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Illinois Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol Evaluation: Impact on Short-term Recurrence Rates – Year Six

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report analyzes the impact of Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) implementation on the safety of children investigated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for abuse and neglect. For this study, safety is assessed using data from DCFS' Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS). Safety is defined in terms of the occurrence/nonoccurrence of an indicated allegation of maltreatment within 60 days of an initial investigation. The current analysis builds upon the results of previous years' reports that found declining recurrence rates over the five years since the CERAP was first implemented.

Comparisons of Service Volume

This section includes simple frequency counts of children and child reports that appeared as part of investigations in the years 1995 to 2001.

- The pattern of all child reports in the seven-year period shows a consistent decrease from 1995 to 2001, with greater decreases occurring during the first three years than in the last three.
- A pattern of decline is apparent in the number of child reports with allegations – from 133,859 in 1995 to 99,521 in 2001; child reports with indicated allegations - from 49,064 to 25,384; and number of children taken into protective custody - from 8,171 to 5,089.

Counting children only for the first time they appeared as part of an investigation during the seven-year time period shows a similar pattern of decline.

- Total child reports generally decreased during the seven-year period, with the exception of small a rise from 1999 to 2000. However, total reports continued to decline the following year.
- The number of children with allegations declined from 100,406 in 1995 to 58,676 in 2001.
- The number of children with indicated allegations declined from 35,009 in 1995 to 13,977 in 2001.
- The number of children taken into protective custody for the first time in the seven-year time period declined from 5,270 in 1995 to 2,492 in 2001.
- The pattern in the number of children with allegations, and children with indicated allegations in the seven-year period has been declining, but it has leveled off in the last three years. The number of children taken into protective custody for the first time declined from 1995 through 2000, leveling off between years 1999 and 2000 and increasing slightly in year 2001.

The number of children reported for the first time in the seven-year period between 1995 and 2001 and whose first report was a Sequence A report showed a pattern of decline over the time period similar to that shown when including all first reports.

- Total reports rose slightly from 1999 to 2000 but continued to decline afterwards; the number of reports in 2001 was fewer than in 1999.
- The number of children with allegations in the first Sequence A report declined from 75,950 in 1995 to 53,430 in 2001. However, there were approximately 400 more such children in 2000 than in 1999. While the number of children with allegations in the first Sequence A report declined slightly from 2000 to 2001, the number of such children continues to be higher than in 1999.

- The number of children with indicated allegations declined in the seven-year period from 23,429 in 1995 to 11,826 in 2001. The one-year decline from 2000 to 2001 was exceeded only by the decline from 1995 to 1996.
- The number of children taken into protective custody in relation to a first Sequence A report in the time period ranged from 2,794 in 1995 to 1,612 in 2001. Both in 1998 and in 2001, the number of children taken into protective custody for the first time in the seven-year period increased somewhat from the previous year. The increase from 2000 to 2001 (120 children) was more than twice the previous increase (54 children).

Comparisons of Recurrence

Short-term (60 day) recurrence rates for all children reported decreased over the six years following implementation of the CERAP.

- Recurrence within 60 days of initial investigation declined from 2.71% in 1995, the pre-implementation year, to 1.11% in 2001, for an overall reduction of 59.04%. The last year's rate probably underestimates actual recurrence, as data for the last two months of the year were not available at the time of analysis.
- The decline was most noticeable in the first year of implementation of CERAP (1996) when the recurrence rate went down to 2.09%, a reduction of 22.88%. Since that point the recurrence rate has continue to decline.
- The rate of recurrence within 60 days was 1.80% in 1997, 1.75% in 1998, 1.60% in 1999, and 1.41% in 2000.

Short-term recurrence rates for children with 1) a first report of Sequence A in the time period and 2) excluding children taken into protective custody for any period of time showed a similar pattern of overall decline compared to the rates of all children.

- The recurrence rate within 60 days of initial investigation declined from 2.13% in 1995 to .96% in 2001 for an overall reduction of 54.93%. The last year's rate

probably underestimates actual recurrence, as data for the last two months of the year were not available at the time of analysis.

