Annual Report 2012

Child and Family Services
Department of Human Services
State of Utah

Gary Herbert, Governor

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This document was prepared by Utah's Division of Child and Family Services.

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This report is available on line at:

Internet Address: http://www.dcfs.utah.gov/reports_forms.htm

Utah Heart Gallery

The children pictured throughout the annual report are youth featured in Utah's adoption Heart Gallery. The Heart Gallery is an event in which youth, who are orphans of the State, are photographed by professional photographers who generously donate their talents, materials, and time to capture the individual personality of each young person. The portraits then become part of a traveling exhibit designed to heighten awareness of the need to find families for our community's forgotten children – older youth and sibling groups without permanent families.

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Director's Message

Once again, we present to you a report full of numbers. As you look at the graphs and read the text remember that the numbers represent people – children and families – who are struggling. Our goal – our vision for Child and Family Services is "Safe Children, Strenghthened Families". That is what we strive for.

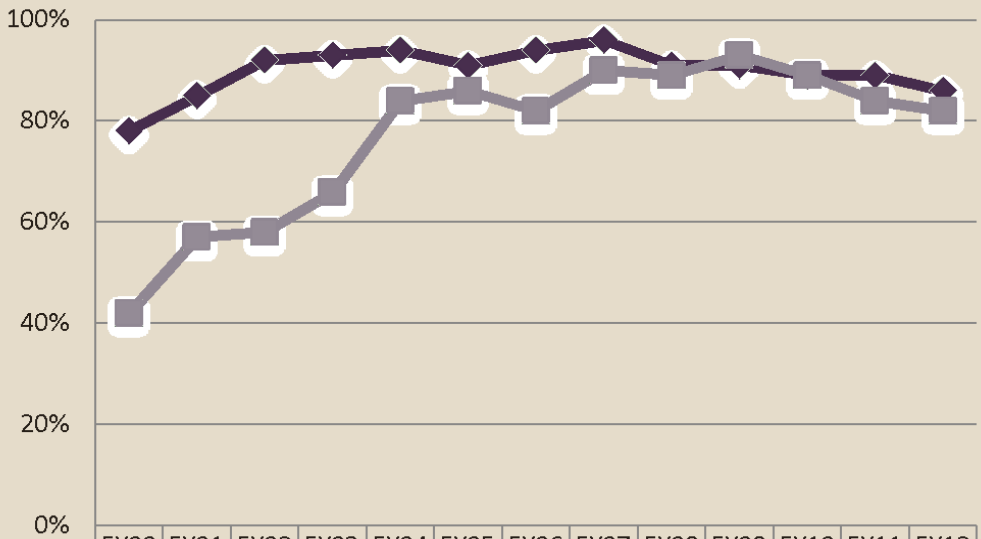
In January 2012, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published a report titled "Analyzing State Differences in Child Well-Being". An index composed of 25 indicators clustered into seven different dimensions of child well-being was used. The dimensions were Family Economic Well-Being, Health, Safe/ Risky Behavior, Education Attainment, Community Engagement, Social Relationships, and Emotional/Spiritual Well-Being. Utah was the fourth highest state in child well-being scores behind New Jersey, Massachusetts and New Hampshire. While our agency alone cannot be responsible for all of these dimensions for every child and family in Utah we must keep in mind that the well-being of children who are abused and neglected includes more than physical safety.

This year we have again had some notable accomplishments. Probably the most worthy of mention is our successful application to receive a Title IV-E waiver from the Federal Administration of Children and Families. This waiver allows us to embark on a Child Welfare Demonstration Project. Utah has chosen to strengthen and increase the In Home Services array with the goal of keeping more children safely in their homes. The project will focus on three areas, which are an improved assessment of a family's needs, tools for the caseworker to use working with a family to increase their protective capacities, and improved community resources for the families we work with. The project will begin in the initial implementation site in the summer of 2013, with full statewide implementation by 2018. In addition, the project will focus on trauma-based treatment for both the parents and the children in the family. We are excited to have this opportunity in Utah (for more information see page 17).

Brent Platt

On the facing page you will find graphs of the findings for the two reviews performed by the Office of Services Review (OSR) for Child and Family Services each year. The top graph is for the Qualitative Case Review (QCR), which measures both status and system preformance as they relate to client outcomes. The bottom graph is for the Case Process Review (CPR), which measures compliance with policy for each of the program areas. You will notice a slight downturn in the numbers for each of the reviews. Part of the decrease is some modification made to both reviews. We are committed to bringing these numbers back up to previous years' scores.

Qualitative Case Review Performance



	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Child and Family Status	78%	85%	92%	93%	94%	91%	94%	96%	91%	91%	89%	89%	86%
System Performance	42%	57%	58%	66%	84%	86%	82%	90%	89%	93%	89%	84%	82%

Case Process Review Performance

Statewide Results		CPS	Unable to Locate	Unaccepted Referrals	Removals	In Home Services	Foster Care Services	Total
FY2011	Sample	651	258	402	460	1006	3035	5812
	Yes answers	617	232	400	276	813	2650	4988
	Partial score	0			0	12.75	12	24.75
	Performance Rate	95%	90%	100%	60%	82%	88%	86%
FY2010	Sample	743	185	438	246	655	3640	5907
	Yes answers	697	147	436	215	540	3307	5342
	Partial score	0			0	21	33	63
	Performance Rate	94%	79%	100%	87%	85%	91%	91%
FY2009	Sample	932	255	396	344	618	3707	6259
	Yes answers	856	211	393	275	518	3365	5622
	Partial score	9			0	21	33	63
	Performance Rate	93%	83%	99%	80%	87%	92%	91%
FY2008	Sample	864	224	396	388	670	3670	6212
	Yes answers	806	201	394	354	534	3354	5643
	Partial score	8.25			0	33.75	12.75	54.75
	Performance Rate	94%	90%	99%	91%	85%	92%	92%
FY2007	Sample	922	216	393	264	716	4014	6525
	Yes answers	862	206	392	251	607	3629	5947
	Partial score	3.75				30.09	53.17	87.01
	Performance Rate	94%	95%	100%	95%	89%	92%	92%

Prevention

DCFS provides nearly $3,000,000.00 from four different funding streams to help community partners with Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention by building protective factors to strengthening families. The 5 protective factors are:

- parental resilience
- social connections
- knowledge of parenting and child development
- concrete supports in times of need
- healthy social and emotional development of children

Families thrive when protective factors are strong in their lives and communities.

One of the programs DCFS helps to fund is Crisis Respite Nurseries. There are 14 located around Utah:

- St. George, Cedar City, and Richfield - **Southwest Region**
- Moab, Price, and Roosevelt - **Eastern Region**
- Orem - **Western Region**
- Midvale, Sugarhouse, and West Valley - **Salt Lake Region**
- Clearfield, Ogden, Box Elder, and Logan - **Northern Region**

Each Crisis Respite Nursery is designed to provide a safe, homelike environment where caregivers can bring their children, ages 0-11 years, during times of stress. The primary purpose of the Nursery is child abuse prevention. Examples of possible reasons for using the nursery include: medical emergencies, financial stress, family violence, divorce, parenting difficulties, and previous abuse issues. The Nursery is not designed for use as a daycare.

