# Identifying Patterns of Child Welfare Involvement and Socioeconomic Conditions Prior to Commercial Sexual Exploitation: A Statewide Case Study

By

Ivy Hammond

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in
Social Welfare
in the
Graduate Division
of the
University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Jill Duerr Berrick, Chair
Professor Erin Kerrison
Professor Cecilia Hyunjung Mo
Professor Rebecca Rebbe

Summer 2023

Identifying Patterns of Child Welfare Involvement and Socioeconomic Conditions Prior to Commercial Sexual Exploitation: A Statewide Case Study

## Abstract

Identifying Patterns of Child Welfare Involvement and Socioeconomic Conditions Prior to Commercial Sexual Exploitation: A Statewide Case Study
by

Ivy Hammond

Doctor of Philosophy in Social Welfare

University of California, Berkeley

Professor Jill Duerr Berrick, Chair

In response to recent federal legislation, the child welfare system assumed primary responsibility for responding to commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children. CSEC complicates the notion of child maltreatment because, unlike other forms of maltreatment, it can simultaneously involve the behavior of abusers and constrained action by the child, often requiring distinct safety planning and service provision. Further, this form of abuse is uniquely embedded within the economy. Historically, much of the available research on the subject approached youth involvement in the sex trade as a form of delinquent behavior, rather than an experience of maltreatment. Emergent contemporary research on CSE indicates that early experiences of sexual abuse and child welfare system-involvement are strongly associated with subsequent CSE risk and victimization. Administrative child welfare data can be leveraged to fill some of the existing empirical gaps, and efforts have been made to document associations between CSE victimization and system involvement. However, much of this research focuses exclusively on youth already being served by the CWS. The relationships between child welfare interventions, case characteristics and subsequent CSE remain largely unexamined. This dissertation is based on a unique dataset constructed using administrative child protective service records and American Community Survey data. The final dataset captures 13,193 children with documented concerns of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) identified by California's child welfare system between 2015 and 2020 and includes maltreatment allegation information on 3,205 de-duplicated reports of suspected CSE submitted to child protective services (CPS) in Los Angeles County, California between 2017 and 2021. Three analyses were conducted to address the following unanswered questions: (1) Do child characteristics and CWS involvement histories of children with identified CSE concerns differ from CWS trajectories of similar children? (2) Are there identifiable subgroups of young people facing CSE risk and/or victimization that have distinct patterns of prior CWS involvement? (3) Is CSE reporting associated with neighborhood-level concentrated disadvantage in Los Angeles County, California? To answer these questions, three distinct analyses were conducted. One relied on a case-control comparison of child welfare trajectories prior to the identification of CSE risk or victimization. The second used latent class analysis to identify subgroups of children with known CSE risk or victimization based on their CWS involvement. The third analysis used geo mapping and logistic regression to describe allegations of CSE in a Los Angeles County and test for an association between CSE reporting and neighborhood-level concentrated disadvantage. Findings indicate that among all youth with identified CSE risk or victimization experiences, nearly all had been reported to the CWS at least

one month prior to the first identified CSE concern, yet less than half (43.4%) had prior cases and under one-third (32.1%) had previously been in out-of-home care. CWS trajectories leading up to CSE identification did not differ significantly by CSE confirmation; however, racial disproportionality was observed in the identification of confirmed CSE victimization. Specifically, Black children were at higher estimated odds of having victimization documented relative to Hispanic youth. After controlling for child and initial CPS report characteristics, the CWS intervened later in childhood for youth that went on to have CSE risk or victimization identified in their case records. Those with identified victimization spent less of their overall lifetime in CWS-supervised cases, but experienced more placement moves and had more entries into medical, psychiatric and/or correctional facilities. Across Los Angeles County, the estimated odds of exploitation being reported to CPS were positively associated with neighborhood concentrated disadvantage. To date, this study represents the most rigorous population-level analysis of child welfare involvement prior to CSEC, and has several key implications for practice and policy. Results show that a majority of children had a history of CSW involvement but were no longer under CWS jurisdiction at the time CSE was identified. This exposes an ongoing need for CSEC-specialized interventions that explicitly include family participation. In addition, CWS decisions not to investigate, intervene or continue providing formal services and supervision appear to have long-term consequences related to CSE victimization, and may indicate that that families' underlying needs went unmet during their initial contact with the CWS. Findings from this analysis identify racial disproportionality in CSE identification within a statewide predominantly non-White child population, and expose a need to test for differences in CSE screening and investigative practices by first responders within different cultural contexts. Finally, this analysis documents a relationship between neighborhood-level concentrated disadvantage and CSEC, and in doing so draws attention to child and family-level resource scarcity as drivers of CSEC. Youth and parent social and economic motivators have been largely absent from discourse on CSE in child welfare scholarship, but this analysis suggests that addressing social, material and economic resource scarcity may optimize CSEC prevention efforts.

## Dedications and Acknowledgements

This dissertation is dedicated to the young people I had the privilege of supporting during and after they experienced exploitation. The fierceness with which they loved, laughed, and persevered despite being treated as less or unworthy of the care and respect they deserve pushed me to pursue this line of research and will continue to drive my future work as a social worker and scholar.

I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Jill Duerr Berrick for her support in navigating the program, for expanding my awareness of child welfare as a global issue and for pushing me to become a more thoughtful scholar. To my committee members, Drs. Erin Kerrison, Cecilia Hyunjung Mo and Rebecca Rebbe, I am grateful for the time, interdisciplinary perspectives and critical insights you shared throughout the dissertation process.

To Joseph Magruder, I could not have completed this research without you. Thank you for the countless hours of mentorship, collaboration and companionship over the last five years. Daniel Webster and Wendy Wiegmann, thank you for acknowledging and valuing my clinical expertise, teaching me how best to apply that information to macro work and allowing me countless opportunities to develop and answer research questions in service of systems-change efforts.

This dissertation would not have been possible were it not for the collaborative arrangement that exists between the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project at UC Berkeley's School of Social Welfare. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the Child Trafficking Response Team, whose partnership and insights have been invaluable to this work and who constantly strive for the best when it comes to serving youth who experience CSE.

To Kia Dupclay and April Grayson, members of the CSEC Action Team Advisory Board, I am deeply appreciative of you both for taking the time to review my findings and provide invaluable feedback about the impact of my words and implications of my findings.
To my friend and colleague, Brenda Mathias, thank you for talking through countless obstacles, workshopping research strategies and providing emotional support in ways that I didn't even know I needed. I truly would not have made it to the finish line without you beside me.

Finally, I want to express my profound gratitude to my family. Without their encouragement, kindness and generosity, I could not have persisted in this PhD program. Thank you for believing in my abilities even when I doubted myself, offering companionship during the COVID-19 pandemic and caring for me while I navigated the pain and challenges my disability caused.

## Contents

## Overview

# Background

## Definitions

Until recently, most youth involvement in the sex trade was criminalized as prostitution or solicitation. During the early 2000s, fierce advocacy by adult survivors combined with growing public concern over human trafficking led social policy makers and service providers to adopt a victim-centered approach to addressing youth involvement in the sex trade. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA, P.L. 106-386) identifies domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) as a severe form of human trafficking and defines it broadly as the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, regardless of whether that minor was subject to force, fraud or coercion by another person (Roby & Vincent, 2017).

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) defined commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC), as:

> …crimes of a sexual nature committed against juvenile victims for financial or other economic reasons [….] These crimes include trafficking for sexual purposes, prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order-bride trade and early marriage, pornography, stripping, and performing in sexual venues such as peep shows or clubs" (Clayton et al., 2013, p 401).

Today, CSEC is often used within service-oriented literature in reference to youth sex trading, whereas DMST and child trafficking are terms more frequently present in legislative and policy-oriented texts.

## Jurisdiction

Federal law dictates that public child welfare agencies are now responsible for identifying and intervening on behalf of youth at-risk of or already experiencing CSEC. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 (PSTSFA; P.L. 113-183) amended titles IV-B, IV-E, and section 1114A of the Social Security Act (SSA), which now require child welfare agencies to identify, document, and determine appropriate services for any child or youth under the care or supervision of the CWS who is at-risk of becoming a sex trafficking victim or who is confirmed to be a sex trafficking victim, including youth who receive in-home services, are absent from placement or are non-minor dependents. States are required to report the annual number of children in foster care who are identified as sex trafficking victims, either before or while they were in foster care in the national adoption and foster care analysis and reporting system (AFCARS).

The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (JVTA; P.L. 114-22) amended the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grant program and modified the definition of child abuse and neglect such that any child who is identified by a state as a victim of sex trafficking or other severe forms of trafficking must be considered a victim of "child abuse and neglect" and "sexual abuse." Due to these federal changes, child welfare agencies are now required to offer secondary- and tertiary-prevention, and have the discretion to use federal funds for primary prevention. Effective May 29, 2017, CAPTA state plans must include provisions and procedures regarding identification and assessment of all reports involving known or suspected child sex trafficking victims along with CSEC identification and response training for the child

welfare workforce. States are also required to report the number of children who are victims of sex trafficking as part of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Following the TVPA's 2013 reauthorization, states began to enact safe harbor laws, which are legal mechanisms that facilitate the paradigm shift to maltreatment victimization within local responses to CSEC (Cole & Sprang, 2020). By 2017, a total of 35 states had enacted some form of safe harbor legislation, while 13 continued to criminalize youth involvement in the sex trade and 2 allowed for affirmative defense in cases of sex trafficking (Gies et al., 2019). CSEC-related provisions vary widely between states and offer a variety of protections and provisions, some of which are conditional upon the child's age and whether the child has been repeatedly detained by law enforcement for their involvement in commercialized sexual exchanges. Among participating safe harbor states, 19 offered full immunity to minors who trade sex, with the definition of minor status ranging from under 16 to under 18 years of age. At least 20 states now require law enforcement to refer youth experiencing CSEC to social services, four of which also offer full immunity. An additional 12 states offer trafficking-specific diversion programs, some of which are optional or contingent upon prior arrest records. Variation notwithstanding, a majority of states now identify the public child welfare system (CWS) as the primary institution held responsible for identifying, intervening and preventing occurrences of CSEC (Roby & Vincent, 2017).

CSEC complicates traditional understandings of child maltreatment, an umbrella term used to refer to child abuse and neglect, because it can simultaneously involve the behavior of abusers and intentional action by the child. The direct perpetrators of CSEC may not be parents, legal guardians or even relatives, which limits the abilities of dependency courts to restrict a perpetrator's access to the child. Analyses of trafficking allegations reported to CPS suggest that fewer than half list a parent or official caregiver as the child's alleged exploiter, which is quite distinct from other forms of abuse and neglect (Cole & Sprang, 2020; Reid et al., 2017; Rozas et al., 2018). Moreover, any involvement of a minor in the sex trade is legally defined as a severe form of sex trafficking, regardless of whether the exploitation involved an identifiable exploiter (i.e., trafficker or pimp). Whereas children are most at risk for experiencing abuse or neglect before the age of five, CSEC is most likely to occur among adolescents, who possess the ability to access transportation autonomously and to circumvent adult supervision if they choose to. Child protection interventions may prove ineffective for youth who understand their involvement in the sex trade as a source of paid employment, community or personal identity rather than abuse that they need to be protected from (Mcdonald & Middleton, 2019). As Luminais et al. (2019) note, "you're not going to be trafficked" and "you're not going to be in that lifestyle anymore" may be synonymous under the law, but their implications for social work practice are not.

**Prevalence**

Given the clandestine and traumatic nature of CSEC, primary data collection is challenging and the bulk of research on CSEC has relies on secondary data to document Due to a combination of practical limitations, methodological shortcomings and ethical considerations, it remains unclear exactly how many children become involved in the U.S. sex trade (Lutnick, 2016; Twis & Shelton, 2018). Prevalence estimates produced over the last twenty years vary widely, and the most commonly referenced statistics often lack empirical rigor or are mis-cited (Fedina et al., 2019).

In 2010, the National Juvenile Prostitution Study (NJPS) relied on a representative sample of local law enforcement incident reports to estimate annual cumulative incidence of law

enforcement identified sex trading or trafficking involving minors. In 2005, an estimated 1,450 incidents of youth involvement in the sex trade came to the attention of law enforcement (Mitchell et al., 2010). Findings from the NJPS provide important sociodemographic information about the child population impacted by commercial sexual exploitation (CSE). However, they should be interpreted with caution due to four important limitations. First, both estimates relied on data collected prior to the paradigm shift, when CSEC was uniformly penalized as criminal activity. Second, neither accounts for experiences of CSEC that were never brought to the attention of law enforcement. Third, law enforcement reports may offer a biased representation of CSEC incidence by overrepresenting street-based CSE and undercounting in-home and online experiences. Fourth, these estimates only offer information at the event-level, and may not reflect child-level experiences of CSEC. Some young people impacted by the U.S. sex trade are known to have prolonged or intermittent experiences of CSEC (Miller-Perrin & Wurtele, 2016; O'Brien et al., 2019). Moreover, it is widely believed that administrative records from the criminal legal system underestimate the true prevalence of CSEC nationwide (Salisbury et al., 2015).

To comply with the JVTA of 2015, NCANDS added sex trafficking as a new child maltreatment type, defined as:

> A type of maltreatment that refers to the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act. States have the option to report to NCANDS any sex trafficking victim who is younger than 24 years.

Some states began submitting the number of children or transition age youth (TAY) confirmed to have experienced CSEC in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018. That year, there were approximately 656,000 victims of all types of child abuse and neglect, for a national annual rate of 8.9 victims per 1,000 children in the population. Child sex trafficking victims represented 0.1% of all confirmed maltreatment, although these data were missing from nearly all U.S. states and territories. Confirmed allegation counts should be interpreted with caution. As researchers and stakeholders have noted, definitional inconsistencies, ongoing screener training needs and disclosure reluctance among youth victimization may all influence CSEC documentation within child welfare data (Gibbs et al., 2018; Hartinger-Saunders et al., 2017; Lavoie et al., 2019).

A small but growing number of studies have used administrative data from the public child welfare system (CWS) to study both suspected and confirmed system-identified CSEC. Descriptive analyses of children reported for alleged exploitation and child trafficking in Illinois, Florida, Kentucky and California appear to be more consistent with the NJPS than the Add Health study prevalence estimates. In Illinois, a total of 563 trafficking allegations about 419 children were investigated in 2012 and 2015, which represented 0.008% of all investigated allegations (Havlicek et al., 2016). During that same period, a total of 4,413 allegations pertaining to 3,420 children were reported to Florida's child protection system (CPS) for allegations of human trafficking (Gibbs et al., 2018). These children represented 1.2% of all children over the age of 10 reported for maltreatment between 2011 and 2015. Between 2013 and 2017, Florida's child protection system (CPS) received 5,498 allegations of CSEC (24.2% of which were confirmed) to more than 5,600 unique children (Latzman et al., 2018). In Kentucky, 697 children were reported to the CPS one or more times between 2013 and 2017 for alleged trafficking (Cole & Sprang, 2020). In California, a total of 9,297 children were the subject of one or more allegations of exploitation from 2014 to 2020, (Hammond & Magruder, 2020). Across these studies, allegations of child sex trafficking represented less than 1% of all allegations made

to the CWS. As with juvenile arrest data, child maltreatment reports are subject to reporter bias and surveillance bias across street-based, in-home or internet-facilitated CSEC.

To summarize, prior to the decriminalization of youth involvement in the commercial sex economy, approximately 1,500 incidents of CSEC were reported to law enforcement as juvenile crimes annually nationwide. Since 2014, a series of federal and state laws have redefined youth experiences of commercial sexual exploitation as a form of child abuse by third-party exploiters and sex buyers. CSEC is increasingly being reported and investigated as a form of child maltreatment, although it remains a very small portion of known child maltreatment.

**Consequences**

While it appears that only a small proportion of minors in the U.S. become involved in the youth sex trade, experiences of commercial sexual exploitation can contribute to detrimental psychological, biomedical, and behavioral consequences that persist into adulthood (Le et al., 2018; Moore et al., 2020; Moore et al., 2019). Growing concern about the multifarious impact of CSEC on the well-being of those involved contributed to the mobilization of public health, child welfare, criminal justice practitioners and social scientists to generate what has quickly become an immensely interdisciplinary body of knowledge on CSEC risk and victimization (Franchino-Olsen, 2021b; Gerassi, 2015). Biomedical and behavioral health scientists have demonstrated associations between CSEC victimization and a wide range of negative biopsychosocial experiences, including: exposure to violence (e.g. rape and physical assault); psychological trauma and mental health disorders (e.g. PTSD); reproductive health complications (sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies); dangerous or self-injurious behavior and substance misuse (Le et al., 2018); and low educational engagement (Landers et al., 2017). Psychosocial and behavioral strategies developed in order to survive the relational, physical and, in some cases, institutional violence that children and adolescents experience as a result of CSEC can be challenging to integrate during and after exiting the sex trade (Moynihan et al., 2018; O'Brien, 2018). Scholarship on sex work and human trafficking suggests that, on average, the biopsychosocial consequences of involvement in the sex trade appear to have a more harmful impact on those who enter the sex trade as minors than those who first trade sex as adults (Footer et al., 2020; Hammond & Mcglone, 2014).

Available data offers an incomplete picture of CSEC experiences in the U.S., but suggests that a small subset of the child population continues to enter the sex trade despite federal and state policy efforts. Despite the relatively small scope of CSEC, it remains an important social and public health concern because experiences of CSE in childhood can have a profoundly detrimental impact on the lives of those who experience it.

## Predicting Commercial Sexual Exploitation during Childhood or Adolescence

Prior to the recategorization of CSEC as a type of child maltreatment, involvement of juveniles in the illicit commercial sex industry was studied as a form of delinquency or as a subtype of child sexual abuse. CSEC as a distinct form of child maltreatment only recently gained public and legal recognition. As a result, scholarship on the subject has largely focused on describing the phenomenon and identifying which portions of the U.S. child population experience it.

### Theoretical Approaches

CSEC is either theorized as victimization that occurs to children or as the behavior of youth motivated by internalized and externalized push and pull factors. The tension between

these approaches exists because, unlike other types of child maltreatment, CSEC victimization tends to occur among older children and adolescents who are comparatively better-equipped to communicate verbally, have basic autonomy over their bodies, and move throughout the community without adult assistance as compared with younger children. Increasingly, researchers are using trauma-informed theoretical approaches to explaining why children may become victimized by sex traffickers or make choices (albeit constrained ones) to begin or continue to trade sex. The following section summarizes four ways of conceptualizing CSE vulnerabilities of greatest relevance to this dissertation. These include the concept of trauma coercive bonding (Sanchez et al., 2019), insecure attachment schema (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991), McDonald's Survival Sex Hierarchy (MSSH) model (Mcdonald & Middleton, 2019) and the Traumagenic Social Ecological Framework (Finigan-Carr et al., 2019)

Among children with identified traffickers, the concept of trauma coercive bonding has been used to explain why children participate in sex trading, sometimes even after having been extricated from the exploitative environment. Trauma coercive bonding occurs when a victim identifies with the perpetrator of their abuse, and typically involves the development of strong emotional connections, feelings of loyalty or indebtedness to one's perpetrator and loss of identity (Sanchez et al., 2019). Although the concept of trauma coercive bonding has not been extensively studied, vulnerability to other forms of trauma bonding has been attributed to disordered attachment (Hopper, 2017). Negative self-esteem and poor relational dynamics with parents or guardians, both indicators of disordered attachment, are believed to increase vulnerability to grooming and CSEC victimization by exploiters (Franchino-Olsen, 2021a). One clinical study of commercially sexually exploited youth (N= 113) identified attachment disorders in more than 50% of the sample (Basson et al., 2012).

According to attachment theory, experiences of co-regulation via consistent, appropriate caregivers during infancy and early childhood is critical for the formation of healthy interpersonal relational patterns and self-regulation behaviors throughout the lifespan (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). Childhood abuse and neglect are associated with the development of attachment disorders (Zimmermann & Soares, 2018). CWS-involvement has been found to mitigate the deleterious effects of child abuse and neglect (Barth et al., 2020), but findings are mixed as to whether CWS involvement helps, exacerbates or has little effect on disordered attachment (Dozier et al., 2016). Placement in therapeutic, home-based settings are prioritized in order to create optimal conditions for healthy psychosocial child development. Placement in congregate care settings, frequent placement changes, placement with non-kin caregivers, and non-kin adoptions have been associated with poorer attachment outcomes (Bruce et al., 2019; Guyon-Harris et al., 2019).

Evidence suggests that the relationship between disordered attachment and placement factors may be stronger among infants and female children (Miranda et al., 2019) and the effects can persist into adolescence, even among children who exit the CWS to permanency (Raby & Dozier, 2019). Among school-aged children and adolescents, frequent placement moves may lead to the loss of friendships and supportive adult relationships (Miranda et al., 2019) and disrupt school participation and academic achievement (Clemens et al., 2018), which can further hinder healthy attachment schema. Psychosocial experiences (i.e., CWS placement disruptions) and therapeutic interventions can change a person's relational schema over the lifespan, but attachment theory posits that infancy and early childhood represent a critical period for psychosocial experiences, including abuse and neglect (Ojanen & Perry, 2007).

Qualitative research suggests that the reasons why youth become commercially sexually exploited can vary based on a child's social-ecological context (Hurst, 2019). Interviews with survivors reveal that for some, their families of origin made life so difficult that the danger and risk of trauma posed by the sex trade felt preferable to that experienced in the home (Bruhns et al., 2018). Yet, many others describe feeling a sense of constrained agency and attributed their involvement in the sex trade to structural, rather than interpersonal coercion (Bay-Cheng, 2019; Gerassi, 2015; Khan et al., 2018; Lutnick, 2016; Rozas et al., 2018; Sapiro et al., 2016)(Bay-Cheng, 2019; Gerassi, 2015; Lutnick, 2016; Sapiro et al., 2016 Khan et al., 2017; Rozas et al., 2018). These survivors identified economic factors as direct and indirect contributors to their experiences of CSEC, including the following: a lack of supervision while their parents participated in shift work or juggled multiple jobs; modeling of survivor sex by parents or other family members; and ongoing exposure to abusers due to a lack of alternative housing options (Bruhns et al., 2018; Corbett, 2018; Hampton & Lieggi, 2020). In some cases, children may enter or remain in the sex trade due to a desire to keep their family members safe from violence or displacement (Hurst, 2019).

Recently, McDonald's Survival Sex Hierarchy (MSSH) model was developed as a framework with which to organize the multiple and changing motivators of sex trading during childhood and adolescence (Mcdonald & Middleton, 2019). According to the MHHS model, all involvement in the sex trade should be understood as survival sex because youth who enter or remain in the sex trade invariably do so to meet one or more of the following needs: physiological (e.g.: to access food or shelter; to avoid withdrawal); safety (to avoid physical violence; to protect loved ones from physical harm); love and belonging (to feel a sense of community; to receive validation from others); esteem (to elevate social status; to gain financial independence); or self-actualization (to achieve a destiny; to actualize full potential).

The MSSH approach accounts for heterogeneity and patterns of co-occurrence among push and pull factors associated with CSEC, and attempts to integrate what has previously been approached as mutually exclusive categories of CSEC risk factors. It also facilitates a longitudinal understanding of motivating needs among youth who experience ongoing CSEC. Although the model is molded from Maslow's linear hierarchical design, it acknowledges that a child's perception of the most important motivating need may change over time and progress in a non-linear or even cyclical order. The MSSH model provides a useful framework with which to identify and organize motivating factors that compel or coerce children to enter or remain in commercially sexually exploitative situations, and can inform the development of services that align with the child's own prioritization. However, it does not acknowledge or explain the processes and larger contexts within which these needs arise.

Drawing from Finkelhor and Browne's traumagenic model (1985) and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1974, 1995), Finigan-Carr et al. developed the traumagenic social ecological framework for child sex trafficking (Finigan-Carr et al., 2019) to expand considerations of CSEC risk by including broader interpersonal and macrosocial processes. The motivation for its development was to "move beyond individualistic explanations of why sex trafficking occurs and consider more complex relationships" (p 49). Carr and colleagues employ a four-tier approach to examine how factors at each social-ecological level (societal, community, interpersonal and child-levels) interact and shape that person's vulnerability to CSEC. The authors provide an example, positing that capitalism causes the enactment of neoliberal policies, which facilitate and maintain systemic inequities in experiences like child poverty, family homelessness, shift work, and parental incarceration, which facilitate behavioral risk factors and

represent root causes of child sex trafficking. This theoretical framework offers a starting point from which to address the question of how societal factors like capitalism contribute to the ecological setting in which the child is embedded and in which the child sex trade thrives, and represents an important contribution to the field.

**CSEC Correlates and Antecedents**

Many behavioral and experiential factors have been identified as correlates of CSEC at the child, family and community-levels. However, to date there are no standardized tools to measure CSEC risk (McCoy, 2017). One common limitation throughout the emergent evidence base is a lack of temporal information that is needed to distinguish between co-occurring factors and actual predictors of CSE victimization. Experiences of CSE have been associated with many antecedent and concurrent experiences or exposures including the following: leaving home without permission or being asked to leave home; substance use; social and learning difficulties in school; childhood mental illness; poverty and lack of material resources; child maltreatment; parental absence or neglect resulting in youth homelessness; normalization of sex trading in the community; and probation or juvenile penal system-involvement. However, the most consistently, strongly associated antecedents of CSEC include childhood sexual abuse, a history of child welfare system involvement, youth substance misuse, leaving or being forced to leave home and going missing from placement (Choi, 2015; De Vries & Goggin, 2020).

**Maltreatment and CWS-involvement**

Before reaching their 18th birthday, an estimated one-third (37.4%) of all children in the U.S. are reported for suspected maltreatment, one in ten (11.8%-12.5%) experience confirmed maltreatment and one in twenty (5.9%) spend time in foster care (Kim et al., 2017, 2020; Kim & Drake, 2019; Wildeman et al., 2014; Wildeman & Emanuel, 2014). Maltreatment reporting most commonly occurs during infancy and early childhood, which are widely recognized as periods of heightened vulnerability to neglect, injury and death (Putnam-Hornstein, 2011). In California, roughly one in seven children are reported for suspected maltreatment at least once before the age of five (Putnam-Hornstein & Needell, 2011).

CWS interventions are largely successful at mitigating the most deleterious effects of child maltreatment, including serious illness, injury and death (Font & Fluke, 2023). Once children reunify with their families of origin or their families satisfy the expectations of the CWS, few reenter the system later in childhood (Wulczyn et al., 2020). Benefits notwithstanding, an array of disruptions and costs can occur during and after CWS involvement that may strain a families' social bonds and limit resource access (Cancian, et at., 2017; (Rock et al., 2015). This in turn, may negatively impact the social and emotional wellbeing of children and their parents.

According to the Traumagenic Social Ecological Framework for child sex trafficking, psychosocial vulnerabilities that take root during and after childhood maltreatment and CWS involvement push and/or pull youth toward commercially sexually exploitative situations (Finigan-Carr, 2019). The sequalae of child maltreatment and out-of-home placement experiences can catalyze trauma bonding with abusers, contribute to the development of insecure attachment, impact the quality and extent to which children's social, emotional and physical needs are met and shape young people's understanding of themselves and the social world around them.

Longitudinal research reveals that the age/developmental stage of the child, placement settings, caregiver types, receipt of services from multiple social workers, duration of time spent

in out-of-home care and placement stability all impact a child's likelihood of reentering foster care (Rolock et al., 2018; Wulczyn et al., 2020). Reentry was found to be significantly higher for Black children compared with all other racial/ethnic groups. Prior findings related to system exits and reentries underscore the need to examine CWS-involvement trajectories in greater detail within studies of revictimization in adolescence.

**CWS-involvement and CSEC.** Associations between CSEC, prior CWS-involvement and the level of intervention provided have been documented among samples from Illinois, Florida and Kentucky. Studies used CWS administrative data to describe lifetime maltreatment and foster care involvement for children with reported and confirmed allegations of sex trafficking.

In Illinois, 61% of all youth reported for alleged trafficking between 2012 and 2015 (N=419) had previously been reported to the CWS for alleged maltreatment of some kind (Havlicek et al., 2016). Among children with prior CPS contact (N=254), 41.3% had a history of alleged sexual abuse. A third (32.7%) of those with prior system contact had been in placement before the alleged victim of trafficking, and 21.3% allegedly experienced trafficking while in a placement episode. Havlicek et al.'s (2016) study provided additional information about children's experiences in out of home placement (e.g.: rate of placement moves; placement type; duration of placement; documented experiences of hospitalization, being absent from care without permission, and penal-system detention). The analysis was restricted to children with an investigated allegation of trafficking during a placement episode (N=54), which represented less than half of all children with trafficking allegations that spent time in placement. This study provided a much-needed preliminary description of system contact among children being reported to child welfare authorities for suspected trafficking. However, the lack of a comparison group limited the generalizability of these data.

Gibbs et al. (2018) produced a comparative study using maltreatment allegations made in Florida between 2012 and 2015. When compared with adolescents reported for non-trafficking maltreatment (N=292,747), youth reported for alleged trafficking (N=3,420) were twice as likely to have prior confirmed maltreatment and were more than four times as likely to have previously experienced sexual abuse. Further, among youth with prior CWS-involvement, the researchers found that adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were twice as likely to have ever entered out-of-home care and four times as likely to have been in congregate care settings as adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688). Gibb et al.'s study suggests that on average, adolescents who experienced CSEC had more prior contact with the CWS and were provided more intensive and restrictive CWS interventions as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment.

In recent years, scholarship has focused on the association between child absences from placement (i.e., runaway behaviors) and CSEC. Pullmann et al. (2020) explored placement histories among all state-dependent youth identified by Washington's CWS as having confirmed or strongly suspected of commercial sexual exploitation between 2015 and 2017 (N=83). Findings indicate that nearly 9 out of 10 youth had gone missing from placement at least once, and on average, these youth had gone missing from care 8.6 times. In Gibbs et al. (2018) study from Florida, adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were 10 times as likely to have gone missing from placement at least once and over 14 times as likely to have three or more missing episodes as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688).