- Once again the most noticeable reduction in the recurrence rate from year to year was apparent between the pre-implementation year and the first year of implementation, from 2.13% and to 1.76% respectively, a reduction of 17.37%.¹
- The recurrence rates continued to decline from year to year in a more moderate fashion. In 1997 the rate of recurrence was 1.60%, in 1998 the recurrence rate was 1.55%, in 1999 the recurrence rate was 1.45%, and in 2000 the recurrence rate was 1.26%.

120-day recurrence rates for children with 1) a first report of Sequence A in the time period and 2) excluding children taken into protective custody for any period of time showed a similar pattern to 60-day recurrence rates.

- The recurrence rate within 120 days of initial investigation declined from 3.18% in 1995 to 1.47% in 2001 for an overall reduction of 53.77%. Again, the last year's rate probably underestimates actual recurrence, as data for the last two months of the year were not available at the time of analysis.
- The most noticeable reduction in the recurrence rate from year to year was apparent between the pre-implementation year and the first year of implementation, from 3.18% to 2.72% respectively, a reduction of 14.47%.¹
- The recurrence rates continued to decline from year to year but in a more moderate fashion.²

¹ While there is an even larger apparent drop from 2000 to 2001, the drop may be due in part to data yet to be entered into the administrative database. Current practice, informed by DCFS, is to consider unreliable data in the last three months of a system download. Data for these analyses was downloaded on December 31, 2001. We are reporting for the time period through November 30, 2001. Therefore, these rates should not be considered reliable at this time.

² Except for the period between 2000 and 2001. See footnote 1.

Illinois Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol Evaluation: Impact on Short-term Recurrence Rates - Year Six

The report analyzes the impact of Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol (CERAP) implementation on the safety of children investigated by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) for abuse and/or neglect. Development of the CERAP was initiated in 1994 as a response to concerns about the immediate safety of children in homes under investigation. It consists of a focused system for assessing safety using empirically based factors found to correlate with risk of abuse and/or neglect and documents a safety plan for each child in the household if conditions in that household are deemed unsafe. Investigators are provided intensive training in the CERAP and must pass a certification exam demonstrating mastery of the protocol.

For the purpose of this study, safety is assessed using data from DCFS' Child Abuse and Neglect Tracking System (CANTS) and is defined as the occurrence of an indicated report of maltreatment within 60 days of an initial report. The current analyses build upon the results of previous years' reports that found declining recurrence rates over the five years post CERAP implementation.

Several alternative explanations for the reduction in recurrence were assessed in previous reports. Policy changes in substance-affected infants and risk of harm and/or inadequate supervision while in the care of a relative were not related to reduced recurrence. These analyses were therefore dropped in last year's and this year's reports. However, in order to ensure uniformity with previous reports in the computed lag between the first investigation of abuse or neglect and the second, we did exclude from recurrence rates children who were taken into protective custody.

The first section of this report presents simple frequency counts of children who were the subjects of abuse and/or neglect investigations. The second section presents an

analysis of changes in short-term maltreatment recurrence rates from the year before the first implementation of CERAP through the six years following implementation.

Section One: Comparison of Service Volumes

Four measures of service provision were compared for the years 1995 to 2001.

The four measures are:

1. Child Reports. This is the count of all children identified within an investigation. Because a child may be a member of multiple households in a given year and/or because a given household may be investigated multiple times in a given year, an individual child may be identified in more than one report in a given year. This is therefore a duplicated count of individual children. A total of 1,122,974 child reports were received in the seven-year period.
2. Child Reports with an Allegation. A subset of the children in (1), this is the count of all children identified within an investigation who were alleged to be the victims of at least one incident of abuse and/or neglect. This too is a duplicated count of individual children as a given child could have multiple reports in a single year. Excluded are children named in a report (e.g., siblings, other relatives) who were members of the investigated household but who were not allegedly abused and/or neglected.
3. Child Reports with an Indicated Allegation. This is a subset of the children in (2), and is the count of all children identified within an investigation for whom at least one allegation of abuse and/or neglect was “indicated.” Again, this is a duplicated count of individual children as a child may have more than one investigation, and therefore possibly more than one indicated allegation, in a given year.
4. Protective Custody Taken³. The fourth count is the number of children taken into protective custody (PC). Protective custody is described within the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act (325 ILCS 5/ 5) in the following terms:

³ Earlier versions of the report defined “protective custody” as placement into the child welfare system. These children were therefore thought to be at substantially lower risk of re-abuse/re-neglect because it was assumed that they had been removed from and did not reside in the investigated household during the 60-day period examined. About a quarter (27%) of children who are taken into protective custody are not subsequently maintained in the child welfare system. Similarly, about a quarter (24%) of children who enter the child welfare system do so without having had protective custody.

