



CA Children's Administration

Report to the Legislature

Children's Services Annual Quality Assurance Report

Child Welfare Services
RCW 43.20A.870 and RCW 74.13.031(5)

January 31, 2010

Department of Social and Health Services
Children's Administration
Division of Quality Management and Accountability
Post Office Box 45042
Olympia, Washington 98504
(360) 902-7928
Fax: (360) 902-7903

Table of Contents

Executive Summary..... 3

Summary Status of Selected Activities 7

2009 Results

Safety

Child Protective Services (CPS) Referrals12

Children seen face-to-face by a social worker following
a referral accepted for investigation within mandated
time frames..... 13

Children who do not experience additional abuse14

Children who are free from abuse or neglect while in
out-of-home care 15

Foster homes receiving health and safety checks 16

Children visited every 30 days by their social worker.....17

Permanency

Children reunified within 12 months of placement 18

Children adopted within 24 months of placement 19

Length of stay for children in care 20

Children reentering care 21

African American and Native American children in care
more than two years..... 22

Children placed with relatives 23

Executive Summary

Protecting the children of Washington state from abuse and neglect is the Administration's top priority.

The Children's Administration Annual Quality Services Report is a retrospective review of how well the Administration achieved a series of performance standards during a given time frame.

Historically, this report would have covered the previous fiscal year in its entirety, in this case July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009. This report, while serving as the Fiscal Year 2009 document, includes a number of performance measures for which there was not an entire fiscal year data set available. Due to the Administration's continued implementation of the new Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System, FamLink, some fiscal year data was not available at the time of this report. The period reported for each measure is noted in the corresponding chart labels and calculation notes.

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration has the primary responsibility of protecting vulnerable children and helping to maintain family stability.

The Administration engages in practices, provides services and resources, and works collaboratively with communities in alignment with the DSHS mission to improve the safety and health of individuals, families, and communities by providing leadership and participating in partnerships.

The Administration maintains accountability to the legislature and the general public for its efforts to continually improve the child welfare system while recognizing that no government entity alone can ensure the safety of children.

We rely heavily upon community-based service providers, child serving agencies, faith communities, schools, and caring individuals to speak up on behalf of vulnerable children by reporting suspected maltreatment of children.

Only when every one of us becomes committed to the well-being of children and the health of our families and communities can real and lasting results be seen.

The Administration responds to numerous external mandates and implements internal assessments and practice improvement initiatives to continually better our quality of service to children and families.

This report, the 13th **Children's Services Annual Quality Assurance Report**, details performance outcome data in compliance with RCW 43.20A.870 and RCW 74.13.031(5), in order to demonstrate progress in the following specific service areas:

Child Protective Services (CPS) response time

The Administration responds quickly to allegations of abuse or neglect and implements safeguards to protect children who have been abused or neglected from further abuse or neglect at the hands of their caregivers.

Children's health and safety in out-of-home care

The Administration monitors children in out-of-home care, performs health and safety checks on licensed facilities, and works to provide safe placements to children who have been removed from their families due to abuse or neglect so they are not abused or neglected in licensed care.

Adherence to permanency planning guidelines

The Administration works toward placing children in permanent homes as quickly as possible and tracks progress with reference to reunification within 12 months and adoption within 24 months.

Children's length of stay in out-of-home placement

The Administration seeks to limit the amount of time children spend in out-of-home care prior to reunification or other permanency plan completion.

Data in this report represents the final data download from the Administration's decades old Case and Management Information System (CAMIS). In accordance with federal mandate, the Administration procured and implemented a new Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS), named FamLink. FamLink launched in February 2009 and will improve the way we manage child welfare cases and track data about our performance.

There is a gap in data between the previous data management system and the new system. Valid and complete data will not be fully accessible through FamLink for several months beyond the publication of this report. Data in this report is extracted from the final CAMIS download of January 2009 and unless otherwise specified is for the first half of Fiscal Year 2009 from July 1, 2008, through December 31, 2008.

Future reports may appear to show trend inconsistency with reference to report history and some outcome measures may be lacking data entirely until FamLink has been operating for some time. As Children's Administration strives to align performance measures more closely with federal tracking methods and accurate portrayal of performance, we may need to establish new baselines and ways of tracking trends over time.

Children's Administration monitors a number of other performance outcomes which are detailed in the [Children's Administration Performance Report](#). Together, these reports include information on performance outcomes for the agency's four priority areas of:

- **Safety**
- **Permanency**
- **Well-being**
- **Supporting client outcomes**

Performance Measures in This Report

In addition to monitoring performance in compliance with federal performance requirements, and responding to other legislative and judicial mandates for outcome measurement, the Administration continues to refine methods for assessing performance and improving outcomes for children and families.

The following measures are included in this report:

- **Timely Response in Emergent Referrals**
The Administration continues to exceed the target response rate of 90 percent of children in emergent referrals seen within 24 hours. The timely response rate has exceeded 95 percent since the fourth quarter of 2008.
- **Timely Response in Non-emergent Referrals**
The Administration continues to exceed the target response rate of 90 percent of children in non-emergent referrals. The most recent response

rate displayed shows that 93.3 percent of children were seen within 72 hours of a non-emergent referral.

