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November 1, 2023

TO: Supervisor Janice Hahn, Chair

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Tamara N. Hunter, DSW

Interim Executive Director

LA County Prevention and Promotion Systems Governing Committee

SUBJECT: REPORT BACK ON EVOLVING FROM MANDATED REPORTER TO MANDATED SUPPORTER (BOARD AGENDA ITEM 12, MAY 2, 2023)

On May 2, 2023, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors (Board) unanimously adopted a motion directing the Executive Director of the Commission for Children and Families to work in partnership with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Office of Child Protection (OCP) to build on its existing Mandated Supporting Initiative (MSI) to:

- 1. Provide quantitative and qualitative data trends on who is calling the DCFS' Child Protection Hotline (Hotline), the reasons why, and any other relevant information that will help understand why Mandated Reporters are calling the Hotline, including demographic breakdown.
- Develop decision-making processes to help improve Mandated Reporters' capacity to make more accurate, consistent, and equitable decisions about whether or not to report to the Hotline, or to connect the family to community-based resources.
- 3. Expedite the development of guidance and policies to operationalize Assembly Bill (AB) 2085; Crimes: mandated reporters at the Hotline and with reporting organizations.

- 4. Establish and build community pathways and supports to connect families who are in need, but do not require Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) intervention in alignment with other community pathway work underway in the County:
 - a. This should include exploration of piloting promising and innovative approaches involving law enforcement, healthcare providers, and educators, and enhancing through capacity-building new or existing community supports.
 - b. Explore sustainable funding opportunities for this ongoing work.
- 5. Create a standardized County Mandated Supporter training and training guidelines.
- 6. Develop recommendations for further redesign of the front end of the County's child welfare system that align with the vision for mandated reporting reform and the broader effort to safely meet the needs of families through the provision of community-based services and supports and reduce overreliance on the child welfare system.
- 7. Draft policy ideas and recommendations informed by nationwide and statewide best practices, including efforts of the California Child Welfare Council's task force on mandatory reporting, for long-term sustainable statewide and local reform efforts related to Mandated Supporters.
- 8. Include recommendations for the ongoing Mandated Supporter work to continue, as well as its long-term placement and funding within the County's infrastructure.
- 9. Ensure that adequate workforce support and funding is made available to the Commission for Children and Families to carry out the Board's directives.
- 10. Work in close collaboration with a broad array of stakeholders to achieve the above-described goals and directives, including:
 - a. Relevant County departments, initiatives, and quasi-governmental agencies, including but not limited to, the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection, the Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, the Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services, Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect, Domestic Violence Council, Women and Girls Initiative, the Poverty

Alleviation Initiative, Center for Strategic Partnerships, Chief Information Office, Chief Executive Office, First 5 Los Angeles, Prevention Services Task Force, The Office of County Counsel, Family First Prevention Services Act Community Pathways Planning Team, and Pre-Petition Legal Advocacy Planning Team;

- Non-County organizations, including school districts, law enforcement agencies, medical providers, community-based organizations, labor partners, philanthropy; advocates and stakeholders with lived experience and expertise; and,
- c. The California Child Welfare Council's task force on mandatory reporting.

OVERVIEW OF THE MANDATED SUPPORTING INITIATIVE (MSI)

In October 2023, the Executive Director of the Commission for Children and Families (CCF) began serving as Interim Executive Director of the Los Angeles County Prevention and Promotion Systems Governance Committee (Committee on Prevention and Promotion). The Committee on Prevention and Promotion's Interim Executive Director will continue with leadership of the MSI in this new role. CCF Commissioners will continue to serve on the MSI Leadership Team and participate in various MSI work groups.

Casey Family Programs has served in a co-leadership capacity of the MSI and been instrumental in its design, development, and implementation.

The MSI is a large-scale effort which aims to reform-not abolish-mandatory reporting of child abuse and neglect in Los Angeles County. The MSI is grounded in the knowledge that despite the stated aims, mandated reporting-in policy and practice-is a deeply misguided and harmful response to our societal responsibility to ensure that children are free from harm.

The current iteration of mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect is, by design, a reactionary model that facilitates an intervention *after* maltreatment is suspected to have already occurred. Mandated reporting does little to bolster protective factors, which have been proven to prevent child abuse and neglect. To the contrary, mandated reporting laws, policy, training, and practice often lead to overreporting, which potentially increases child risk by disrupting a family's trust in the organizations that they should be able to turn to for help in times of need. Further, the current iteration of mandated reporting is a driver of racial disproportionality in the child welfare system and potentially overburdens the Child Protection Hotline (Hotline) with reports that may not meet statutory thresholds. Finally, many Mandated Reporters feel, and indeed are, ill-prepared and inadequately supported to make sound reporting decisions.

MSI Goals

The MSI aims to remedy this flawed model by transforming Los Angeles County's current system of mandated reporting to one which:

- Prevents children from experiencing harm caused by maltreatment, as well as that which stems from unnecessary involvement with the child welfare system,
- Promotes holistic family well-being.
- Provides high-quality supportive services to families in need to prevent child abuse and neglect, and,
- Eliminates mandated reporting as a driver of racial disproportionality and disparity within the child welfare system.

Success of this reform effort will require transformation at the individual, organizational, and systems levels, and targeting of four critical areas:

- Improving Mandated Reporter training and support,
- Building pathways to community-based preventive services and supports at the Mandated Reporter level,
- Amending laws and organizational policy, and,
- Changing the flawed narratives that undergird the current system of mandated reporting.

Narrative Change

The narratives to which we subscribe shape the ways in which we view social problems and the people impacted by them. Narratives also shape our beliefs about what is possible, and they drive the system's approach to resolution. Our perceptions of mandatory reporting of child maltreatment are anchored by deeply entrenched narratives regarding child abuse and neglect, the child welfare system, race, class, and our own personal and professional welfare. As such, the work of narrative change is central to reforming mandated reporting.

In July 2023, the MSI began year one of a two-year formal partnership with FrameWorks for assistance with the development and execution of an effective narrative change strategy. FrameWorks is a think tank that helps mission-driven organizations communicate about social issues in ways that build public will to support progressive change.

As part of this partnership, FrameWorks will conduct listening sessions and exploratory focus groups to test messaging with key stakeholders, which will inform a framing strategy and subsequent communications campaign. FrameWorks will coordinate with the MSI Data Steering Committee to ensure alignment in research activities. See Table 1. for key milestones.

Table 1. Narrative Change: Key Milestones

Milestone	Timing
Initiate Listening Sessions	November 2023
Initiate Exploratory Focus Groups	January 2024
Finalize Framing Strategy and Brief	February 2024
Finalize Listening Session and Focus Group Summary of Findings	March 2024

MSI DISCOVERY PLAN AND PRELIMINARY TREND DATA

On June 16, 2023, the MSI Data Steering Committee was created to establish the initiative's comprehensive data Discovery Plan and conduct the related analysis. The Data Steering Committee is comprised of representatives from the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, Casey Family Programs, Commission for Children and Families, Evident Change, and DCFS' Continuous Quality Improvement Division and Hotline.

The data Discovery Plan will answer questions regarding "who" is making reports to the Hotline, "what" they are reporting, and "why" they report, utilizing quantitative and qualitative research methods in four key areas:

- Administrative Data,
- Exploration of Intimate Partner Violence,
- Stakeholder Experiences, Attitudes, and Perceptions Regarding Mandated Reporting, and,
- Organizational/Sector Readiness for Reform.

Data will be collected from the following sources:

- CWS/CMS, Structured Decision Making, and Safe Measures administrative data,
- Surveys of Mandated Reporters and DCFS staff and families impacted by mandated reporting,
- Focus groups with Mandated Reporters and DCFS staff, and,
- Mandated reporter training and policy from local organizations.

To avoid the common practice of over-surveilling marginalized communities for research purposes, the MSI will leverage existing data that was recently obtained during focus groups conducted with Los Angeles County families who have been impacted by mandated reporting. The focus groups, which were conducted by Castillo Consulting Partners and funded by Casey Family Programs, aimed to understand participants' experiences with mandated reporting and their vision for alternatives to the current model. These data will be included with the full array of data presented as part of the MSI Discovery Plan.

See Table 2. for an overview of the draft MSI Discovery Plan.

Table 2. Overview: Draft MSI Discovery Plan

Table 2. Overview: Draπ MSI Discovery Plan					
Area of Focus	Administrative Data	Survey	Focus Groups	Case Reading	Policy & Training Analysis
Trend Data					
Reports by allegation, demographic characteristics, geography, sector, organization, etc.	Х			Х	
Exploration of Intimate Partner Violence					
Prevalence of intimate partner violence	X		Χ	Χ	
Experiences, Perceptions, & Attitudes					
Major drivers, beliefs, & motivations related to reporting		Χ	Χ	Χ	
Exploration of the influence of bias, e.g., racial, class, other cognitive biases				Χ	
Overreporting & underreporting practices		Χ	Χ		
Perceived preparedness & support for reporting decisions		Χ	Χ		
DCFS Staff Experiences		Χ	Χ		
Family experiences with mandated reporting			Χ		
Perceived barriers to & facilitators of reform		Χ	Χ		
Perceptions of how reform will impact sectors, roles, workload, etc.		Χ	Χ		
Readiness for Reform					
Willingness to use the Community Response Guide		Χ	Χ		
Willingness to refer families to supportive services when a report is not indicated		Χ	Χ		
Identification of potential policy, practice, & training shifts required for reform		Χ	Χ		Χ
Access and availability of prevention services		Χ	Χ		Χ

Discovery Committee

On October 11, 2023, members of the MSI Data Steering Committee, and a broader cross section of stakeholders, including educators, medical professionals, community-based organizations, and lived experts were convened to begin finalizing survey and focus group questions, the policy and training analysis framework, and develop the associated outreach strategies. Initiation of the survey and focus groups is projected for December 2023. This committee, which will also be responsible for preliminary review of research findings, will continue its work through March 2024.

