Washington State
Department of Social
& Health Services

Annual Report to the Legislature

Foster and Adoptive Home Placement

RCW 74.13.031 (2)

December 1, 2009

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Washington State
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL & HEALTH
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Table of Contents

Executive Summary

This report is prepared in compliance with RCW 74.13.031 (2), which requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Children's Administration (CA) to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the agency success in:

> *(a) Meeting the need for adoptive and foster home placements;*
> *(b) Reducing the foster parent turnover rate;*
> *(c) Completing home studies for legally free children; and*
> *(d) Implementing and operating the passport program required by RCW 74.13.285.*
>
> *The report shall include a section entitled "Foster Home Turn-Over, Causes and Recommendations."*

During Fiscal Year 2009, CA activities related to recruitment and retention resulted in the following:

(a) *Meeting the need for adoptive and foster home placements*:

- There were 5,739[1] licensed foster homes, of which 1,355[2] were newly licensed.

- There were 1,331[3] licensed minority foster homes at the end of FY 2009, which is slight decrease from FY 2008.

- 1,701[4] adoptions were finalized.

(b) *Reducing the foster parent turnover rate*:

- Provided statewide support services through contracts with three private agencies.

- Provided training and education opportunities in a variety of ways, including mandatory pre-service training, web-based training, and class room training. In FY 2009, 731 classes were provided and attended by 21,680[5] participants.

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[1] Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download August 2008
[2] Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download August 2008
[3] Children's Administration Decision Support Unit: Source FamLink download September 2009
[4] Children's Administration; Source CAMIS data as of 1/2009 and FamLink 7/2009 Legally Free Children
[5] The number represents duplicate participants

(c) *Completing home studies for legally free children***:**

- Provided adoption home study services to 1,093[6] families through the end of December 2008, all of whom will have a home study completed prior to the adoption being finalized.

(d) *Implementing and operating the Passport Program[7]***:**

- Completed 2,994[8] comprehensive health histories in FY 2009 on children eligible for the program.

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[6] Open Adoption Home Study Cases December 2008
[7] Passport is now called a Comprehensive Health Report
[8] Children's Administration Passport Hand Count

Foster Care Recruitment

The Children's Administration (CA) utilizes a variety of activities and community resources to recruit foster and adoptive parents across the state. Foster home recruitment targets families who can meet the diverse background of children in out-of-home-care.

An adequate pool of diverse foster homes contributes to greater options and placement stability for children by providing CA with greater ability to:

- Match a child's needs with a family who has the necessary strengths and skills to meet those needs;
- Provide a home in a neighborhood and educational district in which a child lives; and
- Increase the ability to place siblings together or close to each other.

Statewide Foster Care Recruitment

To enhance recruitment and retention opportunities in Washington; contracts were awarded regionally beginning in April 2008. The contracts are effective for 39 months (just over 3 years); allowing contractors more time to focus on recruitment.

The contracts were awarded to:
- Lutheran Community Services NW (Families for Kids) in Regions 1, 2 and 6;
- Olive Crest (Fostering Together) in Regions 3 and 4; and
- Foster Care Resource Network in Region 5.

The contracts are regionally based and include:
- Combined responsibility for recruitment and retention;
- Regionally defined, specific performance outcome measures established for both recruitment and retention;
- Establishment of committees in each region comprised of state and contracted staff that meet monthly to discuss and direct the contracted work. In the past year, work has begun to reach out to community leaders to aid in recruitment/retention efforts as part of the Family To Family approach.

Statewide Recruitment Strategies

Children's Administration continues to use targeted recruitment of foster families focusing on the population of potential foster parents who have characteristics similar to "successful" foster parents.

Building upon the Family to Family approach CA and our contracted recruiters have used the Recruitment, Development and Support (RDS) teams in each office. The RDS committees will seek a broader community representation that

includes schools and local community partners. The goal is to use community leaders to find resources to keep children in their own schools and communities.

Children's Administration has begun developing data that will identify where the most children are removed from their school districts due to a lack of foster homes. Such areas then could become "neighborhoods of focus" in the Family To Family approach. Homes could be recruited in that area in a much more targeted way to meet the goal of keeping kids connected with the schools and support networks. A Geographic Information System approach has been used in one region of the state to show the specific number of children removed in a school district. CA has moved to expand this to the entire state.

