



DCFS ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2021

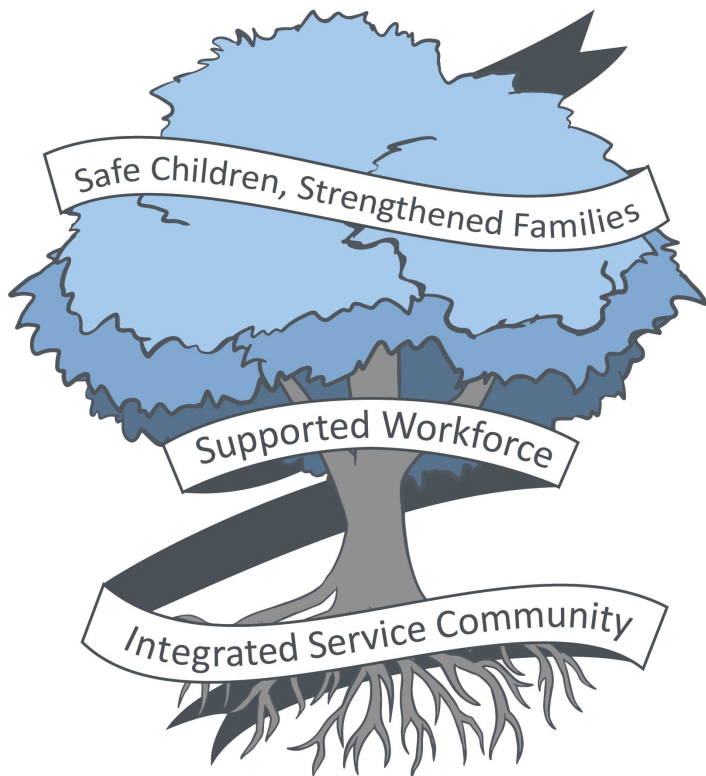
utah department of
human services
CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES

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The data in this report is measured by state fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) unless otherwise stated.

For a copy of this report, or to find previous annual reports please go to dcfs.utah.gov. For questions about this report please contact DCFS Public Information Officer Sarah Welliver at swelliver@utah.gov.

Utah Division of Child and Family Services



Safe Children

Safety is the reason we exist. The mission of the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is to keep children safe from abuse and neglect through the strengthening of families.

Strengthened Families

A child's physical and emotional well-being largely exists within the context of the adults in their life. When a family is strengthened through individualized, trauma-informed, community-based services that are both safety driven and family driven, an environment that promotes child safety and well-being is created.

Supported Workforce

Our most important resource in achieving success with children and families is our staff. They enter the lives of children and families at times of crisis and vulnerability. The professionalism and skill of our staff in engaging, teaming, assessing, planning, and intervening with children and families are essential to good outcomes. Due to the complex and critical nature of child welfare, our community expects and deserves a well trained, experienced, ethical, compassionate, and supported workforce.

Integrated Service Community

DCFS is not the child welfare system — we are the child welfare agency within a much larger social service continuum. Our ability to provide timely, effective, and extensive services to our most vulnerable populations is integrated within a robust network of legal partners and private and public community providers. We also provide Domestic Violence Services.

Utah Division of Child and Family Services

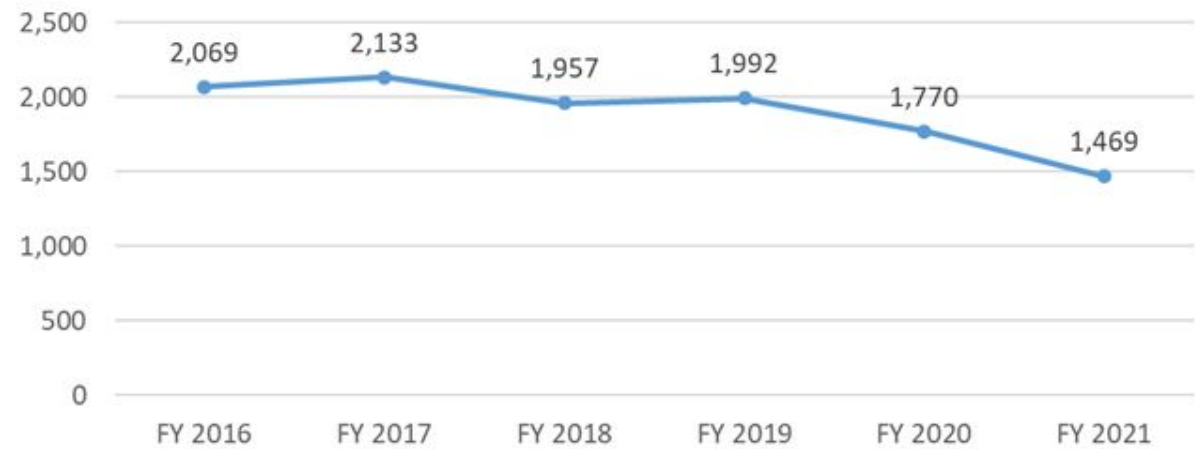
Working toward a system that safely preserves families

Approximately 2 of every 1,000 children* will enter foster care in Utah (national rate is 3:1,000). Our concerted efforts to strengthen families in safely caring for their children is seen in the reduction of children entering foster care (top graph) combined with children experiencing a slight decrease in repeat maltreatment (bottom graph).

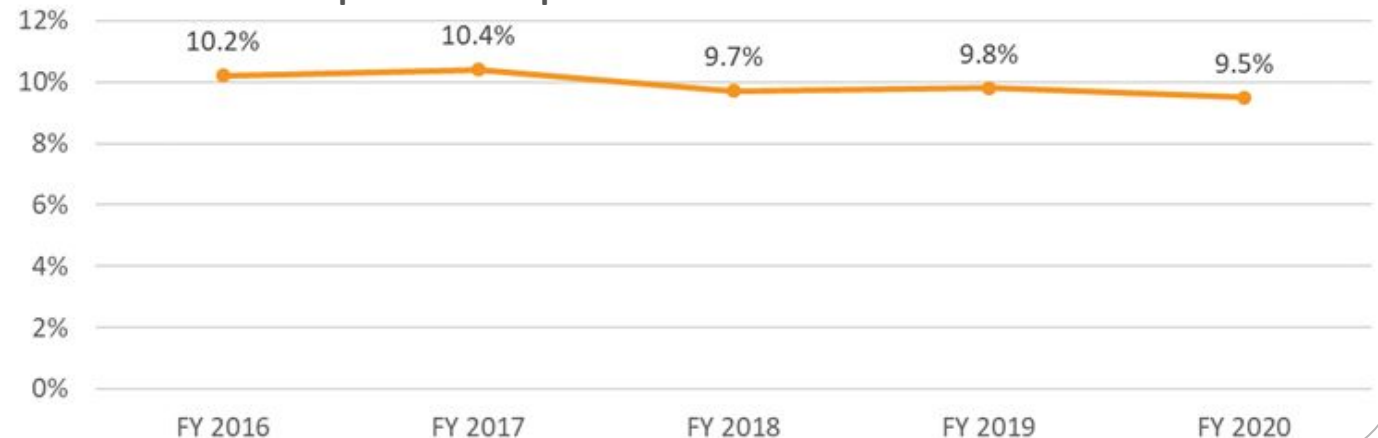
Our goal is to create child safety without introducing the trauma, loss, and grief of separating families whenever possible. This data shows continued progress towards that goal as more victims of abuse and neglect were able to remain in their own homes and children overall experienced increased ongoing safety.