Preliminary Trend Data

The full complement of research included in the MSI Data Discovery Plan will be completed by Spring 2024 and presented publicly during a MSI data summit. However, a preliminary trend analysis of CWS/CMS administrative data was completed by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP). These data cover the period 2019 through 2022 and include population-level rates and descriptive statistics. It is important to note that rates data include all reporter types, as the functionality to disaggregate by reporter type is not available for those reports. Administrative data provide preliminary answers to the following questions:

- How often are children reported?
- Where are children reported?
- Which children are reported?
- What are children reported for?

See Exhibit A. for all data charts developed by the CCWIP. See below for highlights from the analysis.

Between 2019 and 2022, Los Angeles County reporting rates were lower than statewide allegation rates by an average of 2 children per thousand. As expected, reporting rates dropped during 2020 and steadily increased in subsequent years but did not reach prepandemic levels by the end of 2022. The Hawthorne, Vermont Corridor, and Lancaster DCFS regional offices consistently had the highest rates of maltreatment allegations. Black children were consistently reported to the Hotline at higher rates than all other races.

Although the allegation rate for infants decreased from 71 children per thousand in 2019 to 61 children per thousand by 2022, infants were the subject of maltreatment allegations at significantly higher rates than all other children. The age group with the second highest referral rates were children between the ages of 11 and 15.

In 2022, Black infants were nearly five times as likely to be reported as White infants, and nearly three times as likely to be reported as Latino infants. These infant-specific data speak to the importance of partnering with hospitals and community medical providers to help facilitate more accurate, consistent, and equitable reporting decisions, where necessary, and deferment from the Hotline to community-based supportive services whenever possible to do so safely.

In 2022, Mandated Reporters called the Hotline regarding 82,881 children. At 29% each, law enforcement and educators made more than half of all reports. One-quarter of children reported by law enforcement had their allegations substantiated, while just six percent of children reported by educators had a substantiated allegation following a DCFS investigation.

General neglect was the most common allegation. In 2022, 36% of children with allegations were reported for this form of maltreatment. At 19%, physical abuse was also

a common maltreatment allegation, and often among the top three for Mandated Reporters. Notably, 33% of children reported by law enforcement were reported for emotional abuse, the second most common maltreatment allegation made by this group. When made by law enforcement, an emotional abuse allegation can generally be viewed as a proxy for exposure to domestic violence, and this relatively high percentage speaks to the intersection of intimate partner violence and the child welfare system.

DECISION SUPPORT PROCESS FOR MANDATED REPORTERS

Studies¹ have found that reporting decisions are influenced by a host of factors, some of which may be altogether distinct or different from actual concerns about suspected child abuse and neglect. Common examples of these factors include racial and class bias, fear of personal or organizational liability, and uncertainty about how to help a family in needall of which have been found to result in both overreporting and underreporting suspected maltreatment. Researchers have also found that use of decision support processes can mitigate some of these factors and improve the quality of decisions¹.

Community Response Guide

As part of the MSI, Los Angeles County will develop and implement the Community Response Guide (CRG). The CRG is a web-based decision support tool that assists Mandated Reporters with making more accurate, consistent, and equitable decisions regarding concerns that may be reportable to the Hotline.

Once operational in Los Angeles County, a Mandated Reporter with a concern that may be reportable will have the option of accessing the CRG online, where they will answer a brief series of yes/no questions to describe their concerns, and receive one of three recommendations:

- 1. No Action is Required,
- 2. A Report to the DCFS Hotline is Required, or,
- 3. No Report to the DCFS Hotline is Required; however, Family Linkage to Supportive Services is Recommended.

When the CRG indicates that a report to the Hotline is required, the Mandated Reporter will either be directed to call the Hotline immediately to make a suspected child abuse or neglect report or the CRG will link to the Hotline's electronic reporting portal, for non-emergent matters, as defined by State policy. When linkage to supportive services is

¹ Tufford, L.& Lee, B. 2019. Decision-Making Factors in the Mandatory Reporting of Child Maltreatment. Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma.; Enosh, G., Alfandari, R., et. a. 2021. Assessing, Consulting, Reporting Heuristics in Professional Decision-Making Regarding Suspected Child Maltreatment in Community Healthcare Services. Child Maltreatment.; McTavish, J., Kimber, M. et al. 2017. Mandated Reporters' Experiences with Reporting Child Maltreatment: A Meta-Synthesis of Qualitative Studies. BMJ Open.; Banerjee, M., Reynolds, E., et al. 2019.; Hak, F., Guimaraes, T., & Santos, M. 2022. Towards effective clinical decision support systems: A Systematic Review. PLOS One.

recommended, the CRG will serve as a referral mechanism to the MSI Community Pathway. See the "MSI Community Pathway" section of this report.

The CRG is proprietary to Evident Change, the organization that developed the Structured Decision Making (SDM) tool. It is important to note that the CRG is not a risk tool or a predictive tool.

Evident Change has leveraged its deep experience and expertise in developing child welfare-specific decision support tools to custom design CRGs internationally and in jurisdictions across the country. CRGs are in various stages of design and implementation in Ohio, New Hampshire, Humboldt County, and San Diego County.

Recent pre-implementation testing included a *field test* where users practiced using the tool in real life scenarios (while following practice as usual to make their ultimate reporting decision) and *inter-rater reliability (IRR)* testing where users tested the CRG on standardized case scenarios.

- The field test indicated that users had a positive experience using the tool and found the reporting decision-support useful.
- IRR testing of the tool indicated that users testing the CRG were a.) able to use
 the tool to consistently come to the expected recommendation after reading
 hypothetical case scenarios and b.) came to more accurate reporting
 recommendations than the intended reporting decision of the practice as usual
 group (no tool situations).

Finally, while there were differences in reporting decisions by family characteristics when users did not use the CRG, there were no differences when the CRG was used. These results suggest enhanced consistency, accuracy, and equity with tool use.

In July 2023, Casey Family Programs executed a contract with Evident Change to fund the initial phase of development of the Los Angeles County CRG. In August 2023, development of the tool commenced. The Los Angeles County CRG will be custom designed to align with California law, as well as Los Angeles County policy and priorities for child safety and family well-being. The tool will be developed through a four-phased stakeholder engagement and participatory process, and under the stewardship of the MSI Leadership Team.

Due to the levels of stakeholder engagement and Los Angeles County-specific customization, CRG development is projected to be an 18-24-month process, with a targeted implementation date of no later than July 2025. See https://cprg.app.evidentchange.net/humboldt/ for a version of the CRG.

Table 3. CRG Development Phases

Phase	Description	Timeline
Planning Phase	Stakeholder engagement Planning for the Discovery Phase	August 2023 – November 2023
Discovery Phase	Collection and analysis of surveys, focus group, and administrative data.	December 2023 – May 2024
_	- Mandated Reporting policy and training analysis	
Design Phase	CRG creation and testingDevelopment of CRG policy and practice guidelines for users	June 2024 – January 2025
Implementation Phase	Development of CRG training and coaching for usersCRG piloting	January 2025 – July 2025

General Neglect Decision Support Tool

In the interim, Evident Change is partnering with the MSI AB 2085 Work Group to develop a General Neglect Decision Support Tool, a non-web-based decision tree that Los Angeles County Mandated Reporters may utilize to aid their decision-making when they are considering the need to report suspected general neglect.

As with the CRG, the General Neglect Decision Support Tool will produce three recommendations:

- 1. No Action is Required,
- 2. A Report to the DCFS Hotline is Required, or
- 3. No Report to the DCFS Hotline is Required; however, Family Linkage to Supportive Services is Recommended.

The General Neglect Decision Support Tool will be included in and disseminated via the MSI AB 2085 Mandated Reporter Training Supplement that is currently under development and projected for release in January 2024. See the "AB 2085 Guidance and Operationalization" and "Mandated Reporter Training" sections of this report.

Hotline Decision Support Process

In November 2017, the Hotline launched Child Abuse Reporting Electronic System (CARES), its online reporting system, which makes available for Mandated Reporters a short decision tree that serves as an alternate method of assessing potentially reportable child abuse or neglect. Operationalizing CARES required changing the Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act and involved having an independent evaluator assess the tool to assure that it would not jeopardize child safety. Since its implementation, CARES utilization has steadily increased to an average of approximately 800 reports per month.

MSI COMMUNITY PATHWAY AND INITIATIVE ALIGNMENT

MSI Community Pathway

The current model of mandated reporting offers reporting professionals a binary choice-report suspected child abuse and neglect, or do not report. This limited range of options often results in overreporting of families who have needs, but do not require a child protective services intervention and importantly, missed opportunities to connect families to supportive services to **prevent** maltreatment from occurring.

