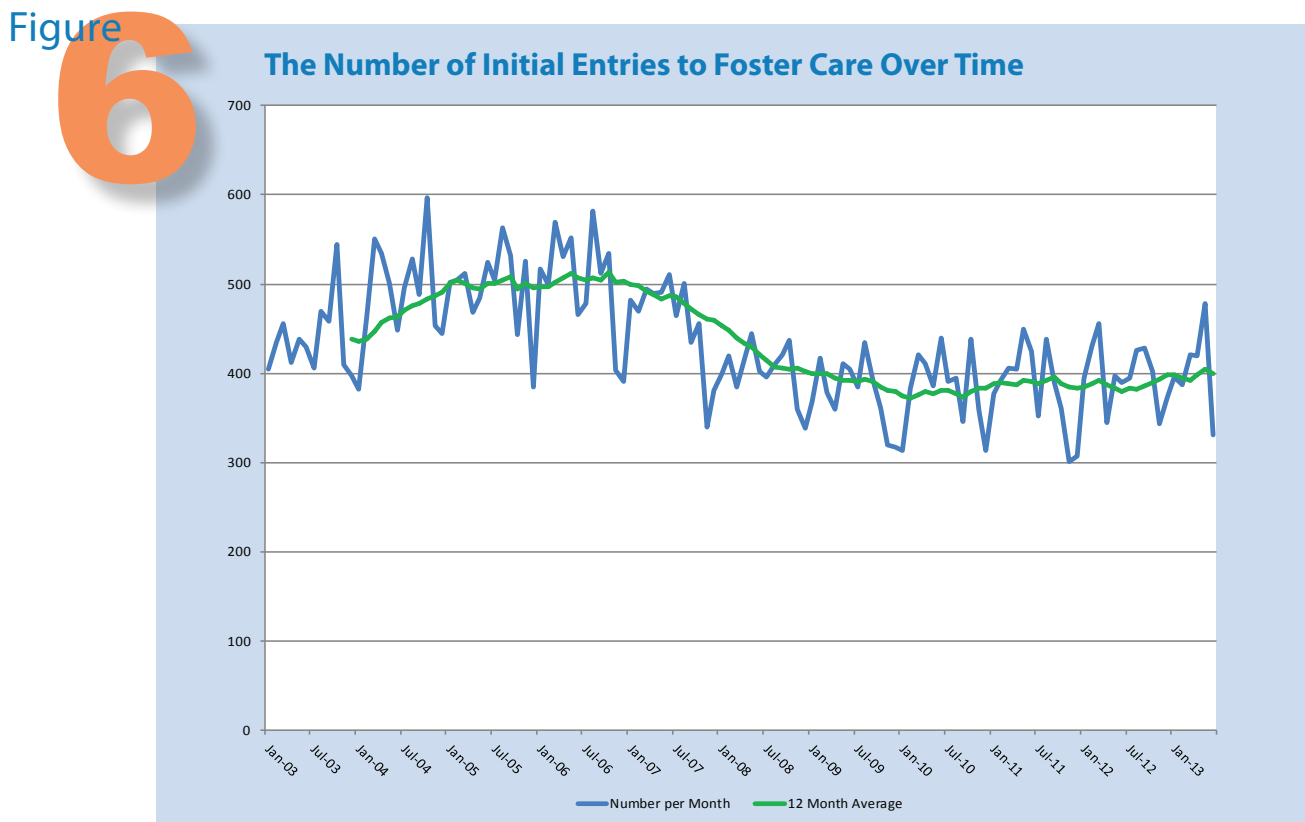
5 Figure



The average number of children per month with these types of maltreatment was about 2,900 from 2003 until early 2007 when the number rose above 3,000. The average number of children per month remained above 3,000 until a decrease in mid-2012 and is presently around 2,900 per month. As noted in the discussion of Figure Three above, Figure Four reflects a decline in the number of children with a finding of neglect, services needed, and services provided, child protective services no longer needed from mid-2012 through the present.