We also grant money to help fund other Community based prevention programs. These programs provide the following services:

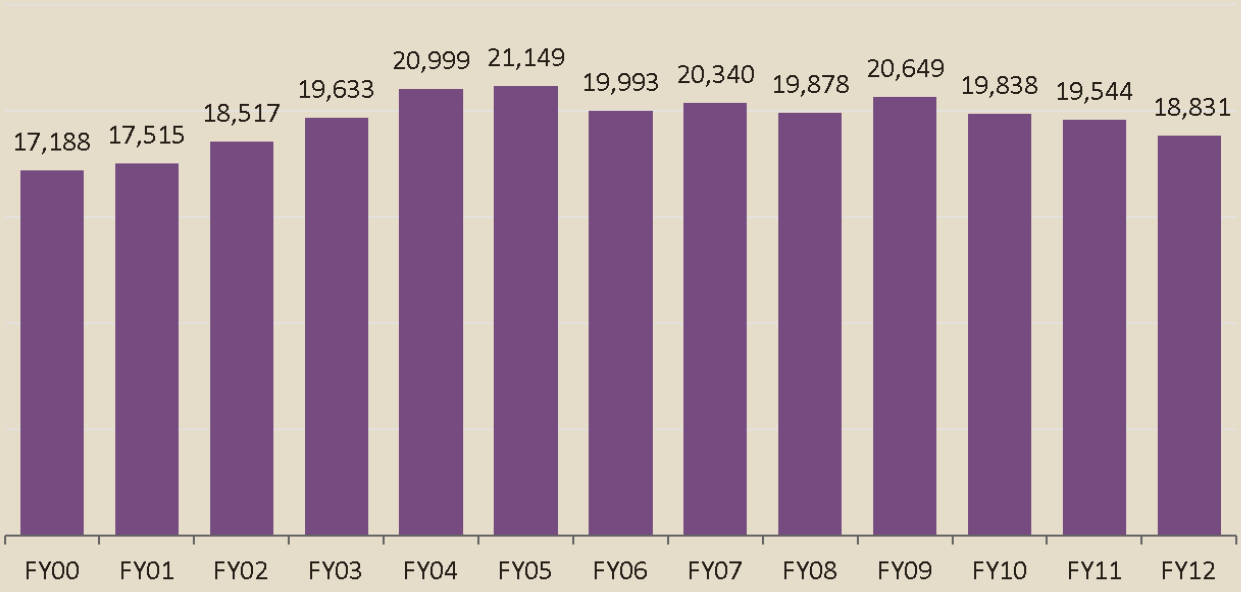
- Family Counseling
- Prevention conference
- Community Café training
- Media Campaign for Child Abuse Prevention month
- Personal body safety presentations for schools offered statewide
- Community presentations
- Parenting classes including targeting the refugee populations in Salt Lake
- Parenting classes for families raising grandchildren
- Home Visiting for high risk parents
- Home based parenting and support
- Resource booklets for Salt Lake County
- Autism-focused parenting classes
- Parent outreach
- Media Expansion for prevention programs
- After-school support for youth
- Expansion of the “Help Me Grow” project to Salt Lake and in Utah County

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) responds to reports concerning potential abuse, neglect, or dependency of children in the community. There is now a statewide toll-free number to call to report allegations of child abuse or neglect. The number - (855) 323-3237 - is toll-free from anywhere in the state. Centralized Intake operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Child Protective Services investigated 18,831 cases in FY12. Of those 6,531 (35 percent) were supported. The referrals that were not investigated were either requesting information or determined not to fit the Utah definition of abuse or neglect, many of which were referred to community resources.

Number of CPS Cases Investigated

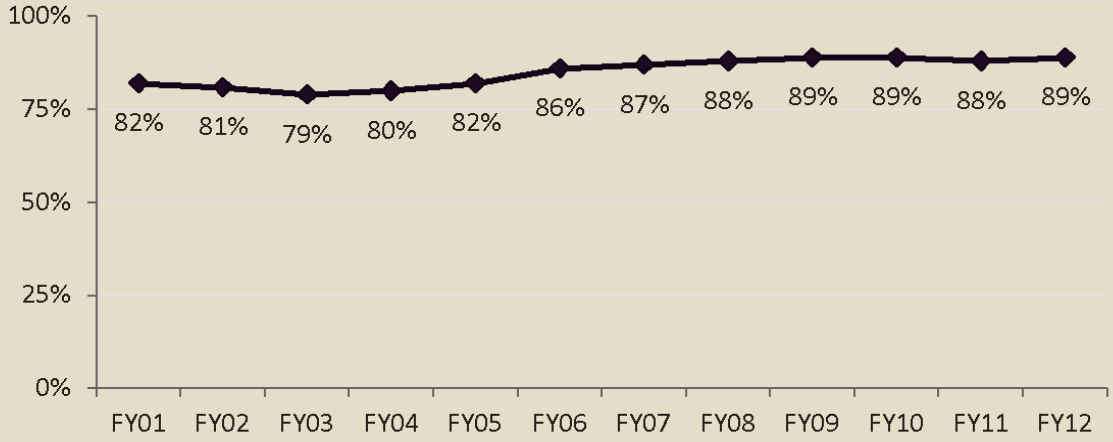


Before a referral is determined to be "unaccepted", the Intake worker refers to statute definitions for abuse, neglect and dependency, and policies and procedures that guide how the case is staffed, identifies documentation needed, and recommends required actions. The Case Process Review (CPR) looks at referrals that were not accepted and if the actions of the Intake worker met policy requirements.

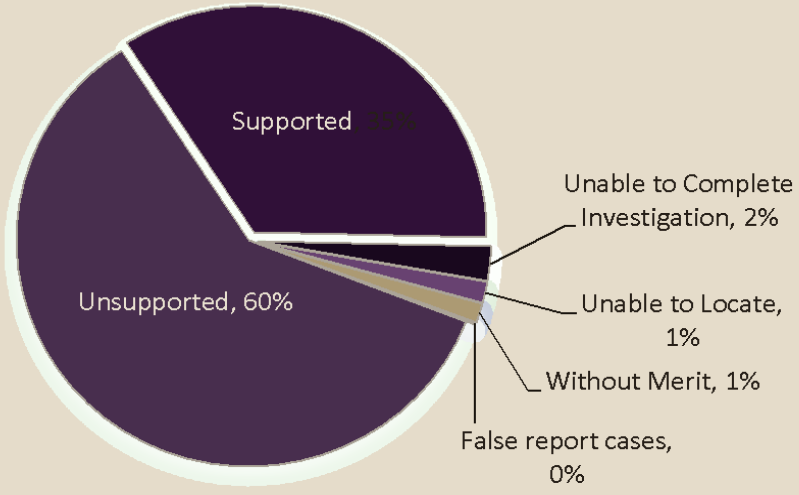
	Goal	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Was the nature of the referral documented?	85%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Did the Intake worker staff the referral with the supervisor or other Intake CPS worker?	85%	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%	100%	99%
Does the documentation adequately support the decision to accept the referral?	85%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	98%

Based on the information given by the referent, Intake workers prioritize cases based on the risk of harm to the child. Priority 1 involves cases where there is an imminent threat to the safety and well-being of a child. Priority 2 is assigned to cases where the child is at risk of further abuse or neglect or the child has immediate protection and safety needs. Priority 3 is assigned to cases where there is an allegation of abuse or neglect that does not require an immediate response. The three priority levels have required time frames for face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim.