- **Children Who Did not Experience Additional Abuse**
Children's Administration works diligently to ensure that children who experience abuse or neglect at the hands of their caregivers are safe from further harm once the Administration intervenes. In recent years, the federal standard for this measure increased to 94.6 percent. In FFY 2008, the Administration helped protect 93.9 percent of children from additional abuse. This represents a continuing favorable trend toward the federal standard and the highest rate of overseeing the protection of children from additional abuse since data tracking began.
- **Children who are free from abuse or neglect while in out-of-home care**
The Administration has overseen the safe out-of-home placement of between 99.0 and 99.8 percent of children since Calendar Year 2000, with 99.62 percent in the most recent reporting period. Concerted effort is made to ensure that children who are removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect do not experience maltreatment in the homes of substitute caregivers. The federal government increased the standard for this measure in recent years and, while the Administration has historically met this measure, we fell slightly short of the increased standard of 99.68 percent in FFY 2008.
- **Foster homes receiving health and safety checks**
Children's Administration staff conducted health and safety assessments of 16.4 percent of licensed homes or facilities, far exceeding the 10 percent required.
- **Children visited every 30 days by their social worker**
On average, during FY 2009, 76.9 percent of children in in-home dependencies were seen every 30 days. From the population of all children in out-of-home placements, 57 percent of children were seen in an average month with 62.4 percent seen in the last month of the fiscal year. Incremental changes to the policy have been implemented over the past several years to gradually increase the number of children who must receive monthly health and safety visits from their social worker. In September of 2008 (FY09) the monthly visit policy was applied to all children in out-of-home care, as well as to all children who receive services in their own homes. The proportion of children who are visited each month has continued to improve. The Administration will continue to monitor its success at visiting children each month and will also evaluate visits during each month a child is in out-of-home placement, consistent with the federal and Braam Settlement Agreement performance measures for monthly social worker visits.
- **Children reunified within 12 months of placement**
Of the children for whom reunification was identified as the best permanency outcome, 71.7 percent were safely reunified within 12 months of removal from their homes.
- **Children adopted within 24 months of placement**
There were 1,701 adoptions finalized, a record number, in the most recent reporting period; however since many of those children adopted

had been in long-term care, the rate of timely adoptions decreased from 24.5 percent in FFY 2008 to 22.3 percent in CY 2008.

- **Length of stay for children in care**
The percentage of children in out-of-home placement for more than two years decreased from 39.9 percent in FY 2008 to 38.9 percent in CY 2008. The median number of days children spent in care increased from 572 in FY 2008 to 577 in FY 2009.
- **Children reentering care**
The percentage of children who re-entered out-of-home care following reunification increased slightly from 10.6 percent in FFY 2008 to 10.7 percent in Calendar Year 2008.
- **African American and Native American children in care more than two years**
The percentage of African American children in care for more than two years decreased slightly in the most recent reporting period from 21.2 percent to 20.8 percent while the rate of Native Americans in long-term care increased slightly from 17.1 to 17.5 percent.
- **Children placed with relatives**
The percentage of children for whom meaningful family connections are maintained through placement with relatives was 37.8.

The Administration either met or made improvements toward federal standards and program improvement goals in several areas related to child safety and permanency in Fiscal Year 2009.

In those areas where performance fell short of federal standards, the Administration continues to pursue policy and practice strategies designed to protect children and support families.

Summary Status of Selected Activities

The Administration is currently addressing program and practice improvement strategies identified in the **Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)**, The **Braam Settlement Agreement**, and the **Governor's Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP)** program. In addition, a **Workload Study** performed in 2007 helped inform practice changes in key areas of staff workload and work efficiencies.

Children's Administration recognized the need for improved statewide consistency in child welfare practices. Agency personnel and key stakeholders throughout the state organized to thoroughly research and adopt a statewide **Practice Model**. This new model, when fully implemented, will raise standards, mobilize resources, and better prepare staff for the work of intervening on behalf of vulnerable children.

In addition, in an effort to provide an integrated information management system, the Administration has embarked upon a three year process of acquiring and implementing a new **Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)**.

Child and Family Services Review

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), a federal review of state child welfare systems, has seven outcome areas related to the safety, permanence and well-being of children and families; and seven (7) related to systemic factors. The CFSR also has six (6) data indicators with national performance standards.

In February 2004 the CFSR review determined that Washington State did not meet substantial conformity for any of the seven (7) outcome standards related to safety, permanence and well-being of children, and in four (4) of the seven related to systemic factors.

In the two years following the CFSR, the Administration successfully completed a Program Improvement Plan (PIP). The next cycle of CFSR for Washington State began with preparations in 2009. An on-site review is scheduled the week of September 13, 2010.

CSFR Round II

The Child and Family Services On-site Review is scheduled for the week of September 13, 2010. The Administration began to prepare for the CFSR with Phase I, the Statewide Assessment, in the late summer of 2009.

There are strong expectations for a broad collaboration across systems within and external to DSHS. There is specific emphasis on collaboration with courts, youth and Tribes.

The Commission on Children in Foster Care, established in 2005 by the Washington Supreme Court, co-chaired by now retired Justice Bobbe Bridge and Assistant Secretary Denise Revels Robinson, will provide a high level of oversight and consultation.

A Statewide Collaboration Steering Committee was established to lead the CFSR assessment process. Membership on the steering committee represents internal and external stakeholders.

Between CFSR site visits, the Administration has maintained focus on practice improvement through the initiatives referenced here as well as the Quality Assurance - Case Review Program.

Braam Settlement Agreement

In July of 2004, a settlement was reached in the Braam vs. DSHS lawsuit that included numerous provisions for improving the well-being of children in the custody of the Children's Administration's. A key component of the settlement agreement was the establishment of an Oversight Panel that was given the responsibility to develop benchmarks and monitor the Department's progress on implementation of the settlement.

The independent Panel has responsibility, in collaboration with Washington's Department of Social and Health Services, and with substantial input from Plaintiffs and other stakeholders, to develop outcomes, benchmarks, and action steps, and to monitor compliance for six areas:

- Placement stability
- Mental health services
- Foster parent training and information
- Unsafe or inappropriate placements
- Sibling separation
- Services to adolescents

The Settlement is a 16-page document with 14 goals. Also resulting from the settlement is an Implementation Plan that defines the specific and enforceable agreements required by the Settlement and the action steps indicated to meet those agreements. The Panel issues monitoring reports every six months for the period of the Settlement (through June 31, 2011).

In the sixth monitoring report, issued in March 2009, the Panel categorized the status of the 15 action steps as follows (the numbers in parentheses indicate the number of action steps that fit each category – e.g. 6 action steps are complete):

- Complete (6)
- Complete through performance period (5)
- Incomplete: Compliance Plan for this step will be due in 30 days (1)
- Under Approved Compliance Plan (2)
- Actions under compliance plan not complete through performance period (1)
- Approved compliance plan complete through performance period (1)
- Pending (1)

The Panel concluded that new or updated compliance plans were required for 12 outcomes, either because data showed that performance in fiscal year 2008 had fallen short of the benchmarks, or because acceptable data had not been submitted.

