Annual Report 2011

Child and Family Services
Department of Human Services
State of Utah

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

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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

As you look through the pages of this 2011 Annual Report you will see graphs and text that show statistics – numbers such as the number of children in custody and the number of investigations, the time to reunification, and the number of adoptions. But numbers alone don't tell the story of each individual or family who has received services through the Division of Child and Family Services. And these stories are compelling.

Over the past year, we have worked to improve Child Welfare services to Utah's families, and we have made some notable accomplishments.

In July we completed the transition to Centralized Intake. We now have an office dedicated to Intake that is open 24 hours, a day seven days a week, 365 days a year with a single 800 number to call from anywhere in the state. An additional objective for centralization was to achieve consistency in the Intake process. Prior to centralization Intake was handled in various ways across the state. The unaccepted rate ranged from 26 percent to 46 percent. With centralization the unaccepted rate is now approximately 41 percent.

This past year, we have worked to improve our ability to assess safety and risk of children and families. Utah Child and Family Services will be using the Structured Decision Making (SDM) model Safety and Risk Assessment tools, which are evidence-based actuarial risk assessment tools. During the past year the tools have been adapted to fit Utah's child abuse laws and are now being programmed into the child abuse and neglect database used by the division (SAFE). We expect to implement these new assessments in the spring of 2012. The safety and risk assessments will be followed by additional assessments to be implemented during the coming year. These new assessments will be the entrance to a new In-Home Services program that will allow us to keep more children safely in their homes and avoid placing them in Foster Care. We are very excited with the prospects for our new In-Home Services program, which will combine increased home visits by caseworkers and other professionals working with the family and contracted services targeted to address the issues that brought the family to the attention of the child welfare system. When the SDM implementation is completed Utah will have a set of assessments that will guide workers in accepting referrals, determining whether to refer a family on for services, ongoing assessment of risk, and if reunification is viable. The implementation of the SDM tools and the launch of the In-Home Services program are two of the primary initiatives for the coming year.

In August 2011 we held the ninth annual Youth Summit. Over 170 youth in Foster Care ages of 16 years and older gathered together for two days of speakers, workshops, and social activities focused on skills for adulthood. This was the highest attendance at a Utah Youth Summit to date. We are already working on plans for the 2012 event.

This past year we began an initiative to improve our contracting process. We centralized procurement and added an auditing unit. The new contracts unit works together with program administrators to better define what services are needed and then once a contract is awarded to measure compliance with the requirements of the contract.

In 2011, Child and Family Services, in partnership with Casey Family Programs, embarked on a new and exciting process known as Permanency Roundtables (PRTs) for re-energizing efforts to promote legal permanency (adoption, reunification, or permanent custody and guardianship) for children who appeared to be more likely to age out of Foster Care without a permanent family connection. There are 35 child welfare jurisdictions throughout the United States using the PRT process. A PRT is an internal permanency consultation using the combined expertise of the case manager, administrators, facilitators, and specialists to develop an action plan centered on exploring and developing permanency options for the child while working to resolve any barriers. We have already seen results from this process and expect to see many more.

During the coming year will will also be working to improve the consistency of practice through strengthening and supporting supervisors,

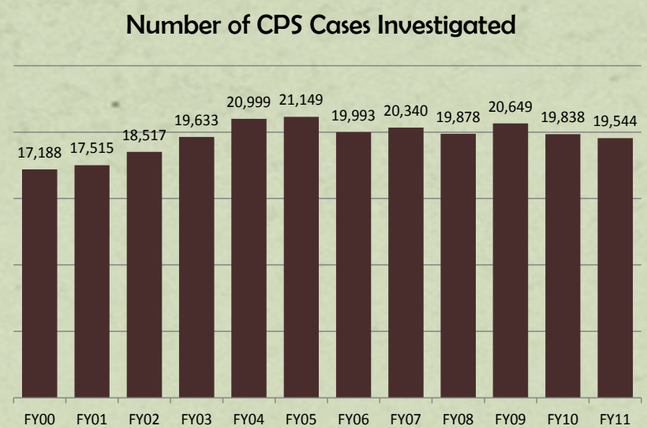
In the spring of 2012 Child and Family Services, along with the Utah Court Improvement Project and Casey Family Programs, will host an Indian Child Welfare conference to raise awareness of Indian children who are involved with the child welfare system and the need for Native American foster homes and support from the tribes for these children in order to keep them connected to their heritage while providing the services that they need.

Our focus this year is to reduce the number of children in Foster Care whether it is through an improved In-Home Services program that keeps children safely in their homes or by working intensely to find families for children who are in Foster Care. We are excited by the prospects for improvement in the Utah child welfare system and for the innovation and creativity that keeps us on the forefront nationally as a system. We will continue to strive for the best practice that will support the children and families of this state.

Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services (CPS) responds to reports concerning potential abuse, neglect, or dependency of children in the community. During the past year, Child and Family Services has centralized Intake services. There is now a statewide toll-free number to call to report allegations of child abuse or neglect. Centralized Intake was fully operational July 2011 and is a 24-hour per day, seven-day per week operation.