These regional studies offer an important, if incomplete picture of CWS-involvement that precedes CSEC. Missing from prior analyses of CWS-identified CSEC is any documentation of

in-home service receipt or cumulative CWS involvement across cases. This dissertation aims to fill those gaps by testing for heterogeneity consistent with findings from Illinois, Florida and Kentucky for youth experiencing CSE victimization or risk.

**Heterogeneity in CSE**

Reid et al. (2019) used latent class analysis (LCA), a person-centered analytic approach being used increasingly within child maltreatment research (Gabrielli & Jackson, 2019) to identify patterns of adverse childhood experiences among juvenile justice-involved adolescents reported to the CWS for suspected child trafficking (N=1,826). The analysis was based on 7 of the 11 Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) collected by the Full Community Positive Achievement Change Tool, which operationalized childhood maltreatment as binary variables (Yes/No) for each maltreatment type and foster care placement.

The LCA identified six distinct classes (ranging in size from 86-249 youth) that differed by maltreatment, foster care involvement, and substance use. The first two latent classes were identified as multiply abused across all maltreatment types and were very likely to have been in foster care, but differed by high and low levels of health-risk behaviors. Youth in the third class experienced sexual and physical abuse and reported high health-risk behaviors, but did not spend time in foster care. The fourth class had the highest conditional probability of emotional abuse and exposure to family violence, along with high levels of health-risk behaviors but were not likely to spend time in foster care. Members of the fifth group were classified by high exposure to family violence, but low maltreatment, health-risk behaviors and likelihood of foster care placement. The final class was characterized by low levels of maltreatment and high levels of health-risk behaviors. Reid et al.'s findings suggest that aggregate analyses of CWS-involvement among youth impacted by CSE may not describe their system-contact sufficiently. Further, the identification of classes with high and low foster care involvement has important implications for the development of CSEC prevention.

**Ecological Factors**

The increasing emphasis on the psychosocial needs of youth was an important step for reducing stigma and advancing trauma-centered responses to CSEC; however, social and economic capital incentives may still be important for understanding the relationships between push/pull factors associated with CSEC. Children, as legal dependents of parents, guardians or the state, are typically conceptualized as future laborers, who are only indirectly impacted by the economy. As such, the roles of capitalism and neoliberal ideologies in the lives of children are often overlooked or oversimplified. However, family and community-poverty are well-documented drivers of all forms of child maltreatment. Economically insecure children experience between three and nine times more state-defined maltreatment than children who do not reside in poverty and research suggests that several indicators of socioeconomic marginalization, including income loss, cumulative material hardship, and housing instability consistently predict state-identified child maltreatment and foster care entry (Alexander, 2010; Conrad-Hiebner & Byram, 2020; Conrad-Hiebner & Scanlon, 2015; Schenck-Fontaine & Gassman-Pines, 2020). In particular, Han et al. (2013) found significant associations between maternal shift work and mother-reported CPS involvement using data from the Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing Study (N = 2,904). Economic and hardship characteristics were found to modify the association between maternal shift work and CPS involvement.

Existing research documents the relevance of community-level socioeconomic contexts for child safety. Raissian and Bullinger (2017) examined the relationship between minimum wage and CPS reports of neglect, finding that a one dollar increase in minimum wage – a proxy for wealth distribution equity – was associated with a 9.6% decrease in neglect reports. Inequities in service provision and child welfare case outcomes have also been identified across economic strata at the family and community-level (Drake & Jonson-Reid, 2014; Evangelist & Shaefer, 2020; Puls et al., 2021; Raissian & Bullinger, 2017). Kim & Drake (2018) linked 2005-2009 NCANDS maltreatment data with 5-year estimates of county-level income measures from the American Community Survey and found that income inequality and child poverty were positively and significantly correlated with child maltreatment rates at the county-level. Even after controlling for child poverty, demographic and economic county characteristics and state-level variation in abuse and neglect incidence, a significant linear effect of inequality on child maltreatment rates was detected.

Common federal and state child welfare outcome measures do not offer any insight into the spatial dynamics of the child welfare system's involvement in communities. Distributions of poverty, maltreatment and CWS-involvement follow similar geographic patterns and reveal racial disproportionality (Roberts, 2021). Whereas one third (37.4%) of the total child population are reported to the CWS for suspected maltreatment by age 18, over half (53.0%) of all Black children in the U.S. child population are reported cumulatively (Kim et al., 2017). Once socioeconomic factors are controlled for, however, White children are found to be at higher risk of maltreatment than Black children (Kim & Drake, 2018). Taken together, these studies underscore the need to consider the role of geospatial socioeconomic characteristics when attempting to understand child maltreatment and CWS-involvement patterns.

With regard to the geospatial aspects of CSEC victimization, visible cases most often occur in regions that are well known to federal and local authorities. In 2003, the FBI identified 13 high intensity child prostitution areas in: Los Angeles, California; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Dallas, Texas; Detroit, Michigan; Tampa, Florida; Chicago, Illinois; San Francisco, California; San Diego, California; Miami, Florida; New York City; Washington, D.C.; Las Vegas, Nevada; and St. Louis, Missouri. Local law enforcement and the FBI input victimization information into a national database to identify youth who experience CSEC and track their movements across local jurisdictions. Despite the availability of geospatial information about where children live and where they experience CSEC, these characteristics have not been rigorously analyzed. CSEC scholarship would likely benefit from analyses that examine geospatial patterns of socioeconomic contextual factors and CSEC victimization.

To summarize, poverty has a racial geography in the U.S. in that racial identity and community context strongly predict a family's experience of poverty. Poverty is a well-established driver of child maltreatment and CWS-involvement. Although racialized poverty has also been documented among qualitative analyses of CSEC risk, poverty and the racial geography of the CWS have not been rigorously studied using quantitative methods in the context of CWS-identified CSEC.

**Analysis of the Existing Knowledge Base**

Efforts to eliminate the stigma associated with youth involvement in the sex trade challenged prevailing morally charged stereotypes by emphasizing the importance of unmet

behavioral and emotional needs in causing CSEC. Such efforts were pivotal to the success of the overall paradigm shift and prompted the adoption of trauma-informed responses to CSEC in place of more punitive measures. This framing led to widespread use of psychosocial human behavior theories to identify and organize common antecedents.

Interpersonal trauma and the relational patterns that develop in response are widely hypothesized contributors to CSE vulnerability (Franchino-Olsen, 2021). Maltreatment during early childhood has been shown to negatively affect attachment security and attachment disorganization among children (Cyr et al., 2020), and the timing and quality of out-of-home care they receive influences how protective foster care will be in terms of attachment post-placement (West, et al., 2020). Despite this, little research has been done to understand the cumulative child welfare case and placement experiences that precede CSEC. For example, it remains to be seen whether a child's age or the duration of CSW involvement influences associations that have been observed between maltreatment and CWS-involvement with subsequent CSEC. Further, sexual victimization theory has been used to explain why childhood sexual abuse strongly predicts CSEC. Unlike other forms of maltreatment, sexual abuse is more likely to occur during older childhood and less likely to occur during the critical period of attachment formation (Mathews et al., 2017). Research on age-specific childhood maltreatment and CWS-involvement prior to CSEC is needed to clarify the relevance of conflicting hypotheses about CSEC vulnerability.

Explanatory theories in CSEC scholarship largely focus on child and parental behaviors as predictors of CSEC, despite the theoretical relevance of ecological factors like poverty and consumer demand. Considerable research has been conducted within the last decade to document and test the significance of associated risk factors, however much remains unknown about the most strongly correlated antecedents – maltreatment, CWS-involvement and social-ecological factors – among children with confirmed experiences of CSEC.

Additional research is needed to better understand antecedent child maltreatment and CWS-involvement as well as socioeconomic antecedents of CSEC among children with prior CWS-involvement. Further, although aspects of CWS-involvement appear to be significant predictors of CSEC when studied in isolation, child welfare case characteristics and their relationships to CSEC victimization have not been studied in relation to one another.

**Chapter Review**

**Chapter 1.** CWS involvement and absences from placement are widely cited predictors of CSEC. Existing research has documented CSE among Black and female youth at rates that are disproportionate to their presence in the general child population. Beyond disclosure reluctance, little is known about how and why reports of CSEC are confirmed for some youth but not others. Guidelines for CSE screening assert that children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems (a disproportionate number of whom are Black) have a higher likelihood of being recruited or coerced into the sex trade than their peers. Are disparities by race and assigned sex observed among the diverse child population in California? Do high levels of identified CSE among Black girls reflect truly disproportionate victimization? Does disproportionate involvement in foster care explain why Black youth have greater odds of confirmed CSE victimization experiences? Chapter 1 addresses these questions using statewide child welfare records from California to examine within-group differences in the child characteristics and CWS involvement of youth with identified CSE risk to those with confirmed CSE victimization. It then documents between-group differences in investigative, service and placement experiences among youth with CSE risk/victimization and case-controls that were individually matched to account for child-level confounders (e.g.; age at CWS contact, race, ethnicity, county of residence).

**Chapter 2.** Bivariate analyses of CWS involvement indicators included in Chapter 1 document considerable heterogeneity in the investigative, service and placement experiences of youth prior to experiences of suspected or confirmed CSE. While a subset of these youth had long-term CWS involvement and required high levels of care, a majority had considerably less case and placement involvement that is typically described in research on CSEC predictors. Understanding this variation is an important step toward identifying and implementing system-level prevention strategies. Using indicators that span the entirety of CWS involvement leading up to the identification of CSE risk/victimization, Chapter 2 applies latent class analysis, a person-centered analytic approach to identify subgroups of young people with distinct patterns of CWS involvement.

**Chapter 3.** It is widely recognized in both child welfare and human trafficking research that sex buyers and third-party exploiters gain capital as a result of sexual exploitation. However, the financial, material and social capital that youth may receive as a result of their exploitation is largely overlooked. Child welfare scholars often point to youth homelessness as a predictor of CSE victimization, but rarely include measures of resource scarcity at the family-level (e.g.: housing security; stable income; access to safe child care). Chapter 3 attempts to bridge the gap between human trafficking and child welfare scholarship by describing geospatial attributes and socioeconomic contexts in which CSEC occurs throughout Los Angeles County, which receives roughly one-third of all CSEC reports made in California. It also examines the relationship between Census tract-level concentrated disadvantage and CSEC reporting.

## Chapter 1

Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Child Characteristics and Child Welfare Decision-Making in California: A Statewide Case Study


## Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** Early experiences of sexual abuse and child welfare system-involvement are strongly associated with commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children (CSEC), but relationships between child welfare investigative, case planning and placement provision efforts and CSEC remain largely unexamined. This study used California's child welfare system (CWS) as a case study in order to (1) describe CWS trajectories of youth with documented CSE concerns (2) compare those findings to matched controls without any documented CSE risk or victimization.

**Methods:** This analysis relied on statewide administrative data collected between 1998-2020 for the following youth subpopulations: all youth with documented CSE risk or victimization before age 18 identified by California's CWS from 2015-2020 (N = 13,076); retrospectively-matched case controls (N=13,045); and a prospectively-matched comparison group (10,656). Pearson's Chi-squared tests, odds ratios and a clinical cutoff were used to identify between and within-group differences in the sociodemographic characteristics and CWS involvement trajectories.

**Results:** A total of 2,662 youth had documented CSE victimization experiences and an additional 10,414 were identified as being at heightened risk for CSE. Documented victimization was disproportionately higher for Black children (as compared to Hispanic children), females and English-speakers. Between-group comparisons revealed that even after controlling for characteristics that predict disproportionate system involvement, CWS trajectories for youth with CSE concerns differed in the timing, continuity and intensity of system involvement. Youth with subsequent CSE concerns had higher estimated odds of being five years of age or older at the time of their first CWS investigation (OR: 7.07; $p$ <.001) and case opening (OR: 9.50; $p$ <.001). Among youth that were selected for formal CWS intervention, those with CSE concerns had higher estimated odds of prior screened-in sexual abuse (OR: 3.62; $p$ <.001), multiple case openings (OR: 4.19; $p$ <.001), and placement in non-foster care institutional settings (OR: 7.05; $p$ <.001).

**Conclusions and Implications** Findings suggest the timing and duration of CWS involvement may influence a child's vulnerability to CSE. However, findings from this study do not explain why Black youth are overrepresented while Hispanic youth are underrepresented among youth with confirmed CSE.

## 1.1. Introduction

Current federal law requires the United States (U.S.) child welfare system (CWS) to screen for and respond to commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC). The Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 codified CSEC as "a type of [child] maltreatment that refers to the recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act" (JVTA; P.L. 114-22). Despite this, state-level governance, law enforcement responses, commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) screening procedures and CWS responses to CSEC vary widely between jurisdictions (Green et al., 2018; Panlilio et al., 2022). CSEC prevalence data is sparse, but population-level exploratory studies conducted using statewide administrative data suggest that allegations of child trafficking represent about 1% of maltreatment documented by CWS agencies (Gibbs et al., 2018; Havlicek et al., 2016; Pullmann et al., 2020).

### CSEC Risk Factors and Antecedents

Much of what we know about the antecedents of CSE emerged from studies that grouped youth identified as being at-risk of CSE and those with confirmed experiences of CSE in their samples (Choi, 2015). This practice is largely due to the fact that CSE is hard to identify. Youth who have been commercially sexually exploited commonly experience disclosure reluctance, and those that do self-identify as having been sexually exploited or trafficked often do so months or years after the exploitation took place (Lavoie et al., 2019). As such, mandated reporters, case workers and researchers may encounter what they suspect to be CSE victimization, but are unable to confirm it definitely. Causal testing of CSEC predictors remains largely absent from the peer-reviewed literature base (Franchino-Olsen, 2021b; McCoy, 2017), but strong associations with childhood sexual abuse, child welfare system entry, use or exposure to drugs and alcohol, and the absence of a safe, accepting home or placement have been documented (Choi, 2015; De Vries & Goggin, 2020; Franchino-Olsen, 2021).

### Child Welfare System Involvement Trajectories

Quantitative administrative datasets that describe maltreatment occurrence (e.g.: The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System), system involvement and out-of-home-placement (the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System) are often restricted to a limited set of data fields collected in order to calculate federal process and outcome measures. While some of these federal process and outcome measures describe CWS workforce performance, many others offer information about child experiences in the system. These include: maltreatment in foster care; foster care entry (and placement type); recurrence of maltreatment while in care; duration of time spent in care; placement stability; reunification and permanency; and reentries (D'Andrade et al., 2008).

Involvement with the CWS is a common experience for children in the United States, but the timing, duration, consistency and intensity of system-involvement vary widely. According to Gelles (2017), the CWS can be understood as a decision-making agency, rather than a provider of services to children and families. The system funnels families through "gates," or decision-points guided by safety, risk, need and strength assessment processes. The gates Gelles (2017) identified within the CWS occur at the following points: Child Protective Services (CPS) report

screening; CPS referral response type; reasonable efforts; determining victimization; preserving or reunifying families; placement setting and context; reunification; alternative exits; and CWS oversight closure. This framing omits several key decision-points within the case management process (e.g.: wraparound eligibility determination; psychoeducation versus psychological treatment; in-home/out-of-home therapy). Nevertheless, thinking about CWS involvement as a dynamic process that can trigger a myriad of experiences, rather than as an event (reported for alleged abuse; entered into care) lends itself to a child-centered approach to maltreatment research.

Wulczyn (2020) defines CWS trajectories as patterns in the timing, duration, spacing, and order of events. He argues that rather than asking, did the child previously enter foster care, researchers stand to learn more about the effects of CWS involvement by instead asking, what age was a child in foster care? How long were they in care? Was that time in care consecutive? The timing, duration, spacing, order and intensity of CWS interventions can have significant effects on child wellbeing indicators like placement instability, exits to permanency and reentries into foster care. Long placement spells, congregate care as first placement setting, separation from siblings, and foster versus kinship care have been found to influence placement stability and case outcomes (Rock et al., 2015). Placement stability, placement setting, caregiver type, initial case closure type and the amount of time spent in out-of-home care have been associated with a child's likelihood of exiting to permanency and their likelihood of reentering foster care post-permanency (Rolock et al., 2018; Wulczyn et al.,2020).

Studying CWS decision-making outcomes and how those decisions shape children's cumulative experiences may expose the underlying mechanisms by which CWS involvement contributes to a child's likelihood of experiencing CSE. Moreover, while much is known about behavioral facilitators of CSEC at the child-level (e.g. leaving placement without permission), generating information about CWS decision points has the potential to expose policy and procedural opportunities for CSEC prevention by the CWS workforce (Jud, et al., 2016). The federal government monitors CWS system performance, in part, using point-in-time rate measures (e.g.: entries into foster care; timely exits from care; placement moves), to establish aggregate performance and outcome standards. The bulk of available research on CWS involvement was generated using state-reported metrics submitted to and made available via the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System and Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. Traditional metrics required of states offer a limited view of a given child's trajectory through the CWS, but improved data analytics have allowed us to expand that picture by "following" children over time through their administrative data.

Cumulatively, it is estimated that over one-third (37.4%) of the U.S. child population will be reported for suspected maltreatment by the age of 18 (Kim et al., 2017), between 11.8 – 12.5% will have their alleged maltreatment substantiated (Kim et al., 2017; Wildeman et al., 2014), and an estimated 5.9% of children will be placed in foster care before their 18$^{th}$ birthday (Wildeman & Emanuel, 2014). While the probability of having a screened-in allegation of abuse or neglect reported once before age 12 is estimated to be 32.4%, the likelihood of having additional screened-in reports drops to 13.7% for 2 reports, 7.6% for 3 reports, 4.5% for 4 reports and only 2.8% for 5 reports, nationally (Kim & Drake, 2019). Together, these findings

underscore the need to examine patterns of CWS involvement across childhood in relation to subsequent adverse experiences, including CSEC.

CSEC only recently fell under the purview of the CWS, and state efforts to develop, implement and document CSE responses remain underway. As a result, few studies have been able to describe or compare the prevalence and characteristics of child welfare-identified CSE. Furthermore, little is known about differences in the screening practices, training content and procedural mandates between local CWS agencies. This information is critical to the development of a robust research base, given that substantiation of non-CSE maltreatment is greatly influenced by agency-level policies, workforce training and other contextual factors (Font and Maguire-Jack, 2015). Despite this, early data collection efforts in a handful of states allowed researchers to analyze reporting, substantiation and placement metrics to offer a preliminary picture of CWS trajectories for youth who experience CSE.

**CWS Involvement and CSEC**

Earlier analyses of CWS involvement prior to experiences of CSE suggest that, in at least three large U.S. states, while only a small percentage of children with high rates of placement instability and placement in restrictive settings go on to experience CSE, most youth with identified CSE victimization previously experienced placement instability and placement in congregate placement settings.

In Illinois, 61% of all youth reported for alleged trafficking between 2012 and 2015 (N=419) had previously been reported to the CWS for alleged maltreatment of some kind (Havlicek et al., 2016). Among children with prior CPS contact (N=254), 41.3% had a history of alleged sexual abuse. A third (32.7%) of those with prior system contact spent time in placement before a CPS report that documented trafficking and 21.3% allegedly experienced trafficking while in a placement episode. Havlicek et al.'s (2016) study provided additional information about children's experiences in out-of-home placement by describing rates of placement moves, placement settings, the duration of placement episodes, and non-child welfare placements. Placement experiences were only reported if an allegation of trafficking was investigated while the child was in a placement episode (N=54). Since, as noted earlier, less than half of all children with trafficking allegations had a history of placement, the generalizability of Havlicek et al.'s findings are limited.

Gibbs et al. (2018) produced a comparative study using maltreatment allegations made in Florida between 2012 and 2015. When compared with children over the age of 10 reported for non-trafficking maltreatment (N=292,747), adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=3,420) were twice as likely to have prior confirmed maltreatment and were more than four times as likely to have previously experienced sexual abuse. Further, among youth with prior CWS-involvement, the researchers found that adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were twice as likely to have entered out-of-home care and four times as likely to have been in congregate care settings as adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688). Gibbs et al.'s study suggests that on average, adolescents who experienced CSEC had more prior contact with the CWS and were provided more intensive

and restrictive CWS interventions as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment.

In recent years, CSEC researchers have focused on associations between child absences from placement (i.e., runaway behaviors) and CSEC. Pullmann et al. (2020) explored placement histories among all state-dependent youth identified by Washington's CWS as having confirmed or strongly suspected CSE between 2015 and 2017 (N=83). Findings indicated that nearly 9 out of 10 youth had gone missing from placement at least once, and on average, these youth had gone missing from care 8.6 times. In the Gibbs et al. (2018) study from Florida, adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were 10 times as likely to have gone missing from placement at least once and over 14 times as likely to have three or more missing episodes as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688).

To summarize, findings from Illinois, Florida and Washington provide an important, but incomplete picture of CWS-involvement preceding experiences of CSEC. First, they offer little information about the timing, duration, spacing, or order of CWS events prior to experiences of CSE. Second, they provide no information on children's in-home service receipt, despite the fact that over two-thirds of children reported for trafficking with some CWS referral history had never entered foster care. Third, they do not offer a compelling comparison group with which to contextualize findings for youth with known CSE risk or victimization.

**Disproportionality**

Racial, ethnic, and gender disproportionalities are common within research produced before and after CSEC was reframed as a child welfare issue. However, ~~as~~ studies that have documented disproportional victimization largely relied on convenience sampling and small samples. In addition, the pervasiveness of racial disproportionality in the CWS – a significant predictor of CSEC – has made it difficult for researchers to test the hypothesis that CSE disproportionately impacts Black children.

Historically, the involvement of children in commercial sexual exchanges was largely understood as a behavioral phenomenon motivated by financial or material need (Greene et al., 1999; Widom & Kuhns, 1996). As a social problem, theoretical approaches to sex trade involvement among minors mostly conceptualized it as an issue affecting socioeconomically marginalized communities, and among children and families of color as a result (Baker, 2019; Campagna, 2016; Chaloner, 2010). Research produced prior to the recent paradigm shift document that Black youth and females were overrepresented in the subpopulation of youth that came to law enforcement's attention due to CSE. Nationally representative juvenile arrest data from the early 2000s reveal that 36-47% of youth cited by law enforcement for involvement in the sex trade were identified as Black, while only 15% of youth between the ages 10-19 years were Black in the general US population (Mitchell et al., 2010; Snyder & Sickmund, 2006).

Estimates produced among adjudicated males suggest that only one in ten identified cases of CSEC involves male youth (Mitchell et al., 2010). However, Reid & Piquero (2014) studied CSE among adjudicated youth in Florida and found that African American boys were

significantly more likely than White male children to experience CSE. Disproportional findings persist within studies conducted after youth involvement in the sex trade was federally recognized as child maltreatment. In Illinois, children reported to the child welfare system for alleged trafficking between 2011 and 2015 (N= 419) were nearly all female (90%), predominantly African American (53%) or White (35%), and averaged 14 ½ years of age (Havlicek et al., 2016). Children reported for alleged trafficking between 2009 and 2015 in Florida (N= 913) were nearly all female (87%), were primarily Black (50%) or White (37%), and had a median age of 16 years.

Many stakeholders, including experts with lived experiences of CSE argue that Black, Indigenous and other young people of color (BIPOC) actually do experience CSE more than their White peers and point to legacies of racism across social-ecological levels as underlying drivers, namely adultification and sexual stereotyping (Baker, 2018; Campagna, 2016; Constance-Huggins et al., 2022; Hurst, 2015). Others suggest that it is the CSE identification process that is racialized, wherein BIPOC children are more likely to be seen experiencing CSE (i.e. the exploitation occurs in unsheltered areas or promoted publicly) and perceived as being involved in commercial sexual exchanges than their non-Black peers (Halter, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2010). Stigmatization among youth with minoritized identities, including those that are not White, cisgender male or primarily English-speaking, is associated with elevated risk for homelessness, experiences of violence, poor CWS outcomes and juvenile justice involvement (Alessi et al., 2020; Evangelist & Shaefer, 2020; Kattari & Begun, 2017; Halter, 2010; Mitchell et al., 2010; Rekker et al., 2015), all of which are strongly associated with CSEC vulnerability. Young people with multiple stigmatized identities may experience these risks synergistically. For example, Kattari and Begun (2017) found that Black, Latinx and biracial transgender and gender nonconforming individuals were more likely to engage in exchange sex as a means of survival than their White counterparts, and the odds were estimated to be four times higher for Black participants, specifically.

Several subgroups of youth who experience CSE remain largely unstudied, despite calls from stakeholders in the field. First, prevalence estimates of CSE among Indigenous and Hispanic youth are sparse, and as a result, disproportionate victimization and identification have not been examined within quantitative research. Scant administrative data on minority sexual and gender identities prevent the research community from documenting the presence (or absence) of disproportionate rates of CSE among queer young people nationwide. However, trafficking has been self-reported at higher rates among gender and sexual minorities than their cisgender and heterosexual peers facing housing insecurity (Alessi et al., 2021; Hogan et al., 2020). Similarly, CSE prevalence has not been documented among minors identified as foreign-born and non-native English-speakers. As a result, it remains unknown whether CSE is experienced or identified differentially among these subpopulations. Taken together, existing evidence suggests that both hypervisibility and invisiblization (i.e. erasure) of BIPOC youth's experiences may be at play within ongoing efforts to prevent and address CSEC.

In the U.S., substantiated maltreatment, formal CWS involvement and foster care entries are experienced by racially and ethnically minoritized children at rates that are disproportionate to their presence in the overall child population. Analyses of national CWS databases reveal that Black, Native/Indigenous and multiracial children are, on average, more likely than White

children to experience substantiated maltreatment and placement in foster care, whereas Asian children are less likely to be substantiated or placed out-of-home (Feely & Bosk, 2021; Maguire-Jack et al., 2020). An estimated 37.4% of all children in the U.S. are reported to the CWS for suspected maltreatment by age 18, yet this percentage varies considerably once stratified by race and ethnicity (Kim et al., 2017). An estimated one-half (53.0%) of Black children are reported to the CWS before reaching adulthood, while one-third (32.0%) of Hispanic children, a quarter of White (28.2%) and Native American (23.4%) youth and one in ten (10.2%) Asian/Pacific Islander children will be reported to the CWS before reaching the age of 18.

Drivers of racial disproportionate passage through CWS gateways (reports; investigations; cases; placement entries; etc) among Black and Indigenous children and disparate trajectories through the CWS are the subject of ongoing debate. Child welfare scholars agree, to an extent, that the racialized distribution of poverty and social capital in the U.S. is one cause (Kim & Drake, 2018; Thomas & Waldfogel, 2022). Debates around additional mechanisms through which racism influences CWS trajectories (and at different social-ecological levels) are ongoing and, in some cases, contentious (Barth et al., 2022; Dettlaff et al., 2020; Edwards et al., 2021; Feely & Bosk, 2021; Henry et al., 2020; Lash, 2017; Maguire-Jack et al., 2021; Marçal & Maguire-Jack, 2021; Roberts, 2021).

**Purpose**

Associations between CSEC, childhood maltreatment and prior CWS-involvement are well documented within the emergent literature base. However, available findings are limited by measurement barriers, confounding co-occurrence of CWS-involvement, and barriers to accessing rigorous comparison data. With regard to measurement issues, existing findings rely on constructs that offer little insight into how children experience CWS-involvement, which may be due in large part to data availability. The existing knowledge base on CSEC predictors is emergent and would benefit from additional research that achieves the following: (a) uses more rigorous counterfactual methods; (b) includes more nuanced measures of CWS involvement; (c) differentiates between CSE risk and victimization; and (c) tests claims of racial disproportionality in CSE victimization.

This study used California's child welfare system (CWS) as a case study to describe sociodemographic, referral, case and placement characteristics associated with CSEC at the population-level. Findings will be used to conduct within- and between-group comparisons to test the hypotheses that (a) youth with identified experiences of CSE victimization differ from those identified only as at-risk of CSE and (b) children with documented CSE risk or victimization experience different CWS trajectories than those without such documentation. This analysis will address the following research questions:

1. What are the sociodemographic characteristics of youth with CWS-identified experiences of CSE in California?

    - Do they differ from the sociodemographic characteristics of youth without confirmed victimization but who have been identified by the CWS as being at-risk of CSE?

2. What report, investigation, case and placement exposures did children and youth have prior to CSE risk or victimization?

    - Did their CWS involvement differ from youth that experienced other forms of maltreatment?

    - Did their CWS involvement differ from youth with the similar initial reports to the CWS?

## 1.2. Methods

### Study Population

Table 1 describes three subgroups of the study population considered in the current analysis. The first group was comprised of all young people with CSE victimization and/or risk (hereinafter referred to as the CSE concern group) documented prior to their 18th birthday and between calendar years 2015 and 2020 (N = 13,076).[1] Second, a total of 13,045 matches were identified for inclusion in a sensitivity analysis of CWS trajectories prior to reports of CSE versus non-CSE maltreatment. Individually matched controls (herein, sensitivity group) were selected for 99.76% of youth with CSE concerns by Census race, ethnicity, primary language, assigned sex, age at CSE/non-CSE comparison event and year of CSE/non-CSE comparison event. Selection criteria for the sensitivity group was informed by Reid and colleagues' (2018) case-control comparison of prior system-involvement for older adolescents with and without reports of child trafficking, in which youth were matched on child characteristics and system involvement (gender, race, age at initial contact with the penal system, special education eligibility and household income). The third subset of the study population (hereinafter, control group) included individually matched comparisons for 99.98% of youth in the CSE concern group that had prior CWS contact (N = 10,641). Control group eligibility was based on the following: Census race; ethnicity; assigned sex; first CWS report county; age at first CWS report; and initial maltreatment type. A total of 15 youth with CSE concerns that were matched with their own pre-adoptive client identifiers[2] and were excluded from the pool of matched pairs prospective comparison group. Sensitivity and control selections were made using SAS 9.4 software (Diseker & Permanente, 2004).

### Data

This analysis relied on quantitative administrative data collected between 1998-2020 by the state of California's county-administered CWS. All 58 counties document the details of allegations, investigations, allegation type, case openings, service delivery and placements in the state-managed Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS). All data used in this analysis were accessed through a longstanding collaborative partnership between the California Department of Children's Services and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project

[1] See Appendix A for a detailed description of *CSE risk* and *CSE victimization* measure construction methodologies

[2] In California, children who reenter the CWS after being adopted are assigned new client identifiers in CWS/CMS.