Government Management Accountability and Performance (GMAP)

Between July 1, 2008 and December 31, 2008, the Children's Administration prepared two GMAP reports for the Governor. At the July 23, 2008 Governor's GMAP forum the Administration presented a report on services provided to vulnerable children. In September 2008 a written GMAP report was provided to the Governor and the GMAP office.

The GMAP forum process provides an opportunity for Children's Administration to discuss performance measures and workload data directly with the Governor. These reports address areas in which the agency is doing well, making progress, or needs to improve performance, and where additional resources are needed in order to best serve Washington's vulnerable children and their families.

This process provides transparency and accountability not only on the part of

Children's Administration but for all state agencies. Governor Gregoire and a panel of advisors ask challenging questions, make recommendations about how to improve outcomes, and may allocate resources where necessary.

The contents of the Administration's presentations are available on the Governor's GMAP website: <http://www.accountability.wa.gov/>

Practice Model

The Children's Administration has implemented Solution Based Casework (SBC) as its practice model to provide an overarching framework for child welfare practice in Washington state.

SBC provides a concrete means of working with all children and families in all parts of the state. It builds upon Family Life Cycle Development Theory, Relapse Prevention Theory, and Solution Focused Interventions. Case work is conducted within the context of the family's everyday life tasks, builds on the family's strengths, and helps the family learn how to manage daily tasks more effectively.

All social workers in the state have received training in Solution Based Casework. Group consultation and follow up coaching on application of Solution Based Casework skills is being provided to all social workers. Ongoing consultation and coaching is provided by a core of seven staff funded through legislative appropriation. Additional coaches have been funded through a grant from the Casey Family Program for the initial implementation stage. Progress on implementation and use of the practice model will be monitored through a statewide quality assurance plan.

Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

FamLink, the Children's Administration's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) is the case management tool transforming the way staff does business. The name reflects the integrated support FamLink gives our work providing services to children, their families, service providers, and our many other child welfare partners. This tool supports consistent business practice statewide. From Walla Walla to Bellingham and Omak to Longview children can receive the same level of quality service.

FamLink is an automated tool to:

- Increase social workers' productivity by making relevant information easily accessible for more informed and timely decisions.
- Increase compliance with required program and practice activities.
- Provide managers with meaningful data to evaluate the effectiveness of the CA service programs.

FamLink provides:

- Practice tools in support of child safety, permanency, and well-being.
- Information about families and staff work for children.
- Services for children and families.
- Payments to our providers.

This integrated system creates an environment supporting teamwork in serving children and their families through monthly staff case reviews with supervisors directly on-line in FamLink. All of this supports our primary goals for children—safety, well-being, and permanency.

Major Accomplishments

FamLink created a model of project governance for CA that supports the multiple needs of the project. The project is supported by a Project Advisory Group (PAG) for decision making and programmatic guidance. An Intelligence Team (IT) uses conference calls to learn about business process changes and provide input on various project recommendations. The Implementation Leadership Team (ILT) supports the implementation of FamLink through the many facets of change management.

Representation from each of the six regions and headquarters divisions comprise the ILT. The team supports the FamLink implementation activities for the local offices. Some of the basic activities they are engaged with are:

- Communications - email messaging in support of organizational readiness
- Data readiness - data clean-up efforts
- Managing training resources - securing facilities for training; dedicating staff to be trainers; ensuring all staff have completed individual training plans; and coordination of staff
- Collaborate on readiness plans - participate in the review and development of implementation plans that meet the business needs for CA

Sound business practices included the engagement of staff in a pilot to test FamLink. The pilot offered staff three weeks to test workflow and business processes related to the new system. Three offices, one rural—one urban and one after hours—participated in testing implementation procedures and the readiness of support services. Added results of the testing included identifying data conversion and functionality incidents. The staff helped execute business operations to ensure that functional requirements were met; tested business process redesigns; documented problems or incidents they encountered, and participated in the incident resolution process.

The engagement with this wide range of individuals at Children's Administration continues to lead CA in successful implementation of FamLink.

FamLink achieved Go-Live on February 1, 2009.

Future Activities

Release Two expanded FamLink functionality to broaden our interface capabilities; increase worker access to safety information; and enhance our fiscal roles in provider payment. Activities that support the reporting requirements for the Braam settlement agreement cross the boundaries between Release One and Release Two. This mingling of Release One and Release Two remains a challenge in the important messaging to staff on functionality.

Release Two had two scheduled release dates. Wave One functionality was scheduled for November 2009 with Wave Two functionality scheduled for February 2010. Release Two expanded FamLink functionality; broadened our interface capabilities; increased worker access to safety information; and enhanced our fiscal roles in provider payment.

CA planned post Release Two activities that include supports for the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) and House Bill 2106 Pilot sites for Case Management services. Post Release Two activities for FamLink included the migration of the legacy DSHS payment system into ProviderOne.

Support of the on-going maintenance of Release One functionality, while engaging in design and development for Release Two, is accomplished through strong leadership and responsible resource management. With sound business structures; creative and

flexible staff; leadership foresight and engagement; Children's Administration will continue to lead in the successful implementation of FamLink.

FamLink is one of the most important tools in supporting quality practice and consistency of service to children and families in Washington State.