The MSI will offer Mandated Reporters a third option of connecting families to community-based services and support via the MSI Community Pathway, when indicated. The MSI Community Pathway will be comprised of existing networked community-based organizations, such as a Family Community Resource Center or Prevention and Aftercare Network, with the ability to link families to a continuum of holistic preventive and promotive services and supports. Families identified by the General Neglect Decision Support Tool (or CRG in the long term) to be in need of supportive services will be connected, via a dedicated services navigator, to the MSI Community Pathway.

Successful implementation of the MSI Community Pathway will require bolstering of existing prevention infrastructure within designated communities to create dedicated capacity to expedite services navigation and services delivery to MSI-identified families. Preliminary discussions with community-based organizations regarding the vision for the MSI Community Pathway providers are underway. MSI Community Pathway locations will ultimately be determined by the location of the MSI pilot programs. The MSI Community Pathway should be viewed as a component of the broader community pathway in Los Angeles County's Comprehensive Prevention Plan for children and families.

MSI Pilots

MSI pilots will serve as opportunities to test a new approach to mandated reporting that involves providing Mandated Reporters the tools that they need to make sound reporting decisions and connect families to supportive services when appropriate. Each MSI pilot will include the following core components:

- Implementation of the AB 2085 Training Supplement, which is inclusive of the General Neglect Decision Support Tool, and
- Implementation of the MSI Community Pathway, which includes:
 - A co-located dedicated services navigator who is attached to a local networked community-based organization, and,
 - Dedicated capacity to serve MSI-referred families.

The MSI currently has capacity to fund up to three pilots in high-impact communities and is in early discussions with several reporting organizations regarding serving as a MSI pilot site.

When MSI pilot sites have been identified, Evident Change will conduct localized prevention services inventories to assess community capacity and needs in designated pilot communities. The MSI anticipates launching at least one pilot by the first quarter of 2024.

Initiative Integration and Alignment

There are opportunities to integrate the MSI with several other aligned initiatives that are currently underway in Los Angeles County.

Public Health Nursing Early Intervention Program

The MSI is working with the Department of Public Health and DCFS to explore a partnership with the Public Health Nursing Early Intervention (PHNEI) program. The PHNEI is a new program that will provide children, youth, and families Public Health Nurse services to:

- reduce recidivism and entries into the child welfare system,
- improve health outcomes, and,
- strengthen family capacity, and help families navigate children's health care needs.

PHNEI support would serve as an enhancement to a MSI pilot with a health care-focused reporting organization, such as a hospital or community medical clinic.

Plans of Safe Care

The MSI is also working with the OCP to develop a strategy to align and integrate with Plans of Safe Care (PoSC) pilots wherever possible. As part of the pilots, PoSCs are being initiated in hospital settings for pregnant people using substances and substance-affected newborns and their parents to align with the County's prevention and promotion goals for children and families – identifying family needs as far upstream as possible in natural touchpoints for families (e.g., healthcare, education, and other community settings), and linking families to services in community to avoid interaction with the child welfare system.

As part of this integration, a PoSC module for health care providers will be added to the AB 2085 Training Supplement eLearning. The MSI and OCP are also exploring leveraging the FrameWorks partnership to support narrative change specific to PoSCs within hospital settings, as well as exploring the feasibility of implementing a joint MSI - PoSC pilot.

Prevention Advisory Committee

The MSI is a part of the recently established OCP and DCFS-led Prevention Advisory Committee. The Prevention Advisory Committee replaced the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) Advisory Committee and brings together lived experts, community experts, and systems partners to facilitate strategic alignment, coordination, and leveraging of resources across various County-led prevention-focused initiatives, such as FFPSA, PoSC, and Thriving Families, Safer Children. With funding from OCP and Casey Family Programs, the Prevention Advisory Committee is able to compensate the lived and community experts for their time and expertise, as well as provide support and mentoring, as needed.

The MSI Community Pathway will also incorporate learnings from other prevention-focused efforts led by OCP, First 5 LA, DCFS, and community partners, including the work to better understand family needs holistically, referral processes, and the use of technology and social media to facilitate linkages to services.

Other Prevention-Focused Efforts

The County's nascent Community Health Workers initiative and Preventative Legal Services project would also serve as enhancements of MSI pilots if the location of the selected communities are geographically conducive to collaboration.

AB 2085 GUIDANCE AND OPERATIONALIZATION

On January 1, 2023, <u>AB 2085</u> went into effect and changed the Penal Code definition of general neglect to be the:

"Negligent failure of a person having the care or custody of a child to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred, but the child is at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness." AB 2085 also provides that "general neglect does not include a parent's economic disadvantage".

The MSI has played a major role in increasing stakeholder awareness of the new law.

On June 22, 2023, the AB 2085 Work Group was established to develop operational guidance for implementation of AB 2085 in Los Angeles County. The AB 2085 Work Group is comprised of representatives from Casey Family Programs, Evident Change, Children's Law Center Los Angeles, Safe and Sound, UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence, Eve Sheedy Consulting, and DCFS' Hotline, Risk Management Division, and Executive Team. The group has focused on solidifying the most ambiguous and subjective language in the law, "substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness". Doing

so will facilitate reporting professionals' decision-making and inform organizational mandated reporting training and policy.

On September 27, 2023, the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) released a draft All County Letter (ACL) inclusive of AB 2085 guidance for stakeholder review and input. The draft ACL encouraged counties to "develop clear policies and procedures for determining when a child may be at substantial risk of suffering serious physical harm or illness", which is in alignment with the aims of the AB 2085 Work Group. The MSI solicited and consolidated feedback from its partners and submitted a Los Angeles County response to CDSS.

Finalized operational guidance for AB 2085 will be included in and disseminated via the AB 2085 Mandated Reporter Training Supplement.

Additional DCFS Efforts

The Hotline utilizes the SDM Hotline tool to make its screening decisions, as does every other county in California. Pending CDSS and Evident Change's updating of the SDM Hotline tool, the Hotline provided preliminary AB 2085 guidance to its staff in the form of an infographic on May 31, 2023. The infographic included examples of situations that no longer meet the reasonable suspicion threshold for a DCFS investigation.

Additionally, for a number of years, the Hotline has focused on ensuring that conditions of pure economic disadvantage are not screened in for a DCFS investigation. DCFS has historically and continues to fund Prevention and Aftercare Programs that aim to improve economic opportunities and support self-sufficiency.

MANDATED REPORTER TRAINING

Mandated Reporter training is a critical area in which we have failed to adequately prepare reporting professionals to make sound reporting decisions. The MSI's training philosophy, which was shaped by relevant research and engagement with Los Angeles County Mandated Reporters, maintains that training must:

- Be child and family-centered,
- Educate Mandated Reporters on the serious realities of child maltreatment, current law, and their legal responsibilities without the fearmongering and coercive tone found in many trainings,
- Foster capacity to think critically about suspected child abuse and neglect and equip professionals to make sound decisions,
- Target racial and socioeconomic disproportionality, and
- Prioritize prevention of maltreatment.

Further, the MSI posits that a well-trained and properly supported workforce **reduces** organizational risk.

The MSI's training strategy includes three deliverables:

- 1. AB 2085 Mandated Reporter Training Supplement,
- 2. Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum Development Guide, and
- 3. "Plug and Play" Comprehensive Mandated Reporter Training.

AB 2085 Mandated Reporter Training Supplement

On July 1, 2023, the MSI entered into an agreement with the UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence to lead the development of the AB 2085 Mandated Reporter Training Supplement (Training Supplement) through a work group process. The MSI Training Supplement Work Group is comprised of representatives from the UCLA Prevention Center of Excellence, Casey Family Programs, SHIELDS for Families, Safe and Sound, CASA of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Office of Education (LACOE), and DCFS' Hotline and Training Division.

As implied by the name, the Training Supplement is intended to enhance existing mandated reporter training by providing operational guidance for AB 2085 and a decision support process that is inclusive of the General Neglect Decision Support Tool. The Training Supplement will also serve as an introduction to the MSI's training philosophy and overarching paradigm shift toward prevention of maltreatment and away from unnecessary involvement with the child welfare system. The Training Supplement will be released in the following formats:

- Pre-Recorded STAR (Stress Trauma and Resilience) Seminar,
- PowerPoint Deck with Facilitator's Notes,
- eLearning, and,
- eLearning for Health Care Professionals.

The Training Supplement will be released in January 2024 and disseminated broadly in collaboration with LACOE and by leveraging the networks of the MSI Coalition.

It is recommended that all County departments that employ Mandated Reporters implement the AB 2085 Training Supplement upon release. The MSI lead consulted with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) regarding this recommendation. DHR advised that the recommendation be implemented via joint memo advising departments to assign the online training to their Mandated Reporters in the TalentWorks System. The MSI will consult with DCFS about co-authoring the memo with DHR, and work with DHR and the CEO Labor Division to develop the most effective cross-departmental communication, implementation, and tracking strategy.

Mandated Reporter Training Curriculum Development Guide

California law does not require standardized mandated reporter training. As a result, the content and quality of training varies significantly by organization. To remedy this the MSI

will create and make available to organizations a Mandated Reporter Training Development Guide (Guide) in effort to achieve a degree of standardization in training philosophy, tone, learning objectives, terminology, activities, etc. The Guide will be informed by MSI Discovery Phase findings, including the mandated reporter policy and training analysis. Development of the Guide is projected to begin in February 2024.

