

2021 Annual Report

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
OVERSIGHT BOARD 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

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Letter from co-chairs

Dear Governor Jay Inslee, the Washington State Legislature, and the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF):

We are honored to serve as the DCYF Oversight Board Co-Chairs for the 2021-2022 term. Building on the foundation created by our predecessors, Representative Tana Senn and retired Representative Ruth Kagi, we have strived to bolster the Board's responsiveness to issues raised by families, caregivers, and providers regarding DCYF's policies and practices aimed at balancing child safety and family well-being.

The DCYF Oversight Board, authorized to oversee DCYF's performance and policies, is most effective when we learn about systemic issues directly from the people impacted by the agency's policies and practices.

To fulfill this role this year, the Board is responding to the public's concern about children and youth being placed in unacceptable settings when appropriate therapeutic placements are not available for our children in the greatest need of services. We are listening to parents and providers who identified the need for intensified prevention efforts from the agency to provide support services to families to keep them remain together and whole. We are learning from the DCYF workforce who has identified current gaps in services for families and staff supports that hinder the agency's ability to actualize culture change. And most certainly, we hear the call for more accountable oversight of the agency charged with ensuring children are protected and families are strengthened and flourish in Washington State.

These issues are not new, though some have been exacerbated by a changing facets of our economy and society over the past couple of years. The COVID-19 pandemic suddenly flipped status quo on its head in 2020, and continues to have lingering impacts on children and families as a result of a shift to virtual learning and changes to direct service delivery. Data in this report provides an initial look at how these changes have impacted DCYF's ability to achieve better and equitable outcomes for children and families. This picture is incomplete as the pandemic has resulted in data gaps in some areas, leaving us all trying to understand the collateral consequences of these unprecedented times. Regardless, it is our job to continue to conduct oversight to ensure DCYF remedies issues impacting families, caregivers, providers, and the workforce.

Even in this context, we are seeing progress in some child and family outcomes since DCYF's creation in 2017. 51.1% of Washington students who are kindergarten ready in all six developmental domains, the highest percentage on record. The number of children in out-of-home care has continually decreased over the past several years and is currently, at 6,921 youth in FY2021, the lowest the population has been in over 10 years. And although more work remains, high school graduation rates continue to increase for adolescents in foster care and juvenile rehabilitation.

Just as we have seen progress, we also have identified areas of concern worth continual monitoring such as the maltreatment rate of youth in out-of-home care and the number of children that re-enter out-of-home care within 12 months. Data gaps or limitations exist due to the agency's aging data infrastructure and need for more comprehensive systems to collect data to answer our modern questions regarding system outcomes and family well-being. This is particularly true for the Board's commitment to holding DCYF accountable to achieving racial equity in child and family service outcomes. Further, we acknowledge data on the agency's performance in some areas is limited due to the nature of how the outcome is measured and the fact the agency's full authority over the continuum of care has only been in place since July 2019.

As we look forward to 2022, the DCYF Oversight Board will continue (1) to oversee the agency’s plan to diminish the increasing use of exceptional placements for youth best served by therapeutic and age-appropriate placement options; (2) to work with the agency to understand and address caseworker workloads, resources needs and services gaps to ensure meaningful and effective engagement with families; (3) to understand the agency’s theory of change for achieving prevention outcomes; (4) to oversee continued development of integrated adolescent services for youth involved in child welfare and/or juvenile rehabilitation to support successful transitions to adulthood; (5) to utilize enhanced data collection and analysis on racial and ethnic disproportionality in systems of care to implement specific actions that will measurably achieve equity; and (6) to continue to oversee and address ongoing impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic on children, parents, caregivers, and providers; among other priority areas as they arise.

As we continue to monitor DCYF’s performance, we promise to hold DCYF to the expectations of intended in its creation. We all want to see DCYF become successful in achieving its mission, but our work continues as we are committed to holding the agency accountable across all domains of its continuum of care.

Handwritten signature of Tom Dent in black ink.

Representative Tom Dent
13th Legislative District
Co-Chair of DCYF Oversight Board

Handwritten signature of Shrounda Selivanoff in black ink.

Shrounda Selivanoff
Director of Public Policy, Children’s
Home Society of Washington
Co-Chair of DCYF Oversight Board

Executive Summary

Created in 2017, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) was created by the Washington State Legislature to administer a continuum of care in order to achieve eighteen outcomes, with corresponding performance measures, focused on the well-being of Washington’s children and families. In this report, the DCYF Oversight Board reviews the agency’s performance in these priority focus areas spanning early learning, child welfare, and juvenile rehabilitation.

The report concludes DCYF is **achieving improved outcomes** for:

- Increasing the number of proportion of children kindergarten-ready
- Increasing the proportion of children in quality early learning programs
- Reducing the number of children entering out-of-home care
- Reducing the length of stay for children in out-of-home care
- Increasing family reunifications, and
- Increasing high school graduation rates for youth in the child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation systems

The report also concludes DCYF’s **practice and operations need improvement** on:

- Eliminating racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in system involvement across child and youth outcomes
- Increasing the available supply of licensed child care
- Licensing more foster homes than there are children in out-of-home care
- Increasing the stability of placement for children in out-of-home care
- Developing strategies to demonstrate to foster families that their service and involvement are highly valued by the agency
- Improving adolescent outcomes, and
- Eliminating the discharge of youth from institutional settings into homeless

Areas of concern for DCYF’s practice include:

- Reducing maltreatment of youth while in out-of-home care, and
- Reducing the number of children re-entering out-of-home care

The agency’s performance on the remaining outcomes is inconclusive due to at least one of the following limitations: (1) the lack of an existing quantifiable measures to capture a priority outcomes, (2) one-time analyses reflective of performance prior to the creation of DCYF, (3) data collection and reporting limitations due to old data infrastructure in need of updating to meet modern data and reporting needs, and/or (4) data analysis lags due to traditional performance measure structure and reporting frequency.

Even with these data limitations, the DCYF Oversight Board reviewed each outcome focus area and identified contributing factors influencing agency performance, including externally imposed limitations introduced by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as opportunities for improvement presented by recent legislative changes, programming, and funding.





For each outcome focus area, the DCYF Oversight Board provides recommendations for DCYF to improve performance reporting, refine priorities, and improve practices with the goal of achieving better outcomes, equitably, for Washington’s children and families.











DCYF Oversight Board Background













In 2017, the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) was created with the passage of [HB 1661](#). DCYF administers early learning, child welfare, juvenile justice and juvenile rehabilitation services previously administered by two separate state agencies – the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) and the Department of Early Learning (DEL). The creation of DCYF restructures how the state serves children, youth and families through a continuum of care, with the goal of producing better outcomes in all Washington communities. [HB 1661](#) (2017) also created the DCYF Oversight Board as an independent entity for monitoring and ensuring that DCYF achieves the stated outcomes as intended by the legislation, and to ensure that the department complies with administrative acts, relevant statutes, rules, and policies pertaining to early learning, juvenile rehabilitation, juvenile justice, and children and family services.

A list of Board members is available for review in Appendix D.

Performance Snapshot RCW 43.216.015(3)(c)

	On Track		Needs Improvement/Mixed		Off Track		Inconclusive due to data limitations and reporting prior to DCYF creation.
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2.	Increase the number and proportion of children kindergarten-ready as measured by the Washington kindergarten inventory of developing skills (WAKids) assessment including mathematics		Page 11
3.	Increase the proportion of children in early learning programs that have achieved the level 3 or higher early achievers quality standard		Page 14
4.	Increase the available supply of licensed child care in child care centers and family homes, including providers not receiving subsidy		Page 16
5.	Prevent child abuse and neglect		Page 18
6.	Reduce number of children entering out-of-home care*		Page 20
7.	Reduce Length of Stay (LOS) in out-of-home care*		Page 24
8.	Reduce maltreatment of youth while in out-of-home care*		Page 26
9.	Licensing more foster homes than there are children in foster care		Page 27
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11.	Increase stability of placements for children in out-of-home care *		Page 31
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16.	In collaboration with county juvenile justice programs, increase number of youth who successfully complete terms of diversion or alternative sentencing options**		Page 50
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* Federally reported measures in the Annual Progress and Services Report, complimented by the Child and Family Services Plan.

** Data limitations due to data lag, analysis, and reporting periods in conjunction with the initial implementation of DCYF in August 2017 and full implementation by July 2019.

DCYF Oversight Board Strategic Plan Review Summary Statement


The DCYF Oversight Board reviewed drafts of DCYF’s Strategic Plan in March 2020 and again in March 2021. Below is an excerpt from the Oversight Board’s response to DCYF in April 2021, with the full response available for review in Appendix A. DCYF informed the Oversight Board that it did not include all of the Board’s feedback given that it received input and feedback from a number of stakeholder groups in addition to the Board’s response, and in an effort to be responsive to various stakeholders, other input was incorporated instead of the Board’s.

The Oversight Board is encouraged by the direction DCYF has outlined in this plan and its obligation to fulfill the mandate as envisioned in the Governor’s Blue Ribbon Commission on the Delivery of Services to Children and Families and House Bill 1661 of 2017. In particular, the DCYF Oversight Board was supportive and pleased to see the following in DCYF’s Strategic Priorities 2020-2025 plan:

- Adding geography, sexual identity/gender expression and ability status to the work aimed at reducing disproportionality and disparities across system outcomes.
- Support for the DCYF workforce that is responsive to emotional and secondary trauma experienced as a result of working in child and family services.
- Trauma-informed care with a healing-centered approach to addressing the needs of children and families served by the Department.
- A focus on staff satisfaction and retention.
- Continued support for the performance-based contracting strategy pursued by the Department for all direct client services.
- Concerted efforts to increase the service array available to children and families across the state with a particular focus on rural areas.
- The inclusion of the Chapin Hall Baseline Performance Assessment as a guide to strengthen quality improvement systems.
- A plan to report on all accountability indicators by race, ethnicity, geography and family income where available.

The DCYF Oversight Board’s full response is available for review in Appendix A. A comparison of the Oversight Board’s feedback, and what DCYF incorporated in their final strategic plan, can be reviewed in Appendix B.

1. Eliminating racial and ethnic disproportionality and disparities in system involvement and across child and youth outcomes in collaboration with other state agencies

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Needs Improvement 

There are a number of indicators to consider when assessing the agency’s performance towards eliminating racial and ethnic disparities across child and youth outcomes. Due to the varied nature of data available and how that data is analyzed, DCYF published a report in May 2021 “Using Data in DCYF to Advance Racial Equity.”¹

When evaluating data regarding race and ethnicity, it is important to analyze trends by understanding the purpose and use of that data in terms of equality versus equity. This is particularly true when considering service provision versus outcomes. Racial and ethnic disproportionality in service provision and resource distribution may exist in order to achieve racial equity in child and family outcomes. Though this is not true for all trends regarding disproportionality, it is necessary to maintain an understanding that targeted strategies for some communities can disrupt long-standing status quo patterns of inequity, by providing services, supports and programming in order to achieve equity.

In this work, DCYF identifies where existing disproportionalities exist in its systems of care, and aims to align the definition, collection, reporting and analysis of racial and ethnic disparities data across early learning, child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation. Data and the assessment of the agency’s performance in this area, as reported here, is reflective of the work conducted by the agency up until this point. As DCYF continues to make progress on aligning the collection, reporting and analysis of racial and ethnic data across systems of care, the Oversight Board will have greater ability to assess the agency’s performance in the coming years.

On page 3 of the “Using Data in DCYF to Advance Racial Equity” Report, DCYF concludes the following about disproportionality across the agency’s three main systems of care:

Child Welfare: American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN), Black/African American (Black), AI/AN-Multiracial, Black-Multiracial, and White groups are overrepresented at multiple stages of the child welfare process relative to the underlying population of children and youth living at or below 200% of the federal poverty level. All other groups, Asian/Pacific Islander [PI], Hispanic, and Multiracial, are slightly underrepresented.

Early Learning: Children who are Black are represented in subsidized child care at nearly twice the rate to which they make up the underlying income-eligible population. AI/AN children are slightly underrepresented in Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), subsidized child care, and home visiting relative to their share of the underlying income-eligible populations.

Juvenile Rehabilitation: AI/AN and Black youth are overrepresented in referrals to court and Juvenile Rehabilitation (JR) admissions relative to the underlying population of youth living in homes at or below 200% of the federal poverty level.

¹ Cummings, K., Graham, J. C., Veele, S., & Ybarra, V. (2021). Using Data in DCYF to Advance Racial Equity. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families – Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability. www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/OIAAEquityData2021.pdf

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **DCYF Strategic Plan:** DCYF has identified *eliminate racial disproportionalities and advance racial equity* as one of six priorities central to the agency's first plan. This commitment may contribute to further progress on this outcome in the years to come.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Some studies have shown that the COVID-19 Pandemic contributed to increasing racial inequities in foster care in certain urban environments. The impacts of the pandemic will be under consideration when monitoring the agency's performance moving forward.²
- **Need for Data Infrastructure:** Continued advances in developing data infrastructure for assessing racial equity in DCYF's systems of care will create greater transparency and metrics by which to assess the agency's progress.
- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of legislation in 2021, including but not limited to [HB 1227](#), [HB 1194](#), [SB 5151](#), [HB 1186](#), [HB 1295](#), and [SB 5237](#), all have elements aimed at addressing racial disproportionalities across early learning, child welfare, and juvenile rehabilitation. The impacts from these new laws will be monitored given their various implementation dates and subsequent practice over the next several years.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Understanding & Utilizing Data:** The Oversight Board will work with DCYF to further understand the distinction between racial and ethnic disproportionalities of children and families enrolled in programs and receiving services, and outcome disparities based on race and ethnicity. Further efforts to communicate these differences and the agency's theory of change to achieve equity in outcomes is necessary to identify targeted and measurable strategies for eliminating inequities.
- **Bolder Commitments:** The DCYF Oversight Board commends the agency for identifying racial equity as a priority in its first strategic plan, though the Board encourages the agency to make bolder commitments, including commitment to defined practice changes and to identify performance targets, in order to actualize the commitment made in the plan. For more details on the Oversight Board's response to DCYF on this commitment, see Appendix A.

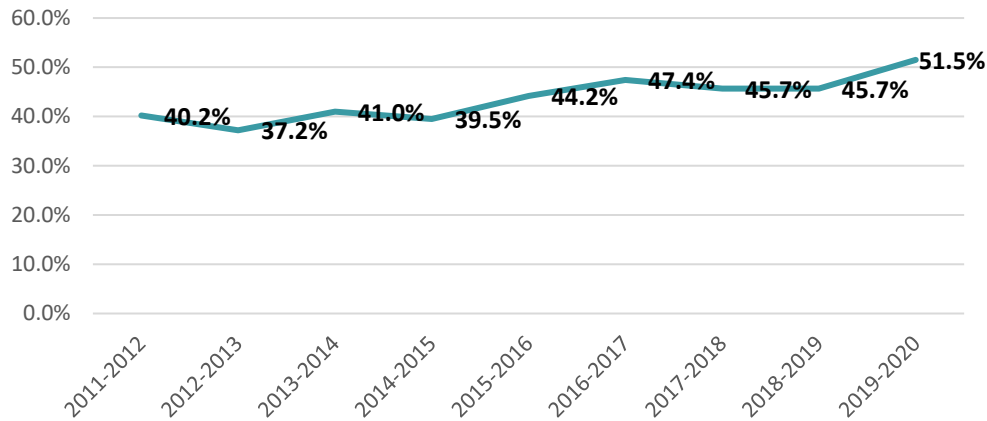
² Bethany Christian Services. *What the Pandemic Taught Us: Innovative Practice Report*. 2021. <https://bethany.org/media/resources/blogs/innovative-practice-report-2021.pdf>

2. Increasing number and proportion of children kindergarten-ready as measure by WA kindergarten inventory of developing skills (WaKIDS) assessment including mathematics.

PERFORMANCE STATUS: On Track, Progress Made

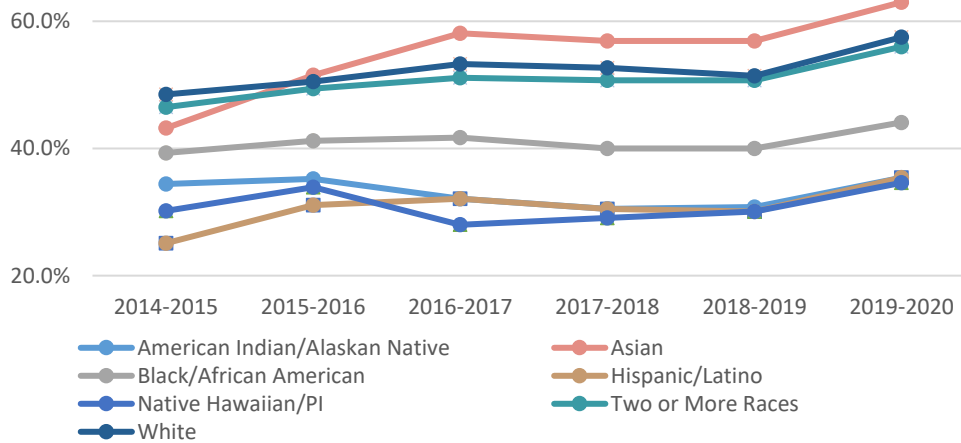


Percentage of Students Entered Kindergarten Ready in All Six Areas of Development and Learning, by School Year



3

Students Kindergarten Ready in all six domains by race and ethnicity, School Year 2014-2015 to 2019-2020



4

School year 2019-2020 marked the highest statewide aggregate performance, at 51.5%, for kindergarten readiness in all six domains for all students across the state. From school year 2018-2019 to 2019-2020, the state documented the first time that students of all racial and ethnic identity groups experienced an overall

³ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Report Card. *Kindergarten Readiness*. 2021.

<https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/103300>

⁴ OSPI Report Card. *Kindergarten Readiness by Student Demographics*. 2021.

<https://washingtonstatereportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/ReportCard/ViewSchoolOrDistrict/103300>

improvement in kindergarten readiness in all six domains. **Disparities** in readiness across all six domains **persist** for American Indian/Alaskan Native (**34.6%**), Black/African American (**44.1%**), Hispanic/Latino (**35.4%**), Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (**33.1%**) students in comparison to white (**57.5%**) and Asian students (**63%**). Math is the lowest scoring area for all students across gender, race and ethnicity.