*Based on [2019 National Kids Count](https://datacenter.kidscount.org) data, datacenter.kidscount.org.

Number of Children Entering Foster Care



Percent of Children Confirmed as Victims of Abuse or Neglect Who Experienced Repeat Maltreatment within 12 months



Family Engagement

The moment Child Protective Services (CPS) becomes involved with a family, our goal is to assess for safety concerns, work with the family to create a safety plan, and provide effective interventions that promote child safety and strengthen parents.

9,062

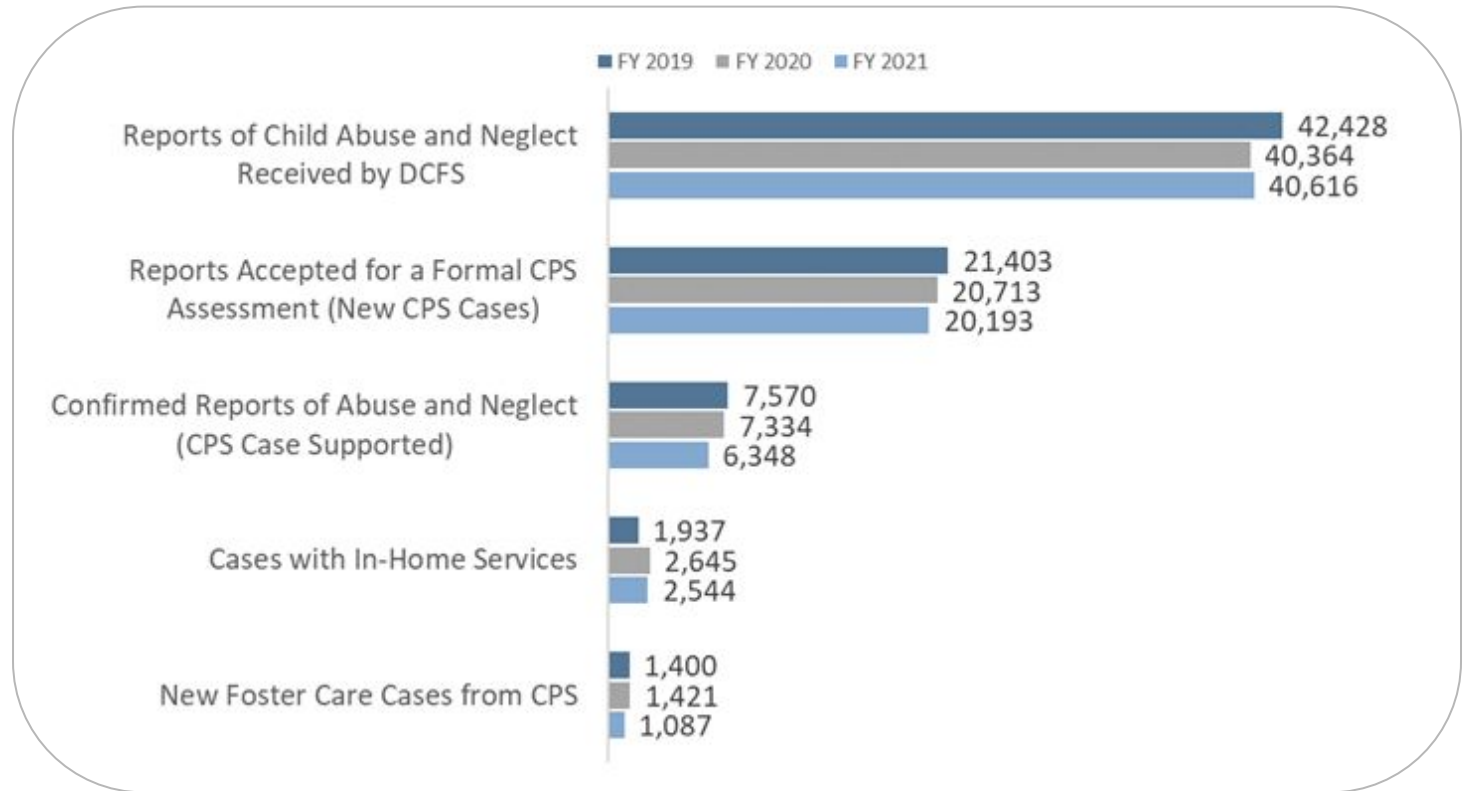
Children confirmed as victims of abuse or neglect.

7,089

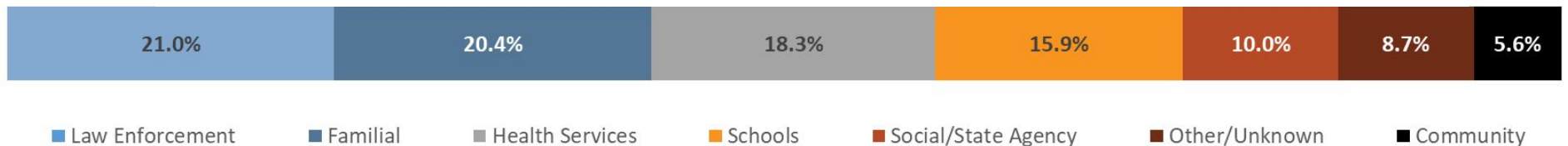
Children confirmed as victims with referrals to community services without further DCFS involvement.

90.5%

Children confirmed as victims of abuse or neglect did not experience repeat maltreatment within 12 months.