"Plug and Play" Comprehensive Mandated Reporter Training

The final MSI training deliverable will be a ready-made, "plug and play" Comprehensive Mandated Reporter Training (Comprehensive Training) that is fully immersed in and reflective of the mandated supporting paradigm shift. The comprehensive training will be released in an eLearning format and made available to any organization that wishes to utilize it.

The Comprehensive Training is projected to be completed by early Summer 2024 to align with the near-universal school district requirement that all employees complete mandated reporter training within the first 30 days of the new school year.

The timeline for the Comprehensive Training is also influenced by a desire to align with statewide efforts to avoid producing conflicting training materials. The California Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) is redesigning its publicly available mandated reporter training and has expressed a desire to partner with the MSI to ensure alignment. Additionally, improving training will be a focal area of the statewide Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force (Task Force). The Task Force is expected to include recommendations for mandates in training content and format in its final report that is projected to be released in June 2024.

DCFS FRONT-END REDESIGN

The Hotline is a high-volume, large-scale operation that has steadily received between 183,024 to 186,999 reports of suspected child maltreatment annually since 2014. These reports are received and assessed by 160 Children's Social Workers, 27 Supervising Children's Social Workers, and six Managers.

Several efforts to safely defer families from the Hotline to community-based services and support were already underway when the May 2nd Evolving from Mandated Reporter to Mandated Supporter motion was passed. DCFS has teamed with internal and external stakeholders, to create, modify, and implement innovative programs, pilots, and systems to directly connect families to services instead of referring them for an investigation.

Implementation of the Community Prevention Linkages Program and Family Urgent Response Systems (FURS), as well as better use of the SDM Hotline decision support tool has resulted in a safe, 34% reduction of referrals generated between 2014 – 2022. In 2014, the Hotline screened in 39% (n=72,290) of all reports made and by 2022, it had screened in 25% (n=47,370) of all reports. A lower screen in rate has resulted in 24,920

fewer DCFS investigations in 2022, as compared to 2014, which translates to 2,000 fewer investigations each month; 290 fewer investigations each week; and 69 fewer investigations each day. These reductions have not resulted in children being less safe, nor an increase in parental/caregiver caused child fatalities.

Structured Decision Making

In recent years, the Hotline has prioritized ensuring closer adherence to SDM user guidelines, which has resulted in increased consistency and focus on using standardized definitions and examples. Closer adherence to SDM guidelines also reduces the likelihood of emotions, opinions, or biases influencing decision making, which is critically important for assessing suspected child maltreatment. Over the years, the Hotline's screening process has become more objective and precise. This has resulted in a reduction in staff being influenced by "buzzwords" and coded language, such as "hostile" and "argumentative, and instead focusing more intently on behavioral descriptors of Mandated Reporter concerns. The Hotline screening process is also more deliberate and lengthier, as more questions are asked, more information is acquired, and more options are considered.

Community Prevention Linkages Program

For many years the Hotline has conducted secondary screening for service needs after ruling out a need for a DCFS investigation. Prior to July 2018, these screenings were conducted via the Community-Based Response Program. In July 2018 the Community Prevention Linkages (CPL) Program (also known as the Hotline 2 Helpline) launched as a more robust, better funded, and more collaborative version of the Community-Based Response Program. The CPL Program involves referring families with concerns that do not meet the statutory threshold for a DCFS investigation to community-based organizations to meet their needs and prevent maltreatment. Implementation of the CPL Program led to an increase in families accepting offered services. Between July 2017 through June 2018, 227 families accepted services. This number rose to 2,414 families accepting services in 2022. A recent study² conducted by Palmer and colleagues found that families who completed CPL-referred services were less likely to have children enter foster care when compared to families who did not receive services.

Family Urgent Response System

The Hotline worked with the CDSS and other partners to successfully launch the Family Urgent Response System (FURS) in March of 2021. The FURS support line and its mobile response option have also contributed to a reduction in DCFS interventions, as the program provides placement stabilization services to current and former foster youth

² Palmer, L., McCroskey, J. et al. 2022. Impacts of the Prevention and Aftercare Program in Los Angeles County: A Propensity Score Analysis of Subsequent Child Protective Services Involvement. Child Welfare.

and their caregivers. FURS reduces the need for calls to the Hotline, law enforcement, or the psychiatric mobile response team (PMRT) when there is an issue in the home.

<u>Domestic Violence Project</u>

In March 2023, the Hotline launched its Domestic Violence Project. The Domestic Violence Project aims to improve Hotline staff capacity to appropriately assess maltreatment reports that involve allegations of intimate partner violence (IPV) and ensure that families receive the most appropriate intervention to ensure child safety and meet their needs. As part of the project, Hotline staff flag reports of IPV and collaborate with a community-based organization with expertise in IPV to provide services and support to families. An additional benefit of the Domestic Violence Project is that Emergency Response Childrens' Social Workers also have access to the co-located IPV experts. In August 2023, more than 500 calls were referred to the Domestic Violence Project. The Domestic Violence Project is also enhancing the Hotline's capacity to collect data that can be used to identify trends and inform resources allocation in communities.

Continued Efforts

Casey Family Programs is working closely with DCFS to explore additional innovative approaches to redesigning the front end of the system. These efforts have included conducting a national scan of child protection hotline best practices and coordinating a peer-to-peer learning session with Colorado to learn more about their team-based secondary screening model which involves reviewing, evaluating, and potentially redirecting maltreatment reports after the initial screen-in decision is made by the Hotline. Exploration of the appropriateness of this model for Los Angeles County is underway. Recommendations for front-end redesigned should be informed by these efforts and will be included in a subsequent MSI progress report.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

In May 2023, the MSI began working with the Chief Executive Office Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations Branch (CEO LAIR) to help inform its strategy for legislative advocacy. CEO LAIR is tracking all bills involving mandated reporting and will work with the MSI to have MSI-supported positions added to the 2024-2025 State Legislative Agenda when the review period opens.

In June 2023, the MSI initiated an effort that was ultimately led by Children's Law Center Los Angeles and Safe and Sound to compile a compendium of all enacted mandated reporting-related legislation to help inform its legislative advocacy.

In August 2023, the MSI initiated early discussions with several California counties to explore the feasibility of supporting legislation that would facilitate counties' implementation of decision support tools during the next or subsequent legislative session.

More broadly, the MSI will work in close collaboration with the state's Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force (Task Force) and its Policy Subcommittee to advance a coordinated and strategic policy agenda. The Task Force Policy Subcommittee is projected to begin meeting in November 2023. As such, a preliminary policy agenda and related recommendations will be included in the next MSI progress update.

MSI FUNDING AND SUSTAINABILITY AND LONG-TERM PLACEMENT

MSI Funding

DCFS-allocated State Block Grant funding serves as the primary funding source for the MSI. The OCP and Center for Strategic Partnerships (Center) were also instrumental in establishing and overseeing a third-party administrator relationship with Southern California Grantmakers, which serves as the mechanism through which the MSI can access State Block Grant funding. This funding will be used for CRG development, the MSI Community Pathway, training deliverables, pilot projects, narrative change efforts, and strategic collaboration. This one-time funding currently has a June 2024 spend down date. If the State Block Grant spend down date is not extended an alternate primary funding source will be required beginning in FY 2024/2025.

The MSI is also being supported by philanthropic funding. The Center has collaborated with the MSI to build philanthropic and civic partnerships to advance the work. In March 2023, the Center worked with Leslie Gilbert-Lurie, Vice Chair of the Blue-Ribbon Commission on Child Protection (Blue-Ribbon Commission) and Aileen Adams Co-Executive Director of the Blue-Ribbon Commission to co-host a MSI Funders Briefing. The Funders Briefing featured David Sanders, Chair of the Blue-Ribbon Commission and President and CEO of Casey Family Programs, who is a champion for mandated reporting reform broadly and the CRG specifically. More than one dozen foundations attended the Funders Briefing and expressed interest in partnering. Since that time, 12 foundations have been engaged and at the time of this writing, the MSI has received funding from the Anthony and Jeanne Pritzker Family Foundation, Barry and Wendy Meyer Foundation, Casey Family Programs, and Weingart Foundation. This funding will be used for consultant support and unmet costs associated with MSI training deliverables and strategic collaboration. Additional fundraising outreach is planned for 2024, which includes a briefing for leaders in the civic and funding community to be held at the home of Leslie Gilbert Lurie.

Funding Sustainability

In the coming years, there will be minimal ongoing costs associated with CRG maintenance and updating of mandated reporter training. The most significant ongoing costs will be associated with services navigation and provision of services via the MSI Community Pathway. Identification of sustainable funding sources is necessary. When a MSI pilot is operational, a small-scale funding stream analysis and sustainability mapping will be conducted.

Relatedly, the OCP is leading early discussions with the Department of Public Health and MSI about assessing sustainability more comprehensively across select prevention-focused initiatives. Recommendations for MSI funding sustainability will be included in a subsequent progress report.

WORKFORCE SUPPORT

The MSI's current workforce consists of the Interim Executive Director of the Committee on Prevention and Promotion and administrative support staff from the Commission Services Division of the Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors (EO). Efforts to increase MSI's workforce support are underway.

DCFS has agreed to loan one Children's Services Administrator I (CSA I) item to the MSI for a one-year period, with the possibility of the item being permanently allocated to the initiative. Interviews were conducted during the week of October 2nd and a selection has been made. The MSI is working with DCFS to onboard the CSA I as soon as possible.

