



Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation Phone Conference Agenda



November 28, 2018

12PM/11CT

Discussion

- **Welcome and Announcements – Everyone is invited!**
- **Check the listings on the website to ensure your program information is up to date and correct for the quarterly report. If you need to add or change anything email Lyndi Bradley at lbradley2@fsu.edu**
- **Questions from Directors**

Reminder—The New Supervised Visitation Manual is available through the Clearinghouse and can be downloaded through this link:

<https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/clearinghouse/manuals-and-materials/supervised-visitation/>

Reminder—The New 2018 Child Sexual Abuse Referrals Manual is available through the Clearinghouse and can be downloaded through this link:

<https://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/new-2018-child-sexual-abuse-referrals-manual-for-providers/>

**The Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation
Annual Report:
Supervised Visitation Database
Case and Client Statistical Analysis**

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Case and Client Statistical Analysis Results 10/1/2017 to 9/30/2018

Cases: 2,204 Clients: 8,810 Services: 33,554

In this report we present the results of the annual Clearinghouse on Supervised Visitation's Database Case and Client Analysis. This report covers October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018, the 12 months since the last report. A total of 36 supervised visitation programs in Florida contributed information to the database during this time span.

For the year, from 10/1/2017 to 9/30/2018, the total number of documented cases was 2,204, the number of clients served was 8,810 (3,793 children, 2,643 visitors, 2,374 custodians/others), and the number of services provided was 33,554. This is the number of completed or terminated services only, and does not include intake sessions, scheduled but cancelled services or no-shows.

The amount of missing data has *continued to decline* over the last five years, probably due to Institute training on the database, periodic reminders to programs to enter all data correctly, and requirements within the database to enter specific information before being allowed to move forward.

Percent vs. Valid Percent - The Percent shown in each table is the percent of the total number of cases showing one particular answer, factoring in any cases for which the data is missing or is zero. The Valid Percent is the percent of the total number of cases showing one particular answer but *not including* any cases with blank cells or missing data. If there are no missing data for a particular variable, then the Percent and Valid Percent will be identical.

Referral Source

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid Dependency Case	1,565	71.0	71.0
DV Injunction	331	15.0	15.0
Dissolution of Marriage	198	9.0	9.0
Never Married / Paternity	66	3.0	3.0
Criminal Case	2	.00005	.00005
Self-Referred	22	1.0	1.0
Other	20	1.0	1.0
Total	2,204	100	100

In the database, there are seven options for the variable Referral Source. This is a mandatory variable, in that database users cannot continue until this information is inserted. For the most part, the trends have remained steady as Dependency Court continues to be the most common referral source. Domestic Violence Injunctions account for the next largest source of referrals and rose slightly compared to 2016/17.

Reason for Referral Condensed

Grouped - Reason for Referral

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Child Abuse / Neglect	427	19.0	19.0
Domestic Violence	796	36.1	36.1
Parental Substance Abuse	771	35.0	35.0
Parental Mental Health	154	7.0	7.0
Parental Criminal Activity	22	1.0	1.0
Other Parental Misconduct	19	1.0	1.0
Other	15	.9	.9
Total	2,204	100.0	100.0

For each case, multiple reasons can be cited for the referral to supervised visitation. However, the database user is required to enter the primary reason for the referral. The percentage of DV referrals stayed fairly constant from the previous year. Also of note, the percentage of Parental Substance Abuse cases rose from 29% in 2014, to 33% in 2015, to 32.1% in 2016, to 34.0% in 2017 and is now at 35%. **Clearly substance abuse is a growing issue of great concern.** The percentage of Child Abuse/Neglect cases fell from 21.6% in 2016, to 20% in 2017, and finally to 19% this year. It is possible that more centers are identifying one factor behind child abuse/neglect may be substance abuse Remember that this is the *Primary Reason for Referral* and may reflect only the main issue of the case as noted in the Referral document.

Reasons for Referral

Year	Substance Abuse	Domestic Violence	Mental Health Issues
2016	32%	36%	6.4%
2017	34%	36%	7%
2018	35%	35%	7%

Substance Abuse issues continue to increase at programs.