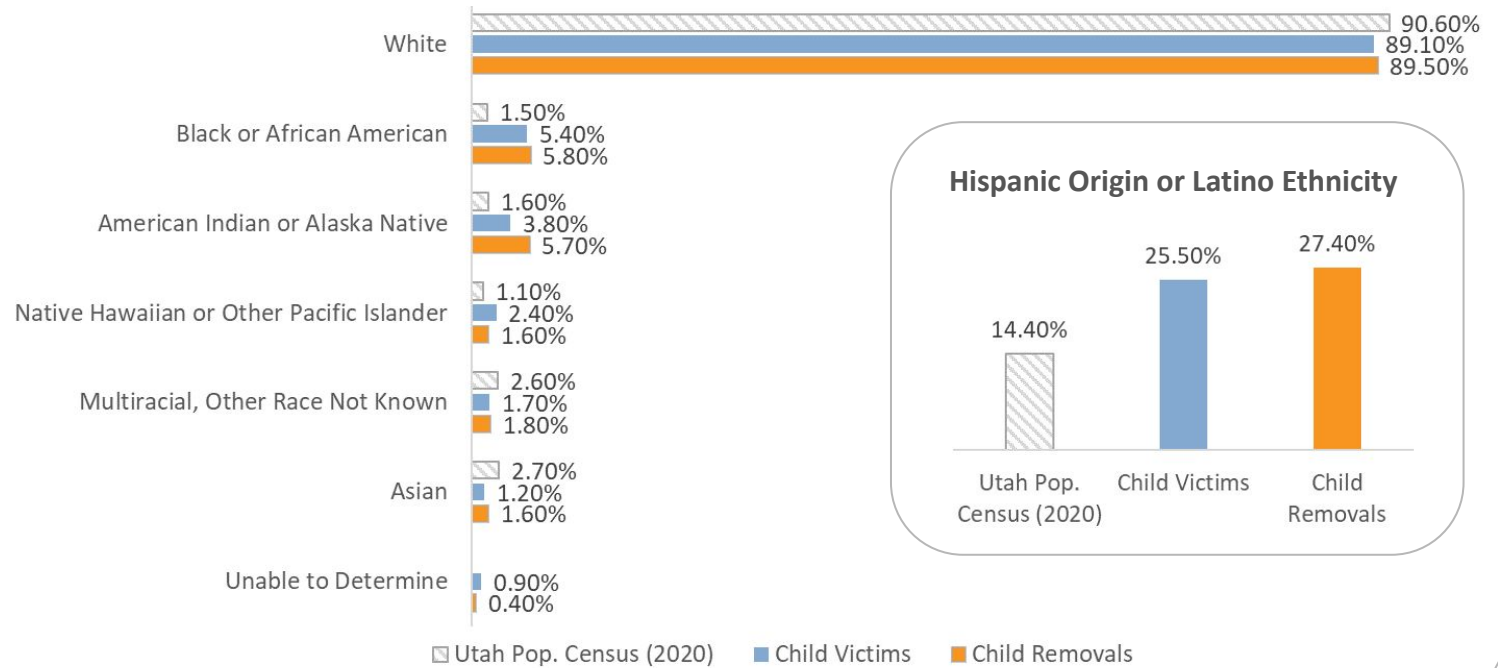
Sources of CPS Reports of Abuse and Neglect Accepted for Assessment During FY 2021



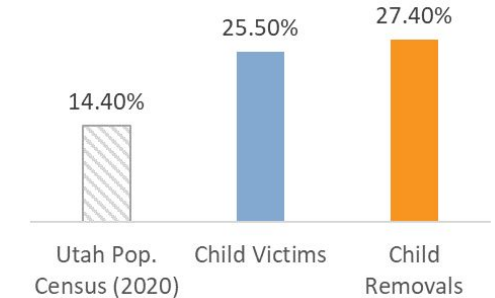
We continue to be committed to the diligent assessment and understanding of the intersection of complex social factors with child abuse and neglect in order to ensure equity for the children and families.

Currently we are partnering with both Casey Family Programs and the University of Utah's Social Research Institute to better analyze and address issues related to racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparity of outcomes.

Race Among Children Confirmed as Victims and Child Removals, FY 2021*



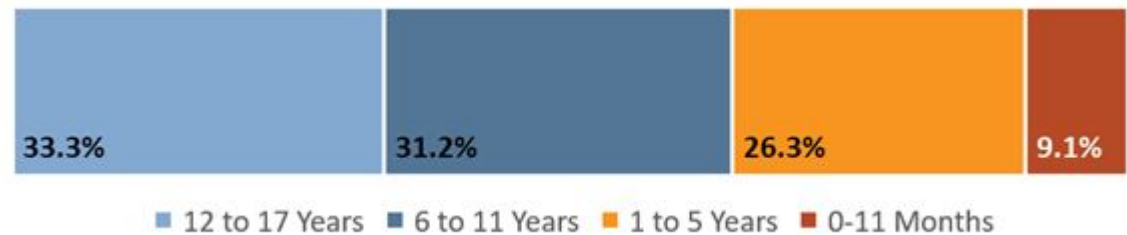
Hispanic Origin or Latino Ethnicity



*Total Utah population is taken from the 2020 Census and included for context.

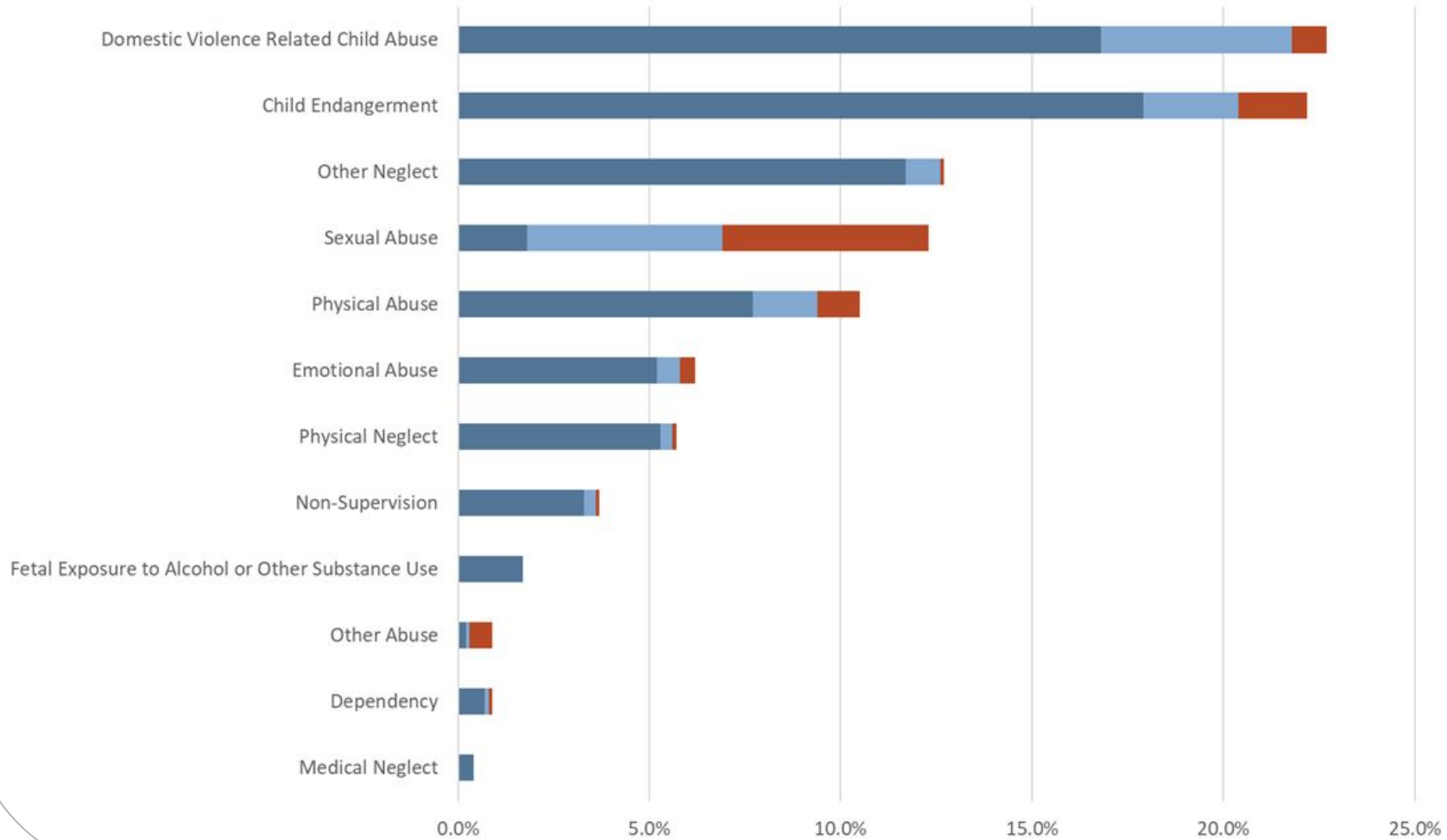
Recommended reading: Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). [Child welfare practice to address racial disproportionality and disparity](#). U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