Of the students entering kindergarten who are also in **foster care**, only **29.3%** were considered ready in all six domains, for a 2017 cohort, this is compared to the **46.4%** of non-foster students considered kindergarten ready in all six domains. In the **social-emotional domain**, students in foster care were assessed at **49.7%** ready compared to their non-foster student counterparts who were assessed at **70.1%** ready, representing the domain with the **greatest discrepancy** between these subgroups of students.⁵ This discrepancy is of particular concern given that for developing brains, emotional well-being and social competence are necessary to support the development of other cognitive abilities.⁶

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic that kept students at home, WaKIDS data for the 2020-2021 school year is incomplete. This will complicate the performance assessments of kindergarten readiness next year.
- **Reporting on Educational Outcomes:** Kindergarten readiness trend data for students in foster care in comparison to a non-foster student population is limited. [HB 2711 \(2020\)](#) requires the Education Research & Data Center (ERDC) to produce a similar annual report comparing foster care student educational outcomes due in March of 2021, 2022 and 2023. These additional analyses will provide further insight into the agency's ability to serve young children in foster care to ensure they are entering K-12 at the same level as their peers.
- **Kinship vs. Non-Kinship Placements:** DCYF acknowledges the value of understanding the impacts of out-of-home placements on social-emotional development. The agency has plans to analyze the impacts of kinship placements, versus non-kinship placements, on social-emotional development of young children in care.
- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of the Fair Starts for Kids Act ([ESSB 5237](#)) introduces multiple strategies for improving child care across the state. With expanded eligibility and reduced copays for some programs, more families and children will have access to high quality early learning opportunities. It is assumed this will improve the number and percentage of children who will be Kindergarten Ready in all six domains when entering kindergarten.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

The DCYF Oversight Board ECDO Subcommittee reviewed Kindergarten Readiness in March 2021. The ECDO Subcommittee has provided the following recommendations to DCYF to increase performance in kindergarten readiness:

- **Partnering with Early Learning Providers:** Pursue innovative ways to work with early learning providers on to share data on kindergarten readiness of children who exit their programs. This will help inform and enhance provider practices with a goal to improve child development outcomes.

⁵ Chen, Viven, et al. *Education Outcomes of Children and Youth Experiencing Foster Care*. 2020. <https://erdc.wa.gov/publications/student-outcomes/education-outcomes-children-and-youth-experiencing-foster-care>

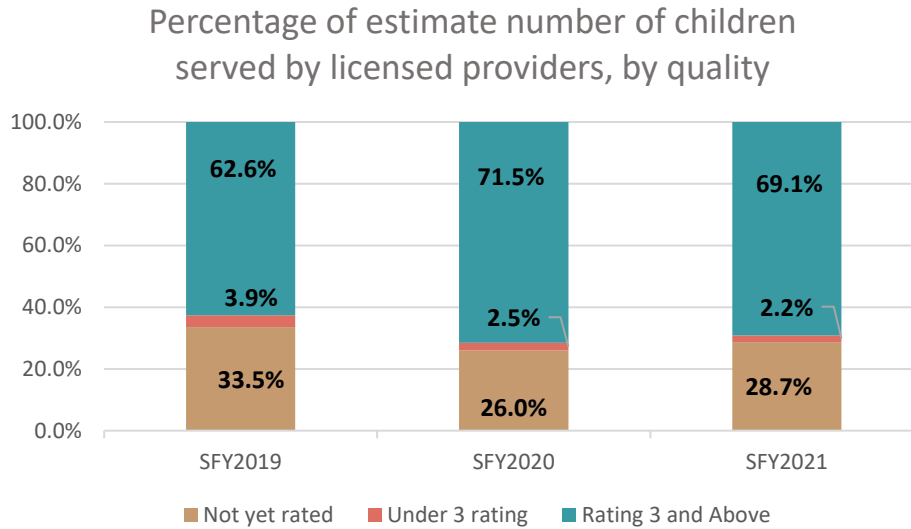
⁶ Center on the Developing Child. *Brain Architecture*. 2021. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/brain-architecture/>

- **BIPOC School Readiness Measure:** The agency should conduct a robust review of meaningful school readiness measures for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) children, who may not be served well by standardized assessments. Upon completion of a thorough review adopt a measure to include in the agency’s strategic plan and performance monitoring practices.
- **EOGOAC 2021 WaKIDS Review:** As part of this effort, DCYF should also review the outcome of the Education Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC)’s 2021 review of WaKIDS, as mandated in the 2020 budget proviso SB 6168, to *review WaKIDS including professional development available to educators and other assessment materials and tools, and make recommendations to OSPI and the educations committees of the legislature on (1) opportunities for reducing bias in the observational assessment process and materials; and (2) barriers to the implementation of the inventory.*
- **STEM Alliance Recommendations:** This work should include partnering with OSPI to adopt the STEM Alliance recommendation *Increase alignment and improving use of Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) assessment* to measure and support EARLY STEM for BIPOC children to achieve equitable outcomes through culturally responsive opportunities to grow and demonstrate skills.⁷
- **Publically Report WaKIDS Data for Children in Foster Care:** DCYF has identified kindergarten readiness has an outcome indicator for the agency’s strategic priority [Create high-quality integrated B-8 system](#). Given this priority and planned future analyses on students in foster care, DCYF is encouraged to report this data accessibly on their website and agency performance page.

⁷ STEM Education Innovation Alliance. “2021 STEM Education Innovation Alliance to Office of Financial Management.” <https://wsac.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2021.STEMAlliance.RecommendationstoOFM.pdf>

3. Increasing the proportion of children in early learning programs that have achieved the level 3 or higher early achievers quality standard

PERFORMANCE STATUS: On Track 



Note: Licensed providers include (1) child care centers, (2) family home providers, and (3) Head Start/ECEAP.

Estimated Number of Children Served by All Types of Providers, By Quality

	SFY2019	SFY2020	SFY2021
Not yet rated	35,295	27,438	29,784
Under 3 rating	4,158	2,637	2,330
Rating 3 and Above	65,921	75,505	71,675
Total	105,374	105,580	103,789

Since SFY2019, the number of children being served by a licensed provider with quality 3 rating or higher in SFY2020, and then saw a decrease in SFY2021 as a backlog for not yet rated providers grew during the COVID-19 pandemic. Though there is a consistent trend since SFY2019 that illustrates the number of children being served by a licensed provider with a quality rating below 3 has declined. Prior to SFY2019, DCYF reported the number of licensed sites, but did not report enrollment or capacity of sites. Given this, the baseline begins in SFY2019 at the time when early learning provider licensing officially became a part of DCYF.

⁸ DCYF. (June 2019 – June 2021). Early Achievers Monitoring Report. Merit.


Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic directly impacted the agency’s ability to license and evaluate providers to determine quality. It is assumed this impact is reflected in the increase of providers “not yet rated” in SFY2021 compared to SFY2020, though both years are still an improvement in comparison to SFY2019.
- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of the **Fair Starts for Kids Act (FSKA)** ([ESSB 5237](#)) during the 2021 legislative session, is intended to expand access to high quality child care to more families across the state. In October 2021, DCYF began the implementation of these changes that will provide up to an additional 6,000 families to afford quality care. It is anticipated that the percentage of children served by providers with a quality rating of 3 or higher will increase in the coming years.

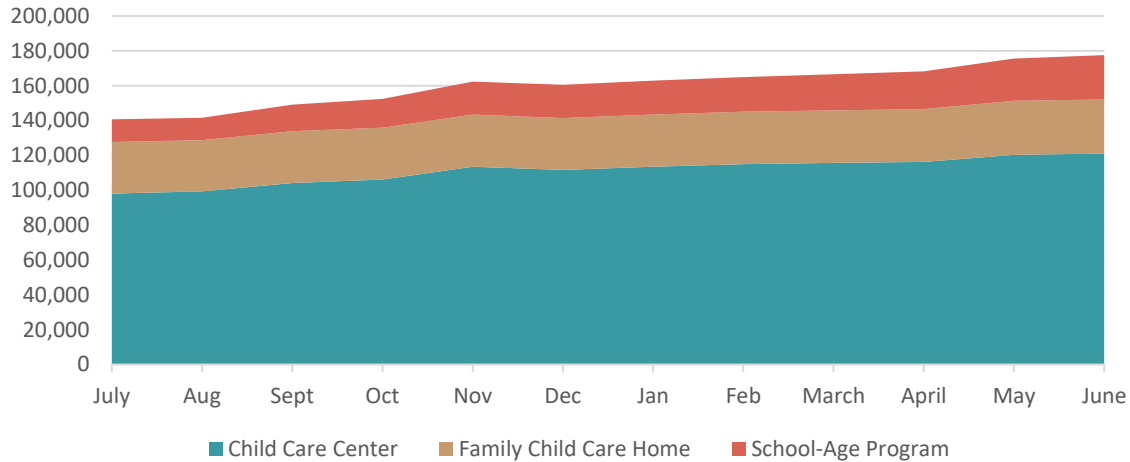
Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Expand FSKA Communication Strategies:** In June 2021, the DCYF Oversight Board’s Early Childhood Development Outcomes (ECDO) Subcommittee received a briefing from DCYF on the implementation efforts for the Fair Starts for Kids Act. The Subcommittee encouraged DCYF to expand its communication strategies to newly eligible families who may benefit from the expanded child care subsidies and eligibility, beyond traditional means of communication via the agency’s website. As the FSKA continues to be implemented, the DCYF Oversight Board will seek briefing updates on implementation progress and impacts to families and providers.

4. Increasing the available supply of licensed child care in both child care centers and family homes, including providers not receiving state subsidy

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Mixed, Needs Improvement 

Open Licensed Capacity by Type, Last Day of the Month, SFY2021



9

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCYF reported on the total licensed capacity for child care centers and family home centers enrolled in Early Achievers. Due to impacts from the pandemic, DCYF shifted to measuring total open licensed capacity for all providers including school-age programs. The practice of measuring total open licensed capacity by DCYF will continue and is being utilized for assessing the agency’s performance on this outcome measure. Given the limited historical data available on the way this measure, performance is being assessed as it reflects the monthly trend over the past year, which has shown a linear increasing trend across all provider types for SFY2021.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic had a dramatic impact on licensed child care providers, reducing capacity of providers, or closing businesses all together as families remained home with their children. DCYF is undertaking efforts to continue to stabilize the child care industry. The agency has administered four separate grants during the pandemic totaling approximately \$438 million in funds to the licensed child care industry. These funding opportunities include the administration of Child Care Stabilization Grants that began in the fall of 2021.
- **Recent Legislation:** The Fair Starts for Kids Act ([ESSB 5237](#)) is intended to continue statewide growth in licensed capacity and increase the number of families served.

⁹ DCYF. (August 2021). *COVID Daily Report* [July 2020-June 2021]. WACompass powerpivot.


- **Child Care Collaborative Task Force:** Actions outlined in the 2021 Child Care Collaborative Task Force Report “Washington State Child Care Access Strategy” is intended to increase the available supply of child care.¹⁰

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Detailed Reporting on Open Licensed Capacity:** To increase the utilization of data for decision-making and targeted strategies, further detail reporting on open licensed capacity is necessary, including a comparison of the types of slots available, usage of available slots and outstanding need for slots across all provider types across all geographic regions of the state.
- **Performance Monitoring:** The DCYF Oversight Board, and its Early Childhood Development Outcomes Subcommittee, will review the agency’s performance in this area in further detail in CY2022, with consistent monitoring of the implementation of FSKA.

¹⁰ Child Care Collaborative Task Force. *Washington State Child Care Access Strategy: A strategy, timeline and implementation plan to reach the goal of accessible, affordable child care for all Washington families*. 2021. <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/FINAL-June-2021-C3TF-Legislative-Report.pdf>

5. Preventing child abuse and neglect

PERFORMANCE: Inconclusive 

Performance Measures:

Measuring prevention is complicated and often requires looking at proxy measures and outcome measures as multiple facets to the same concept. In DCYF’s FFPSA plan, the agency identifies proxy outcomes related to prevention such as an **increase in families committed to receiving services, improved parenting skills, increased family communication** and an **increase in families able to meet a child’s needs**. These measures are not currently being reported on, but future analysis and reporting may provide a more conclusive understanding of the effectiveness of agency’s efforts in these areas. Additionally, outcomes such as the **reduction of child entry and re-entry into the child welfare system** signal successful prevention efforts.

For this report, to assess DCYF’s performance in preventing child abuse and neglect, a review of measures reported federally, include **the number and percentage of families screened for a Family Assessment Response (FAR), the number of families who elected for Family Voluntary Services (FVS), the number of children and youth in out-of-home care** (page 19), and **the percentage of children that re-enter care** (page 27).

Family Assessment Response (FAR): Is an alternate way for to respond to some reports of child abuse and neglect by supporting families when they are in crisis without finding parents responsible for child abuse or neglect, and helping families connect with their communities.

Currently, only data on FAR referrals is available. Further analysis is needed to understand the outcome of FAR referrals. Reporting on the number of FAR referrals that have subsequent CPS investigations will indicate how many FAR referrals succeed in keeping children safe and ensuring family well-being.

Number of CPS Intakes Screened in for FAR ¹¹	
CY2015	13,549
CY2016	17,834
CY2017	19,992
CY2018	22,297
CY2019	21,447
CY2020	15,968

Note: With the passage of SB6555 in 2012, FAR was expected to expand to statewide utilization in 2016, though full implementation was in 2017.

Family Voluntary Services (FVS): FVS allows parents to voluntarily engage in services to increase their protective capacities and meet the child’s safety, health and well-being needs.

Percentage of families who had their FVS case closed that experienced a subsequent screened-in CPS intake or placement of one or more children		
SFY2018	31.2%	20% or less
SFY2019	27.6%	20% or less

¹¹ DCYF. *Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)*. Annual Reports from 2017-2021.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA):** DCYF's FFPSA plan was approved by the federal Children's Bureau in October 2020. With this funding, evidence-based prevention programs will be made available to families prior to formal child welfare involvement. These advances in programming and services bolster the agency's efforts to prioritize prevention and early intervention.
- **COVID-19 Impacts:** The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is evident in the following data points. As a result of the pandemic, the number of referrals for screening were down due to less contact between children and mandatory reporters during period of lock down or restricted activities. This impact is reflected in the number of referrals to FAR that dropped in CY2020.
- **DCYF Organizational Structure Changes:** In October 2021, DCYF announced a reorganization of its leadership structure, including the creation of the Assistant Secretary of Prevention and Client Services. The creation and elevation of this position aligns with the agency's commitment and prioritization to prevention services, a priority at the core of the agency's founding legislation.
- **DCYF Strategic & Equity Plan 2021-2026:** Throughout the agency's [first strategic plan](#), elements of prevention, including investments in services and practices, are central to a systems reform focused on preventing further involvement in the agency's service array. Adopting an **applied racial equity lens** and focusing on **reducing children and youth in out-of-home care by half**, are two of the agency's top six priorities that create the foundation of the strategic plan.

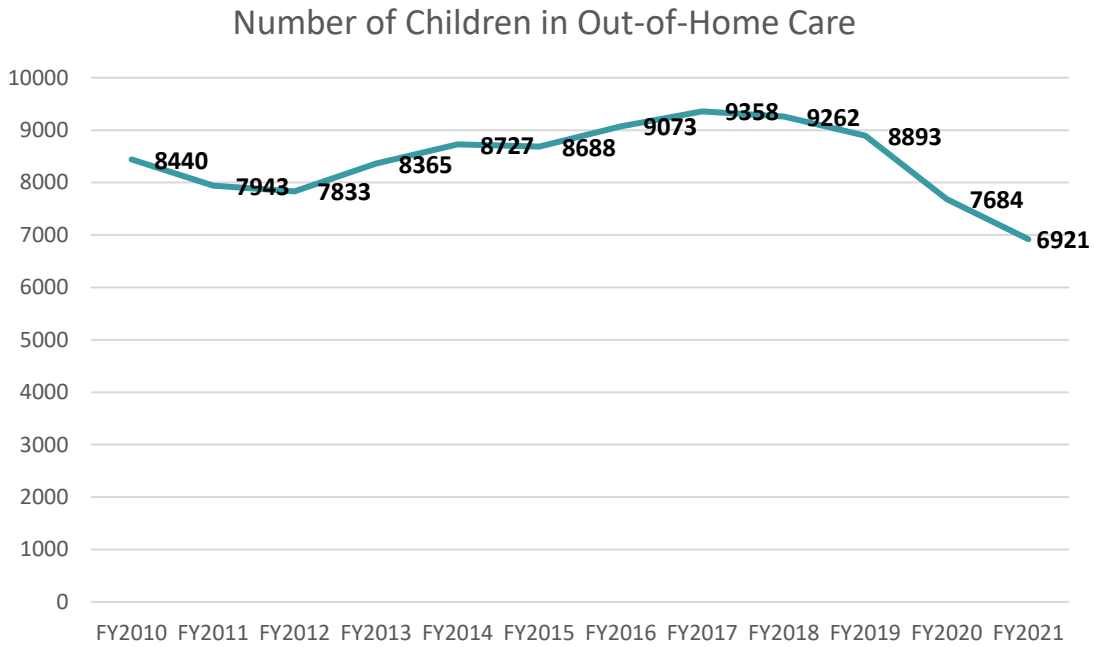
The DCYF Oversight Board commends DCYF for prioritizing racial equity, though the Oversight Board has set expectations for DCYF to further commit to a more defined and tangible approach, with set measurable goals and targets, to intensify the commitment to this work. (For more on the Oversight Board's response to the agency's commitment, see Appendix A).