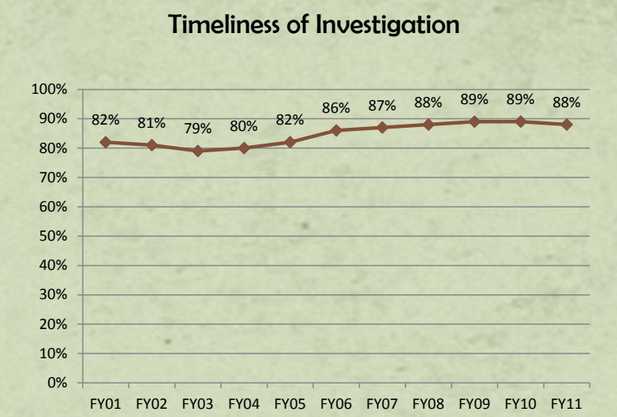
The vast majority (96 percent) of Utah's 877,812 children live in a safe and nurturing family. Only 36,562 (4 percent) were brought to the attention of Child and Family Services. Abuse and neglect investigations were conducted regarding 26,767 children (3 percent), comprising 19,544 CPS investigation cases. Only 11,543 children (1 percent) were found to be victims of abuse and neglect. 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.

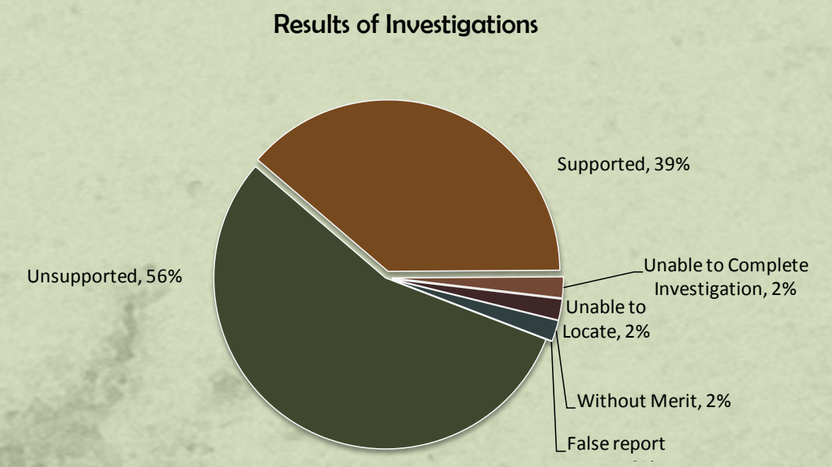


Before a referral is determined to be "unaccepted", the Intake worker refers to policies and procedures that guide how the case is staffed, identifies documentation needed, and recommends required actions. Utah state statute was amended during the past legislative session, which could be a reflection of the increase in unaccepted referrals. This year we had an unaccepted referral rate of 41 percent. 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
Was the nature of the referral documented?	85%	99%	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%
Does the documentation adequately support the decision to accept the referral?	85%	98%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%

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.



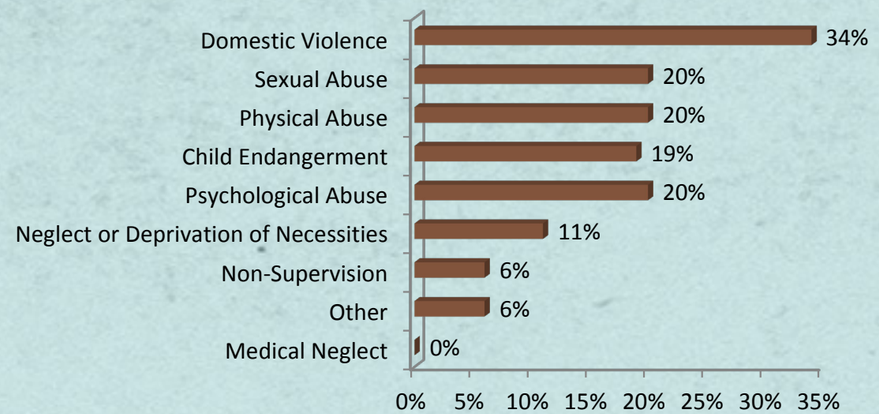


Seventy-four percent of families who had a supported case of abuse or neglect were referred to community services. Of the supported child victims, 13 percent received subsequent In-Home Services and 12 percent received subsequent Foster Care Services from Child and Family Services.

Child Protective Services

During FY 2011, Domestic Violence Related Child Abuse (DVRCA) was the most frequent reason that an allegation resulted in a supported case of abuse, neglect, or dependency. The "Other" allegation category includes allegations of safe relinquishment of a newborn child, dependency, and failure to protect.