This targeted approach, permits a broader recruitment approach that is reflective of the racial and cultural needs of children in care including recruitment based upon child characteristics within their own offices. This may include recruitment of homes to take teens, siblings groups or children that are medically fragile.

The contracts have been modified to include the new approach and new outcome measures based on the specific needs identified in each office in each region. Because of the work done through AdoptUSKids, we will have specific data about foster parents, in addition to the newly-developed data about the characteristics and location of kids coming into care. We are melding the data together to provide the most effective community-based recruitment work.

We continue to do generalized recruitment however it will take a lower priority from the targeted recruitment developed through Family To Family. All recruitment continues to use the foster care logo:
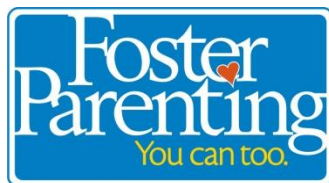
Contractors continue to use current and former foster parents as recruiter/liaisons to recruit and mentor potential new families as they go through the licensing process. The contracts have been reduced to reflect the 2009 budget for all three private agency contractors which resulted in a reduction in staff around the state.

Maintaining a pool of current and former foster parents has been deemed essential by Children's Administration to the continuing work of community- and school-based recruitment.

Statewide Toll-Free Recruitment Number (1-888-KIDS414)

Northwest Resource Associates (NWRA) is the contracted provider that responds to inquiries from potential foster parents from the toll-free line or through the CA

web site. NWRA developed the Statewide Recruitment Information Center (SRIC), which maintains data on these inquiries. During 2009 the database was enhanced to more efficiently handle inquiries received.

In 2009, more than 300 web-based inquiries and 80 phone calls were received monthly from potential foster parents. Those inquires are sent to NWRA, input into the database and then distributed to the appropriate recruitment contractor for each region. Each recruitment contractor then assigns every inquiry to a recruiter liaison, which is responsible for guiding that person through the licensing process.

The Division of Licensed Resources also has access to the web-based inquiries and has begun a more intensive effort to help potential foster parents through the recruitment process. Each contractor is responsible for recorded recruitment activities in the database. The intent is that CA will be able to develop reports on recruitment activities within the data base to aid in recruitment efforts. CA is working with the contractor to develop a meaningful data report.

Newly Licensed Homes

Recruitment of new foster homes is a challenge in Washington State and nationally. Recruitment remains difficult for both Children's Administration and private child placing agencies. Recruitment challenges in Washington State are similar to those experienced nationwide:

- Children in out-of-home care are presenting more difficult challenges for foster parents;
- Individuals or families may be reluctant to take on additional responsibilities of raising children if they are uncertain about their own job or economic status;
- An average of seventy percent of the children adopted are adopted by licensed foster parents (this includes relatives who were licensed). Adoption is a positive outcome for children, but also presents a challenge for placement resources, as foster parents often leave the system when the adoption is complete.

Washington struggled with recruitment during the previous year due to implementation of the Adam Walsh law, which required changes in background checks for caregivers. To better facilitate fingerprinting for caregivers, DSHS contracted with Integrated Biometric Technology (IBT) in July 2008 to provide electronic fingerprinting services across the state. This has proven successful as most potential foster parents can be fingerprinted successfully in a timely manner. An agreement has been reached with the Washington State Patrol to handle the small number of cases where fingerprints remain an issue.

In FY 2009 1,355 new foster homes were licensed, a return to the usual annual level of between 1,100 and 1,360 newly licensed homes. The FY 2008 number

reflected an aberration due to the fingerprint and background check issues. The FY 2009 number is the highest this decade.

Newly Licensed Foster Homes

	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009
	1183	1230	1348	1085	1355
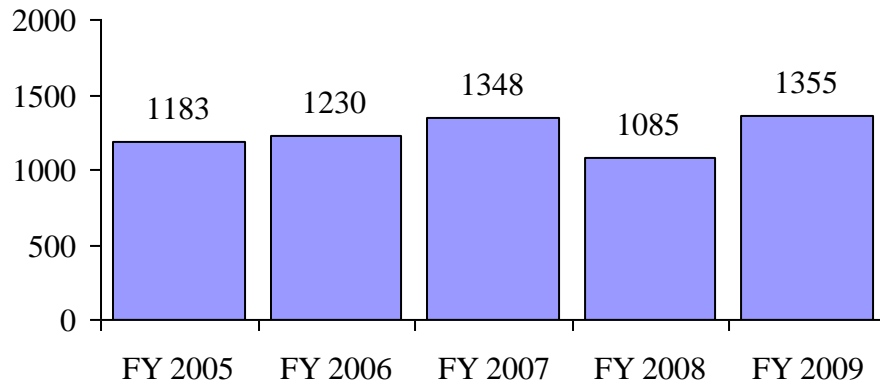
Foster Home Turn-Over:
Causes & Recommendations