Timeliness of Investigation



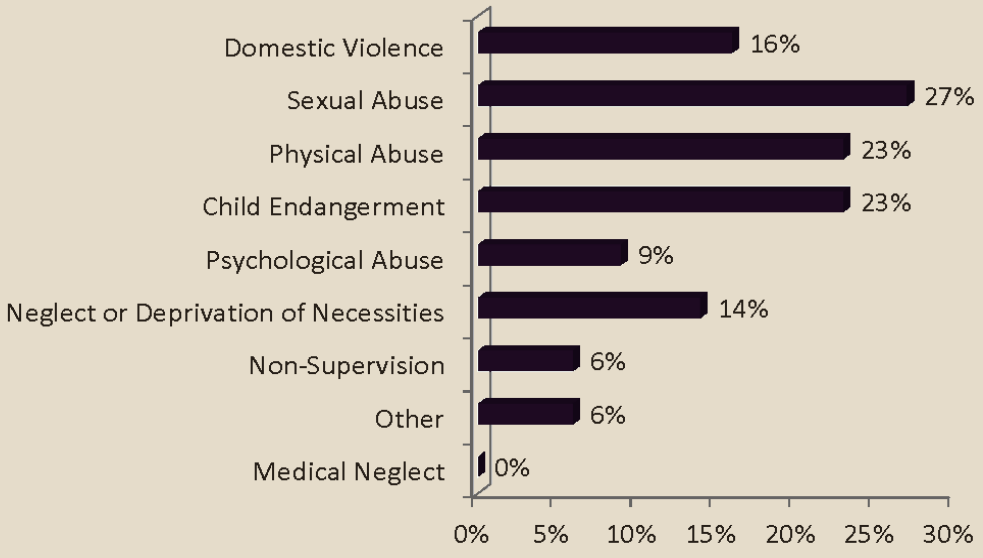
Results of Investigations



Seventy-three percent of families who had a supported case of abuse or neglect were referred to community services. Of the supported child victims, 15 percent received subsequent In-Home Services and 15 percent received subsequent Foster Care Services from Child and Family Services.

During FY 2012, Sexual Abuse was the most frequently supported allegation category. The "Other" allegation category includes allegations of Safe Relinquishment of a Newborn Child, Dependency, and Failure to Protect. Note that one case may have more than one supported allegation; therefore, the percentages in the chart below add up to more than 100 percent.

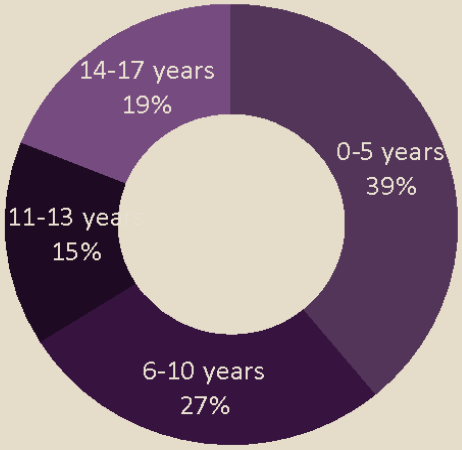
Percent of Allegation Type for Supported CPS Cases



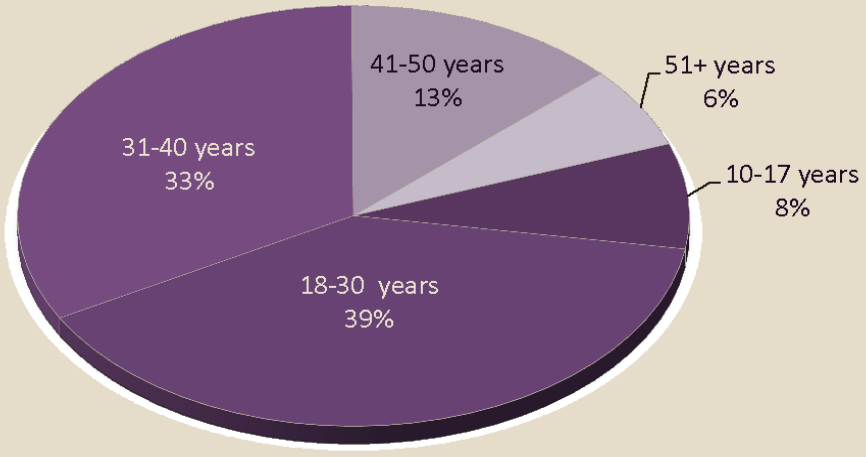
Thirty-one percent of supported abuse or neglect cases had alcohol or drug abuse as a contributing factor as reported by caseworkers, the same level as last two years.

Of the total abused and neglected children, 9,359, in FY 2012, 54 percent were female and 46 percent were male. Approximately 73 percent of perpetrators are the victim's parents, and 16 percent are other relatives.

Victims by Age



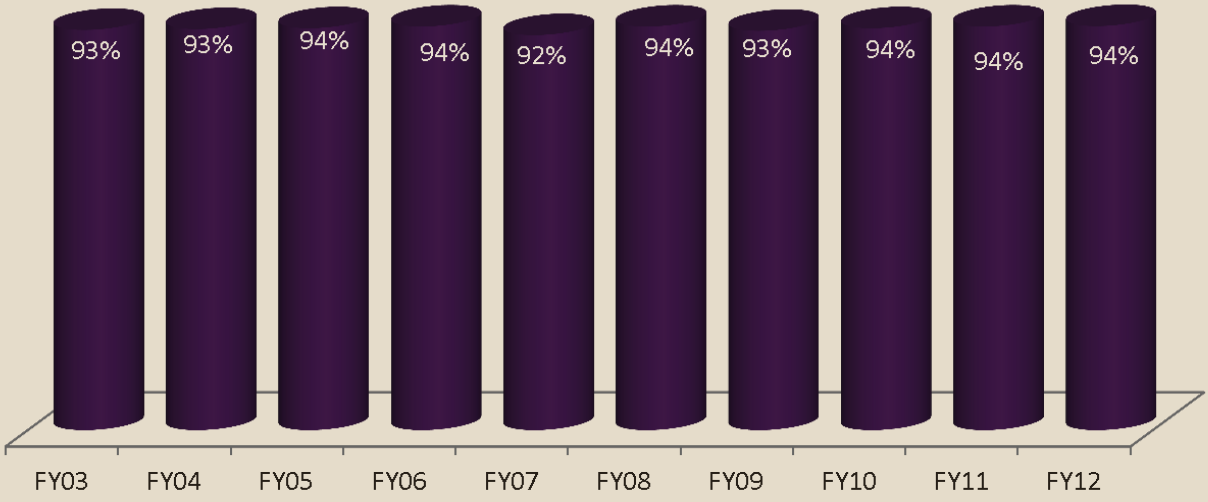
Perpetrators by Age



Outcomes

Recidivism occurs when a child who had previously been found to be a victim of a supported allegation of abuse or neglect at some time in the past is a victim in a new investigation because of a new allegation. If a caseworker determines that the child is at-risk and intervention is required, CPS caseworkers, in partnership with a variety of community-based organizatios such as education, governmental, non-profit, faith-based, tribal, have the ability to provide a wide range of support to the family and child. A new Safety Decision Making (SDM) Risk Assessment has been implemented in an effort to target those families who would benefit the most from services and thus reduce the number of children experiencing additional abuse or neglect.

Percent of Supported Victims Who Do Not Experience Repeat Maltreatment within Six Months



Initiatives

In the coming year we will continue to implement SDM tools for assessing safety and risk of harm to be used during investigations. In addition, a Qualitative Case Review (QCR) for CPS is in the developmental stages with a plan to pilot it in FY 2013.

Domestic Violence Services

Domestic Violence is defined as a pattern of abusive behaviors by one partner against another in an intimate relationship such as marriage, dating, family, or cohabitation. Domestic violence, so defined, has many forms, including physical aggression or assault (hitting, kicking, biting, shoving, restraining, slapping, throwing objects), or threats thereof; sexual abuse; emotional abuse; controlling or domineering; intimidation; stalking; passive/ covert abuse (e.g., neglect); and economic deprivation.