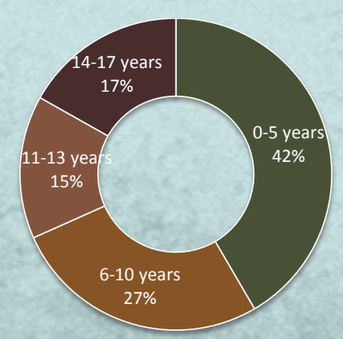
Percent of Allegation Type for Supported CPS Cases



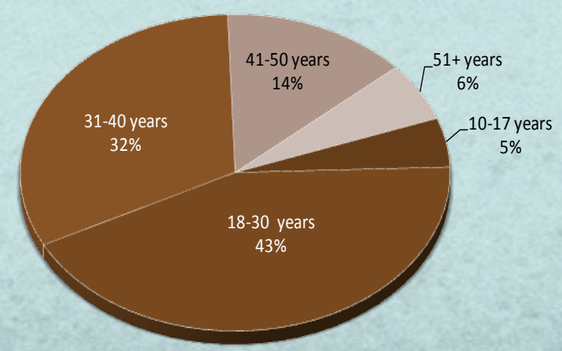
Thirty-one percent of supported abuse or neglect cases had alcohol or drug abuse as a contributing factor as reported by caseworkers, 2 percent more than last year

Of the total abused and neglected children (11,543) in FY 2011, 53 percent were female and 47 percent were male. Approximately 75 percent of perpetrators are the victim's parents, and 17 percent are other relatives.

Victims by Age



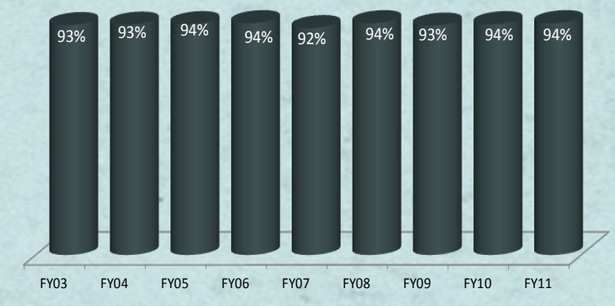
Perpetrators by Age



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 education, governmental, non-profit, faith-based, tribal, and other organizations, have the ability to provide a wide range of support to the family and child.

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



Initiatives

In the coming year we will continue to improve the services and processes of Centralized Intake. We will also be implementing SDM tools for assessing safety and risk of harm to be used during investigations. In additiion, a Qualitative Case Review (QCR) for CPS is in the developmental stages with a plan to pilot it in FY 2013.

Domestic Violence Services

The definition of domestic violence is: The use of physical violence, threats, emotional abuse, harassment, or stalking to control a person's behavior by a spouse, intimate partner, or date. Abusers use domination, intimidation, terrorizing, rule-making, stalking, isolation, controlling fund/transportation/relationships, harassing, and injurious behavior to control and manipulate the action of their partners and sometimes their children.

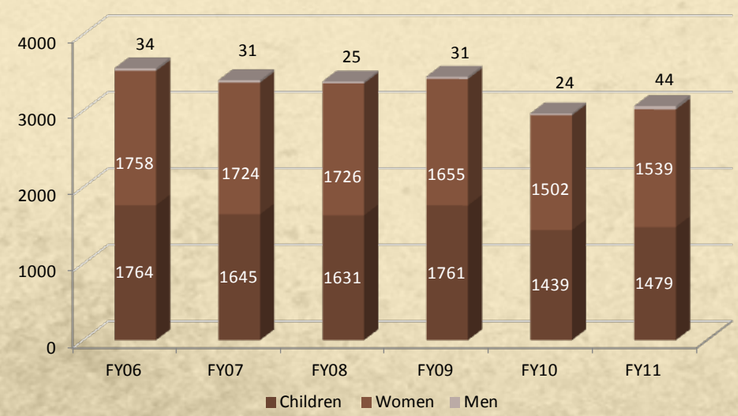
Child and Family Services caseworkers may provide direct services to families with a supported allegation of child abuse or neglect resulting from an incident of domestic violence. Child and Family Services staff may provide the following direct support to victims and/or their families:

- Case management including conducting home visits and providing safety planning.
- Provision of referrals to agencies that provide contracted treatment services.
- Tracking of treatment provided to victims and families.
- Direct clinical counseling.

Domestic violence shelters provide the following services to men, women, and children who can access shelters via referrals from Child and Family Services, law enforcement, other community services, or through direct contact with the shelter:

- Casework.
- Safety planning.
- Group counseling and support groups.
- Community resource education.
- Referrals for employment.
- Mental health, health care, and legal services.
- Perpetrator treatment referrals.
- Assistance in acquiring protective orders.
- Room and board in a secure facility.

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
Children	33,805	38,275	38,766	46,369	40,683	47,364
Women	32,713	33,391	37,391	36,214	35,951	42,687
Men	743	638	610	464	556	912
Total Days	67,261	72,304	76,767	83,047	77,190	90,963
Average Days				24.1	26.0	29.7

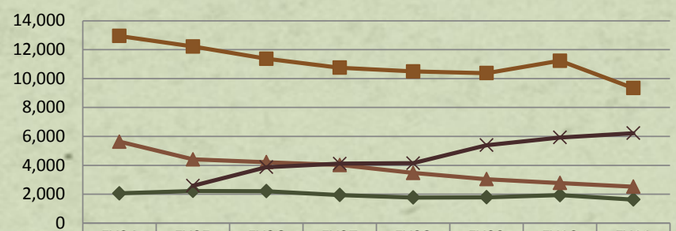
Initiatives

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.

