



Briefing Report
Prevalence of Commercial Sexual
Exploitation of Children (CSEC)
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Issue:

There is a lack of systematic examination of the prevalence of the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) of youth that enter the Florida juvenile justice system. Quantitative analysis of the identification of juvenile “offenders” who are victims of commercial sexual exploitation is virtually non-existent. The current study aims to partially fill that gap by reporting on a multi-county commercial sexual exploitation of children identification pilot project with a comparatively large diverse sample of youth.

Highlighted Results:

The following bullets provide a brief synopsis of the analyses. Methodology, comprehensive results and detailed explanations follow below these highlights:

- 12% of the youth screened, using the pilot project tool: Shared Hope International’s *Intervene*, for potential commercial sexual exploitation of children (CSEC) by the pilot sites were ultimately verified by DCF as CSEC victims;
- 98% of the verified youth were female;
- 40% of the verified youth were verified as a result of DCF notification initiated by the pilot sites (illustrating effectiveness of the pilot project);
- 6% of all youth screened self-disclosed being a victim during the pilot project screening;
- DCF-verified CSEC victims were more likely to have alcohol and drug use history, twice as likely to have 3 or more prior DCF placements, and 2.7 times more likely to have over 5 instances of running away;
- Verified youth had extensive abuse histories compared to non-verified youth, including more physical abuse, greater likelihood of witnessing violence, and were 3.5 time more likely to have identified themselves as victims of sexual abuse.
- Additional policy recommendations include statewide expansion of CSEC screening, strict adherence to screening protocol, and increased efforts at identifying male CSEC victims.

Methodology:

We examine data from a tri-county pilot project implementing a screening tool for commercial sexual exploitation of children. Pilot sites included Miami-Dade, Broward, and Orange counties. Youth were initially screened using the validated Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (FDJJ) risk/needs assessment, the Positive Achievement Change Tool (C-PACT). Youth with an indication of a history of running away or getting kicked out of the home and not returning for over 24 hours were intended to receive an additional screening by mental health staff using the pilot project screening tool: Shared Hope International's *Intervene*. The pilot project data used in this analysis were collected from:

Broward County: October 2012 through August 2013

Miami-Dade County: February 2013 through August 2013

Orange County: March 2013 through August 2013

Youth screened multiple times at the same pilot site were included only one time in this analysis. In total, there were 353 individual youth screened using the second tier pilot screening tool, *Intervene*. Data for this briefing include the C-PACT information closest to the pilot project screening, the information from the pilot project screening, and information from the Department of Children and Families (DCF) on whether the youth was verified as a Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC) victim.

Comprehensive Results:

Table 1 shows the number of individual youth by gender screened in each pilot site. Female youth were 63% of the screened sample. The Broward site produced 62% of the data, followed by Miami-Dade (20%) then Orange (18%).

Table 1. CSEC Screened Youth per Pilot Site

	Female	Male	Total
Broward	128	92	220
Miami-Dade	56	13	69
Orange	39	25	64
Total	223	130	353

Of the 353 screenings, 4 of the youth were already DCF-verified as CSEC victims as per the FDJJ Juvenile Justice Information System (JJIS), meaning the staff already had information that the youth was a victim. Of the 353 screenings, 22 youth (6%) self-disclosed that they were being trafficked.

CSEC screening events can lead to several non-mutually exclusive outcomes. The youth can self-disclose that they are indeed a victim, the staff can place a call to the DCF Abuse Hotline based on information received during the screening, or the staff can choose not to call DCF if no CSEC indicators are evident. DCF can reject or accept calls based on their criteria to start an investigation,

and accepted calls can be verified through the investigation. Of the 353 screenings, DCF was called in 70 instances (19.8%). The call was accepted in 52 of those 70 instances (74% acceptance rate). 283 of the 353 screenings (80%) resulted in no call being made to DCF as the screener believed there was no evidence to initiate a call.