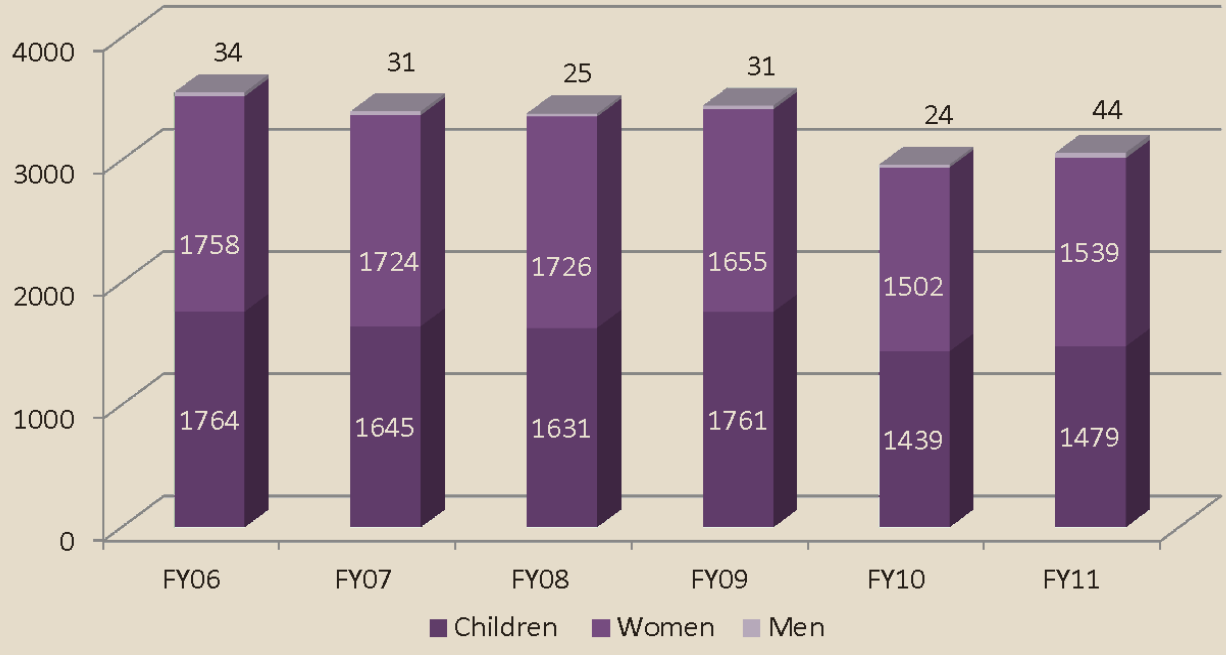
Child and Family Services recognizes domestic violence as a significant challenge facing many of our families. Caseworkers may provide many direct and indirect services to families with a supported allegation related to domestic violence. Direct and indirect services may include:

- Case management services such as safety planning.
- Referral to community supports/agencies that may provide contracted treatment/intervention.
- Direct clinical services.

Child and Family Services received and distributed state and federal dollars to domestic violence shelters across the state of Utah. Shelters provide services to men, women and children. Referral for services may come from many sources including Child and Family Services, law enforcement, community agencies, or self-referral. Shelters provide:

- Direct clinical services
- Direct casework
- Safety planning
- Individual and group counseling
- Community outreach and education
- Referral to community supports
- Assistance in acquiring protective orders
- Direct shelter service

Number of Domestic Violence Victims Served by Shelters



Outcomes

Due to federal privacy guidelines, data collected on clients served in domestic violence shelters do not identify the client. Because clients may enter the same shelter or different shelters during the time period, the client counts are considered duplicated (the same person may be counted more than once).

Shelter Days Provided

	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Children	33,805	38,275	38,766	46,369	40,683	47,364	59,544
Women	32,713	33,391	37,391	36,214	35,951	42,687	47,647
Men	743	638	610	464	556	912	1,175
Total Days	67,261	72,304	76,767	83,047	77,190	90,963	108,377
Average Days				24.1	26.0	29.7	33.2

Initiatives

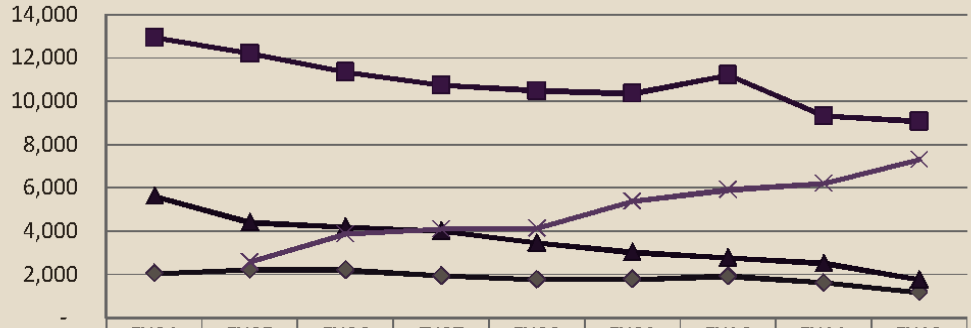
Continued socioeconomic challenges impact domestic violence in unique ways. There is often a correlation between the frequency and severity of domestic violence cases and downturns in the economy. Efforts will continue to protect funding for shelters and provide quality services for families struggling with domestic violence. Child and Family Services continues to seek best practice guidelines for families facing domestic violence issues. Child and Family Services recognizes that children may face significant challenges when they live in a home with violence. As a result, Child and Family Services is committed to providing ongoing services and support for families struggling with domestic violence.

In-Home Services

Utah's In-Home Services program is an array of supports and interventions provided to ensure the safety and well-being of children in their homes while stabilizing, supporting, preserving, and reunifying their families. In-Home Services not only help children remain home rather than coming into foster care, but they can also help expedite a child's safe return home from foster care. In-Home Services can also be provided to relatives who have temporary custody of a child while Child and Family Services works with the parents on reunification services. In-Home Services may be voluntary or court ordered.

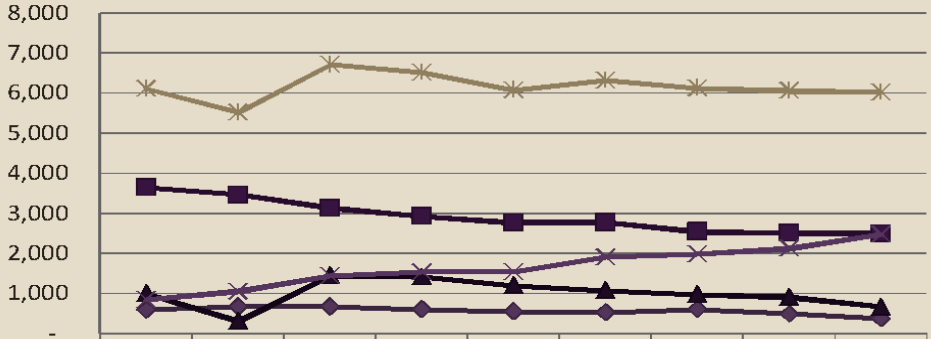
Child and Family Services continues to work to elevate the profession of child welfare in order to take our practice to a higher level. One of the ongoing primary areas of focus this year is the enhancement of In-Home Services. The increased focus on In-Home Services will result in a greater capacity to help families make changes enabling them to safely care for their children in their own home. Child and Family Services operates from a philosophy that children are best served and permanency and well-being outcomes are enhanced when children can safely remain at home with their families.

