



PINNACLE PLAN MEASURES

SEMI-ANNUAL SUMMARY REPORT

JULY 2014

Overview

The Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to improving the safety, permanency, and well-being of children served by the child welfare system. The Pinnacle Plan is the roadmap and public reporting is critical to ensuring transparency and accountability. The [OKDHS Metrics, Baselines, and Targets Agreement -3/7/13](#) outlines how the outcomes and other indicators are to be measured and reported. Monthly, Quarterly, and Semi-Annual Reports will be made available to the public.

Oklahoma is committed to good faith efforts and positive trending toward the goals outlined in the plan. Twice per year DHS provides an analysis in which the agency outlines: (1) the strategies being employed to improve performance in the areas identified in the Compromise and Settlement Agreement, and (2) the progress toward improving performance. The report includes an update regarding performance improvement strategies implemented to date and, when possible, an assessment of the effectiveness of those strategies. Each semi-annual report addresses seven performance areas comprised of 27 specific metric elements. The seven areas are: Foster Care Safety, Counts for New Foster Homes, Worker Contacts, Placement Stability, Shelter Usage, Permanency Timeliness, and Workloads. In addition to monthly public reporting, DHS posts [The Pinnacle Plan - Quarterly Updates](#) to a special section of the okdhs.org website which provide valuable information regarding plan initiatives.

The Compromise and Settlement Agreement requires the Co-Neutrals to determine the extent to which DHS has made good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress toward each Target Outcome. This report will summarize the most significant strategies implemented for each Target Outcome and, where possible, draw connections between those efforts and progress toward the Target Outcomes established in the Metrics, Baselines, and Targets Agreement.

Measurement notes

DHS was the first state agency to have a federally approved Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (KIDS System) and continues to strive for high quality data. **The findings in this report are subject to change due to ongoing data entry, changes in policy, changes in practice, and changes in definitions, and/or data quality issues that may be discovered through the process.**

Organization of the report

In an effort to align the metrics in this report with the elements of a continuous quality improvement (CQI) process, we believe it is important to clarify how the various metrics relate to the levers that DHS can potentially influence in order to improve outcomes for children in care.

The CQI process is based on the premise that improving outcomes for children requires some degree of system reform and that system reform involves changing one or more elements of the traditional way of doing business: (1) the process of care, (2) the quality of care, and (3) the capacity to deliver care. Process changes pertain to how the work is done; quality changes pertain to how well it is done; and capacity changes pertain to the tangible resources the agency devotes to delivering care. CQI presumes that a combination of these three types of reforms will lead to improved outcomes (i.e., safety, permanency, and well-being) for children.

In an effort to clarify how the various Settlement Agreement metrics relate to these particular aspects of DHS's ongoing reform efforts, the report begins with some contextual information and is then organized by type of metric:

SECTION 1: Contextual information. This section provides a general description of entry, exit, and caseload trends since the enactment of the Settlement Agreement and trends in the demographic profile of the children captured during the history of reporting periods.

SECTION 2: Child outcomes. This section reports on metrics related to safety and permanency outcomes for children in care. These include indicators pertaining to **maltreatment in care, placement stability, shelter placement, and permanency.**

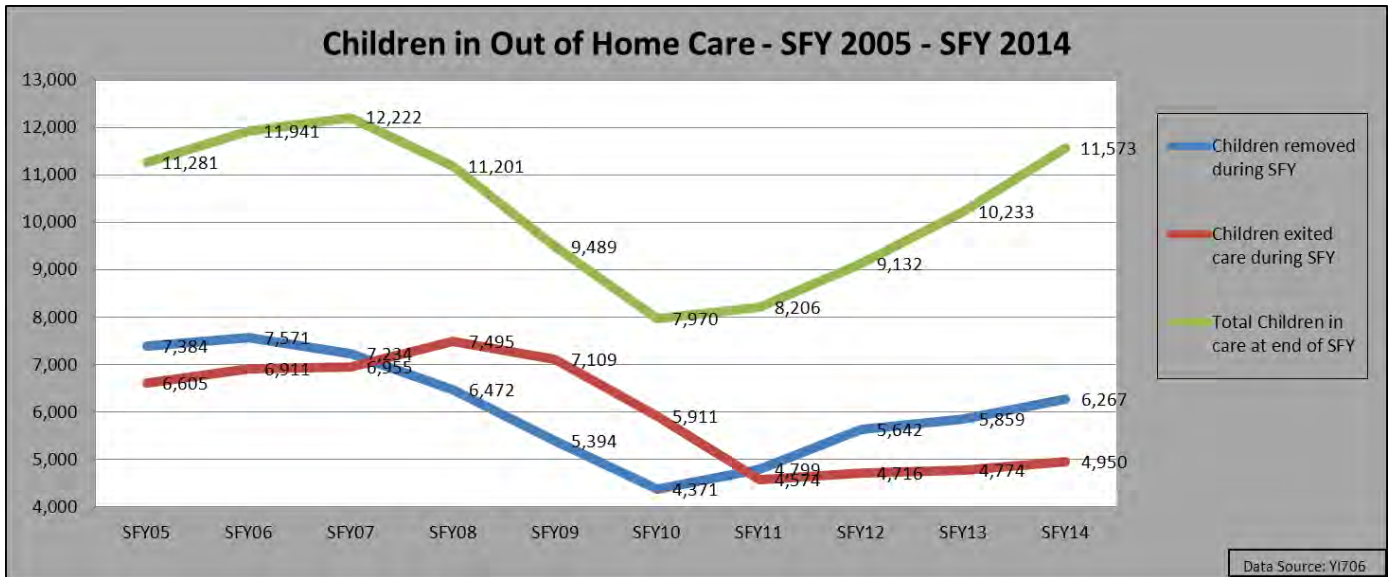
SECTION 3: Process and quality of care indicators. This section reports on metrics designed to measure the process and quality of certain case practices. These include indicators pertaining to the **frequency of worker contacts.**

SECTION 4: Capacity indicators. This section reports on metrics designed to measure DHS's capacity to deliver foster care services. These include metrics pertaining to **foster home development and caseload/workload.**

SECTION 1: Contextual information

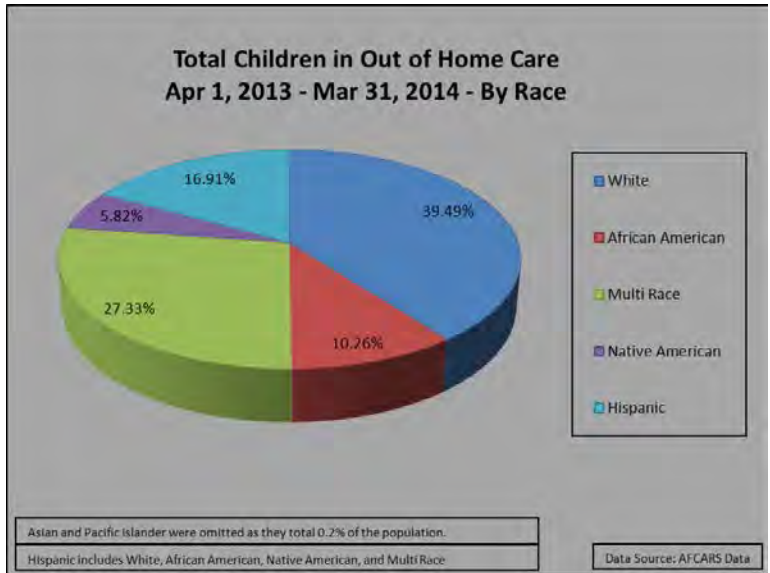
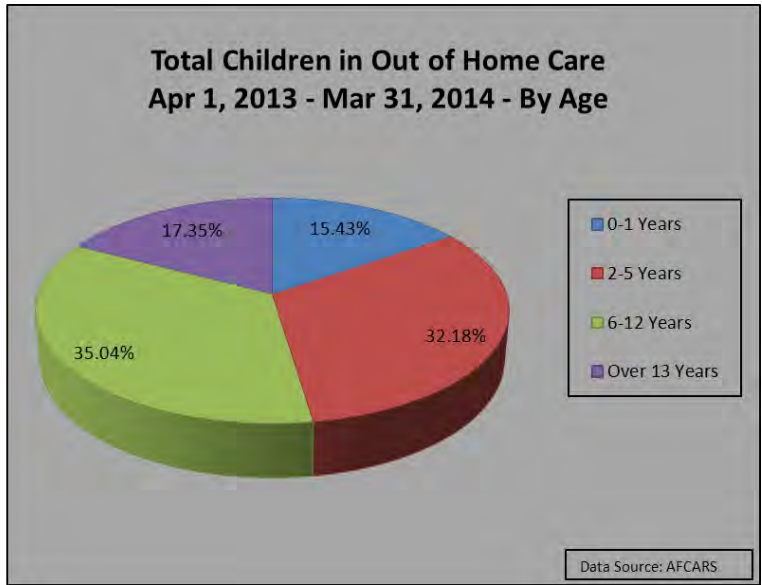
Entry, exit, and caseload trends

DHS began implementing the Pinnacle Plan in July 2012, 6 months after the Settlement Agreement was reached, and has now completed eight quarters of implementation. In January 2012, just over 8,000 children were in care, and by finalization of the plan in July 2012 there were closer to 9,000 children. Currently, there are just over 11,500 in care. This increase in the point-in-time caseload is due to the fact that entries into care have outpaced exits from care.



Demographic information by reporting period

During the reporting period of April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014, DHS served 15,806 children. The “served” population includes all children who were in care for at least 24 hours. This number also includes children in Tribal custody. For the purposes of Pinnacle Plan reporting, those children in Tribal custody are not included in the measures, except for the Absence of Maltreatment in Care measure which includes all children served. This leaves a total population of 15,036 children. The following charts show the demographics of these children by age (as of March 31, 2014) and race. For race, if a child claims more than one race, they are counted in the “Multi Race” category. Hispanic or Latino origin is not counted as a primary race, so if a client indicates that they are Hispanic, regardless of any other race selected, they are reported in the “Hispanic” category. The other races: White, African American, Multi Race, and Native American are all Non-Hispanic.



SECTION 2. Child outcomes

1.1: Absence of maltreatment in care by resource caregivers

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care during the 12-month reporting period, what percent were **not** victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (abuse or neglect) by a foster parent or facility staff member?

Data Source and Definitions:

For the Semi-Annual Report, Oklahoma uses the logic from the official federal metric. This measure uses a 12-month period based on the federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Oklahoma used the two official state-submitted AFCARS (13B & 14A) files combined with a non-submitted annual NCANDS (Covering AFCARS 13B & 14A periods) file to compute the measure. Though the NCANDS file used was not the same file submitted to the federal government (The submission to NCANDS is only submitted annually and due January 31st each year), the non-submitted file was generated using the same programming logic used to generate the submitted file. This includes running the data through the official validation tool.

- Counts of children not maltreated in foster care (out-of-home care) are derived by subtracting the NCANDS count of child maltreatment by foster care (out-of-home care) providers from the AFCARS count of children placed in out-of-home care during the reporting period.
- This metric measures performance over 12 months and differs from the monthly data, which is collected from KIDS each month.
- The federal metric only counts a victim once during the FFY, even if a child is victimized more than once in the course of a year. Whereas in the monthly report, a victim will be counted for every substantiated finding of abuse or neglect.
- Also, NCANDS does not include any referral if the report date and completion date do not both fall during the same FFY reporting period.
- The total population included in this measure includes tribal custody children as these children are included in the federal submission to NCANDS.

This measure includes all children placed in traditional foster care homes, kinship homes (relative or non-relative), therapeutic foster care homes, group homes, shelters, and residential facilities. Oklahoma began including children substantiated of maltreatment by the Office of Client Advocacy in institutional settings in March 2013.