(CCWIP) at the University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley). CCWIP receives quarterly extracts of quantitative CWS/CMS data fields in order to produce public outcome metrics on behalf of the California Department of Social Services and conduct research. CCWIP's ongoing work has Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Protocol 12-10-0800) and the Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS) at UC Berkeley (Protocol ID: 2010-01-592). CCWIP research staff cleans, deidentifies and stores the data on a remote secure server managed by UC Berkeley. This study received IRB exempt status from OPHS (Protocol ID: 2021-09-14613). All data presented in this paper adhere to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data-deidentification masking requirements.[3]

**Measures**

The outcome measure, CSE concern (0,1) was measured in one of two ways. The first was the CSEC Grid, a field associated with each child client that captures CSE risk or victimization in order to track eligibility for CSE prevention and aftercare services (SB 855, Chapter 29, 2014). The second was the presence of an allegation of exploitation that was screened-in for investigation by the CWS. SB 855 definitions of CSE victimization and risk along with screenshots of the CSEC Grid and Allegation page can be found in Appendix B. For within-group comparisons, CSE concern was stratified by CSE certainty. A binary indicator of whether or not victimization was documented (0,1), measured in one of two ways: (1) a "victim" entry on the CSEC Grid (method 1) or a substantiated report of exploitation.

Sociodemographic indicators, including California's composite measure of primary race/ethnicity, assigned sex, primary language and age at earliest CSE concern were derived from data entered by case workers in CWS/CMS. Hispanic youth, females, primarily English-speakers and youth over the age of 15 were used as the reference groups, the selection of which was informed by available data on California's child population, child welfare involved population and subgroups of Californian youth with experiences of CSE. CWS involvement covariates were organized into three overarching categories: report and investigation events; CWS case involvement; and CWS out-of-home placement experiences.[4] In order to ensure temporal validity, only allegation, investigation, case and placement events that began at least 30 days prior to the initial CSE concern were included in the analysis.

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics that summarize CSE field usage and child characteristics, along with allegation, investigation, case and placement histories (herein referred to as CWS involvement histories) were calculated using SAS 9.4 software. Pearson's chi-squared test and a clinical-cutoff [5] were used to test for between- and within-group differences. Logistic regression was then used to estimate differences in the odds of experiences within the CWS for all variables with significant chi-squared and clinical cutoff findings. For the within-group comparison, youth

[3] For additional details about small cell masking requirements, please refer to the CDSS Data De-Identification Reference Guide: https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/Pages/PublicReportingGuidelines.aspx

[4] A complete list of CWS trajectory measures are provided in Appendix B.

[5] Deviations from the expected N were considered clinically significant if they exceeded 100 children.

with CSE victimization were compared with those where only CSE risk was documented. The combined group of youth with documented CSE victimization or risk (herein described as a documented CSE concern) with their matched controls based on the criteria described in the sample description. Findings were considered significant if a Chi-squared p-value of less .001 was observed and the observed distribution varied from the expected value at the cell-level by an N of 100 or more. Unadjusted odds ratios were calculated for variables identified as significant using the first two criteria. SAS 9.4 software was used to clean raw data, construct composite measures, select matched pairs for comparison and conduct logistic regression analyses.

## 1.3. Results

### Within-group comparisons: CSE victimization versus risk

### CSE Identification

Table 1 details findings on how and when CSE victimization and risk were documented for the 2,662 children with confirmed CSE (victimization group) and the 10,414 youth with only CSE risk documented (risk group). The risk group represented over two-thirds (79.6%) of all youth with documented CSE concerns. As Figure 1 demonstrates, documentation of CSE victimization experiences peaked in 2016, and decreased each subsequent year. In contrast, documentation of CSE risk peaked in 2017 and maintained a general upward trend from 2015 to 2020. Among the victimization group, nearly all (91.2%) had their CSE experience indicated via a victim entry on the CSEC Grid (CSE victimization identification method 1), while less than half (45.5%) had a substantiated allegation of exploitation (CSE victimization identification method 2). Roughly one-fifth (19.7%) of the 1,212 youth with substantiated exploitation did not have CSE documented on the CSEC Grid. On average, youth with confirmed CSE victimization were older than those with CSE risk only (68.4% of those victimized were over age 15 vs 43.5% of the at-risk group). Taken together, these findings reveal heterogeneity in CSE documentation practices within California.

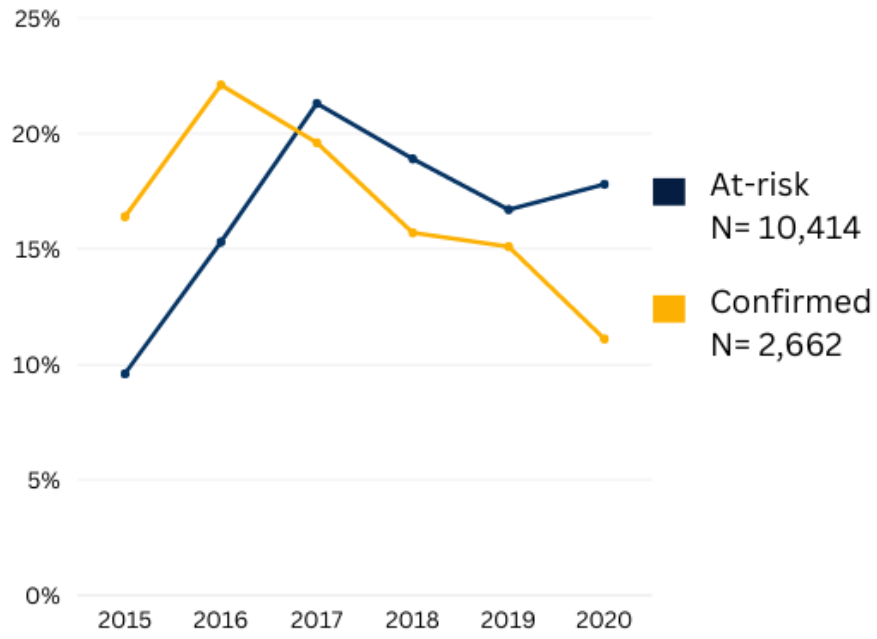
Table 1.1.
Child Characteristics by CSE Risk/Victimization

| | Confirmed CSE | | At-risk of CSE | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Pearson's Chi-squared P-Value | Clinical Significance (Diff. > 100) |
| Total Child List | 2,662 | 20.4 | 10,414 | 79.6 | | |
| Assigned sex was female | 2,476 | 93.0 | 8,324 | 79.9 | <.0001 | Yes |
| CSE Concern before age 15 | 842 | 31.6 | 4,530 | 43.5 | <.0001 | Yes |
| Census race | | | | | | |
| Black | 909 | 34.1 | 1,830 | 17.6 | | |
| White | 1,078 | 40.5 | 4,959 | 47.6 | | |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 59 | 2.2 | 274 | 2.6 | | |
| Native American/Alaskan | 34 | 1.3 | 116 | 1.1 | | |
| Multiracial | 235 | 8.8 | 669 | 6.4 | | |
| Unknown/Other | 357 | 13.4 | 2,566 | 24.6 | | |
| Primary Ethnicity (CA Method) | | | | | <.0001 | Yes |
| Hispanic/Latinx | 1,019 | 38.3 | 4,908 | 47.1 | | |
| Black | 915 | 34.4 | 1,879 | 18.0 | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| White | 602 | 22.6 | 2,771 | 26.6 | | |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 54 | 2.0 | 304 | 2.9 | | |
| Native American/Alaskan | 31 | 1.2 | 104 | 1.0 | | |
| Not Documented | 41 | 1.5 | 448 | 4.3 | | |
| Primary Language | | | | | | |
| English/Unknown | 2,455 | 92.2 | 9,027 | 86.7 | <.0001 | Yes |
| Non-English | 207 | 7.8 | 1,387 | 13.3 | | |
| CSE Concern Year | | | | | <.0001 | Yes |
| 2015 | 436 | 16.4 | 1,002 | 9.6 | | |
| 2016 | 588 | 22.1 | 1,589 | 15.3 | | |
| 2017 | 523 | 19.6 | 2,215 | 21.3 | | |
| 2018 | 417 | 15.7 | 1,970 | 18.9 | | |
| 2019 | 402 | 15.1 | 1,743 | 16.7 | | |
| 2020 | 296 | 11.1 | 1,851 | 17.8 | | |
| Open or Recent CWS case | 1,058 | 39.7 | 2,788 | 26.8 | <.0001 | Yes |
| While in placement episode | 627 | 23.6 | 1,367 | 13.1 | <.0001 | Yes |
| While in congregate care | 577 | 21.7 | 865 | 8.3 | <.0001 | Yes |

Figure 1.1.

Year of initial documented CSE concern




**CWS Involvement Trajectories**

In Table 2, which describes the full sample of youth with identified CSE concerns, a majority (84.1%) had been reported to the CWS prior to the first identified CSE concern, less than half (42.4%) had prior CWS cases and one-third (33.0%) had spent time in California's foster care system. At the time CSE concerns were first documented, 15.2% of youth were in an open placement episode. Of those in foster care, nearly three-quarters (72.3%) were placed in congregate care and roughly one in ten (12.2%) were documented as being absent from placement. Documentation of CSE victimization and risk decreased over time after 2016, and the ratio of documentation of CSE risk peaked the following year and declined at a slower rate, comparatively.

Prior to CSE concerns, CWS trajectories did not differ significantly by CSE certainty level, with the exception of two indicators. Roughly one-third of those with victimization documented had a report of sexual abuse investigated (versus 28.9% among the risk-only group). As Table 2 shows, the estimated odds of having a history of investigated sexual abuse were slightly elevated as compared with the risk-only group (OR: 1.27; <.001). Of those with prior placement experiences, over half (57.3%) of those with victimization experiences had spent some time in a congregate care setting (i.e. group home), while less than half of the risk-only group (44.6%) had. The estimated odds of having been placed in congregate care were twice as high among youth with documented victimization (OR: 2.06; <.001).

Table 1.2.

Referral History by Commercial Sexual Exploitation Risk and Victimization

| | Confirmed CSE | | At-risk of CSE | | Full List | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| Total Child Counts | 2,662 | 20.4 | 10,414 | 79.6 | 13,076 | |
| Youth Reported to CPS Prior to Event | 2,401 | 90.2 | 8,595 | 82.5 | 10,996 | 84.1 |
| Number of Investigated CPS Reports | | | | | | |
| None | 93 | 3.9 | 512 | 6.0 | 605 | 5.5 |
| Under 5 Reports | 985 | 41.0 | 4,172 | 48.5 | 5,157 | 46.9 |
| 5-10 Reports | 868 | 36.2 | 2,766 | 32.2 | 3634 | 33.0 |
| 11-15 Reports | 285 | 11.9 | 730 | 8.5 | 1,015 | 9.2 |
| 15+ Reports | 170 | 7.1 | 415 | 4.8 | 585 | 5.3 |
| 5+ Investigated CPS Referrals | | | | | | |
| Yes | 1,323 | 55.1 | 3911 | 45.5 | 5234 | 47.6 |
| Most Frequent CPS Report Determination | | | | | | |
| No Investigation | 1,066 | 44.4 | 3,771 | 43.9 | 4,837 | 44.0 |
| No Safety Threat Identified | 189 | 7.9 | 885 | 10.3 | 1,074 | 9.8 |
| Situation Stabilized | 828 | 34.5 | 3,174 | 36.9 | 4,002 | 36.4 |
| Incomplete Investigation/Other | 84 | 3.5 | 376 | 4.4 | 460 | 4.2 |
| Case Already Open | 234 | 9.7 | 389 | 4.5 | 623 | 5.7 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Investigated Sexual Abuse Report | 909 | 37.9 | 2,487 | 28.9 | 3,396 | 30.9 |
| First Sexual Abuse Report Determination | | | | | | |
| No Allegation History | 1,013 | _ | 4,752 | _ | 5,765 | _ |
| No Investigation | 647 | 46.6 | 1,706 | 44.4 | 2,353 | 45.0 |
| No Safety Threat Identified | 120 | 8.6 | 393 | 10.2 | 513 | 9.8 |
| Situation Stabilized | 327 | 23.6 | 1,149 | 29.9 | 1,476 | 28.2 |
| Child in Open Case | 197 | 14.2 | 354 | 9.2 | 551 | 10.5 |
| Case Opened | 67 | 4.8 | 155 | 4.0 | 222 | 4.2 |
| Incomplete Investigation/Other | 30 | 2.2 | 86 | 2.2 | 116 | 2.2 |
| CW Placement History | 1,202 | 45.2 | 3,115 | 29.9 | 4,317 | 33.0 |
| Prior Congregate Care | 689 | 57.3 | 1,390 | 44.6 | 2,079 | 48.2 |

**Sociodemographic Characteristics**

Figures 2-4 illustrate the sociodemographic composition of youth by the severity of CSE concern. Young people with documented CSE victimization experiences differed significantly from those in the risk groups by race/ethnicity, primary language spoken, assigned sex and age at earliest CSE concern. Compared to the risk group, a greater percentage of the victimized group were Black (34.1 vs 17.6%) and non-Hispanic (60.7 vs 51.3%). The victimized group had a higher percentage of females (93.0 vs 79.9%) and English as a primary language was more common among the victimized group (92.2 vs 86.7%). Compared to Hispanic youth, Black children had higher estimated odds of having documented CSE victimization (2.05; $p < .001$). The current logistic regression did not produce significant differences among White, Asian/Pacific Islander or Native American/Alaskan young people relative to Hispanic youth. In the victimized group, the estimated odds of being male (OR: 0.30; $p < .001$) and primarily English-speaking (OR: 0.71; $p < .001$) were significantly lower among youth with documented CSE victimization experiences.

Figure 1.2.

Primary Language by CSE concern type

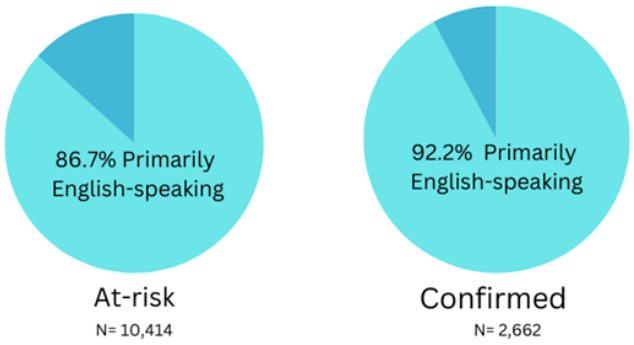



Figure 1.3.

Assigned sex by CSE concern type

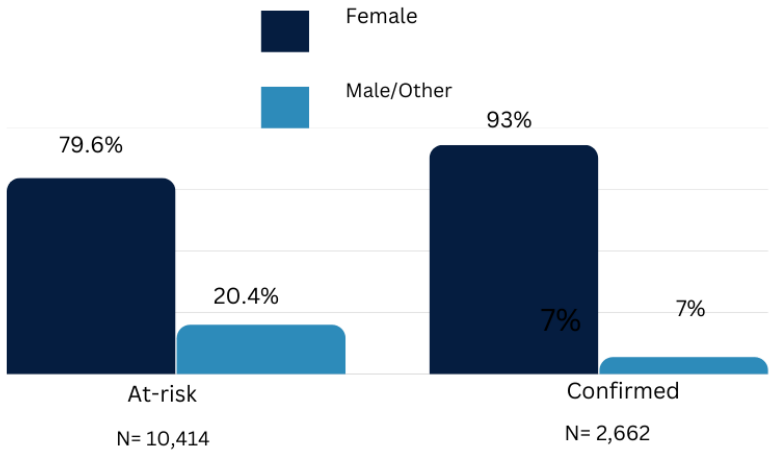


Figure 1.4.

Racial/ethnic disparities in the CWS and by CSE concern type

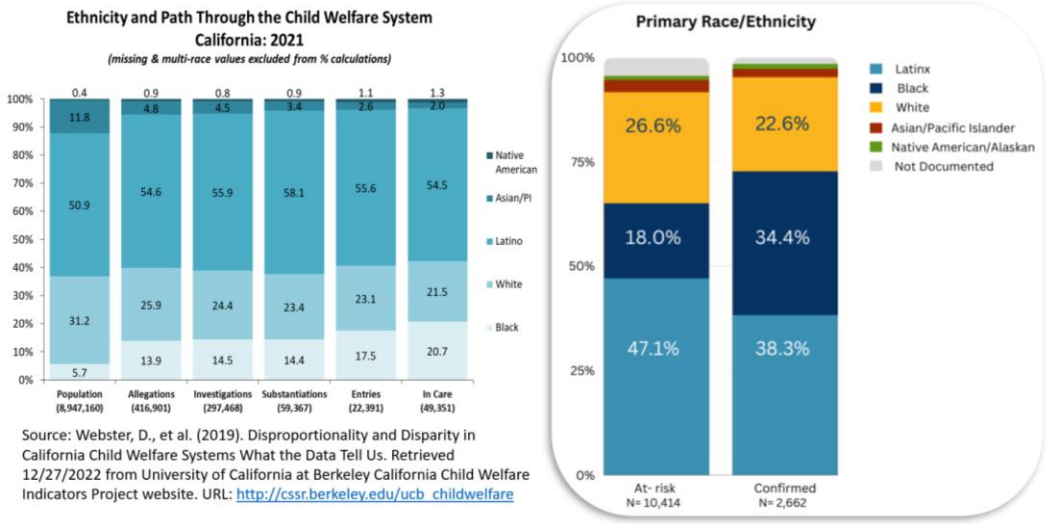



Table 1.3.

Estimated odds of having CSE victimization confirmed by the CWS

| | Odds Ratio | P-value | 95% CI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child Characteristics | | | | |
| Race/Ethnicity^ (with Hispanic/Latinx as reference) | | | | |
| Black | 2.05 | <.0001 | 1.83 | 2.29 |
| White | 1.00 | 0.96 | 0.89 | 1.12 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander | 0.90 | 0.47 | 0.66 | 1.21 |
| Native American/Alaskan | 1.32 | 0.19 | 0.87 | 2.01 |
| Other/Not Documented | 0.50 | <.0001 | 0.36 | 0.70 |
| Male | 0.30 | <.0001 | 0.26 | 0.35 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Non-English Primary Language | 0.71 | <.0001 | 0.60 | 0.84 |
| CWS History | | | | |
| Prior investigated sexual abuse | 1.27 | <.0001 | 1.15 | 1.40 |
| Prior congregate care placement | 2.06 | <.0001 | 1.84 | 2.30 |

*Model includes youth with any experiences of CSE confirmed by the CWS (N=2,662) and youth with CSE risk documented (N=10,414)

*Note about effects sizes: per Chen et al, (2010), odds ratio values of 1.68, 3.47, and 6.71 are equivalent to Cohen's d small, medium, and large effects sizes, respectively

**Between-group comparisons: CSE cases versus controls**

**Summary.** As compared to the control group, young people with documented CSE concerns had more extensive report, investigation and substantiation histories, yet the CWS intervened (via investigation, case opening and out-of-home placement) chronologically later. Among youth that had a prior CWS case, higher percentages of those in the CSE concern group experienced multiple case openings. For those that entered out-of-home care, placement instability and placement in institutional settings were more common among the CSE concern group. Table 4 presents descriptive statistics from the case-control comparison of maltreatment report and investigation histories, while Tables 5 and 6 summarize information about case and out-of-home placement experiences, respectively. Table 7 summarizes findings from the logistic regression for report and investigation-related experiences that met statistical and clinical significance cutoffs.

Table 1.4.

Referral History among the CSE and control groups

| | | Case Control Group N = 10,641 | | CSE Concern Group N = 10,641 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Youth Reported to CPS Prior to Event | | Freq. 10,641 | Col % | Freq. 10,641 | Col % |
| Number of Investigated CPS Reports | | | | | |
| | None | 717 | 6.7 | 537 | 5.0 |
| | Under 5 Reports | 7,682 | 72.2 | 4,958 | 46.6 |
| | 5-10 Reports | 1,858 | 17.5 | 3,566 | 33.5 |
| | 11-15 Reports | 289 | 2.7 | 1,003 | 9.4 |
| | 15+ Reports | 95 | 0.9 | 577 | 5.4 |
| 5+ Evaluated Out CPS Reports | | 518 | 4.9 | 2,564 | 24.1 |
| 1+ Incomplete Investigation Count | | 1630 | 15.3 | 2231 | 21.0 |
| % of CPS Reports Investigated | | | | | |
| | None | 717 | _ | 537 | _ |
| | Less than 50% | 561 | 5.7 | 1,624 | 16.1 |
| | 50% or More | 9,363 | 94.3 | 8,480 | 83.9 |
| % of Investigated Referrals Substantiated | | | | | |
| | None/NA | 5,505 | | 4,278 | _ |
| | Less than 50% | 2,266 | 44.1 | 4,557 | 71.6 |
| | 50% or More | 2,870 | 55.9 | 1,806 | 28.4 |
| First CPS Report Determination | | | | | |
| | No Investigation | 1,711 | 16.1 | 2,248 | 21.1 |
| | No Safety Threat Identified | 2,053 | 19.3 | 2,058 | 19.3 |
| | Situation Stabilized | 4,530 | 42.6 | 4,340 | 40.8 |
| | Incomplete Investigation/Other | 664 | 6.2 | 539 | 5.1 |
| | Child Already in Open Case | 83 | 0.8 | 88 | 0.8 |
| | Case Opened | 1,600 | 15.0 | 1,368 | 12.9 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Most Frequent CPS Report Determination | | | | | |
| | No Investigation | 2,965 | 27.9 | 4,850 | 45.6 |
| | No Safety Threat Identified | 1,477 | 13.9 | 1,029 | 9.7 |
| | Situation Stabilized | 4,404 | 41.4 | 3745 | 35.2 |
| | Incomplete Investigation/Other | 1,347 | 12.7 | 417 | 3.9 |
| | Case Already Open | 448 | 4.2 | 600 | 5.6 |
| First Investigated Referral After Age 5 | | 119 | 1.1% | 775 | 7.3 |
| First Substantiated Referral After Age 5 | | 85 | 0.8% | 559 | 5.3 |
| History of Sexual Abuse Allegations | | 1,433 | 13.5% | 5,103 | 48.0 |
| | Investigated Sexual Abuse Report | 1,011 | 70.6 | 3,319 | 65.0 |
| | 2+ Investigated Sexual Abuse Reports | 171 | 11.9 | 1,067 | 20.9 |
| | Substantiated Sexual Abuse Report | 146 | 10.2 | 832 | 16.3 |
| First Sexual Abuse Report Determination | | | | | |
| | No Allegation History | 9,208 | _ | 5,538 | _ |
| | No Investigation | 513 | 35.8 | 2,300 | 45.1 |
| | No Safety Threat Identified | 232 | 16.2 | 508 | 10.0 |
| | Situation Stabilized | 455 | 31.8 | 1,434 | 28.1 |
| | Child in Open Case | 157 | 11.0 | 537 | 10.5 |
| | Incomplete Investigation/Other | 41 | 2.9 | 116 | 2.3 |
| | Case Opened | 35 | 2.4 | 208 | 4.1 |
| Age at Earliest Alleged Sexual Abuse | | | | | |
| | No Allegation History | 9,208 | _ | 5,538 | _ |
| | 0-3 Years | 342 | 23.8 | 266 | 5.2 |
| | 4-5 Years | 409 | 28.5 | 712 | 13.9 |
| | 6 - 9 Years | 336 | 23.4 | 978 | 19.1 |
| | 10+ Years | 347 | 24.2 | 3,155 | 61.7 |

**Reports and Investigations.** Cumulatively, those in the CSE concern group were more commonly the subject of five or more investigations (21.1% versus 48.4%), five or more evaluated out reports (24.1% versus 4.9%) and five or more substantiated reports of any maltreatment type (5.2% versus 1.3%). After controlling for the age at which children were first reported, a greater percentage of those in the CSE concern group were over the age of 5 at their earliest investigation (7.3% versus 1.1%) and substantiation (5.3% versus 0.8%). After matching on child characteristics and the child's earliest CPS report, estimated odds of receiving a first-ever investigation after the child's fifth birthday were seven times higher among the CSE concern group (OR: 7.07; $p < .001$). Furthermore, a greater percentage of children with CSE concerns had at least one incomplete investigation due to loss of contact or the inability to locate the referred family (15.3% versus 20.1%). A lower proportion of maltreatment reports were screened in among the CSE concern group (OR: 0.40; $p < .001$). The estimated odds were slightly higher among the CSE concern group for the following system experiences: any incomplete prior investigation (1.29; $p < .001$), case openings (1.24; $p < .001$) and out-of-home placement entries (1.38; $p < .001$).

Similar patterns in the timing and extent of CWS responses were identified for reports of sexual abuse specifically. Comparatively more of the CSE concern group were reported for childhood sexual abuse (48.0% versus 13.5%) and the estimated odds of having a sexual abuse report assigned for investigation were nearly four times higher among the CSE concern group (OR: 3.62; $p < .001$). A higher percentage of those with sexual abuse reports in the CSE concern group received a substantiation at some point (16.3% versus 10.2%). Yet, they were reported, on average, later on during childhood (61.7% versus 24.2% reported for sexual abuse after tenth birthday) and a smaller percentage of those in the CSE concern group had their first sexual abuse CPS report screened in for investigation (64.2% versus 54.9%).

Table 1.5.

Case History by Case Control Type

| | Case Control Group | | CSE Concern Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | Col % | Freq. | Col % |
| Child with CW Case History | 3,789 | 35.6 | 5,387 | 50.6 |
| 4+ Investigations Prior to Case Opening | 473 | 12.5 | 1,373 | 25.5 |
| 2+ Substantiations Prior to Case Opening | 616 | 16.3 | 1,183 | 22.0 |
| 2+ Prior CW Case(s) | 814 | 21.5 | 2,143 | 39.8 |
| Percentage of Lifetime in CW Case | | | | |
| Less than 50 | 3,306 | 87.3 | 4,887 | 90.7 |
| 50 or More | 483 | 12.7 | 500 | 9.3 |
| Majority of Case Days Spent In-home | 1,501 | 39.6 | 1,788 | 33.2 |
| Predominant Case Service Type | | | | |
| Family Maintenance | 1,501 | 39.6 | 1,788 | 33.2 |
| Family Reunification | 1,078 | 28.5 | 1,856 | 34.5 |
| Permanent Placement | 1,069 | 28.2 | 1,493 | 27.7 |
| Other Case Service | 141 | 3.7 | 250 | 4.6 |
| First Case Closure Reason | | | | |
| Family Stabilized/Reunified | 1,413 | 37.3 | 1,751 | 32.5 |
| Adoption | 824 | 21.7 | 275 | 5.1 |
| Relative/Legal Guardianship | 186 | 4.9 | 275 | 5.1 |
| Case Dismissed | 876 | 23.1 | 1,278 | 23.7 |
| Transferred Agencies/Other | 54 | 1.4 | 146 | 2.7 |
| Case Remained Open | 436 | 11.5 | 1,661 | 30.8 |
| First Case Length | | | | |
| 6 Months or Less | 850 | 22.4 | 1,460 | 27.1 |
| 6-12 Months | 811 | 21.4 | 1,083 | 20.1 |
| 1-2 Years | 1,137 | 30.0 | 1,370 | 25.4 |
| Over 2 Years | 991 | 26.2 | 1,474 | 27.4 |
| First Case Opened after Age 5 | 551 | 14.5 | 2,992 | 55.5 |
| Last Case Closure Reason | | | | |
| Family Stabilized/Reunified | 1,174 | 31.0 | 1,031 | 19.1 |
| Child was Adopted | 966 | 25.5 | 154 | 2.9 |
| Relative/Guardian | 192 | 5.1 | 155 | 2.9 |
| Case was Dismissed | 761 | 20.1 | 737 | 13.7 |
| Transferred Agencies/Other | 61 | 1.6 | 106 | 2.0 |
| Case Remained Open at CSE Concern | 635 | 16.8 | 3,204 | 59.5 |
| Last Case Length | | | | |
| 6 Months or Less | 776 | 20.5 | 1,936 | 35.9 |
| Between 6-12 Months | 661 | 17.4 | 618 | 11.5 |
| 1-2 Years | 1,122 | 29.6 | 956 | 17.7 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Over 2 Years | 1,230 | 32.5 | 1,877 | 34.8 |

**Cases.** Half of all youth with CSE concerns had a prior CWS case opening (N = 5,387), while just over one-third of young people (N=3,789) in the control group did. Of those with case histories, a quarter of the CSE concern group received four or more CWS investigations before a case was opened on their behalf (25.5% versus 12.5%). A larger percentage of the CSE control group were over the age of 5 when their first CWS case was opened (55.5% versus 14.5% of the control group). After matching controls on child sociodemographic identifiers and the child's first CPS report, the estimated odds of receiving an initial case opening after the child's fifth birthday were over nine times higher among the CSE concern group (9.50; p <.001). Just over a quarter of CSE concern group had their first CWS case remain open for six months or less (27.1% versus 22.4%), a fifth had an initial case open for six months to one year (20.1% versus 21.4%), and one in four had a case that lasted between one and two years (25.4% versus 30.0%). The remaining quarter had an initial case open for two or more years (27.4% versus 26.2%). Findings from the logistic regression estimated that the CSE concern group had 95% higher estimated odds of having their first case open for more than two years as compared to the control group (OR: 1.95; p <.001). Comparing the case closure reasons for each young person's first CWS case, a lower percentage of the CSE concern group had their initial case ended in family stabilization/reunification (32.5% versus 37.3%) or adoption (5.1% versus 21.7%). The estimated odds of being adopted during a child's first CWS case were lower for the CSE concern group (OR: 0.31; p <.001). Cumulatively, a higher percentage of the CSE concern group experienced multiple CWS case openings before a CSE concern was documented (39.8% versus 21.5%), the estimated odds of which were over four times higher for the CSE concern group (OR: 4.19; p <.001).

Table 1.6.