Additional Allegations

Additional Case Allegations

	Frequency	% of all cases
Valid		
Child Abuse / Neglect Issues	353	18.0
Domestic Violence	510	26.0
Parental Substance Abuse	471	24.0
Parental Mental Health Issues	295	15.0
Parental Criminal Activity	118	6.0
Other Parental Misconduct	216	11.0
Fear of Abduction	107	
Prolonged Parent Absence	82	
Undermining Custodial Parent	23	
Pornography	4	
Other	17	.06
Total	1,980	100.0

The table above lists the allegations noted in addition to the primary allegation or reason for referral. As many items as needed may be checked for each case. While 36% of all cases this year were referred to supervised visitation primarily for domestic violence, 26% of the remaining cases listed domestic violence as an additional allegation. In addition, while roughly 35% of cases were referred primarily for Parental Substance Abuse, 24% of the remaining cases alleged that Parental Substance Abuse was an additional issue in the case. Substance Abuse is clearly on the rise as a comorbid issue in supervised visitation cases.

Primary Service Requested

This chart identifies the primary service for which the client was referred. The most common reason for referral remains Supervised Visitation followed by

Monitored Exchange. Most clients also receive parent education and assistance as a secondary service.

Primary Service Requested

	Frequency	Percent
Valid		
Monitored Exchange	127	6.0
Parenting Ed Svcs	170	8.0
Supervised Visitation	1,890	86.4
Therapeutic Supervision	8	.3
Additional Service Only	9	.3
Total	2,204	100.0

Description of Services

Services Provided 10/1/2017 – 9/30/2018

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid			
Monitored Exchange	1,673	5.4	5.4
Supervised Visitation	31,609	94.2	94.w
Intake/Additional Svc.	80	.002	.002
SV Phone/Internet Service	70	.002	.002
Therapeutic Visitation	122	.45	.55
Total	33,554		100.0

The above chart identifies the distribution of service types provided to clients. The most common service remains Supervised Visitation followed by Monitored Exchange. Most clients receiving Supervised Visitation service also receive Parent Education as a secondary service. Note that Supervised Internet services are on the rise, although still a small percent of overall services.

Person Providing Service

Person Providing Service

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Paid Staff	30,064	89.6	93.5
	Intern	704	2.1	5.5
	Volunteer	365	1.3	1.0
	Total	31,133	93.0	100.0
Missing	System	2,421	7.0	
Total		33,554	100.0	

Paid staff members continue to be the main provider of services in Florida’s supervised visitation centers, followed by interns, and last, volunteers. After several years of intern/volunteer use rising, this year it fell 3%.

Child’s Gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Female	1,895	50.0	50.0
Male	1,896	50.0	50.0
Unknown	2	.0001	100.0
Total	3,793		

As in previous years, the number of females and males is even.

Child's Race

Child's Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	2,024	53	54
	Hispanic	449	12	12
	Black	856	23	23
	Asian / Pacific Islander	5	.013	.013
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	36	1	1
	Two or More Races	375	10	10
	Total	3,745		
Missing	48	1		
Total	3,793	100.0	100.0	

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 78% of the U.S. self-reports as white, 16.7% as black, and 23% as Hispanic (some people choose more than one race.) In comparison, blacks appear to be generally over-represented while whites and Hispanics are underrepresented as supervised visitation center clients. Compared to the previous year, there was a 3% increase in both Hispanic children and those identifying as of two or more races. This was offset by a 3% drop in white children and a 1% drop in black children.

Child's Age

Child's Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	0~3	1,387	36.8	37.2
	4~6	945	24.9	25.8
	7~9	575	15.2	15.4
	10~12	473	12.5	12.5
	13~15	241	6.4	6.4
	16+	104	2.5	2.7
Total		3,725	98.3	
Missing	System	68	1.7	
Total		3,793	100.00	100.0

More than 75% of children at visits are under age 10, with a vast majority age 6 and under (62%).

Parents' Marital Status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Unmarried	2,529	66.7	66.7
Married	462	12.2	12.2
Separated	393	10.4	10.4
Divorced	321	8.5	8.5
Unknown	88	2.1	2.1
Total	3,793	100.0	100.0

According to the collected data, a larger percentage of parents receiving Supervised Visitation services were never married to each other, and this percentage rose considerably from 45% in 2015 to 65% in 2016 and continues to hold fairly steady at 67% in 2017 and 66.7% in 2018.

Visitor Gender

The following data represents information on the *primary* visitor in the case. The Visitor is normally someone who does not have custody of the child, but the person with whom the child will have supervised visits.