An officer of a local law enforcement agency, designated employee of the Department, or a physician treating a child may take or retain temporary protective custody of the child without the consent of the person responsible for the child's welfare, if (1) he has reason to believe that the child cannot be cared for at home or in the custody of the person responsible for the child's welfare without endangering the child's health or safety; and (2) there is not time to apply for a court order under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 for temporary custody of the child.... The Department shall promptly initiate proceedings under the Juvenile Court Act of 1987 for the continued temporary custody of the child.

Table 1 presents counts⁴ for the four measures for the seven-year period. Because implementation of the CERAP first occurred on December 1, 1995, each of the seven comparison years was defined as beginning on December 1 and ending November 30.

Table 1. Seven-Year Trends in CANTS Child Reports

	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Total Child Reports	185,447	174,141	162,982	158,329	149,895	148,991	143,189
Child Reports with Allegations	133,859	124,495	115,713	111,205	104,975	102,798	99,521
Child Reports with Indicated Allegations	49,064	43,097	38,863	35,587	32,631	31,498	25,384
Children with Protective Custody Taken	8,171	7,057	6,100	7,031	5,668	5,063	5,089

⁴ Counts presented in the current report differ somewhat from those presented in previous reports. Counts from previous reports were derived from a longitudinal dataset that was built from a series of data captures over time. The data analyzed in the present report were all taken from a December 31, 2001 data capture of the DCFS administrative data systems. In the dataset used in earlier analyses, a report with a "Pending" disposition would always remain so. Because the final case disposition is to be made by 60 days after a report, "Pending" cases would be rewritten as "Indicated" or "Unfounded" within the database used here and are accordingly included in the present counts.

As Table 1 indicates, all but two counts (both regarding the number of children with protective custody taken) show an overall reduction in service volume as compared to the previous year:

- A 6.10% decrease in the number of total child reports from 1995 to 1996, a 6.41% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 2.85% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 5.33% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a .60% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 3.89% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 7.00% decrease in the number of child reports with allegations from 1995 to 1996, a 7.05% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 3.90% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 5.60% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 2.07% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 3.19% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 12.16% decrease in the number of child reports with indicated allegations from 1995 to 1996, a 9.82% decrease from 1996 to 1997, an 8.43% decrease from 1997 to 1998, an 8.31% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 3.47% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 19.41% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 13.63% reduction in the number of children taken into protective custody from 1995 to 1996, a 13.56% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 15.26% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, a 19.39% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 10.67% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a .51% *increase* from 2000 to 2001.

However, considered as a *proportion* of total child reports and as a *proportion* of child reports with allegations, the changes over time in child reports with allegations and child reports with indicated allegations, respectively are smaller. The changes in these proportions are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2. Seven-Year Percentage Changes

%	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Child Reports with Indicated Allegations / Total Child Reports	26.5	24.7	23.8	22.5	21.8	21.1	17.7
Child Reports with Indicated Allegations / Child Reports with Allegations	36.7	34.6	33.6	32.0	31.1	30.6	25.5
Children with Protective Custody Taken / Indicated Child Reports	16.7	16.4	15.7	19.8	17.4	16.1	20.0

As Table 2 shows, the proportion of child reports with indicated allegations to both total child reports and child reports with allegations decreased from 1995 through 2000. Some specific changes over the seven years were:

- A 5.67% decrease in the proportion of child reports with indicated allegations to child reports with allegations in the period from 1995 to 1996, a 2.98% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 4.72% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 2.86% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 1.43% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 16.76% decrease from 2000 to 2001. (Note: these percentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.)
- A 1.95% decrease in the proportion of children taken into protective custody to indicated child reports from 1995 to 1996, a 4.14% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 25.87% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, a 12.08% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 7.46% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 24.72% *increase* from 2000 to 2001.