Percent of Children Confirmed as Victims by Age Group, FY 2021



Confirmed Allegations by Type and Relationship of Individual Responsible for Abuse or Neglect to Child, FY 2021

■ Parent ■ Relative ■ Other Non-Related



Other Neglect includes: Abandonment, educational neglect, failure to protect, failure to thrive, sibling/child at risk. **Other Abuse** includes: Dealing in material harmful to a child, human trafficking (sexual), lewdness, sexual exploitation.

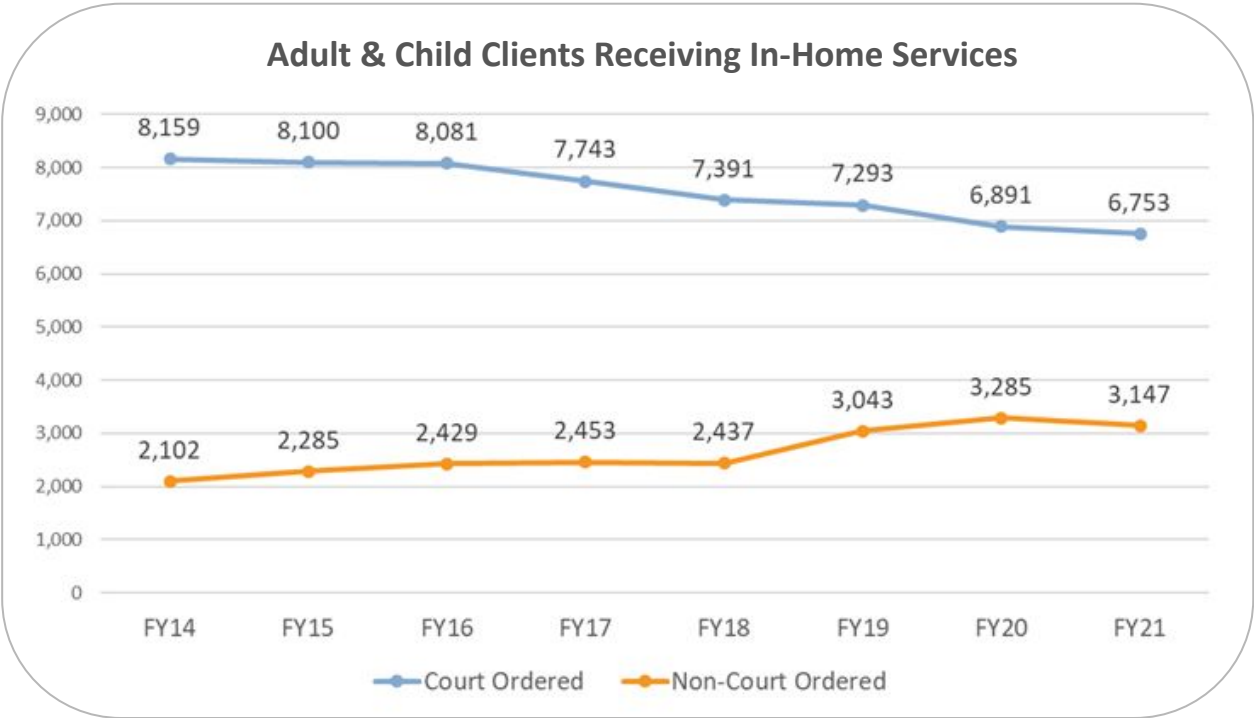
PLEASE NOTE: Percentages shown in the chart above are based on the total number of allegations. Each individual case may include multiple allegations. The total number of allegations in FY 2021 was 13,993.

The goal of in-home services is to keep children safely at home while addressing abuse or neglect through family-driven, solution-focused interventions.

In-home services can include:

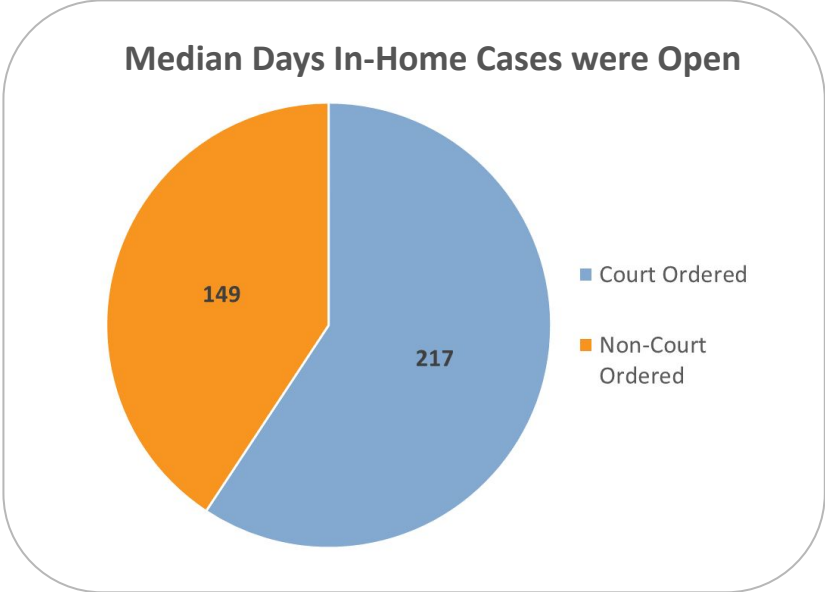
- Child and Family Team Meetings that bring the family, members of their support system, and service providers together to help set solution-focused goals to address safety concerns.
- Developing child safety plans with the family to address and manage safety concerns.
- Linking the family to evidence-based community resources including mental health treatment, parenting skills, and substance use disorder treatment.

In some situations safety can be achieved when a family works collaboratively and voluntarily with DCFS to address risk factors. At other times these services are court ordered to ensure the best outcomes for children and their families.