Of the 353 screenings 42 youth are currently verified as CSEC victims. This means that 11.9% of the youth that had a history of running away (the prerequisite for a screening) and were CSEC screened were ultimately verified by DCF as a CSEC victim. This is not to imply that 12% of juvenile offenders are CSEC victims, but of the juvenile offenders that had a history of running away and were screened, more than 1 in 10 were verified as victims (which is arguably a conservative estimate implying that staff made calls on all youth that should have had calls made, DCF accepted all calls they should have, and investigations verified all cases they should have).

Figure 1:

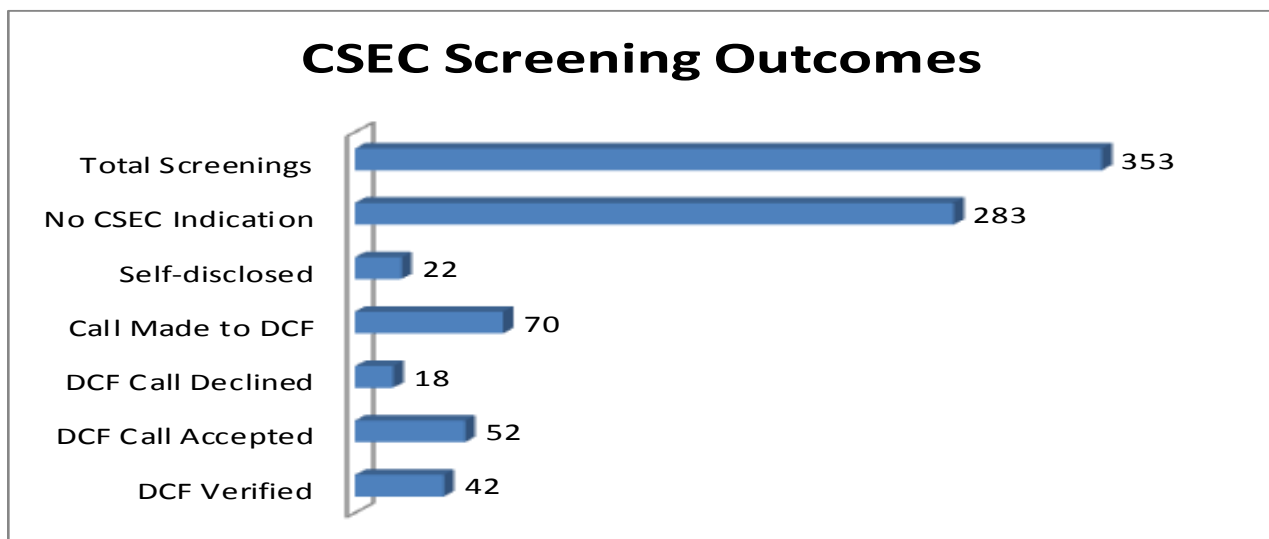


Figure 1 indicates that of the 353 screenings 42 youth were verified by DCF as CSEC victims. Central to the pilot project is whether the verification ***was a result of the pilot project screening***, or whether DCF investigated and verified the youth as a CSEC victim based on information initiated from some other source than the pilot site staff. The main goal of the pilot project was to examine whether a screening process could be implemented that would uncover potential CSEC victims and to notify the appropriate authority (DCF) for investigation. The current analysis used the date that DCF was called and the date of the pilot site screening to examine the proportion of the 42 verified youth that resulted from the pilot site screening. In 17 of the 42 cases the pilot site screen preceded the DCF notification, meaning the DCF call and investigation occurred after the pilot screening and can be considered to have been initiated as a result of the pilot project.

Figure 2 illustrates the 40% of verified CSEC victims uncovered by the pilot project initiation of a call to DCF. Whether the 25 youth verified in the circumstance where DCF was notified prior to the pilot screening would have been verified as a result of the pilot project is purely speculative. However, of

the 25 youth verified by non-pilot project information, 15 of the youth had no indication of CSEC according to the screening, and no call was made to DCF by the pilot site. Of the 42 verified CSEC victims, 41 (97.6%) were female and only 1 was male.