In-Home Services Adult and Child Clients Served



	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Family Preservation	2,061	2,226	2,213	1,946	1,773	1,791	1,934	1,633	1,195
Supervision	12,945	12,214	11,369	10,753	10,497	10,377	11,234	9,342	9,080
Other Interventions	5,638	4,417	4,215	4,020	3,473	3,042	2,779	2,521	1,783
Home Studies		2,591	3,876	4,117	4,143	5,396	5,928	6,222	7,326

In-Home Services Cases

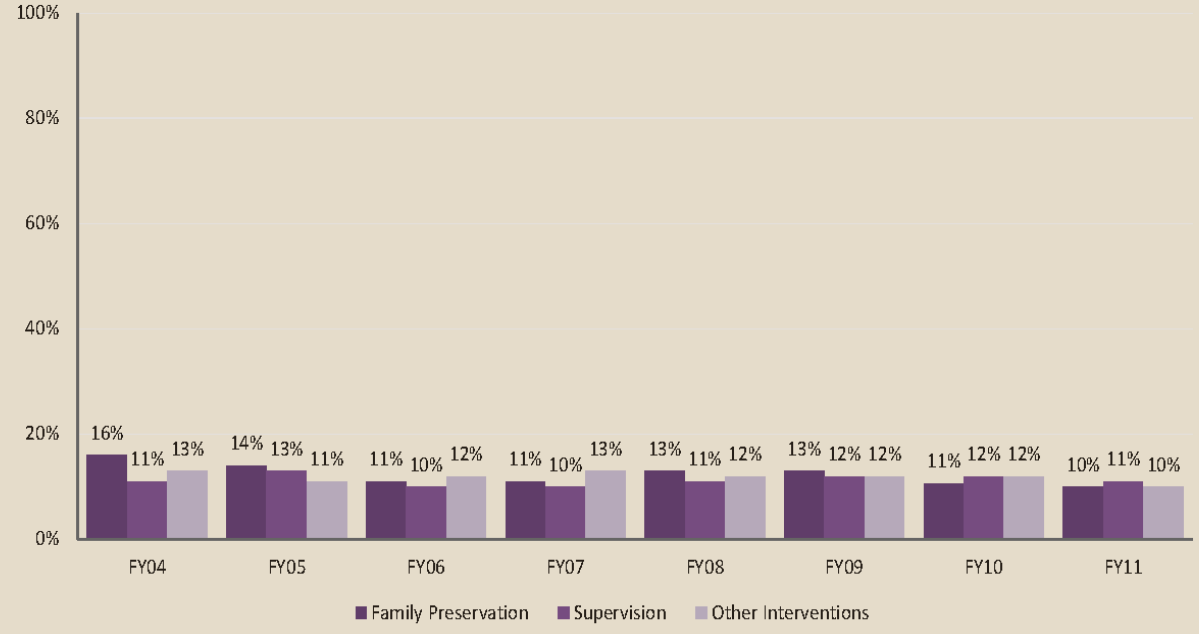


	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Family Preservation	602	678	674	619	554	536	617	502	381
Supervision	3,654	3,471	3,145	2,944	2,777	2,788	2,554	2,519	2,500
Other Interventions	1,008	314	1,449	1,422	1,207	1,085	979	915	670
Home Studies	857	1,063	1,450	1,544	1,554	1,916	1,992	2,133	2,487
Total	6,121	5,526	6,718	6,529	6,092	6,325	6,142	6,069	6,038

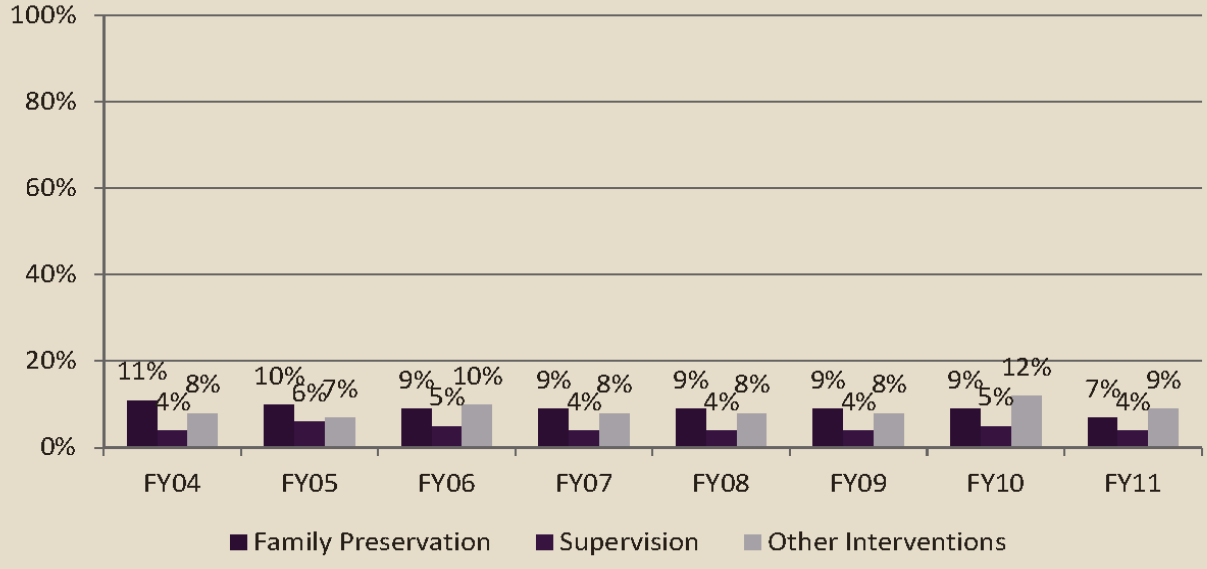
Outcomes

Child and Family Services provides In-Home Services in an effort to mitigate family issues that lead to abuse and neglect as well as to prevent the recurrence of child abuse and neglect. The success of these efforts is proven by the low incidence of subsequent supported CPS allegations as well as the future need for children to enter a Foster Care placement.

Percent of Children Who Exited an In-Home Services Case Who Subsequently Have a Supported CPS Case Within 12 Months



Percent of Children Who Exited an In-Home Services Case who Subsequently Have a Foster Care Case Within 12 Months



Initiatives

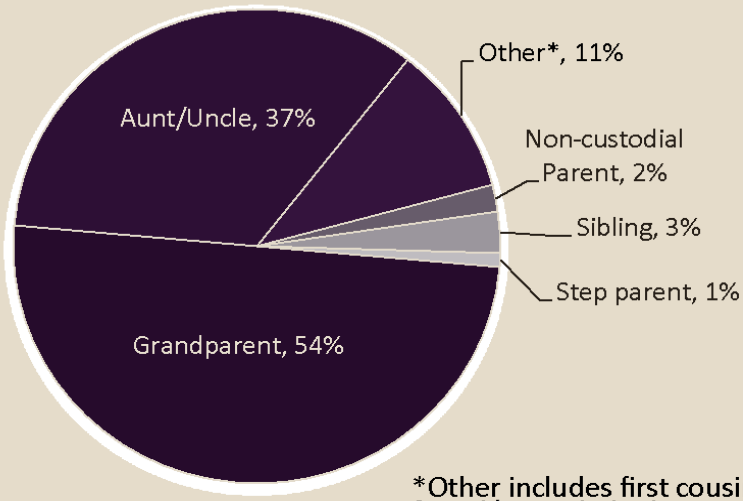
Child and Family Services is committed to safely reducing the number of Utah's children residing in foster care. One of the primary ways this will be accomplished is through a significant enhancement to In-Home Services. During 2012, three primary initiatives have been implemented to support the vision of In-Home services.