Tables 3 and 4 present the same counts and percentages presented in Tables 1 and 2 but only for the first report received on each child from December 1, 1994 through November 30, 2001. These tables therefore are unduplicated counts for children under

investigation during that time period. A report is counted not only if it represents the first recorded investigation of a household ever but any subsequent investigation as long as it was the first investigation of that household to occur during the time period December 1, 1994 through November 30, 2001. The total number of children represented in reports during this seven-year time period was 708,556.

Table 3. Seven-Year Trends in CANTS Child Reports, First Reports During the Time Period Only

	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Total Children	141,240	112,949	99,925	93,201	87,538	88,173	85,530
Children with Allegations	100,406	79,476	69,697	64,561	60,315	60,074	58,676
Children with Indicated Allegations	35,009	25,713	21,784	18,986	17,286	17,000	13,977
Children with Protective Custody Taken	5,270	3,837	3,140	3,443	2,814	2,421	2,492

As was true with the overall counts, counts of first reports in the time period have, with three exceptions, decreased over the seven years observed, showing:

- A 20.03% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children reported, an 11.53% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 6.73% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 6.08% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a .73% *increase* from 1999 to 2000, and a 3.00% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 20.85% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children with at least one allegation of maltreatment, a 12.30% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a

7.37% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 6.58% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a .40% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 2.33% decrease from 2000 to 2001.

- A 26.55% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children with at least one indicated allegation of maltreatment, a 5.28% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 12.84% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 8.95% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 1.65% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 17.78% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 27.19% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children taken into protective custody, an 18.17% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 9.65% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, an 18.27% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 13.97% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 2.93% *increase* from 2000 to 2001.

Table 4. Seven-Year Percentage Changes, First Reports During the Time Period

%	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Children with Indicated Allegations/ Total Child Reports	24.8	22.8	21.8	20.4	19.7	19.3	16.3
Children with Indicated Allegations/ Child Reports with Allegations	34.9	32.4	31.3	29.4	28.7	28.3	23.8
Children with Protective Custody Taken / Indicated Reports	15.1	14.9	14.4	18.1	16.3	14.2	17.8

The changes in the proportions for first reports in the time period December 1, 1994 through November 30, 2001 reveal:

- A 7.30% decrease in the proportion of children with indicated allegations to children with allegations in the period from 1995 to 1996, a 3.39% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 5.91% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 2.54% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 1.26% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 15.82% decrease from 2000 to 2001. (Note: these percentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.)

- A 1.18% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the proportion of children taken into protective custody to indicated child reports, a 3.41% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 25.81% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, a 10.23% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 12.52% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 25.20% *increase* from 2000 to 2001.

Finally, service volume was compared across the seven years for children whose first Sequence A report fell within the period December 1, 1994 through November 30, 2001. The total number of such children was 604,497. Tables 5 and 6 present service volumes and percentage changes for these children.

Table 5. Seven-Year Trends in CANTS Child Reports, Sequence A Reports During the Time Period

	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Total Children	106,941	93,134	86,351	81,839	78,509	79,904	77,819
Children with Allegations	75,950	65,350	60,000	56,591	54,087	54,509	53,430
Children with Indicated Allegations	23,429	19,135	17,130	15,164	14,322	14,267	11,826
Children with Protective Custody Taken	2,795	2,175	1,890	1,944	1,689	1,492	1,612

The changes in counts for children involved in Sequence A reports from December 1, 1994 through November 30, 2001 show, with some exceptions, a decrease over the seven years, in particular:

- A 12.91% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children reported, a 7.28% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 5.23% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 4.07% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 1.78% *increase* from 1999 to 2000, and a 2.61% decrease from 2000 to 2001..
- A 13.96% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children with at least one allegation of maltreatment, a 8.19% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 5.68% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 4.42% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a .78% *increase* from 1999 to 2000, and a 1.98% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- An 18.33% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children with at least one indicated allegation of maltreatment, a 10.48% decrease from 1996 to 1997, an 11.48% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 5.55 % decrease from 1998 to 1999, a .38% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 17.11% decrease from 2000 to 2001.
- A 22.18% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the number of children taken into protective custody, a 13.10% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 2.86% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, a 13.12% decrease from 1998 to 1999, an 11.66% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and an 8.04% *increase* from 2000 to 2001 .