There continues to be a decline in the total number of licensed foster homes in Washington. It is believed that some of the reasons for this decline is the change in the definition of relative that allows "suitable persons" to care for children without becoming licensed foster parents. In the past, these persons would have been required to become licensed as a foster parent. There is also an emphasis on relative placements; this includes notification to relatives within 30 days of out-of-home care which increases the number the children placed with relatives.

Total Licensed Foster Homes
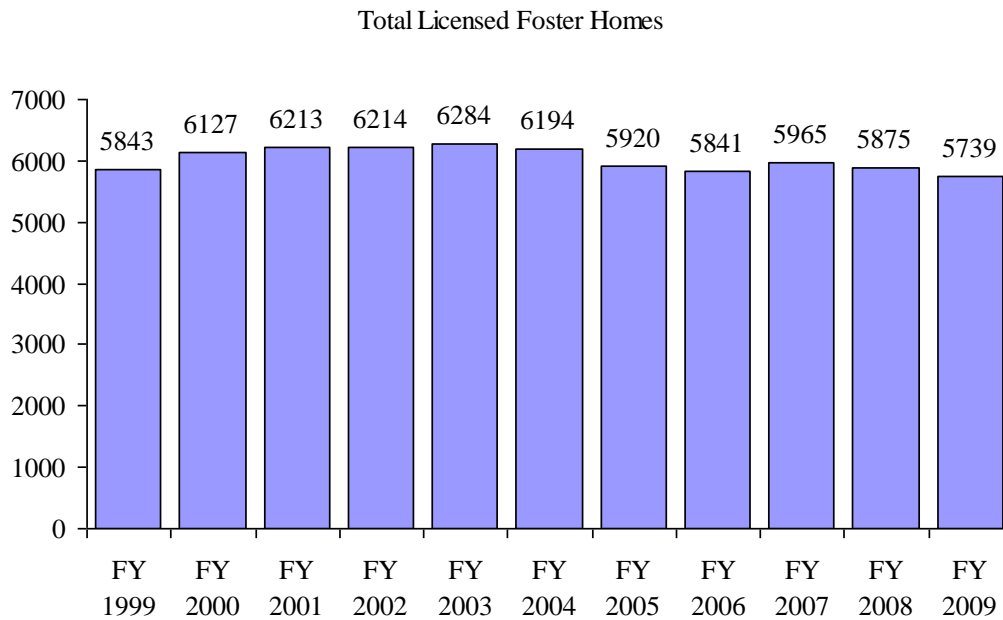
Retention

The licensed foster home retention rate shows relative stability over the last 12 years. The average rate of loss between the first and last year of the three-year licensing cycle has been 31 percent (69 percent of newly licensed homes were still licensed by Year Three). On average, 38 percent of licensed foster homes were retained into a second three-year licensing cycle (into a fourth year). The retention of licensed foster families has been relatively stable since 2000.

There are expected reasons for license closure and they are important in understanding retention challenges. These reasons include:

- The foster parent adopts the child s/he has been caring for; there were a record number of adoptions this year which may provide a greater than typical number of closure.
- The specific child the foster parent became licensed to care for has returned home; and

- The foster parent's personal situation changes (e.g. illness, job change, family commitments).

Reasons for license closure that CA seeks to address include:

- Frustration with the child welfare system; and
- Challenges in coping with child behavior.

Children's Administration uses two key strategies to address these issues 1) training and 2) support.

Foster Parent Training

Foster parent training is an essential part of retention and support. Training and education provides caregivers opportunities to gain additional skills and knowledge to enable them to care for children in out-of-home care. Pre- and in-service foster parent training informs foster parents of system mechanics, helps them with self-care and provides key tools for helping children placed with them.