In-Home Services

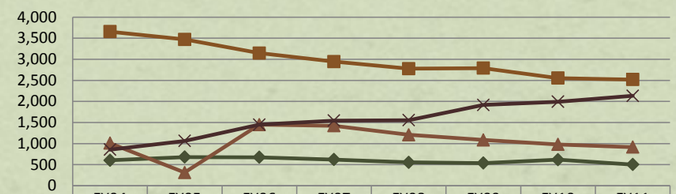
One of the premier groups of services provided by Child and Family Services are the In-Home Services. Child and Family Servies operates from a philosophy that children are best served and permanency outcomes are enhanced when children can safely remain at home with their families. Utah's In-Home Services are 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 children safely returning home from Foster Care. In-Home services can 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.

In-Home Services Adult and Child Clients Served



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

In-Home Services Cases

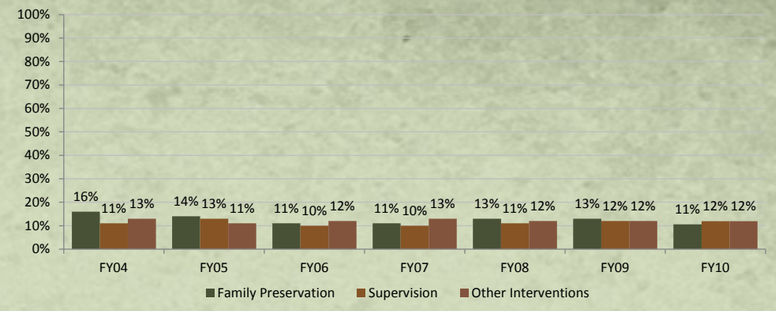


	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Family Preservation	602	678	674	619	554	536	617	502
Supervision	3,654	3,471	3,145	2,944	2,777	2,788	2,554	2,519
Other Interventions	1,008	314	1,449	1,422	1,207	1,085	979	915
Family Home Studies	857	1,063	1,450	1,544	1,554	1,916	1,992	2,133

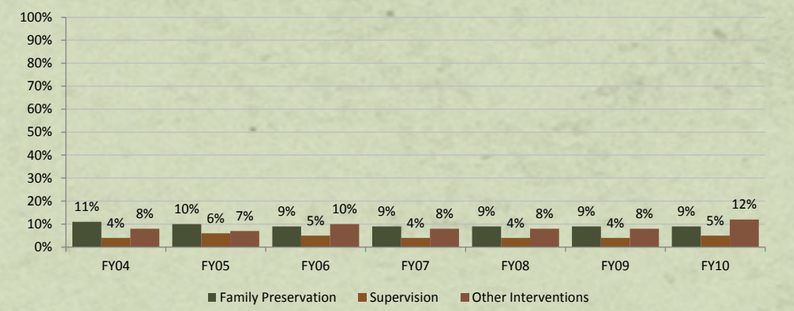
Outcomes

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. Children and families served by Family Preservation may have a higher rate of subsequent supported CPS cases or entry into Foster Care because they are typically more severe cases.

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

This year we will continue to work on the safe reduction of the number of children in foster care through a significant enhancement in Child and Family Services' In-Home Services program. Two of the goals of the enhanced program include:

- Prevent children who have been abused or neglected from coming into Foster Care when they can be safely maintained at home.
- Help expedite children in returning home from Foster Care and safely remaining home.

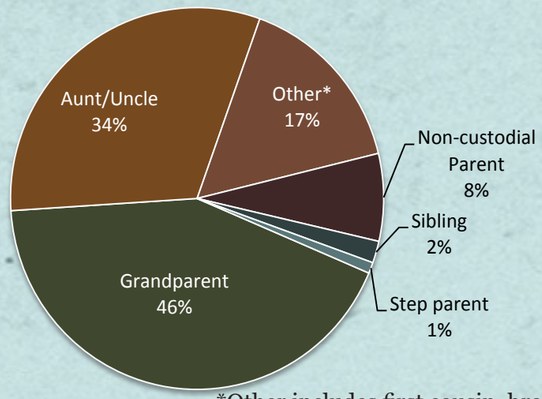
Child and Family Services is directing more time, effort, and resources into bolstering Utah's In-Home Services. The updated In-Home Services model will consist of five key elements, including:

- Family centered practice: Parents and children are key partners in the process.
- A foundation of Practice Model skills: Case management skills of engaging, teaming, assessing, planning, and intervening.
- An overarching Safety Model: Safety is the paramount issue in the work. Issues assessed include threats of harm, child vulnerability, and protective capacities of the caregivers.
- Framework of SDM tools: Using reliable and valid decision tools is fundamental to effective agency practice. The SDM system is a set of research- and evidence-based tools for each important decision in the life of a case.
- In-Home Services Grid: A set of resources and services that can support the family and caseworker in addressing the issues that brought the family to the attention of Child and Family Services.