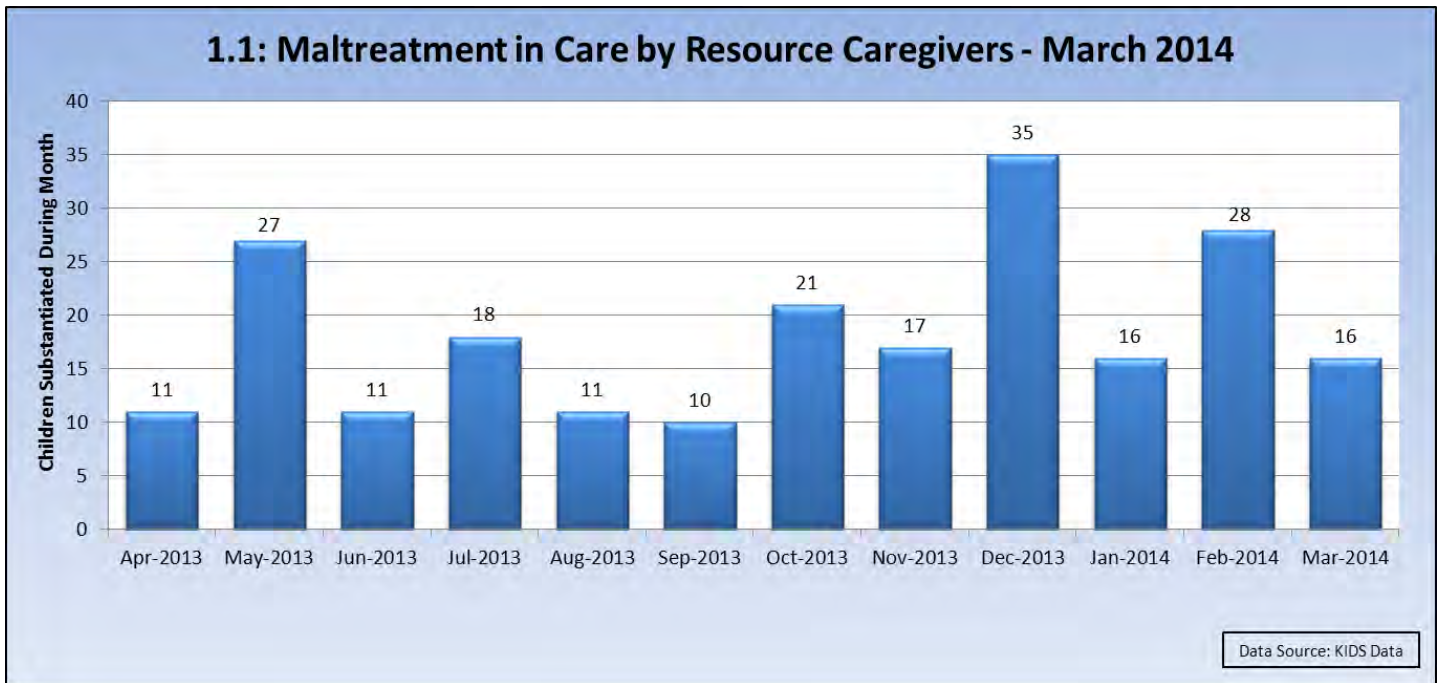
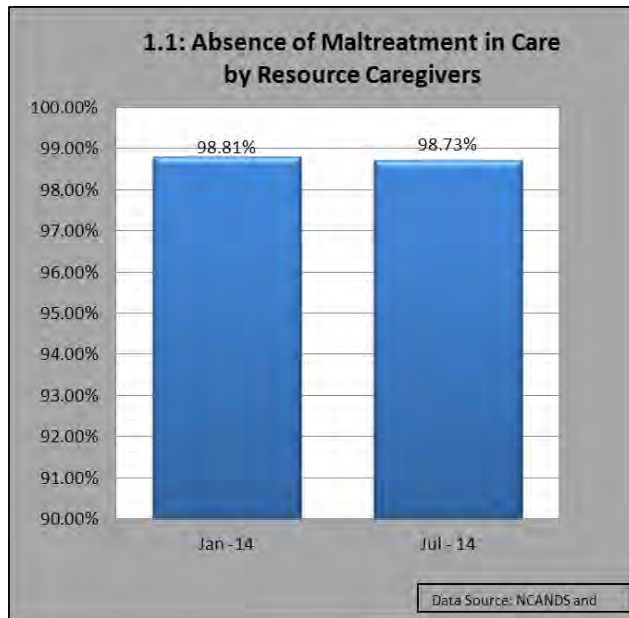
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014.

Numerator: The number of children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 who did not have any substantiated or indicated allegations of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member during that period.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				pending
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/2012 and 9/30/2013	14,866	15,045	98.81%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014	15,605	15,806	98.73%
Target by 6/30/16				pending



	Apr-2013	May-2013	Jun-2013	Jul-2013	Aug-2013	Sep-2013	Oct-2013	Nov-2013	Dec-2013	Jan-2014	Feb-2014	Mar-2014
# of Substantiations	11	27	11	18	11	10	21	17	35	16	28	16

Commentary:

This indicator is based on the federal measure for maltreatment in care and produces representative information about the incidence of maltreatment in care. The data above show the rate of maltreatment in care increased very slightly between the two reporting periods.

It is important to know where the abuse and neglect is occurring (placement type) so appropriate monitoring, oversight and technical assistance can be provided to reduce the incidence of maltreatment in care. For the reporting period of April 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014, there were a total of 201 substantiations of maltreatment while in out of home

care. These 201 victims were included in 117 separate referrals: 76 referrals for children in foster care and 41 referrals to OCA. Of the 139 victims in foster care, 73 children were placed in a Kinship Foster Care Home (36% of substantiations), 48 children were placed in a traditional foster home (24% of substantiations), 11 children were placed in a Therapeutic Foster Care Home (5% of substantiations), 3 children were in a Tribal Foster Care Home, 3 children were placed in a Specialized Community Home, and 1 child was in an adoptive placement (3% of substantiations). Of the 62 OCA victims (31% of substantiations): 31 children were in a Level D, D+, E, or T Group Home, 17 children were in a Psychiatric facility, 7 children were in a Youth Services Shelter, 3 children were in a DHS shelter, 3 children were in a Non-DHS operated facility, and 1 child was in a DHS operated facility.

Resource Type	Percent of Children Placed by Placement Type on Last Day of SFY14
Kinship Foster Care	47%
Regular Family Foster Care	27%
Other Family Foster Care (includes Tribal, DDSD, SCH, etc)	4%
Therapeutic Foster Care	6%
Other Placements (Includes Shelters, Group Homes, Psychiatric Facilities, etc.)	16%

The Office of Client Advocacy (OCA) has taken significant steps to ensure compliance with the Pinnacle Plan. All OCA policy has been changed so that the investigation timeframes for initiation and completion are in alignment with Child Welfare Services (CWS). OCA appropriate referrals are now received and assessed by the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline and investigated by OCA within their specialized children's investigations unit. Additionally, since July of 2013 all investigations are completed and tracked in the KIDS database and the substantiation rate of all OCA investigations, since that time, is in line with the substantiation rate for all child welfare investigations. OCA staff have received additional training from CWS, as well as training on forensic interviewing, and moved from an administrative investigatory model to one focused on safety of children. Immediate Protective Action plans are now put in place with facilities to ensure the safety of the child victim and other residents. Investigations are initiated by face-to-face contact with the alleged child victim within timeframes as specified by the Child Abuse Hotline. OCA is working collaboratively in partnership with Oklahoma Child Care Services (Licensing) and CWS Program Staff to ensure an appropriate agency response when concerns arise in facility settings and in June of 2014, staff from all of these programs attended a two day trauma informed training together to better inform and guide their practice.

Late in SFY14, a new education module was added to the existing SafeCare modules provided through the DHS Comprehensive Home-Based Services (CHBS). See explanation of SafeCare in section 1.2. The provider agencies are now trained to deliver Managing Child Behavior (MCB). Once the child is identified and an assessment is completed by the contractor of the child's behavior, the resource family receives the MCB module that provides education and training on how best to manage the child's disruptive behavior. While this module was developed initially to increase placement stability, DHS hopes to gain some secondary benefit by reducing the number of reports of maltreatment in care due to the resource parent's enhanced ability to deal with the, at times, challenging behaviors of children.

There has also been a rejuvenation of the Trauma Informed Care Project for child welfare residential programs and contracted residential providers as well as multiple divisional staff who support and partner with these

programs. During the past year, over 700 staff and partners received training, technical assistance and on-going consultation regarding trauma informed care through the contract between CWS and the Oklahoma University (OU) National Resource Center for Youth Services. We believe when those who work directly with children and youth in residential care and those who monitor, investigate and mentor these programs understand the science of trauma and its affects, maltreatment will decrease. From a basis of safety, predictability and nurturance, staff receive training about the effects of trauma on the brain as well as mentoring and techniques to recognize and understand how trauma can manifest in various ways including behaviors. Staff are encouraged to utilize new tools to work in ways which support this evidence, thereby creating therapeutic focused environments where children and youth can heal learning how to modulate their behaviors and improve self-regulation.

1.2: Absence of maltreatment in care by parents

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care during the 12-month reporting period, what percent were **not** victims of substantiated or indicated maltreatment (abuse or neglect) by a parent while in DHS custody?

Data Source and Definitions:

For the Semi-Annual report, Oklahoma uses the same logic as Data Element XI. Children Maltreated by Parents while in Foster Care on Oklahoma’s Federal Data Profile. This element uses a 12-month period based on the federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Oklahoma used the two official state submitted AFCARS (13B &14A) files combined with a non-submitted annual NCANDS file (Covering AFCARS 13B & 14A periods) to compute the measure. Though the NCANDS file used was not the same file submitted to the federal government (The submission to NCANDS is due to the federal government by January 31st each year), the non-submitted file was generated using the same logic and program used to generate the submitted file. This includes running the data through the official validation tool.

- This metric measures performance over 12 months and differs from the monthly data, which is collected from KIDS each month.
- The federal data element requires matching NCANDS and AFCARS records by AFCARS IDs.
- The NCANDS report date and completion date must fall within the removal period found in the matching AFCARS record.
- The federal metric only counts a victim once during the FFY, even if a child is victimized more than once in the course of a year. Whereas in the monthly report, a victim will be counted for every substantiated finding of abuse or neglect.

The federal data element includes all victims of substantiated abuse or neglect by a parent while in care, even if the reported abuse occurred prior to the child coming into care. Whereas in the monthly metric, children disclosing abuse that occurred prior to coming into care are excluded.

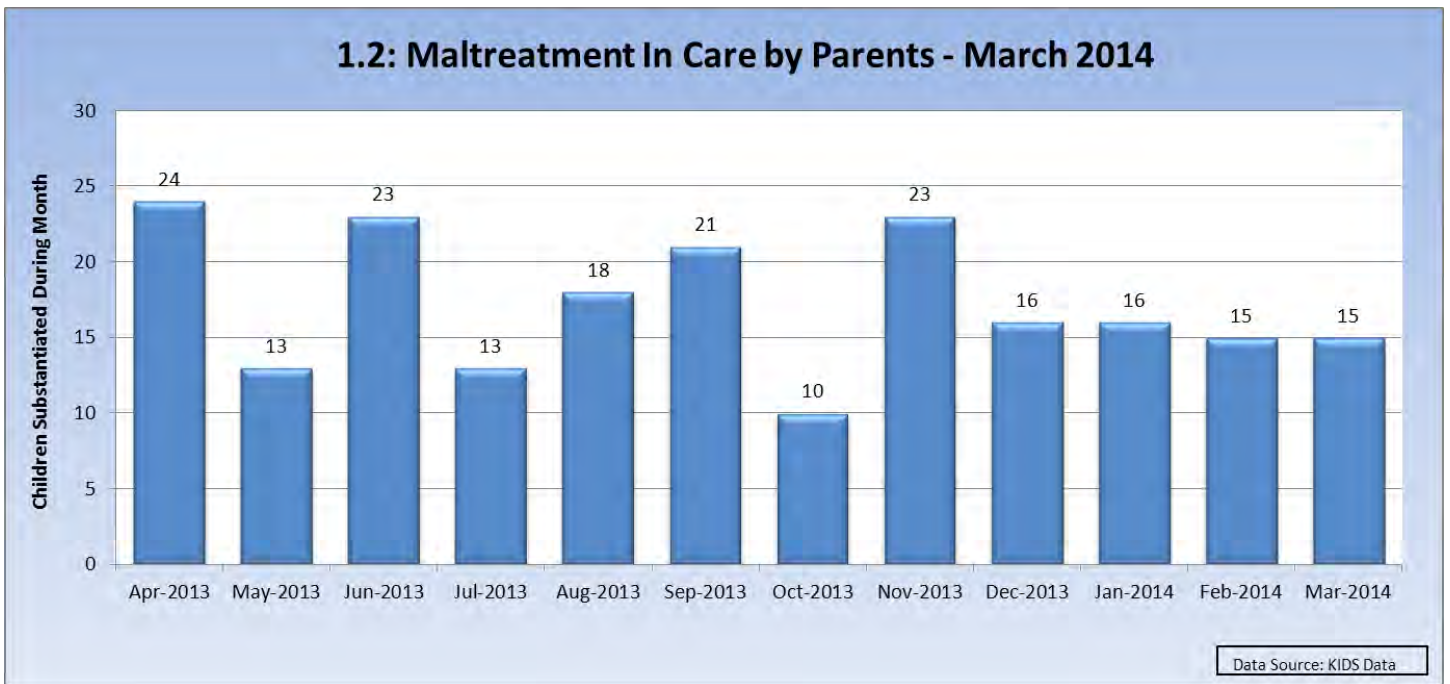
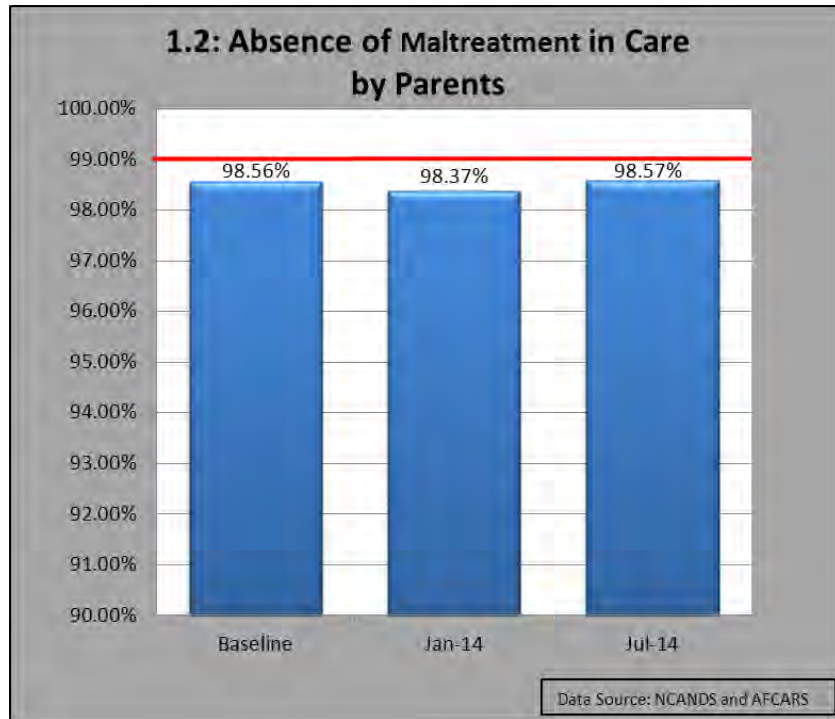
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014.