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

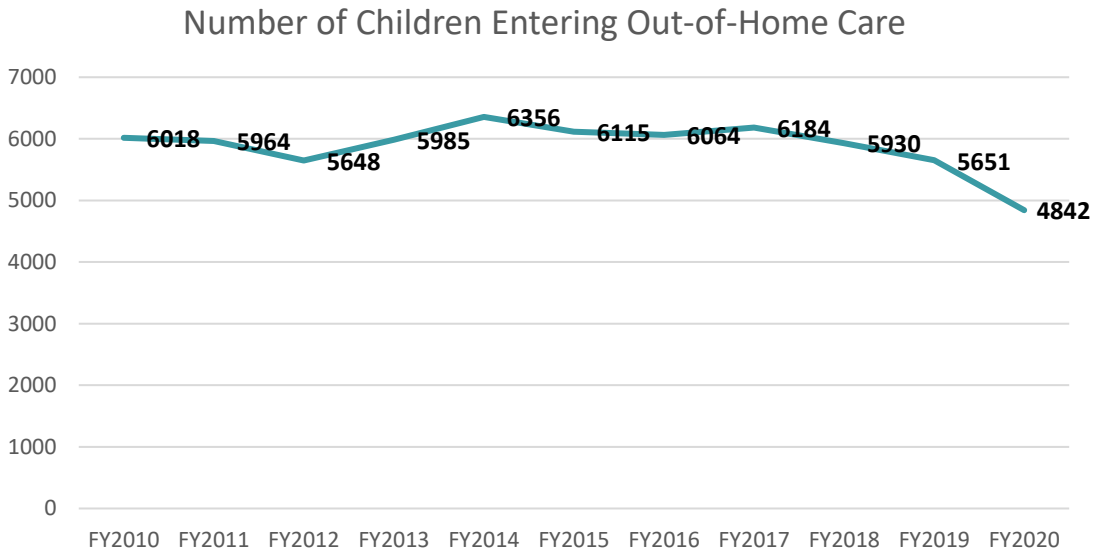
- **DCYF's Prevention Theory of Change:** The DCYF Oversight Board will engage with DCYF in 2022 to understand (1) the agency's theory of change for preventing child abuse and neglect; (2) what outcome measure the agency intends to utilize its performance on prevention; and (3) whether or not the agency's theory of change is achieving desirable results. By utilizing data that does not accurately reflect what is happening in the field with children and families, the state risks reinforcing status quo practice and resulting outcomes.
- **Outcome Data Reporting for Prevention Services:** Data and reporting on the outcomes of families that are referred to FAR and FVS is necessary to identify the effectiveness in the agency's actions to address family needs and avoid an escalation to CPS investigations. With the implementation of FFPSA funding and services, similar reporting on prevention services provided and the ultimate outcome for those families is essential for evaluating the agency's performance on preventing child abuse and neglect.

6. Reducing the number of children entering out-of-home care

PERFORMANCE: On Track



12



13

¹² DCYF. (2021). *Relative vs. Non-Relative Report*. infoFamLink.

¹³ DCYF. (2021). *Out of Home Exits and Entries*. infoFamLink.

Since DCYF’s creation, the number of children and youth entering out-of-home care, and in out-of-home care, are reducing consistently each state fiscal year.

Percentage of Children in Care by Race/Ethnicity, Last Day of State Fiscal Year, 2016-2021

	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference Since SFY2019*
AI/AN	3.87%	3.51%	3.25%	3.19%	3.11%	2.90%	-.29%
AI/AN-Multi	9.56%	10.49%	10.85%	10.82%	11.27%	11.88%	+1.06%
Asian/PI	1.75%	1.69%	2.08%	2.45%	2.06%	1.63%	-.82%
Blac	7.99%	7.80%	8.16%	8.55%	8.47%	7.89%	-.66%
Black-Multi	8.54%	9.08%	9.20%	9.72%	9.79%	9.46%	-.26%
Hispanic	16.51%	15.92%	15.05%	15.48%	15.75%	16.60%	+1.12%
Multi-Other	1.85%	1.97%	1.91%	1.93%	2.02%	2.10%	-.17%
White	49.93%	49.54%	49.49%	47.86%	47.54%	47.54%	-.32%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Note: 46 cases are missing race/ethnicity data and are excluded.

**DCYF was created in 2017 and assumed child welfare authority and responsibilities in July 2018. SFY2019 reflects the first full year of data since DCYF was responsible for children in out-of-home care.*

Given the decrease in the absolute number of children in out-of-home care over the past several years, disaggregated data by race and ethnicity indicates the reduction is occurring at different rates for each group. Although trend differences are observable when reviewing this data, it is important to consider overall demographic shifts in Washington State among children, youth and young adults ages 0-19.¹⁴ The changing demographic landscape of Washington’s population may explain trends illustrated above. A more detailed graph of demographic shifts of the population of children, youth and young adults in Washington can be viewed in [DCYF’s Using Data in DCYF to Advance Racial Equity Report, page 16](#).

DCYF Strategic & Equity Plan

DCYF has adopted this measure as an outcome indicator in the agency’s strategic plan to achieve its agency priority to *safely reduce the number/rate of children and youth in out-of-home care by half*. To ensure the focus on reducing the number of children entering care occurs safely, the agency is also monitoring balancing indicators – such as re-entry into to care rates, extended foster care utilization and reunification rates – to ensure the focus on reduction doesn’t have collateral consequences for youth and families.

Even given the progress made on this area of high importance, and the agency’s continued commitment to keeping it a priority, continued work must be dedicated to **prioritize reducing youth in out-of-home care equitably across race and ethnicity**, as well as well as to target strategies **to reduce the length of stay of those youth in out-of-home care** (see on page 22) and **address the root causes for repeated exceptional placements of a small number of youth** (see graphs on page 30).

¹⁴ Cummings, K., Graham, J. C., Veele, S., & Ybarra, V. (2021). Using Data in DCYF to Advance Racial Equity. Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families – Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability. www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/OIAAEquityData2021.pdf

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **Recent Legislation:** In the 2021 legislative session, [HB 1227](#), which seeks to protect the rights of families responding to allegations of abuse or neglect of a child, is expected to further reduce the number of children entering out-of-home care beginning in 2023 when the bill is fully implemented.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, as students attended class from remote home setting, school mandatory reports had reduced access to visibly see children and youth. This lack of visibility may have resulted in a reduction of CPS referrals over the same time period and may ultimately impact the number of children entering out-of-home care over the two past fiscal years. Additionally, extended Foster Care (EFC) was expanded for young adults who were scheduled to age-out during the COVID-19 pandemic. By providing this support to these young adults, the number of youth & young adults in care remained higher than other years. In alignment with DCYF’s commitment to this priority area, close monitoring of the number of children entering care will be prioritized over the coming years.
- **WA Supreme Court Decisions:** In 2020 and 2021, the Washington State Supreme Court issued decisions that significantly impact how DCYF must apply the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and the Washington State Indian Child Welfare Act (WICWA). In the first, *In re GJA*, the Court held that both Acts require DCYF to prove that “active efforts” were made to prevent the breakup of an Indian Family, and, that the “futility doctrine” may not be used in ICWA/WICWA cases to excuse lack of “active efforts.” As ordered, DCYF must provide and prove “active efforts” - defined as affirmative, active, thorough, and timely efforts intended primarily to maintain or reunite an Indian child with his or her family – were made prior to a court hearing the termination of parental rights petition. In the second, *In re ZIG*, the Court made clear that DCYF has “reason to know” that a child may be Native (triggering the requirements and protections of ICWA/WICWA) where there is any indication that a child may have tribal heritage. With these interpretations clarifying the obligations of DCYF under ICWA/WICWA to support tribal youth and their families, it may be assumed the number of tribal children in out-of-home care will continue to decrease.

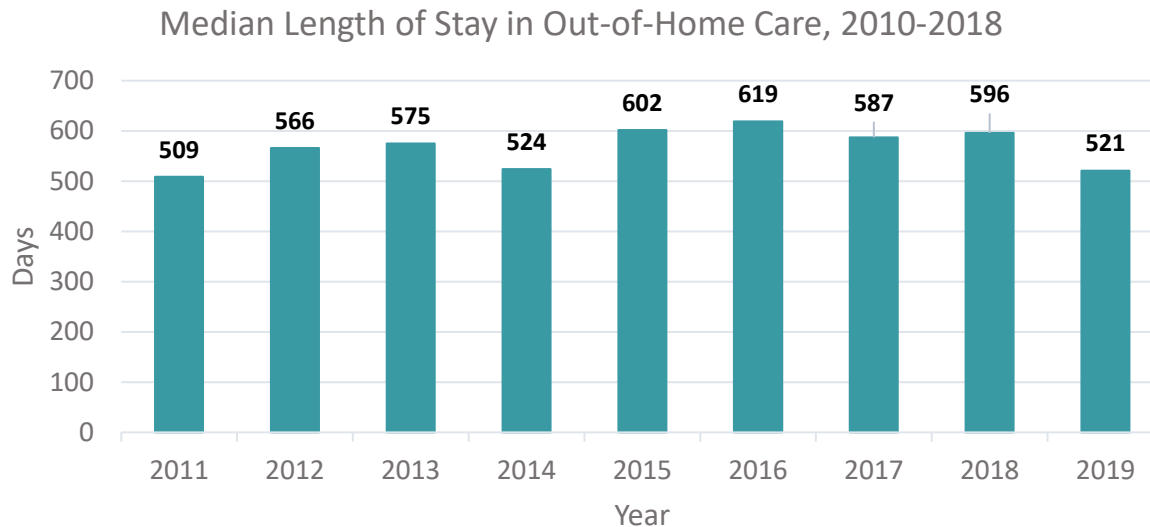
Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Rationale for 50% Reduction Goal:** Without further clarity on the logic behind the agency’s identified goal of reducing children in out-of-home care by half, further detailed discussion is warranted to identify a justifiably reduced size of the foster care system that continues to prioritize child safety and family well-being. This is particularly necessary to ensure that an overall reduction in the number of youth in care does not result in an increasing disproportionate effect on BIPOC children in care. As well as the need to acknowledge the significant positive outcomes youth can experience by receiving effective services while in care, such as the benefits of the Extended Foster Care program as detailed in this report on page 42.
 - Once further transparent discussions and agreement are conducted, targeted strategies are necessary to address any potential disproportionate impacts on children and families based on race, ethnicity, and geographic location.
- **Understanding Impact of Reduced CPS Referrals:** It still remains unknown whether or not the reduction in CPS referrals due to the COVID-19 pandemic is directly linked to a reduction in CPS investigations and overall reduced child safety across the state. To understand the true impacts on child safety due to the reduction of exposure to school-based mandatory reporters, the Oversight Board encourages DCYF to utilize innovative independent research analyzing the risk of child injury

during the time of reduced referrals. An example is a current study being conducted by the University of Southern California (USC) using Washington State data to track child injuries using hospital admissions codes during the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Reducing length of stay for youth in out of home care

PERFORMANCE STATUS: On Track, based on a single data point



DCYF calculates Length of Stay (LOS) by the median number of days children are in out-of-home care. The LOS for any individual child or youth has equal likelihood of falling above or below the median for each state fiscal year. In this calculation, DCYF excludes stays of less than seven days, but includes stays for Trial Return Home period that may go up to a maximum of 30 days.

LOS is a lagged analysis as it is calculated by cohort, for the children who entered care during a fiscal year, and the total length of stay for any child cannot be calculated until the stay is over. For this reason, it takes a little under two years to accurately calculate LOS for a given fiscal year, and thus, the most recent data point available is for SFY2019, the first full year since foster care was administered by DCYF.

The first year of analysis, SFY2019, with DCYF managing foster care suggests a positive trend towards reduced LOS for youth in out-of-home care.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- Interconnectedness of LOS and Reducing the Number of Youth in Out-of-Home Care:** Even given the suggested declining trend for LOS, the total number of youth in out-of-home care has been declining annually since SFY2018. Given an overall reduction of youth in out-of-home care, as the lagged analysis of LOS for the same fiscal years becomes available, it is possible an increasing trend may emerge as those youth who remain in care may have greater challenges in finding placement unless alternative placement options are made available to meet culturally and behavioral needs of youth in care.

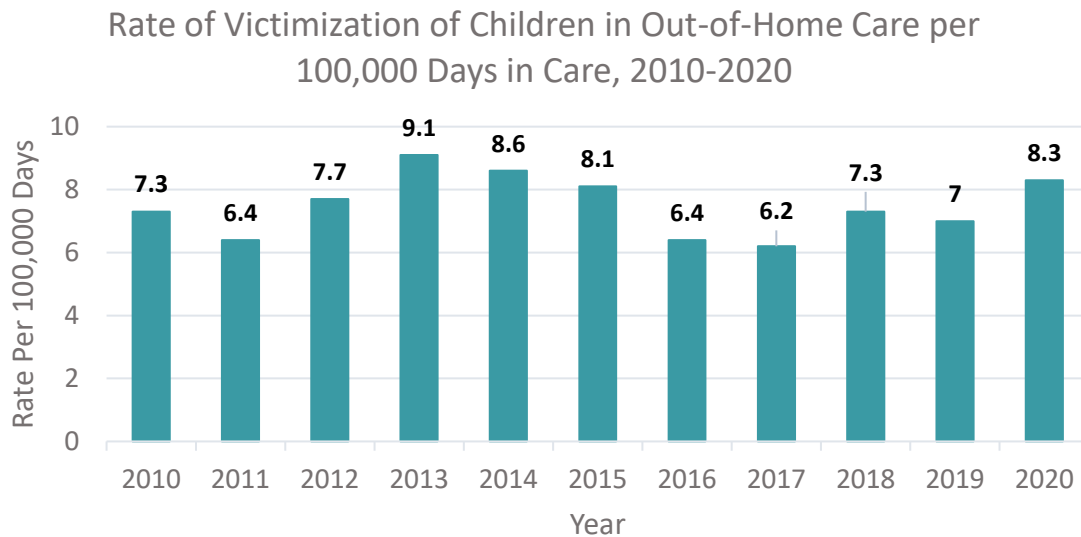
Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

¹⁵ infoFamLink, Child Welfare Priority Performance Measures. Updated 2021 by DCYF Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability (OIAA).

- **Develop Useful LOS Measure:** The DCYF Oversight Board will work with DCYF to explore means to measure LOS in a manner more useful for informing policy and practice to achieve permanency outcomes. The current measure is difficult to understand and lacks practical application for improving practice.
- **Oversight on Potential Collateral Consequences of Adopted Strategies:** The DCYF Oversight Board will be following these data trends in partnership with DCYF to ensure advances in one area of focus do not lead to reduced performance in others. The DCYF Oversight Board will review the agency's performance in this area in further detail in CY2022.

8. Reducing maltreatment of youth while in out-of-home care

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Off Track



Since 2018, when DCYF began to officially administer child welfare programs and services, there has been an increase in founded reports of maltreatment in out-of-home care.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:


- COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated stressors on families in unprecedented ways. Research and reporting indicates that the incidence of domestic violence increased during the pandemic due to economic stress, increased exposure to abusive relationships, reduced options for support, and overall instability related to disasters.¹⁶ These stressors have impacted families differently. During the pandemic, DCYF worked diligently to support foster families to address the impacts on COVID-19 to reduce the likelihood of this impacting foster homes.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- Develop Useful Measure for Maltreatment Rate in Out-of-Home Care:** Similar to the LOS outcome measure review on page 22, the DCYF Oversight Board will work with DCYF to explore means to measure maltreatment in out-of-home care in a manner more useful for informing policy and practice. The current measure is difficult to understand and lacks practical application for improving practice.

¹⁶ Usher, Kim, et al. "Family violence and COVID-19: Increased vulnerability and reduced options for support." *International Journal Mental Health Nursing*. 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1111/inm.12735>

9. Licensing more foster homes than there are children in foster care

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Needs Improvement, positive trend 

Although this measure calls for licensing more foster homes than there are children in foster care, more meaningful measures can be utilized to achieve the same goal.

Since the initial establishment of DCYF, there has been a **relatively constant number of licensed foster homes from 5,060 in 2018 to 5,055 in 2020**¹⁷. Simultaneously, there is a **decreasing trend in the number of children, under the age of 18, in out-of-home care from 9,272 in 2018 to 7,700 in 2020**¹⁸. Although currently the number of licensed foster homes still trails the number of children in out-of-home, the trend is promising.

In 2004, the state’s welfare system set a goal of 2.0 licensed beds per child or youth in care. The following tables illustrate that ratio trend over the past five years by region:

Bed to Child Ratio, Last Day of State Fiscal Year, by Region¹⁹

Region	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Region 1	1.17	1.15	1.1	1.12	1.27	1.18
Region 2	1.15	1.29	1.36	1.52	1.53	1.38
Region 3	0.88	0.94	1.18	1.25	1.59	1.83
Region 4	1.26	1.08	0.94	0.89	0.98	1.16
Region 5	0.86	0.99	1.24	1.38	1.62	1.66
Region 6	1.75	1.38	1.17	1.19	1.32	1.44
State	1.12	1.12	1.14	1.18	1.34	1.41

Methodology: Total licensed capacity of a region divided by total children in care in that region on the last day of the State Fiscal Year.

Although there is still progress to be made to achieve the 2.0 ratio of bed to youth goal, a continually increasing trend is observable for the whole state, with some slight regional variations in trends. This trend is particularly true leading up to 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic impacted all functions of the agency including licensing procedures. Although there is a slight decrease observed for most region in 2021 likely as a result of the pandemic, the DCYF Oversight Board applauds the agency’s work in achieving an increase in the ratio of beds to children throughout the state.

Contributing Factors and Future Performance:

- **Caregiver Recruitment Efforts:** In May 2021, DCYF launched the Be the Way Home campaign focused on foster parent and kinship caregiver recruitment with focused messaging, guiding values and the goal to demonstrate the value provided by safe, loving and temporary homes for youth in care.

¹⁷ DCYF. (2020). *Counts of Licensed Providers by Location and Type Report*. infoFamLink.

¹⁸ DCYF. (2020). *Relative versus Non-Relative Report*. infoFamLink.

¹⁹ DCYF. (August 2021). *Counts of CA licensed providers by location and type report & relative versus non-relative placement report* [June 2016-June 2021]. infoFamLink.

- **Recent Legislation:** Effective July 2021, SB 5151 passed to provide a pathway for child-specific licensing to caregivers. This process supports enhanced recruitment and licensing of kinship caregivers and streamlines the process for finding appropriate placement for all youth in care.
- **Partnerships:** The value of kinship caregivers has gained visibility and support through partnerships with community partners such as Amara CaRES Kinship program that assists with support services and the licensing process.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the availability of placements due to caregivers, understandably, seeking to sure the health and well-being of the children and family members already residing in their homes.
- **Foster Care Application Portal:** In 2022, DCYF will launch a foster parent application portal that aims to improve access to the foster care and kinship care licensing process, with an intent to diversity and increase the population of licensed and unlicensed care providers across the state.

Recommendation for Meaningful Performance Measure:

DCYF, through analysis, has identified that (1) children and youth have better outcomes when placed with kin, and (2) there is a subset of youth that are best served in therapeutic settings. For these reasons, measuring the ratio of licensed foster homes to children in out-of-home care misses the nuanced needs of youth in out-of-home care. Measuring the licensing of therapeutic foster homes in comparison to the need for specialized placement, and the licensing of kinship care, may provide a more meaningful assessment that can help target resources to produce better outcomes for youth.