Philanthropic investments have afforded the MSI the ability to onboard independent consultant support. Finally, the EO will make available to MSI temporary staffing support from a contracted employment agency upon request.

Despite these efforts, given the scope of the MSI, additional staffing is required to adequately support the various components, including design, implementation, and management of the pilots, roll out of the training deliverables, CRG development and implementation, and strategic collaboration.

MSI's LONG-TERM PLACEMENT

It is too early in the MSI's life cycle to make a sound recommendation regarding its long-term placement within the County, as this recommendation should be informed by a number of yet-to-be-determined factors. These factors include the structure of and funding source for the CRG and MSI Community Pathway and the longer-term shape of the County's prevention infrastructure. In the near-term, it is recommended that the MSI remain under the leadership of the Interim Executive Director of the Committee on Prevention and Promotion. Recommendations for MSI's long-term placement within the County will be included in a subsequent progress update.

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

The MSI's strategic collaboration strategy involves robust stakeholder outreach and engagement. The Interim Executive Director of the Committee on Prevention and Promotion personally outreached to all stakeholders named in the motion and invited them to be a part of the MSI Coalition. In addition to the collaborative partnerships described in previous sections of this report, MSI has engaged stakeholders through a variety of ways.

MSI Coalition

The MSI Coalition is comprised of a broad array of stakeholders who have expressed an interest in being a part of the MSI and/or remaining aware of its activities. On May 12, 2023, the MSI Coalition was convened to provide a space for stakeholders to discuss the motion, the MSI's strategy, and opportunities for partnership. Two-hundred and thirty-four stakeholders attended the inaugural meeting and engaged in enriching discussions. The next MSI Coalition meeting is scheduled for December 7th and meetings, thereafter, will occur quarterly. MSI Coalition meetings will serve as an opportunity for stakeholders to receive updates on the MSI and state-level efforts, inform implementation of the MSI strategy, and share information, best practices, and innovation with peers.

MSI Leadership Team

The MSI Leadership Team is comprised of a cross section of decision-makers from key reporting sectors, such as law enforcement, educators, medical and mental health providers, community members, and lived experts. The Leadership Team will serve as stewards of the initiative and help to inform its strategic direction.

Leadership Team members will also play a significant role in the MSI Discovery Phase, as they will help to recruit survey and focus group participants and provide organization-specific content for the policy and training analysis. On August 4, 2023, more than 70 stakeholders attended the full-day, MSI Leadership Team Kickoff Meeting. Members of the Leadership Team will be invited to attend all MSI Coalition meetings, invited to participate in MSI work groups, and engaged at important decision points; however, full Leadership Team convenings will occur on an "as needed" basis, out of an abundance of respect for members' time.

California Mandated Reporting to Community Reporting Task Force

In March 2023, the California Child Welfare Council established the Mandated Reporting to Community Supporting Task Force (Task Force) to lead statewide efforts to reform mandated reporting. The Task Force has been charged with issuing a set of comprehensive recommendations to the California Child Welfare Council in June 2024. The MSI was allocated an "Agency Partner" seat on the Task Force, which is currently filled by the Interim Executive Director of the Committee on Prevention and Promotion. Several other MSI Coalition members were also selected to sit on the MRCS Task Force.

The 31-member Task Force held its inaugural meeting on September 18, 2023. Task Force Subcommittees are expected to begin by November 2023, and will include the following areas of focus:

- Narrowing the Legal Definition of Neglect,
- Mandated Reporter Curriculum and Training,
- Potential Legal Liability Issues for Mandated Reporters,

- Policy and Practice Reforms, and,
- Research and Data.

The MSI will partner closely with the Task Force to ensure alignment on strategic priorities, such as training and legislative advocacy, to the greatest extent possible. The MSI Coalition will also serve as a vehicle by which Los Angeles County stakeholders can inform statewide efforts and vice versa.

Non-MSI-Led Mandated Reporting Reform

It is important to note that non-MSI-led mandated reporting reform efforts are underway in Los Angeles County, such as the work taking place in Inglewood, California. The MSI is partnering with leadership of the Inglewood effort to share learning, leverage resources, and align wherever possible.

Ongoing Stakeholder Awareness Building and Engagement

During this review period, a significant amount of time has been dedicated to raising awareness about the need for mandated reporting reform, addressing fears and concerns about said reform, and engaging stakeholders- regardless of their position- in the work that is underway. This has involved numerous informational presentations, one-on-one, and small group meetings locally and throughout the state. This includes, but is not limited to engagement at the venues and with the groups listed below:

- California Alliance of Child and Family Services' Annual Conference,
- California Association of School Counselors' Annual Conference,
- City of Los Angeles Division of Youth Protection within the Youth Development Department,
- Student Mental Health Policy Work Group,
- Health Management Associates Organized Training for Los Angeles Area Managed Care Plans: LA Care, Healthnet, Anthem, Promise, Kaiser, and Molina,
- Inter-Agency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect (ICAN),
- LACOE Convened School District Human Resources Directors,
- LACOE Convened School District Superintendents and Human Resources Directors.
- Los Angeles County Child Abuse Prevention Councils (CAPCs),
- Los Angeles County Domestic Violence Council,
- Southern California Permanente Regional Group (Kaiser) Family Violence Prevention Programs,
- Various School Districts, and,
- Various Medical Care Providers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that all County departments that employ mandated reporters implement the AB 2085 Training Supplement upon its release in January 2024. Additional recommendations will be included in subsequent updates as the MSI progresses.

Should you have any questions, please contact me by email at huntet@dcfs.lacounty.gov.

TH:vz

Enclosures

c: Sheriff, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department

Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

Chief Executive Officer

County Counsel

Interim Chief Information Officer

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Human Resources

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Social Services

Director, Los Angeles County Department of Youth Development

Executive Director, Los Angeles County Office of Child Protection

Director, Los Angeles County Office of Education

Executive Director, Poverty Alleviation Initiative

Executive Director, Los Angeles County Women and Girls Initiative

Interim Executive Director, Los Angeles County Commission for Children and Families

Executive Director, Center for Strategic Partnerships

Executive Director, Domestic Violence Council

Executive Director, Interagency Council on Child Abuse and Neglect

Chair, Prevention Services Task Force/Executive Director, Los Angeles County Anti-

Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion Initiative

Executive Director, First 5 Los Angeles

Childrens' Deputies, Board of Supervisors

Education Deputies, Board of Supervisors

Health Deputies, Board of Supervisors

Justice Deputies, Board of Supervisors

EXHIBIT A

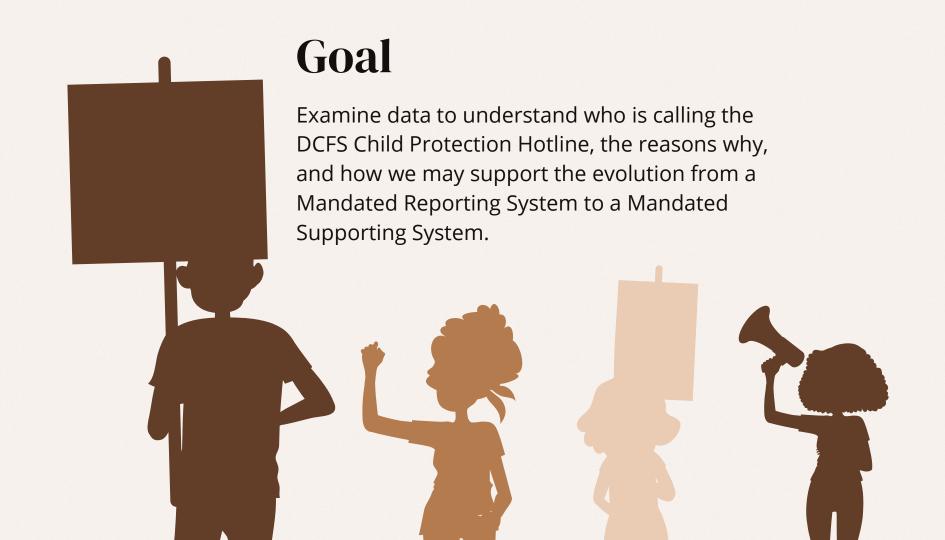
Preliminary Trend Data Prepared by the California Child Welfare Indicator's Project

Evolving from Mandated Reporting to Mandated Supporting Board Motion Directive #1

Preliminary Trend Data Prepared by the California Child Welfare Indicator's Project

October 2023

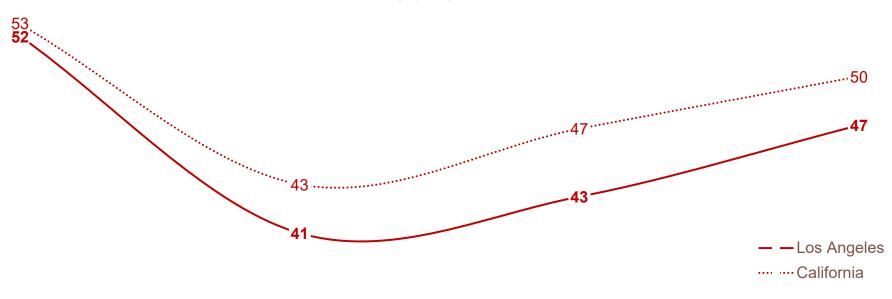




How Often Are Children Reported?