Numerator: The number of children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 who did not have any substantiated or indicated allegations of maltreatment by a parent during that period.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				98.56%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/2012 and 9/30/2013	14,800	15,045	98.37%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014	15,580	15,806	98.57%
Target by 6/30/16				99.00%



	Apr-2013	May-2013	Jun-2013	Jul-2013	Aug-2013	Sep-2013	Oct-2013	Nov-2013	Dec-2013	Jan-2014	Feb-2014	Mar-2014
# of Substantiations	24	13	23	13	18	21	10	23	16	16	15	15

Commentary:

DHS offers, through CHBS, the evidenced-based practice SafeCare. These services help parents in the reunification process with their children and work to reduce maltreatment in care by parents, as well as reduce recidivism rates. SafeCare consists of four education modules: (1) Health Module- to help parents identify symptoms of childhood illnesses or injury; (2) Home Safety Module-to help identify safety and health hazards in the home; (3) Parent-Child Interactions Module; and, (4) Problem Solving/Communications Module. Additionally, to help parents deal with their children’s behaviors upon reunification, the newer MCB module is provided to them as well as the foster parents to allow for more consistency from out-of-home to in-home care. Please refer to the commentary in 1.1 for a description of MCB.

Of note, in June of 2013, a modification was made in KIDS to allow more efficient tracking of the custody status of a child victim at the time the maltreatment occurred. For example, if a child in foster care reports abuse by the parents that occurred prior to being placed in DHS custody, that is addressed. However, the abuse would not be defined as maltreatment in care. Additionally, modifications have been made to the Child Welfare Assessment of Child Safety that better defines safety threats and caregiver protective capacities. This assessment is done at removal, when unsupervised visitation begins, and again at reunification to help determine if the safety threats have been eliminated or reduced and if the protective capacities have been enhanced. The overall purpose of this modification to the assessment is to help child welfare staff make a better determination of whether a child is safe or unsafe, regardless of who has custody of the child.

4.1a: Placement Stability—Children in care for less than 12 months

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care during the 12-month reporting period who were in care for at least eight days but less than 12 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings to date?

Data Source and Definitions:

Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification – AFCARS 13B and 14A

- Measures 4.1a, b, and c are based on the Permanency Federal Composite 1 measures C1-1, C1-2, and C1-3. The data looks at the number of children with two or fewer placement settings during the different time periods.

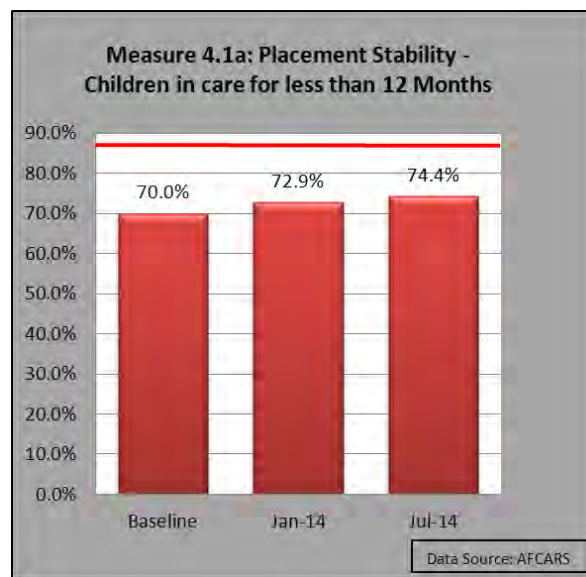
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was between eight days and 12 months.

Numerator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was between eight days and 12 months **and** who had two or fewer placement settings as of 3/31/2014.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				70.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/2012 and 9/30/2013 with LOS b/w 8 days and 12 months	4,396	6,031	72.9%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 with LOS b/w 8 days and 12 months	4,564	6,136	74.4%
Target by 6/30/16				80.0%



4.1b: Placement stability—children in care for 12 to 24 months

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care during the 12-month reporting period who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings to date?

Data Source and Definitions:

Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification – AFCARS 13B and 14A

- Measures 4.1a, b, and c are based on the Permanency Federal Composite 1 measures C1-1, C1-2, and C1-3. The data looks at the number of children with two or fewer placement settings during the different time periods.

Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was between 12 months and 24 months.

Numerator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was between 12 months and 24 months **and** who had two or fewer placement settings as of 3/31/2014.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				50.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/2012 and 9/30/2013 with LOS b/w 12 months and 24 months	2,292	4,514	50.8%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 with LOS b/w 12 months and 24 months	2,569	4,909	52.3%
Target by 6/30/16				68.0%



4.1c: Placement stability—children in care for 24 months or more

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care during the 12-month reporting period who were in care for at least 24 months, what percent had two or fewer placement settings to date?

Data Source and Definitions:

Timeliness and Permanency of Reunification – AFCARS 13B and 14A

- Measures 4.1a, b, and c are based on the Permanency Federal Composite 1 measures C1-1, C1-2, and C1-3. The data looks at the number of children with two or fewer placement settings during the different time periods.

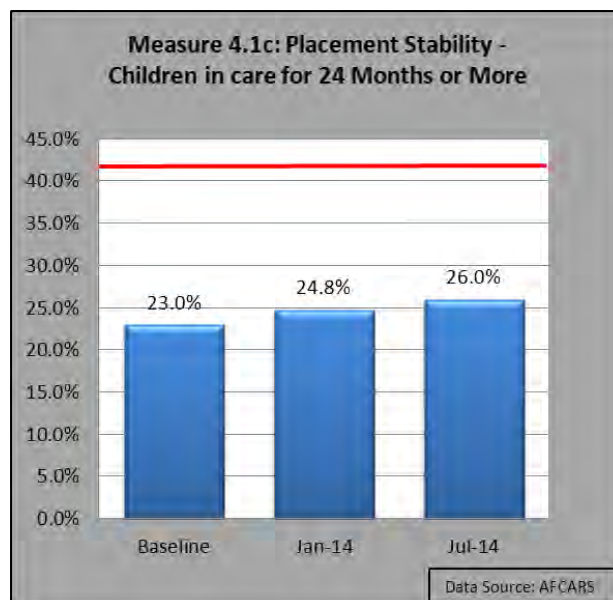
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was 24 months or longer.

Numerator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose length of stay as of 3/31/2014 was 24 months or longer **and** who had two or fewer placement settings as of 3/31/2014.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				23.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/2012 and 9/30/2013 with LOS 24 months or longer	1,002	4,035	24.8%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 with LOS 24 months or longer	1,112	4,277	26.0%
Target by 6/30/16				42.0%



Commentary:

At the outset we would note that these metrics count children’s moves regardless of the reason for the move. Whereas some placement moves take place due to a problem with the child’s setting, some moves happen in order to help children achieve permanency. For example, if a sibling group of children is placed separately initially, a move to reunite the sibling group is counted in this measure. Additionally, a move to a kinship home that may not have been initially identified at the time of removal is also counted. Moves from a higher level of care i.e. a group home to a less restrictive setting, while viewed as good practice for a child, is counted in this measure. The federal and state Children and Family Services Reviews (CFSR) collects qualitative information related to all moves for a child, and when they are planned events for the purposes of achieving permanency for the child they are counted as “positive” moves in the CFSR measure. It is important to note that positive trending for placement stability in all composites is indicated. Each of the performance measures detailed in this report impact the stability of children in the child welfare system and are moving in the right direction.

DHS completed an assessment of performance related to key child and family outcomes through development of the 2015-2019 Children and Family Services Plan (CFSP). Analysis of available data supports the focus on placement stability as an area needing improvement, resulting in the addition of this goal in the DHS 2015-2019 Children and Family Services Plan. The qualitative study completed by The Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG) and Casey Family Programs provided qualitative information supporting a need for improved understanding and engagement with families. Such practices will improve DHS efforts in earlier identification of appropriate placements for children and better understanding of needs for families, therefore improving outcomes for permanency and placement stability.

DHS expects that the Department’s efforts to eliminate the use of shelters for children ages 13 years old and younger will be associated with increased placement stability for children in care. When children are placed directly into shelters, the shelter counts as the child’s first placement even when stay in the shelter is a short one, therefore the most effective strategy to improving placement stability is to reduce shelter usage. At the start of DHS’s efforts to reduce shelter use, many casework staff interpreted the initiative as an effort to “keep children out of the shelter at all costs,” which sometimes resulted in children being placed in foster homes as opposed to shelters even when the home was only to be available to the child for a few days. While this practice may have avoided the use of shelters it likely worked against the Department’s efforts to reduce placement moves. Extensive efforts have been made to increase staff knowledge and understanding, through training and mentoring, of best practices in making the “first placement the best placement” for an individual children and sibling groups. Additional efforts to reduce the use of shelters are described later in this report.

Additionally, Oklahoma places a high priority on kinship placements for children entering the system, as evidenced by the growth in the percentage of children initially placed in kinship care from 18 percent in 2010 and 2011 to 27 percent in 2013. Upon entry into the foster care system, significant time is spent in child-specific (kinship placement) recruitment activities. This includes talking with children and parents to learn about kinship (related and non-related) options for placements and searching available database for relatives. These kinship placements may be grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, or other relatives. There is also a search for kinship (non-relative) possibilities such as teachers, tribal members, coaches, neighbors, close family friends, and others who have a close relationship with the child. After identification of a possible placement, DHS makes contact to conduct an assessment of the resource’s ability to provide a safe placement. These efforts are documented in the case file and reported to the court as required by Oklahoma Statute.

Specialized Kinship Bridge Units were created to support the work in Oklahoma and Tulsa Counties. These units work alongside Child Protective Services (CPS) units to either prevent children from entering a DHS-operated shelter or, if a shelter stay is necessary, move them as quickly as possible to a kinship placement. The work of these units was supported through a demonstration grant from the Children’s Bureau and is producing demonstrable success. As a demonstration grant, evaluation and data analysis was required which provided valuable information to reform efforts. NorthCare in Oklahoma County was awarded a grant (Family KINnections) to support kinship caregivers, increase

successful placements, and reduce placement instability. While implementation is early in the process, Family KINnections has served more than 100 families and enjoys an overall 88 percent success rate in maintaining stable placements and/or positive outcomes for children. As a private non-profit behavioral health agency, NorthCare has extensive experience in working with families served by child welfare in multiple programs including CHBS, outpatient services, and foster home studies.

Efforts are underway to encourage improvement in maintaining brothers and sisters together in placement. Maintaining siblings together in placement is important to improving overall placement stability for children. We find this is an area needing improvement as demonstrated in a recent data analysis completed by Permanency Planning Program staff. Data compiled from multiple sources within the SACWIS/KIDS system showed that of all the children in out-of-home care, 75 percent of children were members of a sibling group. This same analysis showed that of those sibling groups, only 48.5 percent are placed together. In addition, further analysis into placements of sibling groups according to placement types reinforces the need to locate kinship early for children in care. The review found in non-kinship homes 44 percent of sibling groups were placed together compared to 56 percent of siblings being separated. In comparison, in relative and kinship homes, 64 percent of sibling groups were placed together compared to 36 percent of sibling groups being separated. Local data has been provided to assist district directors, field managers, and front-line staff to assess their performance and set reasonable targets for improvement.

Specific efforts to increase placement stability include:

1. Resource workers conducting quarterly visits with foster parents;
2. Creation of a “Matching System” in KIDS to improve the placement process;
3. Creation and utilization of the Vacancy Report, which reflects foster home vacancies and automatically updates itself every six hours thereby improving the placement process;
4. Creation of Bridge Units for each Region to improve communication and sharing of resources between adoptions and foster care;
5. Creation and utilization of the Child Passport to provide more detailed information;
6. Utilization of social networking to share resources with foster parents;
7. Utilization of the Bridge Support Center;
8. Partnering with Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) to increase use of Systems of Care for children in care;
9. Partnering with ODMHSAS to increase types of services available (Region 4 currently);
10. Partnering with NorthCare to secure a \$2 million demonstration grant to better support kinship families in Oklahoma County (KINnection);
11. Building a stronger partnership with Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE) to improve educational stability which will support placement stability; and
12. DHS is becoming a trauma-informed child welfare system:
 - a. Training for foster parents and child welfare staff
 - b. Trauma screening and services for children

4.2: Placement stability—placement moves after 12 months in care

Operational Question:

Of all children served in foster care for more than 12 months, what percent of children experienced two or fewer placement settings after their first 12 months in care?

Data Source and Definitions:

Measure 4.2 looks at placement stability that occurs after the child’s first 12 months in care. The placement that the child is placed in 12 months after their removal date counts as the first placement, and then the metric shows how many children had two or fewer placement settings after that time.

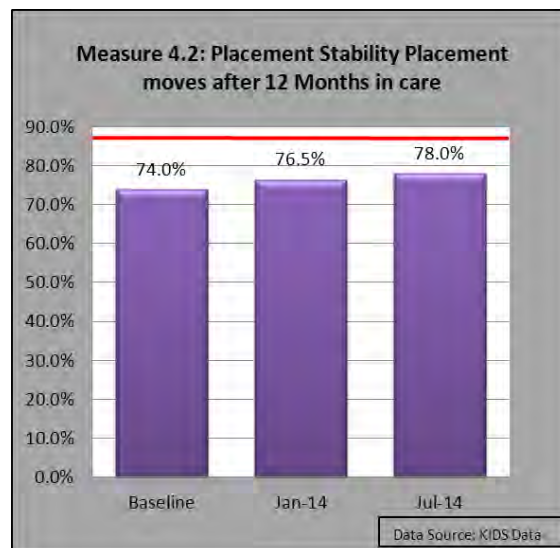
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose current removal was prior to March 31, 2013 and remained in care at least 12 months.