As Children's Administration implements Solution-Based Casework, caregivers were informed and trained on the implications for them as well as for the children and families we serve. Foster Parents received training and support to be part of the team for children and their families in support of their on-going relationships. This training and support included family engagement principles and skills and supports of Solution-Based Casework.

A majority of the training for caregivers is provided by the Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI). The staff offer training during the weekdays, weeknights and weekends to meet the needs of caregivers. These trainings are available to all caregivers, licensed and unlicensed, and are free of charge.

Prior to licensure or adoptive home study approval, families must attend the mandatory training PRIDE pre-service training. Foster parents are also required to take HIV, First Aid, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens training as part of the licensure requirements.

Specialized Class Room Training

Licensed foster parents are required to complete 36 hours of on-going training within each three-year licensing period. This training is available through specialized class room training. The Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) provides training on a variety of topics pertaining to parenting, caring for children, and includes required training courses for families caring for sexually aggressive youth or physically aggressive/assaultive youth.

On-Line Training

The Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI) continues to provide and develop specialized training available on-line to foster parents and caregivers to increase accessibility and access to training. Video workshops as well as interactive online training are available. This allows caregivers to take courses at times that are most convenient to them. Upon completion of the training, caregivers are asked to complete an evaluation that queries their understanding of the workshop material and provides them with a Certificate of Completion. This training is available to anyone accessing the site at the following link: http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/onGoingVid.asp.

Training opportunities for foster parents and caregivers are advertised through the following means:

- Regional web sites
- CA foster parent web site: http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp
- Monthly newsletter sent to all caregivers
- Quarterly mailing of the foster parent training calendar to all caregivers
- Three-page training flyer provided to all social workers, caregivers and participants at meetings

The following training was provided in FY 2009:

- PRIDE pre-service training
  - ♦ 173 classes provided to 3,860 participants
- PRIDE Kinship pre-service training
  - ♦ 6 classes provided to 133 participants
- First Aid and CPR
  - ♦ 225 classes provided to 4,895 participants
- In-service classroom training
  - ♦ RFTI training: 327 classes provided to 4,105 participants
- In-service on-line training
  - ♦ RFTI On-line web based training reached 8,687 participants

Assessment of Training Needs

CA contracted with Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center for the foster parent survey that has been conducted for three years:

- A broad-based telephone interview survey of a random sample of 2,400 licensed and unlicensed caregivers (relative and non-relative). This survey focused on caregiver views on training, support, information sharing and participation in planning and decision-making related to children in their care. Survey results can be found at: http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/general/fostersurvey.asp

The results of the surveys are used to identify training needs and assist in the development of training available for all caregivers.

Teamwork

The RFTI trainers support on-going outreach and support to caregivers by developing innovative ways to meet families' needs. RFTI trainers teamed with community partners to offer additional training and sharing of information. During FY 2009 some activities included:

- Expanding opportunities and invitations to unlicensed relative caregivers to attend all training by sending them regional flyers of upcoming trainings in each region.
- Teaming with community partners to offer additional training and sharing of information.
- "Video day" in local offices for caregivers to come and watch educational videos followed up with a facilitated discussion. Foster Parents receive training credit for viewing these videos.
- Providing a self study training material for foster parents to come together and discuss at lunch time "Brown Bag Training" (rural areas). This self study training material is also used at regional HUB groups in the urban areas.
- Supporting local recruitment and retention contractors by participating in support meetings.
- Attending the quarterly regional and statewide 1624 consultation meetings with foster parents. These meetings identified concerns of foster parents and recommendations for developing positive outcomes.
- Participating in support groups for relatives caring for children not involved in CA, sharing information on resources and behavior issues.
- Developing a Spanish speaking Pre-Service Training, CPR/First Aid Classes, and materials in Spanish.
- Sending RFTI quarterly training catalogue to unlicensed relative caregivers inviting them to all trainings, free of charge.
- Inviting all caregivers to use the lending libraries maintained by the regional trainers.

Foster Parent Support

The Division of Licensed Resources staff continues to provide health and safety checks on ten percent of licensed foster homes each year. These contacts are an opportunity for CA to identify and provide individualized support.

Children's Administration continues to offer two days of respite per month to foster parents. A maximum of two weeks can be accumulated each year.