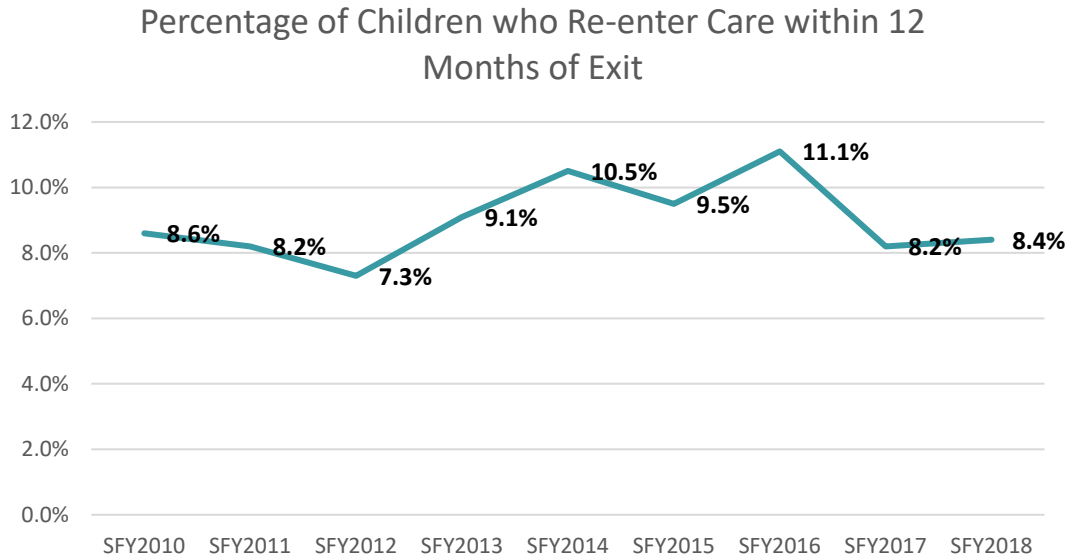
A more suitable measure would reflect the entire array of placement options needed to adequately serve youth in care, rather than measuring the number of licensed foster homes.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Revise Performance Measure & Reporting:** Revise measure to increase licensing for kinship care, therapeutic foster care, and foster care for adolescents needing behavioral support. Enhance behavioral supports for caregivers needing assistance to stabilize and maintain adolescents in placement.
- **Continued Oversight on Use of Exceptional Placements:** As a continuation to the Board’s oversight in 2021 over the agency’s plans for eliminating the use of hotel and office stays for youth, the Board will partner with the Office of Family and Children’s Ombuds to monitor the agency’s ability to effectuate this necessary change.

10. Reducing the number of children that reenter out-of-home care within 12 months

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Off Track



Performance is assessed on this measure based on one year of data, SFY2018. At 8.4%, there is a slight increase in the re-entry into care rate from the previous year, and it remains above the federal target of 7% or lower.

Reporting the percentage of youth who re-enter care requires two years of monitoring after a youth originally enters care to determine which youth safely achieve permanency or who re-enter out-of-home care. Due to this manner of calculation, this measure can only reflect agency performance and the result of decision-making from two years earlier.

Due to the limitations of this data to reflect real-time performance, it is important to consider this measure in conjunction with the number of youth entering and exiting care for each state fiscal year.

DCYF is diligently monitoring the re-entry into care rates while it strives to safely reduce the number of youth in care. DCYF’s Strategic and Equity Plan set a goal to safely reduce the number of youth entering out-of-home care by half by 2026. In an effort to accomplish this goal genuinely, and not doing so by creating collateral consequences by prematurely returning youth to unsafe home environments, the agency is monitoring the number of children re-entering out-of-home care as a balancing indicator to its strategic priority.

Close monitoring of these measures together must continue to ensure children and youth don’t experience the unnecessary trauma of multiple removals, and that families are receiving effective services.

Contributing Facts & Future Performance:

- **FFPSA:** With an increase in the funding and provision of prevention services through the FFPSA plan approved in October 2020, it is assumed more families will receive needed services to keep families

²⁰ DCYF. (2021). *Child Welfare Priority Performance Measures*. InfoFamLink.

intact by being able to avoid engagement with the child welfare system, as well as ensure that, when necessary, reunifications and adoptions are successful, permanent, and prioritize well-being.

- **Family Practice Model:** DCYF's current reworking the Family Practice Model will provide a greater standard practice of family engagement with the child welfare system when it becomes necessary, and will ultimately standardize decision-making and services provision to better support safe households.

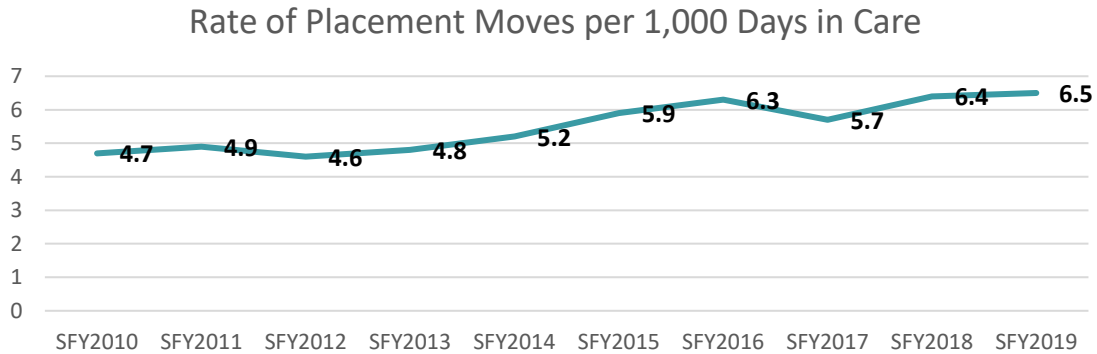
Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Explore Revising Performance Measure:** The DCYF Oversight Board will work with DCYF to explore the value of analyzing and reporting on re-entry into out-of-home care rates more frequently than the current two year time frame. This exploration will include an assessment of resource needs to report on rates more frequently and how this data can be better utilized to inform policy development and decision-making.

The DCYF Oversight Board will review the agency's performance in this area in further detail in CY2022.

11. Increasing the stability of placements for children in out-of-home care

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Mixed 

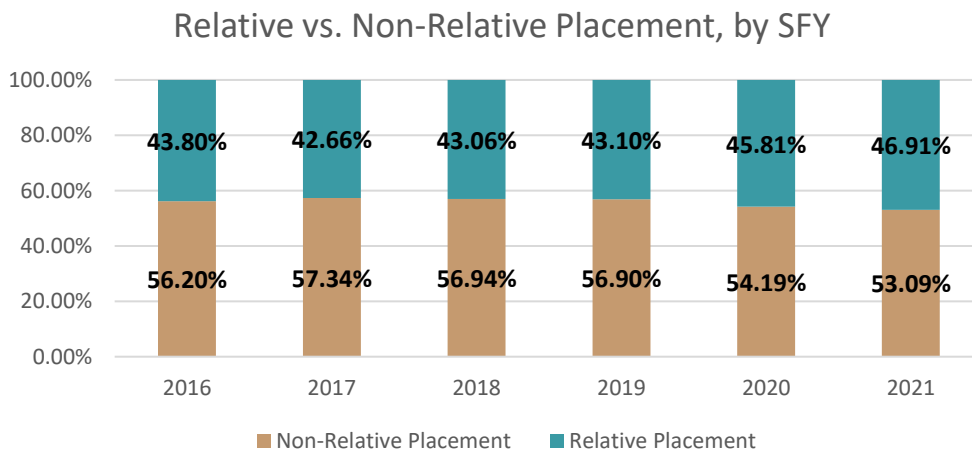


Notes: Of all children who enter foster care in a 12-month period, the rate of placement moves per 1,000 days of foster care. Includes the total care days during the 12-month period, but not closed episodes with time in care of less than eight days. Care days include any days in a Trial Return Home period that occur during the cohort period, up to a maximum of 30 days.

Data reflecting DCYF’s performance on the rate of placement moves is limited and for the single fiscal year data point, SFY2019, it shows a slight increase in rate of placement moves from the year prior, but contributes to all over trend of increasing rate over the last several years.

In an effort to address this trend, DCYF is working towards increasing kinship caregivers to find stable placements for youth in out-of-home care and to keep the youth connected to family. In addition to increasing stability and permanency, research indicates that placement with kin can improve a child’s well-being, reduce trauma, improve behavioral and mental health outcomes, and maintain a child’s connection to their own cultural identity and community.²²

Data from DCYF indicates that the agency’s efforts are showing an incremental increase in the percentage of youth placed with a relative.



²¹ DCYF. (2021). *Child Welfare Priority Performance Measures*. infoFamLink.

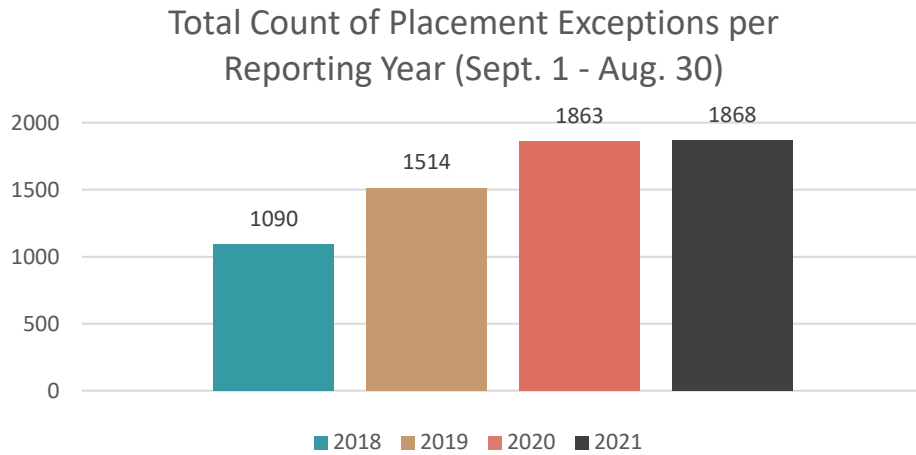
²² Epstein, Heidi R. *Kinship Care is Better for Children and Families*. American Bar Association. July 2017.

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-and-families/

²³ DCYF. (August 2021). *Relative versus Non-Relative Report*. [July 2016-June 2021]. infoFamLink.

Office and Hotel Stays

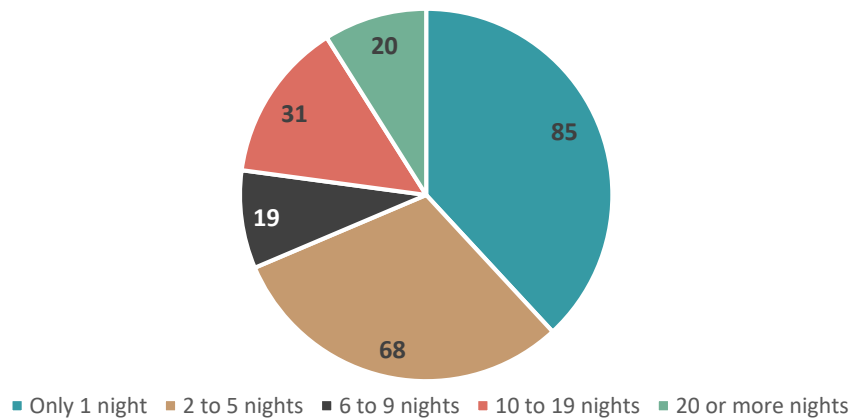
Exceptional placements, including the use of office and hotel rooms, represents a particularly acute population of youth who experience repeated disruption to placements and who are not well served by existing DCYF options.



24

Note: Data presented here is reported through end of June 2021, leaving July and August of 2021 yet to be accounted for

Placement Exceptions per Child, 2020, of Total of 223 Children



25

The DCYF Oversight Board has taken considerable time and effort to work with OFCO and DCYF to understand the increasing trends in exceptional placements. DCYF presented a plan to the DCYF Oversight Board in September 2021 to eliminate the use of hotel and office stays for youth in care by November 1, 2021, in accordance with US District Court Order No. 2:21-cv-00113-BJR.

²⁴ Office of Family and Children’s Ombuds (OFCO). (July 2021). *DCYF Use of Hotel and Offices as Placement 2021 Report*. [September 2018 – June 2021].

²⁵ Office of Family and Children’s Ombuds (OFCO). (July 2021). *DCYF Use of Hotel and Offices as Placement 2021 Report*. [September 2019-August 2020].

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

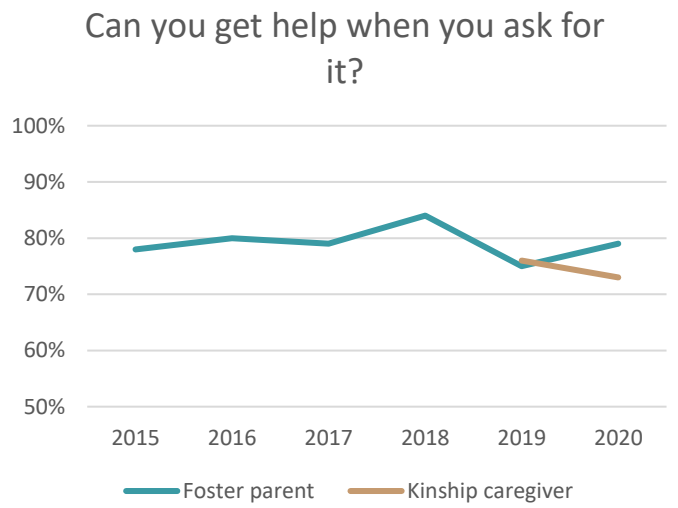
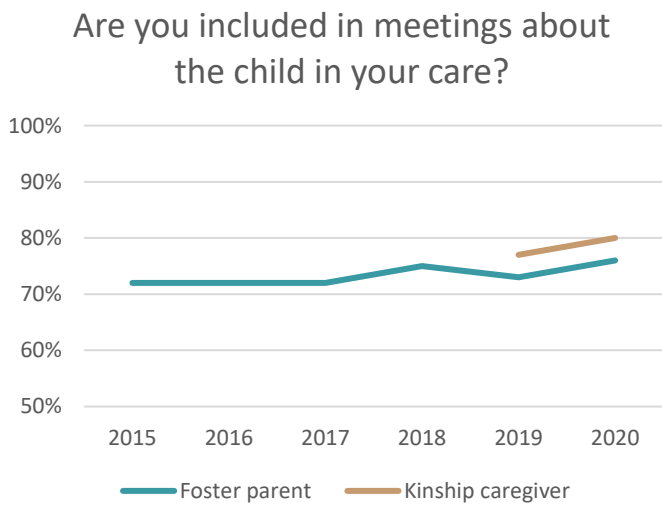
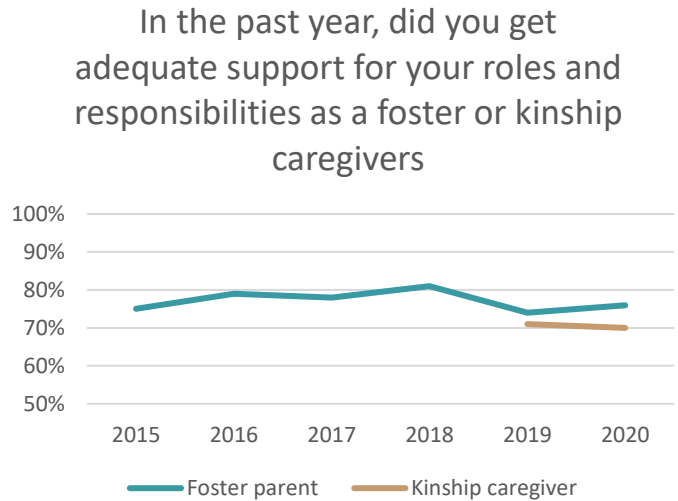
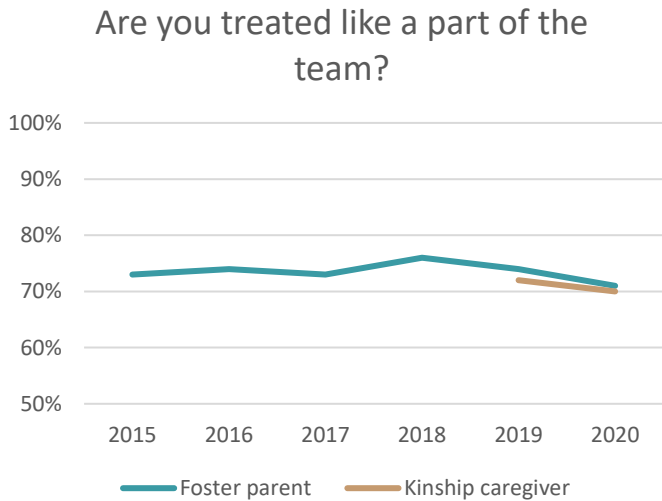
- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** Increasing hotel and office stays over the past several years has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Exceptional Placement Plan:** In September 2021, DCYF has developed a plan to eliminate hotel and office stays starting November 2021. With the additional oversight and monitoring of this work, DCYF has already seen a decline in hotel and office stays. Continued monitoring will assess the effectiveness of the plan into CY2022.
- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of [SB 5151](#), child-specific licensing, during the 2021 legislative session, the number of licensed kinship caregivers may increase and decrease placement moves for those youth.
- **Limited Placement Options for all Children and Youth Eligible for Services:** Beyond children and youth in the formal foster care system, some youth eligible for other state administered services, including developmental disability services and behavioral health services, also lack access to adequate placement and treatment options. There is a continued need for productive collaboration across state agencies, including Development Disabilities Administration (DDA), Healthcare Authority (HCA), and DCYF, to collectively build a robust and accessible placement options array to ensure youth and young adults are appropriately served by the services and systems they need.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Detailed Reporting on Children and Youth Experiencing Placement Moves:** The practical application of the rate of placement moves measure would be improved by providing a more nuanced visual analysis of the rate of placement moves in relation to the number of children in out-of-home care (as reviewed on page 22 of this report). Given the number of children in out-of-home care has decreased while the rate of placement moves has remained relatively consistent, indicates inadequate stable and appropriate placement options for the children and youth in care.
- **Develop Appropriate Placement Options:** Continue to identify and develop appropriate placement options based on the population of youth being served, and work closely with providers to identify resource and support needs to ensure long-term stability.
 - Report on the availability of appropriate placement options beyond licensed foster homes (as recommended on page 26 of this report), report on the need and use of the array placement options.
- **Detailed Reporting on Placement Type:** The complexities presented by finding appropriate sustainable placement for youth in care requires a deeper review of the subgroup data representing the entire population of youth in care. In addition to reporting on placement moves by race and ethnicity, it is recommended that placement moves are disaggregated to reflect youth in kinship care versus non-kin foster care, as well as for youth who currently represent the agency's increasing use of hotel and office stays.
 - Reporting on the subgroups represented in aggregate trends of placement moves will better utilize performance data for policy decision-making to enhance appropriate stable placements for youth in care.
- **Collaboration with Other State Agencies:** Children and youth in need of stable and adequate placement options would benefit from enhanced collaboration between DCYF, DDA, HCA and other agencies to ensure youth are served by the system or systems that best meets their needs.