Numerator: All children served in foster care between 4/1/2013 and 3/31/2014 whose current removal was prior to March 31, 2013 and remained in care at least 12 months **and** had two or fewer placement settings.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				74.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children served between 10/1/12 and 9/30/2013 with LOS at least 12 months	6,404	8,374	76.5%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children served between 4/1/13 and 3/31/2014 with LOS at least 12 months	7,026	9,002	78.0%
Target by 6/30/16				88.0%



Commentary:

See explanation in 4.1

5.1: Shelter Use—children ages 0 to 1 year

Operational Question:

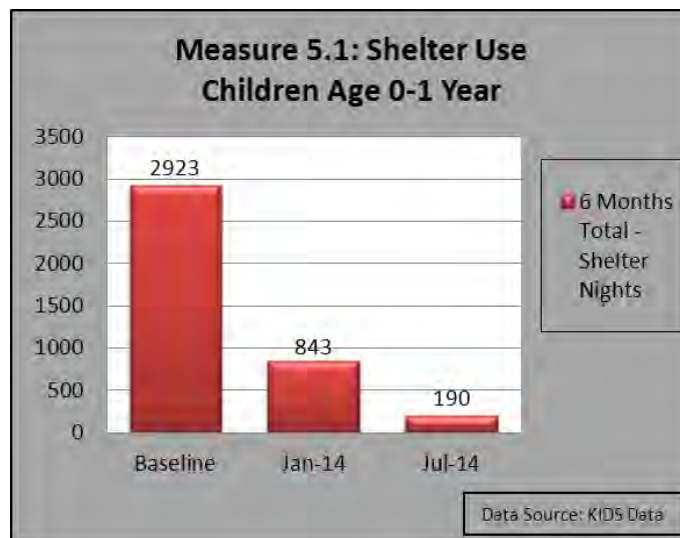
Of all children ages 0-1 year with an overnight shelter stay from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014, how many nights were spent in the shelter?

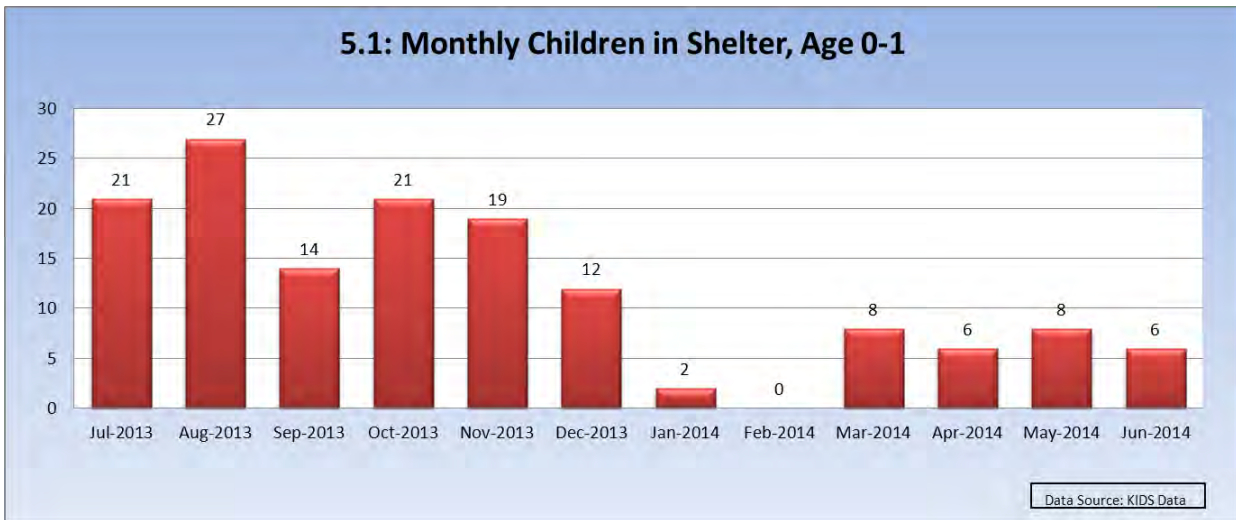
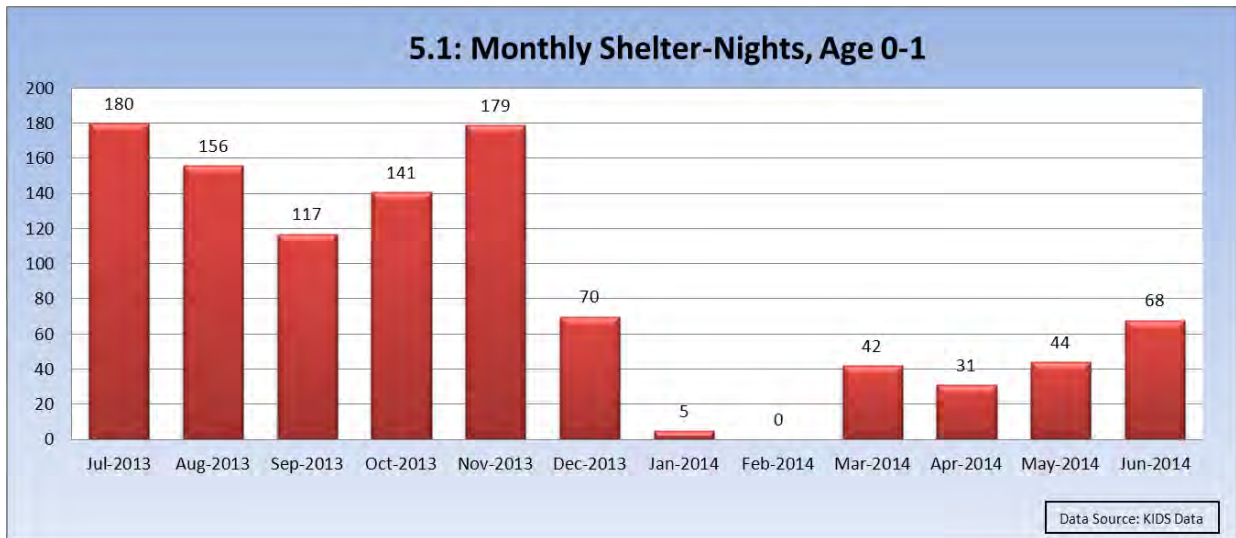
Data Source and Definitions:

Data shown is the total number of nights children ages 0-1 year spent in the shelter during the time period from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. The baseline for this measure was 2,923 nights with a target of 0 nights by 12/31/12. Automatic exceptions will be made for children in the following circumstances: If the child is part of a sibling set of four or more, or a child placed with a minor parent who is also in DHS custody. Please note: These children who meet automatic exceptions are still included in the count of total nights spent in the shelter.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Result
Baseline		2,923 Nights
7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All children age 0-1 year with an overnight shelter stay between 7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	843 Nights
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All children age 0-1 year with an overnight shelter stay between 1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	190 Nights
Target by 12/31/2012		0 nights





Commentary:

A total of 25 (unique) 0-1 year olds spent a total of 190 nights in the shelter between Jan 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014 (The graph above identifies 30 children spending time in shelters between January and June 2014. This is because in some cases, the child’s shelter stay extended across two months. In these cases, the child would be included in the count for both months.) Of these 25 children, 13 children (52 percent) met an automatic exception: 11 were part of a sibling set of four or more and two were children placed with a minor parent who was also in custody. There were 2,185 children ages 0-1 year in care during this time period and 98.9 percent of those children did not have a shelter stay. Overall there were 12,486 children in care and 88.5 percent of all children in care did not have an overnight shelter stay during the reporting period.

The Co-Neutrals made a finding in Co-Neutral Commentary Two (issued in April 2014) that DHS has made good faith efforts to achieve substantial progress toward the outcome of eliminating shelter placement for children under the age of two years old. In fact, the data reflect a profound reduction in shelter use for children under the age of 6. We would note that the Department was able to accomplish these reductions despite a considerable increase in the number of children placed in the agency’s custody--especially children under the age of 6 years old—and delays in foster home recruitment.

A significant shift in agency culture has occurred regarding the diminished reliance upon shelter care as a placement option. This shift in culture was communicated through video messages from leadership, through training, individual unit and team meetings, and CWS Summits with front-line staff. Staff members have been specifically trained and educated regarding the best practices to minimize shelter stays, but also are reminded to never lose sight of the fact that any action taken must always be in the best interest of the child. During new worker academy, staff members are immersed in those best practices related to placement (making the placement in the best interest of the individual child and sibling group). Even after new worker academy is concluded, continuing education and training of all staff members continues to stress non-shelter placements as the option of preference for children in the foster system. The Department also created and disseminated a video message from Director Lake and CWS Director Deborah Smith discussing the effort to refrain from shelter placements along with a CWS Numbered Memo outlining family-setting placement expectations.

In an effort to adopt practices that avoid shelter stays, most-upper levels of Child Welfare management are actively engaged in oversight and accountability measures to ensure shelter stays are only utilized as the option of last resort. Specifically, staff members are required to undertake and document all efforts to avoid shelter usage for those children 6 years old and younger (who do not otherwise meet an automatic exception) and communicate these efforts to CWS management for approval. The authorization process ensures CWS leadership is directly involved in assisting staff to find appropriate non-shelter placements and to assume responsibility along with staff when an overnight stay occurs.

CORE training, quarterly meetings, and in-service training sessions for CWS staff have focused relentlessly on the importance of using family placements for children in out-of-home care. New training for Child Protective Services workers is focused on considering family placements much earlier in the removal process than in past years. Additionally, extensive training has also been developed to ensure workers consider approving relatives, when appropriate, as part of the removal process in order to prevent a shelter stay. Child Protective Services staff members have also received revised training to reach out earlier in the process to their co-workers in foster care for assistance with finding a placement as timely as possible. Bridge Resource (foster care and adoption) staff shifted their schedules to more available 24/7 to facilitate these efforts to match children with families. Such a strategy marked a sea-change in the culture and expectations of front-line staff and management in making day-to-day decisions.

To facilitate its good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress in this performance area, DHS completed a qualitative review in early 2014 to examine the use of shelters for children under 6 years old during October/November/December 2013. Every child's unique circumstances were examined including a case review and interviews with workers (Child Protective Services, Permanency Planning, and Foster Care). The review showed several opportunities for improvement outside of recruiting additional foster homes. As a consequence of the lessons learned from this review and other efforts, another significant reduction in shelter usage for young children occurred in early 2014 and has been sustained to the present day.

Finally, reduced shelter care use is also related to increases in DHS' approval of more foster care families. Efforts to recruit resource families are discussed under 2.1 and 2.3.

5.2: Shelter Use—children age 2 to 5

Operational Question:

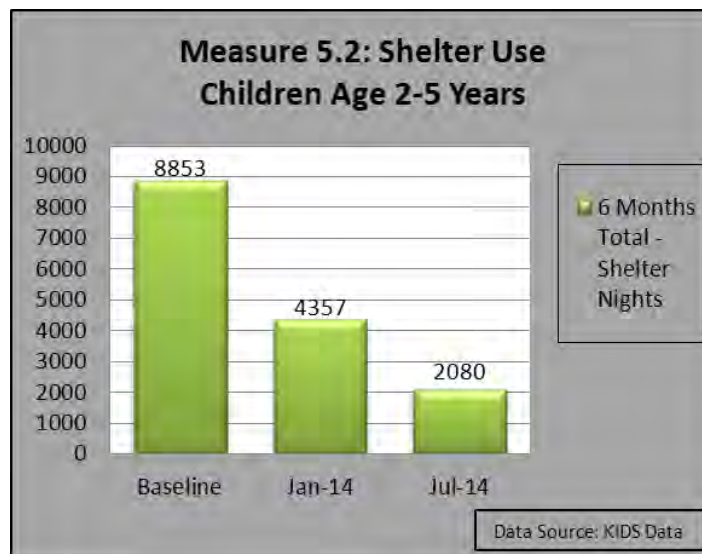
Of all children age 2-5 years with an overnight shelter stay from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014, how many nights were spent in the shelter?