Kinship Services

Kinship caregivers are individuals willing to provide a temporary or permanent home for a child or children of a relative that 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.

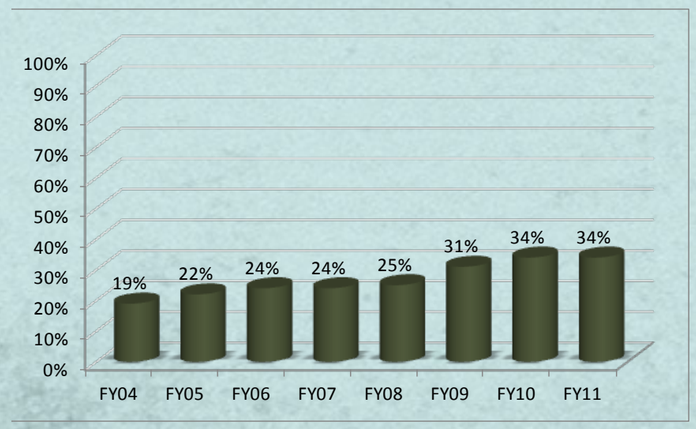
Relationship of Kinship Caregiver to the Child For Children in Foster Care



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

If kinship caregivers attend Foster Care training they can receive the same Foster Care supports available to all licensed foster parents.

Percent of Children in Foster Care Placed with Kinship Caregivers

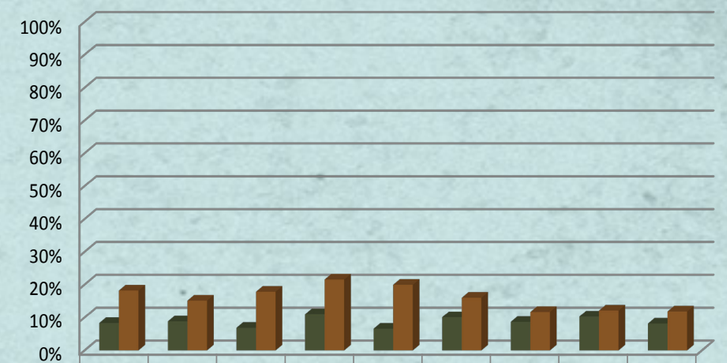


Other placement options open to kinship caregivers include assuming guardianship or taking legal custody of the child. In these scenarios, the kinship caregiver may receive In-Home Services.

Outcomes

Children who were released from custody to live with kin have been achieving lasting stability as can be seen by the reduction in the rate of children re-entering custody. This graph also show the percentage of children who experienced abuse again 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
victim of abuse	8.30%	8.80%	6.85%	10.98%	6.58%	10.09%	8.66%	10.29%	8.14%
re-entry into custody	18.20%	15.15%	17.84%	21.54%	19.96%	16.02%	11.69%	12.13%	11.86%

Initiatives

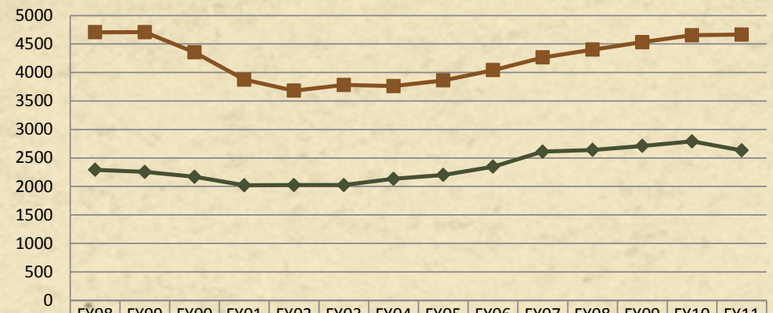
The Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS or SAFE System) made changes to better track kinship placements that occur on In-Home Services cases; however, training of workers on this new system has not yet occurred. Consequently, we cannot get complete information on the number of In-Home Services kinship cases that are being served by Child and Family Services at this time. During the coming year, staff will be trained on kinship tracking in SAFE.

Child and Family Services will also be implementing a new internet-based search engine that will help us locate kin for possible kinship placement of children entering custody.

Foster Care Services

A child may be placed in Foster Care when the threat of abuse or neglect in the home remains high or by court order.

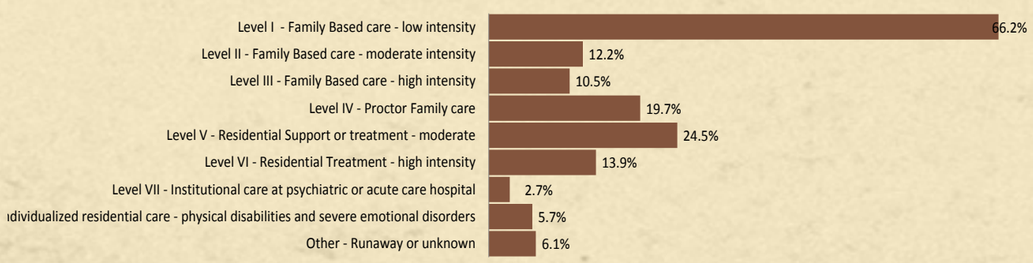
Number of Youth Receiving Foster Care Services Point-in-Time and Total Served