**Figure Five** illustrates how findings from the investigation of maltreatment reports have changed over time. As the figure indicates, while there has been a decrease in the findings of abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, and dependency, there has also been a decrease in the number of unsubstantiations. This decline in unsubstantiations is likely due to a decrease in the number of investigations routed through the investigative track. That notion is further supported by the increase in the number of findings of services not recommended, an outcome of the family assessment track. Figure Five also shows an increasing number of findings of services recommended. The increase reflects the growth of MRS. Even after the expansion of MRS 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 2003 and 2004. There appears to have been an increase between 2005 and 2006, when the number of children entering care centered around 500 per month. In mid-2007, the number entering each month began to fall and ranged between a high of 511 children in June 2007 to a low of 301 in November 2011. For 2010 to 2011, the twelve month average trend line suggests that the number of children entering per month remained between 380 and 390. However, the number entering care per month increased slightly to about 400 children in late 2012 to mid-2013. The slight rise in children entering foster care has occurred despite a recent decline in the number of children found to be victims of maltreatment. Maltreatment numbers are a leading indicator of foster care entries. However, the current rise in foster care entries may be more reflective of 2011 and 2012 maltreatment numbers. Thus, we will likely see a decrease in foster care entries in 2014 following the 2013 decline in maltreatment.

## Trends in the Number of Children in Foster Care on the Last Day of the Month

We analyzed ten year trends in the point-in-time number of children in foster care for North Carolina. These numbers reflect the count of the unique number of children in DSS custody on the last day of each month (see **Figure Seven**). Specific monthly numbers can be found in Appendix A, Table Five. The twelve month average trend line shows that the number of children in foster care was below 10,000 in 2003 and then began to rise above 10,000 in mid to late 2004. The number of children in foster care rose steadily to a high of about 11,200 in mid-2007. In late 2007, the number of children in foster care began to decline to about 10,000 in early 2009 and continued to fall to about 9,000 in 2011. The number of children