Allegation Rates

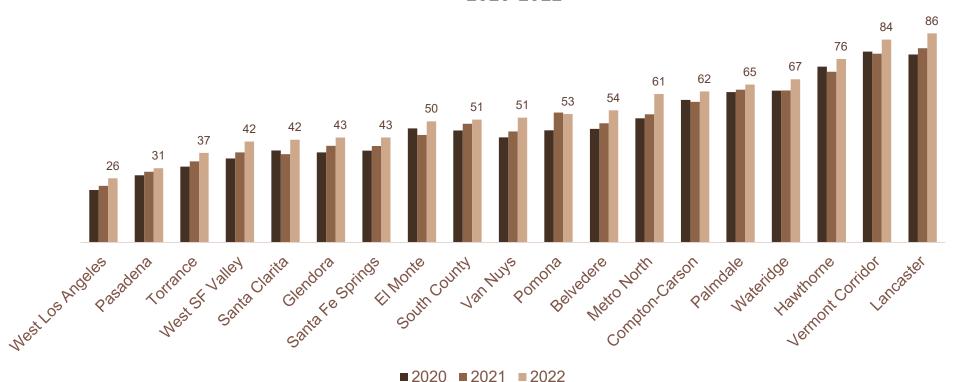
Los Angeles & California Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



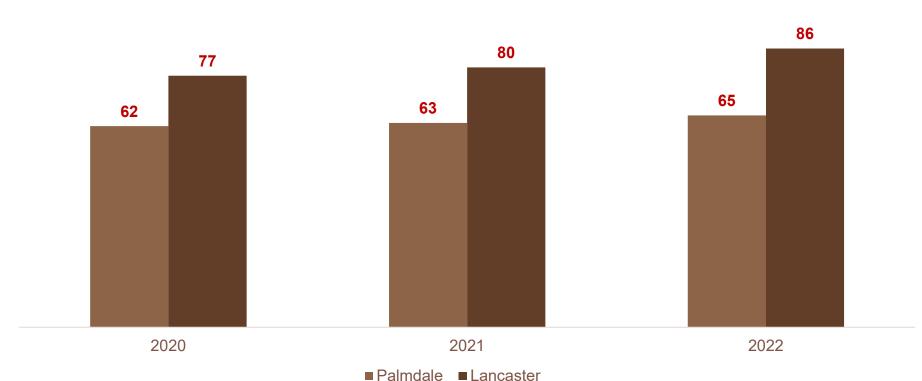
Where Are Children Reported?

Allegation Rates by Regions & SPAs

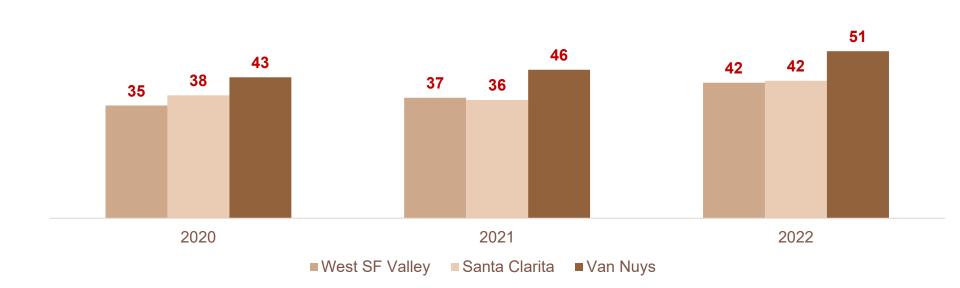
Field Offices in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



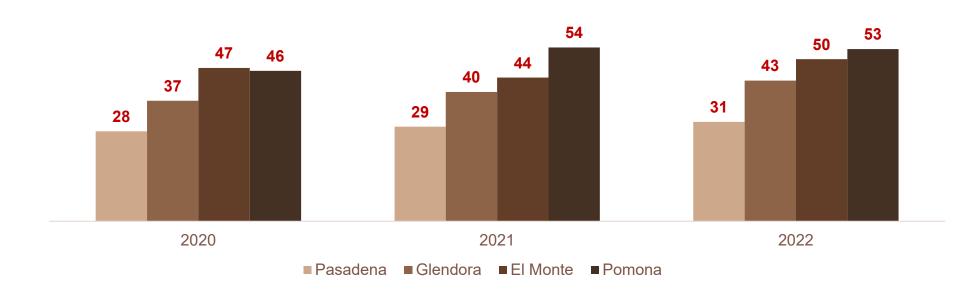
SPA 1 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



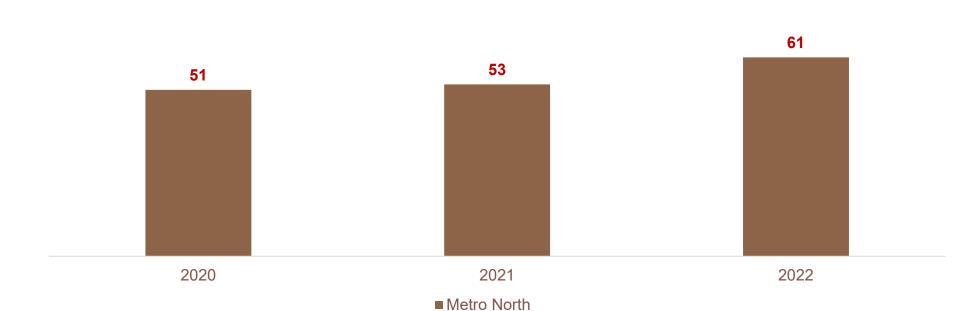
SPA 2 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



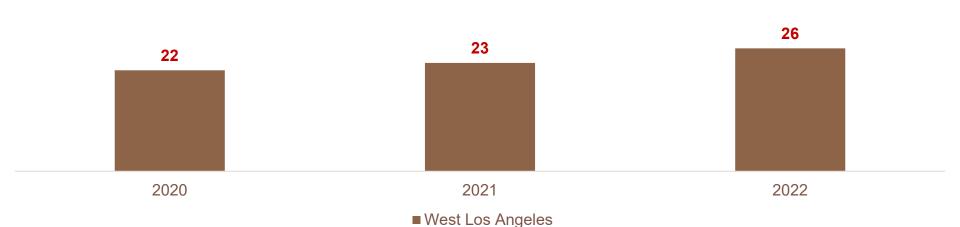
SPA 3 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



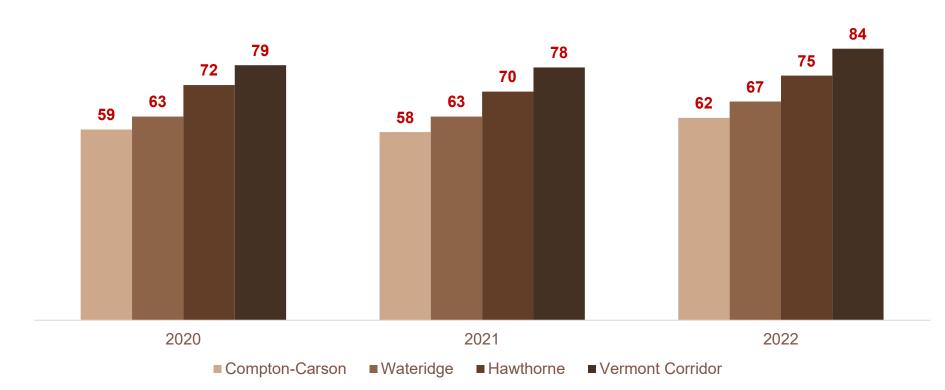
SPA 4 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



SPA 5 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates

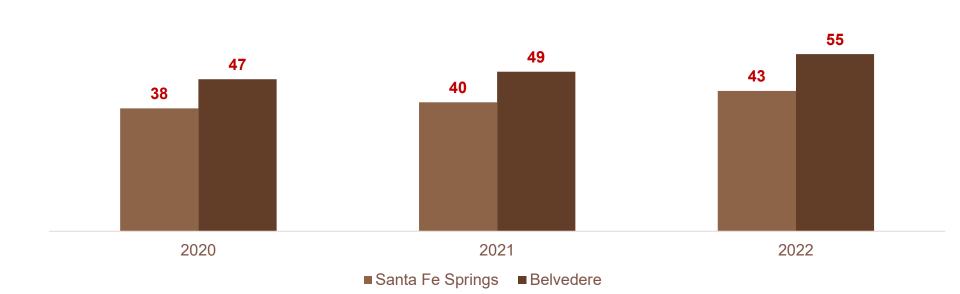


SPA 6 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates



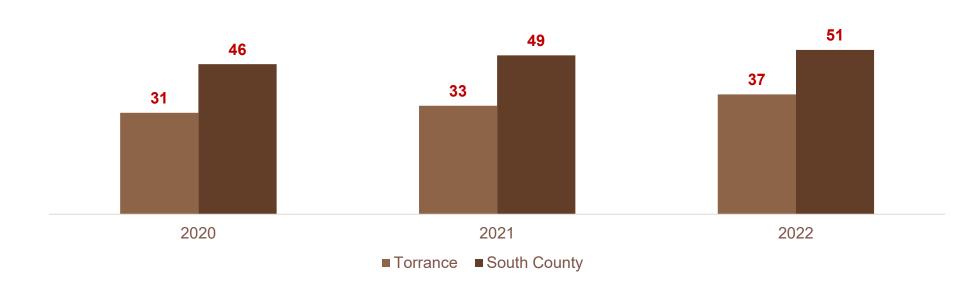
SPA 7 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates

Per 1,000 Children 2020-2022



SPA 8 in Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates

Per 1,000 Children 2020-2022

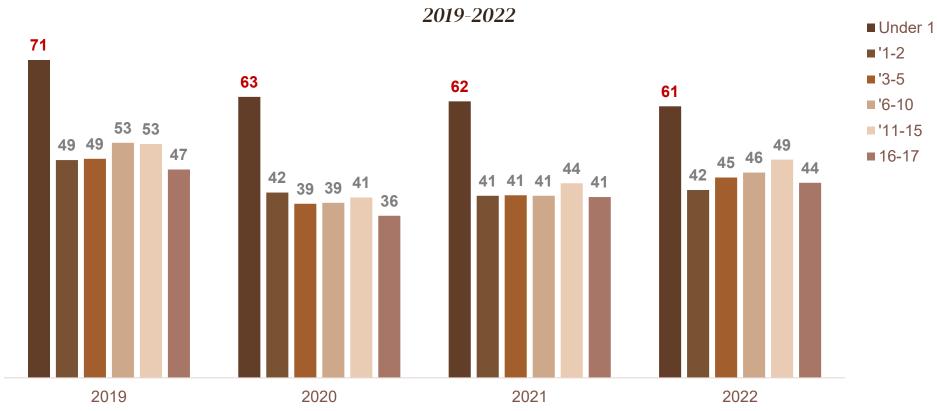


Which Children Are Reported?

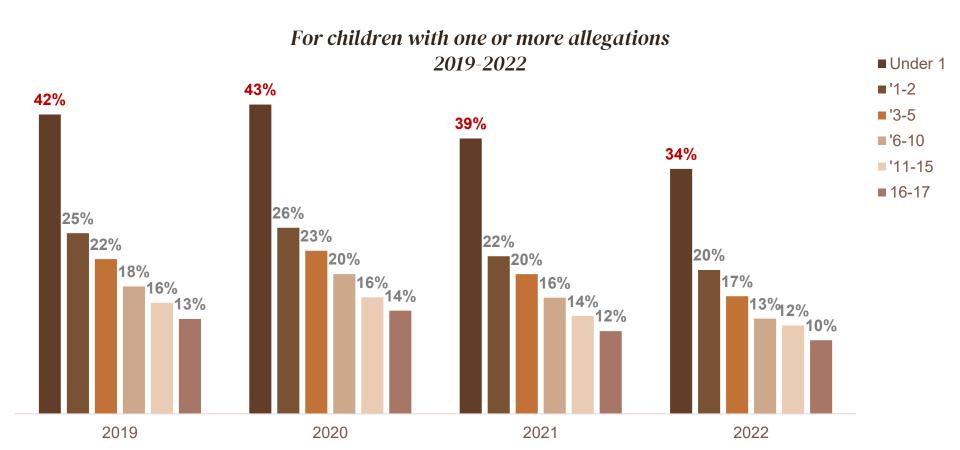
Allegation Rates by Age, Race/Ethnicity, & Sex at Birth

Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates by Age

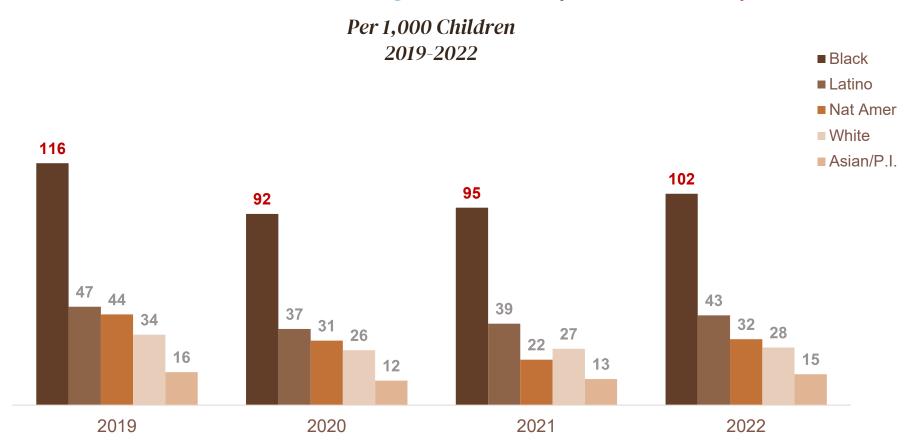
Per 1,000 Children 2019-2022



Los Angeles
Percentage of Allegations that Were Substantiated by Age



Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

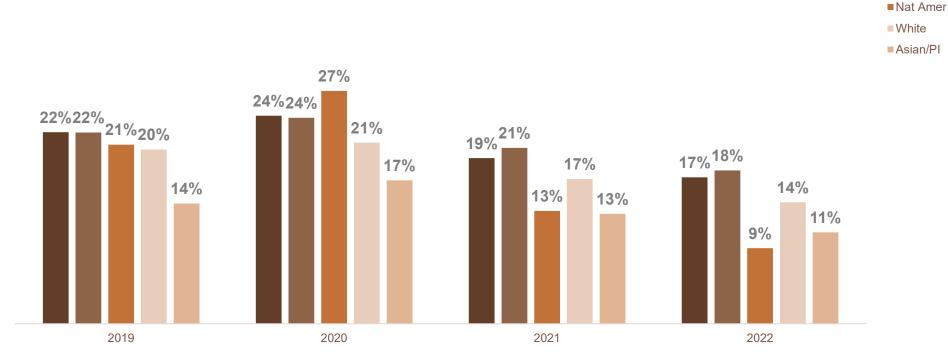


Los Angeles Percentage of Allegations that Were Substantiated by Race/Ethnicity

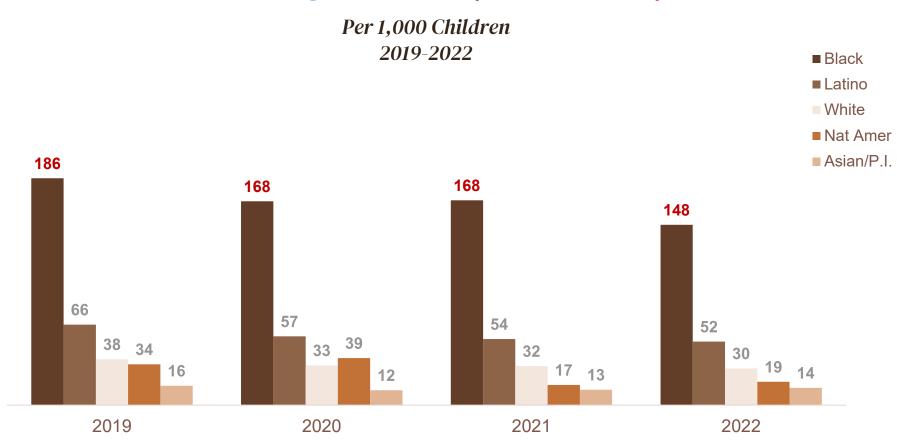


■Black

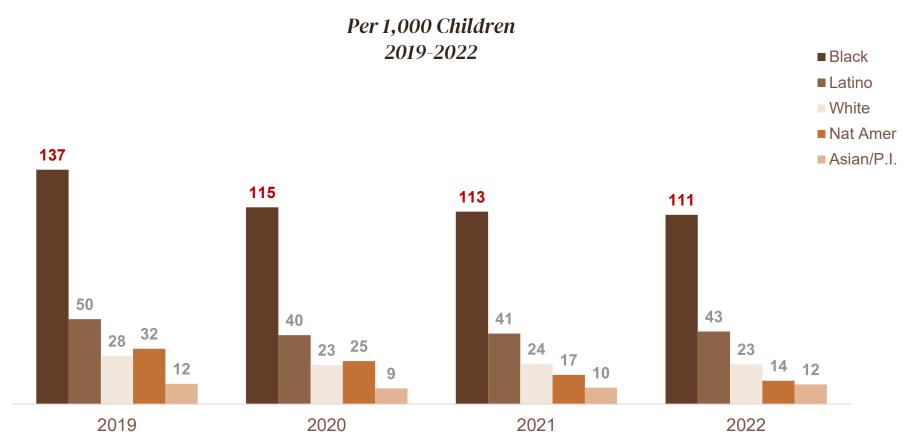
■ Latino



Los Angeles Infant Allegation Rates by Race/Ethnicity

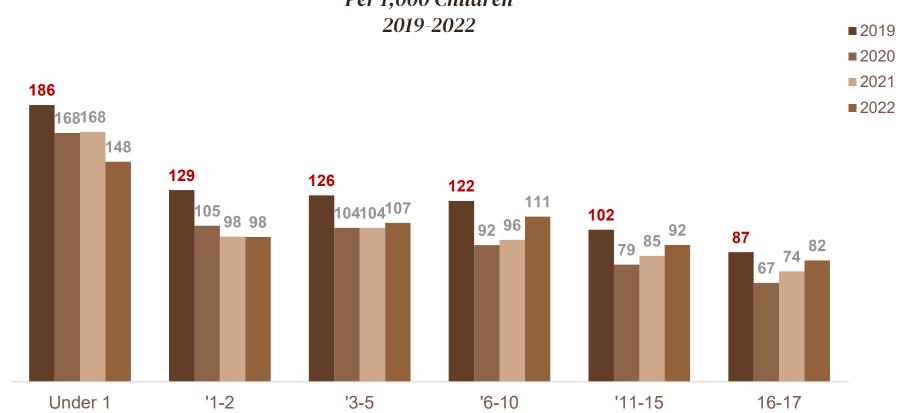


Los Angeles 0-5 Years Allegation Rates by Race/Ethnicity



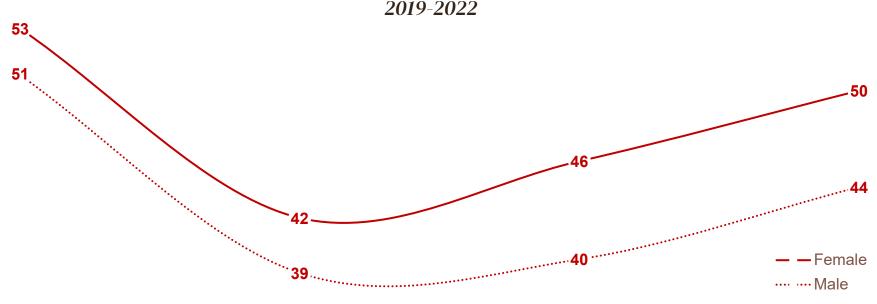
Los Angeles Black Allegation Rates by Age