2,544
Total number of in-home services cases for Fiscal Year 2021.

90.5%
In-home child clients who did not have a subsequent supported CPS case within 12 months of case closure (based on prior year's case closures reported in FY 2021).



Of the **1,471** children who were removed in fiscal year 2021, **79%** involved substance use as a safety concern.

We recognize substance use disorders as a health crisis that affects countless Utah families. The majority of cases requiring a child welfare intervention involve substance use.

Our goal is always for the child to remain in the home whenever safely possible while we work to connect the parent or caregiver to services to address any contributing factors. In doing so we help build a parent's long-term capacity to safely care for their children through substance use disorder and mental health treatment in their communities.

32.1%

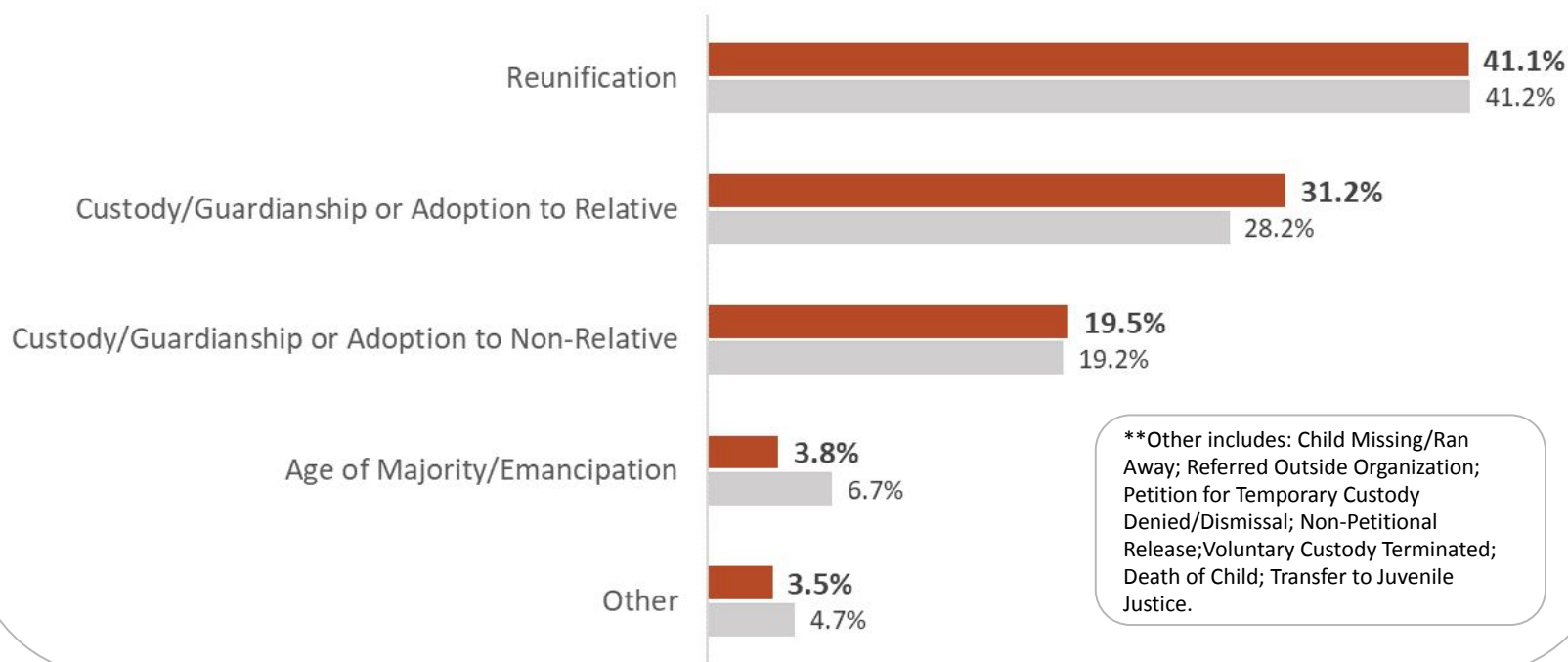
Confirmed cases of abuse and neglect that involve substance use disorder.

3.9%

Cases that involve a confirmed allegation of fetal exposure to alcohol or other substance use.

Reasons Children Exited Foster Care by Case Count During FY 2021, Substance Use Related Foster Care Cases vs. No Substance Use

■ Substance use related foster care case ■ All foster care cases



****Other includes:** Child Missing/Ran Away; Referred Outside Organization; Petition for Temporary Custody Denied/Dismissal; Non-Petitional Release; Voluntary Custody Terminated; Death of Child; Transfer to Juvenile Justice.

When children are unable to safely remain in their own homes, foster care can act as a temporary intervention until children can be safely reunited with their family.