12. Developing strategies to demonstrate to foster families that their service and involvement is highly valued by the department, as demonstrated by the development of strategies to consult with foster families regarding future placement of a foster child currently placed with a foster family

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Mixed, Needs Improvement →

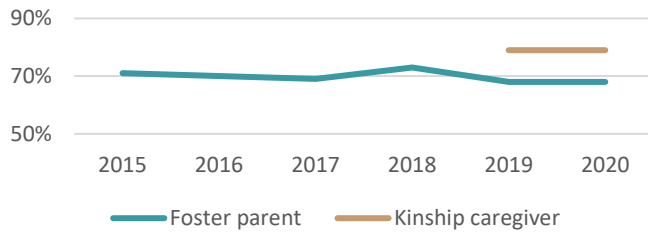


²⁶ DCYF Caregiver Survey Report 2020. (April 2021). Prepared for Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families by Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020CaregiverReport.pdf>

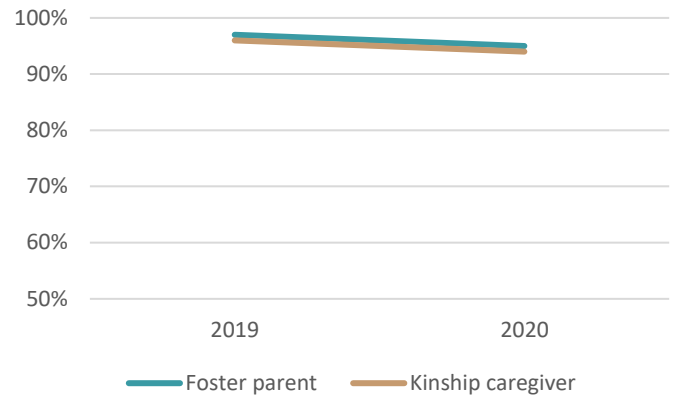
²⁷ DCYF Foster Parents Speak: 2018 Foster Parent Survey. (January 2019). Prepared for Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families by the Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2018CaregiverReport.pdf>

²⁸ DSHS Foster Parents Speak: 2017 Foster Parent Survey. (May 2018). Prepared by Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2017CaregiverReport.pdf>

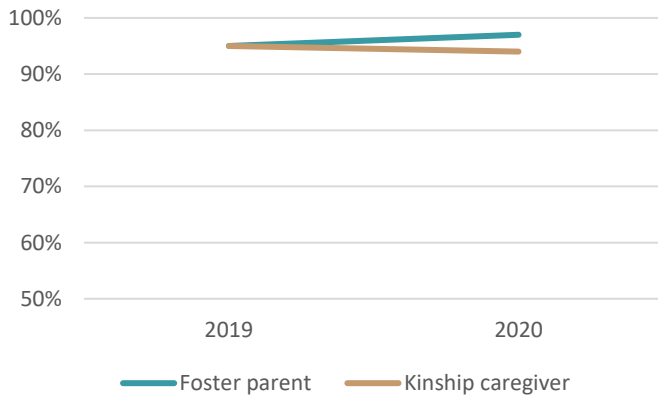
Do you get adequate information about the needs of the children placed with you, such as medical, behavioral, developmental and educational needs?



Did licensing staff treat you with respect?



Were licensing or home study staff knowledgeable about the process?



In 2020, 1,346 caregivers completed the survey out of a total of 1,637 caregivers who were given an opportunity to complete the survey, resulting in an 83% response rate. Although high, it should be noted that this is the lowest response rate for the survey over the past five years.

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Survey Response Rate	92%	92%	92%	89%	86%	83%

²⁹ DCYF Caregiver Survey Report 2020. (April 2021). Prepared for Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families by Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020CaregiverReport.pdf>

³⁰ DSHS Foster Parents Speak: 2016 Foster Parent Survey. (May 2016).). Prepared by Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BraamFY15FPSurvey.pdf>

³¹ DSHS Foster Parents Speak: 2016 Foster Parent Survey. (June 2017). Prepared by Department of Social and Health Services Research & Data Analysis Division. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/BraamFY16FPSurvey.pdf>

Caregivers who received the survey were identified based on having at least one child in care within the six months of the sampling time frame.

Each survey question provides four options along a scale for a response. Positive response percentages in the graphs provided in this report represent when a survey responder selected one of two positive survey response options instead of the two more negative response options. In this survey, the positive options included “usually” and “always/almost always” for some questions, and “somewhat adequate” and “more than adequate” for other questions.

Survey responses across all questions maintain a relatively high positive response, though it should be noted that there is an observable downward trend in positive responses for some survey questions from 2018 to 2020, the timeframe within which DCYF became responsible for foster parent and kinship caregiver licensing services.

The addition of kinship caregivers as a separate response group to the survey also highlights potential differences in experiences as caregivers given the supports provided to each subgroup, though, again, positive response rates remain relatively high on all questions. Key findings from the 2020 survey include the following:

- Although most caregivers stated they are being included in meetings about the youth in their care, there are mixed responses to how well they are being listened to and treated as a team member when decisions about the youth in care are being made.
- Most caregivers said they are well supported.
- Experiences with case workers and social workers are mixed.
- Most caregivers report receiving adequate information, but they want more.
- Most caregivers said they got the help when they asked for it, but many described challenges with processes and resources.
- Caregivers were very happy with the licensing program.
- This year, foster caregivers were more positive than kinship caregivers in three areas of support.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **COVID-19 Impacts:** During 2020, foster families and kinship caregivers were provided increased payments to mitigate increasing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

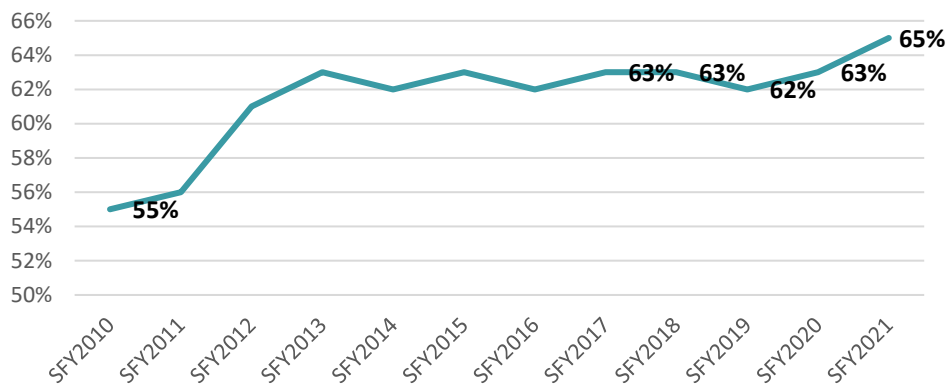
- **Detailed Reporting on Race & Ethnicity:** The 2020 survey was the first to collect the race and ethnicity of the primary caregiver. To understand if race and/or ethnicity indicate a difference in experience for primary caregivers, or any potential differences response rates to the survey, this data should be made publically available. With the agency’s efforts to diversify the caregiver pool, it is essential to ensure that all caregiver experiences are understood and heard, and differing experiences identified and addressed to support providers adequately.

13. Increasing family reunification by increasing number of youth who are reunified with their family of origin

RCW 43.216.015(3)(c)(iv)(A-B) differentiates the performance measure (A) “increasing family reunification” from “increasing the number of youth who are reunified with their family of origin”. DCYF does not distinguish between these two measures and reports on total number of youth reunified with their family of origin. For these reasons, this report follows the same logic and will use the number and percentage of youth reunified with their families to assess performance in these areas.

PERFORMANCE STATUS: On track 

Percentage of total exits that are reunifications each year



32

Percentage of Exits that are Reunifications by Race and Ethnicity ³³

	SFY2017	SFY2018	SFY2019	SFY2020	SFY2021	Difference since SFY2019*
AI/AN	52.34%	42.02%	59.34%	58.38%	52.38%	+10.36%
AI/AN-Multi	67.15%	60.80%	57.07%	59.90%	68.50%	+7.7%
Asian/PI	78.38%	78.57%	76.03%	74.07%	62.10%	-16.47%
Black	63.26%	65.88%	65.12%	65.93%	65.00%	-.88%
Black-Multi	67.54%	64.90%	66.18%	64.66%	66.75%	+1.85%
Hispanic	64.66%	67.31%	69.70%	65.10%	69.51%	+2.2%
Multi-Other	76.72%	71.30%	62.86%	63.55%	63.04%	-8.26%
Unknown	95.12%	69.23%	80.00%	96.15%	94.44%	+25.21%
White	59.85%	61.52%	59.35%	62.32%	62.13%	+6.1%

*DCYF was created in 2017 and assumed child welfare authority and responsibilities in July 2018. SFY2019 reflects the first full year of data since DCYF was overseeing family reunification rates.

³² DCYF. (August 2021). *Out of Home Care Exits & Entries Report*. [June 2010-June 2021]. infoFamLink

³³ DCYF. (August 2021). *Out of Home Care Exits and Entries Report*. [July 1, 2016 – June 30, 2021]. infoFamLink.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of [HB 1194](#) in the 2021, which seeks to strengthen parent-child visitation during child welfare proceedings, may positively impact the reunification rate of children with their family of origin as relationships are maintained while children and youth are in out-of-home care.

Additionally, the passage of [SB 5151](#), a bill that enhances pathways to child-only licensing in an effort to recruit and support of more kinship caregivers. Kinship caregivers maintain a child or youth's connection with their family of origin.


Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Amend Performance Measure in Statute:** Future amendment to the statute, RCW 43.216.015(3)(c)(iv)(A-B) to combine the measures into one, instead of its current structure which lists the same concept as two separate measures.
 - Amend the same statute to require the measurement to assess the percentage of youth exiting to reunification rather than total number of youth who are reunified for the family. As the number of youth in care continues to decrease, the absolute number of reunifications loses meaning compared to the percentage of all youth who are being reunified from a given exit cohort.

14. In collaboration with county juvenile justice programs, improving adolescent outcomes including reducing multisystem involvement and homelessness; increasing school graduation rates and successful transitions to adulthood for youth involved in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems

Overall **PERFORMANCE STATUS:** Mixed 

Multisystem Involvement:

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive 

DCYF’s Adolescent Programs Unit was developed to encompass integrated services across the agency’s core service areas for youth and young adults who are involved in child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, or both. The Adolescent Programs Unit is a new unit established with the creation of DCYF.

In 2021, the Unit has continued to make efforts to integrate services across previously siloed programs between child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation. Prior to 2021, the Unit has primarily provided services to child welfare-only involved youth and young adults, while juvenile rehabilitation has continued to function separately both in program administration and as indicated on the agency’s organizational chart.


To adequately measure multisystem involvement, the agency needs an intermediary IT system to allow for the child welfare data system (FamLink) to communicate and connect with data in the juvenile rehabilitation system (Automated Client Tracking, or ACT). Advances in data collection will also result in the ability to establish a baseline to assess future performance of DCYF’s integrated adolescent services.

In 2021, to address the need for further integration, the Unit has taken the lead on institutional education for the agency, particularly regarding the work outlined in [HB 1295](#) *Providing public education to youth in or released from institutional education facilities*.

The Unit has established a strong partnership with the Office of Homeless Youth in the Department of Commerce. Both these offices meet on a biweekly basis to form better solutions to eliminate the discharge of youth and young adults from care into homelessness and to ensure youth and young adults who exit care are able to obtain sustainable housing options.

- The DCYF Oversight Board encourages even bolder attempts to integrate adolescent services across child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation, as this was a key component of the establishing legislation that created DCYF in 2017 (RCW 43.216.015).

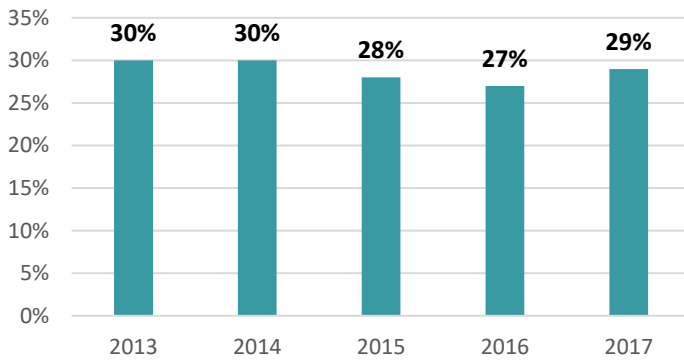
Homelessness:

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive due to data limitations that reflect an exit cohort prior to the creation of DCYF. 

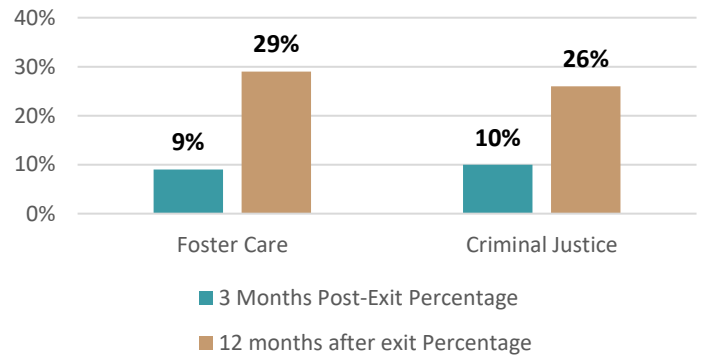
Most recent report on homelessness of adolescents (age 12 to 17) and young adults (18 to 24) after exiting a

system of care was published in 2020, though the most recent data available due to data lag analysis reflects the 2017 exit-from-care cohort, a cohort that exited either previous to, or during, the creation of DCYF.³⁴

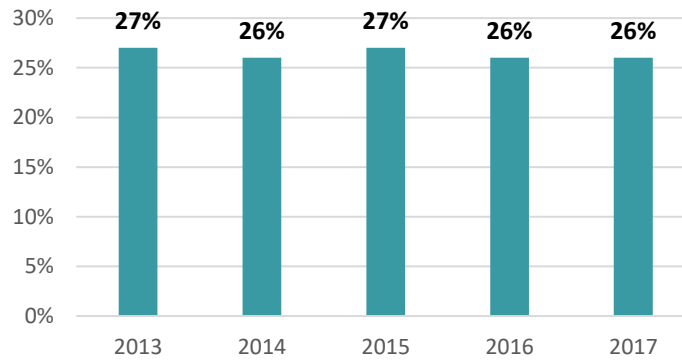
Percentage of Foster Care Youth and Young Adults Who are Homeless 12 Months After System Exit



Percentage of Youth and Young Adults Who Are Homeless in Periods After Exit from System of Care, 2017



Percentage of JR Youth and Young Adults Who Are Homeless 12 Months After System Exit



Limitations of this data include a data lag to assess when youth and young adults exit care and the timeframe post-care until when homeless may occur, as well as the infrequent analysis and reporting of this data.

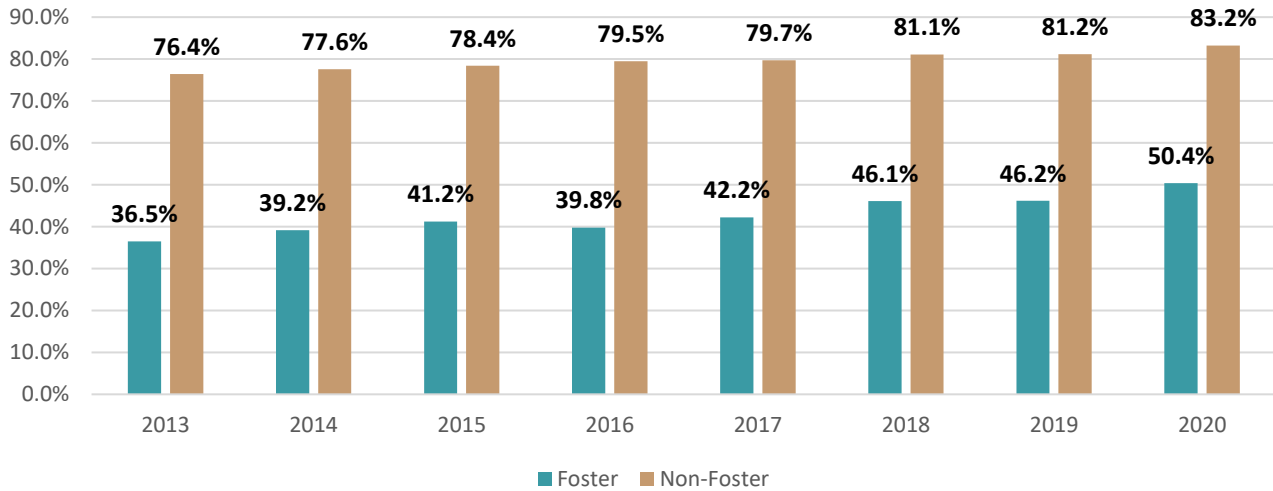
³⁴ DSHS RDA. *Homelessness Among Youth Exiting Systems of Care in Washington State*. Report 11.240. 2020.