Primary Visitor's Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Female	1,322	60.0	60.0
	Male	880	40.0	40.0
	Total	2,641	100.0	100.0
Missing	System	2	.008	
Total		2,204	100.0	

In the last decade, men and women were almost equally represented as visitors participating in supervised visits. Since 2014 the percentage of women has increased steadily to 60% in 2018. was approximately 10% points higher over the two years previous to 2017, this year's numbers have held fairly steady. There were 439 additional visitors served by the centers for a total of 2,643 visitors served. Of the additional 439 visitors, 254 were women and 185 were men. Additional visitors may include another parent, step parents, siblings, and grandparents, among others. However, if both parents are non-custodial visitors, we urge sites to establish a separate case for each.

Visitor Race

Primary Visitor's Race

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	1,345	61.1	61.1
	Hispanic	324	14.7	14.7
	Black	465	21.1	21.1
	Asian / Pacific Islander	6	.2	.2
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	14	.6	.6
	Two or More Races	42	1.9	1.9
	Other	4	.2	.2
	Total	2,200	99.8	100.0
Missing	4	.2		
Total	2,204	100.0		

The majority of primary visitors continues to be white. Last year there were almost twice as many black visitors as Hispanic visitors, but in 2018 the ratio is closer to 2:3. The percentage of visitors claiming Asian /Pacific Islander or American Indian / Alaska native has risen slightly as has the number of American Indian/Alaska Natives. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 78% of the U.S. self-reports as white, 16.7% as black, and 23% as Hispanic (some people choose more than one race.) As visitors, Blacks are somewhat overrepresented compared to their general population, Hispanics are somewhat underrepresented as are Caucasians/Whites.

Visitor Relationship to Child

By far, the most common primary visitor was a parent to the child client (96-98%). As in all previous years (with the exception of 2011) mothers showed higher representation as visitors than fathers. Women are the most common head of single parent households and therefore, more susceptible to poverty and the issues that accompany it. It is not surprising that women are the most common visitor in Dependency cases and fathers are the most common visitors in cases referred via Domestic Violence sources.

Primary Visitor's Relationship to Child - Grouped

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	1,319	59.8	59.9
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	861	39.4	39.4
	Grandparent	13	.5	.5
	Sibling	1	.05	.05
	Other Family Member	4	.1	.1
	Non-Relative Caregiver	1	.05	.05
	Other	0		
	Total	2,199	99.9	100.0
Missing	System	5	.1	
Total		2,204	100.0	

The following chart represents the 439 additional visitors to the primary visitors. More than 70% are parents demonstrating cases wherein both parents are non-custodial visitors. The Institute encourages database users to separate those cases into two different cases, one for each parent. This way, with each parent categorized as a primary visitor, we can more accurately report all parent data in A&V reports.

Other Visitor's Relationship to Child - Grouped

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	158	36.1	36.4
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	149	34.0	34.3
	Grandparent	43	9.8	9.8
	Sibling	14	3.1	3.1
	Other Family Member	28	6.4	6.4
	Non-Relative	42	9.6	9.6
	Other	2	.4	.4
	Total	436	99.4	100.0
Missing	System	3	.6	
Total		439	100.0	

Visitor Annual Income

Visitor Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Less than 10,000	1,331	59.7	60.0
10,000 - 19,000	415	19.0	19.0
20,000 - 29,000	302	14.0	14.0
30,000 - 39,000	70	3.0	3.0
40,000 and above	78	4.0	4.0
Total	2,196	99.7	100.0
Unknown	8	.3	
Total	2,204	100.0	

As in previous years, the majority of visitors are below the poverty level – approximately 79% below \$20,000 and perhaps as much as 93% if the family poverty line is used (includes less than \$29,000.) The number of visitors in the lowest category rose from 54.9% last year, to almost 60% in 2018.

Custodian Gender

The following data represents information on the *primary* custodian in the case.

Custodian Gender				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Female	1,593	72.2	80.4
	Male	356	16.3	18.0
	Unknown	33	1.5	1.6
	Total	1,982	90.0	100.0
Missing	System	222	10.0	
Total		2,204	100.0	

Clearly women were, by far, the most common custodian, the person having legal custody of the child client. This may be in part due to the fact that most Foster Parents are listed as females.

Custodian Race

Custodian Race				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	White	1,215	55.2	63.4
	Hispanic	263	12.0	13.7
	Black	362	16.4	18.9
	Asian / Pacific Islander	7	.3	.4
	Am. Indian / Alaska Native	9	.4	.5
	Two or More Races	51	2.3	2.6
	Other	10	.4	.5
	Total	1,917	87.0	100.0
Missing		287	13.0	
Total		2,204	100.0	

The majority of the primary custodians continue to be white. However, this year, the number of custodians identifying as white decreased slightly from 59% to 55% while the number identifying as Hispanic increased about 2%.