Safety

Goal: Children will be safe from abuse and neglect

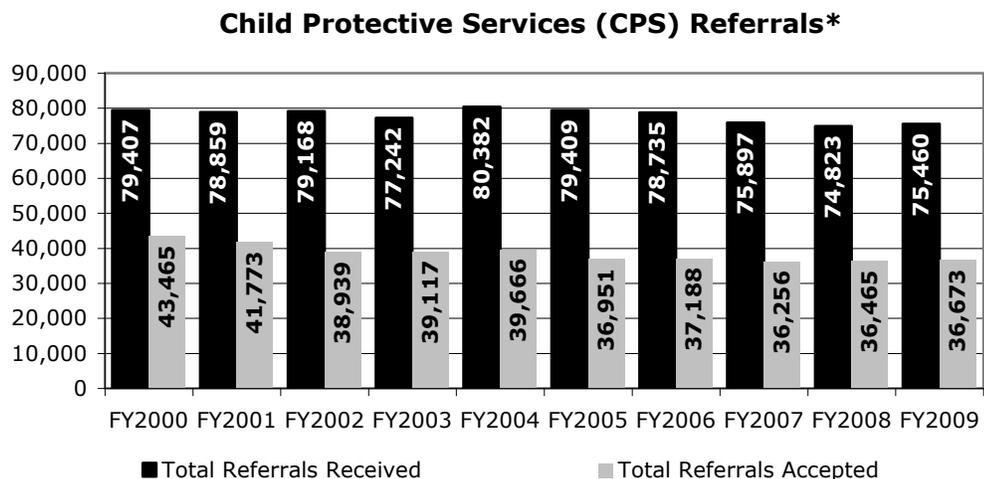
Children's Administration is the primary entity responsible for securing the safety of vulnerable children through responding to and investigating allegations of child abuse or neglect, assisting families in safely parenting their children, licensing substitute care homes to nurture children in out-of-home care, find suitable placements for children who cannot return home, and work toward enhancing the well-being of children and families.

The first step to any involvement with the child welfare system is a referral that a child or group of children may be in danger. This referral may come in the form of a telephone call placed by a concerned family member or other person in a child's life. Often the initial reports come from mandated reporters, those individuals who are required by law to report child maltreatment such as law enforcement officers, medical professionals, educators, and child care workers. The Administration may also become aware of a child at risk through other means. For instance if a social worker becomes aware that a registered sex offender lists an address where children live or a police officer response to a complaint of drug manufacturing in a home with children, Child Protective Services is alerted.

While Children's Administration is responsible for improving child safety, securing placement permanency, and enhancing well-being, no government entity alone can accomplish this task. Every member of a family, school, and community has the moral and often legal responsibility to alert Child Protective Services if a child is potentially being harmed.

Child Protective Services (CPS) Referrals*

In Fiscal Year 2009, Children's Administration received more than 75,000 reports of suspected abuse or neglect. Of those, nearly 37,000 were determined to have met the legal criteria to warrant an investigation.



* Number of referrals received per fiscal year. Includes Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) Child Protective Services referrals. Source: EMIS report.

Objective: Initiate timely investigations
Measured by: Children seen face-to-face by a social worker following a referral accepted for investigation

Children’s Administration must be alerted to a child or children who may be a victim of abuse or neglect in order to launch an investigation or otherwise intervene in a vulnerable child’s life.

The Administration’s most common method of notification is a telephone call received through the statewide EndHarm hotline, 1-877-ENDHARM, or calls to local law enforcement. Children’s Administration may also learn of endangered children through police investigations of domestic violence or drug trafficking, known sex offenders who are released into a home, or concerns about homes or facilities licensed to care for children.

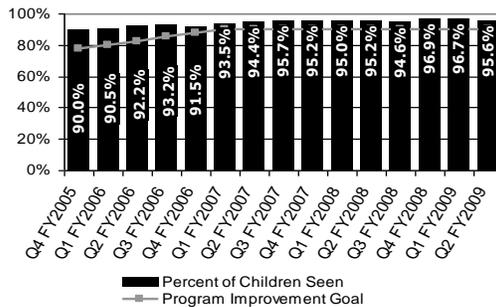
The initial incoming calls are assigned to regional offices for further investigation. Children’s Administration conducts a thorough investigation of referrals regarding children who may be victims of abuse or neglect whenever the allegations meet the legal definition of abuse or neglect.

Children who are at imminent risk of harm must be seen within 24 hours following an accepted referral. All other children in accepted referrals are seen with 72 hours.

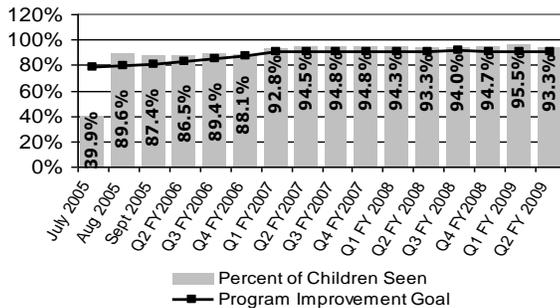
The Administration maintains a goal of 90 percent for children seen face-to-face within 24 hours of an emergent referral. The Administration has well exceeded that target since 2006 and maintained a rate of above 95 percent for both quarters of Fiscal Year 2009 reported.

The goal for children in non-emergent referrals seen within 72 hours is also 90 percent, which the Administration has exceeded since 2007.

Percentage of Children in Emergent Referrals Seen Within 24 Hours*



Percentage of Children in Non-Emergent Referrals Seen Within 72 Hours**



* Percent of children in emergent referrals seen or attempted within 24 hours. Excludes Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) CPS referrals. The federal Program Improvement Plan goal was 90 percent by September 2006. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

** Percent of children in non-emergent referrals seen or attempted within 72 hours. Excludes Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) CPS referrals. The federal Program Improvement Plan goal was 90 percent by September 2006. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

Objective: Reduce recurrence of abuse or neglect
Measured by: Children who do not experience re-abuse

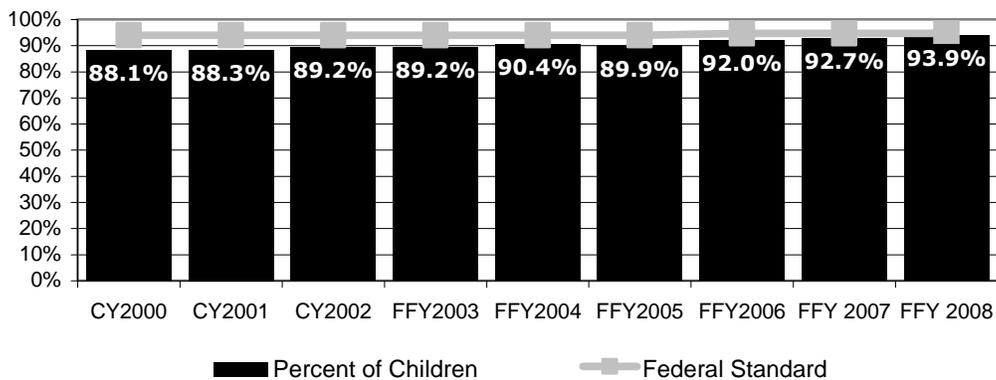
Children’s Administration social workers and community service providers employ a variety of safety measures and strategies to help prevent those children who have been abused or neglected from experiencing further harm.