Educational Outcomes:

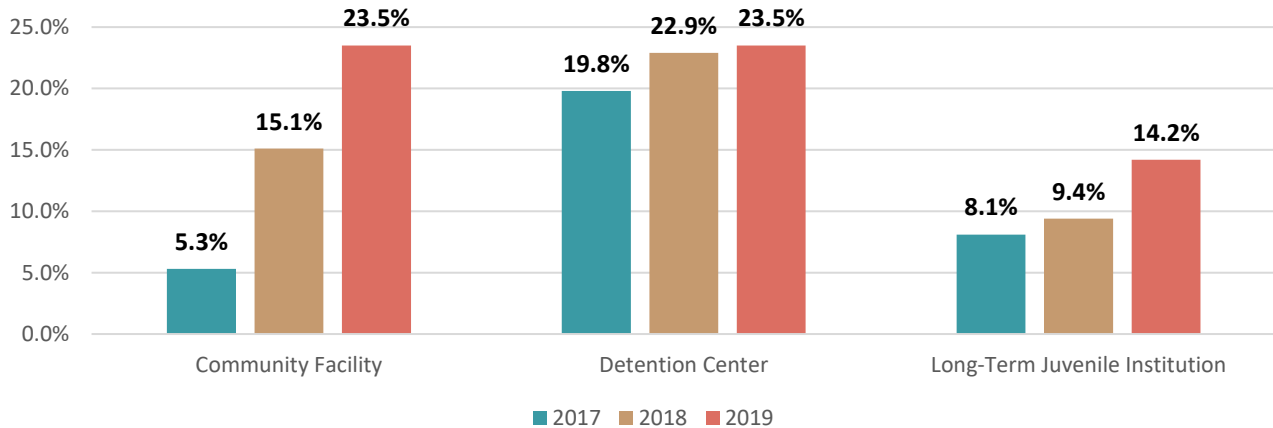
PERFORMANCE STATUS: On Track



High School Graduation Rates for Youth in Child Welfare



Four Year Graduation Rate for Students Enrolled in Institutional Education at some point in grade 9-12



Over the past seven years, high school graduation rates for youth in foster care have consistently increased. Youth in institutional facilities are improving in educational outcomes though at an unacceptable rate far below the rate of counterparts in the child welfare system or the general youth population.


Improving educational outcomes for youth in care has improved over the years due to partnerships with youth serving organizations, such as the impact of Treehouse’s Graduate Success program on the graduation of foster youth since the program’s inception in 2013.

³⁵ OSPI Report Card.

³⁶ *Improving Institutional Education (IE) Programs and Outcomes Taskforce Workgroup, September 3, 2020. Presented by Katie Weaver Randall, OSPI Director of Student Information*

Similar to reporting on homeless rates for youth and young adults exiting care, the reporting frequency of educational outcomes for youth in care is not currently conducted. Recent legislation, [SB 6511 \(2020\)](#) and [HB 1295 \(2021\)](#) provide legislative reporting requirements on educational outcomes for youth in foster care and juvenile rehabilitation, respectively. With initial annual reports beginning in 2021, robust data and outcome assessments in this area will help inform future agency performance assessments regarding educational outcomes.

Successful transitions to adulthood:

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive 

A number of factors, measures and programs influence DCYF’s performance in supporting successful transitions to adulthood for youth in care.

Current data is limited, though there is an expectation that through the performance-based contracting (PBC) initiative, that DCYF will develop meaningful metrics for successful transition to adulthood when new methods of data collection for providers is available.

According to DCYF’s Strategic Priorities Plan for 2021-2016, *Create successful transition into adulthood for youth and young adults in our care*, has been identified as one of the agency’s top six priorities. In the plan, the agency has identified the following outcome measures to determine its performance: (1) high school graduation rates, and (2) workforce participation following exit, both disaggregated for child welfare, juvenile rehabilitation, and crossover youth. DCYF has stated that fully developed outcome measure identified in the Plan will not be ready until the end of CY2021. Given this, the following data has been collected and assessed for the DCYF Oversight Board’s current purposes to determine the agency’s performance thus far in this area.

Employment Outcomes

Little analysis currently exists regarding employment outcomes for youth and young adults who have experienced foster care in Washington State. A lagged analysis for youth and young adults who experienced JR in FY14-FY18 is summarized as follows.

Percentage of Youth Released from JR Residential Facilities who find Employment within One-Year Post-Release³⁷

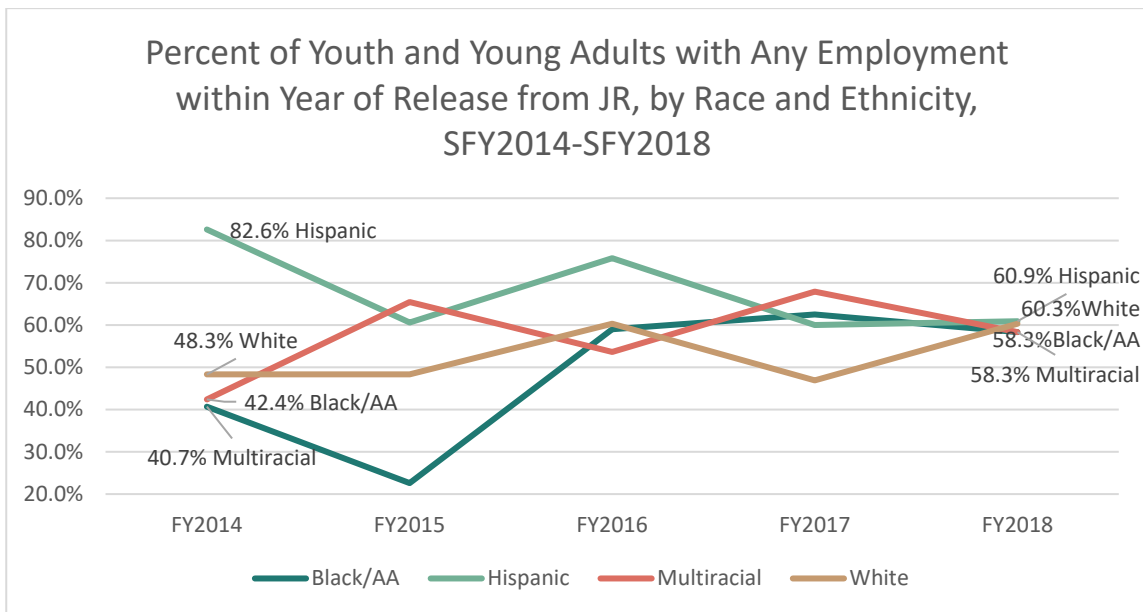
	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Any work in the year post-release	49.5%	47.2%	61%	55.1%	59.6%

Data is analyzed from FY14-FY18, based on the collection of data in a post-release period and by matching data with the Employment Security Department regarding reported wages. For this reason, this data reflect employment of youth and young adults released from JR prior to JR officially becoming a part of DCYF in July 2018, which is the beginning of FY2019.

³⁷ DCYF Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability. *Employment Outcomes for Youth Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation*. September 14, 2020. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/JREmploymentOutcomesFY14-FY18.pdf>

Reporting on when a youth or young adult first obtains employment post-release from JR illustrates that highest percentage of youth and young adults who gain employment within their first quarter after exiting JR, 39.9% do so within the first quarter after their exit from JR. The longer time has passed since their JR release, there is a declining likelihood a youth or young adult will obtain employment in that first year.

For the youth and young adults who did obtain employment, the greatest percentage, 19.9%, sustained employment for two quarters post-release. This suggesting that youth and young adults are mostly likely to obtain employment immediately after release, but may struggle to maintain employment as time passes.



Note: Race and ethnicity categories including Asian, Native American and Other has youth in each category less than 10 for each year and are not included in the above line graph.

From the data available, when disaggregated by race and ethnicity, indicates greater disparities in employment outcomes prior to youth and young adults released in SFY2018. Further data is needed for recent years to assess DCYF’s performance connecting youth and young adults residing in JR facilities with employment opportunities upon their exit from JR.

DCYF has partnered with several peer mentor and career pathway organizations to assist youth in finding employment.

Independent Living Skills

The Independent Living Program is a voluntary program for youth ages 15-18 in out-of-home care to support skill development related to obtaining employment, securing housing, managing finances, and more. In FFY2018, 900 youth in foster care were served by the Independent Living Program (ILP), with 70% of the served youth creating a plan based on a life-skills assessment, and 73% of youth served who completed the ILS modules.³⁹

³⁸ DCYF Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability. *Employment Outcomes for Youth Released from Juvenile Rehabilitation*. September 14, 2020. <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/JREmploymentOutcomesFY14-FY18.pdf>

³⁹ DCYF. *Agency Performance Page: Foster Youth Served in Independent Living Program, FFY2018. Child welfare education and adolescent services providers. 2018.* <https://dcyf.wa.gov/practice/oiaa/agency-performance/resilience>

Transitional Living Services

The Transitional Living Services Program is a continuation of the Independent Living Skills Program for former foster youth ages 18-21 who meet certain criteria regarding their age at the establishment of dependency and the length of time in out-of-home care. In FFY2018, 1,140 young adults were served by Transitional Living Services, with 52% creating a plan based on a life-skills assessment, and 92% of young adults who were referred actually received services.

Extended Foster Care (EFC)

A 2020 report published by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP),⁴⁰ found that Extended Foster Care (EFC) improved a young adults employment outcomes, including increased earnings. Similar effects of EFC included increased educational attainment, reduced likelihoods of homelessness, the need for public assistance, the need for crisis services or treatment, and criminal convictions.

To ensure successful transitions for young adults in EFC during the COVID-19 pandemic, young adults who were scheduled to age-out during the pandemic were allowed to remain in EFC after they turned 21. This ensured young adults had an opportunity to maintain stability during the pandemic and the corresponding economic impacts.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **Recent Legislation:** HB 1061, concerning youth eligible for developmental disability services who are expected to exit the child welfare system, passed in the 2021 legislative session. DCYF will work with the Developmental Disability Administration (DDA) to identify youth who are dependent and eligible for DDA services, and plan for the youth's transition to adulthood.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Investments into Data Systems & Outcome Measure Development:** Across several aspects of adolescent outcomes, data is limited due to one-time analyses, lagged analyses or the lack of baseline data. Further investments in the systems and development of outcome measures in this area will lead to greater transparency on the agency's performance.
- **Public Reporting of Rate of Multisystem Involvement:** Establish a method for regularly reporting on the percentage of youth and young adults in DCYF care with multisystem involvement across child welfare and juvenile rehabilitation, with a particular indicator identifying the migration of youth first involved in the foster care system who later become involved in Juvenile Rehabilitation.
 - Continue collaborating with local county jurisdictions to develop real time reporting on multisystem involved youth across the child welfare system and juvenile justice systems. This data will contribute to improving prevention efforts by identifying service eligibility, service needs, gaps, and opportunities for engagement to avoid further system involvement.
 - Provide transparency on DCYF's collaboration activities with local jurisdictions would provide further insight into overall efforts and challenges to advancing coordination efforts in service delivery and data reporting.
- **Report on Outcomes up to Age 25:** The Board recommends DCYF measure outcomes for all youth and young adults receiving agency services to age 25, in alignment with youth and young adults in the JR system and the implementation [HB 6160 \(2018\)](#), JR to 25. Measuring outcomes for youth and young

⁴⁰ Miller, M., Bales, D., & Hirsch, M. (2020). Extended foster care in Washington State: Final Report. (Document Number 20-05-3201). Olympia: Washington State Institute for Public Policy.

adults to age 25 across programs and services will provide valuable data on the agency’s performance in assisting youth to successfully transition to adulthood.⁴¹

⁴¹ Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Thrive by 25: Casey Foundation Announces Increased Focus on Youth and Young Adults*. 2021. <https://www.aecf.org/blog/thrive-by-25-casey-foundation-announces-increased-focus-on-youth-and-young>

15. Reducing future demand for mental health and substance use disorder treatment for youth involved in child welfare and juvenile justice

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive 

To reduce future demand for mental health and substance use disorder treatment for youth and young adults involved in DCYF systems of care, it is first and foremost important that youth and young adults identified with a treatment need while in care of the agency or receiving the agency’s services, are receiving appropriate treatment services.

The most recent data available is for SFY2018 and for youth and young adults in care enrolled in Medicaid. Coordinated Care, the statewide managed care health plan, is provided to children and youth and young adults who are: in foster care, in adoption support, in Extended Foster Care (ages 18-21 years old), aged-out of foster care after their 18th birthday (ages 18-26 years old), and reunified with their parents (for up to 12 months after foster care ends).

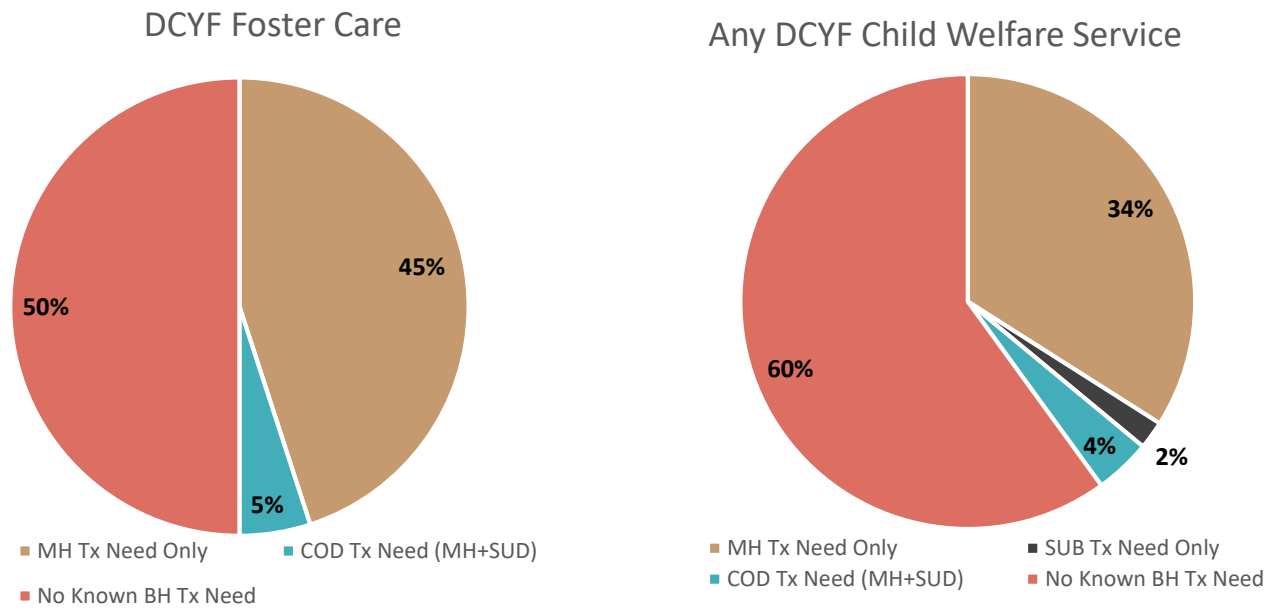
Trends indicate that youth and young adults identified with mental health needs receive services at a much higher rate than youth and young adults in need of substance use disorder treatment or co-occurring disorder treatment.

An analysis for SFY2018 identified treatment needs for the population of youth and young adults in Foster Care and enrolled in Medicaid, that youth and young adults in foster care in the following age ranges had identified treatment needs for mental health (MH), substance use disorder (SUD), and co-occurring disorder (COD):⁴²

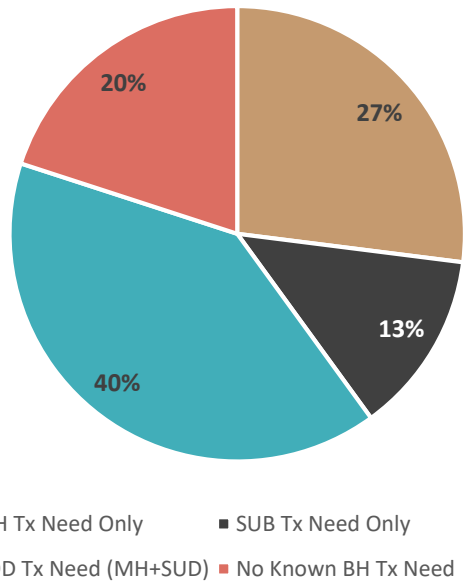
	MH Treatment Need	SUD Treatment Need	COD Treatment Need	No Known Tx Need
Age 0-4	20%			80%
Age 5-11	71%			29%
Age 12-17	80%	20%	22%	18%
Age 18-20	70%	26%	21%	25%

⁴² DSHS Research and Data Center Division. *Children’s Behavioral Health Dashboard: Behavioral Health Treatment Needs and Outcomes among Medicaid Enrolled Children in Washington State*. February 2021. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/DASHBOARD_ChildrensBehHealth.pdf

Behavioral Health Treatment Need of Medicaid Enrolled Children, Youth and Young Adults by Service Delivery System, Ages 0-20, SFY2018⁴³



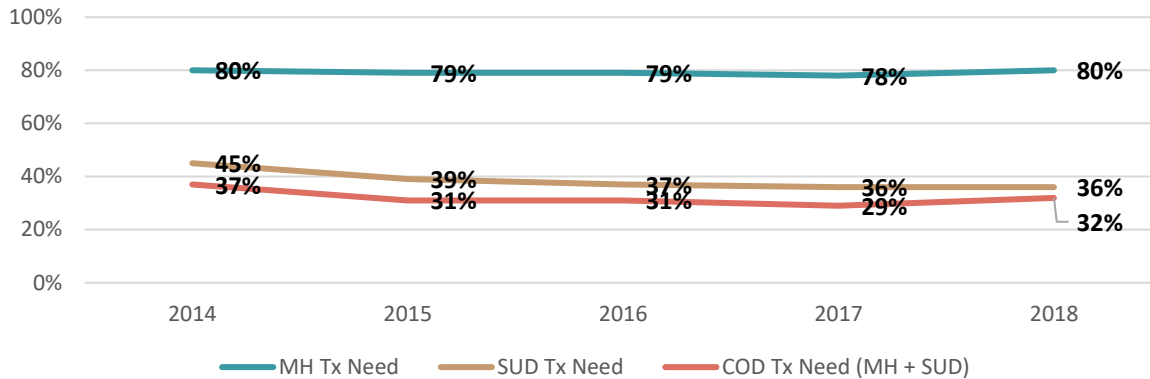
DCYF Juvenile Rehabilitation Services



⁴³ DSHS Research and Data Center Division. *Children's Behavioral Health Dashboard: Behavioral Health Treatment Needs and Outcomes among Medicaid Enrolled Children in Washington State*. February 2021. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/DASHBOARD_ChildrensBehHealth.pdf

⁴⁴ DSHS Research and Data Center Division. *Children's Behavioral Health Dashboard: Behavioral Health Treatment Needs and Outcomes among Medicaid Enrolled Children in Washington State*. February 2021. https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/DASHBOARD_ChildrensBehHealth.pdf

Percentage of Foster Care Youth Enrolled in Medicaid with an Identified Treatment Need Who are Receiving Treatment



Juvenile Rehabilitation – Identified Treatment Needs Post-Release

In 2019, only 33% of youth and young adults with identified mental health treatment needs and with Medicaid, were receiving services 3 months post-release. And only 9% of youth and young adults with identified substance use disorder treatment needs were receiving services 3 months post-release.⁴⁵

For youth and young adults without parole aftercare, it is even more important for DCYF to continue to bolster efforts to contract with community based organizations to provide peer mentoring for youth and young adults in JR facilities preparing to transition back to their communities post-release and to assist with connection to services for treatment.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic, both the disease and associated social guidelines to reducing the spread of the disease, has impacted mental and physical health of children and youth around the country. Understanding these compounding effects for youth and young adults in care will be essential for ensuring youth and young adults are receiving the needed treatment services while in care and to reduce future need for treatment.^{46 47}
- **Recent Legislation:** HB 1186, concerning juvenile rehabilitation, requires that youth and young adults receiving community transition services must have appropriate treatment and programming as determined by DCYF. The expansion of community transition services should increase the number of youth and young adults in JR receiving timely needed treatment, and reduce future demand for treatment when these individuals fully transition to adulthood.
 - Additionally, [SB 5476](#), addressing the *State v. Black* decision, increases diversion pathways for individuals who may have been charged in the criminal justice system with drug possession, and refers them to community-based care when possible and appropriate to serve complex or co-occurring behavioral health conditions. Recommendations on data collection and reporting

⁴⁵ Medicaid Coverage & Behavioral Health, 2019, created by DSHS Research and Data Analysis Division, May 19, 2021 and presented in Results WA Performance Review on Sept. 9, 2021. TVW: <https://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2021091068>

⁴⁶ National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. *School-Based Strategies for Addressing the Mental Health and Well-Being of Youth in the Wake of COVID-19*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26262>.