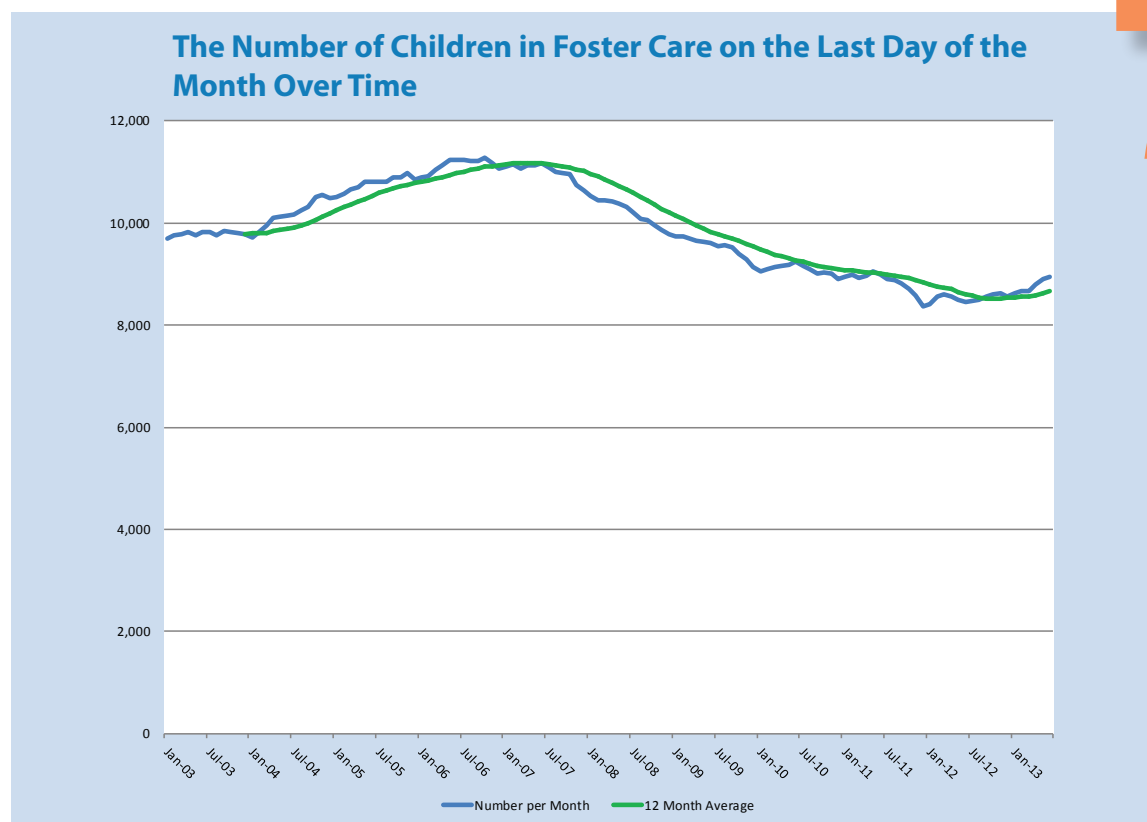


Figure 7



in foster care decreased further to about 8,500 at the end of 2012. However, the number of children in foster care began to increase somewhat to about 8,700 by mid-2013. As with entries into foster care, the number of children in foster care may decrease in 2014 given the recent decline in the number of children found to be victims of maltreatment. Overall, North Carolina has seen a significant decrease in the number of children in foster care over the past ten years.

## Summary

From 2003 to 2011, there was a gradual increase in the monthly number of children with reports of maltreatment until a recent decline in 2012-2013. 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 and then declined before stabilizing to just below 400 per month in 2010-2011. Recent data suggests a slight increase to about 400 children per month at the end of 2012 and mid-2013. Overall, North Carolina has seen a significant decrease in the number of children in foster care in the past ten years. However, an upward trend in the number of children in foster care emerged by mid-2013.

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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=dgweb.highlight.sas&label=&county=North+Carolina](http://sasweb.unc.edu/cgi-bin/broker?_service=default&_program=dgweb.highlight.sas&label=&county=North+Carolina)

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-03	11,079
Feb-03	10,599
Mar-03	12,352
Apr-03	11,651
May-03	12,095
Jun-03	9,735
Jul-03	10,508
Aug-03	11,651
Sep-03	11,792
Oct-03	12,853
Nov-03	10,223
Dec-03	9,306
Jan-04	10,268
Feb-04	11,336
Mar-04	14,003
Apr-04	12,906
May-04	12,168
Jun-04	10,636
Jul-04	10,962
Aug-04	12,529
Sep-04	12,480
Oct-04	12,487
Nov-04	11,296
Dec-04	9,796
Jan-05	11,816
Feb-05	11,067
Mar-05	12,295
Apr-05	12,658
May-05	12,417

Jun-05	10,575
Jul-05	9,949
Aug-05	12,011
Sep-05	12,728
Oct-05	11,983
Nov-05	10,638
Dec-05	9,551
Jan-06	11,421
Feb-06	11,511
Mar-06	13,756
Apr-06	11,628
May-06	13,424
Jun-06	10,541
Jul-06	10,184
Aug-06	11,694
Sep-06	11,763
Oct-06	12,347
Nov-06	10,572
Dec-06	9,717
Jan-07	11,864
Feb-07	11,926
Mar-07	13,653
Apr-07	12,373
May-07	14,108
Jun-07	10,766
Jul-07	10,879
Aug-07	12,085
Sep-07	12,123
Oct-07	13,581
Nov-07	11,464
Dec-07	9,999
Jan-08	12,620
Feb-08	12,553

Month	Number of Children Reported
Mar-08	12,743
Apr-08	14,577
May-08	13,884
Jun-08	10,972
Jul-08	11,084
Aug-08	11,270
Sep-08	12,957
Oct-08	13,197
Nov-08	10,330
Dec-08	10,632
Jan-09	11,317
Feb-09	12,241
Mar-09	13,874
Apr-09	12,895
May-09	13,505
Jun-09	11,506
Jul-09	11,256
Aug-09	11,889
Sep-09	12,520
Oct-09	12,244
Nov-09	11,117
Dec-09	11,065
Jan-10	11,511
Feb-10	11,324
Mar-10	14,848
Apr-10	13,743
May-10	13,507
Jun-10	12,043
Jul-10	10,906
Aug-10	12,003
Sep-10	13,530
Oct-10	13,006
Nov-10	12,099
Dec-10	10,290
Jan-11	11,397
Feb-11	12,566