The federal standard for this measure increased in Federal Fiscal Year 2006 from 93.9 percent to 94.6 percent of children who experience founded referrals of abuse or neglect will be protected from additional founded referrals of abuse or neglect within six months.

The Administration has never met the federal standard for this measure but has made consistent improvements since data tracking began, overseeing the protection of 93.9 percent of children from repeat maltreatment in FFY 2008.

We strive to ensure the future safety of all child abuse and neglect victims who come to our attention, and have demonstrated measurable progress toward that goal.

Percentage of Children Who Did Not Experience Re-Abuse*



* Percent of children with a founded referral of abuse or neglect who were free from an additional founded referral of abuse or neglect within six months of the initial referral. “Founded” means that an investigation concluded that the maltreatment was more likely than not to have occurred. For referrals with multiple allegations, the referral is considered founded if any of the allegations are founded. The federal standard is 94.6 percent or more children will be free from additional founded allegations of abuse. In 2002, the federal government changed the required reporting period from calendar year to federal fiscal year. In 2007, the federal government required that states report the percent of children **free from** additional founded allegations of abuse rather than those who were re-abused. Source: Federal Fiscal Year 2008 data submitted to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Objective: Improve safety for children placed in out-of-home care

Measured by: Children who are free from abuse or neglect in out-of-home care

When Children’s Administration removes a child from an abusive home, our goal is to place them in a safe, nurturing home. Whenever possible, children are placed with relatives or other friends who have a relationship with them. When children can’t stay with relatives, we depend on licensed foster parents to care for them.

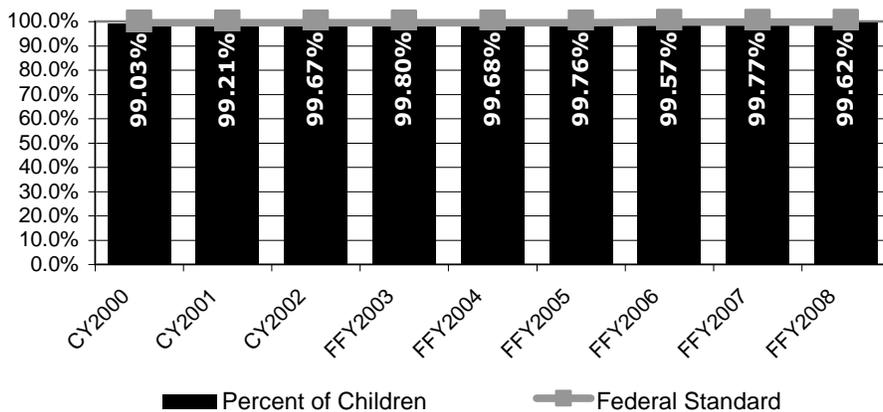
Foster Parents must demonstrate the caring and ability to meet state licensing requirements. The licensing process helps ensure that foster parents are committed to serving children. Every licensed foster parent:

- Passed a rigorous background check
- Has a licensor visit their home to make sure it is safe for children,
- Attended more than 30 hours of pre service training, including CPR/First Aid.

Foster parents’ licenses are renewed every 3 years.

We have high standards for protecting children from abuse or neglect in foster care. Until Federal Fiscal Year 2006, the federal government set a standard that 99.43 percent of children in foster care would be free from abuse and neglect. Washington State has met this measure consistently over the last 8 years. In FFY 2006, the federal standard increased 99.68 percent. Washington missed the standard in FFY 2006, but has met it every year since.

Percentage of Children Free From Abuse or Neglect While in Out-of-Home Care*



* Percent of children in out-of-home care without a founded referral of abuse or neglect. The new federal standard is 99.68 percent or more. Source: federal fiscal year 2008 data submitted to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

Objective: Improve safety for children placed in out-of-home care
Measured by: Foster homes receiving health and safety checks

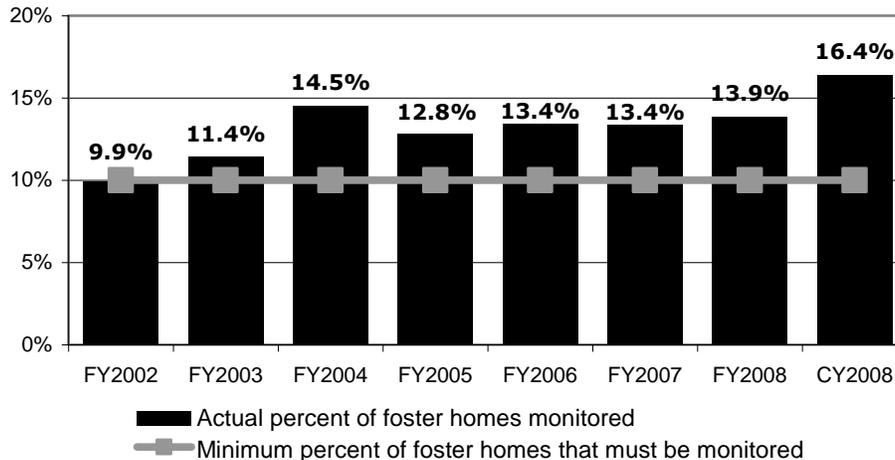
Foster parents may live in a house or an apartment. They may rent or own their home. Foster parents and their homes must meet safety standards and emergency preparedness requirements beyond those of a typical home:

- Foster parents have to practice evacuation plans with the children in their care
- Fireplaces and wood stoves must be secured against child accessibility
- Medications must be locked up at all times
- Foster parents take a variety of health and safety courses

Licensors evaluate every foster home before a license is granted and every three years before they renew a license. They also visit at least 10 percent of the homes on their caseload every year. When they go to a foster home, licensors work with foster parents to make sure all the safety requirements are met.