⁴⁷ Morina N, Kip A, Hoppen TH, et al. Potential impact of physical distancing on physical and mental health: a rapid narrative umbrella review of meta-analyses on the link between social connection and health. *BMJ Open* 2021;11:e042335. doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2020-042335

for individuals referred to diversion for recovery navigator services or other services, who receives services, and what types of services, is expected on December 1, 2021. Increased diversion pathways and eligibility, and more data to track service provision, may impact future treatment needs for youth and young adults involved in child welfare and juvenile justice by connecting them with services sooner.

- **DCYF Strategic Plan:** In the agency’s first strategic plan, DCYF identifies that staff retention impacts the behavioral health of children and youth and young adults in care or who are receiving services. Efforts outlined in the plan to focus on staff retention strategies are intended to mitigate these impacts on children and youths’ and young adults’ behavioral health.
- **Early Mental Health Interventions:** The Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation (IECMHC) system for child care is a prevention-based service for adults working with infants and children in early learning and care settings. Providing mental health services and supports to children at a young age, and strengthening the capacity of the parents, caregivers, and providers, ensures children and families are receiving needed services as early as possible, reducing further future demand on treatment services.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Prioritize Strategies to Reduce Trauma:** Continue to prioritize efforts to reduce trauma for youth and young adults while in care, including prioritizing the placement of youth in out-of-home care with kin, and enhancing supports to kinship caregivers.⁴⁸
- **Bolster Collaboration Efforts with Local Juvenile Justice Systems:** As reviewed in the following pages, DCYF should bolster collaboration efforts with county juvenile court administrations to increase diversion and disposition alternatives in order to reduce the likelihood of juvenile incarceration resulting in negative adult mental health outcomes.⁴⁹ The *State v. Blake* decision, and the passage of SB 5476, provides more opportunities for collaboration between DCYF and local court jurisdictions to improve outcomes for youth.
- **Partnering with Children and Youth Behavioral Health Workgroup:** Continue to prioritize active partnership and consultation with the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Workgroup, a coordinating body that identifies barriers and opportunities for accessing behavioral health services for children, youth and young adults, and advises the Legislature on BH services and supports.


⁴⁸ Epstein, Heidi R. *Kinship Care is Better for Children and Families*. American Bar Association. July 2017.

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/child_law/resources/child_law_practiceonline/child_law_practice/vol-36/july-aug-2017/kinship-care-is-better-for-children-and-families/

⁴⁹ Barnet, Elizabeth S., et al. “How Does Incarcerating Youth People Affect Their Adult Health Outcomes?” *Pediatrics*. vol. 139, no.2, 2017.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5260153/>

16. An increase in the number of youth who successfully complete the terms of diversion or alternative sentencing options

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive 

Juvenile Rehabilitation officially became a part of DCYF in July 2019, the beginning of SFY2020. Due to data reporting lags, the most recent data available reflects SY2019, a year prior to Juvenile Rehabilitation joining DCYF. For this reason, there is not enough data to determine how the agency is doing in regards to collaboration with local jurisdictions to increase in the number of youth who successful complete terms of a diversion or alternative sentencing options, those historic trends indicate progress will continue.

Diversions:

Juvenile diversion programs seek to hold youth accountable for their actions while connecting youth with appropriate services, without formal court processing in local county juvenile justice systems. Most recent data on diversions reported published end of CY2020 reflects data from SFY18 and SFY19, prior to when JR officially became part of DCYF.^{50 51}

	SFY2017	SFY2018	SFY2019
Referrals from law enforcement	19,211	17,695	16,412
Diversion	8,644	7,853	6,966
Cases filed	9,350	8,705	7,280

Note: Referrals are frequently not resolved in the same year the referral occurs. Therefore, a diversion or case filed in a specific state fiscal year is not necessarily a resolution of a referral reported during that same fiscal year. In addition to diversion and cases filed, other actions such as “no action taken” and “informal action taken” may take place when a referral is made. Only referrals, diversions and cases filed are provided here simply to illustrate decreasing trends across all domains over the three reporting years.

Juvenile justice involvement is declining in Washington.⁵² Even with declining involvement, DCYF has the opportunity to further engage with juvenile courts to encourage higher utilization of diversion. In particular, an increased utilization of diversion can reduce racial and ethnic disparities within the juvenile justice system.⁵³

State funding provided to county juvenile courts is administered through the Juvenile Court Block Grant, based on a funding formula administered by DCYF. The Referred and Diverted Youth Report, published December 2020, describes the challenges with increasing diversion options in smaller juvenile jurisdictions as follows:

“Although the funding formula is incentive based, and weighted more on the use of EBPs, there is a limited amount of funding. Accordingly, if a juvenile court does not currently have a program that serves low-risk youth, and most of the referred youth are low risk, they would need to make programmatic changes to accommodate this population. In order to make programmatic changes, the juvenile court would most likely need to shift funding from an existing program into a new program. Moderate and high-risk youth are weighted much higher in the formula, so taking funding from these

⁵⁰ Referred and Diverted Youth, December 2020: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/Referred-Diverted-Youth2020.pdf>

⁵¹ Referred and Diverted Youth, December 2019: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/ReferredDivertedYouth-2019.pdf>

⁵² Washington State Juvenile Justice Report to the Governor & State Legislature, August 2020: <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020WA-PCJJgov.pdf>

⁵³ Annie E. Casey Foundation. Expand the Use of Diversion from the Juvenile Justice System. 2020. <https://assets.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-expandtheuseofdiversion-2020.pdf#page=5>

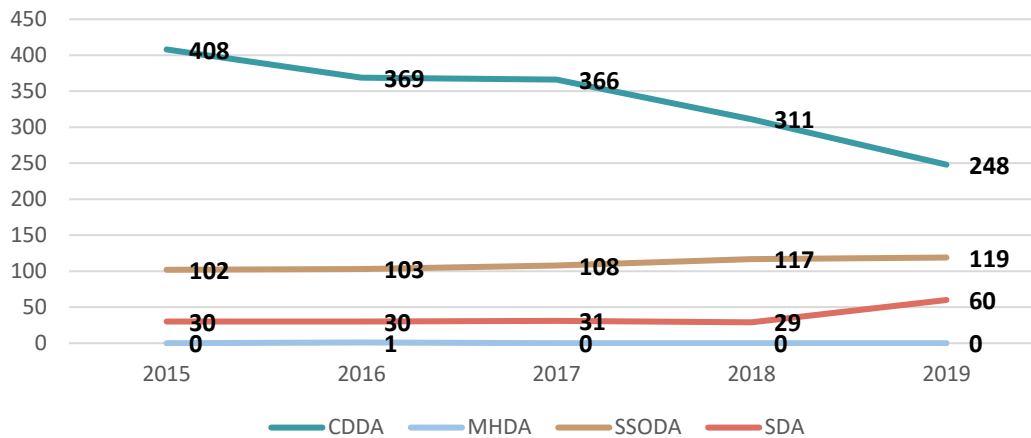
programs to implement a program for low-risk youth could result in a negative impact in the funding formula for that juvenile court.”

Disposition Alternatives:

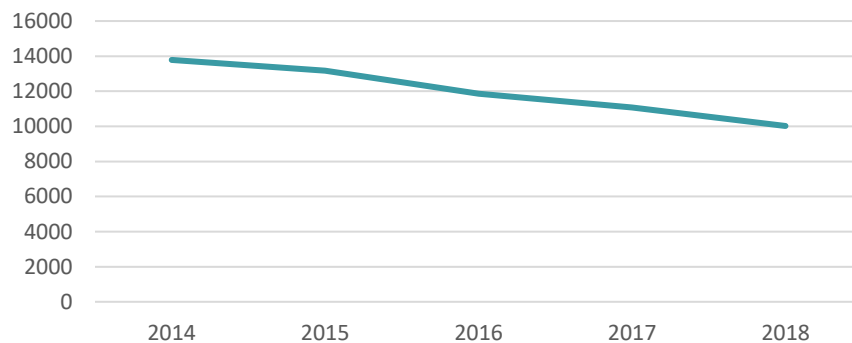
Youth who are committed to JR may be eligible for disposition alternatives which allows for a youth to remain in the community to receive local supervision and services through juvenile court, rather than serving their time in a JR facility. Disposition Alternatives include: **Chemical Dependency Mental Health Disposition Alternative (CDMHDA), Special Sex Offender Disposition Alternative (SSODA), and Suspended Disposition Alternative (SDA).**

Note: In 2016, the WA State Legislature combined the Chemical Dependency Disposition Alternative (CDDA) and the Mental Health Disposition Alternative (MHDA) to create the Chemical Dependency Disposition Alternative (CDDA), Mental Health Disposition Alternative (MHDA). This information is provided to explain the data reported in the below table. ⁵⁴

Initiated Disposition Alternatives, SFY 2015-2019



Statewide Juvenile Court Dispositions, 2014-2018



As stated above, juvenile justice involvement continues to decline across Washington, and subsequently dispositions and disposition alternatives, with the exception of the Suspended Disposition Alternative which

⁵⁴ DCYF. *Juvenile Court Block Grant Report 2020*. December 2020.

<https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/reports/JuvenileCourtBlockGrant2020.pdf>

⁵⁵ DCYF. *Washington State Juvenile Justice Report to the Governor & State Legislature*. August 2020. <https://dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020WA-PCJJgov.pdf>

has seen an increase in 2019, suggesting an continuing effort to keep youth from being committed to JR institutional facilities that often take youth geographically away from their communities and families.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:


- **State v. Blake and SB 5476:** The WA Supreme Court *State v. Blake* decision, and subsequent passage of SB 5476 by the State Legislature, assumes an increase in diversion pathways opportunities, as well as the number of youth eligible for diversion, to seek and receive appropriate community-based care services. To fulfill the intent of these changes, there is a need to ensure enough diversion services are available in each local jurisdiction to appropriately meet the needs of eligible youth. If the amount of services and providers available cannot meet the need of now eligible youth referred for diversion, performance on this outcome will be impacted. This must be taken into consideration for future performance reviews.

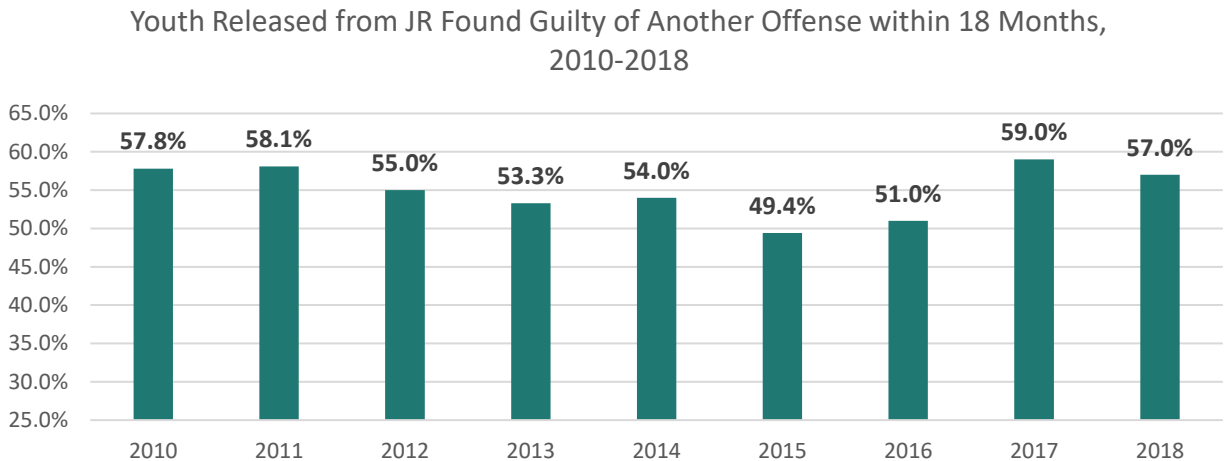
Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Revisit Juvenile Court Block Grant Funding Formula:** DCYF should review and adjust, as necessary, the Juvenile Court Block Grant funding formula to assure outcomes match the goals of the programs, including incentivizing local juvenile courts to increase diversion pathways for youth.

The DCYF Oversight Board will review the agency’s performance in this area in further detail in CY2022.

17. A decrease in the number of youth and young adults who commit subsequent crimes

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Inconclusive due to data lag and reporting reflecting performance prior to the initial creation of DCYF in 2017, and Juvenile Rehabilitation’s subsequent joining of DCYF in July 2019. 



The juvenile recidivism rate is calculated in the 32 months after the fiscal year release of a youth or young adult from a JR facility. This timeframe includes an 18 month period to determine if a youth or young adult commits a crime post-release, along with an additional 12 months provided for case completion and adjudication of the new offense, and an additional 2 months for reporting.

The most recent reports from DCYF reflect SFY2016. The DCYF Oversight Board has requested updated reports for SFY2017 and SFY2018, though the Board recognizes that JR did not officially join DCYF until July 2019, thus a true assessment of DCYF’s impact on juvenile recidivism can’t be fully be ascertained until reporting years 2024, 2025 and 2026, to reflect DCYF’s performance in SFY2020, SFY2021 and SFY2022. Three years can indicate if a trend is occurring or if the results are mixed.

Contributing Factors & Future Performance:

- Peer Mentoring:** To improve re-entry outcomes after a youth or young adult is released from a JR institution, DCYF has been increasing the number of peer mentor programs – including Choose 180, SPARK and Hope for Homies⁵⁷ – made available to youth and young adults while they are incarcerated. Continuing to offer opportunities for youth and young adults to connect with mentors while incarcerated, through release and post-release while in the community, reduces the likelihood a youth or young adult will recidivate.⁵⁸


⁵⁶ DCYF. (2020). *Automated Client Tracking System (ACT) and the Administrative Office of the Court – Washington State Center for Court Research.*

⁵⁷ “Behavioral Healthcare System – Community Public Performance Review.” Results Washington, Sept. 2021. <https://www.tvw.org/watch/?eventID=2021091068>

⁵⁸ Hawkins, Stephanie, et al. *Mentoring for Preventing and Reducing Delinquent Behavior Among Youth: National Mentoring Resource Center Research Review.* Feb. 2020. https://nationalmentoringresourcecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Mentoring_for_Preventing_and_Reducing_Delinquent_Behavior_Among_Youth_Research_Review.pdf

- **Recent Legislation:** [HB 1186 \(2021\)](#) will increase the community transition services provided to youth and young adults incarcerated in a JR facility. These services are expected to improve re-entry outcomes and reduce recidivism.

18. Eliminating the discharge of unaccompanied youth from institutional settings into homelessness

PERFORMANCE STATUS: Needs Improvement 

The responsibility for eliminating the discharge of unaccompanied youth from institutional settings into homelessness is not the sole responsibility of DCYF. Institutional settings includes JR institutions and group care settings within child welfare, both regulated and administered by DCYF, but also includes residential behavioral health settings under the authority of the Healthcare Authority (HCA) and programs administered by the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) in the Department of Commerce (RCW 43.330.720). Achieving this outcome requires effective collaboration among these state agencies and assessing performance on this outcome must acknowledge this fact. The following discussion provided in this section is focused on the areas under DCYF’s authority.

DCYF’s Adolescent Programs Unit Director presented to the DCYF Oversight Board’s Youth and Young Adult Outcomes & Transitions Subcommittee in March 2021, the goal to eliminate discharging youth to homelessness from a DCYF’s system of care has not been achieved as of January of this year. Data from an analysis conducted by DSHS’ RDA reflects homelessness post-system exit from a 2017 cohort that was published in July 2020 and is reviewed in this report on page 38. This data only reports on literal homelessness, and does not reflect unstable housing.

Available, affordable, appropriate housing options for youth and young adults exiting DCYF care is the greatest obstacle ensuring youth and young adults are not discharged into homelessness. The DCYF Adolescent Programs Unit, in partnership with the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY), and the Healthcare Authority (HCA), developed recommendations and identified resources needed to ensure adequate stable and safe housing options are available to youth and young adults exiting care. These recommendations and needed resources can be reviewed in the collaborative document [Improving Stability for Youth Exiting Care Fact Sheet](#).

DCYF has hired three dedicated JR housing program specialists to assist youth and young adults in obtaining housing when planning for release from a JR facility. Similarly, the Adolescent Programs Unit has hired an Adolescent Program Manager to take the lead on connecting youth and young adults exiting DCYF care with an array of housing options.

Further strengthening these efforts and underlining the agency’s commitment to this outcome, the DCYF Strategic Plan’s clearly states the agency will ensure “youth exiting foster care and JR have safe, affordable, supportive housing plans.” The agency’s strategic plan’s monitoring plan also identifies *rates of homelessness following exit* as a balancing indicator for the agency’s priority of *creating successful transitions into adulthood for youth and young adults in care*.

Funds administered by the agency are made available to young adults enrolled in Extended Foster Care (EFC) Funding can assist with a housing deposit, first and last month’s rent, utilities, or other basic household items. DCYF’s Adolescent Programs Unit is also the lead on the Child Welfare Housing Assistance Pilot Program seeking to provide housing supports in order to shorten the time a child is in out-of-home care when the only barrier to family reunification is the lack of appropriate housing.