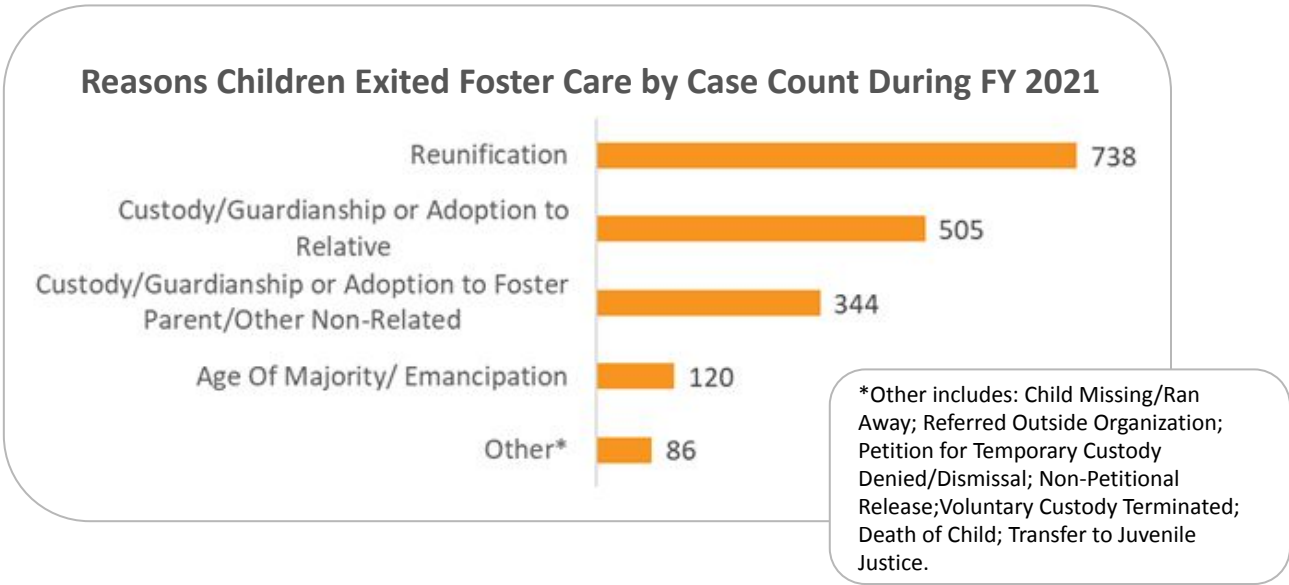
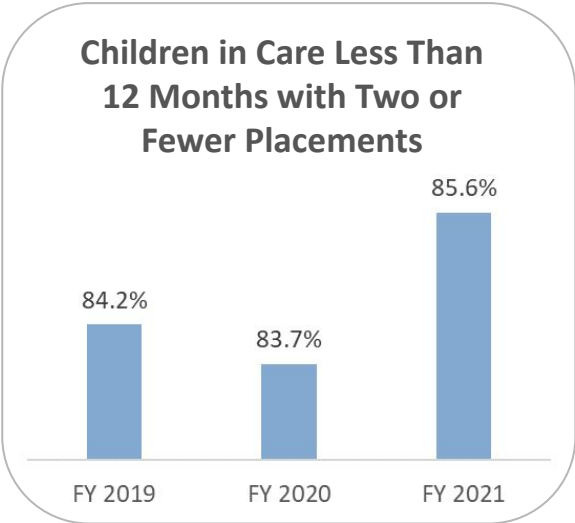
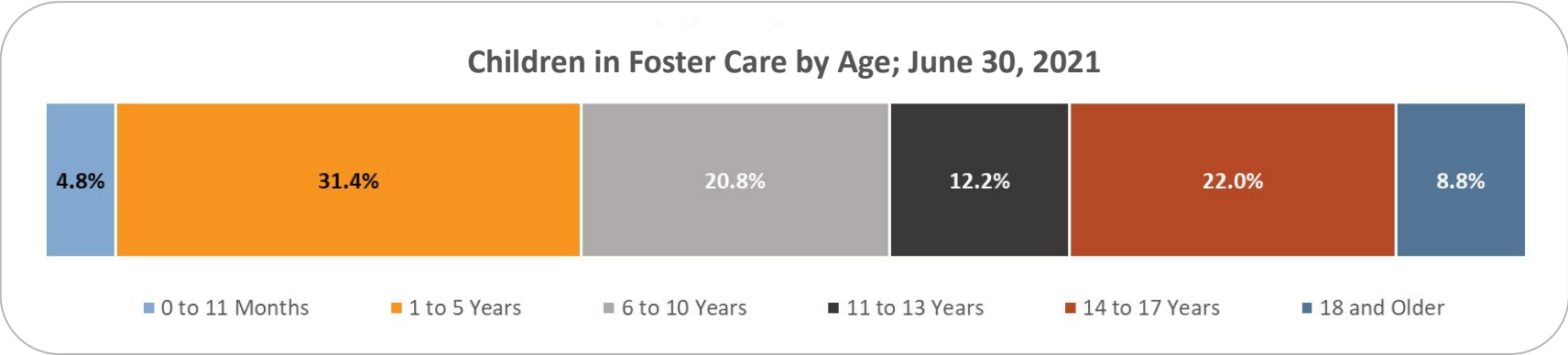
Whenever possible, placement with a non-custodial parent, relative or friend is priority in order to lessen the trauma of removal, and keep children connected to their family, community and culture.

3,902

Total children served in foster care at some point during the fiscal year.

92.6%

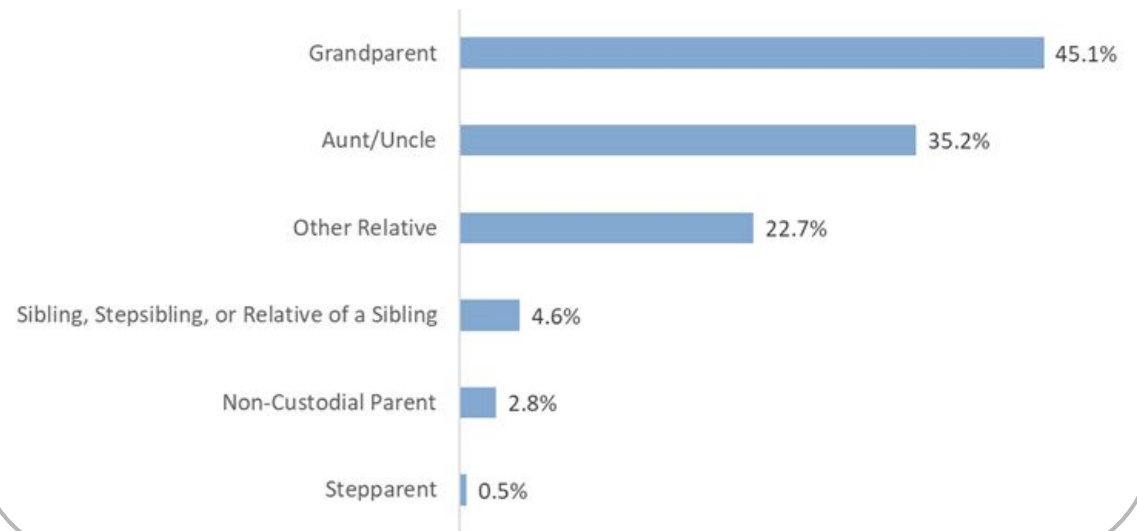
Children whose foster care cases closed during previous fiscal year who did not re-enter care in FY 2021.



Placement with family best reduces trauma and preserves a child’s connection to their culture, biology, ancestry, and community.

Kinship care allows a child to stay in the care of a family member or friend who is willing to meet the child’s needs, including working with the child’s parent(s) toward reunification, or providing a permanent home.

Relationship of Kinship Caregiver to Children Placed in Kinship Care during FY 2021



1,813

Children served in kinship placement.

89.7%

Children who exited foster care to a relative and did not re-enter foster care within 12 months.

94.85%

Children who exited foster care to a relative and did not have a supported CPS case within 12 months.

Children Served in a Kinship Placement, FY 2010 - FY 2021



Recommended reading: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2017. *Needs of Kinship Care Families and Pediatric Practice*. Administration on Child, Youth and Families; 2021. *Achieving Permanency for the Well-being of Children and Youth*.

Every child deserves safety, stability and permanency.

Continued efforts to find meaningful, loving, permanent, and safe living environments are critical for children who enter into foster care. For children who cannot reunify safely with their family, adoption services can connect children to a home through relatives, families who fostered them, or other families seeking to adopt.

Youth who exit foster care without a permanent home need added supports.

No service can replace the stability and connection of a family. We provide assistance to youth ages 14 to 21 and continue to work with community partners toward reunification, kinship care, or adoption until youth leave our care.

The Transition to Adulthood Living (TAL) program utilizes a network of organizations to offer services including academic mentoring, financial planning, career preparation, and limited financial assistance until youth reach age 23 (this was temporarily extended to age 27 due to the pandemic).

12 months

Median time in care for children who exited foster care to reunification.

20 months

Median time in care for children who exited foster care to adoption.

1,120

Youth aged 14 and older served in foster care.