The Children's Administration contracts for support services through regional performance-based contracts. Each contractor must develop a plan for retention

that includes support systems for foster families and relative caregivers. These support systems fall into one of the following categories:

- A hub is one family at the center of several foster families facilitating monthly meetings and bringing the families together to share resources, ideas, respite and training.
- A support group is foster parents meeting together regularly to connect and network.
- A buddy system is the pairing of a veteran foster parent/family with a new foster parent/family. Sometimes, these individual pairings occur through a hub-type arrangement or support group.
- Mentoring partners an experienced foster parent with an applicant through the licensing process.

The number of support groups varies over time; on average, there are approximately 50 or more groups statewide. Each support group consists of eight to ten families. The support groups have also been used to provide training hours to meet licensing requirements.

Additional contracted support providers are:

- After Hours Support Line: A statewide after-hours line provides resource information and referral and crisis support.
- Foster Intervention and Retention Support Team (FIRST): Neutral, third party support for licensed foster parents undergoing a DLR/CPS investigation is available 24 hours a day.
- Contracts have been executed in the regions for critical support services to foster parents caring for sexually reactive children, physically assaultive children or children with other high risk behaviors via:
  - ◆ In-home case management;
  - ◆ Short-term therapeutic and educational interventions using evidence-based practices, specifically Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Behavioral Chain Analysis;
  - ◆ 24-hour a day support for those homes receiving the services.

Additionally, CA creates and mails out The Caregiver Connection, a monthly informative newsletter to all foster parents, guardians of dependent children, unlicensed relative caregivers and adoptive families.

1624 Quarterly Consultation Meetings

Children's Administration continues to meet quarterly to improve communication between foster parents, Foster Parent Association of Washington, and CA. The goal of the 1624 meetings continues to be improving communication centered on recruitment and retention of foster homes, effective foster parent training, and enhancing children's lives in care. Additionally permanence, safety and well being of all children in out-of-home care are discussed at the meetings. Each region has selected two foster parents to represent their region at the statewide

meetings. There have been 24 regional meetings and four statewide quarterly meetings since November 2007. Regional meetings are rotated through locations in each region and each region has an opportunity to host the quarterly statewide meeting.

Camp To Belong

Camp To Belong is a non-profit camp that provides siblings who are in foster care but not placed together an opportunity to spend a week with each other. This weeklong camp provides foster parents a "respite" from sibling visits and provides separated siblings a chance to spend time with one another 24 hours a day for a week. Children's Administration provides key financial and administrative support to help re-connect the siblings at a five-day summer camp designed specifically for separated siblings. This year, Washington sent 73 kids to camp, and launched the first ever Washington state-based camp at Port Orchard.

Summary

Increasing and maintaining the pool of licensed foster homes is challenged by the emotional and financial costs of caring for children as a volunteer. In a world with fewer stay-at-home parents and where most families have complex, busy lives, fostering is often seen as out of reach.
CA is working to increase supports of all kinds for foster parents, hoping to build on the foundation created the past several years through the contracts, state law and other initiatives.

Adoption Recruitment

Adoption is not a temporary arrangement between individuals; it is a lifetime commitment on a social and legal protective measure for children. Adoption for many is not an easy journey; it comes with many unanswered questions, good intentions and is not for everyone. CA staff must have the skills to delicately handle difficult issues and in some cases assist families to understand that love is not enough and that perhaps adoption is not the best plan for them. Adoptive parents must go through an assessment that is often intrusive and requires dealing with difficult issues in order for the adoption home study evaluator to determine the fitness of the applicant (RCW 26.33.190).

There are many factors to consider when choosing a family that can "best meet the needs of a child" on a lifetime basis. It requires keeping the best interests of the child as the focal point of adoption. It requires making placement decisions with known and available information as to which family is the best fit for a particular child. CA uses a shared decision making process to match children with a plan of adoption with adoptive parents.

Adoption Recruitment Activities

CA undertakes a variety of activities to recruit adoptive families for waiting children. These activities include hosting consortiums, specific recruitment contracts with community partners, and the use of local and national adoption exchanges.

As of July 1, 2009, there were 1,844[9] legally free children with a permanent plan of adoption. Over half of the children are in placement with a permanent adoptive family and are awaiting finalization of their adoption.