- The Title IV-E waiver demonstration project. Utah has received approval from the federal government for a "Child Welfare Demonstration Project" to improve efforts already underway to strengthen In-Home Services in Utah. This is also referred to as a Title IV-E waiver. The project allows a portion of federal funding currently available only for foster care to be used more flexibly to support In-Home Services. The project will have a rigorous evaluation that includes child and family well-being analysis. The purpose of the demonstration project is to help children at risk of foster care placement to remain safely with their families and to improve well-being outcomes for children and families receiving In-Home services. The project has three primary areas of focus:
  - Implementation of an evidence-based child and family assessment tool
  - Development and implementation of caseworker tools and training
  - Increase community coordination and implement evidence-based services.
- Formation of the state office In-Home Team. Child and Family Services has dedicated more existing program and leadership resources to support the focus on in-home services. As part of the effort, a state office In-Home Team was created. Team membership includes program administrators from Prevention, Intake, and CPS. In addition, two career mobility In-Home program administrators have been added to the team to assist with the implementation of the enhanced In-Home Services program.
- Structured Decision Making (SDM). The SDM system is a set of research- and evidence-based tools that assist with each important decision in the life of a case. The SDM system has now been implemented in the CPS and In-Home Services program areas throughout the state. The SDM system serves as an improved in-home framework that is harmonious with Utah's existing Practice Model and Safety Model. The SDM tools help identify those families who would most benefit from In-Home Services and when it would be appropriate to close an In-Home Services case. The SDM framework also provides a recommended level of intervention intensity based on the assessed risk level. That risk level then translates to contact standards for In-Home cases. Incorporating formalized caseworker contact standards helps build confidence in the ability of Child and Family Services to respond to more cases of abuse and neglect without having to remove the child from the home. It also assists with reducing the time children spend in foster care by providing an enhanced supportive resource during the transition home.

Kinship Services

Kinship caregivers are individuals who provide a temporary or permanent home for a relative child or children who cannot remain in the home of their parents due to the threat of further abuse or neglect. Kinship caregivers include grandparents, aunts, uncles, sisters-in-law, brothers-in-law, stepparents, siblings, stepsiblings, and first cousins to the child.

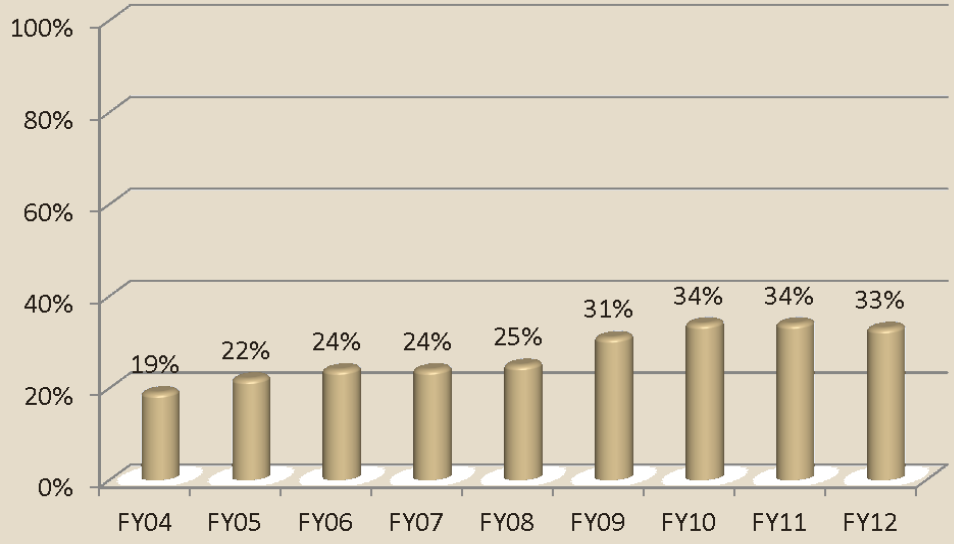
For Children in Foster Care - Relationship of Kinship Caregiver to the Child



*Other includes first cousin, brother/sister in-law, or friend/extended relative

If kinship caregivers become licensed child-specific foster parents and attend foster care training they can receive the same supports available to all licensed foster parents.

Percent of Children in Foster Care Placed with Kinship Caregivers at Some Point in Time During the Year

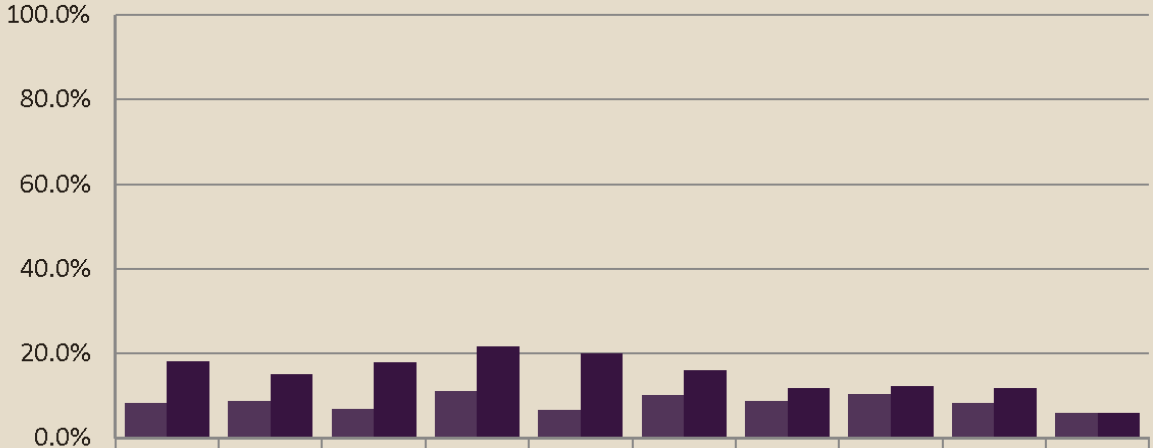


Other placement options open to kinship caregivers include assuming guardianship or taking legal custody of the child. In these instances, the kinship caregiver may receive In-Home Services.

Outcomes

More children released from custody to live with kin achieve lasting stability as evidenced by the reduction in the rate of children re-entering custody. This graph also show the percentage of children who again experienced abuse after being released to kin.

Percent of Children Who Exited Custody to a Relative Who Were the Victims of Abuse and Children Who Reentered Custody Within 12 Months



	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Victims of Abuse	8.3%	8.8%	6.9%	11.0%	6.6%	10.1%	8.7%	10.3%	8.1%	5.9%
Re-entry into Foster Care	18.2%	15.2%	17.8%	21.5%	20.0%	16.0%	11.7%	12.1%	11.9%	6.0%

Initiatives

Child and Family Services has trained and licensed twenty-five employees who are now using an internet-based search engine called CLEAR to locate relatives for possible kinship placements of children entering custody.

Training of workers is planned on the new kinship placement tracking system located in the Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS or SAFE system) will allow Division employees to track In-Home Services cases. This system will allow the Division to gather information on the number of In-Home Services kinship cases that are being served by Child and Family Services.

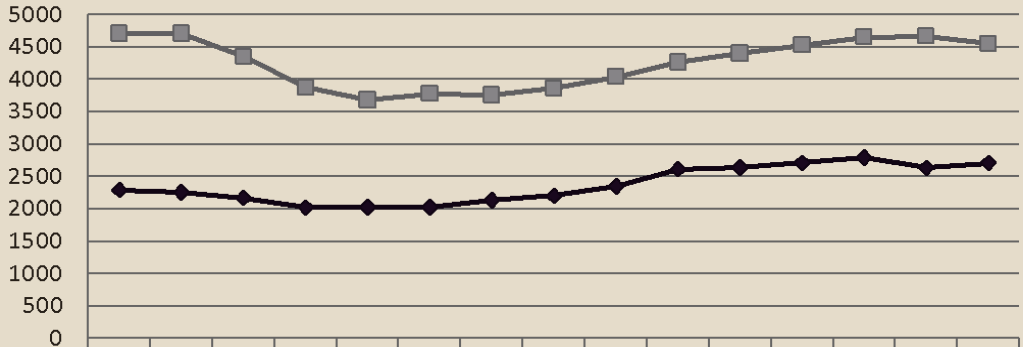
Grandfamilies is a service of Children's Service Society, and has partnered with Davis Behavioral Health and the Davis County Health Department's Family Health & Senior Services Division to make their expansion possible into Davis County. Grandfamilies focuses on meeting the growth and developmental needs of children and promoting positive relationships in families.