Placement History by Case Control Type

| | Case Control Group | | CSE Concern Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | Col % | Freq. | Col % |
| Children with CW Placement History | 2,622 | 24.6 | 4,192 | 39.4 |
| Predominant Placement Type | | | | |
| Relative Care | 1,161 | 44.3 | 1,031 | 24.6 |
| Foster/Legal Guardian Care | 1,410 | 53.8 | 2,122 | 50.6 |
| Congregate Care / Other | 51 | 1.9 | 1,039 | 24.8 |
| 4+ Placements | 795 | 30.3 | 2,338 | 55.8 |
| First Placement After Age 3 | 642 | 24.5 | 3,028 | 72.2 |
| First Placement after Age 5 | 411 | 15.7 | 2,632 | 62.8 |
| Prior Congregate Care | 222 | 8.5 | 2,026 | 48.3 |
| Prior Non-Foster Care Placement | 38 | 1.4 | 796 | 19.0 |

**Placements.** Placement histories were identified for 39.4% of all youth with CSE concerns (N = 4,192) and 24.6% of all matched controls (N=2,622). Among youth with prior placements, a higher percentage of the CSE concern group entered placement after their fifth birthday (62.8% versus 15.7%) and spent time in four or more placements (55.8% versus 30.3%). It was estimated that the CSE concern group had over seven times higher odds of having been placed in congregate care (OR: 5.84; $p < .001$) or a non-CWS institutional or penal setting (7.05; $p < .001$) than matched controls. In contrast, the estimated odds of spending a majority of placement days under relative care were lower among youth with CSE concerns (0.56; $p < .001$). Higher-than-average placement instability (i.e. four or more prior placements) was more

common among the CSE concern group, and their estimated odds of having been in four or more placements were twice that of controls (OR: 1.95; $p < .001$).

**Table 1.7**

Logistic regression of CSE concern status on CWS involvement

| Referral, Case and Placement Indicators | Odds Ratio | P-value | 95% CI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First Investigated after Age 5 | 7.07 | <.0001 | 5.57 | 8.97 |
| Screened in sexual abuse | 3.62 | <.0001 | 3.34 | 3.92 |
| Prior incomplete investigation | 1.29 | <.0001 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| CWS case history | 1.24 | <.0001 | 1.13 | 1.36 |
| Out-of-home placement history | 1.38 | <.0001 | 1.24 | 1.52 |
| Above-median percentage of CPS reports investigated | 0.4 | <.0001 | 0.38 | 0.42 |
| First Case after Age 5 | 9.50 | <.0001 | 8.43 | 10.70 |
| First Case ended in Adoption | 0.31 | <.0001 | 0.26 | 0.37 |
| First Case Open 2+ Years | 1.95 | <.0001 | 1.71 | 2.22 |
| 2+ Prior Cases | 4.19 | <.0001 | 3.75 | 4.70 |
| Majority of CWS case(s) spent in out-of-home care | 1.24 | <.0001 | 1.12 | 1.39 |
| Prior placement in congregate care | 5.84 | <.0001 | 4.97 | 6.86 |
| Prior placement in non-foster care placement facility | 7.05 | <.0001 | 4.99 | 9.97 |
| 4+ prior placements | 1.95 | <.0001 | 1.70 | 2.25 |
| Above median time spent in care | 1.18 | <.0001 | 1.06 | 1.32 |
| Majority of placement days in relative care | 0.56 | <.0001 | 0.51 | 0.64 |

## 1.4. Discussion

### Within-group discussion

This study documented few differences in the CWS involvement histories as compared to the CSE risk-only group, but revealed sociodemographic disproportionalities among youth with identified CSE victimization. Young people with documented CSE victimization were disproportionately Black, female and primarily English-speaking relative to the risk-only group. Furthermore, the percentage of Black children present among youth with documented CSE victimization (38.3%) exceeds their representation among the general child population (5.7%), those with substantiated maltreatment (14.4%) and those in foster care (21.7%) throughout California (Webster, et al., 2022). Conversely, Hispanic youth comprise between 50-60% of the general and CWS-involved populations, but represent only 39.3% of youth with confirmed CSE. The case-control matching approach ensured that the observed between-group differences cannot be explained by confounding disproportionality resulting from sociodemographic differences between the cases and controls. However, findings from this study do not explain why Black youth are overrepresented while Hispanic youth are underrepresented among youth with confirmed CSE. Many possibilities exist, including, but not limited to: actual disproportionate victimization of Black youth; sexual stereotyping; insufficient or ill-informed training; contextual dynamics that may dictate the visibility of CSE within communities; and/or cultural or religious influences on disclosure during investigations. Similar sociopolitical factors may also drive the disproportionately low documentation of CSE victimization for males and primarily non-English speakers. In order to better understand underlying causes of the observed disproportionality, qualitative research on CWS investigations of CSEC is required.

### Between-group discussion

Between-group comparisons of CWS report, investigation, case and placement histories for youth with documented CSE concerns and their individually-matched controls produced five key findings relevant to child welfare policy and programmatic responses to CSE.

First, nearly all children with CSE concerns (84.1%) had been brought to the attention of the CWS prior to the confirmed CSE victimization, just over one-half (54.6%) had a formal CWS case opened on their behalf, under one-half spent more than a week in foster care (45.5%) and fewer than one in four (24.3%) were in a placement episode on or around the time CSE concerns were first identified. Federal guidelines and funding sources (i.e. Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018) encourage CWS to administer CSEC prevention and screening interventions in out-of-home care settings (Gibbs et al., 2018b). Results from the current study indicate that this approach does not address CSE vulnerability amongst a sizable portion of children known to the CWS, but who are not under CWS supervision when they experience CSE victimization.

Second, current findings reveal that, on average, CWS interventions (i.e. investigations, case openings, placement entries) occurred later in the lives of children who went on to have concerns of CSE brought to the attention of the CWS. Early system-intervention is not always a beneficial response to child maltreatment concerns. That said, late CWS intervention coupled

with comparatively more experiences of incomplete investigations, case openings and placement instability, as observed among the CSE concern group, points to these decision points as potential missed opportunities to engage children and their families in upstream CSE prevention. Of those with reported sexual abuse concerns, a smaller percentage of youth received an investigation and the CWS investigated sexual abuse concerns chronologically later. Findings on the timing of CWS interventions are consistent with qualitative studies that present the insights of people with lived experiences of CSE. Some survivor experts describe their initial understanding of CSE as a way to achieve some control over the abuses they were subjected to in childhood, and others posited that receiving education on connections between prior sexual abuse and exploitation may have prevented their own experiences of CSE (Bruhns et al., 2018; Hurst, 2021). While the results of this analysis cannot be used to determine whether the maltreatment occurred or was reported later for the CSE concern group, the current study may inform future efforts to study CSE risk moderators, particularly for children with experiences of sexual abuse.

Third, the characteristics of children's initial CWS cases differed in clinically relevant ways. Specifically, the CSE concern group spent, on average, less time in their initial CWS case. However, the estimated odds of having an initial case end in adoption were lower among the CSE concern group and family reunification or stabilization was less common for the CSE concern group. Moreover, the estimated odds of having multiple case openings were higher among youth in the CSE concern group, which can result in the assignment of unfamiliar caseworkers, dependency judges, behavioral healthcare providers and even out-of-home care providers to children reentering CWS supervision. These case history findings offer preliminary evidence that CWS intervention and longer periods of formal involvement may promote child permanency and be protective against CSEC. However, more information about the social and geospatial contexts in which CWS interventions and CSE exposure occur is needed to interpret these associations.

Fourth, for youth with out-of-home care histories, kinship care was less common, while placement instability and entries into non-child welfare institutional settings (i.e. psychiatric hospitals; inpatient substance use treatment; juvenile detention camps) were more common among young people in the CSE concern group as compared to the control group. Together, this study documents a pattern of multi-institution and cross-system involvement prior to experiences of CSE. Professionals and paraprofessionals working with youth in these settings may be well positioned to implement primary prevention strategies, in addition to the secondary and tertiary prevention programs that have been championed by federal and state-level governing bodies (Gibbs et al., 2018).

Fifth, a majority of young people with CWS-identified experiences of CSE victimization had it documented on their child-client notebook but had no substantiated allegations of exploitation on file. The federal safety measure that tracks maltreatment recurrence and California's reoccurrence of allegation measure each rely on base populations of children with substantiated maltreatment reports[6]. This suggests that documentation practices implemented by

[6] Webster, D., Lee, S., Dawson, W., Magruder, J., Exel, M., Cuccaro-Alamin, S., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Wiegmann, W., Saika, G., Courtney, M., Eastman, A.L., Hammond, I., Gomez,

the CWS workforce may impede the CWS's ability to track CSE revictimization at the population-level.

**Limitations**

Several considerations may limit the generalizability of the current study. First, this study only captured CSE and childhood maltreatment that was reported to the CWS in the state of California, and may undercount maltreatment and CWS encounters that occurred elsewhere. Due to state-level differences in CSE-related policy, associations that emerged in this analysis may not be generalizable for other geographies or jurisdiction. However, California was an early adopter of diversion and treatment responses to CSE and may inform efforts that are underway in other states and territories. Second, the racial and ethnic identities included in the study were extracted from CWS/CMS and documented by the CWS workforce. While policy requires that workers update records to reflect self-reported responses, administrative data are subject to human error and the categories available to choose from may not adequately describe the true ethnic, racial or cultural identities of children included in this study. Finally, CSE documentation became mandatory one year prior to the study period and workers may not have received adequate CSE assessment training prior to the start of the observation period. As such, some of the documented risk and victimization described may reflect false positives or negatives. Summary statistics included in this paper are not reported (and should not be referenced) as prevalence estimates of CSE among California's child population.

**1.5. Conclusions**

Using California as a case study, this research describes the sociodemographic characteristics and CWS trajectories of youth with CSE victimization and risk identified by the CWS between 2015 and 2021. CSE victimization (as opposed to CSE risk) was documented disproportionately among Black, female and primarily English-speaking youth. Findings from a case-control comparison of youth with similar initial CWS contact highlight the importance of timing, duration and continuity of CWS interventions in CSE vulnerability. This case study can inform quality improvement efforts related to prevention and aftercare services, primary and secondary CSEC prevention, and data collection. Further, this analysis includes novel child metrics derived from administrative data that can be used to summarize children's trajectories through the CWS among other subpopulations of interest. Future research efforts should examine CSEC investigation and screening practices, patterns across CWS involvement metrics and the socioeconomic context in which CWS-identified CSEC occurs.

---

A., Prakash, A., Sunaryo, E., Guo, S., Berwick, H., Hoerl, C., Yee, H., Flamson, T., Gonzalez, A., Ensele, P., Nevin, J., & Guinan, B. (2022). CCWIP reports. Retrieved Jan 18, 2023, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website. URL: https://ccwip.berkeley.edu

**Chapter 2**

**A latent class analysis of child welfare system involvement prior to commercial sexual exploitation**

## Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** Behavioral factors that contribute to commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSE) are well documented, but the impact of institutional system factors remains largely untested. The purpose of this exploratory study is to identify latent subgroups of children within California's population of young people impacted by CSE risk/victimization using observable characteristics of their cumulative CWS involvement.

**Methods:** Latent class analysis was used to identify unobservable groups within a population of 6,399 children that had CSE victimization or risk identified by the CWS after the age 15. The final model included seven observable binary measures: incomplete maltreatment investigation; maltreatment reports in multiple counties; CWS diversion following substantiated maltreatment; initial CWS case open 24 months or longer; initial case concluded with family reunification or family preservation; placement with relatives; and placement in congregate care.

**Results:** A 5 class model was identified. Over half (56.8%) of the study population was assigned to the "Low Involvement" class, characterized by minimal involvement in the CWS at the investigation, case and placement stages. Under a tenth (8.1%) of the study population was classified as "Highly Mobile," who had the highest probability of being reported to the CWS in multiple counties and having one or more investigations closed as incomplete. The "CWS Reentry" class comprised just under one-fifth (18.0%) of the study population, all of whom had multiple cases before the age of 15. About one in ten (9.4%) youth in the study population were assigned to the "Relative Care" class, who had lengthy, stable CWS involvement. The remaining 7.8% were assigned to the "Congregate Care" group based on their predominant placement histories.

**Conclusions and Implications**: Results from this latent class analysis reveal marked heterogeneity in terms of the timing, duration, continuity and setting of CWS intervention, and expose the scope of CSE victimization and risk that has been identified among youth not in foster care. Children classified as Low Involvement and Relative Care would likely benefit from family-based CSE prevention services, yet few evidence-based interventions have been evaluated for use with CSE-impacted families. This is particularly true for the families of Black children, a quarter of whom were assigned to the Relative Care class. This analysis refines the empirical knowledge base on pathways into the commercial sex industry during childhood by identifying multiple patterns of CWS involvement among CSE-impacted youth.

## 2.1. Introduction

### Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children

Historically, research on what is now recognized as commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children (CSEC) conceptualized youth involvement in the sex trade as a type of risky sexual behavior or a criminal act. CSEC as child maltreatment only recently gained public and legal recognition. During the early 2000s, fierce advocacy by adult survivors and growing public concern over human trafficking led social policy makers and service providers to adopt a victim-centered approach to addressing youth involvement in the sex trade. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA, P.L. 106-386) identifies domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) as a severe form of human trafficking and defines it broadly as the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, regardless of whether that minor was subject to force, fraud or coercion by an exploiter (Roby & Vincent, 2017). Commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) refers to:

> …crimes of a sexual nature committed against juvenile victims for financial or other economic reasons [….] These crimes include trafficking for sexual purposes, prostitution, sex tourism, mail-order-bride trade and early marriage, pornography, stripping, and performing in sexual venues such as peep shows or clubs" (Clayton et al., 2013, p 401).

The 2014 Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PSTSFA; P.L. 113-183) amended titles IV-B, IV-E, and section 1114A of the Social Security Act (SSA), which now require child welfare agencies to identify, document, and determine appropriate services for any minor under the care or supervision of the CWS who is at-risk of CSE or is confirmed to have experienced sex trafficking victimization. Then, in 2015 (JVTA; P.L. 114-22) the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) state grant program was amended to broaden the definition of child maltreatment so that any child who is identified by a state as a victim of sex trafficking or other severe forms of trafficking must be considered a victim of "child abuse and neglect" and "sexual abuse." Due to these federal changes, child welfare agencies are now required to offer secondary- and tertiary-prevention, and have the discretion to spend federal funds on primary CSE prevention.

Prevalence data on CSE in the United States is sparse. However, researchers have begun to use administrative data from the public child welfare system (CWS) to study both suspected and confirmed system-identified CSEC. Based on descriptive analyses of exploitation allegations reported to the CWS in Illinois, Florida, Kentucky and California, they appear to comprise less than 1% of all allegations made to the CWS In Illinois, a total of 563 trafficking allegations 0.008% of all investigated allegations were investigated on behalf of 419 children between 2012 and 2015 (Havlicek et al., 2016). During that same period, a total of 4,413 allegations pertaining to 3,420 children were reported to Florida's child protection system (CPS) for allegations of human trafficking (Gibbs et al., 2018). These children represented 1.2% of all children over the age of 10 reported for maltreatment between 2011 and 2015. Between 2013 and 2017, Florida's child protection system (CPS) received 5,498 allegations of CSEC (24.2% of which were confirmed) on more than 5,600 unique children (Latzman et al., 2018). In Kentucky, 697 children were reported to the CPS one or more times between 2013 and 2017 for alleged trafficking (Cole & Sprang, 2020). In California, a total of 9,297 children were the subject of one

or more allegations of exploitation from 2014 to 2020, ( Hammond & Magruder, 2020). Available data offer an incomplete picture of CSEC experiences in the US, but suggest that a small subset of the child population continue to enter the sex trade in the U.S. despite federal and state level efforts to address this form of child maltreatment.

**Maltreatment and CWS-involvement**

The association between CWS-involvement during childhood and CSEC victimization during adolescence is well documented. However available findings are limited by measurement issues, cumulative effects of CWS-involvement and lack of comparison data. With regard to measurement issues, existing findings rely on constructs that offer little insight into how children experience CWS-involvement, which may be due in large part to data availability. Quantitative administrative datasets that describe maltreatment occurrence (e.g.: the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System), system involvement and out-of-home-placement (the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System) are often restricted to a limited set of data fields collected in order to calculate federal process and outcome measures. While some of these federal process and outcome measures describe CWS workforce performance, many others offer information about child experiences in the system. These include: maltreatment in foster care; foster care entry (and placement type); recurrence of maltreatment while in care; duration of time spent in care; placement stability; reunification and permanency; and reentries (D'Andrade et al., 2008).

Each year, approximately 4% of the child population are reported to the CWS for suspected maltreatment, yet over one third (37.4%) of the U.S. child population will be reported for suspected maltreatment by the age of 18. Considerably fewer are reported multiple times (Kim et al., 2017). Kim and Drake (2019) used over 1 million maltreatment allegations documented in NCANDS from 2015 to generate a synthetic longitudinal dataset, and estimated that the probability of having screened-in abuse or neglect reported before age 12 was 32.4% for 1 report, 13.7% for 2 reports, 7.6% for 3 reports, 4.5% for 4 reports, 2.8% for 5 reports, and 1.8% for 6 reports. Estimated incidence of confirmed maltreatment before age 18 range from 11.8% (Kim et al., 2017) to 12.5% of children in the U.S. (Wildeman et al., 2014). Cumulative prevalence estimates for out-of-home placements are also available. Wildeman and Emanuel (2014) used 2000-2001 data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) to generate a synthetic dataset and estimated that up to 5.9% of all U.S. children were ever placed in foster care before their 18$^{th}$ birthday.

Infancy and early childhood are widely recognized as periods of heightened risk for child maltreatment and fatality (Putnam-Hornstein, 2011). Nationally, an estimated 5.3% of all children are investigated for abuse or neglect during the first year of life (Kim et al., 2017). Several longitudinal analyses have been conducted using linked CPS and birth records from California to calculate cumulative CWS contact during early childhood. Magruder and Shaw (2008) found that 4.6% of children born in California in 1999 had been reported for alleged maltreatment and 2% had a substantiated referral during the first year of life. Among infants in California's 2002 birth cohort, 14% were reported for suspected maltreatment before the age of five (Putnam-Hornstein & Needell, 2011). A total of 1.2% of all children in the 1999 birth cohort had been placed in out-of-home care before the age of one (Magruder & Shaw, 2008).

The impact of CWS-involvement on child safety outcomes is particularly challenging to study. Children who experience confirmed maltreatment are more likely to experience negative

safety outcomes (i.e., recurring maltreatment, fatal injuries, accidental injury, etc.) than children without any confirmed experiences of maltreatment. However, comparing safety outcomes among maltreated children who receive CWS services with children who receive no intervention is both ethically and methodologically challenging. As such, researchers are largely reliant on observational data (CPS reports) to measure maltreated child samples and quasi-experimental designs. A recent review of key findings on the effects of CWS service provision, including out-of-home placement suggest a positive impact on child safety (Barth et al., 2020). Among 14 reviewed studies on maltreatment re-reporting that controlled for CWS service receipt, eight identified a decrease in re-reporting associated with service receipt and six identified moderate increases in maltreatment re-reporting. Two reviewed analyses of children reported for suspected maltreatment and indicate that foster care entry can reduce re-reporting and recurrence of maltreatment. However, findings showed that behavioral, relational and system-related factors act as levels that can promote or inhibit the protective effects of CWS-involvement.

A recent analysis of child welfare data from 20 states examined CWS placement reentry among children who exited their first placement episode between 2003 and 2010 (N = 607,289) by exit type (Wulczyn et al., 2020). The analysis found that 27% of children who exited to reunification or placement with guardians reentered care by 2018 and 17% of all children to live with a guardian reentered care by 2018. The study documented a heightened risk of reentry among children who experienced the following: (1) frequent changes in care type before reunification; (2) discharge to reunification within six months of entering care; and (3) children placed during infancy. These findings underscore the need to examine the impact of case and placement factors in relation to children's developmental timeline when attempting to understand the risk of maltreatment recurrence and placement reentry. Among children who exited to kin guardianship in California between 2003 and 2010 (N = 18,831) and were followed for up to 14 years, approximately 17.3% reentered foster care (Parolini et al., 2018). Reentry timing was found to be bi-modal, with maxima at approximately 3 years and 12 years.

Longitudinal research reveals that CWS service factors, placement setting, caregiver type, placement stability and time spent in out-of-home care, impact children's likelihood of exiting to permanency and their risk of reentering foster care after initial exits from CWS supervision. For example, Rolock et al. (2018) examined reentry within two years among all children adopted by age 16 through the foster care system in Illinois and New Jersey between 2000 and 2010, and found that approximately 5% reentered foster care. Predictors of reentry included include older age at adoption, number of placements during foster care, time spent in foster care prior to adoption. Reentry was also found to be significantly higher for Black children compared with all other racial/ethnic groups. Prior research has also identified correlates of placement instability, including long placement spells, congregate care as first placement setting, separation from siblings, foster-care versus kinship care and receiving services from multiple social workers (Rock et al., 2015). These findings underscore the need to consider CWS-involvement characteristics when studying revictimization during childhood and adolescence.

**CWS-involvement and CSEC**

Much less is known about CWS service receipt and permanency outcomes throughout childhood and at specific developmental stages for the subpopulation of children who experience CSEC. Further, none of the studies reviewed in Barth et al.'s systematic review (2020) examine the impact of CWS-involvement on preventing allegations of CSEC, which are typically categorized

in maltreatment research as sexual abuse or other unspecified maltreatment. Extant research that has documented CWS-involvement prior to experiences of CSEC among multiple sample populations suggest heterogeneous prior involvement patterns, ranging from no contact to experiences of long-term placements in the highest levels of care.

Greeson et al. (2019) examined factors associated with child sex trafficking among a sample of unhoused young adults who engaged in commercial sex (N=98). Participants who disclosed childhood involvement in commercial sex were significantly more likely to have self-reported prior CWS-involvement and formal or informal out-of-home placement than participants engaged in commercial sex during adulthood only. Reid et al. (2019) also found in Florida that experiences of all subtypes of child maltreatment and foster care placement histories were significantly higher among juvenile justice-involved adolescents reported for suspected child trafficking (N=913) than a one-to-one comparison group that was matched on gender, race, age at initial contact with the penal system, special education eligibility and household income.

Associations between prior CWS-involvement and the level of intervention provided have also been documented among samples with CWS-identified experiences of CSEC. Studies of Illinois, Florida and Kentucky CWS data have described lifetime maltreatment and foster care involvement for children with reported and confirmed allegations of sex trafficking. Maltreatment, placement stability, foster care entry and placement type, in particular, have received considerable scrutiny in relation to CSEC victimization. However, measures of those experiences are typically restricted to occurrence independent of timing (i.e., ever reported to CPS or entered foster care; ever placed in congregate care) or crude frequencies (number of out of home placements; number of missing from care episodes).

In Illinois, 61% of all youth reported for alleged trafficking between 2012 and 2015 (N=419) had previously been reported to the CWS for alleged maltreatment of some kind (Havlicek et al., 2016). Among children with prior CPS contact (N=254), 41.3% had a history of alleged sexual abuse. A third (32.7%) of those with prior system contact had been in placement prior to the alleged victim of trafficking, and 21.3% allegedly experienced trafficking while in a placement episode. Havlicek et al.'s (2016) study provided additional information about children's experiences in out of home placement (rate of placement moves; placement type; duration of placement; documented experiences of hospitalization, being absent from care without permission, and penal-system detention), however placement descriptors were only reported for children with an investigated allegation of trafficking during a placement episode (N=54), less than half of all children with trafficking allegations that spent time in placement. This study provided a much-needed preliminary description of system contact among children being reported to child welfare authorities for suspected trafficking. However, the lack of a comparison group limited the generalizability of these data.

Gibbs et al. (2018) produced a comparative study using maltreatment allegations made in Florida between 2012 and 2015. When compared with children over the age of 10 reported for non-trafficking maltreatment (N=292,747), adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=3,420) were twice as likely to have prior confirmed maltreatment and were more than four times as likely to have previously experienced sexual abuse. Further, among youth with prior CWS-involvement, the researchers found that adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were twice as likely to have ever entered out-of-home care and four times as likely to have been in congregate care settings as adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688). Gibb et al.'s study suggests that on average, adolescents who experienced CSEC had more prior contact with the CWS and were provided

more intensive and restrictive CWS interventions as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment.

In recent years, CSEC researchers have focused on associations between child absences from placement (i.e., runaway behaviors) and CSEC. Pullmann et al. (2020) explored placement histories among all state-dependent youth identified by Washington's CWS as having confirmed or strongly suspected of commercial sexual exploitation between 2015 and 2017 (N=83). Findings indicated that nearly 9 out of 10 youth had gone missing from placement at least once, and on average, these youth had gone missing from care 8.6 times. In Gibbs et al. (2018) study from Florida, adolescents reported for alleged trafficking (N=2,719) were 10 times as likely to have gone missing from placement at least once and over 14 times as likely to have three or more missing episodes as compared with adolescents reported for other types of maltreatment who also had prior CWS contact (N=176,688).

### Purpose

Research on CSEC vulnerability has primarily focused on behavioral levers, while system-levels drivers remain largely untested. Additionally, research conducted on CWS involvement prior to CSEC is limited by the ways CWS involvement has been conceptualized, defined and measured. Metrics vary widely from one study to the next, with some studies simplifying it to a single, binary exposure (any versus no involvement). Many researchers rely on national child welfare databases, which are deidentified, cleaned and freely accessible to the public. However, such datasets are not well suited to exploratory analyses of CWS trajectories at the child-level. Raw child welfare case administrative records contain a plethora of additional information, but are much harder for the research community to access. Regardless, construct validity issues make efforts to (1) synthesize findings across multiple studies and (2) isolate modifiable institutional mechanisms quite challenging for child welfare scholars who study CSEC.

As detailed in Chapter 1, the CWS is best understood as a decision-making institution that directs children and families through a series of gateways based on child safety and service need assessments (Gelles, 2017). According to Wulczyn (2020), child-level analyses that capture cumulative investigative, case and placement experiences/exposures are superior to methods that examine CWS involvement at the event-level within exploratory research. To date, no prior analyses of CWS-identified CSEC have used a person-centered approach to study cumulative experiences/exposures within the CWS. The purpose of this exploratory study is to identify latent subgroups of children from within California's population of young people impacted by CSE risk/victimization characterized by their cumulative CWS involvement histories.

## 2.2. Methods

### Study Population

This study examined administrative data associated with 6,399 minors born between 1998 and 2005 that met the following criteria: (1) they were listed as having a CSE concern (i.e. having been at-risk for CSE or already experienced CSE victimization) documented in CWS records while the minor was between the ages of 15 and 18; (2) had some prior contact with the CWS in the state of California (e.g. report of suspected maltreatment; case opening; out-of-home placement; etc.); and (3) whose CWS records were not missing data on their racial identity and

assigned sex.[7] Demographic data on gender identities (Gender Queer; Gender; Non-Binary; Transgender) and sexual orientations (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Queer) were not included in this analysis because these data were not collected for a majority of the study population.

**Data Source**

This analysis relied on administrative records from 1998-2020 by the state of California's county-administered CWS. All 58 counties use a centralized Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) to document the details of maltreatment reports, investigations, case openings, service delivery and foster care placements. To ensure temporal validity, all CWS involvement summarized in the following list of measures occurred a minimum of 30 days prior to the date a CSE concern was first documented. This study does not summarize CWS involvement that took place after a CSE concern was identified by the CWS.

All data used in this analysis were accessed through a longstanding collaborative research project between the California Department of Social Services and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) at the University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley). CCWIP has ongoing access to longitudinal, deidentified CWS/CMS data at the child-level, which is maintained on a remote secured server managed by UC Berkeley with the approval of the California Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Protocol 12-10-0800) and the Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS) at UC Berkeley (Protocol ID: 2010-01-592).

The data were cleaned and descriptive tables were constructed using SAS 9.4 software. The current analysis received IRB exempt status from OPHS (Protocol ID: 2021-09-14613). All data presented in this paper adhere to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data-deidentification masking requirements.[8]

**Measures**

CSE risk and victimization were both defined under California's Senate Bill 855 (Chapter 29, 2014), the details of which can be found in Appendix 2-1. In Chapter 1, univariate and bivariate comparisons of CWS involvement between youth with documented CSE victimization and those with only CSE risk noted did not reveal significant differences in their CWS trajectories. Informed by this and guided by the current research question, youth with any CSE risk or victimization (herein referred to as CSE concern/s) were considered members of a single population. CSE concerns were documented in the CWS database one of three ways: (1) an entry on the CSEC Grid, a data field where CWS workers can enter "At-risk" or "Victim" directly

[7] Sociodemographic information, including primary race, ethnicity, assigned sex, gender identity, sexual orientation and age (at earliest CSE concern) were derived from data entered by case workers in CWS/CMS and may not reflect how young people in the study population self-identify.

[8] For additional details about small cell masking requirements, please refer to the CDSS Data De-Identification Reference Guide: https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/Pages/PublicReportingGuidelines.aspx

onto a child's client file; (2) a CPS report alleging exploitation that was screened-in to receive an investigation by the CWS; and/or (3) a substantiated allegation of general neglect report with a maltreatment subcategory of "failed/unable to protect [the child] from CSE."

The following list of CWS involvement-related experiences, conditions or exposures were included in the exploratory analysis for one of several reasons: Incomplete maltreatment investigations, maltreatment reports in multiple counties, and CWS diversion following initial maltreatment. These are important to consider because they represent points where multiple social and technical contributing factors can adversely affect events in a CWS investigation, case or placement.

*Incomplete maltreatment investigation.* This binary indicator measured whether a child was the subject of one or more incomplete maltreatment investigations resulting in a child-level client disposition[9] of "unable to locate child" or "loss of contact" with the family (0,1). In an incomplete investigation, the child welfare agency was unable to determine whether or not maltreatment had occurred due to insufficient information or connect the family with community-based services and supports. These reports receive a disposition of "inconclusive."

*Maltreatment reports in multiple counties.*This measure was a binary indicator that the child had been the subject of maltreatment reports in at least two of California's 58 counties (0,1). County child welfare agencies operate independently from one another and the barriers to cross-county communication and data-sharing that exist between agencies can impede the provision of services to children and families.