Figure 2:

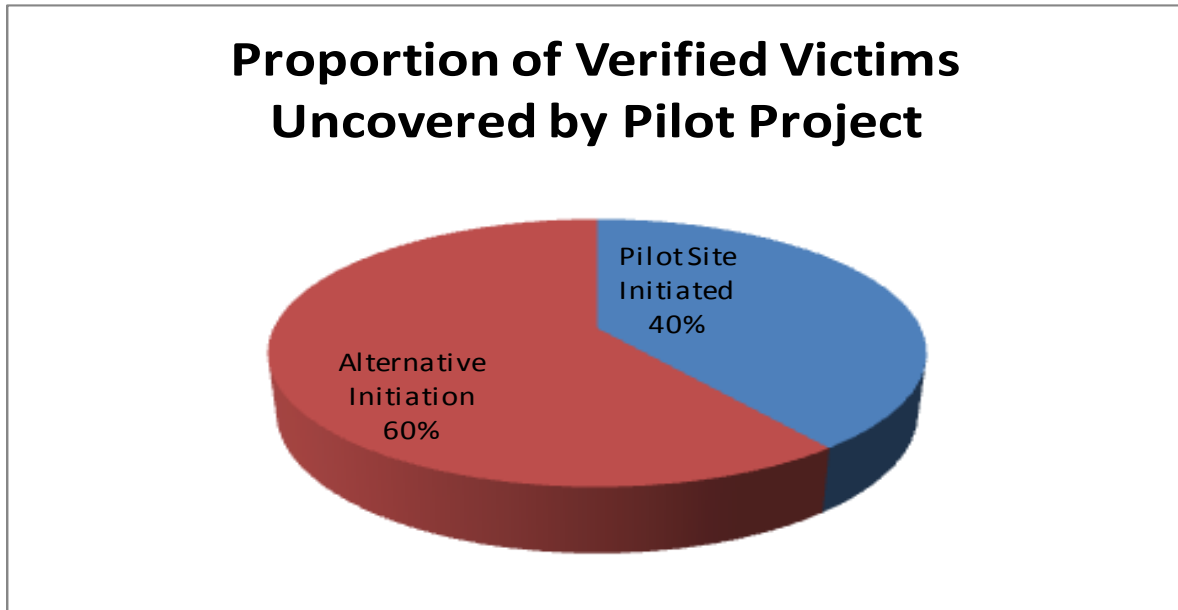


Figure 3 displays the race/ethnicity of the DCF-verified and the non-verified youth. Of the 42 youth verified as CSEC victims, 12 are White, 26 Black, and 4 Hispanic.

Figure 3.