Adoption Consortiums

Adoption consortiums are often the first step in recruitment for a child in need of a permanent adoptive family when the birth family and the current caregiver are not a permanent resource. An adoption consortium is a staffing that brings together both state and private agency staff to provide information about a child or children, learn about waiting adoptive families and learn about additional recruitment options. These consortiums occur in all six regions and build relationships with community partners and inter-regional linkages on behalf of children. For some children this is the only level of recruitment needed; for those whom an adoption consortium does not result in a match, adoption exchanges are used.

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[9] Children's Administration; Source CAMIS data as of 1/2009 and FamLink 7/2009 Legally Free Children

Local and National Adoption Exchanges

The Children's Administration contracts with the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE), to provide adoption recruitment through the use of local and national adoption exchanges. The Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE) is a Washington State only recruitment resource. WARE provides a secure web site that is password protected for CA staff and private adoption agency staff to recruit and match children with approved adoptive families. This web site provides current information on children in need of an adoptive family and on approved adoptive families.

The children listed on the WAREKids web site http://warekids.org/?tn=1 include children where concurrent planning is occurring and those who may not yet be legally available for adoption. CA staff is required to register all children who have a permanent plan of adoption and are not in an identified adoptive home.

During FY 2009 there were 241 new children registered with WARE for a total of 461 children registered during the year. During this past year, 198 children registered with WARE were placed with permanent families.

Children who are registered with WARE for more than 90 days and are legally free are registered with the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) web site www.nwae.org which provides recruitment on a national level. NWAE served 178 new children for a total of 301 children in FY 2009; 132 of these children were placed with permanent families, 31 are on hold with potential pending placements, 18 children were withdrawn, and 120 children are still in need of matching with a family.

Child Specific Recruitment

Children's Administration contracts with NWAE to provide comprehensive recruitment activities for children who need an adoptive family and for whom other recruitment activities have not been successful. NWAE subcontracts with six to seven private child placing agencies, forming a partnership to provide this child specific recruitment program, known as Specialized Adoption Recruitment Program (SARP).

Child specific recruitment includes gaining a full understanding of the child's needs through discussion with the current and past caregiver's including relatives, to determine if they might be a resource for the child. Focused, individualized and persistent recruitment can and does work for children who are considered the hardest to place.

In FY 2009, 67 children were enrolled in the program, 35 children were placed with adoptive families, 10 children had placements pending, 6 children were withdrawn at the request and/or in consultation with social workers, and 16 children are still waiting to be matched with a family.

Child specific recruitment continues to increase the probability of finding a permanent adoptive family for children where regular recruitment methods have failed.

A breakdown by age for the 67 children served is:

Children in Child Specific Recruitment	
Age in Years	**Number of Children/youth Enrolled**
0-7	12
8-12	33
13-18	22
Total	**67**

Purchase of Service

The Purchase of Service (POS) program continues to be a successful means for recruitment of adoptive families for hard to place children. The program was designed in the late 1980s and provides funding to private agencies in and out of the state of Washington to offset the cost of recruitment, training, transitioning and supervision of adoptive placements for eligible children. Eligibility is based upon the child being registered with WARE, and the length of time they are registered prior to identification and placement with an adoptive family.

CA develops individual contracts for each eligible child placed. The contracts are performance-based and allow for two payments, one for the adoptive placement and one for the finalization of the adoption. If a child disrupts from the placement, the second payment is not paid. The POS program is an avenue to access adoptive placements for children when an appropriate family has been located through a private agency in Washington State or nationally.

In FY 2009, 64 children were referred to the program which resulted in 47 specific contracts for adoptive placements. Thirty-one adoptions have been finalized during this fiscal year and the remaining children are pending adoption finalization.

Finalized Adoptions

The Children's Administration (CA) continues to make every effort to establish permanency for children unable to return to the care and custody of their birth parents through adoption, third party custody, dependency guardianship and long-term care agreements with foster parents or relatives. Permanency through adoption was established for 1,701 children in the care and custody of CA during Fiscal Year 2009.