*CWS diversion following initial maltreatment.*This variable documented whether or not a report of maltreatment was found to be true (i.e. substantiated) but a CWS case was not opened in response (0,1). The family may or may not have been referred for voluntary community-based services or supports.

*Long initial CWS case* .A long initial case was defined as one that remained open 24 months or longer (0,1). When the data in this analysis were collected, voluntary cases were not to remain open longer than six months and eighteen months was the length of time CWS agencies were expected to have provided reasonable efforts to either return the child to the family or determine that an alternative permanency plan was necessary (42 USCA § 675(5)(C)).

*Initial Family Reunification or Preservation.* This binary indicator documented whether the case closure reason documented was either "Family Stabilized" or "Reunified with Family."

*Multiple CWS case openings*

This variable captured whether or not the child had one or more cases opened after the initial case had concluded (0,1).

9

*Relative Care.* This measured whether the child had spent time in CWS-supervised out-of-home-placement in the care of a relative or non-relative extended family member (0,1).

*Congregate Care.* This indicator documented whether or not the child had been placed in one or more congregate care settings (e.g. group home; psychiatric care facility) while in foster care (0,1).

## Analysis

First, the sociodemographic composition and historical CWS involvement of the full study population were examined at the aggregate-level using descriptive statistics. Next, the observable indicators of child welfare system interaction described above were used to estimate unobservable latent groups present within the study population using an exploratory statistical method called latent class analysis.[10] Based on the method recommended by Curran and Bauer (2021),[11] the poLCA package available in RStudio was used to fit a series of models increasing the number of latent classes using the seven indicators[12] listed above. All LCA models were fitted with 100 different sets of random starting values.

The number of classes included in the model was selected based on multiple fit indices, including the Akaike information criterion (AIC) and Bayesian information criterion (BIC). The likelihood ratio statistic ($G^{2)}$ and Pearson's Chi-square goodness of fit statistic ($\chi^2$) were also considered when interpreting model fit. How well a solution could be interpreted (i.e., whether the latent subgroups in a solution showed meaningful patterns and whether classes were of a large enough size to compare using descriptive statistics) were also considered when selecting the optimal model. Descriptive statistics were then summized for each of the identified classes.

## 2.3. Results

## Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on this population of adolescents with CSE concerns identified by the CWS between their 15th and 18th birthdays. One quarter (24.9%) had actual CSE victimization (rather than heightened-risk or suspected victimization) documented by the CWS. Fewer than one in five (17.4%) were in an out-of-home placement episode at the time a CSE concern was first noted in their case files. Over all, the group was predominantly female (86.5%), primarily English-speaking (89.8%). A total of 138 individuals had a queer sexual orientation or gender identity recognized and documented by the CWS (4.3% of the 3,198 youth that had CSE concerns identified after 2018). Just under one half of all adolescents in the population had their ethnicity documented as Hispanic. Nearly one in four adolescents were listed as Black (24.4% of the population; 8.3% identified as Hispanic ethnicity) or White and non-Hispanic (23.5%). One in five (19.7%) had their race documented as "other" (91.3% identified as Hispanic), and about 7% were listed as multiracial (23.7% identified as Hispanic).

---

[10] Linzer, D. A., & Lewis, J. B. (2011). poLCA: An R package for polytomous variable latent class analysis. *Journal of statistical software*, *42*, 1-29.

[11] Curran, P., & Bauer, D. (November 11, 2021). *What's the best way to determine the number of latent classes in a finite mixture analysis?*. Curran-Bauer Analytics. Available at: https://centerstat.org/class-enumeration/

[12] Pearson Correlation Coefficients were calculated using the PROC CORR function in SAS (with 0.30 as the upper limit) to assess for collinearity among the indicators considered for inclusion in the model. While all other indicators met assumptions of independence, a measure of placement instability (4 or more prior placement homes) considered for inclusion in the model was ruled out due to high collinearity.

The remainder of the population was 2% Asian or Pacific Islander (14.5% identified as Hispanic), and 1% Native American/Alaskan Native (46.9% identified as Hispanic).

Table 2.1.

Study population characteristics

| Study Population | Total | 6,399 |
|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | % |
| Race/Ethnicity | | |
| Black/Non-Hispanic | 1,433 | 22.4 |
| Black/Hispanic | 130 | 2.0 |
| White/Non-Hispanic | 1,504 | 23.5 |
| White/Hispanic | 1,446 | 22.6 |
| Asian or PI/Non-Hispanic | 106 | 1.7 |
| Asian or PI/Hispanic | 18 | 0.3 |
| Native American/Non-Hispanic | 34 | 0.5 |
| Native American/Hispanic | 30 | 0.5 |
| Multiracial/Non-Hispanic | 332 | 5.2 |
| Multiracial/Hispanic | 103 | 1.6 |
| Other/Non-Hispanic | 110 | 1.7 |
| Other/Hispanic | 1,153 | 18.0 |
| Male Assigned Sex | 862 | 13.5 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Youth Identified as LGBT | | |
| Data Not Available | 3,201 | 50.0 |
| No | 3,060 | 47.8 |
| Yes | 138 | 2.2 |
| Primarily Non-English Speaking | 655 | 10.2 |
| Age at CSE Concern | | |
| 15 | 2,080 | 32.5 |
| 16 | 2,283 | 35.7 |
| 17 | 2,036 | 31.8 |

Table 2 summarizes system involvement characteristics for the full study population. One in five (21.9%) had an investigation initiated that could not be completed due to the CWS agency's inability to locate the family or a loss of contact with the family before all information relevant to the investigation could be collected. One in six (16.2%) had concerns of maltreatment reported to CWS agencies in more than one county. One in ten (11.8%) had a report of maltreatment substantiated that did not result in a CWS case opening. Approximately one-fourth (16.6%) had a case closed due to family stabilization or reunification, while a fifth of the study population (21.1%) experienced 2 or more CWS case openings prior to the identified CSE concern. One in five (40.4%) had been placed in out-of-home care prior to any documented concerns of CSE.

Table 2.2.

Child Welfare System Involvement

| Child welfare involvement history | | |
|---|---|---|
| CSE Victimization Documented | 1,593 | 24.9 |
| In placement at CSE Concern | 1,113 | 17.4 |
| Referrals in multiple counties | 1,038 | 16.2 |
| Prior incomplete investigation(s) | 1,402 | 21.9 |
| Substantiation w/out CWS case | 753 | 11.8 |
| First case open 2+ years | 947 | 14.8 |
| First case reunified/stabilized | 1,065 | 16.6 |
| Multiple cases | 1,351 | 21.1 |
| Prior foster care | 2,587 | 40.4 |
| Prior placement w/ relative | 1,222 | 19.1 |
| Prior congregate care | 1,405 | 22.0 |

Table 3 presents the values associated with each fit test by the number of classes included in a given model. A five-class model was selected as the best fit for this dataset. Class membership, which is depicted graphically in Figure 1, ranged from 7.8-56.8% of the study population. Descriptive statistics stratified by class membership can be found in Table 4.

Table 2.3.

Latent class analysis fit statistics

| Model | AIC | BIC | G-sq (LRT) | Pearson $\chi 2$ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Class 1 | 47754.7 | 47808.8 | 6214.6 | 12603.1 |
| Class 2 | 43107.2 | 43222.2 | 1549.1 | 1730.9 |
| Class 3 | 42458.6 | 42634.4 | 882.4 | 1026.0 |
| Class 4 | 42248.7 | 42485.5 | 654.6 | 727.8 |
| Class 5 | 42128.9 | 42426.5 | 516.8 | 564.1 |

Figure 2.1
Latent classes within a population of adolescents with CWS-identified concerns of CSE

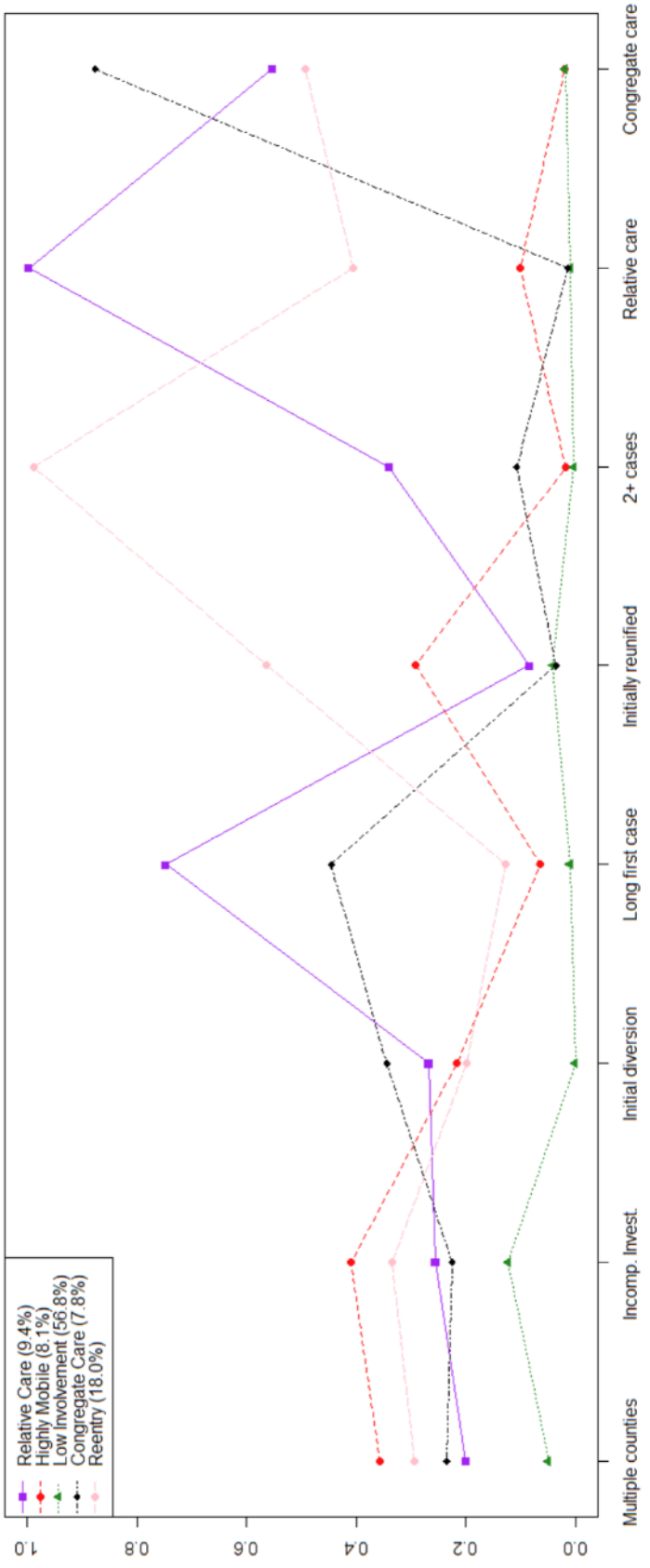


Table 1.4.

Descriptive statistics by class membership[13]

| | Class 1: Highly Mobile | | Class 2: Relative care | | Class 3: Reentry | | Class 4: Congregate Care | | Class 5: Low Involvement | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Child List: 6399 | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % | Freq. | % |
| | 520 | 8.1 | 600 | 9.4 | 1,149 | 18.0 | 497 | 7.8 | 3,633 | 56.8 |
| Male | 60 | 11.5 | 98 | 16.3 | 193 | 16.8 | 108 | 21.7 | 403 | 11.1 |
| Documented race - Black | 129 | 24.8 | 217 | 36.2 | 316 | 27.5 | 134 | 27.0 | 767 | 21.1 |
| CSE victimization documented | 124 | 23.8 | 178 | 29.7 | 341 | 29.7 | 166 | 33.4 | 784 | 21.6 |
| Referrals in multiple counties | 281 | 54.0 | 122 | 20.3 | 333 | 29.0 | 102 | 20.5 | 200 | 5.5 |
| Incomplete investigation(s) | 319 | 61.3 | 154 | 25.7 | 378 | 32.9 | 96 | 19.3 | 455 | 12.5 |
| Substantiation w/out case opening | 198 | 38.1 | 168 | 28.0 | 233 | 20.3 | 154 | 31.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| First case open 2+ years | 51 | 9.8 | 515 | 85.8 | 125 | 10.9 | 209 | 42.1 | 47 | 1.3 |
| First case reunified/stabilized | 216 | 41.5 | 33 | 5.5 | 617 | 53.7 | 20 | 4.0 | 179 | 4.9 |
| Multiple cases | 0 | 0.0 | 175 | 29.2 | 1,149 | 100 | 27 | 5.4 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Prior placement w/ relative | 81 | 15.6 | 600 | 100.0 | 477 | 41.5 | 0 | 0.0 | 64 | 1.8 |
| Prior congregate care | * | * | 347 | 57.8 | 567 | 49.3 | 487 | 98.0 | * | * |

[13] * indicates a masked value; percentage (%) columns document within-class percentages

Table 2.5.

Descriptive statistics by class membership

| | Class 1: Highly Mobile | | Class 2: Relative care | | Class 3: Reentry | | Class 4: Congregate Care | | Class 5: Low Involvement | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Freq. | | Freq. | | Freq. | | | | Freq. | |
| Child List: 6,399 | 520 | 8.1 | 600 | 9.4 | 1,149 | 18.0 | 497 | 7.8 | 3,633 | 56.8 |
| Race/ Ethnicity | | | | | | | | | | |
| Black/ Non-Hispanic | 698 | 19.2 | 118 | 22.7 | 296 | 25.8 | 200 | 33.3 | 121 | 24.3 |
| Black/ Hispanic | 69 | 1.9 | 11 | 2.1 | 20 | 1.7 | 17 | 2.8 | 13 | 2.6 |
| White/ Non-Hispanic | 864 | 23.8 | 138 | 26.5 | 269 | 23.4 | 101 | 16.8 | 132 | 26.6 |
| White/ Hispanic | 764 | 21.0 | 117 | 22.5 | 301 | 26.2 | 146 | 24.3 | 118 | 23.7 |
| Asian or PI/ Non-Hispanic | 75 | 2.1 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Asian or PI/Hispanic | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Native American/ Non-Hispanic | 15 | 0.4 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Native American/Hispanic | 13 | 0.4 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Multiracial/ Non-Hispanic | 152 | 4.2 | 32 | 6.2 | 83 | 7.2 | 39 | 6.5 | 26 | 5.2 |
| Multiracial/ Hispanic | 45 | 1.2 | * | * | 23 | 2.0 | 16 | 2.7 | * | * |
| Other/ Non-Hispanic | 96 | 2.6 | * | * | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Other/Hispanic | 832 | 22.9 | 75 | 14.4 | 122 | 10.6 | 65 | 10.8 | 59 | 11.9 |
| Hispanic | 1,723 | 47.4 | 235 | 45.2 | 466 | 40.6 | 283 | 47.2 | 190 | 38.2 |
| Assigned sex - Male | 403 | 11.1 | 60 | 11.5 | 193 | 16.8 | 98 | 16.3 | 108 | 21.7 |
| CSE victimization documented | 784 | 21.6 | 124 | 23.8 | 341 | 29.7 | 178 | 29.7 | 166 | 33.4 |

**Low Involvement Class**

The "Low Involvement" class is characterized by minimal involvement in the CWS at the investigation, case and placement stages. Over half (56.8%) of the study population was assigned to this class. Relative to the other latent groups, these young people had the lowest probabilities of every exposure included in the model. None of the members experienced a CWS diversion (i.e. no case was opened) following a maltreatment substantiation, and none had multiple cases prior to CSE. One in five (21.6%) class members had documented CSE victimization. One in ten youth assigned to the low involvement group were male (11.1%), and just under one half (47.4%) of the group was Hispanic. One in five youth were non-Hispanic White (21.2%) and roughly one-fifth (21.1%) of all class members were Black, including those identified as Hispanic. Nearly all Native American (82.4%) and Asian or Pacific Islander (70.8%) youth in the study population were assigned to the Low Involvement class, although findings on these two subpopulations should be interpreted with caution, as they each made up fewer than 3% of the study population.

**Highly Mobile Class**

The "Highly Mobile" class, which included under a tenth (8.1%) of the study population, had the highest probability of being reported to the CWS in multiple counties and of having one or more investigations closed as incomplete. This indicates that the CWS agency was unable to locate or maintain contact with the referred family long enough to complete the assessment. Subsequently, these youth had low probabilities of lengthy cases, multiple case openings and placement in either relative or congregate care. The Highly Mobile group included one in ten (11.5%) males and almost one in four (23.8%) youth that had CSE victimization confirmed in their case records. Roughly half of the group was Hispanic. One in four class members was non-Hispanic White (26.5%), whereas and one in four were Black (24.8%), regardless of ethnicity.

**Reentry Class**

The "CWS Reentry" class comprised just under one-fifth (18.0%) of the study population, all of whom had multiple cases before the age of 15. This group had a high probability of having one or more investigations closed as incomplete, and a low probability of experiencing long initial CWS cases. About half of this group had their first CWS case end in family stabilization or reunification. The CWS Reentry group was 16.8% male and nearly 30 percent (29.7%) had CSE victimization confirmed in their case records. About 40% of the group was Hispanic,[14] and one in four were Black, regardless of ethnicity (27.5%) or non-Hispanic White (26.6%).

[14] Exact percentage not shown due to the presence of masked cells, per data de-identification requirements.

### Relative Care Class

About one in ten (9.4%) youth in the study population were assigned to the "Relative Care" class, all of whom spent time under a relative's care while in an out-of-home placement episode. This group was characterized by lengthy, stable CWS involvement. They had a high probability of having a CWS case open for two or more years coupled with a low probability of having multiple case openings. This class had the second lowest probability of being reported to the CWS for concerns of maltreatment in multiple counties, the third lowest probability of having one or more investigations closed as incomplete. The Relative Care class was 16.3% male and more than one in four (29.0%) had CSE victimization confirmed in their case records. Nearly half (47.2%) of the group was Hispanic. Of the five classes, the Relative Care group had the highest percentage of Black youth, regardless of ethnicity (36.2%) and lowest percentages or non-Hispanic White (16.8%).

### Congregate Care Class

Nearly all of the young people assigned to the "Congregate Care" class (7.8% of the study population) had a congregate care placement history (98.0%), while none of them had spent time in relative care. They had a high probability of cases remaining open for two or more years and a low probability of having multiple CWS cases before age 15. One in four members were male (21.7%), which is higher than the percentages found in any other class. This class was associated with the highest probability of having CSE victimization confirmed in their case records, and one-third (33.4%) of members had documented CSE victimization. Only about one-third (38.2%) of the Congregate Care class was Hispanic. More than a quarter of all members in this group were Black, regardless of ethnicity (27.0%) and non-Hispanic White (26.6%), respectively.

## 2.4. Discussion

Using indicators that span the entirety of CWS involvement leading up to CSE risk/victimization, this analysis applied latent class analysis, a person-centered method used to identify five classes of young people with distinct patterns of CWS involvement. Significant differences in the timing, setting and continuity of their system involvement emerged. Five key implications emerged from the findings produced by the current study.

First, while much of the existing scholarship on CSEC asserts that CSE happens to children that grow up in foster care, the current study found that a majority of adolescents were not under CWS jurisdiction when CSE risk/victimization was initially identified. Prior studies describing the CWS involvement of youth with confirmed or suspected experiences of trafficking in Washington (Pullmann et al., 2020), Illinois (Havlicek et al., 2016) and Florida (Gibbs et al., 2018) primarily focused of samples of youth that were in CWS placement episodes and in congregate care settings, so the current analysis expands the scope through which we can examine CSEC in the U.S. Further, the child welfare workforce cannot assess for CSEC among children outside of the system. As such, universal CSE screening procedures (such as at CPS

hotline intake or for all referred children over a certain age) may not be an efficient use of the child welfare workforce's time, and social support systems in schools and community spaces may be better positioned to conduct routine CSE screenings.

Second, children in the Low Involvement and Relative Care classes would benefit from family-based CSE prevention services, yet few evidence-based interventions have been evaluated for use with CSE-impacted families. One exception is the Support to Reunite, Involve, and Value Each other (STRIVE) program (Milburn et al., 2012), an evidence-based family re-engagement program that was originally designed for youth experiencing homelessness or engaging in "runaway" behaviors. In 2020, Bounds et al. began to adapt STRIVE for use in with families whose children are affected by CSE. Additional research is needed on the effectiveness of STRIVE and other culturally competent family re-engagement interventions within the context of CSEC aftercare.

Third, the CWS histories of nearly 10% of this population were assigned to the Relative Care class, which was primarily characterized by foster placement under the care of relatives and long initial CWS cases. Of the five classes, this group had the highest percentage of Black youth (36.2%) and lowest percentages of non-Hispanic White (16.8%). Additional research is needed in order to understand why CSE risk and victimization are occurring (or at least being documented) disproportionately for Black youth under the care of relatives. Regardless of the underlying mechanisms, this finding underscores the importance of supporting the Black relative caregivers that actually provide children with psychosocial care and supervision on behalf of the CWS. As Wu et al. (2020; 2022) notes, few kinship navigator or caregiving support resources have been developed or adapted to meet the needs of Black kin families, specifically. Kinship care is associated with lower birth rates among youth in foster care (King & Van Wert, 2017; King et al., 2014), but findings from the current analysis underscore the need to cover adolescent sexual and relational health topics beyond contraception within kinship support programs.

Fourth, the LCA revealed that one in five adolescents in this population experienced short initial cases, but the CWS was compelled to open an additional case prior to the age of 15 (characteristic of the Reentry class). Case re-openings and placement re-entry occur regularly, either due to a recurrence of maltreatment or an altogether new safety threat. Of all children who entered care in 2019, a median of 7.3% had a re-entry within 12 months (Administration for Children and Families, 2022). While reentry may be warranted to ensure the immediate physical safety of young people, it can compound the instability of children's social bonds, sense of community and feelings of belonging (Rogers, 2017), all of which are push factors associated with CSEC. Efforts to mitigate these disruptions require considerable cross-system collaboration (e.g.: foster family agencies, school districts, public housing programs); however, there are opportunities within CWS processes to reduce disruptions in the lives of children. In many jurisdictions, re-entries require children and their families to interact with new investigators, court personnel, caseworkers, therapists and school personnel. Future research should examine whether provider continuity has any impact on the occurrence of CSE in adolescence among youth with reentries.

Fifth, this paper is the first statewide analysis of CSE among a largely Hispanic child population (47.0%) and the first to include information about the linguistic needs of children

with known or suspected experiences of CSE documented by California's CWS. One in ten youth primarily spoke a language other than English (nearly all of whom spoke Spanish). Additionally, child welfare records indicate that nearly half (46.9%) of all Native American adolescents with CWS-identified CSE risk/victimization are also documented as Hispanic/Latinx. Just under 15% of Asian and Pacific Islander youth are documented as Asian Hispanic/Latinx, and almost one in ten (8.3%) Black adolescents is reportedly as Hispanic or Afro-Latinx. Research on the professional education of the child welfare workforce highlights the complexities of serving Spanish-speaking clients and an overall lack of culturally and linguistically relevant training materials for emergent bilingual social workers. These findings underscore the need to equip bilingual child welfare workers with the tools and resources required to respectfully and effectively investigate reports of CSE and intervene on behalf of exploited children. Similarly, CSE trainings offered to mental and medical healthcare providers, academic personnel and mandated reporters should incorporate linguistic and other culturally-relevant considerations for discussing CSE when working with multicultural families, and Hispanic families specifically.

### Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting findings from this analysis. First, it should be noted that this study only captured CWS contact that occurred within California. As a result, the current findings may undercount CWS involvement that occurred elsewhere, particularly among the High Mobility class. Second, CSE-related policies, assessment practices and workforce training processes vary from state to state (McCoy, 2017). These results may not be generalizable to other states. Nevertheless, this case study may inform CSE prevention, assessment and intervention efforts that are underway in other states and territories, particularly in the Southwestern part of the country with similar sociodemographic compositions. Second, the racial and ethnic identities reported in this study were extracted from the CWS database-and originally documented by hotline intake personnel and caseworkers. Although statewide policy requires them to update fields based on client responses, administrative records are subject to data entry errors and the categories available to choose from may not adequately describe the true ethnic, racial or cultural identities of children included in this study. Finally, CSE risk and victimization assessment procedures are not standardized across the state. Although class membership did not vary drastically among those with documented CSE victimization in the aggregate, county-level differences may exist.

## 2.5. Conclusions

Given the well-documented association between congregate care and CSEC, many prior studies have narrowed their analyses on CSE antecedents to children in congregate care. California's data show that a majority of youth with CSE risk/victimization identified by the CWS spent a very small proportion of their childhood in any type of care, and most did not have an open case or placement episode at the time CSE concern was documented. Considerable

resources have been allocated at the state and federal-level to develop and improve therapeutic placement options for youth experiencing CSE (Gibbs, Feinberg et al., 2018). In doing so, the CWS triaged CSEC-related resources to settings where they would reach youth with the most extensive service needs. Looking forward, specialized training, concrete resources, and respite care may greatly benefit families of origin and relative caregivers who are struggling to keep these young people safe.

In the context of social services, cultural competence is the ability to translate knowledge and cultural awareness into health and psychosocial interventions (Thomas et al., 2010). Findings from this study introduce two key opportunities for the advancement of cultural competence within CSEC responses. First, findings show that some relative caregivers of Black children are finding themselves in a position that requires them to protect adolescents from exploitation, but they may not have the knowledge, resources or physical ability to so. These caregivers are known to the CWS, and may remain in contact with the system in order to receive Kip-GAP aid. As such, the system has an opportunity and responsibility to equip Black kinship care providers with CSEC-related knowledge and skills before youth in their care enter late adolescence. Second, the Latinx community represents the largest ethno-racial group among California's child population (CCWIP, 2023), and nearly half of all children with documented CSE risk/victimization were identified in their records as being Hispanic. Religious beliefs, morality standards and gender roles, all of which are culturally embedded, can shape how CSE perpetration and victimization are understood and contextualized by children, families and communities. In California, standard CSEC trainings inform first responders that children of color, and girls in particular, are at elevated risk of being forced or coerced into the commercial sex industry, but do not provide culturally sensitive or linguistically appropriate tools with which to discuss, assess for or establish safety plans in response to CSEC. The CWS workforce, and bilingual child welfare workers in particular, would greatly benefit from culturally – and linguistically – competent adaptations of CSEC training materials.

Ultimately, child welfare agencies cannot keep every child safe all of the time. For those not involved in the CWS, findings from this study suggest that community-based screening and prevention efforts should be bolstered to prevent the need for system involvement. For children with CWS involvement, results indicate that there are upstream system and agency-level changes to be made that could improve the quality of services delivered and enhance child safety following case termination among this client population. Much attention had been given to expanding access to specialized care in settings that offer high levels of care (i.e. Foster Family Agency homes and congregate care placements), but the proportion of children residing in-home or with kinship care providers underscores the ongoing need for enhanced CWS workforce training and the development of evidence-based resources geared toward the parents, relatives and non-relative extended family members of young people likely to experience CSE.

## Chapter 3

Commercial Sexual Exploitation Reporting and Associations with Concentrated Disadvantage


### Abstract

**Background and Purpose:** CSEC is different from other types of maltreatment because of its unique connection to the economy, however family-level resource scarcity has not been studied as a modifiable driver of CSE. Further, no studies have described the geographic distribution of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) maltreatment reports or empirically tested the relationship between socioeconomic contexts and CSE of children at the event-level. The purpose of this study is to describe CSE reporting in a large, urban Southwestern county and examine the relationship between CSE reporting and neighborhood-level concentrated disadvantage index (CDI) scores.

**Methods:** This study used administrative data on 3,205 de-duplicated allegations of CSE reported to child protective services (CPS) in Los Angeles County, California between 2017 and 2021 and 5-year estimates from the 2017 American Community Survey at the Census block-level. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize reporter and child characteristics associated with CSE allegations, and a geomap was constructed to visually depict the relationship between CSE reports and CDI scores throughout the county. The association between CDI score and CSE reporting was then examined using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression.

**Results:** One in four CSE reports were placed by law enforcement personnel. Three-quarters of CSE reports were screened-in for investigation to receive and one in four (26.0%) were substantiated. Roughly one-third (30.7%) of all CSE reports were made on behalf of a child with an open CWS case, while one in ten (10.2%) resulted in a new CWS case being opened and a quarter (25.3%) of all CSE reports listed a closure reason of 'situation stabilized.' Less than 5% of the reports indicated that no safety threat had been identified for the referred child or the investigation could not be completed, respectively. The estimated odds of exploitation being reported to CPS in a given Census block were 4 times higher with every one-unit increase in CDI score (95% CI: 3.6-4.6; $p<.001$).

**Conclusions and Implications**: This analysis describes the geospatial, reporter and child characteristics associated with countywide CSE maltreatment allegations and is the first empirical study to document an association between CSE maltreatment and the socioeconomic conditions in which it occurs. Future research should examine the effects of programs that address family-level socioeconomic resource scarcity (i.e., housing insecurity, lack of childcare or unmet basic needs) on CSE victimization during adolescence.

## 3.1. Introduction

Due to a combination of practical limitations, methodological shortcomings and ethical considerations, little definitive evidence exists documenting how many children become involved in the U.S. sex trade and who are the children most impacted by CSEC (Twis & Shelton, 2018; Lutnick, 2016). Many existing texts on sex trafficking either cite prevalence estimates that were not rigorously generated or misuse existing estimates (Fedina et al., 2019). Some efforts to document the scope and burden of CSEC, however, have been more discerning.

One-year cumulative incidence estimates produced using nationally representative juvenile justice data indicate that 1,450 and 1,130 incidents of youth involvement in the sex trade came to the attention of law enforcement in 2005 and 2009, respectively (Mitchell et al., 2010; Swaner et al., 2016). While helpful, the utility of these estimates is limited in three important ways. First, both estimates relied on data collected prior to the paradigm shift, when CSEC was uniformly penalized as criminal activity. Second, neither accounts for experiences of CSEC that were never brought to the attention of law enforcement. Third, these estimates only offer information about CSEC at the event-level rather than at the child-level. Some young people impacted by the US sex trade are known to have prolonged or intermittent experiences of CSEC, so event-level analyses may overestimate the prevalence of CSEC (O'Brien, 2019).