Additional advancements in data collection and the frequency of data reporting are required to assess the agency’s performance to prevent youth and young adults being discharged into homelessness in real time, as well as including analysis of unstably housed youth and young adults who are discharged from the systems of care.

Contributing Factors & Impacts to Future Performance:

- **Recent Legislation:** The passage of [HB 1186](#) intends to assist with youth and young adults in the JR system with reentry services, by increasing the opportunity for youth and young adults to benefit from community transition services, including accessing housing assistance services, and reside in a community facility. Enhanced efforts aimed at successful reentry may influence the agency’s performance on connecting youth and young adults to appropriate housing upon exit.

Recommendations & Future Follow Up:

- **Real-Time Data on Housing Status upon Discharge:** To fully assess the agency’s performance on this outcome, real-time data on housing status of youth and young adults exiting DCYF care is necessary. Targeted approaches, such as the Child Welfare Housing Assistance Pilot Program, can provide initial insights in opportunities for data collection and reporting on successful housing outcomes. This data can also assist DCYF when collaborating with the Office of Homeless Youth (OHY) and local housing providers to identify housing needs by region for youth being discharged from institutional settings.
- **Continued Collaboration:** Continue to collaborate with other state agencies assisting families and youth and young adults seeking accessible and appropriate housing in an effort to expand the array of housing options and streamline efforts across systems.

Conclusion

DCYF was created by HB 1661 in the 2017 legislative session. The agency officially became responsible for programs, services and licensing regarding early learning and child welfare by July 2018. Juvenile Rehabilitation formally joined the agency in July 2019. In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived and impacted the continuum of care administered by DCYF in all areas.

This report attempts to identify DCYF’s performance in the legislatively mandated outcome and performance measures developed at the agency’s inception (RCW 43.216.015(3)(c)). Data across the full spectrum of performance areas is fragmented due to lag analyses, data gaps, or limited time frames by which to assess the agency’s performance due to certain units and authority only joining the agency as of July 2019.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unprecedented impacts on all aspects of early learning, child welfare, and juvenile justice/rehabilitation. Throughout 2020 and into 2021, DCYF workforce, families, youth and young adults, providers, and caregivers have had to pivot and adjust in uncertain times to ensure the well-being of children, youth and young adults, and families. Inevitably, these realities have impacted the agency’s performance on identified outcomes, and potentially will continue to impact performance as the pandemic lingers. Targeted efforts must continue to be made in areas identified with the most need for improvement to ensure that all Washington families and children have equitable opportunities to achieve and sustain holistic well-being.

Needless to say, the ability to fully assess the agency’s performance will continue to be limited for the coming years until all identified outcome areas have a few years of data under DCYF’s authority to assess reliable trends. Even with these limitations, the DCYF Oversight Board will continue to assess the agency’s performance through engagement with families and children, providers, Tribes, stakeholders, and the agency itself.

Appendices

Appendix A: DCYF Oversight Board Response & Feedback on DCYF Strategic Priorities 2020-2025

The Oversight Board does want to offer additional guidance to strengthen the direction of DCYF over the next five years. The following feedback from the DCYF Oversight Board aligns with the order and organization of the current document.

Mission, Vision and Introduction Statement

❖ **Embed a specific plan to reduce racial and ethnic disparities throughout the main DCYF strategic plan**

The Board applauds the attention drawn to reducing racial and ethnic disparities early on in DCYF's strategy priorities document, and the expansion of that focus to reducing disparities based on family income, geography, sexual identity/gender expression and ability status. Though the Oversight Board would like to see the department:

- (1) Clearly state specific actions connected to this commitment; and
- (2) Enmesh this work throughout this strategic plan document and not treat it as a separate plan to be produced later in the year after this plan is finalized.

By prioritizing reducing these disparities and disproportionality, the Department must commit to making it a part of every program, policy or operation administered by the agency. Without seeing this formally memorialized in the strategic plan, the Oversight Board is concerned that these efforts will continued to be siloed and perceived as additional or separate work from the main mission of the Department.

DCYF Agency Priorities

1. Safely reduce the number/rate of children in out-of-home care by half

- ❖ **Expand this goal to reduce youth and young adults involved in the juvenile justice and juvenile rehabilitation systems.** As DCYF seeks to de-silo its work and provide a continuum of care, the Oversight Board believes this should be attributed to efforts to reduce the number of youth and young adults in care across the child welfare system, juvenile justice and juvenile rehabilitation system. This would require prioritizing DCYF's leadership role in strengthening partnerships with local governments to increase diversion options for youth touched by the juvenile justice system.
- ❖ **Address youth in BRS placements who are returning home from out of state placements, as well as reducing hotel stays and other emergency placement stays.** With the focus on safely reducing the number of children in care, the Oversight Board would like to see commitment to strategies and actions in this plan that address the in-state placement of youth returning from out-of-state BRS placements, as well as strategies that will mitigate the pattern of increasing hotel stays and other emergency placements.

2. Create successful transition into adulthood for youth and young adults in our care

- ❖ **Expand specificity around mental health and substance use disorder treatment, both in the description of the current state of these issues and what will be addressed within that landscape.** Additional information on the realities of this issue and how DCYF will address it is desired.
- ❖ **Include higher education access, in addition to vocational education, as an option for creating successful transition into adulthood for youth and young adults in care.**

3. Create high quality integrated B-5 system

- ❖ **Parent and caregiver supports should be central to creating a high quality integrated B-5 system.** Parents and caregivers are cornerstone to ensuring better outcomes for our youngest Washingtonians and essential for building and maintain a quality holistic B-5 system.

4. Improve quality and intention of our practice

- ❖ **Highlight new innovative programs – such as the Family Connections Program and the Certificates of Parental Improvement** - that enhancing caregiver relationships, resources and opportunities produce better outcomes for children, youth and families in our state.

5. Improve quality and availability of providers services

- ❖ **Identify and prioritize strategies on strengthening partnerships with communities, providers and local governments.** The Blue Ribbon Commission identified that the expectations to improve outcomes for children and families that are touched by DCYF systems, is an expectation that cannot be achieved by DCYF alone. The Department must take a leadership position in forging and supporting partnerships with communities, providers and local government entities including local courts.
- ❖ **Acknowledge the success of the Network Administrator model in Region 1, administered by Empire Health through the Family Impact Network,** and address its relationship to the strategy for achieving a robust service array, particularly in rural areas.

Cross-Cutting Themes

- ❖ **Add the commitment to reducing disparities and disproportionality across all DCYF systems.**

Additional indicators of interest to monitoring plan

The Oversight Board acknowledges that this plan is in early stages of development, but the Board is glad to see a clearly defined commitment to reduction of youth in care by a designated factor. The Oversight Board expects that similar target will be set across all priority areas identified in the plan, including the commitment to obtain 90% kindergarten readiness for all children entering kindergarten.

Additionally, the Oversight Board believes the following indicators would be insightful for monitoring performance for strategies laid out in this plan:

- ❖ **For *create successful transitions into adulthood for youth and young adults in our care*** – add driver indicator on stable placements
- ❖ **For *create high quality integrated B-5 system*** – add (1) stability of child care to ensure children are not being moved from center to center; (2) higher Early Achievers ratings, and (3) capacity growth of providers over time.
- ❖ **For *improve quality and availability of provider services*** - add capacity growth of providers over time.

Again, the Oversight Board is encouraged by the plan the Department has put forth as is main areas of focus over the next 5 years. The Board believes with the additional guidance provided here, DCYF is moving on a strong foundation towards achieving the stated outcomes central to its mission.

Appendix B: Comparing DCYF Oversight Board Feedback on Draft DCYF Strategic Plan (March 2021) with Final DCYF Strategic Plan 2021-2026 (published June 2021)

In addition to the DCYF Oversight Board’s feedback, DCYF received and incorporated final comments from a number of other valued entities and feedback opportunities, including: external stakeholders, the agency’s tribal policy advisory committee, an external survey, internal staff and from members from the public attending agency webinars.

Documents for reference: [DCYF OB Feedback](#) & [Final DCYF Strategic Plan](#)

DCYF Oversight Board Feedback	Final DCYF Strategic Plan
Overarching Impressions:	
DCYF committing to become an antiracist organization: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commendable, but requires more definition, identification of measureable goals and targets 	No change.
Suggestion to make 3 year plan for more decisive and rapid change, instead of 5 year	No change.
Uniformly be bold in committing to quantifiable targets in all priority areas – in parity with reducing children in out-of-home care by half.	No change.
More intentional integration and alignment of services within each intention area.	New commitments to integration have been added throughout priority areas by the inclusion of “youth” in addition to children in appropriate intention areas, the commitment to expand access to services no matter where youth or families enter the system, and across the outcome indicators of the monitoring plan that seeks to integrate across previously siloed agency focus areas.
Include “youth” and “young adults” in the <i>Safely Reduce the Number/Rate of Children in Out-of-Home Care by Half</i> .	“Youth” was added.
Center youth, family, provider and caregiver voice when collaboration or consultation sought.	In <i>Improve Quality and Availability for Provider Services</i> , DCYF has added a specific commitment to working providers directly in an effort to support quality and expand capacity as part of agency’s goal of becoming an antiracist organization.
Equity:	
Define Antiracism	No definition provided. Work listed on page 5 of plan outlines DCYF’s plan to become anti-racist. Same content as draft strategic plan OB reviewed in March 2021.
Use concepts of antiracism and equity and apply them throughout the strategic plan.	Clearer commitment to efforts towards equity, including:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in language (ex: from “at-risk populations” to “high need communities”, page 6), • Supporting the culture and identity to children and youth in care (page 6), • Disentangling high need youth from BIPOC and LGBTQA+ youth by providing separate strategies for expanding placement options for high need youth (such as CLIP and DDA placements) and for expanding placement options for BIPOC and LGBTQA+ children and youth that is affirming of their culture and identity (page 6), • Intentional language for examining and challenging how DCYF systems and funding for contracted services currently operate, while also expanding capacity for BIPOC and marginalized communities (page 10) • Add tribal status for reporting on outcome, balancing and driver indicators in monitoring plan (page 11), • For outcome indicators, disaggregated for JR/crossover youth in <i>Safely reduce the number/rate of youth in out-of-home care by half</i> intention priority, disaggregated for child welfare, JR and crossover youth in <i>Create successful transition into adulthood for youth and young adults in our care</i> intention priority, and disaggregated for child welfare-involved children in <i>Create high-quality integrated B-8 system</i> intention priority (page 11).
<p>Examine and Set Goals to Dismantle Racist Structures</p>	<p>See what is outlined above. DCYF’s plan has consistently focused on expanding community capacity instead of institutional, though no additional changes were made between March 2021 draft and final strategic plan.</p>
<p>Safely Reduce the Number/Rate of Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Care By Half</p>	
<p>Basis for identifying goal of cutting children in out-of-home care in half.</p>	<p>No change. Consistent with first draft, DCYF’s plan refers to data from other states that show it is possible to significantly decrease remove rates of children without compromising safety. No changes made between the March 2021 draft and final strategic plan.</p>
<p>Clarification on intention of community-based alternatives to mandatory reporting.</p>	<p>No change. No clarification provided.</p>

Prioritize re-working Family Practice Model.	No change. Prioritization of strategies within strategic plan is unchanged between March 2021 draft and final strategic plan.
Quantifying goals for reducing length of stay.	No change.
Create Successful Transitions into Adulthood for Youth and Young Adults in Our Care	
Integrate services further for youth and young adults across continuum of care model.	Commitment to providing more widely available contracted services to youth and families regardless of the specific system they enter within DCYF’s continuum of care (page 7).
Setting Goals and Targets for Least Restrictive Environment.	No change.
Strengthen Therapeutic Environments.	DCYF expands focus from improving adherence to Dialectical Behavioral Therapy (DBT) to improving adherence to all therapeutic models in JR (page 7). No other changes.
Enhance Stability and Quality of Adult Relationships.	No change.
Create a High Quality Integrated B-8 System	
Work with families to define “quality” and how they would measure it.	Monitoring plan adds a placeholder for a 3-year old development outcome indicator (TBD) and a 3 rd grade inclusion measures (TBD) (page 11).
Adopt meaningful strategies and measures for BIPOC children to further the pursuit of equity in early childhood development.	Monitoring plan adds placeholder for 3 rd grade inclusion measure (TBD) as mentioned above. Early childhood development indicators, to the extent possible, will be reported as disaggregated by race/ethnicity, geography, tribal status, family income, geography, and child-welfare involved children (page 11).
Include strategy to analyze utilization and outcomes of ESIT for diverse populations.	See above inclusion of 3 year old development outcome indicator disaggregated by race/ethnicity, geography, tribal status, family income, geography and child-welfare involved children (page 11). No other additional changes.
Improve Quality and Intention of Our Practice	
Further definition of supportive supervision as an indicator of culture change.	No change.
Additional DCYF OB Feedback	
“Youth” and “Young Adults” should be included in <i>Safely Reduce the Number/Rate of Children in Out-of-Home Care by Half</i> .	“Youth” added.
Increase and align adolescent supports so more youth receive disposition alternatives in the community rather than JR commitment.	Plan already included “serve youth in least restrictive environment possible” and “expand community

	capacity instead of institutional” (page 7). No additional changes.
Sustain community based alternatives to detention and diversion from form prosecution through collaborations and partnerships with agencies, private sector and CBOs.	Commitment to providing more widely available contracted services to youth and families regardless of the specific system they enter within DCYF’s continuum of care (page 7). No additional change.
Substantially reduce length of stay in JR facilities and county detention.	See above. No additional change.
Monitoring Plan	
Beyond previously existing reporting requirements – such as federal and performance-based contracting – ask measure become more refined, quantifiable and accessible.	DCYF is developing all indicators in the plan with a projected date of finalizing the measures by the end of CY2021. Measures will be developed with the intention of being meaningful given the strategies outlined in the plan and will be publically reported.
Encourage identification and commitment to targets and timelines for indicators in all priority intention areas.	Further development of indicators expected by end of CY2021 as mentioned above. DCYF’s plans to further identify targets and associated timelines is yet to be determined.
For <i>Safely reduce children and youth in out-of-home care by half</i> , disaggregate data by JR/crossover youth to align services.	Incorporated in final plan.
Driver indicators for <i>Create Successful Transitions into Adulthood for Youth and Young Adults in Our Care</i> should include: number of disposition alternatives, number of diversions, length of stay for youth involved in JJ/JR system.	Not incorporated.
For <i>Create High Quality Integrated B-8 System</i> , make “percentage of 3-4 year olds participating in high quality preschool” a driver indicator. Make “Kindergarten Readiness” one outcome indicator.	Incorporated in final plan.
Add 3 year old development outcome indicator for <i>Create High Quality Integrated B-8 System</i> .	Incorporated in final plan. Final outcome indicator TBD.
Add inclusive 3 rd grade outcome indicator for <i>Create High Quality Integrated B-8 System</i> .	Incorporated in final plan. Final outcome indicator TBD.
Add “Provider diversity” as balancing indicator for <i>Create High Quality Integrated B-8 System</i> .	Incorporated in final plan.
Consider exclusion data as balancing indicator for school age children in <i>Create High Quality Integrated B-8 System</i> .	Not incorporated.

Appendix C: Identified surveys related to child, youth and family services

- **2019 Washington Child Care Industry Assessment**
 - <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Child-Care-Collaborative-Task-Force-Industry-Assessment-Report.pdf>
- **State Executive Branch Employee Child Care Access Survey**
 - <https://www.commerce.wa.gov/about-us/boards-and-commissions/child-care-collaborative-task-force/>
- **2019 State Interagency Coordinating Council**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/esit/ProviderSurvey.pdf>
- **ChildCare Aware of Washington**
 - <https://childcareawarewa.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/impact-of-min-wage.pdf>
- **Best Starts for Kids (King County only)**
 - <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/community-human-services/initiatives/best-starts-for-kids/survey.aspx>
- **Early Childhood Education Assistance Program or ECEAP**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/eceap/contractors/pbc>
- **Nurse Family Partnership or NFP**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2019CaregiverReport.pdf>
- **2020 DCYF Caregiver Survey Report**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020CaregiverReport.pdf>
- **Family/Youth Crisis Response Survey**
 - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QJ5SL2Y>
- **2018 Foster Parent Survey: Foster Parents Speak**
 - <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sites/default/files/rda/reports/research-11-246.pdf>
- **Child Welfare System Insights**
 - <http://pocdata.org/>
- **Department of Health Youth Survey**
 - <https://www.doh.wa.gov/dataandstatisticalreports/datasystems/healthyyouthsurvey>
- **The LOVIT Way Program Evaluation Process**
 - <https://2020.animikii.com/>
- **2020 DCYF Caregiver Report**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2020CaregiverReport.pdf>
- **2019 DCYF Caregiver Survey Report**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/2019CaregiverReport.pdf>
- **DCYF Permanency From Day One Grant Evaluation and Survey**
 - <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/practice/practice-improvement/permanency-from-day-one/evaluation-survey>
- **OSPI Healthy Youth Survey**
 - <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/healthy-youth-survey>

Appendix D: Membership

Name	Representing
Katie Biron	Foster parent representative
Annie Blackledge , Mockingbird Society	Representative of an organization that represents the best interest of the child
Judy Warnick , Senate	Legislator
Bobbe Bridge , Center for Children & Youth Justice	Juvenile rehabilitation and justice subject matter expert
Tom Dent , House of Representatives (Board Co-Chair)	Legislator
Jeannie Darneille , Senate	Legislator
Ben de Haan , UW School of Social Work	Child welfare subject matter expert
Sydney Forrester , Governor’s Policy Office	Governor’s Office representative (non-voting)
Loni Greninger , Jamestown S’Klallam Tribe	Western Washington tribal representative
Ruth Kagi , State Representative (ret.)	Early learning subject matter expert
Anne Lee , TeamChild	Subject matter expert in reducing disparities in child outcomes by income, race, and ethnicity
Diane Liebe , Yakima Valley Farm Worker’s Clinic/Children’s Village	Physician with experience working with youth
Charles Loeffler , Department of Children, Youth, and Families	Child welfare caseworker representative
Lois Martin , Community Day Center for Children	Early childhood program practitioner representative
Shrounda Selivanoff , Office of Public Defense (Board Co-Chair)	Parent stakeholder group representative
Tana Senn , House of Representatives	Legislator