Custodian Relationship to Child

Custodian's Relation to Child - Grouped

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Mother (Biological, adoptive, or step)	438	19.9	22.0
	Father (Biological, adoptive, or step)	233	10.6	11.7
	Grandparent	268	12.7	13.5
	Sibling	3	.1	.1
	Foster Parent	685	31.1	34.4
	Other Family Member	177	8.0	8.9
	Non-relative Caregiver	109	4.9	5.5
	Other	31	1.4	1.6
	Group Home	45	2.0	2.3
	Total	1,989	90.7	100.0
Missing	System	215	9.3	
Total		2,204	100.0	

Previously, the most common custodian was a parent to the child client (38.2%) but it has dropped from last year to 33% in 2018. An increase is represented in the number of Foster Parents (up 1%) and Grandparents (up 2%.) Mothers have significantly higher representation as custodians than do fathers – almost twice as many mothers as fathers. This may be due to the fact that mothers are more likely to have original custody of children. Following foster parents, parents and then grandparents were the most common custodians.

Custodian Income

Custodian Income

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent

Less than 10,000	227	10.3	11.5
10,000 - 19,000	397	18.1	20.2
20,000 - 29,000	556	25.2	28.3
30,000 - 39,000	335	15.2	17.0
40,000 and above	452	20.5	23.0
Total	1,967	89.4	100.0
Unknown	237	10.6	
Total	2,204	100.0	

Because many programs and case managers do not have access to this information, there is some missing data in regard to custodian income. However, this reporting year, database users made a concerted effort to acquire this information as required. The number of custodians in the lowest income level has decreased significantly from 17.9% in 2017 to 11.5% in 2018. Most of the gains were in the \$40k or higher category, up from \$18.7% to 23%. With the economy continuing to grow, this may reflect the income movement up the ladder. It appears that almost 32% of the custodians earn less than \$20,000 per year, down from about 40% last year. Still, with federally designated poverty levels (Feb. 2018) at \$25,100 for a family of four, a significant number of clients fall beneath the poverty threshold. Also, 60% percent of custodians fall below the 125% of poverty level mark.

Domestic Violence Reported in Referral

DV Yes or No

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	937	42.5
	No	1,267	57.5
Total		2,204	100.0

In each case, the person entering data is required to note whether domestic violence (DV) was a component of or was present in the case upon intake (according to the referral,) and 42.5% indicated Yes. This represents a 1% increase over last year.

Critical Incidents: Serious Disruptions in Service

A *Critical Incident* is a serious disruption in service: an event that occurred before, during, or immediately after the service that was so severe as to require the cancellation or termination of the service or the removal of the offending party from the premises.

Year	Critical Incident Cases
2014	90 (3.4% of all cases)
2015	151 (6.2% of all cases)
2016	202 (9.3% of all cases)
2017	239 (10.7% of all cases)
2018	193 (8.7% of all cases)

From 2014 to 2017, the number of cases with critical incidents has risen consistently from 90 to 239 or from 3.4% to 10.7% of all cases. This may be in part due to the researchers redefining "critical incident" to include *any serious disruption of services* following the 2014 reporting year. This year, however, the number of cases with a critical incident has fallen from 10.7% of cases in 2017, to 8.7% of cases in 2018. If this is a new trend or an anomaly remains to be seen, but it is certainly a welcome development. As the Institute continues to

emphasize the need for enhanced safety measures and consistently offers support and training on the issue of safety in supervised visitation, this drop is hopefully a positive result of those efforts.

While the overall percentage of incidents per total number of services reported is still fairly low, it is evident through discussions that these events are often underreported, especially if the incident has a smooth outcome. The number should also represent a commendation to the well-trained staff of Florida's SVCs who are quite successful in preventing critical incidents from occurring as well as handling them safely and quickly. Those centers with proper security measure in place often have more successful outcomes in cases of critical incidents.

But a rise in the number of cases with critical incidents is concerning and may be quite dangerous. An intoxicated and angry visitor can pose a substantial threat not only to those present for the visit but also anyone else in the office, agency, or vicinity of the visit. Proper security measures are always necessary to prevent potential tragedies from occurring.