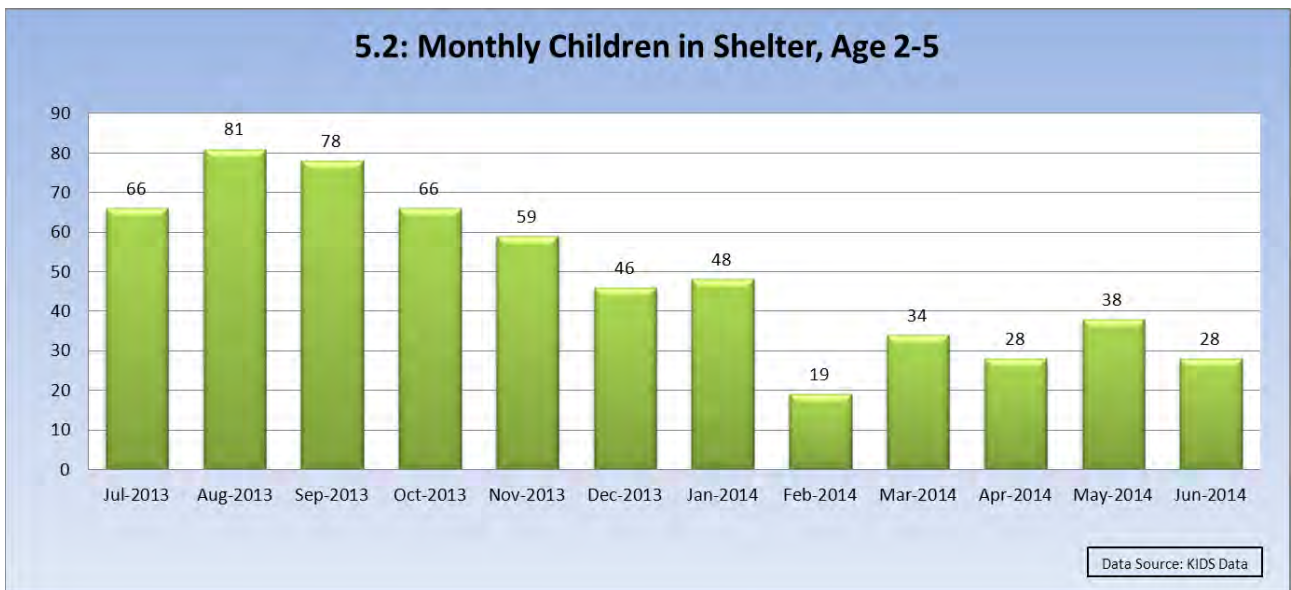
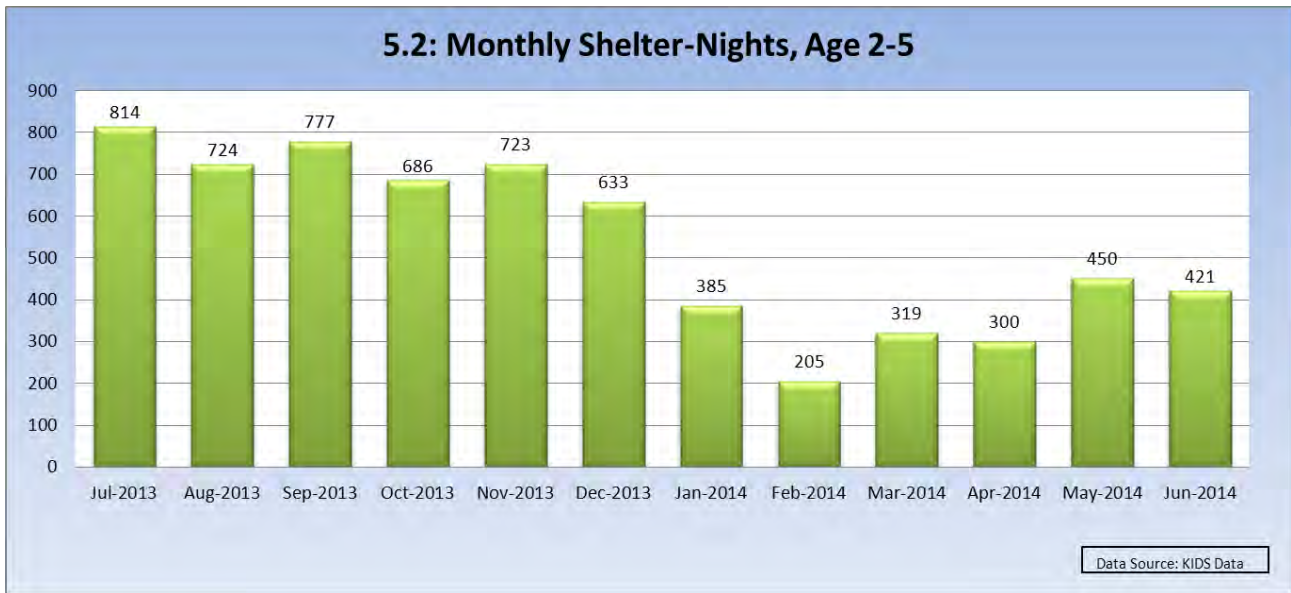
Data Source and Definitions:

Data shown is the total number of nights children age 2-5 years spent in the shelter during the time period from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. The baseline for this measure was 8,853 nights with a target of 0 nights by 6/30/13. Automatic exceptions will be made for children in the following circumstances: If the child is part of a sibling set of four or more or a child placed with a minor parent who is also in DHS custody. Please note: These children who meet automatic exceptions are still included in the count of total nights spent in the shelter.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Result
Baseline		8,853 Nights
7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All children age 2-5 years with an overnight shelter stay between 7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	4,357 Nights
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All children age 2-5 years with an overnight shelter stay between 1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	2,080 Nights
Target by 6/30/2014		0 Nights





Commentary:

A total of 133 unique children ages 2-5 years old spent a total of 2,080 nights in shelter care between Jan 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. (The graph above identifies 195 children spending time in shelters between January and June 2014. This is because in some cases, the child’s shelter stay extended across two months. In these cases, the child would be included in the count for both months.) Of these 133 children, 44 children (33.1 percent) met the automatic exception as part of a sibling set of four or more. There were 3,920 children ages 2-5 years in care during this time period and 96.6 percent of those children did not have a shelter stay. Overall there were 12,486 children in care during this period and 88.5 percent of all children in care did not have an overnight shelter stay during the reporting period. For additional details, see commentary in 5.1.

5.3: Shelter Use—children age 6 to 12

Operational Question:

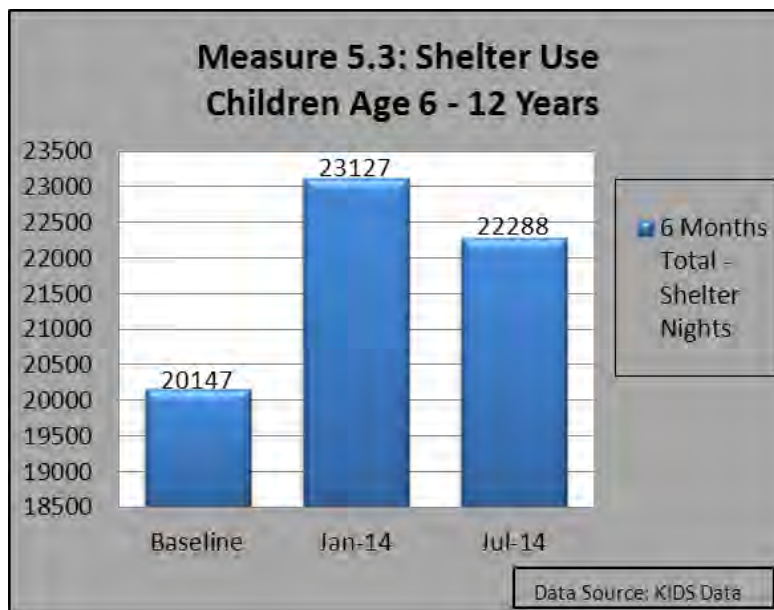
Of all children ages 6-12 years with an overnight shelter stay from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014, how many nights were spent in the shelter?

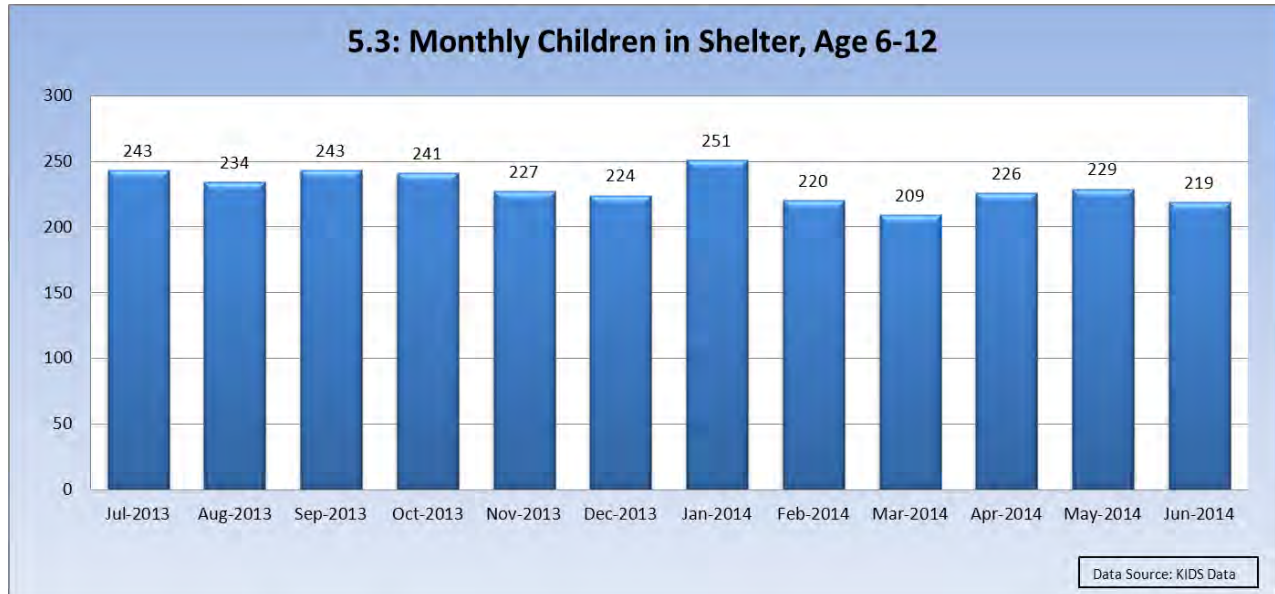
Data Source and Definitions:

Data shown is the total number of nights children ages 6-12 years spent in the shelter during the time period from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. The baseline for this measure was 20,147 nights with an interim target of 10,000 nights by 12/31/2013. Automatic exceptions will be made for children in the following circumstances: If the child is part of a sibling set of four or more, or a child placed with a minor parent who is also in DHS custody. Please note: These children who meet automatic exceptions are still included in the count of total nights spent in the shelter.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Result
Baseline		20,147 Nights
7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All children age 6-12 years with an overnight shelter stay between 7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	23,127 Nights
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All children age 6-12 years with an overnight shelter stay between 1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	22,288 Nights
Target by 4/1/2015		0Nights





Commentary:

A total of 698 unique children ages 6-12 years old spent a total of 22,288 nights in the shelter between Jan 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. (The graph above identifies 1,354 children spending time in shelters between January and June 2014. This is because in some cases the child’s shelter stay extended across two months. In these cases, the child would be included in the count for both months.) Of these 698 children, 108 children (15.5 percent) met the automatic exception as part of a sibling set of four or more. There were 4,361 children ages 6-12 years old in care during this time period and 84.0 percent of those children did not have a shelter stay. Overall, there were 12,486 children in care and 88.5 percent of all children in care did not have an overnight shelter stay during the reporting period.

DHS requested an extension from the Co-Neutrals to the commitment related to this specific age group. The revised target indicated that children between the ages of 6-12 years old were to be placed in family-like settings by July 1, 2014. The Co-Neutrals approved DHS’ revised and extended proposed targets for placing children ages 6-12 in family-like settings. The following are DHS revised targets:

- By July 1, 2014, children under the age of eight years old will be placed in family-like settings rather than staying overnight in shelters unless they are part of a large sibling group of three or more children.
- By October 1, 2014, children under the age of 10 years old will be placed in family-like settings rather than staying overnight in shelters unless they are part of a large sibling group of three or more children.
- By January 1, 2015, children under the age of 13 years old will be placed in family-like settings rather than staying overnight in shelters unless they are part of a large sibling group of three or more children.
- By April 1, 2015, DHS will meet the original target and expectation of placing children under the age of 13 years old in family-like settings unless they are part of a large sibling group of four or more children.

5.4: Shelter Use—children age 13 and older

Operational Question:

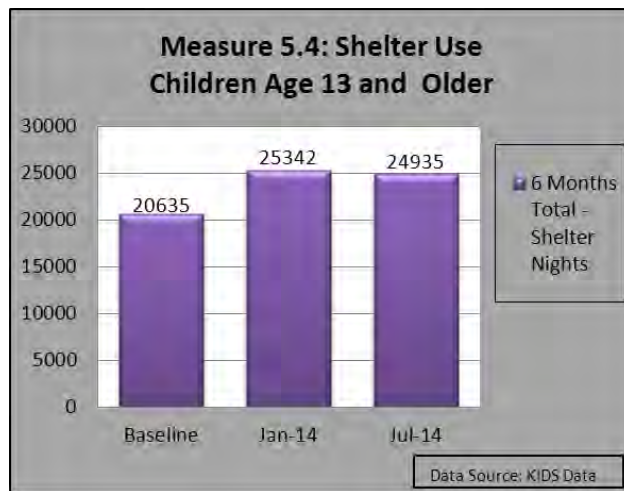
Of all children age 13 years or older with an overnight shelter stay from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014, how many nights were spent in the shelter?