Finalized Adoptions
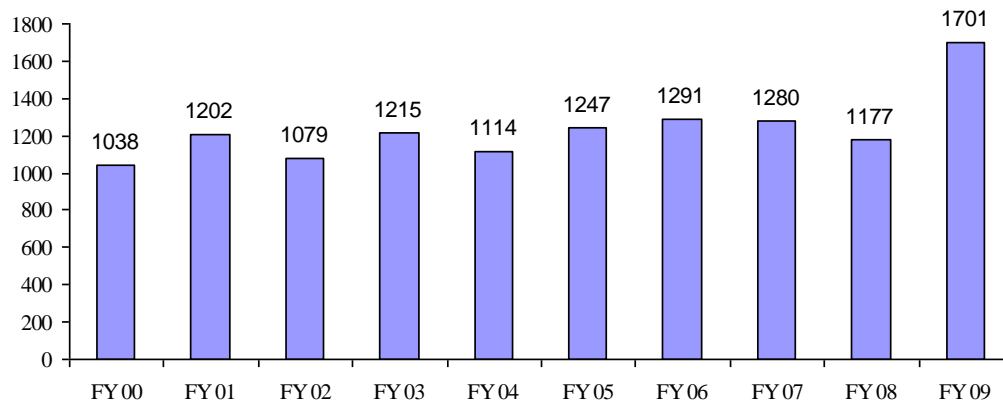
There continues to be a high number of legally free children, 1,844 in need of permanency, even though CA continues to complete over 1,000 adoptions annually. Reasons for legally free children remaining in out-of-home care are:

- Current caregiver has been identified as a potential permanent family but an adoptive home study has not been completed.
- Child and family may need services to stabilize a placement prior to finalizing an adoption.
- Completing the Child's Family Medical and Social Background, disclosure with the adoptive family is time intensive.
- Though recruitment efforts are underway, a permanent family has not yet been identified for a child, youth or sibling group.
- Preparing and transitioning children into permanent adoptive families involves several factors. Including:
  - ◆ Age of the child or youth
  - ◆ Needs of the child (educational, medical, emotional)
  - ◆ Proximity of adoptive family to child's current placement
  - ◆ ICPC regulations and contracting issues
- Children are not ready for adoption due to mental health and/or behavioral issues.
- Children with a higher level of needs and issues (emotional or behavioral) are harder to find a permanent family and require more intense recruitment work to find an adoptive family.

- Some youth and adoptive families are more frequently inquiring about the pros and cons of delaying adoption finalization in order take advantage of newly publicized college assistance programs. The eligibility requirements for some programs are determined by the youth's age at time of adoption.

Summary

CA continues to focus on achieving permanency for children in foster care. In FY 2009, CA achieved its highest number of adoptions. CA recognizes exceeding this goal may be a challenge each year; however there continues to be a focus on adoption and permanency for children in out-of-home care by utilizing a variety of recruitment options available and through the continued funding of the purchase of service program which aids in the recruitment and post placement supervision for placements that occur out of state.

Home Studies for Legally Free Children

The Children's Administration provides adoption services to many families throughout the year; the number of families receiving adoptions services is determined by looking at a point in time. At the end of December 2008 there were 1,093 open cases to families receiving adoption services. Some children are adopted by families that had services provided by a private agency. Some children are placed with adoptive families that receive services through a private child placing agency either in Washington or in another state.

Adoption services provided by CA to adoptive families include:

- Completion of adoptive home studies, if one has not been done privately
- Child identification
- Transition support for successful placement
- Post-placement services to the child and family
- Assistance with adoption finalization and application for Adoption Support

Children's Administration goal is to complete an adoption home study within 90 days of a completed application. The actual amount of time it takes to complete an adoptive home study involves a variety of factors. Including:

- Completion of pre-service training
- Completion of criminal history background check including fingerprint check
- Completion of child abuse and neglect check in and out of state when required
- Completion of adoption paperwork
- References returned to the agency

Passport Program

Overview & History

The Foster Care Public Health Nurse Services (FCPHN), previously known as the Foster Care Passport Program (FCPP) was established in 1998 and continues to be a collaborative program between the Children's Administration, other DSHS administrations, and local public health jurisdictions statewide.

In 2006, new referral criteria were developed by CA, shifting the focus so that children birth to age 18 years, with existing complex health needs, receive a comprehensive health report through the program. This change was made to better serve children where the service was most critical and to develop consistency across the state. Since the inception of the program in 1998, each region had developed their own criteria to determine which children received a "passport."

