A. Sample Methodology

- A total population of 4,760 investigations was extracted from FSFN investigations closed between 02/15/09 and 04/15/09 which contained “Some Indicators” or “Verified” findings of an allegation of Substance Misuse by a parent or other person acting in a caretaker capacity (paramours, relative or non-relative babysitters, facility employees, relative or non-relative legal custodians, or licensed care custodians).

- The sample size was pre set for review of 60 investigations statewide. The random table numbers were applied to identify the sample set.

B. Distribution of Sample

- Of the 60 investigations reviewed, 23 (38%) were closed with Verified findings and the remaining 37 (62%) were closed with Some Indicators.

C. Analysis of Investigations closed with Verified Findings

- Services referrals made

  1. Of the 23 Verified investigations, 19 (83%) contained documentation to indicate that referrals for substance abuse services were initiated prior to investigative closure.

  2. Of the four Verified investigations that did not have documentation of substance abuse service referrals, an additional two investigations involved relatives as legal caregivers who were named Caretaker Responsible for the Verified substance misuse allegations. In both investigations, the child(ren) were sheltered from these caregivers and moved to other placements. In such circumstances where “reunification” with the relative caregiver is not a permanency goal, there is no requirement to engage these caregivers in any sort of services or case planning tasks.

  3. Excluding this set of review results from the sample, 19 out of 21 investigations with Verified findings (90%) contained documentation that referrals for substance abuse services were initiated prior to investigative closure.

  4. Of the 19 Verified investigations that were referred for substance abuse services, 12 (63%) contained additional documentation to indicate that the referred services had been engaged prior to investigative closure.

  5. Of the remaining seven investigations that did not contain documentation that the referred services had been engaged, two contained documentation indicating that (despite both being a recent court-ordered case following the child(ren)’s shelter) the parents refused to cooperate with recommended substance abuse services.
6. Three additional investigations contained documentation that the referred services had not been engaged under voluntary circumstances, meaning there were no legal means to ensure parental/caregiver engagement in services.

7. One additional investigation contained documentation indicating that the CBC case manager and supervisor made the decision that they would not involve the father in any further services as he had just completed a recent Case Plan (and continued to have substance abuse problems) so it was felt that "nothing more could be done" for him. The mother, however, was involved in in-patient treatment.

8. In the remaining investigations wherein service referrals had been made, it could not be determined based on documentation if/why these services had not been engaged prior to investigative closure (a court-ordered case).

- **Service Referrals Not Made**
  1. Two of the 21 applicable investigations (10%) did not contain documentation of service referrals (and hence, services engagement). One investigation involved a child whose court-ordered case was closed three days prior to receipt of a new investigation. Both parents were arrested on a VOP for being in possession of a firearm (was found in their hotel room during a Vice raid). The child was taken into custody upon the arrest and the parents remained incarcerated throughout the duration of the investigation. The other investigation did not contain documentation which explained any reason for a lack of services referrals.

D. **Analysis of Investigations closed with Some Indicators**

- **Services referrals made**
  1. Of the 37 investigations closed as “Some Indicators”, 21 (57%) contained documentation that referrals for substance abuse services were initiated prior to investigative closure.

  2. Of these 21 investigations, seven (33%) contained documentation to support that the referred services had been engaged prior to investigative closure.

  3. Of the 14 investigations that did not indicate the referred services were engaged prior to investigative closure, seven (50%) were attributed to parental/caregiver lack of cooperation or outright refusal to participate. All eight cases were on a voluntary basis, meaning there were no legal means to ensure parental/caregiver engagement in services. An additional two (14%) investigations indicated that substance abuse services had already been initiated prior to commencement of the investigation, and the remaining five investigations (36%) did not indicate a reason why the services were not engaged prior to closure of the investigation (with all five cases being voluntary circumstances, meaning there were no legal means to ensure parental/caregiver engagement in services).

- **Service Referrals Not Made**
  1. Sixteen of the 37 investigations (43%) that were closed with Some Indicators did not include documentation that substance abuse service referrals were made.
2. Of these sixteen investigations, three investigations (19%) indicate that no service referrals were necessary as the alleged individual was no longer serving in a caretaker capacity for the child. An example is a child whose grandmother’s paramour (the AP) was arrested for domestic violence and was no longer residing in the home or providing care for the child at the conclusion of the investigation. The remaining 13 investigations (81%) did not contain any specific information as to why services were not referred (with 12 of the investigations being voluntary circumstances, meaning there were no legal means to ensure parental/caregiver engagement in services.

E. Caveats to consider in determining the significance of these results

- Reviews consisted of “desk reviews” only, meaning that documentation of FSFN notes was the only method of information gathering for the review.

- FSFN chronological note documentation does not always provide a complete and comprehensive depiction of all investigative activities.

- While all 60 reviewed investigations contained the common thread of alleged substance misuse by a parent or caregiver, each investigation is unique given the specifics of allegations, the assessed vulnerability of the child, the presence of additional safety threats other than substance misuse, and the presence or lack of parental protective capacities. Each of these circumstances interact with equal influence to determine which circumstances (investigations) require the initiation of services and which ones don’t. In consideration of this, not every investigation that is closed with Some Indicators or Verified findings of substance misuse requires referral and engagement of services in order to ensure imminent and on-going child safety.