Emerging analyses of state-documented child trafficking screening shed some light on the scope of known CSEC in the U.S. Between 2011 and 2015, a total of 3,420 children were reported to Florida's child protection system (CPS) for allegations of human trafficking, a majority of whom were reported due to sex trafficking rather than labor exploitation (Gibbs et al., 2018).

### Socioeconomic Contextual Factors

Poverty is a well-established driver of child maltreatment and CWS-involvement (Kim & Drake, 2018) and in the United States, poverty disproportionately impacts families of color (Riley, 2018; Roberts, 2021). As such, poverty cannot be rigorously studied without accounting for its racialized distribution and racial disproportionality cannot be examined without dealing with the effects of racialized poverty.

Poverty and racial disproportionality have been identified as concerns specific to CSEC. However, few rigorous empirical studies have attempted to document these associations (Twis, 2020). Poverty, or the inability to meet one's own basic needs, is considered a central motivator for youth entry into the sex trade, although this is typically conceptualized as a child's experience of poverty and measured by experiences of homelessness "runaway" episodes (Latzman et al., 2018; Pullmann et al., 2020). Survivors have also identified lack of stable income and housing during childhood as contributing factors (Hampton & Lieggi, 2020), but measures of family and community-level poverty remain largely absent from empirical CSEC research.

The Census and American Community Survey offer publicly-available indicators of community context, including three composite measures that have been used as proxies of

socioeconomic disenfranchisement and structural racism. In California, geospatial information about known cases of CSEC is documented by law enforcement and child protection agencies, but these records are not widely available to the research community. The growing field of CSEC scholarship would likely benefit from exploratory analysis of socioeconomic predictors of confirmed CSEC victimization.

**CSEC, Child Welfare System-Involvement and Socioeconomic Conditions**

An association between CWS-involvement during childhood and CSEC victimization during adolescence is well documented, and in the U.S., racialized poverty is of concern for both childhood CWS involvement and CSEC in adolescence. However, prior analyses have generated little information about the mechanisms by which CWS-involvement and socioeconomic conditions may contribute to CSEC vulnerability. Limitations to the existing literature base include measurement challenges, confounding factors, lack of comparison data, and reliance on overly simplistic constructs to represent children's pathways through the CWS.

Within adult trafficking research, poverty and housing instability are widely recognized as risk factors for sex trafficking (McCoy, etc; Choi, 2015. However, as de Vries (2022) notes, little is known about the relationship between neighborhood-level socioeconomic marginalization and commercial sexual exploitation broadly. To date, no geospatial analyses of CSE as a form of child maltreatment have been conducted. However, two important studies produced within the field of criminology that used geospatial data to document the prevalence and geographic distribution of sex trafficking perpetration (regardless of survivor age) offer important insights that can inform research on childhood experiences of CSE specifically.

**Sex Trafficking and Concentrated Disadvantage**

Prior findings on the relationship between socioeconomic contexts and CSE are mixed. Diaz et al. (2022) examined human trafficking arrest data from 2013 to 2017 to test for associations between macro-level social disorganization and geospatial characteristics of human trafficking in Florida and found that human trafficking arrests were positively associated with housing instability and larger law enforcement presence at the county-level. In Texas, Mletzko et al. (2018) documented a negative association between concentrated disadvantage and sex trafficking cases identified by law enforcement. Mletzko et al. also identified the presence of geospatial clustering of trafficking at the local level, with 30% of the sex trafficking activity being contained within just 4% of the city's census block groups (CBGs).

**Purpose**

To date, no studies have described the geographic distribution of CSEC as documented by the CWS or empirically tested the relationship between socioeconomic contexts and commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children at the event-level. The current study uses administrative data of allegations of CSE reported to the child protection system (CPS) in a large, urban Southwestern county to describe CSE reporting and document reporter, child and geospatial characteristics associated with CSE reports and test for an association between CSE reporting and neighborhood-level concentrated disadvantage.

## 3.2. Methods

### Study Context

This analysis involved the review of 3,205 de-duplicated reports made to CPS due to suspected CSE in Los Angeles County, California between 2017 and 2021. This region was selected for because it has a diverse population of over 9.8 million, receives approximately one-third of all CSE reports made across all 58 Californian counties and is located in a region identified as a high-intensity CSEC perpetration area in a survey conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (Department of Justice, 2019).

### Data Sources

This analysis relied on quantitative administrative data collected between 2017-2021 by the Los Angeles County (LA County) Department of Children and Family Services. These data are stored in the state-managed Child Welfare Services/Case Management System (CWS/CMS) and accessed through a longstanding research partnership between the California Department of Children's Services and the California Child Welfare Indicators Project (CCWIP) at the University of California at Berkeley (UC Berkeley). The overall project has Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the state of California's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (Protocol 12-10-0800) and the Office for Protection of Human Subjects (OPHS) at UC Berkeley (Protocol ID: 2010-01-592). This analysis was determined by OPHS personnel not to meet the University's definition of human subject research. All data presented in this paper follow the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) data-deidentification masking requirements.[15]

This study also included American Community Survey (ACS) five-year estimates constructed using data collected in Los Angeles County, California between 2017-2021. The following ACS measures were used at the Census tract-level: percentage of individuals below the poverty line; percentage of individuals on public assistance; percentage of female-headed households; percentage of population that was unemployed; and percentage of the population that was 18 years and under.

To calculate the CDI value for any geographic region, the percentages of each of the five measures are z-score transformed and averaged to create the composite concentrated disadvantage index value (Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs, 2013).

[15] For additional details about small cell masking requirements, please refer to the CDSS Data De-Identification Reference Guide: https://www.dhcs.ca.gov/dataandstats/Pages/PublicReportingGuidelines.aspx

**Measures**

The outcome measure, CSE maltreatment report (0,1) was measured as any CPS report that contained an allegation of exploitation or a sub-abuse category indicating that the suspected maltreatment was CSEC.

The Concentrated Disadvantage Index (CDI), which has been used to study associations between concentrated disadvantage and sex trafficking (Mletzko et al., 2018), is a composite metric that includes measures of social, economic and other forms of resource scarcity. CDI scores were calculated using American Community Survey (ACS) Census tract-level data collected between 2017-2021 across Los Angeles County. Following the guidelines established by the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (2013), Z-scores for each of the five measures described above were averaged to create CDI scores and transformed so that that all Census tracts had positive CDI scores.

Sociodemographic indicators, including California's composite measure of primary race/ethnicity, assigned sex, primary language and age at earliest CSE concern were derived from data entered by case workers in CWS/CMS. Hispanic youth, females, primarily English-speakers and youth over the age of 15 were used as the reference groups, the selection of which was informed by available data on California's child population, child welfare involved population and subgroups of Californian youth with experiences of CSE. CWS involvement covariates were organized into three overarching categories: report and investigation events; CWS case involvement; and CWS out-of-home placement experiences.[16] In order to ensure temporal validity, only allegation, investigation, case and placement events that began at least 30 days prior to the initial CSE concern were included in the analysis.

**Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used to document child characteristics and CWS responses to CPS reports alleging CSE and ordinary least squares (OLS) regression was used to document the association between CDI score and CSE reporting. Child welfare data were constructed, cleaned and summarized using SAS software 9.4. Geospatial data construction and OLS regression were conducted in RStudio using the open-source *tidycensus* and *olsrr* packages.

## 3.3. Results

**CSE Reporting**

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on reporters, children and investigation outcomes associated with CSE reports. A total of 3,205 reports alleging CSE of a minor[17] were made to the Child Protection Hotline (CPS) in Los Angeles County, California between 2017 and 2021. Over one-quarter of these reports (27.2%) were initiated by law enforcement personnel, 12.4% were generated by CWS staff, and an additional 16.1% were placed by an education, medical care or

[16] A complete list of CWS trajectory measures are provided in Appendix B.

[17] Reports alleging CSE of a nonminor dependent were excluded from this analysis.

other known service provider. One quarter (24.8%) of all CSE reports identified a child in foster care as the suspected victim. Of all reports that listed children in care as suspected CSE victims (n=795), one in twelve (8.1%) were made while the child was absent from care, 12.2% were residing in a group care setting and under 5% were in a home-like setting when the CSE report was made.

**CPS Responses**

Three-quarters of CSE reports were screened-in by the CPS to receive an investigation. One in four (26.0%) were substantiated (i.e. investigated and found to be true), while two-thirds (35.1%) were closed as inconclusive. Roughly one-third (30.7%) of all CSE reports were made on behalf of a child with an open CWS case. One in ten (10.2%) CSE reports resulted in a new CWS case being opened. A quarter (25.3%) of all CSE reports listed a closure reason of 'situation stabilized,' and an additional 5.0% of reports indicated that no safety threat had been identified for the referred child.

About two-thirds (68.9%) of all CSE reports listed a suspected victim that was between the ages of 15 and 17 years at the time CSE was reported to the CWS. Nearly half (43.3%) of all CSE reports included a possible victim that was identified as Hispanic, over two-thirds (38.6%) as non-Hispanic Black and roughly one in ten (12.2%) as non-Hispanic White.[18] A minority (8.1%) of all CSE reports identified a possible victim that was male. Nearly one-third of all CSE reports included a possible victim that was between 15 and 17 years of old.

[18] Exact counts of CSE reports made on behalf of Native American, Asian and Pacific Islander minors could not be displayed due to data de-identification requirements imposed by CDSS.

Table 3.1.

CSE Maltreatment Reports in LA County (2017-2021)[19]

| CSE Maltreatment Reports N= (3,205) | Frequency | Percentage | 2019 Non-CSE reports (N= 93,203) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Reporter Type | N | % | % |
| Law enforcement | 871 | 27.2 | 25.5 |
| Counselor/Therapist | 530 | 16.5 | 15.4 |
| CWS Staff | 397 | 12.4 | 6.2 |
| Education | 258 | 8.1 | 17.2 |
| Medical | 228 | 7.1 | 4.8 |
| Family/Friend/Neighbor | 69 | 2.2 | 4.8 |
| Other Reporter | 581 | 18.1 | 13.5 |
| Unknown | 271 | 8.5 | 12.6 |
| Investigative finding | | | |
| Substantiated | 832 | 26.0 | 22.2 |
| Inconclusive | 1,125 | 35.1 | 45.6 |
| Unfounded | 448 | 14.0 | 16.8 |
| Evaluated Out | 800 | 25.0 | 15.4 |
| Race/Ethnicity | | | |
| Hispanic | 1,387 | 43.3 | 53.0 |
| Black (non-Hispanic) | 1,238 | 38.6 | 16.7 |
| White (non-Hispanic) | 392 | 12.2 | 13.3 |
| Asian/Pacific Islander (non-Hispanic) | * | * | 3.4 |
| Native American (non-Hispanic) | * | * | 0.2 |
| Missing | 127 | 4.0 | 13.4 |
| Residing in a Placement | 534 | 16.7 | - |
| Referral disposition | | | |
| Child Already in Open Case | 983 | 30.7 | - |
| Situation Stabilized | 810 | 25.3 | - |
| No Investigation | 800 | 25.0 | - |
| Case Opened | 326 | 10.2 | - |
| No Safety Threat Identified | 157 | 4.9 | - |
| Incomplete Investigation/Other | 129 | 4.0 | - |
| Placement setting | | | |
| Not in placement episode | 2,410 | 75.2 | - |
| Absent from placement | 261 | 8.1 | - |
| Group care setting | 391 | 12.2 | - |
| Home-like setting | 130 | 4.1 | - |
| Other setting | 13 | 0.4 | - |

[19] (-) indicates there was no comparable metrics available for non-CSE maltreatment reports

**Concentrated Disadvantage Index (CDI)**

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of transformed CDI scores for all of Los Angeles County's Census tracts, which have a normal distribution ranging from negative 1.95 to positive 3.37. Table 2 presents findings from the logistic regression analysis, which document a positive association between Census tract level CDI score and CPS reports of exploitation. Across Los Angeles County, the estimated odds of exploitation being reported to CPS were 4 times higher with every one-unit increase in CDI score (95% CI: 3.6-4.6; p<.001). A visual representation of the bivariate geospatial analysis of the association between CD and exploitation reporting can be found in Figure 3.

Figure 3.1.

Distribution of Concentrated Disadvantage in Los Angeles County

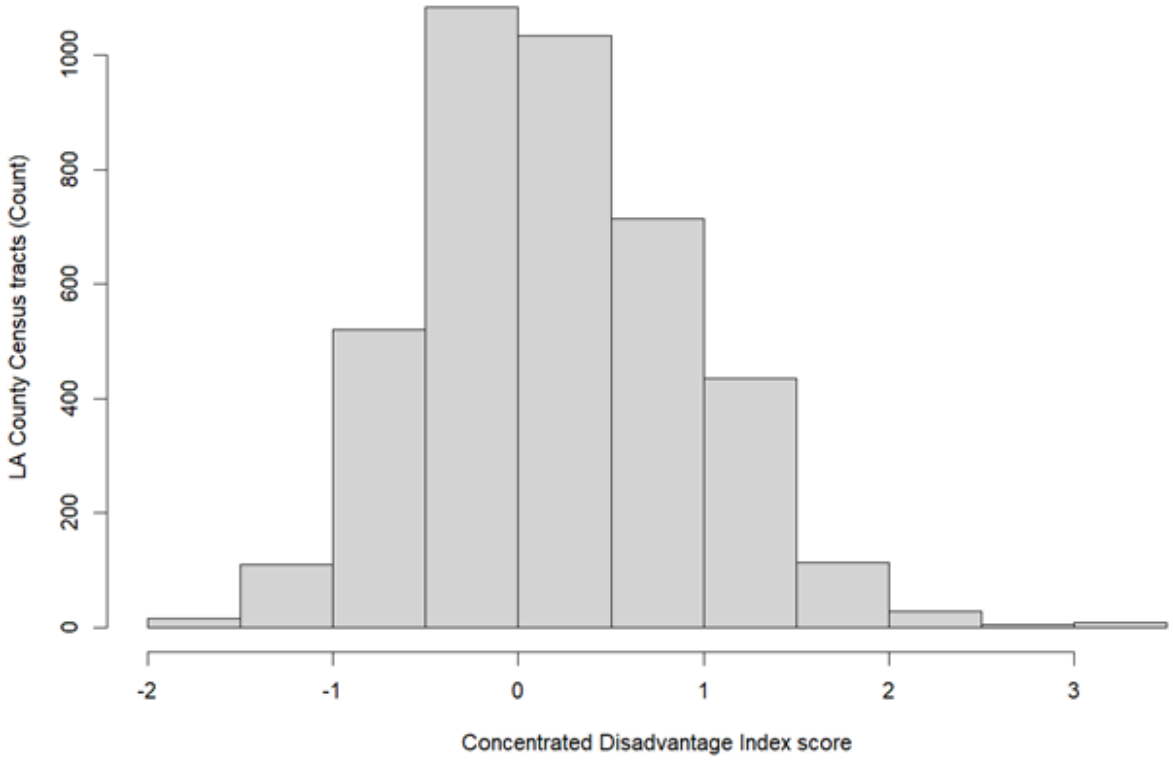


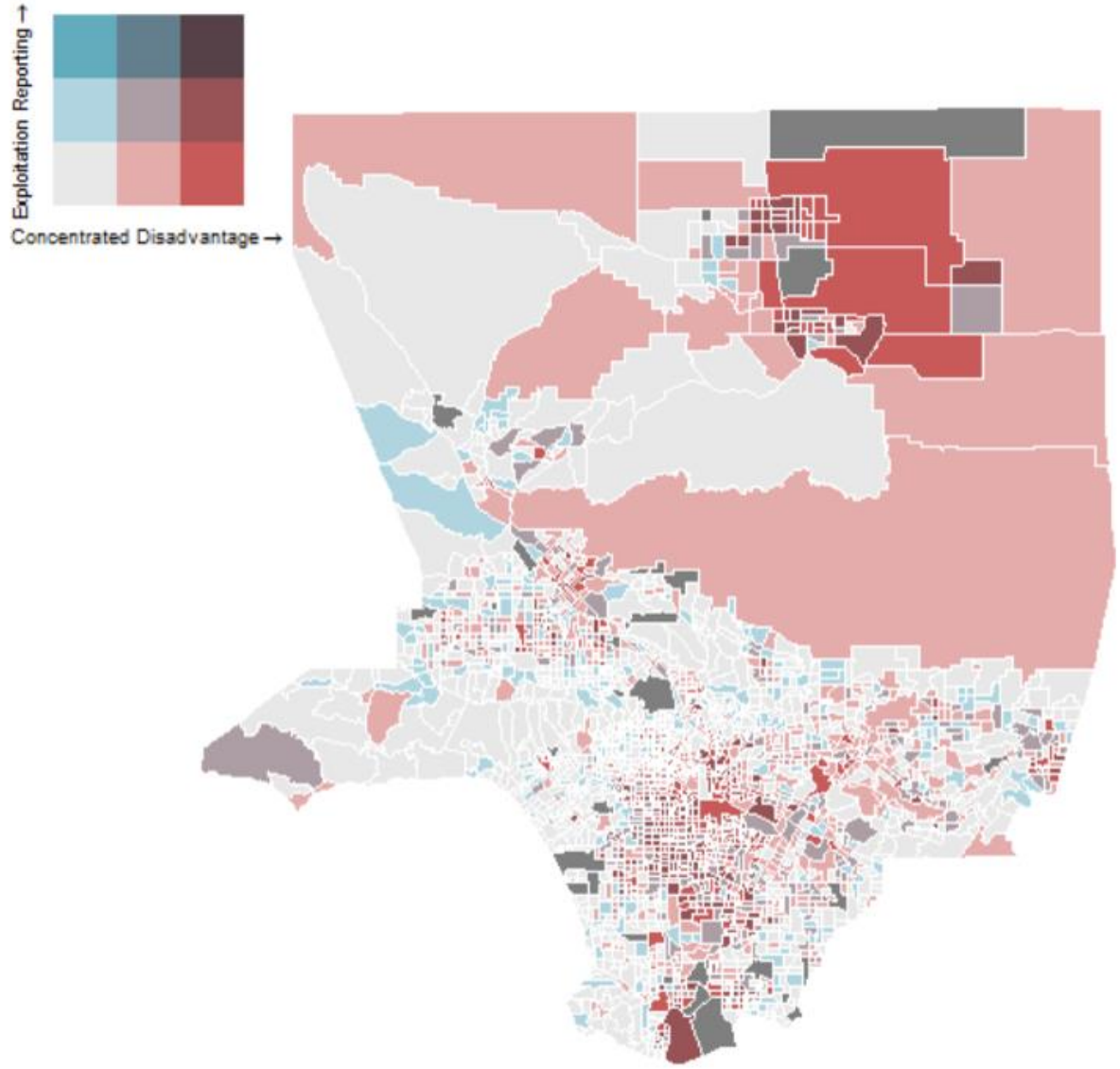
Table 3.2.

Logistic regression of exploitation on Concentrated Disadvantage Index

| Outcome: Exploitation Allegation | Estimate (log odds) | Odds Ratio | 95% CI | P-val |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CDI score | 1.4 | 4.04 | 3.60 4.56 | <.001 |
| Null deviance: 5450.8 on 4065 degrees of freedom<br>Residual deviance: 4747.9 on 4064 degrees of freedom<br>Note - (38 observations deleted due to missingness)<br>AIC: 4751.9<br>Number of Fisher Scoring iterations: 4 | | | | |

Figure 3.2.

Exploitation allegations and Concentrated Disadvantage in Los Angeles County



## 3.4. Discussion

This exploratory analysis documented the child and caller characteristics associated with CPS reports of CSE in Los Angeles County between 2017 and 2021. In addition to offering a first-ever geospatial analysis of CWS-identified exploitation, this study has four key takeaways that are relevant to both policy and practice.

First, this descriptive geospatial analysis offers previously inaccessible information about CSE reporting practices, investigation outcomes, and child welfare responses to exploitation. Just under one-third (30.1%) of all CSE reports were made on behalf of youth with open CWS cases, and one in four named children in open foster care placement episodes (24.8%). Considering the child-level analysis presented in chapter one (which found that about half of children with CSE concerns had no prior CWS case) and the event-level results from this study together, findings suggest that while most children only had a single concern of CSE reported, a portion of those with open CWS cases are reported for concerns of exploitation multiple times over the course of their system involvement. Additional research is needed to better understand how and why this subgroup of youth appear to experience more exploitation than others and would facilitate efficient use of CSE interventions for those most likely to be revictimized.

Second, higher levels of concentrated disadvantage were associated with a fourfold increase in the estimated odds of CSE being reported in a given neighborhood. Similar associations have been documented between socioeconomic conditions and other types of child maltreatment (e.g.: general neglect; physical abuse). However, CSEC is characterized by its integral connection to the economy. Federal and state laws distinguish between childhood sexual abuse and CSE based on the explicit exchange of financial or other forms of capital. In some cases of CSE, families and even minors themselves may rely on or be incentivized by the capital generated as a direct result of the sexual exploitation. Despite this, parent and child income needs are largely absent from child welfare scholarship on CSEC and are not a primary focus of specialized CSE interventions. Future research should examine whether access to stable income, childcare, and housing moderate the relationship between concentrated disadvantage and CSEC and test whether the observed relationships differ based on child characteristics.

Third, compared with other forms of maltreatment, fewer CSE investigations are concluded as inconclusive, meaning the CWS was unable to determine whether the alleged maltreatment did occur. Specifically, 35.1% of investigated CSE reports were closed as inconclusive, while roughly 45% of all maltreatment types during the same time period.[20]. These findings are positive, given that trainings on CSEC assessment were only available after 2015. However, additional mixed methods research is needed to identify the underlying reasons why one-in-three CSE maltreatment reports could not be concluded as either substantiated or unsubstantiated.

[20] Data Source: CWS/CMS 2022 Quarter 3 Extract. Program version: 2013.12.05 Database version: 764391EF CCWIP reports. Retrieved Mar 12,2023, from University of California at Berkeley California Child Welfare Indicators Project website.URL: https://ccwip.berkeley.edu

Fourth, a quarter of all CSE reports were placed by law enforcement personnel. This implies that nearly one in four exploited youth came in close contact with law enforcement, who are potentially the first point of contact a child may have following CSE. These findings document collaboration between law enforcement and child welfare agencies at the point of CSE identification and highlight the need for all law enforcement officers to be trained in trauma-responsive approaches to engaging with youth in the immediate aftermath of CSE. Further, underscore the need to ensure the transfer of custody from law enforcement to child welfare is not experienced by children as incarceration or criminalization.

Taken together, this evidence suggests that for parents with mental health problems or substance abuse, family maintenance services may be doing just enough in terms of re-referral risk. Similar to the argument put forth by Putnam-Hornstein, et al. (2015), adequate but non-optimal services rendered to a higher-risk group are unlikely to reduce risk of re-referral below the average rate. The present analysis suggests at least that they may level the playing field for parents with mental health problems or substance abuse.

**Limitations**

The generalizability of these findings should be interpreted with caution, due to several limitations. First, state and local policies related to CSEC vary considerably, which likely influences how CSE is reported, documented and addressed by the CWS. Second, CSEC screening and reporting mandates took effect roughly two years before data from this study were collected, but Los Angeles County is sizeable and mandated reporters may not have received adequate training or guidance around CSEC before 2017. As such, CSE reporting may differ in later years or outside of Los Angeles County. Nevertheless, these data offer more detailed information about the geographies of CSEC than previous attempts and may still aid other jurisdictions in contextualizing CSE reporting and responses within their own CWS. Third, this analysis was restricted to CSE reports where the associated address could be geocoded, which may limit the relevance of the current findings to cases where the child's last known residence had not been determined at the time a CPS report was generated. Finally, the regression model used in this analysis required the assumption of independence between Census-tracts. Future analyses should control for potential correlation between spatial units using generalized linear squares (GLS) spatial regression (Freisthler, et al., 2006).

## 3.5. Conclusions

This analysis reintroduces socioeconomic conditions into discourse on youth involvement in the commercial sex industry. As this phenomenon evolved from a type of delinquent behavior performed by youth to a form of victimization done to youth, motivating factors that steer some young people into the sex trade took a backseat. Instead child welfare scholars turned to explanatory theories commonly used in child maltreatment victimization research. Some of the most widely favored CSE prevention curricula focus on promoting youth empowerment and proud choice-making with respect to sex trading and trafficking. Fostering young people's agency is particularly important for youth experiencing CSE, given the nature of this particular

type of trauma. However, doing so without also centering the very real financial decision-making some youth feel obligated to make allows the harmful effects of capitalism to remain unnamed and unchecked. Until the social safety net can resolve the economic underpinnings of this child safety threat, it cannot effectively protect young people from experiencing CSE.

Poverty and housing insecurity are still frequently referenced as contributors to CSE risk, but have not been empirically tested as modifiable drivers of CSE. Within the existing literature base, unmet basic needs are usually discussed in reference to the living conditions of older adolescents, as opposed to their families of origin. Stable housing receipt and income increases have been shown to improve child welfare outcomes among the overall population of system-involved families. Child welfare scholarship would benefit from research that would test the effects of family-level socioeconomic resource scarcity (i.e., housing insecurity, lack of childcare or unmet basic) on CSE, specifically.

## Overall Conclusions

### Findings

Using California as a case study, this dissertation described the sociodemographic characteristics, child welfare system involvement and socioeconomic conditions associated with children's experiences of commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) of children (CSEC). As with any emergent policy issue, the growth and refinement of scholarship on CSEC requires time and continued attention. The three analyses conducted within the current study expand the existing knowledge base on CSE vulnerability in several key ways.

Chapter 1 compared population of young people with CSE victimization to those identified by the child welfare workforce as having a high likelihood of CSE and found that victimization is disproportionately identified among Black, female and primarily English-speaking children. It also revealed that CWS interventions (i.e. investigations, case openings, placement entries) occurred later among the CSE group than controls, who were matched on child characteristics and their first-ever maltreatment report. Chapter 1 investigated CSEC substantiation practices by the child welfare workforce and introduced quasi-experimental approach to control for antecedent child welfare system involvement as a confounder.

In Chapter 2, several original measures were developed using administrative data and used to identify latent groups of children with known or suspected experiences of CSE based on their prior CWS trajectories. Results from this latent class analysis reveal considerable heterogeneity in terms of the timing, duration, continuity and setting of CWS intervention, and exposes the scope of CSE victimization and risk that has been identified among youth not in foster care. This analysis refines the empirical knowledge base on pathways into the commercial sex industry during childhood by identifying multiple latent groups of CSE-impacted youth based on their prior CWS involvement.

Chapter 3 describes the geospatial and socioeconomic contexts in which CSEC is known to occur Los Angeles County, a large, urban and predominantly Latinx region of California. Using CPS reports and American Community Survey data, it revealed concentrated spatial groupings of CSE reports and documented a significant positive association between and CSE reporting and concentrated disadvantage at the Census tract-level. In addition, results from this study will provide the public and service provider communities previously inaccessible information about CSE reporting practices, investigation outcomes, and child welfare responses to exploitation.

## Policy Implications

A major goal set forth by the Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (FFPSA; P.L. 115-123) was to break the cycle of child removal by focusing on strengthening families before the need for removal arises and ensuring that foster care placements function in ways that explicitly support family reunification efforts (Lindell et al., 2020; Villalpando, 2019). Additionally, the adoption of FFPSA was intended to strengthen the resources and supports

available to families within their communities. The following section contextualizes results from Chapters 1-3 within ongoing implementation of this federal policy.

**Substantiating CSE victimization**

Findings from Chapter 1 indicate that among young people identified by the CWS as having a high likelihood of experiencing CSE, Black adolescents and females are disproportionately identified by child welfare workers as having been victimized as compared to Hispanic and male youth, respectively. In contrast, prior research on police perceptions of youth involved in the sex trade did not find the child's race (measured as White versus non-White) to be significantly associated with perceived CSE victimization. Chapter 1 findings offer a more in-depth view of racial disproportionality within a predominantly non-White child population with results from Chapter 1, and expose a need to examine differences in CSE screening and substantiation practices by first responders across disciplines and institutions.

**Responding to CSEC**

Chapters 1 and 2 show that a majority of families coming to the attention of the CWS due to CSEC had a history of CSW involvement, but were no longer CWS-involved at the time CSE was identified. This is consistent with findings from Florida, and indicates that many children experiencing CSE are ostensibly still under the care and custody of their parents or legal guardians. A major goal set forth by FFPSA was to break the cycle of child removal by focusing on strengthening families before the need for removal arises and ensuring that foster care placements function in ways that explicitly support family reunification efforts (Lindell et al., 2020; Villalpando, 2019). Despite this, few CSEC-specialized programs exist that explicitly involve family participation (Moynihan et al., 2018) and even less offer support to parents whose children are being exploited (Gibbs, Feinberg et al., 2018). The paucity of family-oriented interventions may also exacerbate existing racial, ethnic and class disparities commonly observed in outcomes related to family preservation, family reunification and other forms of permanency (Choi, 2017; Kim & Drake, 2018; Putnam-Hornstein et al., 2013). Emergent interventions (e.g. the STRIVE intervention described in Chapter 2), show promise and warrant further consideration.

**Preventing CSEC**

Socioeconomic scarcity is widely recognized as an indirect cause of maltreatment and a complicating factor in child welfare cases, regardless of allegation type; however, the relationship that exists between CSEC and resource scarcity is unique because resource and/or financial gain directly motivates the abuse itself. The association between concentrated disadvantage and CSEC documented in Chapter 3 highlights the relevance of socioeconomic context at the systemic, rather than individual-level.

Historically, underlying socioeconomic vulnerabilities were rarely improved by CWS involvement (Cancian et al., 2017) and may contribute to economic hardship experienced by families and young people aging out of foster care (Hook & Courtney, 2011; Rosenberg & Kim,

2018). However, the FFPSA now incentivizes strengthening the resources and supports available to families within their communities (Lindell et al., 2020; Villalpando, 2019). Research on the effects of concrete resources like supportive housing and income support on CWS-involved families is emergent, but available evidence suggests they can have protective effects on maltreatment rates, child welfare outcomes, and family stability (Farrell et al., 2017; Fowler & Schoeny, 2017; Pergamit et al., 2017; Raissian & Bullinger, 2017). Findings from this dissertation suggest that addressing social, material and economic resource scarcity may optimize CSEC prevention efforts.