Table 6. Seven-Year Percentage Changes, Sequence A Reports During the Time Period

%	1995 (12/1/94– 11/30/95)	1996 (12/1/95– 11/30/96)	1997 (12/1/96– 11/30/97)	1998 (12/1/97– 11/30/98)	1999 (12/1/98– 11/30/99)	2000 (12/1/99– 11/30/00)	2001 (12/1/00– 11/30/01)
Children with Indicated Allegations /Total Child Reports	21.9	20.5	19.8	18.5	18.2	17.9	15.2
Children with Indicated Allegations /Child Reports with Allegations	30.8	29.3	28.6	26.8	26.5	26.2	22.1
Children with Protective Custody Taken /Indicated Child Report	11.9	11.4	11.0	12.8	11.8	10.5	13.6

Changes in proportions for children with Sequence A reports show:

- A 4.87% decrease in the proportion of children with indicated allegations to children with allegations in the period from 1995 to 1996, a 2.39% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 6.29% decrease from 1997 to 1998, a 1.12% decrease from 1998 to 1999, a 1.13 % decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 15.65% decrease from 2000 to 2001. (Note: these percentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.)
- A 4.20% decrease from 1995 to 1996 in the proportion of children taken into protective custody to indicated child, a 2.39% decrease from 1996 to 1997, a 16.36% *increase* from 1997 to 1998, a 7.81% decrease from 1998 to 1999, an 11.02% decrease from 1999 to 2000, and a 29.05% *increase* from 2000 to 2001.

Section Two: Recurrence Analysis

Short-term recurrence⁵ rates decreased over the six years following implementation of the CERAP. Table 7 presents the recurrence rates for the 708,556 children and their first investigation that occurred during the seven-year time period observed. As the table shows, there has been a consistent decrease in the recurrence rates over the seven-year period. Overall, the percentage reduction in recurrence from 1995 to 2001 was 59.04%.

⁵This is a measure of investigated children who were subsequently abused or neglected.

Table 7. 60-Day Recurrence for First Reports in Time Period

	Total	Number Recurrent^a	Crude Rate (%)	% Reduction From Prior Year^b
1995	141,240	3,828	2.71	
1996	112,949	2,363	2.09	22.88
1997	99,925	1,800	1.80	13.88
1998	93,201	1,630	1.75	02.78
1999	87,538	1,399	1.60	08.57
2000	88,173	1,243	1.41	11.88
2001 ^c	85,530	950	1.11	21.28

^aThe number recurrent is of children with an indicated report occurring within 60 days of their first report in the time period observed.

^bPercentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.

^cRecurrence rates for 2000 may be incomplete as data for January 1, 2001 through January 29, 2001 were not available at the time of analysis.

The data representing first reports were further refined by selecting only the Sequence A reports and only the cases not associated with protective custody taken. Since the CERAP is targeted at the prevention of future maltreatment and children with multiple investigations have higher rates of indication than those in their first investigation, controlling for investigation number by selecting only Sequence A reports provides a clearer picture of the impact of CERAP implementation. Eliminating children with protective custody taken theoretically excludes from analysis those children who spent a portion of time out of the investigated (and CERAP evaluated) household⁶. These 590,900 children without protective custody and with Sequence A reports are the subject

⁶ Because of questions regarding the inclusion or exclusion of protective custody cases from these recurrence analyses, separate analyses were conducted including cases associated with protective custody cases, excluding cases associated with protective custody, and including only those cases associated with protective custody having been taken. Analyses that included protective custody cases with total reports did not differ from those excluding protective custody cases. The crude recurrence rates and percentage reductions were the same whether protective custody cases were included or not.

of the remainder of analyses presented. The 60-day recurrence rates during the seven-year observation period for these children are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. 60-Day Recurrence for Sequence A Reports in Time Period, Excluding Cases Associated with Protective Custody Taken

	Total	Number Recurrent ^a	Crude Rate	% Reduction From Prior Year ^b
1995	104,146	2,221	2.13	
1996	90,959	1,605	1.76	17.37
1997	84,461	1,354	1.60	09.09
1998	79,895	1,241	1.55	03.13
1999	76,820	1,111	1.45	06.45
2000	78,412	991	1.26	13.10
2001 ^c	76,207	734	0.96	23.81

^aThe number recurrent is of children with an indicated report occurring within 60 days of their first Sequence A report in the time period observed.

^bPercentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.

^cRecurrence rates for 2001 may be incomplete as data for January 1, 2002 through January 29, 2002 were not available at the time of analysis.

As Table 8 shows, for each year observed, there has been a reduction in the recurrence rates relative to the previous year. The overall reduction from pre-implementation to 2001, the sixth year post implementation, is 54.93%.⁷

Although the CERAP was originally designed to assess risk for the 60 days post assessment, we “looked ahead” to see if the CERAP might be predictive of lower recurrence rates post 60 days. Table 9 presents the results of a 120-day recurrence analysis for the same children represented in Table 8, that is, children with Sequence A reports without protective custody. As Table 9 shows, for each year observed, there has

⁷ However, this figure may be slightly inflated due to possible recurrences occurring after January 1, 2002.

been a reduction in the recurrence rates relative to the previous year. The overall reduction from pre-implementation to 2001, the sixth year post implementation, is 53.77%.⁵

Table 9. 120-Day Recurrence for Sequence A Reports in Time Period, Excluding Cases Associated with Protective Custody Taken

	Total	Number Recurrent ^a	Crude Rate	% Reduction From Prior Year ^b
1995	104,146	3,315	3.18	
1996	90,959	2,471	2.72	14.47
1997	84,461	2,031	2.40	11.76
1998	79,895	1,891	2.37	01.25
1999	76,820	1,777	2.31	02.53
2000	78,412	1,560	1.99	13.85
2001 ^c	76,207	1,123	1.47	26.13

^aThe number recurrent is of children with an indicated report occurring within 120 days of their first Sequence A report in the time period observed.

^bPercentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.

^cRecurrence rates for 2001 may be incomplete as data for January 1, 2002 through January 29, 2002 were not available at the time of analysis.

Summary

Results of the six-year follow-up of the impact of the Child Endangerment Risk Assessment Protocol indicate that 60-day recurrence of maltreatment for at-risk children has decreased consistently from the year prior to first implementation of the CERAP (1995) - through 2001⁸. Overall, the 60-day recurrence of maltreatment decreased more than 50% over the seven-year period. However, the reduction in recurrence rates from year to year was more pronounced in the initial years after implementation than in the last few years. The crude recurrence rate for the year 2001 is based on incomplete data, thus, it cannot be said whether the sharper decrease in the rate of recurrence compared to the rate registered in 2000 reflects an actual decrease or is simply an artifact of the missing data. 120-day recurrence rates show a similar pattern of reduction over the course of the seven years.

Analyses of recurrence that have excluded all but Sequence A reports have done so assuming that those reports represent the first report in which a given child ever appears in the CANTS system. However, because sequence assignment is made at the household level, because a child can belong to multiple households, because the membership of any given household often changes within this population, and because the definition of who constitutes the same household over time is subject to judgment, children can and do appear on multiple Sequence A reports in multiple “households.” The fact that a child can appear on multiple Sequenced A reports implies that a child who is part of a Sequence A report may have actually been involved in one or more previous reports. Furthermore, even if the Sequence A report is verifiably the first ever for a child, the child may be re-reported as part of other Sequence A reports in other households.

A Sequence A re-report at the child level could mean one of at least two things: 1) the child is in a household that is different from that where she/he was at the prior report;

⁸ Recurrence figures for year 2001 are however, incomplete; data on potential recurrences 33 to 60 days after initial reports made November 2- November 30, 2001 were not available at the time of writing.

or 2) the records of the previous reports on the household are no longer available, thus, a re-report appears as the first report for the household. In either of these two cases there is a possibility that the household as it is now constituted has not been previously assessed by the CERAP. Unless the CERAP is expected to have a protective effect on the individual child even after she/he changes household, sequence A re-reports may more appropriately be counted as first reports within the context of the CERAP evaluation.