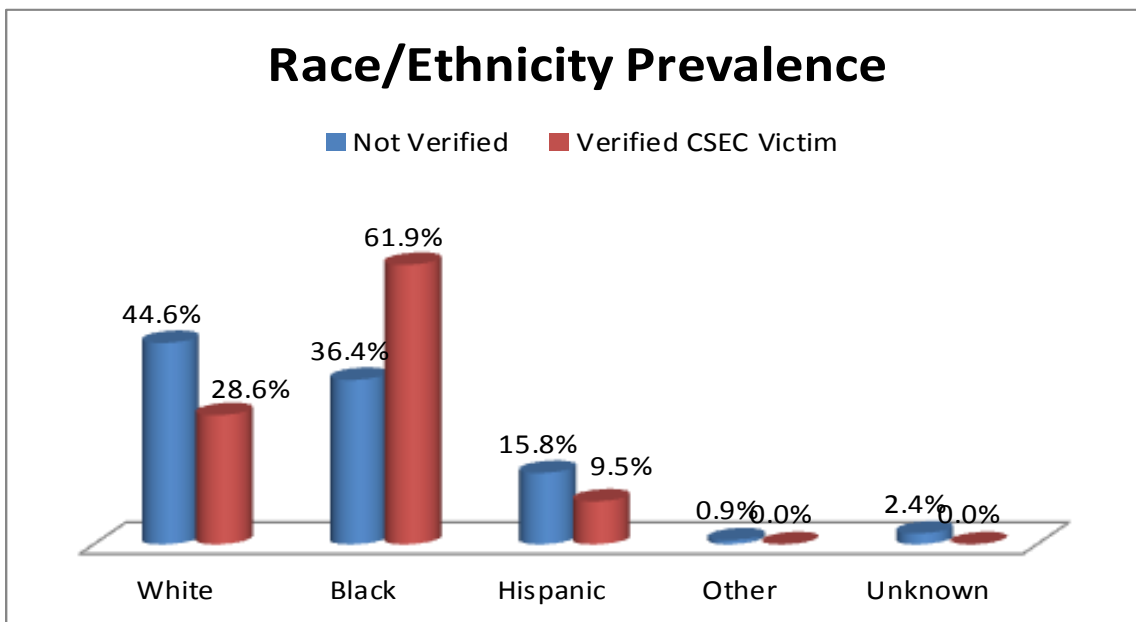


Figure 4 illustrates the extent of abuse history, according to the C-PACT assessment, for the 353 youth by whether the youth was a DCF-verified CSEC victim or not. As shown, the 42 verified youth are much more likely to have experienced