Point in Time Count of Children in Foster Care +24 Months June 30, 2021



During the pandemic, concern for those youth exiting care greatly increased due to the financial stressors and health concerns our communities were experiencing. TAL coordinators worked to strengthen outreach and connect qualifying individuals to available after care supports, including assistance with rent, food, education, bills and other needs. Health and safety concerns related to COVID-19 also resulted in court delays, in some instances extending a youth's time in care.

Supporting Family Well-being

Prevention of child abuse and neglect is a focus of DCFS through local community-based services that include:

- Parenting classes
- 6 evidence-based home visitation programs
- Statewide community and school-based education presentations
- Support to grandparents raising grandchildren
- 17 crisis nurseries in local Family Support Centers across the state

More than \$3.1 million of federal and state funds were provided through DCFS for these community-based prevention services in FY 2021.

By supporting Utah's network of community services focused on the health and wellbeing of all Utahns, we assist in upstream efforts that can strengthen the children and families we serve, and positively affect prevention through the actively addressing the social determinants of child maltreatment.

Domestic Violence Services

Connecting adults affected by domestic violence to trauma-informed services also enhances stability, safety and permanency for children. Domestic violence services provided by local shelter and treatment programs with federal and state funding through DCFS include:

- 15 domestic violence shelter
- Trauma-informed therapy, financial planning and safety planning
- Assistance with protective orders
- LINKline domestic violence crisis hotline
- Lethality Assessment Protocol (LAP) program utilized by law enforcement and victims advocates to assist and educate victims
- Trauma-focused treatment for both survivors and offenders

More than \$10.5 million was provided through DCFS for domestic violence services in FY 2021.

31,451

Number of calls from the LINKline crisis hotline received by shelters.

3,168

Number of adult and child clients served in domestic violence shelters.

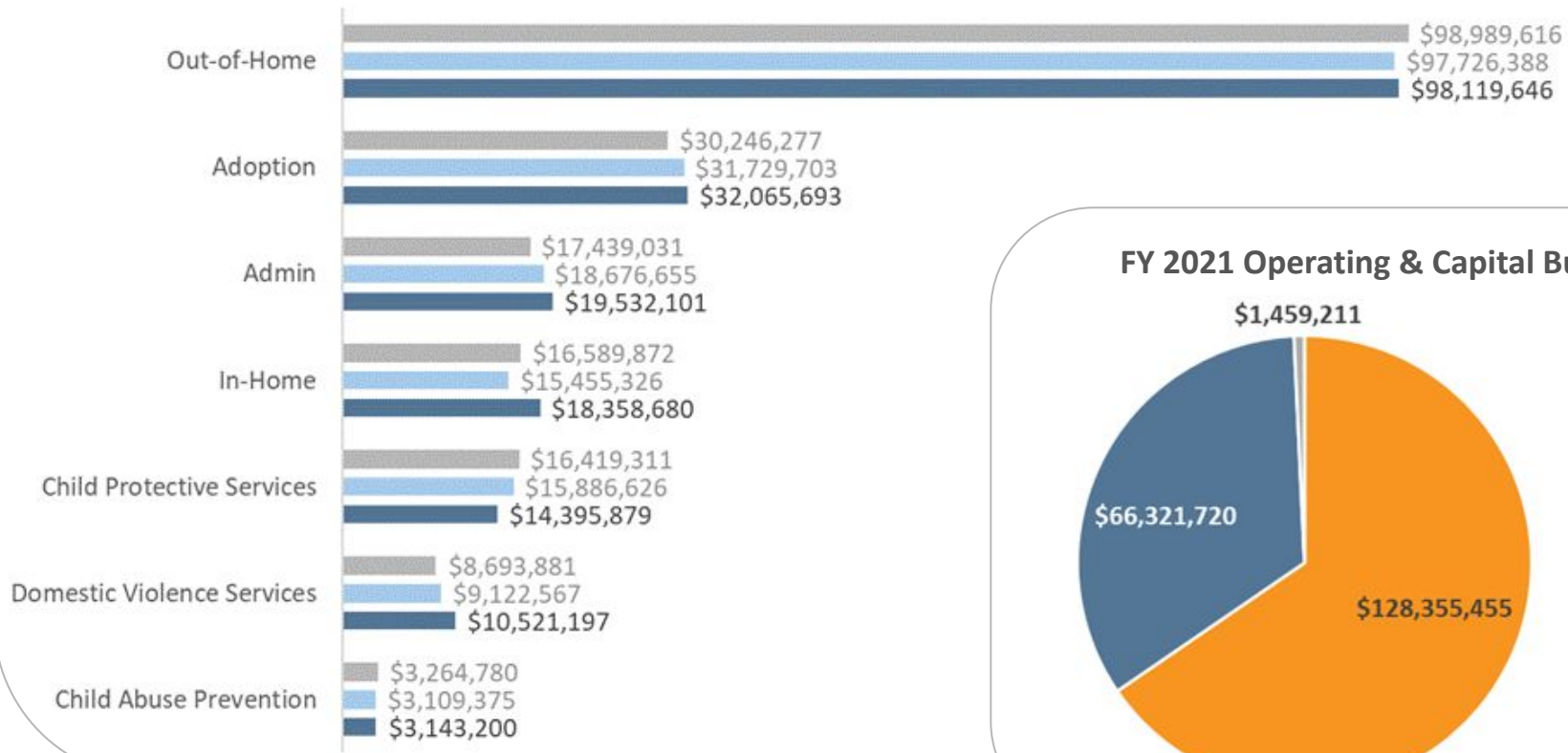


The budget for the division is primarily made up of a mix of state general fund, federal funds and dedicated credits. The following four general fund restricted accounts are appropriated by the Legislature and distributed through DCFS for services that focus on child abuse prevention and treatment programs, adoption, health and education programs for women and children, and domestic violence services:

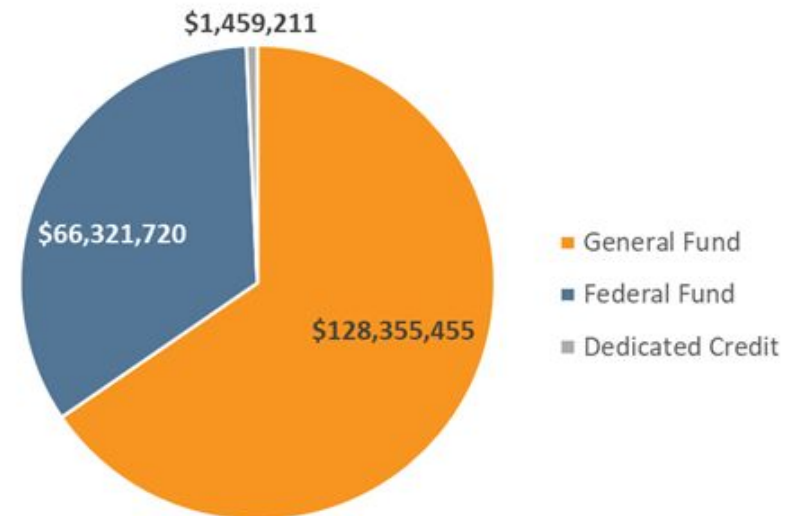
- Children’s Account
- Choose Life Adoption Support Restricted Account
- National Professional Men’s Basketball Team Support Women and Children Issues Restricted Account
- Victims of Domestic Violence Services Account