Proposal for Analyses at the Household Level

Recurrence analyses of Sequence A reports were originally conducted with the assumption that a Sequence A report represented the first report in which a given child ever appeared in the CANTS system. However, as noted, sequence assignment is made at the household level, and a child can belong to multiple households at a given time and over time. Therefore, children can and do appear on multiple Sequence A reports within the CANTS system. Furthermore, the CERAP is designed to assess household conditions. Even if we can be relatively satisfied that a given Sequence A report is the child's first, defining recurrence as a second appearance of a child within investigation records overlooks the fact that the child may be in a different household at the time of the later investigation. Given the existence of multiple Sequence A reports at the child level and given that the CERAP is designed to assess household conditions, recurrence might be more appropriately assessed at the household level.

Analysis of the items on the CERAP instrument (e.g., “Any member of the household ...” “There is reason to believe that the family ...” “The presence of domestic violence...”) underscores the fact that assessment is made at the household level.

Therefore, we argued in last year's report that it was most conceptually appropriate to evaluate the CERAP at the level of the entire household rather than at the level of each child. However, analyses presented in last year's report demonstrated that approaching the evaluation of the CERAP from the perspective of either child or household recurrence

yields similar results. We therefore discontinued analysis at the household level and do not present these analysis in this year's report.

We continue to feel that analysis at the household level is not only the most conceptually appropriate analytic strategy, but it is also the most analytically valid approach. However, our examination of DCFS administrative data present questions about the appropriate operational definition of "household." In last year's report we defined household on the basis of the State Central Registry Number (SCRNUM) assigned to the household – a common SCRNUM was taken as an indicator of a common household across time/investigations. DCFS defines "household" on the basis of a child-caretaker combination. Thus, a particular child-caretaker combination should carry the same SCRNUM across investigations. Similarly, the same SCRNUM should be associated with the same child-caretaker combination over time. However, application of this definition does not address the situation in which a mother and father are listed as caretakers in an initial investigation, separate and move to different homes, and both are later are associated with an investigation of their common child. Which parent-child combination, if either, now carries the previously assigned SCRNUM? Physical inspection of records by the authors further revealed at least one specific instance in which a common caretaker-child pair, identified by CANTS IDs, was assigned different SCRNUMs from one investigation to another.

For these reasons, we propose to conduct another set of analyses of the relationship of the CERAP to recurrence. In these analyses, the unit of observation will be the child-caretaker pair. On the basis of CANTS IDs, a record will be constructed representing a pairing of each caretaker with each child listed within an initial report. CANTS reports will then be examined for subsequent indicated allegations involving each of the originally-identified pairs at both 60 days and 120 days after the initial investigation.

**CERAP Recurrence Analysis at the
Household Level**

An Addendum to:

**Illinois Child Endangerment
Risk Assessment Protocol Evaluation:
Impact on Short-term
Recurrence Rates – Year Six**

April 11, 2002

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Short-term recurrence rates at the household level decreased over the six years following implementation of the CERAP. Table 1 presents the recurrence rates for the 336,362 households and their first investigation that occurred during the seven-year time period observed. As the table shows, there has been a consistent decrease in the recurrence rates over the seven-year period. Overall, the percentage reduction in recurrence from 1995 to 2001 was 59.14%⁹.

Table 1. 60-Day Indicated Re-Reports for Household’s First Report in Time Period: Indicated Re-Reports Relative to Total Number of First Reports

Year	Total	Number Recurrent ^a	Crude Rate (%)	% Reduction From Prior Year ^b
1995	63439	1767	2.79	
1996	51514	1024	1.99	28.67
1997	48097	865	1.80	9.55
1998	44902	775	1.73	3.89
1999	43063	664	1.54	10.98
2000 ^c	43069	603	1.40	9.09
2001 ^d	42278	481	1.14	18.57

^aThe number recurrent is of children with an indicated report occurring within 60 days of their first report in the time period observed.

^bPercentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.

^cNote that both the number recurrent and the crude rate in 2000 differ from those of the previous report. This is because the denominator, first reports, represents all first reports through November 30, 2000. Complete data for the numerator, number recurrent, representing recurrences on December 1, 2000 through January 29, 2001 was not available at the time of the previous report.

^dRecurrence rates for 2001 may be incomplete as data for January 1, 2002 through January 29, 2002 were not available.

¹This figure may be slightly inflated due to possible recurrences occurring after December 31, 2001.