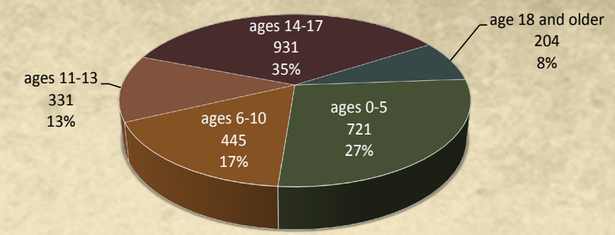
	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Point in time June 30	2292	2255	2168	2020	2023	2023	2134	2202	2347	2611	2640	2710	2790	2632
Total Served During Year	4705	4708	4353	3875	3680	3781	3760	3860	4040	4263	4401	4532	4652	4664

To ensure that children are placed in a safe environment Child and Family Services maintains a number of Foster Care placements that, based on the child's needs, offer an increasing intensity of services.

Placement Types of Children in Foster Care

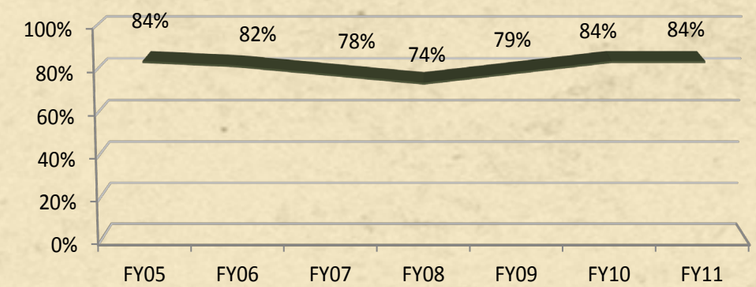


Percent and Total Number of Children in Foster Care Point-in-Time June 30, 2011 by Age Group



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



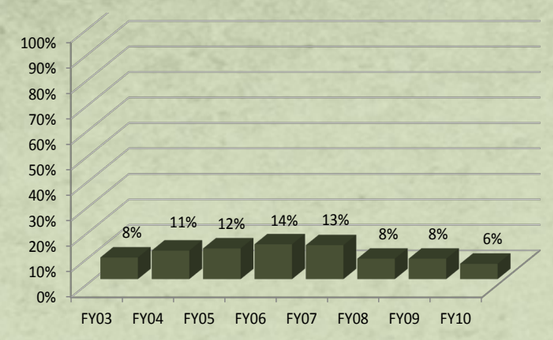
Outcomes

Once children are placed into cusotdy 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. Child and Family Services attempts to balance guickly finding a permanent placement with reducing the likelihood that the child will return to Foster Care. The chart below shows the diposition of children at the close of Foster Care cases in the past year and the median length of time they were in custody.

Reason for Exiting	Percent	Median Months in Custody
Reunification with Parent(s)/ Primary Caregiver(s)	44%	11.0
Adoption Final	25%	14.0
Custody and Guardianship to Relative	15%	5.0
Age of Majority/ Emancipation	10%	34.5
Child Ran Away	2%	20.5
Custody to Juvenile Justice Services	2%	16.0
Custody/Guardianship to Foster Parent/Other Nonrelative	1%	12.5
Referred Outside Organization	1%	33.0
Death of Child	0.1%	6.0
Total	100%	

Foster Care Services

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

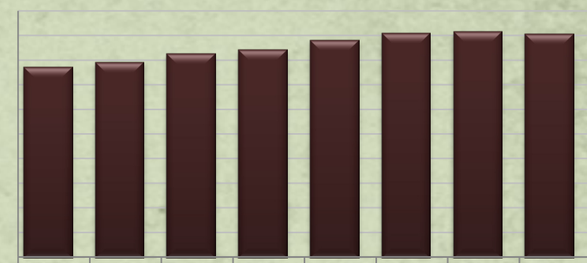
Child and Family Services will continue to:

- 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 in Foster Care has decreased from 41% to 39%.

Number of Children Age 14 and Older In Foster Care



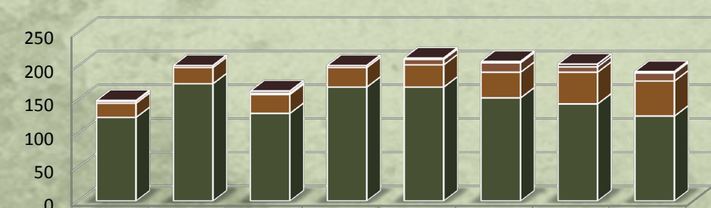
	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Number of Children 14 years and older	1,547	1,586	1,651	1,685	1,765	1,818	1,833	1,813
Percent	41%	41%	41%	40%	41%	40%	39%	39%

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/health education.
- Communication/social relationships/family and marriage.
- Home life/daily living.
- Work/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
21yrs	1	0	3	0	2	2	4	2
20yrs	3	3	2	3	8	14	8	12
19 yrs	21	24	28	29	33	38	47	52
18 yrs	124	174	130	169	169	153	144	126

Transition to Adult Living

Outcomes

Over the last five years, Child and Family Services has provided more than $960,000 in Education and Training Vouchers (ETVs) to 461 youth requiring educational assistance to receive vocational training or further their education through a local college or university. The drop in number from 2008 to 2009 reflects youth who completed degrees and were no longer using an ETV.