Washington state statute requires that "Monitoring shall be done by the department on a random sample basis of no less than ten percent of the total licensed family foster homes licensed by the Administration on July 1 of each year," and reported annually. (RCW 74.13.260; RCW 74.13.031(5)). The Children's Administration has exceeded this requirement since Fiscal Year 2003, achieving foster home health and safety checks in 16.4 percent of licensed homes in calendar year 2008.

Percentage of Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) Foster Homes Monitored Annually*



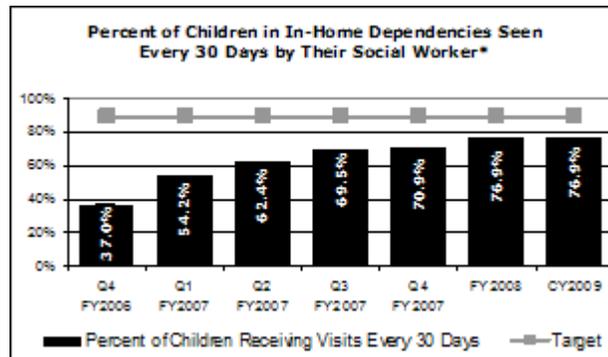
* Percentage of Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) foster homes with a health and safety check completed by the Division of Licensed Resources annually. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

Objective: Increase worker visits with children
Measured by: Children visited every month by their social worker

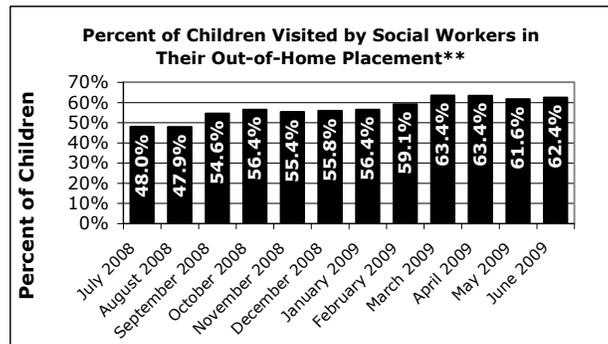
Children’s Administration has implemented incremental changes to the frequency with which social workers are required to visit children placed in out-of-home care.

This phase-in process was designed to address the needs of the most vulnerable children first and to move toward monthly, in-home visits for all children in out-of-home care.

Historically, social workers were required to visit children placed in out-of-home care every 90 days. In State Fiscal Year 2005 the Administration began requiring monthly social worker visits with dependent children placed in their own homes. In FY09 76.9 percent of children placed in in-home dependencies were visited in an average month.



As of September 2008, Social Workers were required to see all children in out-of-home care monthly in the placements where those children reside. From July 2008 through June 2009, 57 percent of children in out-of-home care were visited in an average month.



* Percent of children in in-home dependencies who are seen face-to-face by their social worker in their caregiver’s home at least once within the last 30 days. Source: September 2008 CAMIS download.

** Source: FamLink, run date 10/21/2009

Permanency

Goal: Provide safe, permanent placements as quickly as possible for children who are placed into out-of-home care

Objective: Increase permanency for children in out-of-home care

Measured by: Children reunified within 12 months of placement

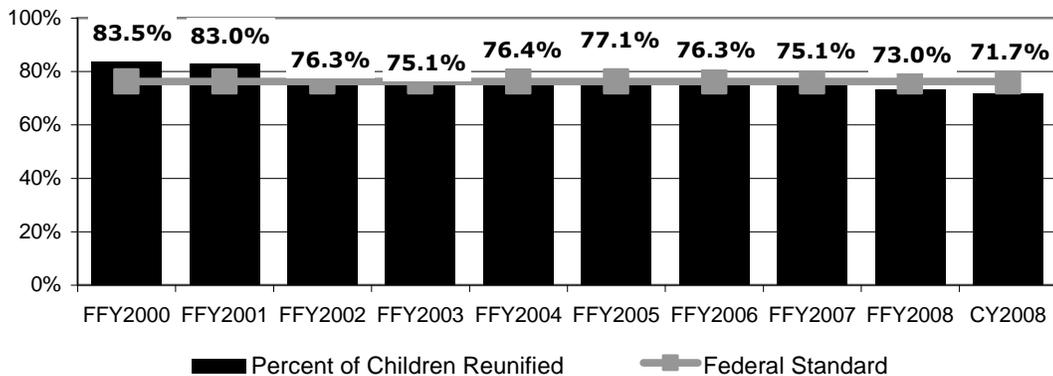
The Federal Standard requires that 76.2 percent of children who were removed from their families due to abuse or neglect will be reunified within 12 months if reunification is determined the best outcome for the child.

Children's Administration works diligently to safely reunify children within designated timeframes; however, when priorities compete, safety always takes precedence over timeliness.

The Administration works with families and community service providers to assess a family's readiness to have a child home and to ensure safeguards are in place prior to returning any child to a home from which he or she was removed due to maltreatment.

In Calendar year 2008, 71.7 percent of children for whom reunification was deemed the best permanency outcome, were reunified with their parents.

Percentage of Children Reunified Within 12 Months of Placement*



* Percent of children reunified with their parents within 12 months of placement into out-of-home care. The federal standard is 76.2 percent or higher. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08. Prior to FFY 2008, data was based upon June counts as in most cases, September data was not available at the time this report was submitted.

Objective: Increase permanency for children in out-of-home care

Measured by: Children adopted within 24 months of placement

Foster care is meant to serve as a temporary, safe placement for children who have been removed from their homes due to abuse or neglect. The goal for all children is to be placed in a safe, stable, permanent home as quickly as possible.