each form of abuse, especially sexual abuse. Over 57% of the verified CSEC victims identified themselves as victims of sexual abuse, compared to 16.4% of the non-verified youth.

Figure 4.

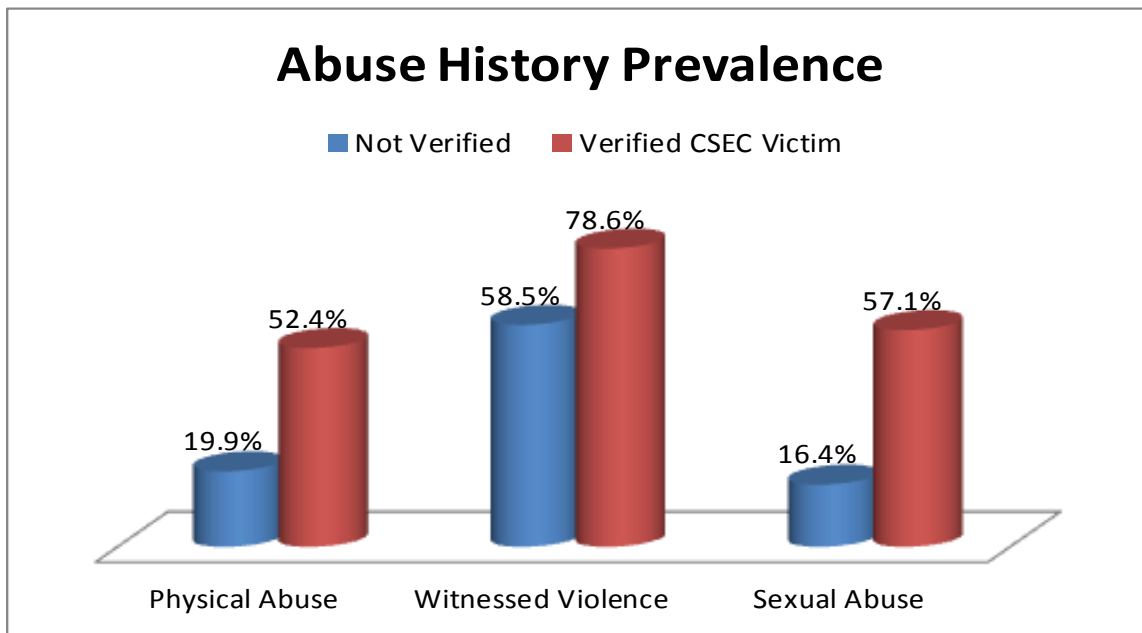
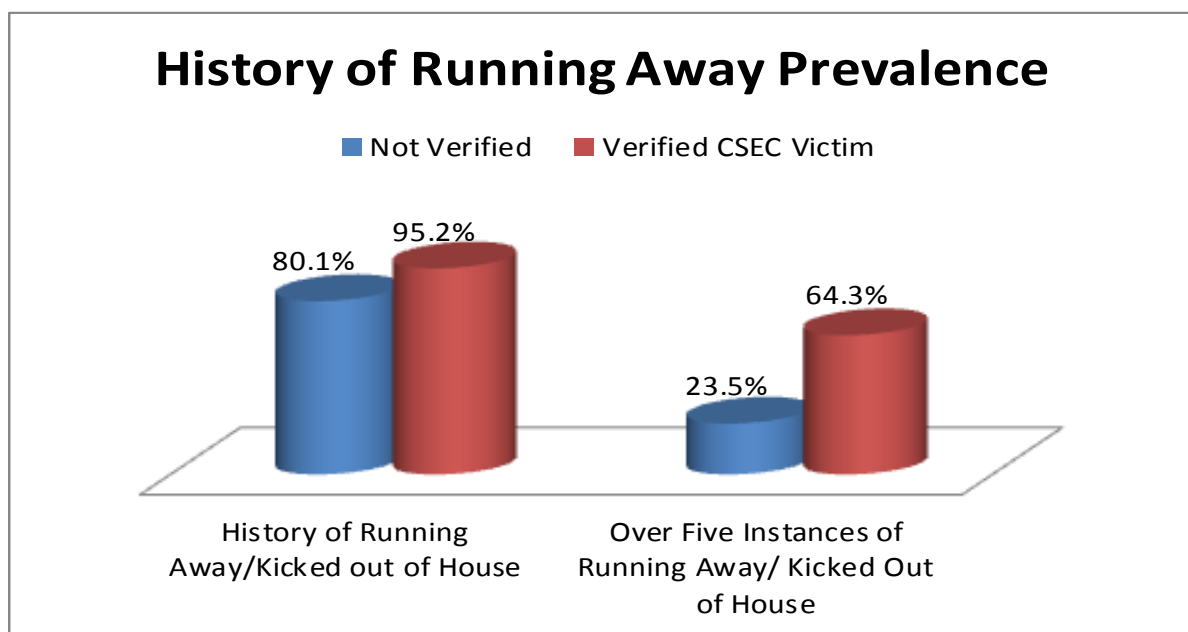