Number of cases with Critical Incidents: 193 (8.7% of all cases)

Total number of Critical Incidents: 228 (.68% of all services)

Number of Incidents	Type of Incident
7	Visitor threatened the staff
12	Visitor showed favoritism
9	Visitor threatened other adult
7	Visitor is arrested on-site
6	Child accidentally injured
102	Visitor refused to follow the staff's redirection
4	Visitor physically harmed child
7	Visitor threatened child
30	Visitor came to the visit intoxicated
6	Visitor used corporal punishment

4	Visitor became ill
18	Child refused to participate
8	Child abuse observed
3	Child became ill
1	Custodian refused direction
0	Custodian threatened staff
0	Act of God
4	Other
228	Total

Reports from 2014-2017 indicated a progressive increase in critical incidents monitored by supervised visitation personnel with the leading causes including: visitors ignoring redirection, visitors arriving intoxicated, and the child refusing to participate. Data from 2018 continues this trend with visitors ignoring direction being the most prominent issue. The number of visitor arriving intoxicated rose slightly. Critical Incident outcomes are listed below. These are the actions taken by programs following an incident. Several items may be checked for each incident. Of note is the fact that law enforcement or emergency personnel were called 82 times.

Critical Incident Outcomes

Below are the noted actions taken in each case experiencing a critical incident. Several action might have been taken for a particular incident, therefore allowing for a higher number of actions than incidents themselves.

#	Result
78	Case worker was notified
75	Incident report was written
198	Incident was discussed with the violator
21	No action taken
31	Police/sheriff/emergency personnel were called

84	Service Terminated
12	Staff called abuse hotline (1-800-96-ABUSE)
9	Violator was arrested
0	Case Closed due to Critical Incident
16	Other

Parties Responsible for Cancellation of Visit

Scheduled visits are often cancelled before they can take place. Below is a cumulative list of those responsible for cancelling services. Most often, the visit is cancelled by the visitor for various reasons.

Party responsible	Number of Times
Visitor	4,095
Custodian (Not Foster Parent)	382
Foster Parent	310
DCF/CBC	871
SV Program	414
Other	397
Missing	2,926
Total	9,395

Reasons for cancellation are varied and listed below. Most often, no reason is given, especially when cancellation messages are left on center voicemail. In addition, one or more parties are often reported as "No Show" for a service, meaning they did not officially cancel and did not show up for the scheduled appointment time. **There were 4,509 No Shows.** Also of note is the number of services **cancelled for Non-Confirmation - 381.** Many sites are requiring confirmation to ensure their program resources are not wasted on no-shows.

Reason for Cancellation of Scheduled Service	Number of Times
Conflicting Appointment	291
Transportation	595
Work	377
None Given	2,252
Illness	854
Other	143
Holidays	147
Weather	112
Death	26
Child's Activities	105
Incarceration	49
Vacation	181
Change in Court Order	86
Child Refusal to Visit	49
Staff Resources Unavailable	16
Other Emergency	250
Non-Confirmation	381
Total	5,914
Missing	3,481
Total	9,395

Reasons for Case Closure

In the 2017-2018 analysis period, 1,095 cases were closed. It is noteworthy that centers often forget to close cases, especially if clients simply stop coming over time. The Institute has made an effort to remind centers to review and close cases no longer active.

	Frequency	
Excessive No-shows/cancellations	380	
Completion of Court Ordered Term of Service	100	
Moved to unsupervised visits (per court order)	178	
Termination of Parental Rights or Court Ordered Cessation of Visits	55	
Loss of Contact with Visitor or Custodian	83	
Family Re-unified	86	
Refusal of Child to Visit	14	
SVP Program's time or visit limit reached	16	
Safety concerns	42	
Termination for Violation of Other Rules	12	
Excessive demands on program resources	5	
Critical Incidents	5	
Refusal to pay fees	5	
Other (please specify)	23	
Total	1,004	

Case Closures Due to Safety Reasons

Year	Case Closures
2015	59
2016	52
2017	55
2018	42

The number of cases closed for safety reasons remains at 4%.

Additional Closure Variables

Since the 2014 reporting year, additional closing variables have been part of the database. Centers were asked to report on substance abuse and arrests for violent crime before, during, and after the completion of services. If the center answered yes, they were provided the opportunity to expand on their information. Below is the summary of this data from the 1,004 cases closed this year and the percentage of closed cases the numbers represent.