Mar-11	15,622
Apr-11	12,963
May-11	15,136
Jun-11	12,324
Jul-11	10,997
Aug-11	13,016
Sep-11	13,458
Oct-11	13,292
Nov-11	12,627
Dec-11	11,319
Jan-12	13,703
Feb-12	13,581
Mar-12	14,887
Apr-12	13,264
May-12	14,369
Jun-12	11,071
Jul-12	11,248
Aug-12	12,437
Sep-12	12,384
Oct-12	13,632
Nov-12	11,148
Dec-12	10,119
Jan-13	12,608
Feb-13	12,002
Mar-13	12,268
Apr-13	13,290
May-13	14,021
Jun-13	9,826

# Table 2

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

Month	Number of Children with a Substantiated Report
Jan-03	3,118
Feb-03	2,870
Mar-03	3,150
Apr-03	3,014
May-03	3,092
Jun-03	2,610
Jul-03	2,695
Aug-03	2,964
Sep-03	3,100
Oct-03	3,180
Nov-03	2,484
Dec-03	2,290
Jan-04	2,624
Feb-04	2,882
Mar-04	3,542
Apr-04	3,311
May-04	2,985
Jun-04	2,709
Jul-04	2,848
Aug-04	3,224
Sep-04	3,147
Oct-04	2,890
Nov-04	2,720
Dec-04	2,469
Jan-05	3,022
Feb-05	2,665
Mar-05	3,091
Apr-05	3,113
May-05	2,841
Jun-05	2,729
Jul-05	2,487
Aug-05	2,988

Sep-05	2,988
Oct-05	2,756
Nov-05	2,435
Dec-05	2,223
Jan-06	2,741
Feb-06	2,730
Mar-06	2,898
Apr-06	2,643
May-06	2,883
Jun-06	2,268
Jul-06	2,375
Aug-06	2,745
Sep-06	2,573
Oct-06	2,611
Nov-06	2,187
Dec-06	2,074
Jan-07	2,438
Feb-07	2,426
Mar-07	2,702
Apr-07	2,492
May-07	2,771
Jun-07	2,291
Jul-07	2,182
Aug-07	2,445
Sep-07	2,326
Oct-07	2,476
Nov-07	2,165
Dec-07	1,944
Jan-08	2,601
Feb-08	2,299
Mar-08	2,283
Apr-08	2,624
May-08	2,426
Jun-08	1,986
Jul-08	2,235
Aug-08	2,196
Sep-08	2,415
Oct-08	2,424
Nov-08	1,873

Month	Number of Children with a Substantiated Report
Dec-08	2,011
Jan-09	2,242
Feb-09	2,190
Mar-09	2,538
Apr-09	2,428
May-09	2,392
Jun-09	2,062
Jul-09	2,169
Aug-09	2,367
Sep-09	2,290
Oct-09	2,225
Nov-09	2,010
Dec-09	1,985
Jan-10	2,126
Feb-10	2,117
Mar-10	2,737
Apr-10	2,570
May-10	2,403
Jun-10	2,376
Jul-10	2,149
Aug-10	2,272
Sep-10	2,546
Oct-10	2,311
Nov-10	2,038
Dec-10	1,797
Jan-11	2,110
Feb-11	2,346
Mar-11	2,992
Apr-11	2,362
May-11	2,659
Jun-11	2,214
Jul-11	2,147
Aug-11	2,469
Sep-11	2,458
Oct-11	2,219
Nov-11	2,177

Dec-11	2,068
Jan-12	2,641
Feb-12	2,402
Mar-12	2,547
Apr-12	2,358
May-12	2,604
Jun-12	2,068
Jul-12	2,129
Aug-12	2,072
Sep-12	1,923
Oct-12	2,062
Nov-12	1,704
Dec-12	1,656
Jan-13	2,118
Feb-13	1,950
Mar-13	2,063
Apr-13	2,241
May-13	2,123
Jun-13	1,506