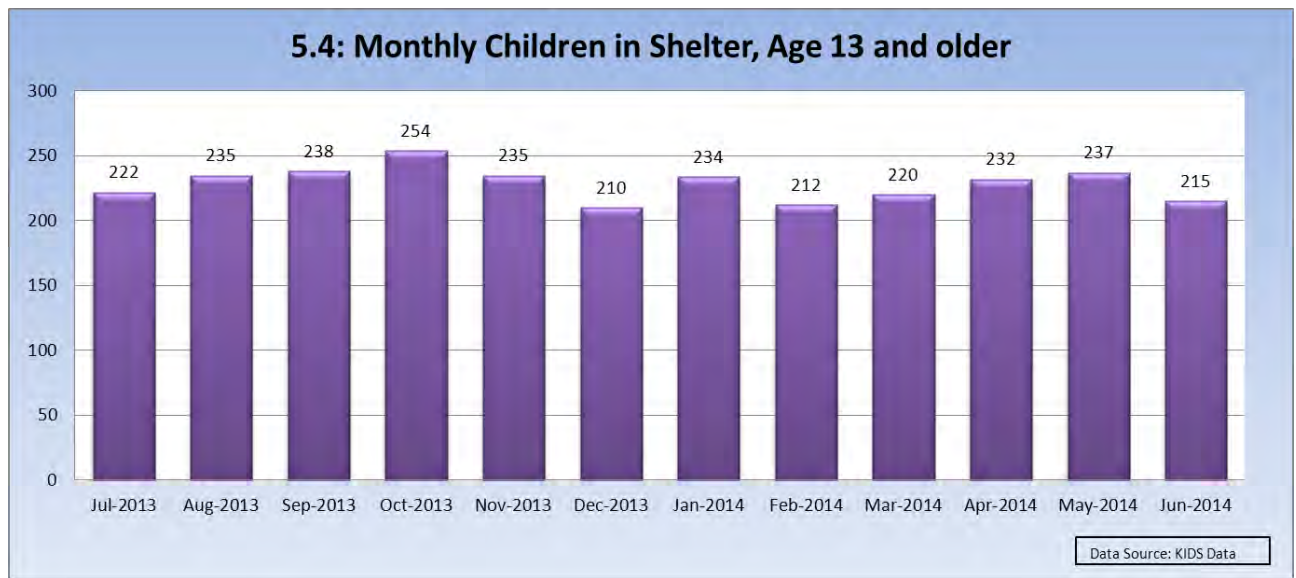
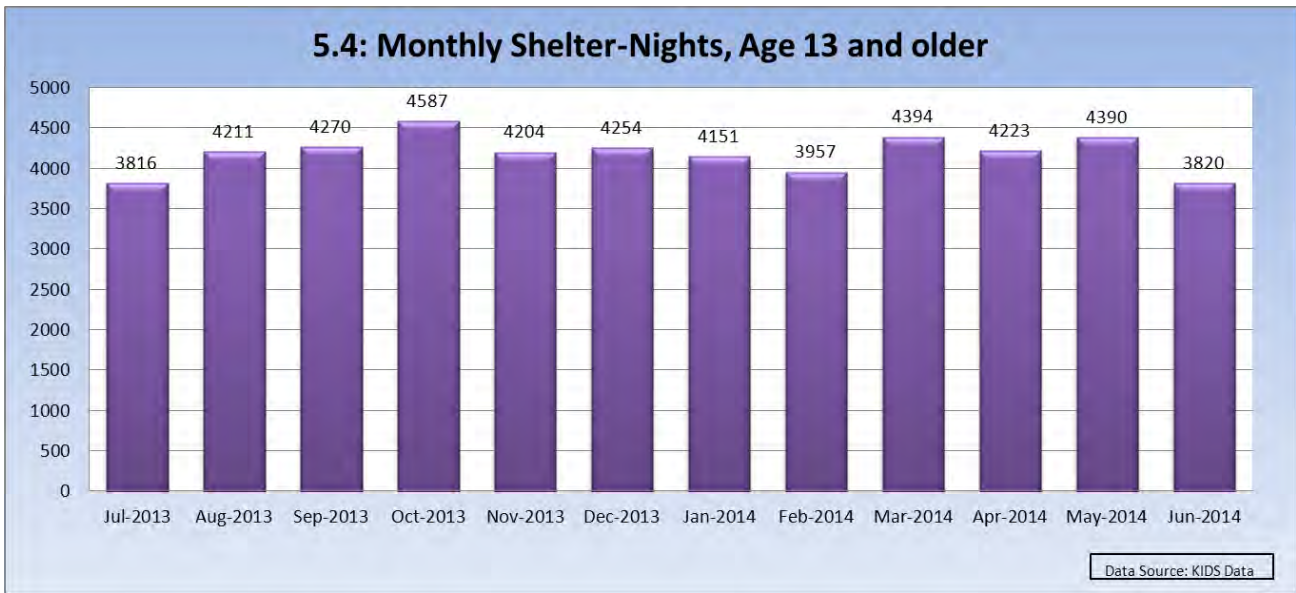
Data Source and Definitions:

Data shown is the total number of nights children age 13 years or older spent in the shelter during the time period from January 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. The baseline for this measure was 20,635 nights with a target of 13,200 (35 percent below the baseline) for the six-month period ending June 30, 2015. Of the children 13 years and older placed in a shelter during this period, 80 percent will meet the criteria of Pinnacle Plan Point 1.17. Automatic exceptions will be made for children in the following circumstances: If the child is part of a sibling set of four or more, or a child placed with a minor parent who is also in DHS custody. Please note: these children who meet automatic exceptions are still included in the count of total nights spent in the shelter.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Result
Baseline		20,635 Nights
7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All children age 13 or older with an overnight shelter stay between 7/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	25,342 Nights
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All children age 13 or older with an overnight shelter stay between 1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	24,935 Nights
Interim Target by 6/30/2015		0 Nights





Commentary:

A total of 584 unique children age 13 years or older spent a total of 24,935 nights in shelter care between Jan 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. (The graph above identifies 1,350 children spending time in shelters between January and June 2014. This is because in some cases, the child’s shelter stay extended across two months. In these cases, the child would be included in the count for both months.) Of these 584 children, 31 children (5.3 percent) met the automatic exception as part of a sibling set of four or more. There were 2,020 children ages 13 years or older in care during this time period and 71.1 percent of those children did not have a shelter stay. Overall, there were 12,486 children in care during this period and 88.5 percent of all children in care did not have an overnight shelter stay during the reporting period. For additional details, see commentary in 5.1.

6.2a: Permanency within 12 months of removal

Operational Question:

Of all children who entered foster care between 12 and 18 months prior to the end of the reporting period, what percent exited to a permanent setting within 12 months of removal?

Data Source and Definitions:

Measures 6.2a, b, c, and d cover the number and percent of children who entered foster care during a designated time frame from the removal date and reached permanency within 12, 24, 36, or 48 months respectively. This data is pulled from the AFCARS files.

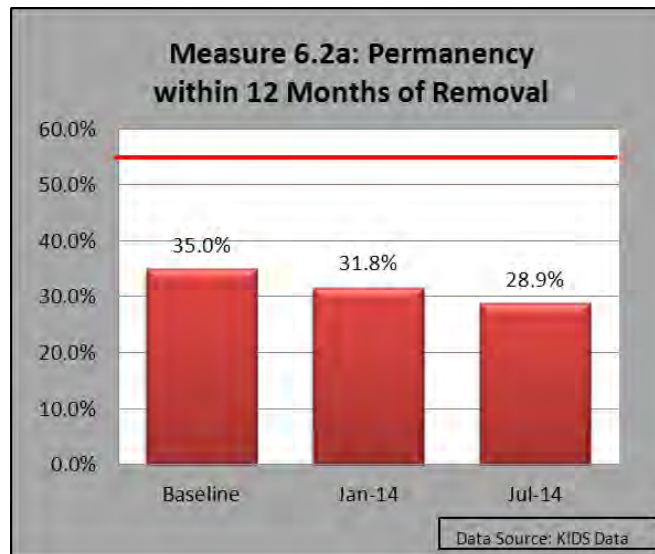
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who entered foster care between 10/1/2012 and 3/31/2013.

Numerator: The percent of children who entered foster care between 10/1/2012 and 3/31/2013 who exited to a permanent setting within 12 months of removal.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				35.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All admissions from 4/1/2012 – 9/30/2012	856	2,962	31.8%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All admissions from 10/1/2012 – 3/31/2013	782	2,707	28.9%
Target by 6/30/2016				55.0%



6.2b: Permanency within 2 years of removal

Operational Question:

Of all children who entered their 12th month in foster care between 12 and 18 months prior to the end of the reporting period, what percent exited to a permanent setting within two years of removal?

Data Source and Definitions:

Measures 6.2a, b, c, and d cover the number and percent of children who entered foster care during a designated time frame from the removal date and reached permanency within 12, 24, 36, or 48 months respectively. This data is pulled from the AFCARS files.

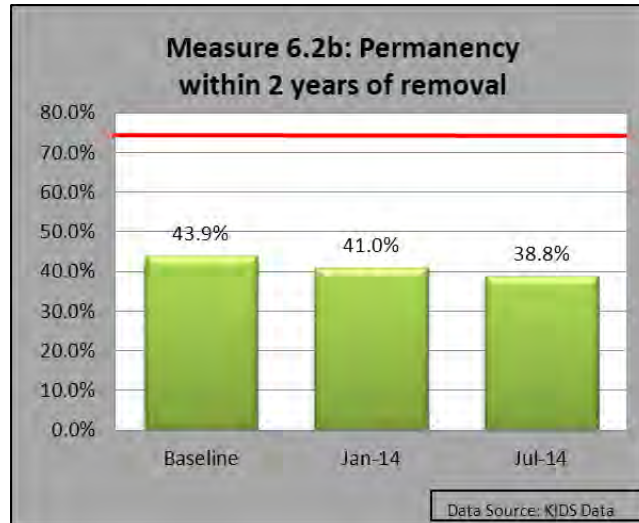
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who entered foster care between 10/1/2011 and 3/31/2012.

Numerator: The percent of children who entered foster care between 10/1/2011 and 3/31/2012 who were removed at least 12 months and who exited to a permanent setting within 24 months of removal.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				43.9%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All admissions from 4/1/2011 – 9/30/2011	667	1,626	41.0%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All admissions from 10/1/2011 – 3/31/2012	577	1,487	38.8%
Target by 6/30/2016				75.0%



6.2c: Permanency within 3 years of removal

Operational Question:

Of all children who entered their 24th month in foster care between 12 and 18 months prior to the end of the reporting period, what percent exited to a permanent setting within three years of removal?

Data Source and Definitions:

Measures 6.2a, b, c, and d cover the number and percent of children who entered foster care during a designated time frame from the removal date and reached permanency within 12, 24, 36, or 48 months respectively. This data is pulled from the AFCARS files.

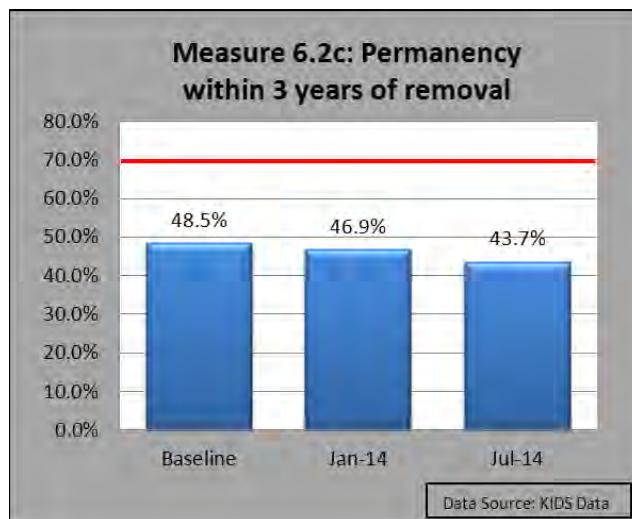
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who entered foster care between 10/1/2010 and 3/31/2011.

Numerator: The percent of children who entered foster care between 10/1/2010 and 3/31/2014 who were removed at least 24 months and who exited to a permanent setting within 36 months of removal.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				48.5%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All admissions from 4/1/2010 – 9/30/2010	350	746	46.9%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All admissions from 10/1/2010 – 3/31/2011	286	654	43.7%
Target by 6/30/2016				70.0%



6.2d: Permanency within 4 years of removal

Operational Question:

Of all children who entered their 36th month in foster care between 12 and 18 months prior to the end of the reporting period, what percent exited to a permanent setting within 48 months of removal?

Data Source and Definitions:

Measures 6.2a, b, c, and d cover the number and percent of children who entered foster care during a designated time frame from the removal date and reached permanency within 12, 24, 36, or 48 months respectively. This data is pulled from the AFCARS files.

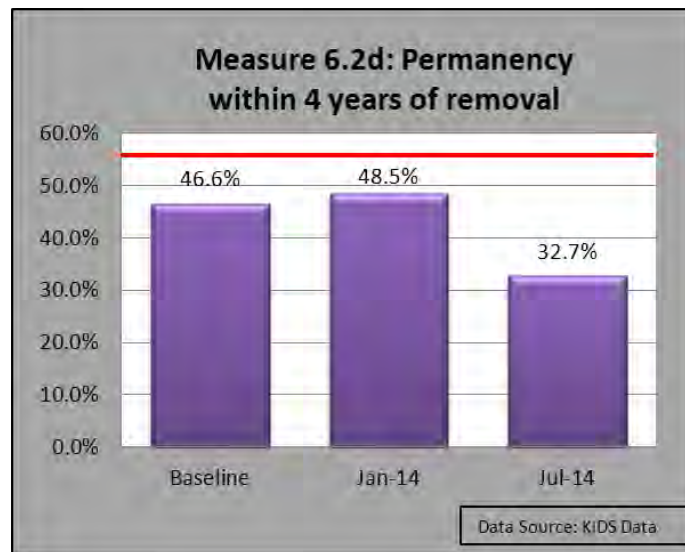
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who entered foster care between 10/1/2009 and 3/31/2010.