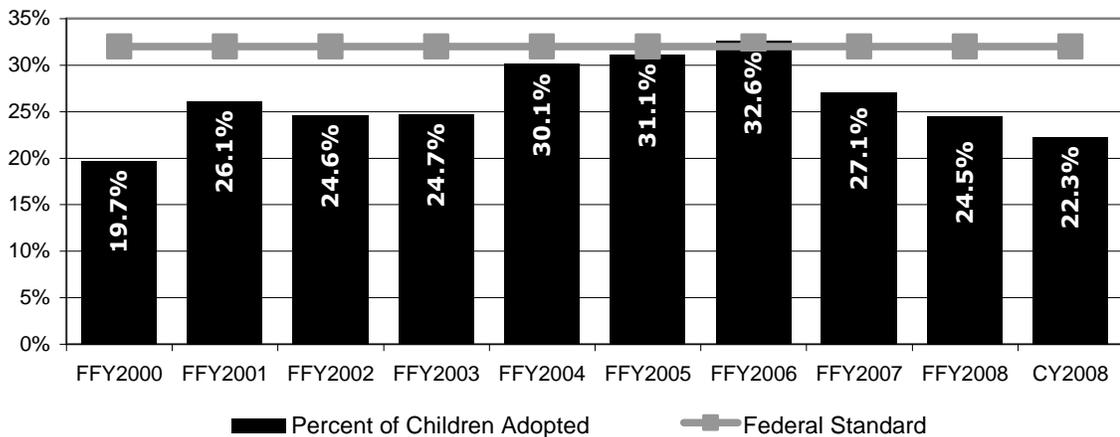
When reunification is not possible, efforts are made to find an adoptive family best suited to meet the needs of a specific child.

The federal standard is that at least 32 percent of children will be adopted within 24 months of placement; the purpose of all federal permanency standards is to ensure that children do not languish in long-term temporary care. While the Administration works to meet these standards, safety is always the first priority and timeliness to adoption may decline as a result.

In recent years, the rate of timely adoption has declined with 22.3 percent of children adopted were adopted within 24 months in Calendar Year 2008.

Many of those finalized adoptions were of "hard to place" children who had remained in care for long periods of time. As more children who have been in long-term care are placed in permanent adoptive homes, the overall rate of timely adoptions decreases.

Percentage of Children Adopted Within 24 Months of Placement*



* Percent of children with a permanency plan of adoption who were adopted within 24 months of placement into out-of-home care. The federal standard is 32 percent or higher. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

Objective: Decrease length of stay without increasing reentry

Measured by: Length of stay for children in care

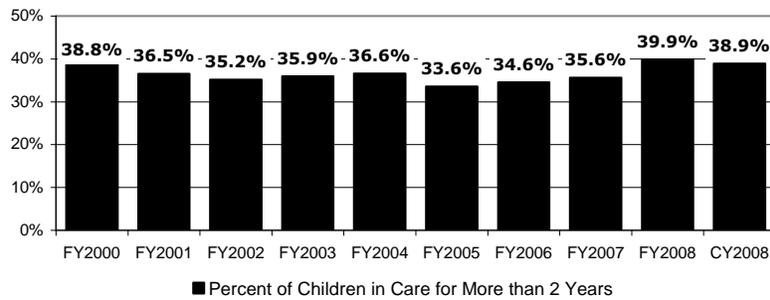
The Children's Administration works to ensure that no child remains in temporary out-of-home placement any longer than is necessary to address the needs of families in crisis. Our goal is to ensure that children are returned home or placed into safe, permanent homes as quickly as possible.

As family difficulties grow increasingly complex, parents may need more intensive supports for longer periods of time in order to safely parent their children. Moreover, as older children, sibling groups, and children with complex medical and behavioral issues enter care at increasing rates, securing adequate relative placements or adoptive homes often becomes more difficult.

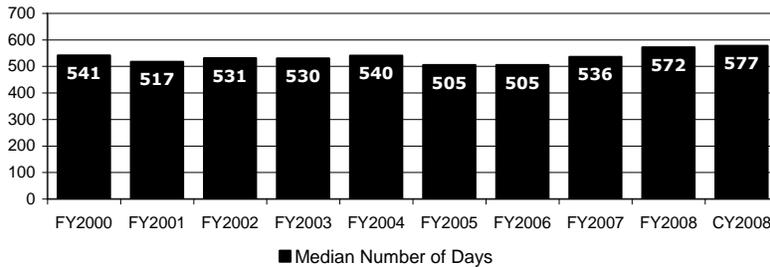
The percentage of children in care for longer than two years continually increased from FY 2005 until FY 2008. There was a slight reduction in length of stay in the Calendar Year 2008 measure from 39.9 to 38.9 percent.

The median number of days children remain in care has shown an increase over the same time period, with children remaining in care on average 577 days.

Percentage of Children in Care for More Than 2 Years*



Median Number of Days Children are Placed in Care**



*Percent of children in the Administration's custody in out-of-home care for more than 60 days, who have a cumulative time in care during their current placement episode of more than two years. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

**Median cumulative time in care for all children in care for more than 60 days. This measure is calculated based upon the population of children in care for more than 60 days to more clearly depict the status of children for whom the Administration is actively conducting permanency planning. Sixty days was the chosen "cut off" point because children who stay in care at least 60 days must have a permanency plan completed at this point. If children placed for very short periods of time were included in this measure, it would inaccurately skew the understanding of the percent of children who are placed for much longer periods of time. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 for CY08.

Objective: Decrease length-of-stay without increasing reentry

Measured by: Children reentering care

Children’s Administration must balance the need to preserve a child’s significant family connections with ensuring that safety and stability supports are in place prior to returning a child home.