# Table 3

**The Number of Children by Investigation Finding Type <sup>2</sup>**

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
Jan-03	44	144	98	2,734	98	0	84	366	7,511
Feb-03	44	132	83	2,493	118	0	204	457	7,068
Mar-03	62	134	114	2,644	196	0	274	543	8,385
Apr-03	51	147	107	2,516	193	0	311	714	7,612
May-03	55	140	129	2,590	178	0	374	706	7,923
Jun-03	53	120	80	2,157	200	0	389	534	6,202
Jul-03	37	149	89	2,242	178	0	495	625	6,693
Aug-03	46	152	112	2,424	230	0	596	682	7,409
Sep-03	60	163	132	2,401	344	0	719	674	7,299
Oct-03	76	161	198	2,426	319	0	822	810	8,041
Nov-03	41	118	118	1,921	286	0	648	709	6,382
Dec-03	31	101	74	1,804	280	2	563	646	5,805
Jan-04	38	159	95	2,014	318	2	565	669	6,408
Feb-04	58	134	124	2,271	295	0	617	769	7,068
Mar-04	50	182	128	2,742	440	0	915	1,060	8,486
Apr-04	55	153	131	2,514	458	0	915	1,047	7,633
May-04	51	169	95	2,220	450	0	1,001	1,171	7,011
Jun-04	51	120	103	1,986	449	0	884	1,200	5,843
Jul-04	48	156	125	1,937	582	0	933	1,466	5,715
Aug-04	59	164	85	2,230	686	0	1,205	1,816	6,284
Sep-04	51	166	152	2,124	654	3	1,188	1,811	6,331
Oct-04	68	167	123	1,811	721	3	1,263	2,052	6,279
Nov-04	47	144	112	1,852	565	0	1,127	1,790	5,659
Dec-04	55	128	89	1,636	561	0	1,027	1,522	4,778
Jan-05	56	155	107	1,979	725	3	1,253	1,828	5,710
Feb-05	24	133	130	1,760	618	4	1,358	1,803	5,237
Mar-05	56	165	125	1,882	863	0	1,373	2,117	5,714
Apr-05	54	162	121	1,943	833	0	1,503	2,386	5,656
May-05	30	150	102	1,790	769	2	1,638	2,392	5,544
Jun-05	43	131	113	1,655	787	2	1,291	2,100	4,453

<sup>2</sup> The count of children is not unique as some 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
Jul-05	26	131	92	1,554	684	1	1,169	1,991	4,301
Aug-05	46	155	142	1,845	800	1	1,358	2,322	5,342
Sep-05	36	157	133	1,794	868	2	1,699	2,479	5,560
Oct-05	48	151	110	1,644	803	13	1,535	2,236	5,443
Nov-05	25	125	94	1,459	732	28	1,409	1,985	4,781
Dec-05	47	111	106	1,255	704	47	1,271	1,985	4,025
Jan-06	41	136	128	1,590	846	175	1,615	2,244	4,646
Feb-06	32	120	123	1,493	962	248	1,577	2,528	4,428
Mar-06	51	174	162	1,464	1,047	355	1,993	3,372	5,138
Apr-06	44	149	154	1,246	1,050	382	1,635	2,923	4,045
May-06	82	146	164	1,333	1,158	476	1,851	3,491	4,723
Jun-06	51	85	106	1,055	971	417	1,360	2,881	3,615
Jul-06	33	99	81	1,108	1,054	420	1,374	2,863	3,152
Aug-06	51	122	105	1,249	1,218	506	1,556	3,373	3,514
Sep-06	43	111	100	1,128	1,191	547	1,693	3,466	3,484
Oct-06	41	98	101	1,137	1,234	641	1,915	3,636	3,544
Nov-06	44	89	121	940	993	578	1,583	3,270	2,954
Dec-06	31	74	55	916	998	511	1,571	2,973	2,588
Jan-07	33	110	122	1,064	1,109	668	2,016	3,628	3,114
Feb-07	31	90	125	1,019	1,161	692	1,976	3,705	3,127
Mar-07	41	105	132	1,117	1,307	736	2,288	4,499	3,428
Apr-07	36	123	136	1,003	1,194	699	2,139	4,003	3,040
May-07	49	84	116	1,097	1,425	824	2,451	4,683	3,379
Jun-07	45	96	96	851	1,203	681	1,748	3,642	2,404
Jul-07	44	84	89	938	1,027	733	1,767	3,844	2,353
Aug-07	54	100	141	932	1,218	744	2,060	4,119	2,717
Sep-07	33	71	99	847	1,276	826	2,113	4,354	2,504
Oct-07	47	77	104	836	1,412	883	2,354	4,878	2,990
Nov-07	35	95	98	740	1,197	711	1,934	4,119	2,535
Dec-07	29	79	65	723	1,048	629	1,877	3,491	2,058
Jan-08	40	84	90	924	1,463	812	2,370	4,301	2,536
Feb-08	37	89	83	816	1,274	792	2,453	4,418	2,591
Mar-08	36	74	101	881	1,191	844	2,444	4,653	2,519
Apr-08	24	98	94	954	1,454	986	2,721	5,297	2,949

Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
May-08	30	127	73	936	1,260	916	2,625	5,299	2,618
Jun-08	29	67	102	701	1,087	642	1,887	4,352	2,105
Jul-08	24	93	63	762	1,293	757	1,913	4,100	2,079
Aug-08	16	113	90	657	1,320	734	1,949	4,325	2,066
Sep-08	23	85	84	843	1,380	971	2,359	4,943	2,269
Oct-08	37	84	97	811	1,395	996	2,321	5,036	2,420
Nov-08	45	67	101	628	1,032	710	1,889	3,928	1,930
Dec-08	30	74	99	700	1,108	792	1,900	3,921	2,008
Jan-09	30	71	90	731	1,320	747	1,994	4,148	2,186
Feb-09	33	87	82	726	1,262	926	2,400	4,504	2,221
Mar-09	40	98	111	922	1,367	906	2,759	5,052	2,619
Apr-09	35	94	89	769	1,441	891	2,561	4,694	2,321
May-09	37	93	72	854	1,336	876	2,769	4,939	2,529
Jun-09	31	80	76	747	1,128	772	2,136	4,424	2,112
Jul-09	34	85	88	696	1,266	726	2,204	4,224	1,933
Aug-09	50	111	109	834	1,263	794	2,358	4,167	2,203
Sep-09	37	83	75	783	1,312	848	2,595	4,412	2,375
Oct-09	44	68	99	691	1,323	817	2,371	4,575	2,256
Nov-09	30	95	61	696	1,128	679	2,298	3,869	2,261
Dec-09	37	88	79	651	1,130	799	2,275	3,856	2,150
Jan-10	28	83	88	702	1,225	797	2,479	3,995	2,114
Feb-10	37	90	121	695	1,174	785	2,214	4,049	2,159
Mar-10	34	108	144	900	1,551	1,017	3,214	5,124	2,756
Apr-10	24	115	99	947	1,385	935	3,063	4,727	2,448
May-10	32	117	127	816	1,311	837	3,045	4,979	2,243
Jun-10	24	103	81	807	1,361	894	2,632	4,174	1,967
Jul-10	25	90	101	673	1,260	809	2,226	3,813	1,909
Aug-10	30	126	95	720	1,301	866	2,602	4,259	2,004
Sep-10	24	98	82	909	1,433	950	2,914	4,587	2,533
Oct-10	29	80	104	796	1,302	805	2,934	4,490	2,466
Nov-10	12	68	96	744	1,118	761	2,810	4,307	2,183
Dec-10	20	73	75	578	1,051	603	2,309	3,604	1,977
Jan-11	22	66	84	717	1,221	644	2,791	3,800	2,052
Feb-11	30	102	79	787	1,348	763	3,227	4,098	2,132