**References**

Ainsworth, M. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991). An ethological approach to personality development. *American psychologist*, *46*(4), 333.

Alessi, E. J., Greenfield, B., Manning, D., & Dank, M. (2021). Victimization and resilience among sexual and gender minority homeless youth engaging in survival sex. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, *36*(23-24), 11236-11259.

Alexander Jr, R. (2010). The Impact of Poverty on African American Children in the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems. In *Forum on Public Policy Online* (Vol. 2010, No. 4). Oxford Round Table.

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs. (2013). *Life course indicator: Concentrated disadvantage*. Washington DC: AMCHP

Baker, C. N. (2018). *Fighting the US youth sex trade: Gender, race, and politics*. Cambridge University Press.

Baker, C. N. (2019). Racialized rescue narratives in public discourses on youth prostitution and sex trafficking in the united states. *Politics & Gender*, *15*(4), 773-800.

Barth, R. P., Jonson-Reid, M., Greeson, J. K. P., Drake, B., Berrick, J. D., Garcia, A. R., Shaw, T. V., & Gyourko, J. R. (2020). Outcomes following child welfare services: what are they and do they differ for black children? *Journal of Public Child Welfare*, *14*(5), 477–499.

Basson, D., Rosenblatt, E., & Haley, H. (2012). *Research to action: Sexually exploited minors (SEM) needs and strengths.* West Coast Children's Clinic.

Bay-Cheng, L. Y. (2019). Agency is everywhere, but agency is not enough: A conceptual analysis of young women's sexual agency. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *56*(4-5), 462-474.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1974). Developmental Research, Public Policy, and the Ecology of Childhood. Child Development, 45(1), 1.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1995). Developmental ecology through space and time: A future perspective. In P. Moen, Glen H. Elder Jr, & Kurt Lüsche (Eds.), *Examining lives in context: Perspectives on the ecology of human development.* (pp. 619–647).

Bruce, M., Young, D., Turnbull, S., Rooksby, M., Chadwick, G., Oates, C., Nelson, R., Young-Southward, G., Haig, C., & Minnis, H. H. (2019). Reactive Attachment Disorder in Maltreated Infants and Young Children in Foster Care. *Attachment and Human Development*, *21*(2), 152–169.

Bruhns, M. E., del Prado, A., Slezakova, J., Lapinski, A. J., Li, T., & Pizer, B. (2018). Survivors' Perspectives on Recovery from Commercial Sexual Exploitation Beginning in Childhood. *Counseling Psychologist, 46*(4), 413–455.

Campagna, L. (2016). Invisible victims: American Indian women and adolescent involvement in the domestic sex trade. *American Indian Culture and Research Journal, 40*(1), 47-54.

Cancian, M., Cook, S. T., Seki, M., & Wimer, L. (2017). Making parents pay: The unintended consequences of charging parents for foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 72*, 100-110.

Chaloner, E. (2010). Anybody's daughter-How racial stereotypes prevent domestic child prostitutes of color from being perceived as victims. *Child. Legal Rts. J., 30*, 48.

Choi, K. R. (2015). Risk factors for domestic minor sex trafficking in the United States. *Journal of Forensic Nursing, 11*(2), 66–76.

Clayton, E., Krugman, R., & Simon, P. (2013). Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States.

Clayton, E. W., Krugman, R. D., & Simon, P. (2013). *Confronting Commercial Sexual Exploitation and Sex Trafficking of Minors in the United States.*

Cole, J., & Sprang, G. (2020). Post-implementation of a Safe Harbor law in the US: Review of state administrative data. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 101, 104320.

Conrad-Hiebner, A., & Byram, E. (2020). The Temporal Impact of Economic Insecurity on Child Maltreatment: A Systematic Review. In Trauma, Violence, and Abuse (Vol. 21, Issue 1, pp. 157–178). SAGE Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838018756122

Conrad-Hiebner, A., & Scanlon, E. (2015). The economic conditions of child physical abuse: A call for a national research, policy, and practice agenda. *Families in Society, 96*(1), 59–66. https://doi.org/10.1606/1044-3894.2015.96.8

Conrad, A., Paschall, K. W., & Johnson, V. (2019). Persistent economic insecurity and harsh parenting: A latent transition analysis. *Children and Youth Services Review, 101*, 12-22.

Constance-Huggins, M., Moore, S., & Slay, Z. M. (2022). Sex trafficking of Black Girls: A critical race theory approach to practice. *Journal of Progressive Human Services, 33*(1), 62-74.

Corbett, A. (2018). The voices of survivors: An exploration of the contributing factors that assisted with exiting from commercial sexual exploitation in childhood. *Children and Youth Services Review, 85*, 91–98.

Curran, P., & Bauer, D. (2021). What's the best way to determine the number of latent classes in a finite mixture analysis?. *CenterStat*.

Cyr, C., Euser, E. M., Bakermans-Kranenburg, M. J., & Van IJzendoorn, M. (2020). Attachment security and disorganization in maltreating and high-risk families: A series of meta-analyses. *Devenir*, *32*(4), 237-285.

D'Andrade, A., Osterling, K. L., & Austin, M. J. (2008). Understanding and measuring child welfare outcomes. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work 5*(1–2), pp. 135–156.

Dettlaff, A. J., & Boyd, R. (2020). Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system: Why do they exist, and what can be done to address them?. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *692*(1), 253-274.

De Vries, I. (2022). Examining the geography of illicit massage businesses hosting commercial sex and sex trafficking in the United States: The role of census tract and city-level factors. *Crime & Delinquency*, 00111287221090952.

De Vries, I., & Goggin, K. E. (2020). The impact of childhood abuse on the commercial sexual exploitation of youth: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *21*(5), 886-903.

Diaz, M., Huff-Corzine, L., & Corzine, J. (2022). Demanding reduction: A county-level analysis examining structural determinants of human trafficking arrests in Florida. *Crime & Delinquency*, *68*(1), 28-51.

Dozier, M., Roben, C. K. P., Caron, E., Hoye, J., & Bernard, K. (2016). Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up: An evidence-based intervention for vulnerable infants and their families. *Psychotherapy Research*, *28*(1), 18–29.

Drake, B., & Jonson-Reid, M. (2014). Poverty and Child Maltreatment. In *Handbook and child maltreatment*, 131–148.

Edwards, F., Wakefield, S., Healy, K., & Wildeman, C. (2021). Contact with Child Protective Services is pervasive but unequally distributed by race and ethnicity in large US counties. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *118*(30), e2106272118.

Evangelist, M., & Shaefer, H. L. (2020). No Place Called Home: Student Homelessness and Structural Correlates. *Social Service Review*, *94*(1), 4–35.

Farrell, C. A., Fleegler, E. W., Monuteaux, M. C., Wilson, C. R., Christian, C. W., & Lee, L. K. (2017). Community poverty and child abuse fatalities in the United States. *Pediatrics*, *139*(5).

Feely, M., & Bosk, E. A. (2021). That which is essential has been made invisible: The need to bring a structural risk perspective to reduce racial disproportionality in child welfare. *Race and social problems*, *13*(1), 49-62.

Fedina, L., Williamson, C., & Perdue, T. (2019). Risk Factors for Domestic Child Sex Trafficking in the United States. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *34*(13), 2653–2673.

Finkelhor, D., & Browne, A. (1985). The traumatic impact of child sexual abuse: a conceptualization. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *55*(4), 530–541.

Finigan-Carr, N. M., Johnson, M. H., Pullmann, M. D., Stewart, C. J., & Fromknecht, A. E. (2019). A Traumagenic Social Ecological Framework for Understanding and Intervening with Sex Trafficked Children and Youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, *36*(1), 49–63.

Font, S. A., & Fluke, J. D. (2023). Understanding and Promoting Child Wellbeing After Child Welfare System Involvement: Progress Made and Challenges Ahead. *International Journal on Child Maltreatment: Research, Policy and Practice*, 1-17.

Footer, K. H., Hamilton White, R., Nyeong Park, J., Decker, M. R., Lutnick, A., Sherman, S. G., Sherman, S. G., White, R. H., Park, J. N., Decker, M. R., & Lutnick, A. (2020). Entry to Sex Trade and Long-Term Vulnerabilities of Female Sex Workers Who Enter the Sex Trade Before the Age of Eighteen. *J Urban Health*, *97*, 406–417.

Fowler, P. J., & Schoeny, M. (2017). Permanent housing for child welfare-involved families: Impact on child maltreatment overview. *American journal of community psychology*, *60*(1-2), 91-102.

Franchino-Olsen, H. (2021). Vulnerabilities relevant for commercial sexual exploitation of children/domestic minor sex trafficking: A systematic review of risk factors. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *22*(1), 99-111.

Franchino-Olsen, H. (2021). Frameworks and theories relevant for organizing commercial sexual exploitation of children/domestic minor sex trafficking risk factors: A systematic review of proposed frameworks to conceptualize vulnerabilities. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *22*(2), 306-317.

Freisthler, B., Lery, B., Gruenewald, P. J., & Chow, J. (2006). Methods and challenges of analyzing spatial data for social work problems: The case of examining child maltreatment geographically. *Social Work Research*, *30*(4), 198-210.

Gabrielli, J., & Jackson, Y. (2019). Innovative methodological and statistical approaches to the study of child maltreatment: Introduction. *Child abuse and neglect*, *87*, 1-4.

Gerassi, L. (2015). A heated debate: Theoretical perspectives of sexual exploitation and sex work. *Journal of sociology and social welfare*, *42*(4), 79.

Gelles, R. J. (2017). Creating an Effective Child Welfare System. *Urban Policy Frontiers*, 59.

Gibbs, D. A., Henninger, A. M., Tueller, S. J., & Kluckman, M. N. (2018). Human trafficking and the child welfare population in Florida. *Children and Youth Services Review, 88*, 1–10.

Gies, S., Healy, E. B., Bobnis, A. P., Cohen, M. I., & Malamud, M. (2018). Safe Harbor Laws: Changing the Legal Response to Minors Involved in Commercial Sex.

Greene, J. M., Ennett, S. T., & Ringwalt, C. L. (1999). Prevalence and correlates of survival sex among runaway and homeless youth. *American journal of public health*, *89*(9), 1406-1409.

Green, S. T. (2008). Protection for victims of child sex trafficking in the United States: Forging the gap between US immigration laws and human trafficking laws. *UC Davis J. Juv. L. & Pol'y*, *12*, 309.

Greeson, J. K., Treglia, D., Wolfe, D. S., & Wasch, S. (2019). Prevalence and correlates of sex trafficking among homeless and runaway youths presenting for shelter services. *Social Work Research*, *43*(2), 91-100.

Guyon-Harris, K. L., Humphreys, K. L., Fox, N. A., Nelson, C. A., & Zeanah, C. H. (2019). Signs of attachment disorders and social functioning among early adolescents with a history of institutional care. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 88*, 96–106.

Halter, S. (2010). Factors that influence police conceptualizations of girls involved in prostitution in six US cities: Child sexual exploitation victims or delinquents?. *Child maltreatment*, *15*(2), 152-160.

Hammond, G. C., & Mcglone, M. (2014). Entry, Progression, Exit, and Service Provision for Survivors of Sex Trafficking: Implications for Effective Interventions. *Global Social Welfare, 1*(4), 157–168.

Hammond, I., & Magruder, J. (2020). *Children and Youth Experiencing Commercial Sexual Exploitation in California: Characteristics and Response Efforts by Child Welfare Agencies*. California County Welfare Directors Association Conference, virtual.

Hampton, M. D., & Lieggi, M. (2020). Commercial sexual exploitation of youth in the United States: A qualitative systematic review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, *21*(1), 57-70.

Han, W., Huang, C., & Review, M. W. (2013). The role of parental work schedule in CPS involvement. *Children and Youth Services, 5*(35), 837–847.

Hartinger-Saunders, R. M., Trouteaud, A. R., & Johnson, J. M. (2017). Mandated reporters' perceptions of and encounters with domestic minor sex trafficking of adolescent females in the United States. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 87*(3), 195–205.

Havlicek, J., Huston, S., Boughton, S., & Zhang, S. (2016). Human trafficking of children in Illinois: Prevalence and characteristics. *Children and Youth Services Review, 69*, 127–135.

Henry, C., Victor, B. G., Ryan, J. P., & Perron, B. E. (2020). Substantiated allegations of failure to protect in the child welfare system: Against whom, in what context, and with what justification?. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *116*, 105091.

Hogan, K. A., & Roe-Sepowitz, D. (2023). LGBTQ+ homeless young adults and sex trafficking vulnerability. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, *9*(1), 63-78.

Hook, J. L., & Courtney, M. E. (2011). Employment outcomes of former foster youth as young adults: The importance of human, personal, and social capital. *Children and Youth Services Review, 33*(10), 1855-1865.

Hopper, E. K. (2017). Polyvictimization and Developmental Trauma Adaptations in Sex Trafficked Youth. *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma, 10*(2), 161–173.

Hurst, T. E. (2021). Prevention of child sexual exploitation: Insights from adult survivors. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, *36*(13-14), NP7350-NP7372.

Kattari, S. K., & Begun, S. (2017). On the Margins of Marginalized. Affilia, 32(1), 92–103.

Khan, B., Lee, H. W., Thrash, C. R., & Dombrowski, K. (2018). Agency and social constraint among victims of domestic minor sex trafficking: A method for measuring free will. *Social science research*, *76*, 144-156.

Kim, H., & Drake, B. (2019). Cumulative prevalence of onset and recurrence of child maltreatment reports. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, *58*(12), 1175-1183.

Kim, H., Wildeman, C., Jonson-Reid, M., & Drake, B. (2017). Lifetime prevalence of investigating child maltreatment among US children. American Journal of Public Health, 107(2), 274–280.

Landers, M., McGrath, K., Johnson, M. H., Armstrong, M. I., & Dollard, N. (2017). Baseline Characteristics of Dependent Youth Who Have Been Commercially Sexually Exploited: Findings from a Specialized Treatment Program. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *26*(6), 692–709.

Lash, D. (2017). *" When the welfare people come": Race and class in the US child protection system*. Haymarket Books.

Latzman, N. E., Gibbs, D. A., Feinberg, R., Kluckman, M. N., & Aboul-Hosn, S. (2019). Human trafficking victimization among youth who run away from foster care. *Children and Youth Services Review, 98*, 113-124.

Lavoie, J., Dickerson, K. L., Quas, J. A., & Redlich, A. D. (2019). Overcoming disclosure reluctance in youth victims of sex trafficking: New directions for research, policy, and practice. *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law, 25*(4), 225–238

Le, P. D., Ryan, N., Rosenstock, Y., & Goldmann, E. (2018). Health issues associated with commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children in the United States: A systematic review. *Behavioral Medicine*, *44*(3), 219-233.

Lindell, K. U., Sorenson, C. K., & Mangold, S. V. (2020). The Family First Prevention Services Act: A new era of child welfare reform. *Public Health Reports*, *135*(2), 282-286.

Linzer, D. A., & Lewis, J. B. (2011). poLCA: An R package for polytomous variable latent class analysis. *Journal of statistical software*, *42*, 1-29.

Luminais, M., Lovell, R., & McGuire, M. (2019). A safe harbor is temporary shelter, not a pathway forward: How court-mandated sex trafficking intervention fails to help girls quit the sex trade. *Victims & Offenders*, *14*(5), 540-560.

Lutnick, A. (2016). *Domestic minor sex trafficking: Beyond victims and villains*. Columbia University Press.

Magruder, J., & Shaw, T. V. (2008). Children Ever in Care. *Child welfare*, *87*(2), 169-188.

Maguire-Jack, K., Font, S. A., & Dillard, R. (2020). Child protective services decision-making: The role of children's race and county factors. *American journal of orthopsychiatry*, *90*(1), 48.

Mathews, B., Bromfield, L., Walsh, K., & Cheng, Q. (2017). Reports of child sexual abuse of boys and girls: Longitudinal trends over a 20-year period in Victoria, Australia. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 66*, 9–22.

Marcal, K. E., & Maguire-Jack, K. (2021). Housing insecurity and adolescent well-being: Relationships with child welfare and criminal justice involvement. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *115*, 105009.

McCoy, M. (2017). Measurements of Vulnerability to Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Human Trafficking*, 1–12.

McDonald, A. R., & Middleton, J. (2019). Applying a survival sex hierarchy to the commercial sexual exploitation of children: A trauma-informed perspective. *Journal of public child welfare*, *13*(3), 245-264.

Miller-Perrin, C., & Wurtele, S. K. (2017). Sex trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Women & Therapy*, *40*(1-2), 123-151.

Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Wolak, J. (2010). Conceptualizing juvenile prostitution as child maltreatment: findings from the National Juvenile Prostitution Study. *Child Maltreatment*, *15*(1), 18-36.

Miranda, M., Molla, E., & Tadros, E. (2019). Implications of Foster Care on Attachment: A Literature Review. *The Family Journal*, *27*(4), 394–403.

Mletzko, D., Summers, L., & Arnio, A. N. (2018). Spatial patterns of urban sex trafficking. *Journal of Criminal Justice*, *58*, 87-96.

Moore, J., Fitzgerald, M., Owens, T., Slingsby, B., Barron, C., & Goldberg, A. (2021). Domestic minor sex trafficking: a case series of male pediatric patients. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, *36*(23-24), 11728-11742.

Moore, J. L., Houck, C., Barron, C. E., & Goldberg, A. P. (2019). Patients Referred for Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: A Comparison of Confirmed and Suspected Youth. *Journal of Pediatric and Adolescent Gynecology*, *32*(6), 628–632.

Moynihan, M., Pitcher, C., & Saewyc, E. (2018). Interventions that Foster Healing Among Sexually Exploited Children and Adolescents: A Systematic Review. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, *27*(4), 403–423.

O'Brien, J. E., Jordan, B., Honeycutt, N., Wilsnack, C., & Davison, C. (2019). "It's All about Breaking down Those Barriers…": Exploring Survivors' Perspectives on Services and Treatment Needs following Commercial Sexual Exploitation during Childhood. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, *16*(2), 160–177.

Ojanen, T., & Perry, D. G. (2007). Relational schemas and the developing self: Perceptions of mother and of self as joint predictors of early adolescents' self-esteem. *Developmental Psychology*, *43*(6), 1474.

Pergamit, M., Cunningham, M., & Hanson, D. (2017). The impact of family unification housing vouchers on child welfare outcomes. *American journal of community psychology*, *60*(1-2), 103-113.

Pullmann, M., Parker, E. M., Becker, J., Pullmann, M. D., Roberts, N., Mangiaracina, K. J., Briner, L.,

Puls, H. T., Hall, M., Anderst, J. D., Gurley, T., Perrin, J., & Chung, P. J. (2021). State spending on public benefit programs and child maltreatment. *Pediatrics*, *148*(5).

Putnam-Hornstein, E. (2011). Report of maltreatment as a risk factor for injury death: A prospective birth cohort study. *Child Maltreatment, 16*(3), 163–174.

Putnam-Hornstein, E., & Needell, B. (2011). Predictors of child protective service contact between birth and age five: An examination of California's 2002 birth cohort. *Children and Youth Services, 33*(8), 1337–1344.

Raby, K. L., & Dozier, M. (2019). Attachment across the lifespan: Insights from adoptive families. *Current Opinion in Psychology, 25*, 81-85.

Raissian, K. M., & Bullinger, L. R. (2017). Money matters: Does the minimum wage affect child maltreatment rates?. *Children and youth services review, 72*, 60-70.

Reid, J. A., Baglivio, M. T., Piquero, A. R., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2017). Human trafficking of minors and childhood adversity in Florida. *American journal of public health, 107*(2), 306-311.

Reid, J. A., Baglivio, M. T., Piquero, A. R., Greenwald, M. A., & Epps, N. (2019). No youth left behind to human trafficking: Exploring profiles of risk. *American journal of orthopsychiatry, 89*(6), 704.

Reid, J. A., & Piquero, A. R. (2014). On the Relationships Between Commercial Sexual Exploitation/Prostitution, Substance Dependency, and Delinquency in Youthful Offenders. Child Maltreatment, 19, 247–260.

Rekker, R., Pardini, D., Keijsers, L., Branje, S., Loeber, R., & Meeus, W. (2015). Moving in and out of poverty: The within-individual association between socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency. *PLoS one, 10*(11), e0136461.

Riley, A. R. (2018). Neighborhood disadvantage, residential segregation, and beyond—lessons for studying structural racism and health. *Journal of racial and ethnic health disparities, 5*, 357-365.

Roberts, D. (2021). The community impact of racial disproportionality: The racial geography of child welfare. *Racial disproportionality and disparities in the child welfare system*, 235-251.

Roby, J. L., & Vincent, M. (2017). Federal and State Responses to Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking: The Evolution of Policy. *Social Work, 62(3)*, 201–209.

Rock, S., Michelson, D., Thomson, S., & Day, C. (2015). Understanding Foster Placement Instability for Looked After Children: A Systematic Review and Narrative Synthesis of Quantitative and Qualitative Evidence. *British Journal of Social Work, 45*(1), 177–203.

Rolock, N., Pérez, A. G., White, K. R., & Fong, R. (2018). From Foster Care to Adoption and Guardianship: A Twenty-First Century Challenge. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 35*(1), 11–20.

Rosenberg, R., & Kim, Y. (2018). Aging out of foster care: Homelessness, post-secondary education, and employment. *Journal of public child welfare, 12*(1), 99-115.

Rozas, L. W., Ostrander, J., & Feely, M. (2018). Inequalities in US Child Protection: The Case of Sex Trafficked Youth. *Social Sciences, 7*(8), 135.

Sapiro, B., Johnson, L., Postmus, J. L., & Simmel, C. (2016). Supporting youth involved in domestic minor sex trafficking: Divergent perspectives on youth agency. Child Abuse and Neglect, 58, 99–110.

Salisbury, E. J., Dabney, J. D., & Russell, K. (2015). Diverting Victims of Commercial Sexual Exploitation from Juvenile Detention: Development of the InterCSECt Screening Protocol. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*(7), 1247–1276.

Sanchez, R. V., Speck, P. M., & Patrician, P. A. (2019). A concept analysis of trauma coercive bonding in the commercial sexual exploitation of children. *Journal of Pediatric Nursing, 46*, 48-54.

Schenck-Fontaine, A., & Gassman-Pines, A. (2020). Income inequality and child maltreatment risk during economic recession. *Children and youth services review, 112*, 104926.

Silverman, M., & Becker, J. R. (2020). Residential instability, running away, and juvenile detention characterizes commercially sexually exploited youth involved in Washington State's child welfare system. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 102*.

Snyder, H. N., & Sickmund, M. (2006). Juvenile offenders and victims: 2006 national report. *Office of juvenile justice and delinquency prevention*.

Swaner, R., Labriola, M., Rempel, M., Walker, A., & Spadafore, J. (2016). Youth involvement in the sex trade. *Center for Court Innovation*.

Thomas, M. M., & Waldfogel, J. (2022). What kind of "poverty" predicts CPS contact: Income, material hardship, and differences among racialized groups. *Children and youth services review, 136*, 106400.

Twis, M. K. (2020). The Influence of Victims' Unmet Basic Needs as a Mediator in Trafficking Relationships: A Research Note. Families in Society: *Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 101*(1), 44–53.

Twis, M. K., & Shelton, B. A. (2018). Systematic review of empiricism and theory in domestic minor sex trafficking research. *Journal of Evidence-Informed Social Work, 15*(4), 432–456.

Villalpando, F. (2019). Family First Prevention Services Act: An overhaul of national child welfare policies. *Child. Legal Rts. J.*, *39*, 283.

West, D., Vanderfaeillie, J., Van Hove, L., Gypen, L., & Van Holen, F. (2020). Attachment in family foster care: Literature review of associated characteristics. *Developmental Child Welfare*, *2*(2), 132-150.

Widom, C. S., & Kuhns, J. B. (1996). Childhood victimization and subsequent risk for promiscuity, prostitution, and teenage pregnancy: a prospective study. *American journal of public health*, *86*(11), 1607-1612.

Wildeman, C., & Emanuel, N. (2014). Cumulative risks of foster care placement by age 18 for US children, 2000–2011. *PloS one*, *9*(3), e92785.

Wildeman, C., Emanuel, N., Leventhal, J. M., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Waldfogel, J., & Lee, H. (2014). The prevalence of confirmed maltreatment among US children, 2004 to 2011. *JAMA Pediatrics*, *168*(8), 706–713.

Wulczyn, F., Parolini, A., Schmits, F., Magruder, J., & Webster, D. (2020). Returning to foster care: Age and other risk factors. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *116*, 105166.

Zimmermann, P., & Soares, I. (2018). Attachment & Human Development Recent contributions for understanding Inhibited Reactive Attachment Disorder. *Attachment and Human Development*, *21*(2), 87–94.

# Appendices

Appendix A: CSEC Documentation Guidelines

Appendix B: Variable List

Appendix A

CSEC Documentation Guidelines


WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**
744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • *www.cdss.ca.gov*

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

[ ] State Law Change
[X] Federal Law or Regulation Change
[ ] Court Order
[ ] Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
[ ] Initiated by CDSS

ALL COUNTY LETTER (ACL) NO. 15-49

May 28, 2015

TO: ALL COUNTY CHILD WELFARE DIRECTORS

ALL CHILD WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAM MANAGERS

ALL COUNTY CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS

ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES

ALL INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM COORDINATORS

SUBJECT: **COMMERCIALLY SEXUALLY EXPLOITED CHILDREN (CSEC)**

**DOCUMENTATION IN THE CHILD WELFARE SERVICES/CASE**

**MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CWS/CMS)**

REFERENCE: PUBLIC LAW (P.L.) 113-183; SENATE BILL (SB) 855 (CHAPTER 29, STATUTES OF 2014); CSEC PROGRAM, WELFARE AND

INSTITUTIONS (WIC) CODE SECTION 16524.6 ET SEQ.; ACL 14-62; PENAL CODE SECTION 11165.1.

This ACL provides instruction on how to properly document within CWS/CMS children and youth[21] who are, or are at risk of being, commercially sexually exploited as required by the Title IV-E program (as

21 Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I) "any child or youth over whom the State agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision and who the State has reasonable cause to believe is, or is at risk of being, a sex trafficking victim (including children for whom a State child welfare agency has an open case file but who have not been removed from the home, children who have run away from foster care and who have not attained 18 years of age or such older age as the State has elected under

amended by P.L. 113-183) and the county elective CSEC Program (established in SB 855).[2] Specifically, these instructions explain when and how to use the existing "Exploitation" abuse category and the new statewide Special Project Codes (SPCs) to capture this information.

Because permanent system changes to CWS/CMS for CSEC-related data will not be in place by statutory reporting deadlines, the SPCs were developed for interim use until the necessary system changes can be made. The SPCs will be available for county use no later than June 1, 2015.

Background

Recent legislation (SB 855, Chapter 29, Statutes of 2014) amended the WIC section 300 to clarify that under existing law, commercially sexually exploited children[22] whose parents or guardians failed or were unable to protect them may fall within the description of section 300(b) and be adjudged as dependents of the juvenile court. The Legislature also amended the WIC (commencing with Section 16524.6) to establish a state-funded CSEC Program to be administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) that counties may that counties may elect to participate in. In addition, on September 29, 2014, the President signed P.L. 113-183, the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act. This new federal law contains several provisions relating to sex-trafficked children, including a requirement that agencies develop policies and procedures for identifying, documenting, and determining appropriate services for serving children and youth who the state has reasonable cause to believe is, or is at risk of being, a victim of sex trafficking and reporting related data to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Use of the Exploitation Abuse Category for Commercial Sexual Exploitation

Currently, "exploitation" is defined in the Child Welfare Services Manual of Policies and Procedures, Division 31 as "forcing or coercing a child into performing functions which are beyond his/her capabilities or capacities, or into illegal or degrading acts. The term also includes sexual exploitation as defined by Penal Code Section 11165.1(c)." Penal Code section 11165.1(c) includes in the definition for sexual exploitation conduct involving child pornography, employment of a minor to perform obscene acts, and knowingly promoting, aiding, assisting, employing, using, persuading, inducing, or coercing a child to engage in, or assist others to engage in, prostitution or a live performance involving obscene

---

Section 475(8) of this Act, and youth who are not in foster care but are receiving services under Section 477 of this Act)" [2] WIC § 16524.6 et. seq.

22 WIC § 300(b)(2) "…a child who is sexually trafficked, as described in Section 236.1 of the Penal Code, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts described in Section 236.1 or 11165.1 of the Penal Code, and whose parent or guardian failed to, or was unable to, protect the child, is within the description of this subdivision, and that this finding is declaratory of existing law. These children shall be known as commercially sexually exploited children."

sexual conduct, or to pose or model for purposes of preparing film or pictorial depictions involving obscene sexual conduct.[23]

Page Three

Additionally, WIC section 300(b)(2) describes a commercially sexually exploited child as a child who is sexually trafficked (as described in Section 236.1 of the Penal Code), or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts described in Section 236.1 or 11165.1 of the Penal Code.

Based upon these definitions and descriptions, caseworkers should use the existing "exploitation" abuse category concerning any allegation of commercial sexual exploitation.

Instructions for Using the Exploitation Abuse Category

When a referral comes in through the hotline indicating the commercial sexual exploitation of a minor, the intake worker will choose "exploitation" as the abuse category allegation in the Referral Notebook. If the exploitation allegation is substantiated, the appropriate CSEC SPC(s) should be attached to the minor that was the focus of the allegation in the case notebook. Based upon the evidence gathered during the investigation, caseworkers should use appropriate judgment to determine who is named as the perpetrator in the allegation and whether other allegations, such as neglect, should also be documented in the referral.

Additionally, when choosing the primary reason for removal and placement of a child when commercial sexual exploitation is a part of the decision, "exploitation" should be provided as the primary and/or secondary reason for removal, depending upon the circumstances of the case. For example, if the parent's failure to protect the child from commercial sexual exploitation is the primary reason for removal, then "general neglect" could be the primary reason and exploitation is the secondary reason for removal. If

"exploitation" is chosen as a primary or secondary abuse category, then all applicable SPCs should be attached in the case notebook. Refer to **Attachment A** for instructions on locating and entering the exploitation allegation and for locating and entering exploitation as the reason for removal.