We next limited analyses to only Sequence A household reports. These 309,469 households are the subject of the remainder of analyses presented. The 60-day recurrence rates during the seven-year observation period for these households are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. 60-Day Indicated Re-Reports for Household's First Sequence A Report in Time Period: Indicated Re-Reports Relative to Total Number of First Reports

Year	Total	Number Recurrent ^a	Crude Rate (%)	% Reduction From Prior Year ^b
1995	49476	976	1.97	
1996	45380	759	1.67	15.21
1997	44845	759	1.69	-1.19
1998	43042	718	1.67	1.44
1999	42113	645	1.53	8.19
2000 ^c	42603	594	1.39	8.97
2001 ^d	42010	477	1.14	18.56

^aThe number recurrent is of children with an indicated report occurring within 60 days of their Sequence A report in the time period observed.

^bPercentage changes represent the percentage change in percentages, not the raw difference from one percentage to another.

^cNote that both the number recurrent and the crude rate in 2000 differ from those of the previous report. This is because the denominator, first reports, represents all first reports through November 30, 2000. Complete data for the numerator, number recurrent, representing recurrences on December 1, 2000 through January 29, 2001 was not available at the time of the previous report.

^dRecurrence rates for 2001 may be incomplete as data for January 1, 2002 through January 29, 2002 were not available.

Summary

The overall pattern of short-term recurrence at the household level is similar to the pattern found when the analysis is done at the child level, that is, for all first reports in the time period. However, the pattern changes when looking only at Sequence A first reports. As can be seen in Table 2, the household recurrence rate decreases from 1995 to 1996, remains flat from 1996 to 1998, then noticeably declines in 1999 and 2000 compared to the previous years. (Because the recurrence rate for the year 2001 is based on incomplete data, it is premature to make any conclusions since 2000.) Overall, the percentage reduction from 1995 to 2001 is 42.44%.¹⁰

Our analysis of recurrence at the level of the household level is an attempt to examine the effect of the CERAP implementation on recurrence at the same conceptual level at which the CERAP was constructed and is administered. However, our preliminary efforts leave a number of issues unresolved. First, analysis at the household level assumes that the composition of the household remains relatively constant from the first to the second report. It does not seem inconceivable to expect that the composition of the household might change as a result of the initial investigation. There might be other factors that interact with the event of the initial investigation that propel changes in the composition and/or dynamics of the household, which in turn may have positive or negative effects on the risks for the children at a given time. It is necessary to find out the proportion of households that change composition over a given period of time and take those changes into account when computing recurrence rates. At that point the question becomes: How do we evaluate the effect of the CERAP on risk within a household when the composition of that household has changed between report dates?

Another issue that remains troublesome is the uncertainty in the definition of “household” and the degree to which household membership and common SCRNUM overlaps. Generally, DCFS defines a household in terms of caretaker-child

¹⁰This figure may be slightly inflated due to possible recurrences occurring after December 31, 2001.

constellations. Thus, a household reported for a second time would retain the same SCRNUM and be given a sequence code of B if the investigation revealed the same caretakers and children to be members of that household at both times. However, our examination of the data revealed that a number of common caretaker-child pairs had multiple SCRNUMs with multiple Sequence A reports. Therefore using SCRNUM as the indicator of a “household” and only coding as a recurrence for that household those subsequent investigations in which the same SCRNUM appeared potentially undercounts household recurrences. The issue remains and must be resolved whether caretakers and children who are part of one household in which the CERAP is administered should be counted as part of a “recurrence” when they are technically labeled as part of a different household. Likewise, should we, as we have done in this and every previous CERAP recurrence analysis, count as recurrences child reports that are associated with different SCRNUMs? Relative to the potential undercounting across common SCRNUMs, counting recurrence across common child ID numbers but not taking into account changes across SCRNUMs may result in a kind of overcounting of recurrence thereby underestimating the ability of the CERAP assess household risk.

In the year six CERAP child level recurrence evaluation, we proposed an analysis that we believe most closely approximates the conceptual level at which the CERAP is intended to be used. We proposed that the recurrence of maltreatment at the level of the child-caretaker pair is the most appropriate level to investigate the effects of CERAP. The child-caretaker pair most closely approximates the conceptual “household” notion evaluated with the CERAP. These analyses will be presented Summer, 2002.