Numerator: The percent of children who entered foster care between 10/1/2009 and 3/31/2010, who were removed at least 36 months and who exited to a permanent setting within 48 months of removal.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				46.6%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All admissions from 4/1/2009 – 9/30/2009	128	264	48.5%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All admissions from 10/1/2009 – 3/31/2010	91	278	32.7%
Target by 6/30/2016				55.0%



Commentary:

A comparison of the last two entry cohorts for each measure 6.2a, b, and c shows that the proportion of children exiting to permanency within 12, 24, and 36 months has dropped slightly. While the entry cohort for the measure 6.2d shows a greater decrease from 46.6 percent to 32.7 percent. Based on analysis of available qualitative and quantitative data, including a recent study completed by the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group (CWPPG), Oklahoma has adopted a goal related to timely achievement of permanency in its 2015-2019 Children and Family Services Plan. Recent analysis supports the need for improvement in the area of family engagement, among other things, as a tool for achievement of safety, permanency, and well-being for children and has resulted in the development of the Sooners Sentinel Site

Project (SSSP) to address areas of need. The SSSP is based on a successful methodology borrowed from public health in which a few smaller geographic areas are chosen to implement proven strategies and determine how to best “scale up” to a larger geographic region. The two sites chosen based on analysis of need are Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties. More details about this project are found under 3.3. County level performance data related to average length of stay in care for children has been created and will continue to be the focus of ongoing analysis, including assessment related to expansion of SSSP. Data analysis also shows that children with disabilities as well as older youth are more likely to experience longer lengths of stay, therefore coordinated efforts to target these groups of children continue and are outlined below.

There are numerous factors that may be contributing to the slight decrease in performance on these measures. The ability to move children quickly to permanency may be linked to the number of children in care. As the in-care population rises, so does the strain on the agency’s resources for managing cases and reaching permanency goals. Currently, there are over 11,500 children in out-of-home care and there have been incremental increases each month since May 2012. Worker turnover may also contribute to delays in permanency as turnover is often associated with discontinuity in case management. DHS has hired additional staff, and while this is desirable, cases must be transferred for the purpose of providing caseload relief once staff has been trained. New staff must gradually increase caseload capacity throughout the first year of employment, while honing new skills and learning best practices

Despite the challenges, DHS continues to implement a number of strategies targeting permanency. Many of the strategies in Pinnacle Point 4 of the Oklahoma Pinnacle Plan focus on improving permanency for children who might be considered more challenging in terms of realizing permanency such as youth in groups homes and older youth. Early successes with some of the initiatives are encouraging. Trauma-informed and systems of care focus, permanency roundtables, and diversion services for children in group homes were some of the practice changes intended to bring about permanency for specific children.

A partnership between DHS and Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) **Systems of Care** kicked off in SFY 2013 in Region 4 to affect placement stability and crisis services to support relatives and foster parents caring for children in care. Child Welfare staff is encouraged to have these additional services available through ODMHSAS to support permanency for children. While many collaborations, interventions, and trainings have been planned and are currently underway, six Community Forums were scheduled to bring the business community, faith-based organizations, tribes, community partners and families together to bring back the idea that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Community Forums were held during the last quarter of SFY 2014 to engage six communities in understanding the opportunities to serve children involved with Child Welfare Services.

A **Sibling Connections Workgroup** was formed and met in June 2014 for two days to craft a better process for reviewing sibling connections throughout the life of a case. The Workgroup consisted of staff at every level of the agency and every region of the state. The sibling separation focus had unintentionally shifted to more of a back-end review when adoption was being considered for siblings who were not placed together. Education efforts will focus on the term “siblings” and the shift to speak more about “brothers and sisters”; reviewing sibling data reports; changing the Placement Agreement to specify whether the child has brothers and sisters who aren't placed together and the agency's expectation to do so, unless it is not in the child's best interest; incentivizing sibling placements; and messaging the need to look at sibling connections at every Family Team Meeting for the child. In July 2014, the Executive Team has approved all of the Workgroup's recommended changes.

Eckerd, a private agency, was awarded a contract to provide services to children to ensure timely permanency for youth in group homes and focuses on movement from institutions to family homes. They are focused in OKC and Tulsa and are providing services to 40 children at this time. While it’s early in the contract and there have been several challenges in the implementation phase, several successes with children moving from group homes to family homes have already occurred.

In October 2013, DHS initiated **Permanency Roundtables (PRTs)** per the Oklahoma Pinnacle Plan; older youth who will soon transition from the child welfare system (approximately 350 between the ages of 16-18 years old with parental rights terminated). The focus is on achieving permanency for these youth before age 18 years old, ensuring connections to support systems are in place, and ensuring no youth leaves the system without the tools and skills needed to ensure success. Thirty and 60-day surveys are sent to all Child Welfare workers and supervisors who have a case that is part of the PRT process. This process helps assess progress on action plans created during PRT. Child Welfare staff and Casey Family Programs are working towards embedding PRTs within regions. In February 2014, the second phase of the PRTs began. This strategy is too early in the process to assess effectiveness; however, many other states have experienced success in moving children to permanency using PRTs.

Permanency Values Training continues to be offered through a Training/Technical Assistance partnership through the National Resource Center for Permanency and Family Connections. The expert with this T/TA is Gary Mallon from the National Center for Child Welfare Experience. Mr. Mallon presented Permanency Values training to Child Welfare staff in Oklahoma during SFY 13 and continues to expand this training to reach the judiciary. Mr. Mallon presented at the statewide Judicial Conference on July 15, 2014. The focus will be on addressing barriers to timely permanency. This is part of a plan developed to provide the foundation for creating pathways to permanency for older youth and children in foster care.

Guidance is given to staff in Memo CWS 14-07 regarding children with developmental disabilities involved in Child Protective Services (CPS) cases. Children with developmental disabilities may be more vulnerable to child maltreatment requiring closer coordination and collaboration between CWS and Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS) upon receipt of a child abuse and neglect report. When a Child Welfare Specialist encounters a child who has a diagnosed or perceived developmental disability, medical issue, or both, the Child Welfare Specialist may seek consultation with DDS. The memo provides guidance to staff regarding how to see consultation. This coordination is important from the onset of Child Welfare involvement with a family, and continues throughout the life of the case as critical to the achievement of timely permanency for children with developmental disabilities.

Permanency Planning Programs staff continue to revise training materials on a variety of processes and best practices for use at the Child Welfare Supervisor Academy, and Level I and II courses that reach Child Protective Services, Permanency Planning, and Bridge staff members. Permanency Planning staff continues to stress the importance of *Family Team Meetings (FTMs)* throughout the duration of the case in order to make decisions, including case plan development, Individualized Service Plan, placement, visitation, and sibling placement/separation. Ongoing trainings allow Permanency Planning staff to continue to stress importance of early and ongoing diligent search for every case, in order to identify, locate, notify, contact, and engage relatives. Stressing how engaging relatives can be a win-win for families and workers. Staff is also training on how to complete *Diligent Searches* effectively and has developed a one page 'How To' on diligent searches. The online diligent search courses will continue to be offered in addition to two family-finding courses this fiscal year. *Family Finding* training is being required for all of Child Welfare staff in Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties over the next six months in order to improve our statewide practice in locating and engaging families.

Permanency Planning staff is finalizing plans to dedicate a team member for 20 hours per week from August 2014 to May 2015 to: conduct research on ongoing family meeting models to guide the selection of a model for OK; conduct workgroups and feedback sessions with FTM coordinators and others effected across the state; develop a consistent form of documentation to be used across the state; ensure fidelity to a model; track and build reports around FTM facilitation; track fidelity and outcomes alongside the Research and Statistics Team; and refine the policy on FTMs and other development and embedment procedures. Additionally, an initiative has been started with Annie E. Casey's guidance to develop a more defined Team Decision-Making process for upfront Family Meetings. Multiple meetings and calls have been conducted toward the end of establishing and embedding that practice in the CW system.

The rising number of children in out-of-home care is concerning to Permanency Planning Programs staff due to the lack of resources to adequately meet the needs of these families. It is believed through better engagement of families by child welfare workers, CWS will be more effective in moving children to permanency and there will be fewer children in foster care. Through use of a research-based tool, *exploratory pilot surveys* (Exploratory Pilot Evaluation of Child Welfare Permanency Planning Workers' Ability to Engage Parents to Improve Permanency Outcomes for Children in DHS Custody) were conducted of parents and Permanency Planning workers looking at the worker's ability to engage parents. The tool was first developed by Diane Yatchmenoff, with the assistance of Casey Family Programs, and was modified to be used on a larger scale by state agencies.

The evaluator received a list of 200 randomly selected permanency planning cases from KIDS that had the case plan goal of "return to own home." There were 36 parent surveys conducted by phone interview and entered into DHS's Business Enterprise Survey Tool software. The questions on the surveys consisted of multiple choice questions and a couple of opened ended questions to better understand the relationship. Overall, the findings were favorable of Permanency Planning workers as evidenced by the number of positive comments made by parents about their worker. Even on cases where the parent identified primarily negative interaction with the worker, the parent usually identified that the worker spoke positively about the child to the parent and the parent identified the worker believed the parent really cared about their child. This pilot was not a representative sample of permanency workers however the findings were promising and it is a tool that can be utilized by DHS in the future to conduct a representative survey to produce a baseline for further evaluation.

The **Oklahoma Trauma Assessment and Service Center Collaborative** (OK-TASCC) project is led by DHS. DHS has partnered with the Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (CCAN) through the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center for the evaluation of the project. A trauma-informed systems approach will be utilized through the statewide implementation of the OK-TASCC project which will target children (0-18yrs) in the care and custody of DHS and placed in Oklahoma's foster care system. A trauma-informed systems approach will: 1) enhance system-wide capacity by infusing knowledge, awareness, and skills into organizational culture, policies and practices; 2) result in DHS having the infrastructure and capacity to identify and meet the social and emotional well-being needs; 3) reduce repeat exposure to traumas of the children served; 4) integrate the essential elements of a trauma-informed system within the five key implementation grant components; and 5) result in positive outcomes at both the client-level and system-level. DHS is on the verge of the implementation phase, which will initially entail using a child behavioral health screener for children coming into out-of-home care. The Implementation Phase Plan has been submitted to the Federal Project Officer for approval.

6.3: Re-entry within 12 months of exit

Operational Question:

Of all children discharged from foster care in the 12 months period prior to the reporting period, what percentage re-entered care within 12 months of discharge?

Data Source and Definitions:

Reentry within 12 months measures of all children discharged to permanency (not including adoption) from foster care in the 12 month period prior to the reporting period, the percentage of children who re-enter foster care during the 12 months following discharge. This is the same as the Federal Metric and this data is pulled from AFCARS data.

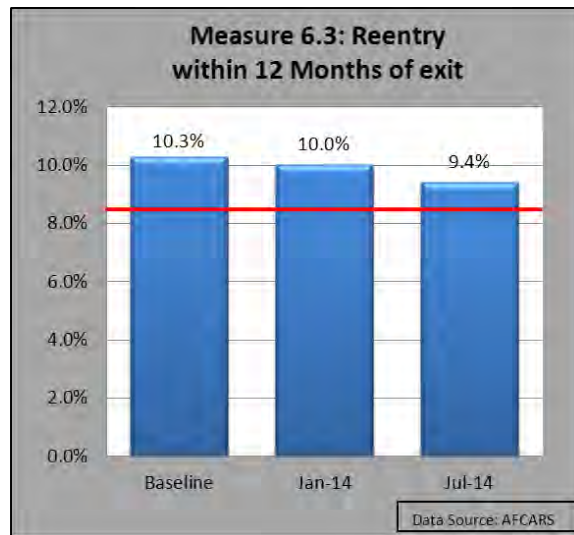
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who exited foster care between 4/1/2012 and 3/31/2013.

Numerator: All children who exited foster care between 4/1/2012 and 3/31/2013 who re-entered care within one year of exit.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				10.3%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All exits between 10/1/2011 and 9/30/2012	234	2,334	10.0%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All exits between 4/1/2012 and 3/31/2013	223	2,375	9.4%
Target by 6/30/2016				8.2%



Commentary:

The number of children reentering out-of-home care within a 12 month period declined slightly in the last six months, yet is above the target. Worker continuity is still challenging and may impede the achievement of this target in particular.

Operationally, one effective strategy has been to strengthen partnerships with local tribe, faith, business, and community leaders to improve supports for families who have been reunited. The Community Forums in Region 4 noted

previously is one such effort. Much attention has also been placed on becoming more trauma-informed or looking through a trauma lens regarding children's needs in reconnecting with their families. The increase in the number of therapists in the state to provide TF-CBT has strengthened the supports for children with trauma, as well as providing insight to parents to assist them in understanding trauma in their child's life and in their life. FTMs are also increasing for reunification purposes so that the best plan is in place when children are reunified. Pinnacle Point 4 initiatives outline many of the improvements in ensuring the safety and well-being for children who are more at risk for reentering care.

6.4: Permanency for legally free teens

Operational Question:

Of all legally free foster youth who turned age 16 in the period 24 to 36 months prior to the report date, what percent exited to permanency by age 18?

Data Source and Definitions:

Among legally free foster youth who turned 16 in the period 24 to 36 months prior to the report date, Measure 6.4 reports the percent that exited to permanency by age 18. An “Exit to Permanency” includes all youth with an exit reason of adoption, guardianship, custody to relative, or reunification. “Legally Free” means there is a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father.