Month	Dependency	Abuse	Abuse and Neglect	Neglect	Services Needed	Services Provided, No Longer Needed	Services Recommended	Services Not Recommended	Unsubstantiated
Mar-11	37	94	134	1,044	1,683	965	3,770	5,101	2,794
Apr-11	26	82	95	834	1,325	721	3,220	4,426	2,234
May-11	43	87	135	923	1,471	950	3,882	5,227	2,418
Jun-11	30	74	104	731	1,275	734	3,053	4,200	2,123
Jul-11	24	96	97	733	1,197	659	2,646	3,846	1,699
Aug-11	27	102	107	803	1,430	699	3,206	4,520	2,122
Sep-11	27	67	95	814	1,455	746	3,308	4,514	2,432
Oct-11	33	71	91	665	1,359	846	3,430	4,382	2,415
Nov-11	19	85	89	687	1,297	773	3,082	4,356	2,239
Dec-11	20	64	119	653	1,212	606	3,019	3,745	1,881
Jan-12	23	80	109	916	1,513	742	3,609	4,452	2,259
Feb-12	26	113	118	774	1,371	836	3,418	4,701	2,224
Mar-12	25	88	103	898	1,433	783	3,948	4,931	2,678
Apr-12	14	69	89	799	1,387	714	3,403	4,503	2,286
May-12	21	66	99	953	1,465	771	3,525	4,940	2,529
Jun-12	15	76	89	676	1,212	617	2,683	3,792	1,911
Jul-12	39	94	85	652	1,259	644	2,776	3,877	1,822
Aug-12	21	98	102	706	1,145	718	3,084	4,484	2,079
Sep-12	37	82	73	669	1,062	633	3,063	4,541	2,224
Oct-12	35	83	98	731	1,115	726	3,349	4,900	2,595
Nov-12	20	65	69	520	1,030	631	3,038	3,788	1,987
Dec-12	28	56	93	506	973	512	2,693	3,552	1,706
Jan-13	22	84	122	663	1,227	785	3,293	4,202	2,210
Feb-13	22	57	88	600	1,183	575	3,302	3,988	2,187
Mar-13	19	73	94	710	1,167	610	3,434	4,103	2,058
Apr-13	24	105	116	761	1,235	610	3,585	4,641	2,213
May-13	29	71	92	737	1,194	708	3,625	5,097	2,468
Jun-13	12	53	59	504	878	380	2,691	3,686	1,563

# Table 4

**The Number of Children Initially Entering Foster Care**

Month	Number of Children Initially Entering Care
Jan-03	405
Feb-03	434
Mar-03	456
Apr-03	412
May-03	438
Jun-03	430
Jul-03	406
Aug-03	469
Sep-03	458
Oct-03	544
Nov-03	410
Dec-03	397
Jan-04	382
Feb-04	462
Mar-04	550
Apr-04	534
May-04	501
Jun-04	448
Jul-04	496
Aug-04	528
Sep-04	488
Oct-04	597
Nov-04	453
Dec-04	444
Jan-05	502
Feb-05	505
Mar-05	512
Apr-05	468
May-05	485
Jun-05	525
Jul-05	505
Aug-05	563

Sep-05	532
Oct-05	443
Nov-05	526
Dec-05	384
Jan-06	517
Feb-06	499
Mar-06	569
Apr-06	531
May-06	552
Jun-06	466
Jul-06	478
Aug-06	582
Sep-06	512
Oct-06	535
Nov-06	403
Dec-06	391
Jan-07	482
Feb-07	470
Mar-07	494
Apr-07	489
May-07	491
Jun-07	511
Jul-07	464
Aug-07	501
Sep-07	435
Oct-07	456
Nov-07	340
Dec-07	381
Jan-08	400
Feb-08	419
Mar-08	384
Apr-08	417
May-08	444
Jun-08	402
Jul-08	396
Aug-08	410
Sep-08	421
Oct-08	437

Month	Number of Children Initially Entering Care
Nov-08	360
Dec-08	338
Jan-09	369
Feb-09	417
Mar-09	378
Apr-09	360
May-09	411
Jun-09	405
Jul-09	384
Aug-09	435
Sep-09	393
Oct-09	361
Nov-09	320
Dec-09	317
Jan-10	313
Feb-10	383
Mar-10	421
Apr-10	411
May-10	386
Jun-10	439
Jul-10	391
Aug-10	394
Sep-10	346
Oct-10	438
Nov-10	359
Dec-10	314
Jan-11	377
Feb-11	392
Mar-11	406
Apr-11	404
May-11	449
Jun-11	424
Jul-11	352
Aug-11	438
Sep-11	390
Oct-11	361

Nov-11	301
Dec-11	307
Jan-12	394
Feb-12	431
Mar-12	456
Apr-12	345
May-12	397
Jun-12	389
Jul-12	395
Aug-12	426
Sep-12	428
Oct-12	402
Nov-12	344
Dec-12	373
Jan-13	396
Feb-13	387
Mar-13	421
Apr-13	419
May-13	478
Jun-13	331