Substance Abuse (SA)

	Yes	% of closed cases indicating S/A was present	No	Unknown
SA Present	28	28.4% of cases closed	71	
	6		8	
SA Prior to Services	26	94% of SA Cases	11	580
	8		9	
SA While Case was Open	31	11% of SA Cases	12	650
			9	
SA During a Service	6	2% of SA Cases	35	763
SA Known After Services	3	1% of SA Cases	19	782

About 35% of clients came to supervised visitation this year with substance abuse as their primary issue. Twenty-four percent of new cases also listed substance abuse as an additional allegation. The actual number may be higher as substance abuse is known to be severely underreported. Some substance abuse issues continue during the SV services, sometimes even during a service.

It appears that a majority of the substance abuse in cases occurs before SV services and might in fact contribute to a client's placement in an SV program. On the bright side, data show that during services, substance abuse may be, at least for a time, decreasing. Note that many programs do not have the resources available to track clients after they leave.

Arrests for Violent Crime (AVC):

	Yes	% of closed cases indicating AVC was present	No	Unknown
Arrests for Violent Crime	229	23% of cases closed	77 5	
AVC Prior to Services	214	93% of AVC cases	11 1	624
AVC While Case was Open	14	6% of AVC cases	15 1	639
AVC During a Service	7	3% of AVC cases	50	747
AVC Known After Services	4	2% of AVC cases	37	767

In the over 1,000 cases that programs closed in the 2017-2018 year, almost 23% of cases included a client who had been previously arrested for a violent crime. Fortunately, the percentage of those perpetrators becoming violent during supervised visitation services is low. While the number of known offenses post services reported is only 4, this may be due to the fact that many centers do not have access to records after their clients complete services. In addition, some centers do not have the time or funding to follow up with their clients post services.

Yet, previous data which included a review of client arrest records for two years post services did indicate a significant decrease in reported violent crimes. This may also be reflected in the decreasing numbers above as, based on previous Institute research, arrests for violence decrease during and after SV services.

Implications and Recommendations: Safety and Funding

Consistently for the past five reports, the gender of the children, the race/ethnicity of the families, and the income of the parents who use Florida's supervised visitation (SV) programs has remained constant.

However, as the Institute tracks the provision of supervised visitation services over the years, we again note the need for funding for safety personnel at supervised visitation programs in Florida, and we emphasize the increase in parental substance abuse as reasons for referral.

As we reported last year, the number of critical incidents reported at SV programs helps justify a call for security at programs. These incidents –serious disruptions in service – decreased a bit this year, yet an analysis of the descriptions of the incidents reveals potentially dangerous dynamics at programs: parents refusing to accept direction from staff, parents showing up at visits under the influence of drugs/alcohol, and parents threatening staff or other parents (among others). The presence of security personnel -- once a common sight at SV programs, but now a rare part of SV services because of chronic underfunding and visitations in case worker/agency settings – would no doubt make visitation safer across the state.

Achieving increased security presence at Florida's SV programs was a part of the call to the Florida Legislature in the 2008/2009 Report to the Florida Legislature (available at http://familyvio.csw.fsu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Final_Report_to_Legislature.pdf). Those recommendations, created by a statewide task force mandated by the legislature as part of Florida Statutes 753, have never been acted upon by the legislature (despite several individual legislators' attempts for such reform). Because of this, the recommended comprehensive Standards have not been enacted.

A related finding in this year's data analysis is **the increase in the number of cases sent to supervised visitation mainly because of a parent's substance abuse.** The data base captures the primary and the additional reasons that cases are

sent to SV. As more cases are sent primarily because of a parent's substance abuse, our SV data reflect national trends in individuals' struggles with addiction. The need for security at programs to keep vulnerable children and families, as well as staff and the surrounding community, is again demonstrated in this data.

The Institute list of Florida SV programs includes both non-profit and for-profit programs. There has never been a mechanism to monitor or certify any of these programs to ensure that they follow the current or recommended Standards. As in years past, the Institute will alert DCF and the Office of the State Courts Administrator to both the need for the implantation of standards statewide and increased funding, especially for onsite security personnel, to keep families safe at SV programs. The number of No-Shows is troubling because of the limited resources that exist for visitation services. **The Clearinghouse will identify programs that have a low no-show rate and make recommendations to other programs to try to reduce their rates.**

Overall, this annual report again indicates that cases are being referred to supervised visitation because of serious parental problems. DCF funds ongoing training for all programs in an attempt to augment safe practices for families and communities. However, there is much more work to be done to provide the support that these crucial programs need. **Safety measures need to be funded to ensure that these children and families are protected.**

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