Per 1,000 Children



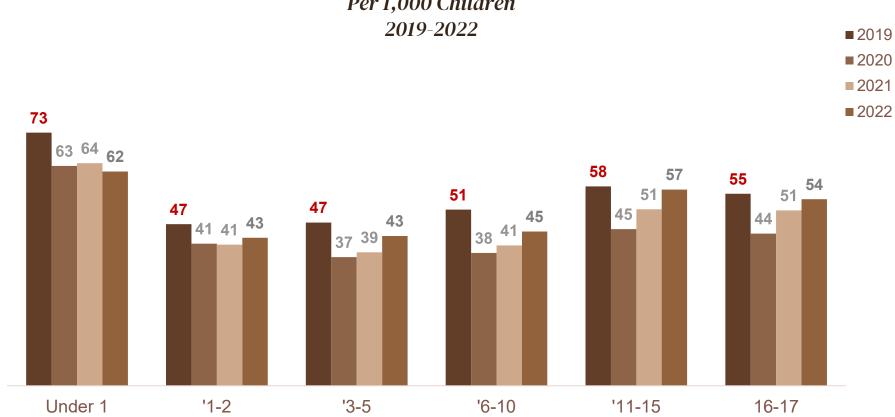
Los Angeles Child Maltreatment Allegation Rates by Sex at Birth





Los Angeles Female Allegation Rates by Age

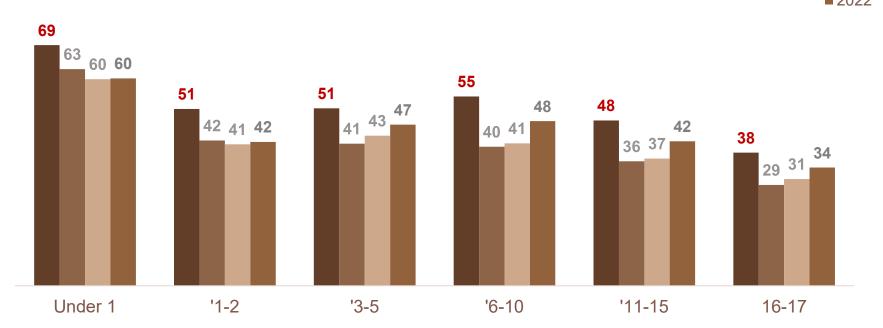
Per 1,000 Children



Los Angeles Male Allegation Rates by Age

Per 1,000 Children 2019-2022



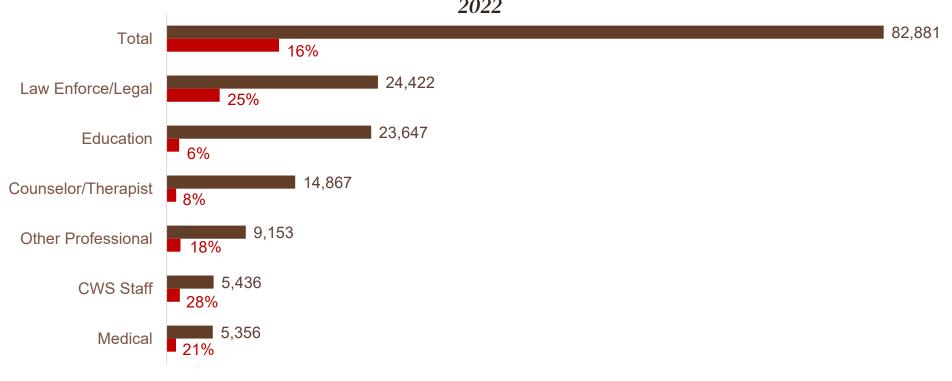


What Are Children Reported For?

Allegations by Reporter & Maltreatment Type

Los Angeles Mandated Reporters Child Maltreatment Allegations & Substantiations by Reporter



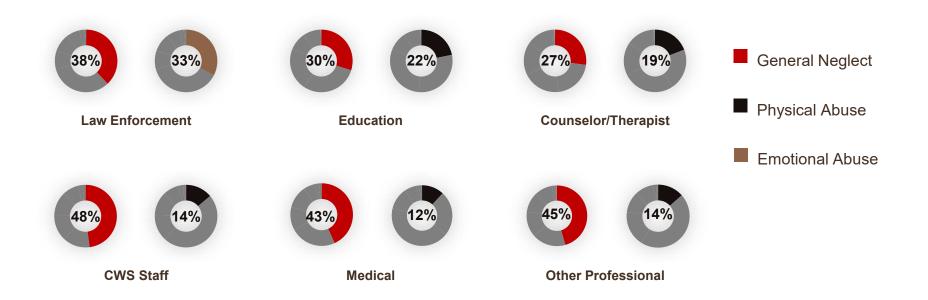


■ Children with Substantiated Allegations

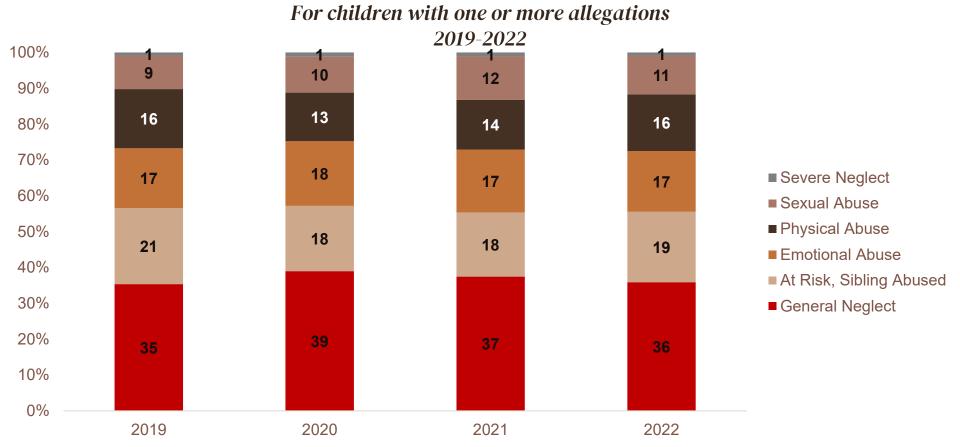
■ Children Reported

Los Angeles Mandated Reporters Most Common Child Maltreatment Allegation Types by Reporter

For children with one or more allegations 2022



Los Angeles Mandated Reporters Child Maltreatment Allegations by Type



Los Angeles Mandated Reporters

100%

90%

80%

70%

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

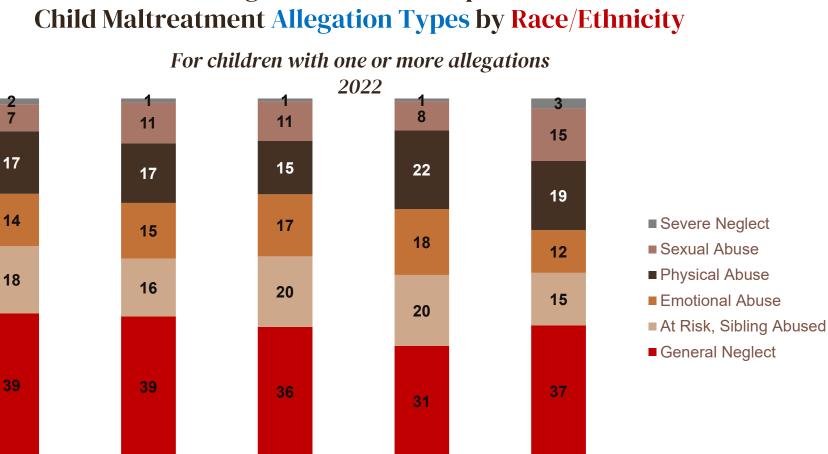
10%

0%

Black

White

Latino



Asian/PI

Nat Amer

Questions?

Wendy Wiegmann

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510-847-5322



Thank You!

Data for this slide deck were provided by the CA Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP). The CCWIP is a collaboration of the California Department of Social Services and the School of Social Welfare, University of California at Berkeley, and is supported by the California Department of Social Services, Casey Family Programs, the Tipping Point Community, and the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.



Berkeley Social Welfare
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA



TIPPING POIN COMMUNITY