DCFS Actual Expenditures by Program

■ 2019 ■ 2020 ■ 2021



FY 2021 Operating & Capital Budget Sources

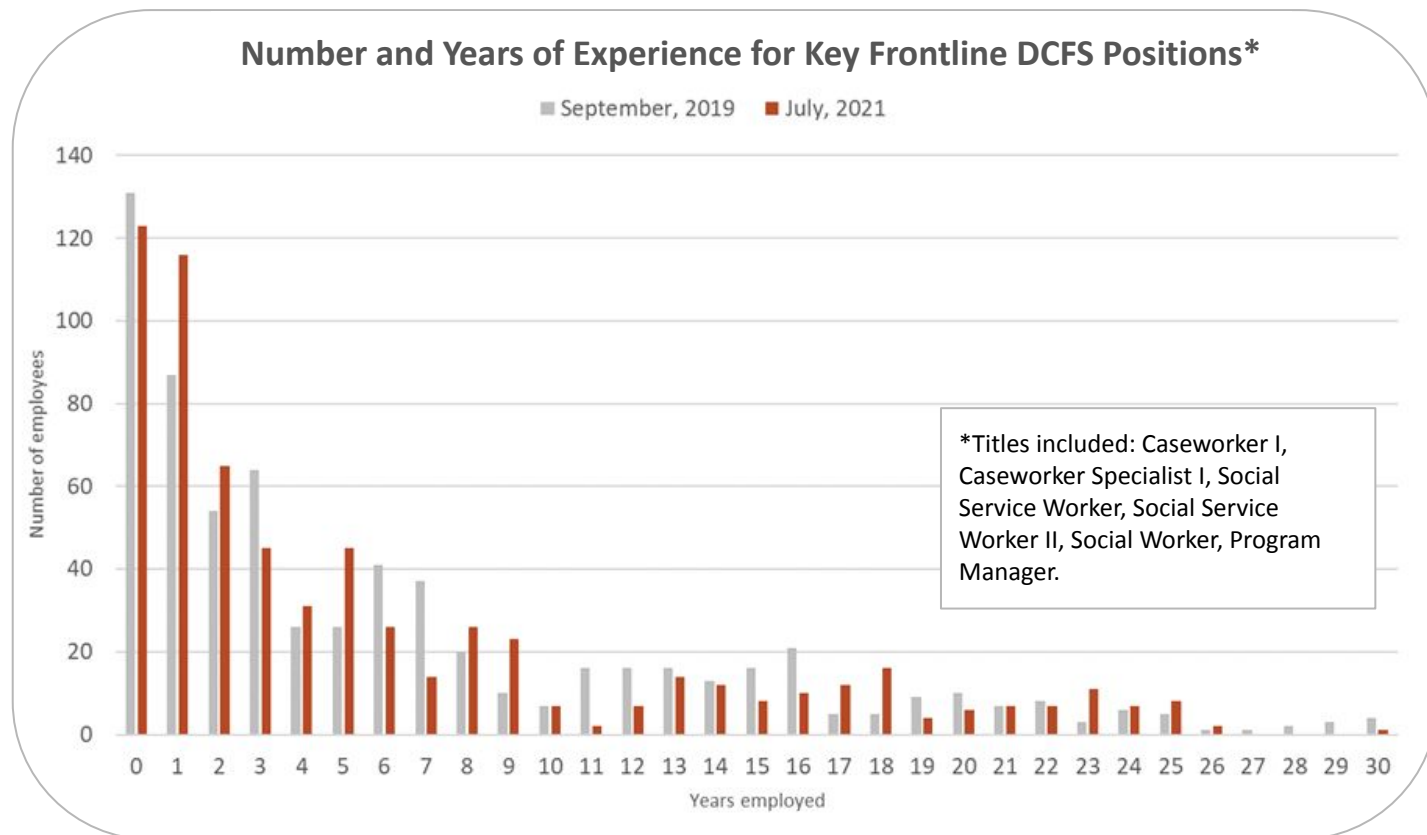


During Fiscal Year 2021, 146 new employees completed the required hours of training.

Required training includes:

- All DCFS direct service staff are required to complete 120 hours of in-class Practice Model Training and 40 hours of supervised field experience before they can work independently with families.
- Within 90 days of hire, direct services staff are required to complete a web-based 4th and 14th Amendments training.
- Within one year of hire, direct service staff are required to complete an Indian Child Welfare Act course, and a one-day Trauma Informed Care training.

After the first year, direct services staff are required to complete a minimum of 20 hours of additional annual training.



1,018 Total number of DCFS staff at end of FY 2021.	665 DCFS staff in key frontline positions at end of FY 2021.	46% DCFS staff in key frontline positions at end of FY 2021 with >3 years of experience.	34.4% Turnover for key frontline DCFS positions during FY 2021.
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Support from the governor’s office and state lawmakers during the 2021 Legislative Session led to a \$5 million investment in DCFS frontline staff. These funds meant to address caseworker recruitment and retention went into effect July 2021. DCFS has instituted initial changes that support increased compensation and improved professional development. DCFS will continue to track and adapt this important investment in frontline staff to increase recruitment and retention of these key positions.

A Fully Integrated Child Welfare System

As Utah's child-welfare and legal communities work toward a fully integrated child-welfare system that is focused on best practices, we are united in our commitment to protecting children and strengthening families. As such, we have come together to develop the following core principles that reflect our overarching goals of child safety, well-being, and permanency.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THE FOLLOWING:

- 1 Our interventions preserve and create safe family and community connections in ways that minimize loss, harm, and disruption.
- 2 Children and families receive early, intensive family engagement, advocacy, and access to services and supports.
- 3 All participants are empowered and valued within a trauma-informed environment that amplifies family voice.
- 4 Children and families are served by highly-skilled professionals, including the judiciary, attorneys, child-welfare staff, foster parents, and other community partners.
- 5 All participants experience hearings and judicial orders that are consistent, of high quality, embody best practices, and afford all participants due process of law.
- 6 All participants are committed to providing families with an experience that is safety-driven, compassionate, transparent, and forward-moving.
- 7 Our interventions in the lives of children and families will be effective and individualized regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, cultural heritage, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

These core principles embody a collaborative, cross-system, statewide child-welfare transformation, supported by the following Utah child-welfare professionals:

- Board of Juvenile Court Judges
- Juvenile Court Improvement Program
- Office of Guardian ad Litem and Court Appointed Special Advocates
- Department of Human Services
- Utah Attorney General's Office, Child Protection Division
- Parental Defense Alliance of Utah
- Division of Child and Family Services
- Lokken & Associates, P.C.