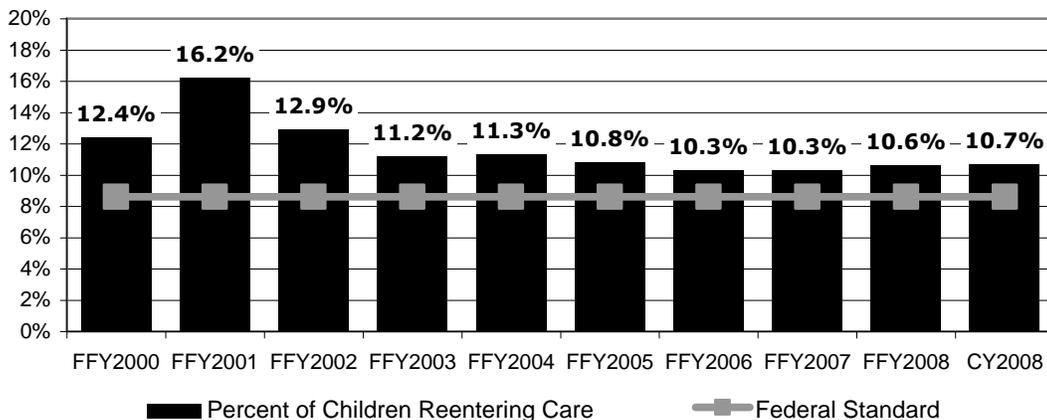
The Administration continues to engage with families for varying lengths of time following reunification based on child and family needs. Every effort is made to ensure that children return home successfully and are able to remain with their family.

Children’s Administration and service providers implement reunification assessments, transition and safety plans, and work to ensure the availability of ongoing services. Even with access to services and supports, not every family will be able to safely parent, adequately nurture, and appropriately discipline their children.

“Re-entry” measures the percentage of children who have been reunified with their families and later are placed back into out-of-home care.

In Calendar Year 2008, 10.7 percent of children who had returned home, later reentered out-of-home care.

Percentage of Children Reentering Care within 12 Months of Reunification*



* Percent of children who reentered out-of-home care within 12 months of reunification with their parents, regardless of length of stay. The federal standard is 8.6 percent or less. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

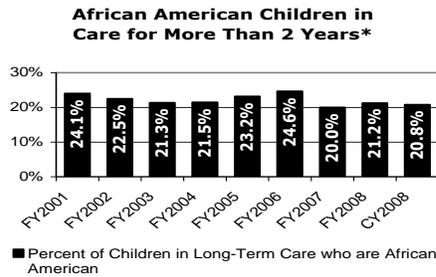
Objective: Decrease over-representation of African American and Native American children in care
Measured by: African American and Native American children in care for more than two years

Across the nation there has been increased awareness of the disproportionate rate at which children of color come into and remain in child welfare systems. Washington state has been very involved in identifying systemic causes of both the overrepresentation of children of color and the disparate treatment those children and their families often receive.

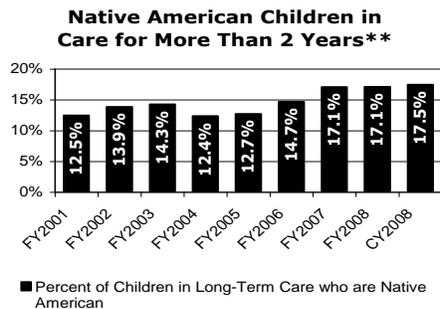
Three of the decision points at which the issue of disproportionality seems most prevalent in Washington state are:

- When a child is referred to Child Protective Services for allegations of abuse or neglect.
- When a child is removed from the care of his or her parents due to findings of abuse or neglect.
- When a child remains in care for longer than two years.

Children’s Administration has been tracking for some time the rate of African American and Native American children in care for longer than two years. In Calendar Year 2009 the percentage of African American children in long-term care decreased slightly from 21.2 to 20.8 percent.



The percentage of Native Americans in long-term care increased slightly during the same period from 17.1 to 17.5 percent.



The Administration continues to identify strategies to reduce disproportional representation of children of color and to better meet the needs of all vulnerable children in our state.

* Percent of children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home and are African American. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

** Percent of children who have been placed in out-of-home care for two years or longer who are not in their permanent home and are Native American. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.

Objective: Increase relative placements
Measured by: Children placed with relatives

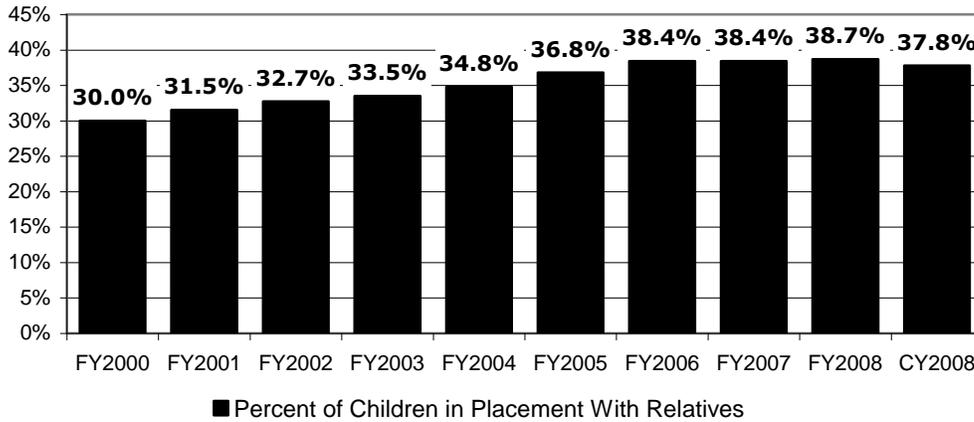
A sense of familiarity can do much to help children who must be removed from their families to adapt to new surroundings, routines, and family dynamics.

Whenever it is safe and in the best interest of the child or children involved, the Administration makes concerted efforts to place children with extended family members or other suitable persons known to them.

New legislation enacted over the past several years has expanded the definition of "relative" and allowed more people who know and love children in their lives to step forward as possible placement resources.

The rate of relative placements had steadily increased until the most recent year report. The decline in relative placements in this case from 38.7 percent to 37.8 percent may be reflective of an incomplete data set rather than an actual reduction in relative placements.

Percentage of Children in Placement with Relatives*



* The percent of children in placement with a relative on the last day of the fiscal year. Source: Special end of CAMIS download January 28, 2009 run for CY08.