Figure 5.



Next, we examine the history of running away or getting kicked out of the home for over 24 hours, according to the C-PACT assessment, of the 353 youth comparing verified CSEC victims with non-verified youth. As seen in Figure 5, the vast majority of both groups had a history of running away/getting kicked out of the house, which is appropriate as it was a trigger for the pilot project screening interview. Still, over 95% of the verified CSEC victims had a history, compared to 80% of the non-verified youth. Put differently, only 4.8% (2 youth) of the verified CSEC victims did not have a history of running away. Perhaps more striking is the proportion of verified victims that had a history of over 5 instances of running away/getting kicked out of the house. Over 64% of the CSEC victims had such a history, compared to fewer than 24% of the non-verified youth.

Figure 6 illustrates the prevalence of a history of court-ordered or DCF voluntary out-of-home and shelter care placements exceeding 30 days for verified and non-verified youth. As shown, 30% of the non-verified youth had a history of DCF placement, while 52.4% of the verified CSEC victims had such a history. Again, examining the extremes further demonstrates the unique situation of CSEC victims, with over 21% of those youth having a history of 3 or more DCF placements compared to only 10% of the non-verified youth.

Figure 6.

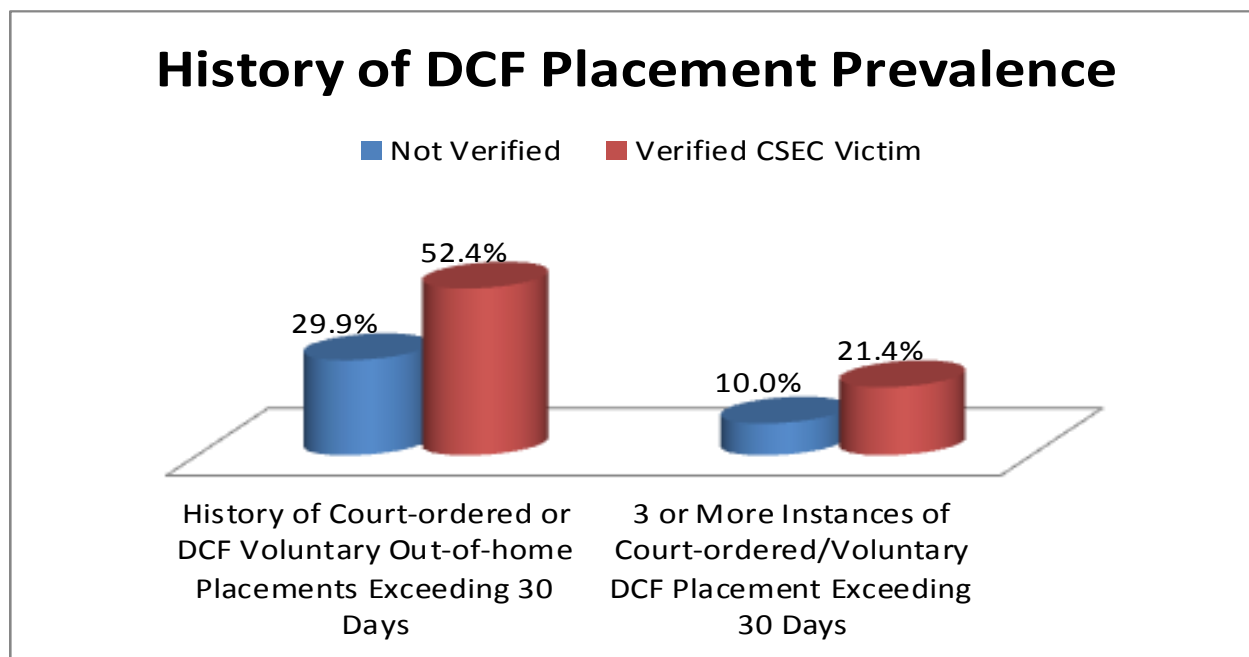
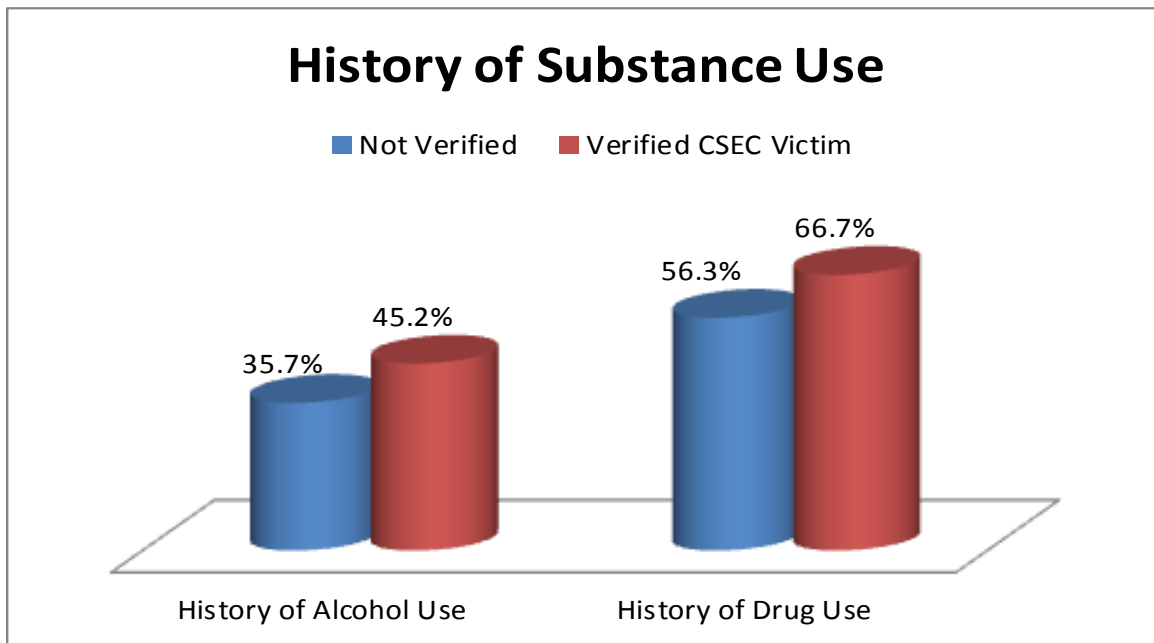