Child and Family Services will be implementing a kinship guardianship assistance program to provide kinship guardianship assistance payments on behalf of children to grandparents and other relatives who have assumed legal guardianship of the children for whom they have cared for as foster parents and committed to care for on a permanent basis.

Foster Care Services

A child may be placed in Foster Care when it is determined that the child is unsafe due to inadequate parental protective capacities and other safety intervention or by court order.

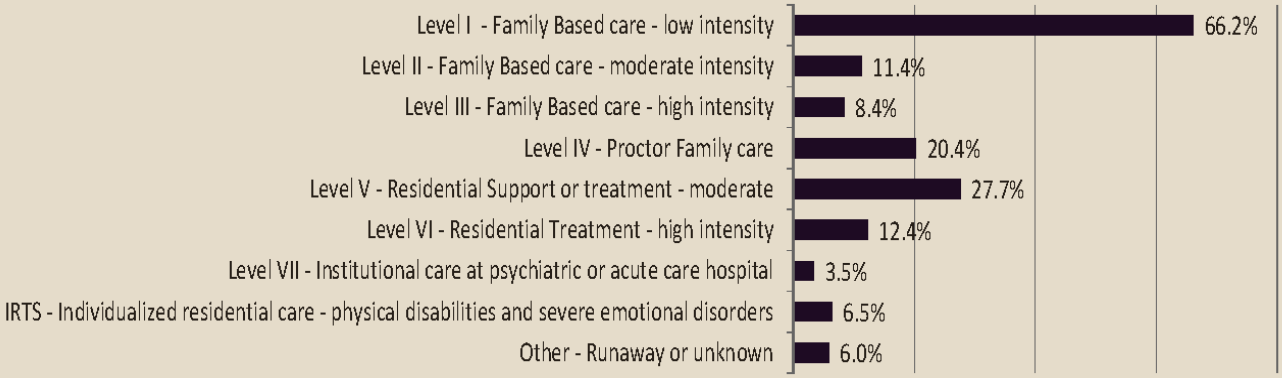
Number of Youth Receiving Foster Care Services Point-in-Time and Total Served



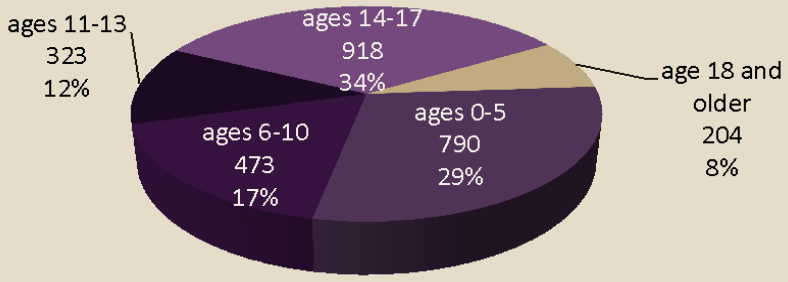
	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
Point in time June 30	2292	2255	2168	2020	2023	2023	2134	2202	2347	2611	2640	2710	2790	2632	2708
Total Served During Year	4705	4708	4353	3875	3680	3781	3760	3860	4040	4263	4401	4532	4652	4664	4549

To ensure that children are placed in the environment that best meets their needs, Child and Family Services maintains a number of Foster Care placements that, based on the child's needs, offer an increasing intensity of services. Levels I through IV are family-based settings. Levels V and above are institutional settings. If a child must be placed in an institutional setting a plan is developed to move that child to a family setting as quickly as possible. Children do better when living in a family.

Placement Types of Children in Foster Care

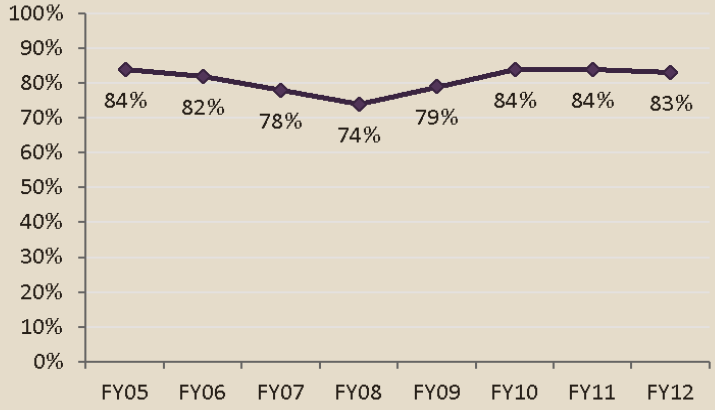


Percent and Total Number of Children in Foster Care Point-in-Time June 30, 2012 by Age Group



Assuring permanency for children is a key value of Child and Family Services, and ensuring that children are involved in as few placements as possible is a major objective.

Percent of Children in Foster Care Less Than 12 Months who had Two or Fewer Placements

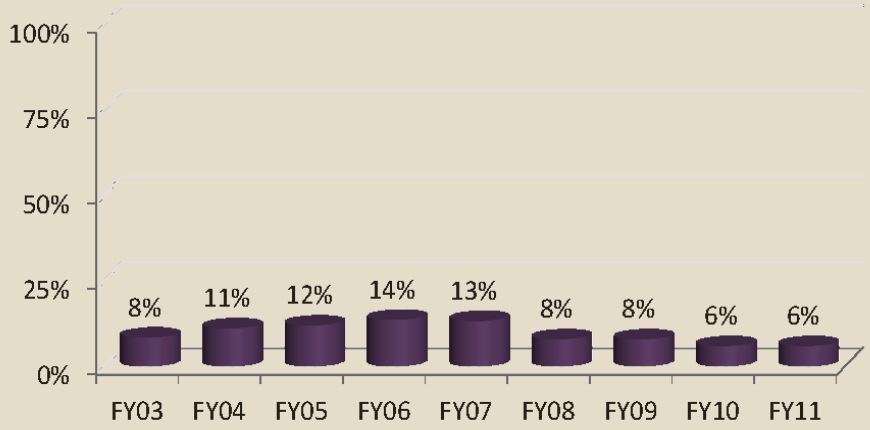


Outcomes

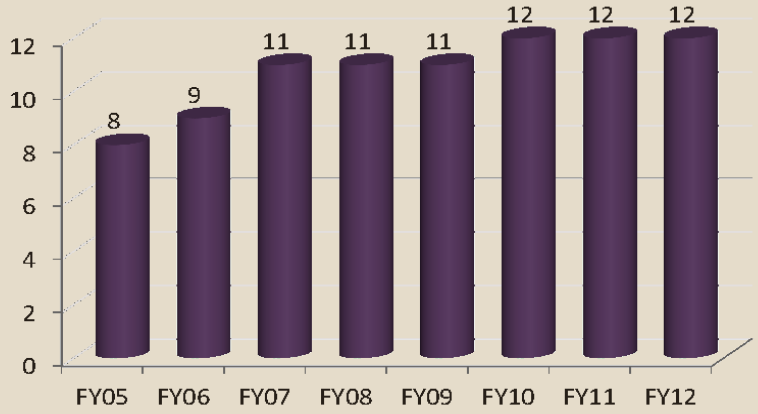
Once children are placed into the custody of the state for their safety, the goal of Child and Family Services becomes to reunify them with their parents. If reunification is not possible, Child and Family Services focuses on finding another permanent home. The chart below shows where children went at the close of the Foster Care case for the past year and the median length of time they were in custody. Fifty-five percent of children either returned to live with a parent or went to live with a relative.