# Table 5

## The Number of Children in Foster Care on the Last Day of the Month

Month	Number of Children in Foster Care
Jan-03	9,684
Feb-03	9,761
Mar-03	9,787
Apr-03	9,814
May-03	9,764
Jun-03	9,828
Jul-03	9,832
Aug-03	9,759
Sep-03	9,844
Oct-03	9,832
Nov-03	9,812
Dec-03	9,771
Jan-04	9,710
Feb-04	9,823
Mar-04	9,947
Apr-04	10,092
May-04	10,123
Jun-04	10,138
Jul-04	10,165
Aug-04	10,250
Sep-04	10,318
Oct-04	10,500
Nov-04	10,555
Dec-04	10,497
Jan-05	10,508
Feb-05	10,575
Mar-05	10,659
Apr-05	10,706
May-05	10,817
Jun-05	10,815
Jul-05	10,799
Aug-05	10,807

Sep-05	10,903
Oct-05	10,903
Nov-05	10,974
Dec-05	10,853
Jan-06	10,889
Feb-06	10,913
Mar-06	11,039
Apr-06	11,125
May-06	11,233
Jun-06	11,233
Jul-06	11,228
Aug-06	11,219
Sep-06	11,210
Oct-06	11,289
Nov-06	11,175
Dec-06	11,068
Jan-07	11,116
Feb-07	11,157
Mar-07	11,068
Apr-07	11,127
May-07	11,134
Jun-07	11,163
Jul-07	11,086
Aug-07	10,996
Sep-07	10,973
Oct-07	10,964
Nov-07	10,751
Dec-07	10,643
Jan-08	10,530
Feb-08	10,453
Mar-08	10,435
Apr-08	10,413
May-08	10,376
Jun-08	10,306
Jul-08	10,213
Aug-08	10,086
Sep-08	10,051
Oct-08	9,951

Month	Number of Children in Foster Care
Nov-08	9,873
Dec-08	9,789
Jan-09	9,739
Feb-09	9,729
Mar-09	9,692
Apr-09	9,647
May-09	9,625
Jun-09	9,605
Jul-09	9,535
Aug-09	9,566
Sep-09	9,533
Oct-09	9,390
Nov-09	9,278
Dec-09	9,136
Jan-10	9,046
Feb-10	9,103
Mar-10	9,133
Apr-10	9,152
May-10	9,176
Jun-10	9,235
Jul-10	9,155
Aug-10	9,104
Sep-10	9,002
Oct-10	9,027
Nov-10	9,007
Dec-10	8,908
Jan-11	8,938
Feb-11	8,980
Mar-11	8,934
Apr-11	8,960
May-11	9,050
Jun-11	8,990
Jul-11	8,893
Aug-11	8,888
Sep-11	8,812

Oct-11	8,707
Nov-11	8,583
Dec-11	8,358
Jan-12	8,409
Feb-12	8,557
Mar-12	8,613
Apr-12	8,554
May-12	8,495
Jun-12	8,442
Jul-12	8,479
Aug-12	8,489
Sep-12	8,562
Oct-12	8,596
Nov-12	8,617
Dec-12	8,555
Jan-13	8,617
Feb-13	8,675
Mar-13	8,677
Apr-13	8,805
May-13	8,904
Jun-13	8,939

# Appendix B

## Multiple Response System (MRS) Description

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

Counties have some flexibility in whether to use the investigative or the family assessment track. According to policy<sup>3</sup>, the choice of response should be based on the approach that best provides for the child's safety, permanence, and wellbeing. State policies require that all reports of abuse follow the investigative track. In addition, the policies require that certain reports of neglect—such as those involving a child fatality or where there is medical neglect of a disabled infant—follow the investigative track as well. For other neglect or dependency reports, county departments of social services may use the family assessment response. The family assessments incorporate System of Care (SOC) principles such as involving the family in decisions, developing an individualized plan which builds on the family's strengths, fostering interagency collaboration to address the family's needs, and developing culturally appropriate responses.

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

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<sup>3</sup> The policies for investigations are found in Volume 1: Children's Services, Chapter VIII: Child Protective Services, of the NC-DSS Family Services Manual available at <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/>.