Figure 7 shows the prevalence of alcohol and drug use history of 353 youth. DCF-verified CSEC victims have higher prevalence rates of both past alcohol and drug use. Just over 2/3 of DCF-verified CSEC victims have a history of drug use.

Figure 7.



Implications:

Knowledge of the proportion of youth that enter the FDJJ system that are Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children victims is critical to providing appropriate services to youth. Prevalence rates related to this issue are essentially unknown. The FDJJ implemented a pilot project in three Juvenile Assessment Centers (JACs) in Broward, Miami-Dade, and Orange counties. The purpose of the pilot project was to implement a screening process that would help identify potential CSEC victims and notify DCF for potential investigation. 12% of the youth screened during the project period were verified as CSEC victims. While seemingly small, that percent is substantive and alarming considering 50,803 individual youth were referred to FDJJ during fiscal year 2012-13. Of the individual youth that were assessed with the PACT during fiscal year 2012-13, 23.3% had a history of running away or getting kicked out of the house where they did not return for over 24 hours, which was the initial trigger for CSEC screening for the pilot project. If 12% of those youth (as found in the pilot project) were verifiable CSEC victims, that would equate to 1,420 youth being victims that one year ($50,803 \times .233 \times .12 = 1,420$). There are, however, limitations to these estimates. During the pilot project, it was uncovered that not all youth with a history of running away were given the pilot project screening *Intervene*. The three sites used various methods, including professional judgment, to decide whether the youth really needed CSEC screening. Therefore, future studies must examine what characteristics differentiated a youth that had a history of running away that was not screened from one that was. We do know that males were disproportionately under-screened in terms of having a history of running away and not being screened for CSEC in the pilot sites.

This analysis did uncover striking differences between DCF-verified CSEC victims and non-verified youth. The verified youth were more likely to have alcohol and drug use history, twice as likely to

have 3 or more prior DCF placements, and 2.7 times more likely to have over 5 instances of running away. Verified youth had extensive abuse histories compared to non-verified youth, including more physical abuse, greater likelihood of witnessing violence, and were 3.5 times (350%) more likely to identify themselves as victims sexual abuse. The fact that 100% of verified CSEC victims did not report being sexually abused is indicative of these youth not always identifying that what has happened to them is sexual abuse.

Expansion of pilot sites or statewide implementation of a CSEC screening seems pertinent in light of the findings. A strict adherence to the protocol would allow for accurate examination of prevalence rates of CSEC victims among the juveniles referred to FDJJ. Ensuring all youth with a history of running away (for example) receive the follow-up CSEC screening would assist this endeavor. Once criteria for screening are firmly established, prevalence rates of CSEC victimization would be easier to ascertain and actual gender differences in victimization can be extrapolated. Additional screening items should be identified and added that addresses gang- and familial-controlled sex trafficking, domestic servitude, and labor trafficking to expand our understanding of child exploitation in increasingly nuanced ways.

The pilot project was successful at identifying youth that were potential CSEC victims and notifying the appropriate authority to conduct investigations. Future analyses should examine the risk/need profile differences between youth verified to be CSEC victims and the other screened youth. Perhaps identification of a unique constellation of risk and needs can lead to prevention efforts to reduce the prevalence of CSEC in Florida's juvenile population.