Average Cost Per Youth Receiving Education and Training Vouchers

	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Number of Youth	103	111	65	93	89
Average Cost per Youth	$2,823.51	$2,497.77	$1,569.99	$1,576.66	$1,658.66

A special report 'Assessing Outcomes of Youth Transitioning from Foster Care' was produced in 2010. Copies are available upon request.

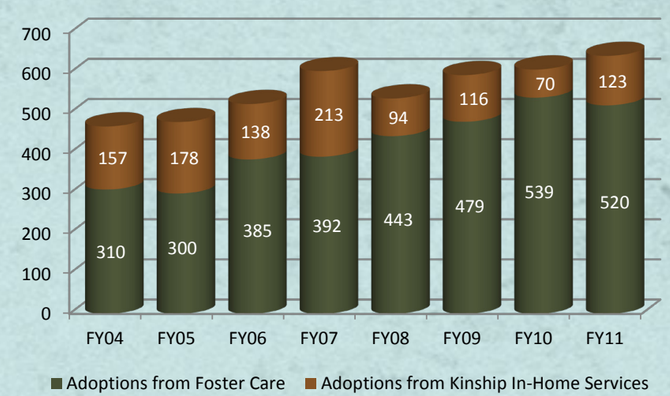
Initiatives

Child and Family Services continues to work on strategies to improve connections with youth once they leave care. We completed modifications to SAFE and now collect information needed to support the National Youth Transition Database (NYTD), which assesses youths' well-being and tracks nationwide services delivered to youth after they exit state care.

Adoption Services

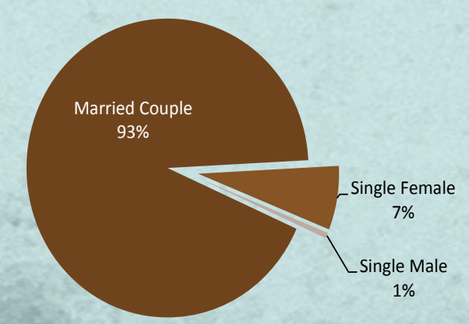
The Adoption program strives to find an adoptive home for every child that cannot be safely raised by their parents.

Number of Children Adopted from Foster Care Services and Kinship In-Home Services



Relatives, Foster Care families, and other families in the community may be able to adopt a child once parental rights have either been relinquished or legally terminated.

Structure of Families Adopting from Foster Care

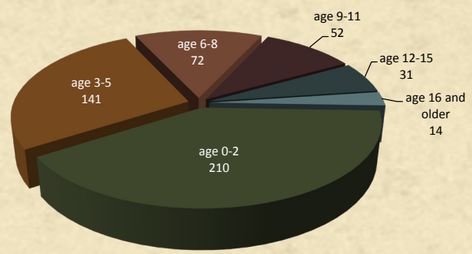


Most children are adopted by the Foster Care or kinship family that is caring for them. The child's caseworker helps the adoptive parents assess what services the child may need currently or in the future, then helps identify community resources that may be helpful in raising the adopted child. Adoption assistance may be available for adopted children who qualify.

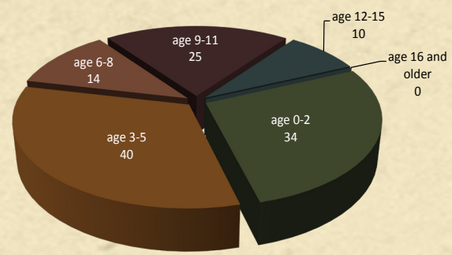
Adoption Services

While children can be adopted at any age, most adoptions in Utah are of children age zero to five years old. We attempt to recruit adoptive families specifically for older youth in state care through Child and Family Services community partners, including The Adoption Exchange, which sponsors the Heart Gallery and Wednesday's Child televised in collaboration with CBS Television.

Ages of Children Adopted from a Foster Care Case



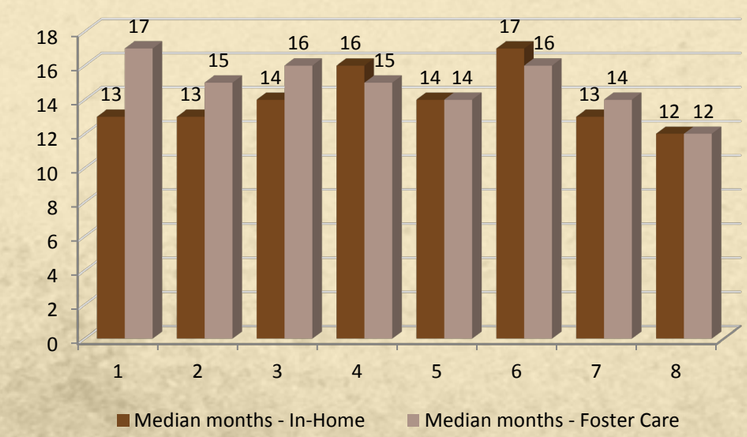
Ages of Children Adopted from a Kinship In-Home Services Case



Outcomes

Utah has been able to move children quickly to adoption when reunification with a child's parents has been unsuccessful.