Four Special Project Codes

---

23 Penal Code § 11165.1(c)(2) "A person who knowingly promotes, aids, or assists, employs, uses, persuades, induces, or coerces a child, or a person responsible for a child's welfare, who knowingly permits or encourages a child to engage in, or assist others to engage in, prostitution or a live performance involving obscene sexual conduct, or to either pose or model alone or with others for purposes of preparing a film, photograph, negative, slide, drawing, painting, or other pictorial depiction, involving obscene sexual conduct…"

The SPCs in the tables below will be used in identifying and documenting children and youth[24] who are, or at risk of being, commercially sexually exploited and have new or existing open cases in CWS/CMS. The SPCs are located on the Special Project page of the case notebook in CWS/CMS. The SPCs will be programmed into the application and active no later than June 1, 2015. Caseworkers shall commence use of the first Page Four

two SPCs no later than July 1, 2015. The second two SPCs will be available for county use no later than June 1, 2015, but are not required to be used until their specified commencement dates. Please note that a child or youth may have multiple SPCs attached to his or her case notebook, if applicable. Refer to **Attachment A** for specific instructions on locating and entering the Case Notebook client-specific CSEC SPCs listed below.

**The following SPC Titles and Descriptions are held to a character limit (30 and 254 respectively), therefore they contain truncated and abbreviated words.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | **S-CSEC Victim During Care**[25] | Child/youth who is CSEC/sex trafficked, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts as described in Penal Code §236.1 or §11165.1, including pornography and who became such a victim WHILE IN foster care |

- The start date will be the date the child or youth–while in care–became a victim of commercial sexual exploitation, as identified by the caseworker through the county screening process. The end date will be entered as the date the child or youth no longer receives child welfare services.
- Commence use of this SPC no later than July 1, 2015.
- Required by the county elective CSEC Program and the federal Title IV-E Program.

24 WIC § 10609.45 & WIC § 11375; Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I) "any child or youth over whom the State agency has responsibility for placement, care, or supervision and who the State has reasonable cause to believe is, or is at risk of being, a sex trafficking victim (including children for whom a State child welfare agency has an open case file but who have not been removed from the home, children who have run away from foster care and who have not attained 18 years of age or such older age as the State has elected under Section 475(8) of this Act, and youth who are not in foster care but are receiving services under Section 477 of this Act)"

25 Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I), § 479(c)(3)(E), & WIC § 16524..9

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 2. | **S-CSEC Victim Before Care**[26] | Child/youth who is CSEC/sex trafficked, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts as described in Penal Code §236.1 or §11165.1, including pornography and who became such a victim BEFORE entering foster care |

- The start date must be entered but cannot be entered as a date prior to the child or youth's entry into the child welfare system. Therefore, caseworkers should enter the start date as the date the case was opened. The end date will be entered as the date the child or youth no longer receives child welfare services.

- Commence use of this SPC no later than July 1, 2015.

- Required by the county elective CSEC Program and the federal Title IV-E Program.

Page Five

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3. | **S-CSEC At-Risk**[2728] | Min. of 2 indicators: prior sexual trauma; freq. AWOL/homeless; solicitation charges; probation/LE involvement; history of hard substance abuse; branding tattoos; freq. truancy; relationship w/ much older adult; tech use involving atypical sexual behav. |

- The start date will be the date the child or youth is identified by the caseworker as being at-risk for CSE based upon meeting the risk factor requirements in the SPC description and based upon the knowledge of the caseworker. The end date will reflect the date the child or youth is no longer considered to be at-risk for commercial sexual exploitation, or the date when the child or youth became a victim of commercial sexual exploitation. If the child or youth becomes a victim of commercial sexual exploitation after having been identified and documented as at-risk for commercial sexual exploitation, the social worker should end date the S-CSEC At-Risk SPC and add the S-CSEC Victim During Care SPC to the case notebook.

- The indicators listed were obtained from research, survivors, advocates, and county stakeholders. Due to the SPC description area being limited to 254 text characters, this list is not an exhaustive list of all risk factors.

- Commence use of this SPC no later than September 29, 2016.  Required by the federal Title IV-E Program.

26 Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I), § 479(c)(3)(E), & WIC § 16524..9

27 Social Security Act § 471(a)(9)(C)(i)(I)

28 Social Security Act § 471(a)(35)(A)(iii)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4. | **S-CSEC Absence From Placement**[9] | Dependent/ward who is AWOL, or is abducted, or is otherwise absent from placement and is CSEC/sex trafficked as described in WIC §300(b)(2) or Penal Codes §236.1 or §11165.1 during absence from placement and identified as such upon return to placement |

- This SPC applies to children and nonminor dependents in foster care and not the expanded populations of youth identified in Footnote 1 on the first page of this ACL.

- Per federal law , the social worker will need to ascertain the child[29] 's experiences while absent from placement, including whether the child was a victim of commercial sexual exploitation during the absence from placement. Once the child is so identified, however long it may take, the social worker will retroactively enter the start date as the date when the child was first absent from placement and the end date as the date the child returned to placement.

Page Six

- This SPC may be used multiple times for separate incidents.

- Commence use of this SPC no later than September 29, 2015.

- Required by the federal Title IV-E Program.

CWS/CMS System Change

While CDSS recognizes that these SPCs do not capture all of the new Title IV-E data requirements, the upcoming CWS/CMS system change will provide counties with the ability to document all Title IV-E Program required data for children, youth, and nonminors who are, or are at risk of being, commercially sexually exploited. This CWS/CMS system change will occur before federal deadlines for the data elements not captured by these interim SPCs.

Counties needing additional assistance regarding data entry should contact their

System Support Consultant at the Office of Systems Integration, or the CMS Support Branch at (916) 651-7884 or CMSProgramPolicyUnit@dss.ca.gov. For any other questions, please contact the Child

29 Social Security Act § 471(a)(35)(A)(iii) "determining the child's experiences while absent from care, including screening the child to determine if the child is a possible sex trafficking victim (as defined in Section 475(9)(A))"

Welfare Policy and Program Development Bureau; CSEC Program staff at CSECProgram@dss.ca.gov or (916) 651-6160.

Sincerely,

***Original Document Signed By:***

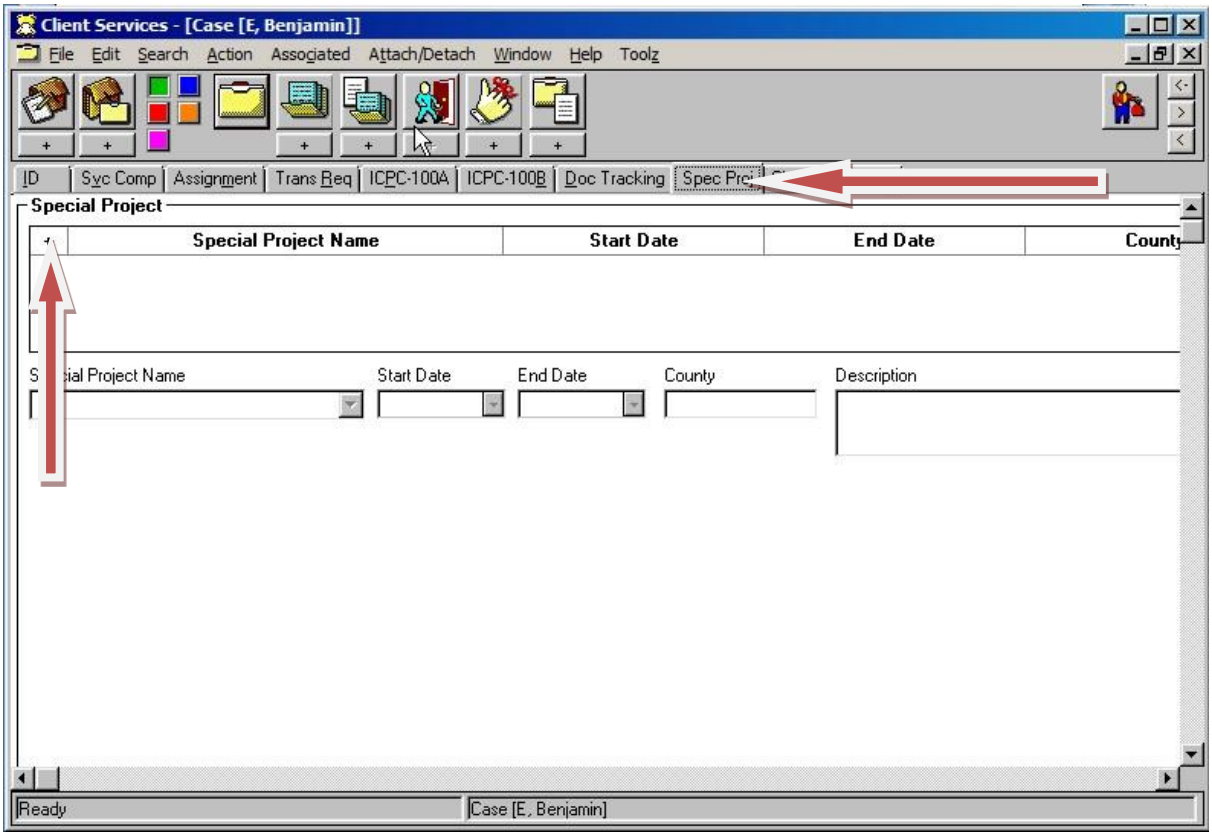
KEVIN GAINES, for

GREGORY E. ROSE

Deputy Director

Children and Family Services Division

Page One **Instructions for entering the CSEC Special Project Codes**



1. Click on the **Special Projects** Page tab.

2. Click on the "+" in the Special Project grid and select the appropriate code (listed below).

- **S-CSEC Victim During Care**

Child/youth who is CSEC/sex trafficked, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts as described in Penal Code

§236.1 or §11165.1, including pornography and who became such a victim WHILE IN foster care

- **S-CSEC Victim Before Care**

Child/youth who is CSEC/sex trafficked, or who receives food or shelter in exchange for, or who is paid to perform, sexual acts as described in Penal Code

§236.1 or §11165.1, including pornography and who became such a victim BEFORE entering foster care

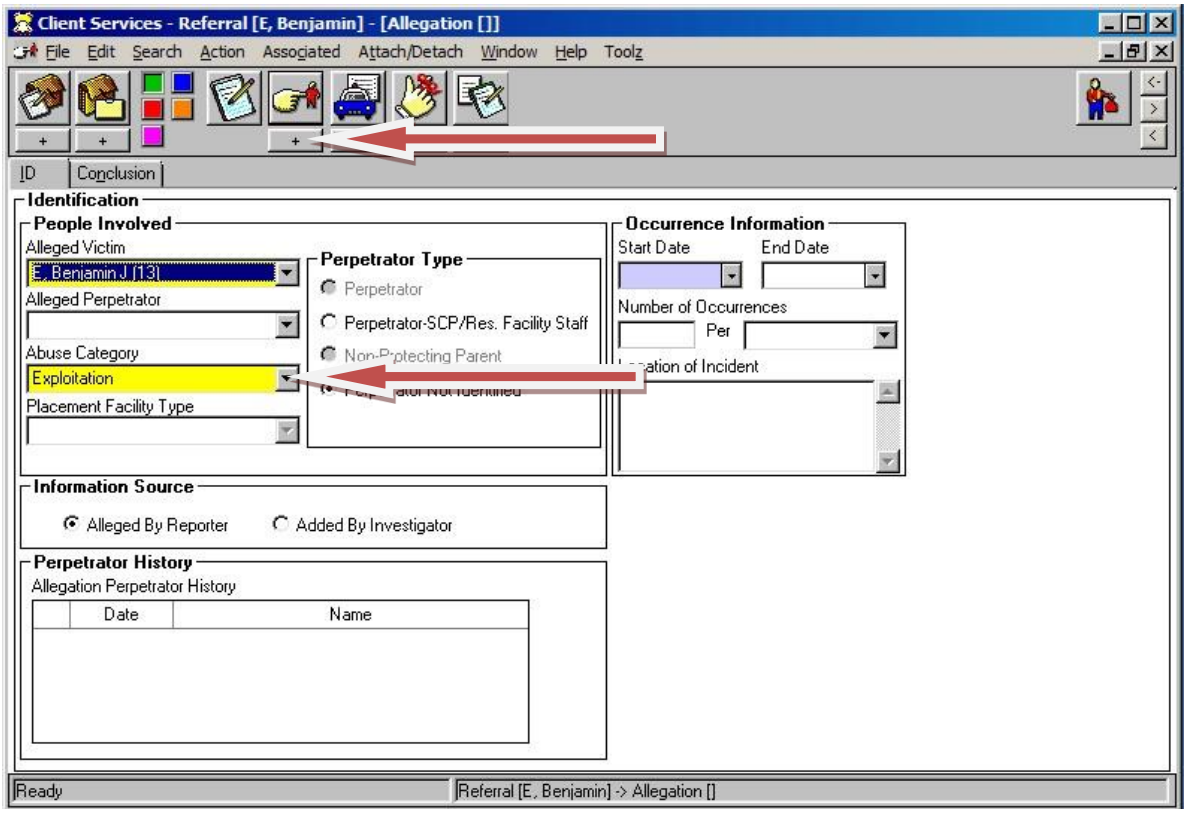
- **S-CSEC At-Risk**

Min. of 2 indicators: prior sexual trauma; freq. AWOL/homeless; solicitation charges; probation/LE involvement; history of hard substance abuse; branding tattoos; freq. truancy; relationship w/ much older adult; tech use involving atypical sexual behavior.

- **S-CSEC Absence From Placement**

Dependent/ward who is AWOL, or is abducted, or is otherwise absent from placement and is CSEC/sex trafficked as described in WIC §300(b)(2) or Penal Codes §236.1 or §11165.1 during absence from placement and identified as such upon return to placement.

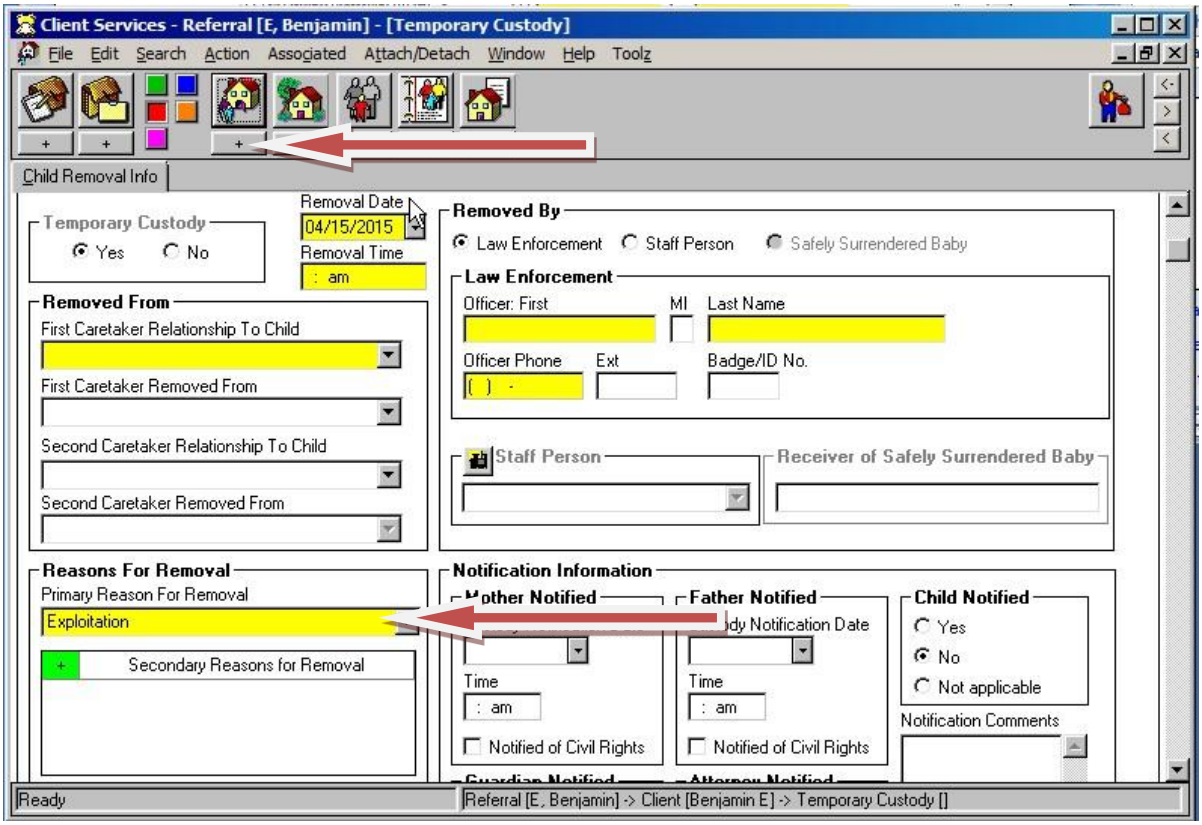
Page Three **Instructions for locating and entering the Exploitation Allegation**




**In the Referral Management (green section):**

1. Click on the **Create New Allegation "+"** button.

2. Click the dropdown button in the **Abuse Category** field and select **Exploitation**.




**In the Placement Management (red section) of the Referral:**

1. Click on the **Placement "+"** button.

2. Click the dropdown menu button in the **Reasons For Removal** field and select **Exploitation.**

**Appendix B**

Variable List

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| ADPTN_STCD | Char | ADOPTION_STATUS_CODE |
| ADPT_AGE | Num | ADOPTED_AGE |
| BIRTH_DT | Num | BIRTH_DATE |
| CASE_CT | Num | Case Count |
| CENS_RC | Num | Census Race |
| DEATH_DT | Num | DEATH_DATE |
| DRUG_IND | Char | DRUG_IND |
| GENDER_CD | Char | CWS/CMS Gender Code |
| HISP_CD | Char | HISPANIC_ORIGIN_CODE |
| HISP_CDX | Num | Hispanic Status |
| MHLTH_IND | Char | MENTAL_HEALTH_ISSUES_IND |
| MNRMOM_IND | Char | MINOR_NMD_PARENT_IND |
| PREVCA_IND | Char | PREV_CA_CHILDREN_SERV_IND |
| P_ETHNCTYC | Num | PRIMARY_ETHNICITY_TYPE |
| REF_RCV_DT | Num | RECEIVED_DATE |
| SOC158_IND | Char | SOC158_SEALED_CLIENT_IND |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| TRBA_CLT_B | Char | TRIBAL_ANCESTRY_CLIENT_IND_VAR |
| TR_MBVRT_B | Char | TRIBAL_MEMBRSHP_VERIFCTN_IND_VAR |
| age3 | Num | Age 3 Birthday |
| b_lang | Num | Primary Language (Binary) |
| b_sex | Num | Assigned Sex (Binary) |
| case1_adopted | Num | First Case Ended in Adoption |
| case1_closure | Num | First Case Closure Reason |
| case1_county | Char | COUNTY_SPECIFIC_CODE |
| case1_dismissed | Num | First Case Dismissed |
| case1_fm_fr | Num | First Case Family Stabilized/Reunified |
| case1_length_cat | Num | Months in First Case (Categorical) |
| case1_open | Num | First Case Remained Open |
| case1_over2yrs | Num | First Case Open Over 2 Years |
| case1_rel_lg | Num | First Case Ended with Relative/Guardian |
| case1_reunified | Num | First Case Stabilized |
| case1_s_age | Num | Age at First Case |
| case1_stabilized | Num | First Case Stabilized |
| case1_trans_other | Num | First Case Closed in Transfer/Other |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| case_after_3 | Num | First Case Opened after 3rd Birthday |
| case_after_5 | Num | First Placement after Age 5 |
| case_hx | Num | CW Placement History |
| concern_AGY_RSPC | Num | AGENCY_RESPONSIBLE_TYPE |
| concern_county | Char | County of CSE Concern |
| concern_fac_type | Num | Post-RFA Place Fac. at CSE Concern |
| concern_in_gh | Num | CSE Concern While in Congregate Care |
| concern_in_oh | Num | In Placement Home/Facility at CSE Concern |
| concern_in_pe | Num | In Placement Episode at CSE Concern |
| concern_in_pe_abs | Num | CSE Concern While Absent from Placement |
| concern_p_type | Num | Placement Type at CSE Concern |
| concern_plc_fclc | Num | Pre-RFA Place Fac. at CSE Concern |
| concern_s_age | Num | Age at First Documented CSE Concern |
| concern_year | Num | Year of First CSE Concern |
| cps_hx | Num | Alleged Maltreatment History |
| cse_list | Num | CSE Risk/Victimization Documented |
| current_reg_ctr | Char | CURRENTLY_REGIONAL_CENTER_IND |
| dispo_evalout_ct | Num | Evaluated Out Dispo. Count |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| dispo_incase_ct | Num | Child Already in Open Case Dispo. Count |
| dispo_incomplete_ct | Num | Unable to Complete Investigation Dispo. Count |
| dispo_newcase_ct | Num | Open New Case Dispo. Count |
| dispo_other_ct | Num | Other Dispo. Count |
| dispo_safe_ct | Num | No Safety Threat Identified Dispo. Count |
| dispo_stabilized_ct | Num | Situation Stabilized Dispo. Count |
| early_concern | Num | CSE Concern before Age 15 |
| ethnicxlang | Num | Race/Ethnicity & Language |
| exp | Num | Alleged Exploitation |
| exp_age | Num | Age at Alleged Exploitation |
| exp_count | Num | Alleged Exploitation Referral Count |
| exp_county | Char | ASSIGNMENT_COUNTY |
| exp_perp | Num | CLIENT_RELATIONSHIP_TYPE |
| exp_perp_cat | Num | CLIENT_RELATIONSHIP_TYPE categorical |
| exp_rp | Num | REPORTER_RELATIONSHIP |
| exp_year | Num | Year of Alleged Exploitation |
| first_ref_age | Num | Age at First Referral |
| first_ref_county | Char | ASSIGNMENT_COUNTY |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| first_ref_sub | Num | First Referral Substantiated |
| first_ref_yr | Num | Year of First Referral |
| first_referral_dispo | Num | First Referral Determination |
| first_severity | Num | First Referral Disposition |
| first_soat | Num | First Referral Most Severe Allegation |
| first_sub_age | Num | Age at First Substantiated Maltreatment |
| gender_expression | Num | GENDER_EXPRESSION_TYPE |
| gender_identity | Num | GENDER_IDENTITY_TYPE |
| int_dev_condition | Num | Intellectual/Developmental Disability |
| inv_ref_5plus | Num | 5+ Investigated CPS Reports Pre-CSE Concern |
| inv_ref_ct | Num | Investigated Referral Count |
| inv_refs_b4_case | Num | Referral Count before Case Opening |
| lang | Num | Primary Language collapsed |
| language | Num | PRIMARY_LANGUAGE_TYPE |
| last_c_length_cat | Num | Last Case Length (Cat) |
| last_c_over2yrs | Num | Last Case Open Over 2 Years |
| last_case_adopted | Num | Last Case Ended in Adoption |
| last_case_closure | Num | Last Case Closure Reason |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| last_case_county | Char | COUNTY_SPECIFIC_CODE |
| last_case_dismissed | Num | Last Case Dismissed |
| last_case_e_age | Num | Age at Last Case Closure |
| last_case_fm_fr | Num | Last Case Stabilized/Reunified |
| last_case_open | Num | Last Case Remained Open |
| last_case_rel_lg | Num | Last Case Ended with Relative/Guardian |
| last_case_s_age | Num | Last Case Start Age |
| last_case_trans_other | Num | First Case Closed in Transfer/Other |
| late_intervene | Num | 4+ Investigated Referrals Before Case |
| learn_spec_condition | Num | ADHD/Learning Disorder & Special Ed |
| lgbt | Num | Queer Sexuality/or Gender ID (Avail. 2018 or Later) |
| life_perc_case | Num | Lifetime Percent in CW Case |
| life_perc_ohc | Num | Percent of Life in Care |
| mh_bx_condition | Num | Mental/Behavioral Health Condition |
| mom | Num | Youth ID'ed as a Parent |
| narrow_list | Num | Narrowly Defined CSE |
| ohc_hx | Num | Flag for Prior Placement |
| other_condition | Num | Int/Dev/Phys Condition |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| perc_invest | Num | Percent of Referrals Investigated |
| perc_sub | Num | Percent of Investigated Referrals Substantiated |
| phys_neuro_condiiton | Num | Physical/Neurological Condition |
| place_1_age | Num | Age at First Placement |
| place_after_3 | Num | First Placement After 3rd Birthday |
| place_after_5 | Num | First Placement After 5th Birthday |
| place_count | Num | Number of Placements |
| pre_adopt | Num | Pre-Adoption History Included |
| predom_case_type | Num | Predominant Case Service Component |
| predom_cc | Num | Predom. Placement - Congregate |
| predom_dispo_cat | Num | Predominant Referral Disposition (Cat) |
| predom_dispo_evalout | Num | Majority of Referrals Not Investigated |
| predom_dispo_incom | Num | Majority of Referrals Not Investigated |
| predom_dispo_ | Num | Majority of Referrals Closed |
| safestable | | as Save/Stabilized |
| predom_fc | Num | Predom. Placement - Foster Care |
| predom_home | Num | Majority CW History - In-Home |
| predom_ohc | Num | Majority CW History - Out-of-Home |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| predom_other_csc | Num | Majority CW History - Other Case Type |
| predom_other_p | Num | Predom. Placement - Other |
| predom_place | Num | Predominant Placement Type Before CSE Concern |
| predom_rel | Num | Predom. Placement - Relative |
| prior_case | Num | Flag for Prior Case |
| prior_cc | Num | Prior Congregate Care |
| prior_fc | Num | Prior FFA/FFH |
| prior_other_p | Num | Prior Non-CW Placement |
| prior_place | Num | Flag for Prior Placement |
| prior_reg_ctr | Char | PREV_REGIONAL_CENTER_IND |
| prior_rel | Num | Prior Relative Care |
| psych_hosp | Num | Psychiatric Hospitalization |
| psych_meds | Num | Psychotropic Medication |
| racexethnic | Num | Race & Ethnicity |
| racexlang | Num | Race & Language |
| recent_case | Num | Case within 2yrs of CSE |
| ref_5plus | Num | 5+ CPS Reports Pre-CSE Concern |
| ref_after_3 | Num | First Investigated Referral After 3rd Birthday |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| ref_after_5 | Num | First Investigated Referral After 5th Birthday |
| ref_ct | Num | Referral Count |
| refs_b4_case | Num | Referrals Before Case Opening |
| risk | Num | CSE Risk Documented |
| risk_age | Num | Grid Start Age |
| risk_b4_csec | Num | Risk Documented Prior to CSE Event |
| risk_county | Char | County Creating CSEC Grid Entry |
| risk_s_dt | Num | START_DATE |
| risk_year | Num | Year ID'ed at Risk of CSE |
| sa_age | Num | Age at Alleged Sexual Abuse |
| sa_alleg_ct | Num | Alleged Sexual Abuse Count |
| sa_alleged | Num | Prior Alleged Sexual Abuse |
| sa_first_dispo | Num | First Sexual Abuse Investigation Finding |
| sa_inv | Num | Prior Investigated Sexual Abuse |
| sa_inv_ct | Num | Investigated Sexual Abuse Count |
| sa_mult_inv | Num | 2+ Investigated Reports of Sexual Abuse |
| sa_mult_sub | Num | 2+ Substantiated Reports of Sexual Abuse |
| sa_sub | Num | Prior Substantiated Sexual Abuse |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| sa_sub_ct | Num | Substantiated Sexual Abuse Allegations |
| sexual_orientation | Num | SEXUAL_ORIENTATION_TYPE |
| st_days | Num | Placement Days - Supportive Transition |
| sub | Num | Substantiated Exploitation |
| sub_after_3 | Num | First Substantiation After 3rd Birthday |
| sub_after_5 | Num | First Substantiation After 5th Birthday |
| sub_age | Num | Age at Substantiated Exploitation |
| sub_count | Num | Substantiated Referral Count |
| sub_county | Char | ASSIGNMENT_COUNTY |
| sub_exp_count | Num | Substantiated Exploitation Count |
| sub_exp_county | Char | ASSIGNMENT_COUNTY |
| sub_exp_perp | Num | CLIENT_RELATIONSHIP_TYPE |
| sub_exp_perp_cat | Num | CLIENT_RELATIONSHIP_TYPE collapsed |
| sub_exp_rp | Num | REPORTER_RELATIONSHIP |
| sub_late_intervene | Num | 2+ Substantiated Referrals Before Case |
| sub_ref_5plus | Num | 5+ Substantiated CPS Reports Pre-CSE Concern |
| sub_ref_ct | Num | Substantiated Referrals |
| sub_s_dt | Num | Date of Substantiated Exploitation |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|
| sub_year | Num | Year of Substantiated Exploitation |
| subs_b4_case | Num | Substantiated Referrals Before Case Opening |
| sum_c_days | Num | Total Case Days |
| sum_days_abs | Num | Placement Days - Absent |
| sum_days_cc | Num | Placement Days - Congregate Care |
| sum_days_fc | Num | Placement Days - Foster Care |
| sum_days_jj | Num | Placement Days - Absent |
| sum_days_lg | Num | Placement Days - Legal Guardianship |
| sum_days_med | Num | Placement Days - Medical Facility |
| sum_days_rel | Num | Placement Days - Relative |
| sum_p_days | Num | Total Placement Days |
| time_to_cse | Num | Time Between Last Case Closure & CSE Concern |
| vic | Num | CSE Victimization Documented |
| vic_age | Num | Grid Start Age |
| vic_count | Num | CSE Victimization Entries |
| vic_county | Char | County Creating CSEC Grid Entry |
| vic_s_dt | Num | Date ID'ed as CSE Victim |
| vic_year | Num | Year ID'ed as CSE Victim |

| Variable | Format | Label |
|---|---|---|

*Capitalized letters indicate that the variable was created by CCWIP and/or CDSS