Foster Care PHN (FCPHN) Services Program Overview

Current Referral Criteria
Current eligibility criteria are based on risk factors that identify children and youth who are in greatest need of the services of the Foster Care Public Health Nurse (FCPHN). During the first 30 days of placement, screening specialists review the risk indicators. If any of the risk indicators are present, the screening specialist makes a referral directly to the FCPHN who then determines if the child needs a comprehensive health report or other health related services. In addition, FCPHN reviews monthly automated lists of placed children, by legal and custody status, to help assure that all necessary children are identified. Services may also be requested by social workers and caregivers at any time for non-enrolled children, should concerns arise. After consultation with the FCPHN, a determination is made regarding eligibility for services.

Services
Foster care public health nurses are contracted to develop a comprehensive health report for eligible children, and to provide public health nurse consultation services. Public health nurses research and collect health information from birth to present for each enrolled child. The public health nurse provides a comprehensive report of the child's history, including results from the Child Health and Education Track (CHET) screening report, and a summary of the child's current health status. This report is provided to the assigned social worker and the child's caregiver. The report includes nursing recommendations regarding health follow-up, anticipatory guidance regarding the child's health, safety and developmental needs, and community resource information where needed.

Specific responsibilities of the foster care public health nurse include:

- Identifying, gathering, interpreting and compiling all available health history information on referred children into the CAMIS Passport module (and subsequently FamLink).

- Alerting the child's social worker immediately upon identification of any significant health issues requiring follow-up prior to completion of the product.
- Consulting with the social worker or care provider upon request when a health concern is identified or health-related information and materials are needed.
- Facilitating assessment, education and referral to health services, as needed or requested.
- Providing a signed health report and recommendations and all obtained medical records to the assigned social worker within five days of completion.
- Providing a signed health report and recommendations to the caregiver, within five days of completion.

In addition, the FCPHN is regularly asked to help with medical record interpretations, researching or interpreting immunization histories, and providing health education information on a wide variety of topics, including infectious diseases, growth and development, cardiac disease, respiratory and genetic disorders.

Program Transitions

On February 2, 2009, all FCPHN data entry was transitioned from CAMIS to the new FamLink system. Processing time per enrolled child rose during February through June of 2009 to an average of 17-20 hours due to multiple new variables, including:

1) FamLink is unable to produce the FCPHN Comprehensive Health Report. The program was unable to produce reports from February through April 2009. A temporary, interim template was created, which allowed modified product completion to resume at the end of April. The temporary document does not contain all of the database information, and the PHN is required to manually replicate pertinent data into the temporary document. A permanent system resolution is in process.
2) Comprehensive medical data is now significantly more time consuming to enter, due to screen processing time, and pending system revisions.
3) Medicaid claims data now requires more time to access organize and view in order to research probable medical record sources.
4) Health data converted from CAMIS to FamLink requires significant editing to maintain data integrity and return it to a codifiable format.
5) Non-health professional-entered data requires PHN editing once medically confirmed via medical records obtained.
6) FCPHN are unable to view the comprehensive data collectively, in order to compile nursing recommendations after data entry.
7) Overall DCFS learning curve with FamLink social worker case assignments, unexpected case closures and case participant connections.

Wherever possible, temporary work-arounds have been identified and implemented to increase services and production, pending resolution of functionality issues.

Summary

During FY 2009, the following services were provided

Service	Year Total
Passports & temporary FCPHN Comprehensive Health Reports	*2,994
Health Education/PHN Consultations	1,264
Case Finding & Referral Encounters	**140
Agency Liaison Services	***200
* See Transition factors above	
**Child-specific consultation encountered when serving another child	
***Interagency coordination to assist social worker and/or caregiver in accessing services	

The chart below provides information on the number of Comprehensive Health Histories completed for the past three fiscal years [10] [11].

Comprehensive Health Histories Completed by Fiscal Year
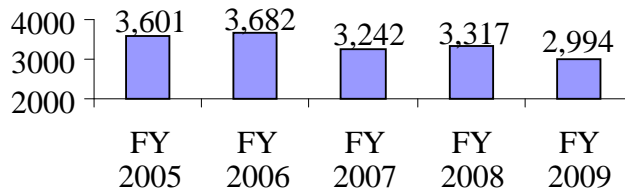
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served; CA and the FCPHN are now providing services to the children most in need of the service.

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[10] Children's Administration Passport Hand count

[11] Referral criteria changed in FY 07 data prior to this year reflects a broader referral criteria