Median Months Cases are Open Prior to Adoption



These data look at children who were adopted within the given fiscal year and came back into Foster Care at any time after their adoption. Thus the children adopted in FY 2005 could have come back into Foster Care within a five-year period; while the children adopted in FY 2011 only have had a few months to have come into Foster Care. With the increased emphasis on providing adoptive parents with the services and resources they need to raise an adopted child, more than 98 percent of adoptions of children from state care have been successful since 2005.

Number of Children Adopted who Received State Adoption Assistance who Came Back Into Custody

	Total adopted	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	Total to date
FY05	456	1	2	2	2	2	8	2	19
FY06	503		2	1	3	1	2	1	10
FY07	561			1	1	7	5	6	20
FY08	513					1	1	6	8
FY09	530					1	2	2	5
FY10	597							4	4
FY11	570							1	1

Initiatives

Child and Family Services continues to:

- Select and implement a consistent home study assessment tool to be used in assessing kinship placements that desire to adopt their relative's child, a project done in cooperation with the Office of Licensing.
- Integrate brain regulation research into foster parent and staff training curriculum, a partnership with the Utah Foster Care Foundation.
- Work with the Heart Gallery to achieve permanency through recruitment of adoptive parents for older youth.

Workforce

Utah has a highly qualified cadre of workers. The average Child and Family Services employee is 43 years of age and has worked for the agency an average of 113 months (almost nine years). All caseworkers have at least a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work, Psychology, Sociology, or a closely-related field of study.

Child and Family Services Workforce Demographics

Race	Number	Percentage
American Indian/Alaska Native	8	1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	17	2%
Black	6	1%
Hispanic	45	4%
White	955	93%
Total	1,031	1

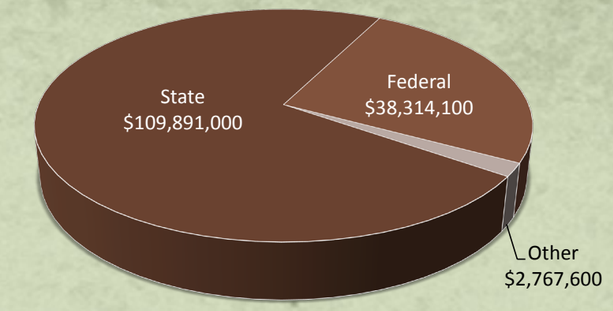
Gender	Number	Percentage
Male	243	24%
Female	788	76%

New employees receive nearly nine weeks of CORE Practice Model training prior to providing services to a family and, as new caseworkers tackle their first cases, experienced staff mentor them, guiding them through the intricacies of the casework process. Caseworker, supervisory, and administrative staff are all required to receive 40 hours of training each year.

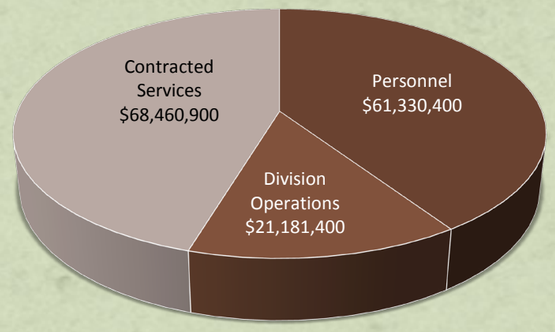
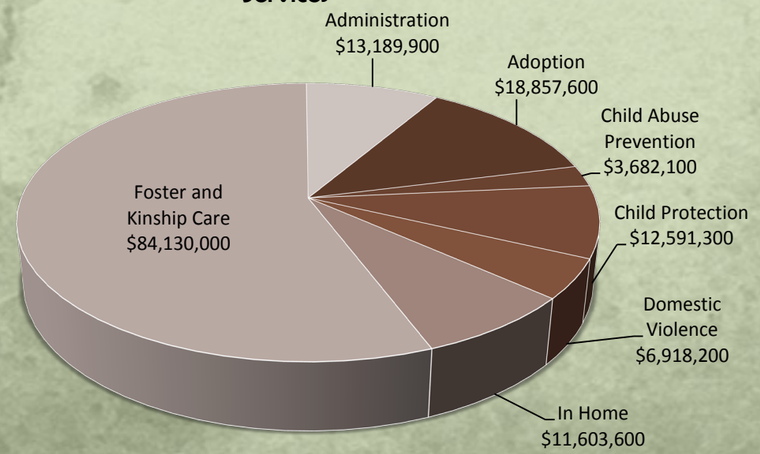
In FY 2011 the Child and Family Services Training Team delivered 409 courses and more than 2,610 hours of training.

Funding

Revenue - Actual



Expenditures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