Reason for Exiting	Percent	Median Months in Custody
Reunification with Parent(s)/ Primary Caregiver(s)	40%	11
Adoption Final	28%	15
Custody and Guardianship to Relative	15%	5
Age of Majority/ Emancipation	10%	40
Child Ran Away	1%	28
Custody to Juvenile Justice Services	2%	16
Custody/Guardianship to Foster Parent/Other Nonrelative	2%	11
Referred Outside Organization	2%	38
Death of Child	0.0%	3
Total	100%	

Percent of Children Exiting Custody with a Subsequent Foster Care Episode within 12 Months



Median Months in Custody for Children Exiting Care During the Year



Initiatives

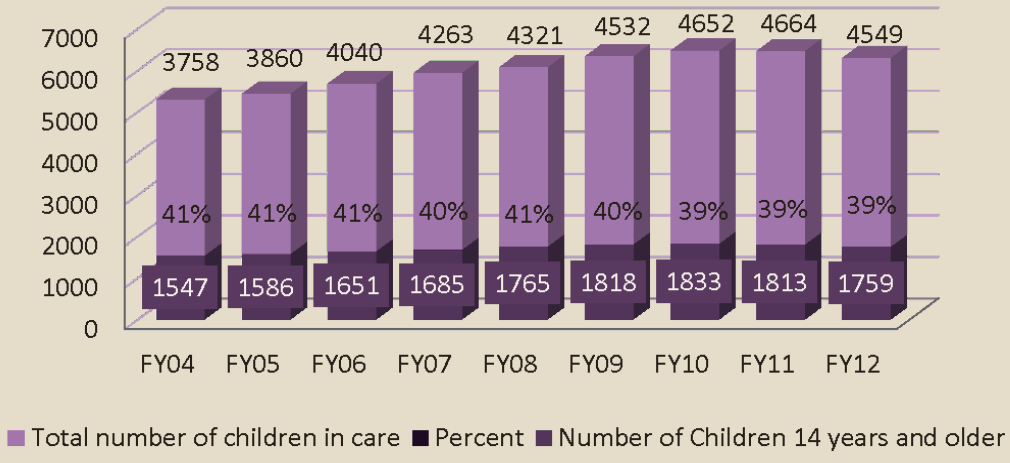
Child and Family Services will continue to:

- Improve educational outcomes for children in Foster Care by working with school districts to implement federal and state laws that strongly encourage educational stability for children in Foster Care.
- Increase the number of home-based foster placement options available for children with more difficult emotional and behavioral problems to prevent them from being placed in more restrictive residential placements.
- Strengthen and increase the skills of our Foster Care families who are willing to work with children needing intensive services.
- Develop additional wrap-around services that will support keeping children in their foster home rather than moving them to residential care.
- Continue to update and expand the Peer Parent program curriculum.
- Continue to develop and provide training for staff and partners to raise awareness about the importance of providing permanency for all children we serve.

Transition to Adult Living

The Transition to Adult Living (TAL) program offers a continuum of services and supports to youth age 14 years and older in the care of Child and Family Services. Since 2008 the percentage of youth age 14 years and older in Foster Care has decreased from 41% to 39%.

Number of Children Age 14 and Older In Foster Care

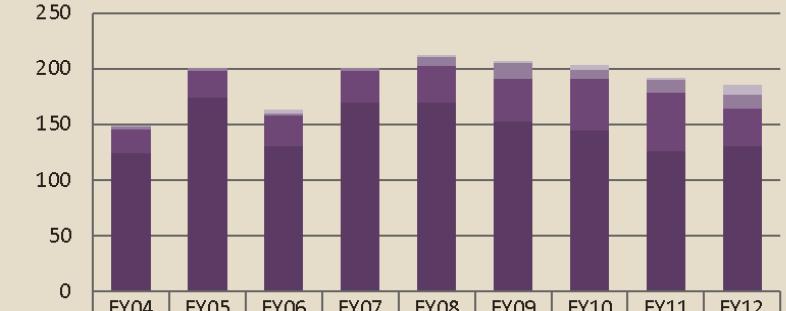


TAL services prepare young people to meet the challenges of transitioning to adulthood by helping them develop skills in five fundamental areas of adult life:

- Self-care and health education
- Communication, social relationships, family and marriage
- Home life and daily living
- Work and career planning, and education
- Housing and money management

Emancipation from Child and Family Services custody occurs when a child 18 years or older is released from the custody of the state. Although youth can remain in Foster Care up to age 21 years, most leave soon after their 18th birthday.

Youth Emancipating from Foster Care by Age



	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
21yrs	1	0	3	0	2	2	4	2	8
20yrs	3	3	2	3	8	14	8	12	13
19 yrs	21	24	28	29	33	38	47	52	34
18 yrs	124	174	130	169	169	153	144	126	130

Outcomes

During FY 2012 the Transition to Adult Living (TAL) coordinators refocused Utah's TAL services by developing a statewide strategic plan coinciding with the Utah TAL Focus Areas. The plan has three core areas: Building Meaningful Relationships, College and Career Ready, and Educating and Partnering with the Judicial System. Goals were set within each of the areas to improve outcomes for youth who are in the system, or will exit the system.

To help youth build meaningful relationships with trusting adults that will endure throughout their lifetime and provide permanent connections for them, the TAL coordinators participated in Permanency Round Tables, which is a process to identify permanency options and permanent connections for youth in care. We have also laid the groundwork for the State Youth Council, which will begin in January, 2013. This groundwork included strategic planning on engaging youth in the youth council, goals for the youth council and identifying youth to serve on the youth council. These youth councils will add the much needed youth voice to the system to inform system improvements and other issues facing youth in Utah's foster care system.

To help prepare youth to be ready for college and career, each region focused on enrolling youth in services to support these goals including the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program through the Department of Workforce Services and Educational Training Vouchers (ETV). These services provide opportunities for youth to gain vocational training and education through Utah's public colleges, universities and technical colleges. For state fiscal year 2012 there were 109 youth receiving ETV. This is an increase of 20 youth since last year. The goal for TAL was to increase the number of youth enrolled by 10%, which was met and exceeded! This strategic goal also included increasing the number of youth who make informed choices regarding Job Corps and other training facilities. This has been done by increasing the number of youth participating in tours of those facilities.

To help inform Child and Family Services staff of services available for TAL youth, they participated in a number of conferences and summits highlighting the permanency needs of youth and the services available to them. Included in these conferences were youth panels who presented their first-hand perspective of what it is like to grow up and age out of foster care. Youth panels spoke to guardians ad litem, CASA volunteers, educators, mental health professionals, caseworkers, foster parents and the community about life in foster care. These youth panels have been a compelling part of these presentations.

One highlight from the last year was the Youth Leadership Summit which was held in August, 2012. This summit brought together approximately 200 youth in Utah's foster care system to learn skills needed as they become adults. This great experience culminated in the Youth Speak-Out. Youth were able to share their experiences with each other, administration, and lawmakers. Youth saw this as an opportunity to create change in the foster care system that they are a part of. Youth who attended the event said they felt empowered by being surrounded by other youth who were just like them; they no longer felt alone.

During the summit the completely redesigned "Just for Youth" website, was launched. This website creates a one-stop shop for youth with information on services and other programs all designed to help them be successful adults.