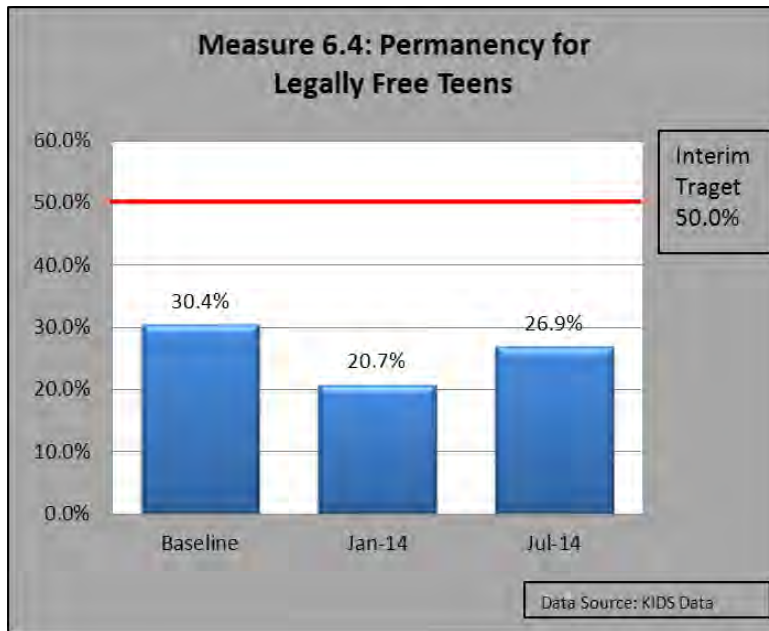
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children in care who turned 16 between 4/1/2011 and 3/30/2012 and were legally free at the time they turned 16.

Numerator: The number of children who turned 16 between 4/1/2011 and 3/30/2012 and were legally free at the time they turned 16 **and** reached permanency prior to their 18th birthday.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				30.4%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children in care who turned 16 between 10/1/2010 and 9/30/2011 and were legally free at the time they turned 16.	29	140	20.7%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children in care who turned 16 between 4/1/2011 and 3/30/2012 and were legally free at the time they turned 16.	36	134	26.9%
Interim Target by 12/31/14				50.0%
Interim Target by 12/31/15				75.0%
Final Target by 6/30/16				80.0%



Commentary:

Between April 1, 2011 and March 31, 2012, a total of 134 legally free youth turned 16 years of age. Of those, 36 exited to permanency which included two children (1.5 percent) through reunification, 23 children (17.2 percent) through adoption, 10 children (7.5 percent) through guardianship, and one child (0.7 percent) through custody to relative. Of the 134 children, 81 exited care prior to reaching permanency which included 80 children (59.7 percent) through emancipation/aged out and one child (0.7 percent) transferred to another agency. Seventeen of the 134 children (12.7 percent) were still in care on the last day of the reporting period (3/31/2014). Details regarding specific strategies targeting this measure can be found under 6.1.

6.5: Rate of adoption for legally free children

Operational Question:

Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12-month period prior to the year of the reporting period, what percentage were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption within 12 months of becoming legally free?

Data Source and Definitions:

Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12-month period prior to the year of the reporting period (rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father), the percentage who were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months from the date of becoming legally free. “Legally Free” means there is a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father. This measure is federal metric C2.5.

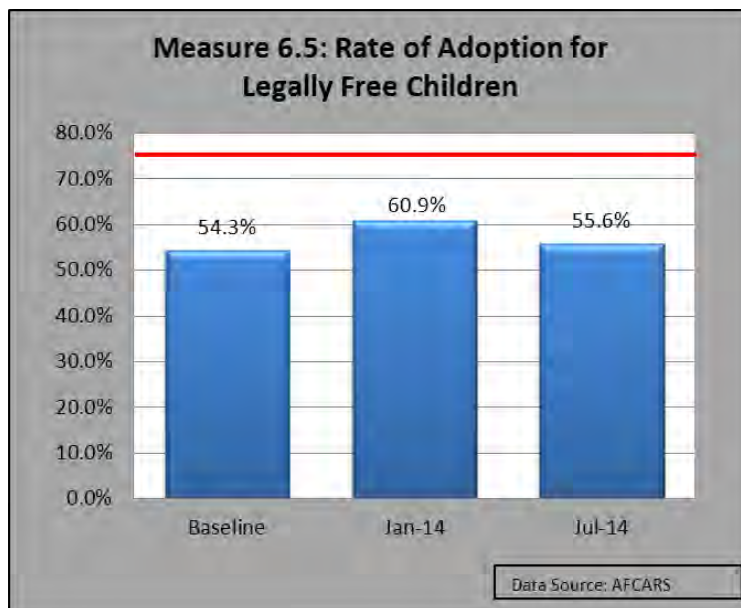
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who became legally free for adoption between 4/1/2012 and 3/31/2013

Numerator: Number of children who became legally free for adoption between 4/1/2012 and 3/31/2013 and who were discharged from care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months from the date they became legally free.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				54.3%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children who became legally free between 10/1/11 and 9/30/2012	898	1,474	60.9%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children who became legally free between 4/1/12 and 3/31/2013	857	1,540	55.6%
Target by 6/30/2016				75.0%



Commentary:

We hypothesize that the DHS’s ability to achieve permanency for legally free children is influenced by an increase in the in-care population. In order to address this barrier, the Child Welfare Director approved the hiring of 20 temporary employees beginning early in March 2014 to assist with the administrative duties associated with moving children to

permanency. These positions were extended through September 30, 2014 in order to assist in finalizing these adoptive placements. DHS anticipates that the assistance of these administrative positions will increase the rate of children achieving permanency within 12 months of becoming legally free over the next quarter. Details regarding specific strategies targeting this measure can be found under 6.1.

6.1 Rate of permanency for legally free children with no adoptive placement

Operational Question:

Of children who were legally free but not living in an adoptive placement as of January 10, 2014, what number of children have exited care to a permanent placement?

Data Source and Definitions:

Of all children who were legally free for adoption as of January 10, 2014 and did not have an identified adoptive family, the percentage who have since achieved permanency, either through adoption, guardianship, or reunification. The target for this measure is that 90.0 percent of the children ages 0-12 years, and 80.0 percent of the children ages 13+ years will achieve permanency by June 30, 2016. “Legally Free” means there is a parental rights termination date reported to AFCARS for both mother and father or for one parent if the child was previously adopted by a single parent. In the KIDS system, these children are classified as “Quad 2” children, indicating that these children are legally free and have no identified adoptive placement.

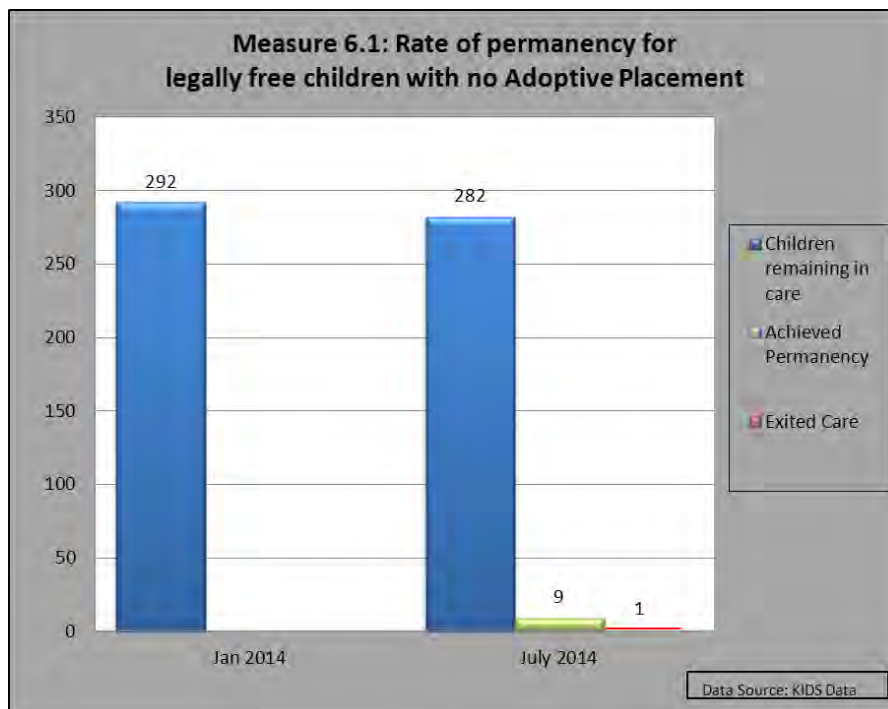
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All Quad 2 children with a case plan goal of adoption as of 1/10/2014.

Numerator: The number of Quad 2 children with a case plan goal of adoption children who have achieved permanency.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Cohort Baseline				292 Children
1/10/2014 – 6/30/2014	All Quad 2 children age 0-12 as of 1/10/14 with a case plan goal of adoption	8	207	3.9%
	All Quad 2 children age 13 or older as of 1/10/14 with a case plan goal of adoption	1	85	1.2%
Target by 6/30/2016		90.% (Age 0-12 Years) 80.0% (Age 13+ Years)		



Commentary:

As of June 30, 2014, nine children achieved permanency and one child has aged out of custody. Additionally, there are 39 children in the original cohort who are now identified as “Quad 1” children, which means they have an identified adoptive family that is in the adoption process. These children remain in the cohort until they achieve permanency. Extensive efforts are underway to move this identified group of children to permanency.

DHS Office of Communications has launched the AdoptOKKids.org website to highlight the children who are legally free not in an identified placement and to provide information on becoming a Bridge resource parent. Staff use a report to track efforts made for each child using child specific recruitment methods. These methods include a binder consisting of information sheets on every child available for adoption without an identified placement, websites such as AdoptOKKids, AdoptUSKids, the Adoption Exchange and the Heart Gallery. DHS is currently working on a project for next quarter with the Adoption Exchange to highlight some youth at their adoption matching event with photos and videos and have staff available to discuss their children with families.

DHS has been partnering with private licensed child placing agencies to recruit adoptive homes for these children. Quarterly meetings are held with these agencies to ensure information is being shared to support this partnership. Oklahoma law currently requires consent for adoption from children 12 years old and older. A consent form was developed and staff were trained to have purposeful conversations about adoption answering any questions or concerns voiced by the children and youth.

Regions 3 and 5 have had Adoption Transition Units for the past several years. DHS has created a rural Adoption Transition Unit to focus on permanency for children who are legally free without an identified placement and to prevent them from aging out of foster care without achieving permanency. The current status of the children and youth in this cohort includes 15 children/youth in Trial Adoption status, 42 children/youth are authorized and either going through the disclosure process or visiting potential families.

DHS was awarded a Department of Health and Human Services planning grant to develop a model intervention for youth and young adults with child welfare involvement who are at risk of homelessness (HHS-2013-ACF-ACYF-CA-0636). This planning project called "The Road to Independence (RTI) Network" is supervised by the DHS Office of Planning, Research and Statistics. The RTI provides the staff to review, collect, and analyze data, create reports, convene focus groups, engage multiple state agencies and community partners, and research evidence-based and best practices around transitioning youth. The analysis has been completed and strategies are being explored to better address issues related to preventing youth from exiting care without permanency.

Ongoing trainings continue to stress importance of early and ongoing diligent search for every case, in order to identify, locate, notify, contact, and engage relatives. Teaching skill related to engagement of relatives throughout the life of the case is critical strategy related to permanency for children, particularly this specific population. Additionally, program staff completes training related to completion of Diligent Searches effectively. The online diligent search courses continue in addition to two family finding courses this fiscal year. Family Finding training is required for all of Tulsa and OK. County over the next 6 months in order to improve our state wide practice in locating and engaging families.

Additional strategies, such as Permanency Roundtables, Family Team Meetings, a contract with Eckerd targeting children in group settings, Permanency Values training, etc., target permanency for the populations accounted for in 6.4, 6.5, and 6.1. Details regarding each of these strategies can be found in 6.2d.

6.6: Trial Adoption Disruptions

Operational Question:

Of all children who entered trial adoptive placements during the previous 12 month period, what percent of adoptions did not disrupt over a 12 month period?

Data Source and Definitions:

A trial adoption placement is defined as the time between when a child is placed into an adoptive placement until the adoption is legally finalized. A trial adoption disruption is defined as the interruption of an adoption after the child's placement and before the adoption finalization.

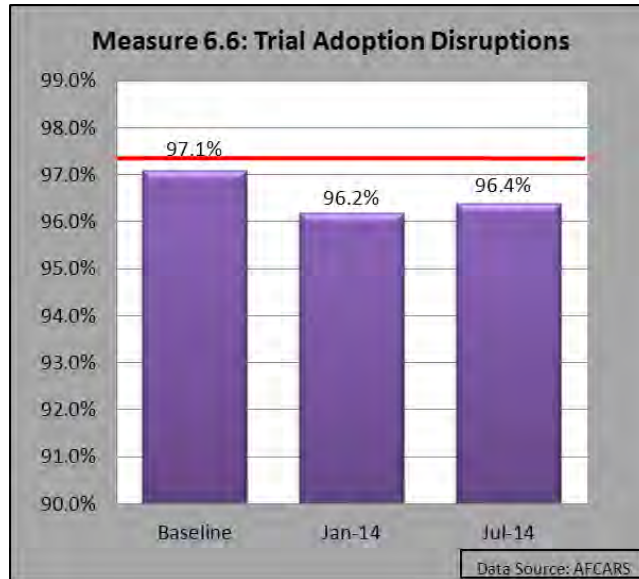
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: Number of children that entered Trial Adoption between 4/1/2012 – 3/31/2013

Numerator: Number of children that entered Trial Adoption between 4/1/2012 – 3/31/2013 and the trial adoption did not disrupt as of 3/31/2014.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				97.1%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children who entered TA between 10/1/2011 – 9/30/2012	1,433	1,489	96.2%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children who entered TA between 4/1/2012 – 3/31/2013	1,366	1,417	96.4%
Target by 6/30/2016				97.3%



Commentary:

DHS believes this performance is related to the high percentage of legally free children who are adopted by the individuals and families with whom they are placed. The Pinnacle Plan Point 4.12 is a strategy related to disruption staffings prior to moving children. This process requires an FTM including the trial adoptive resource parents, the assigned permanency planning and adoption child welfare specialist and supervisors in order to assess the needs of the child and the trial adoptive resource family. The placement disruption staffings have not prevented all disruptions, but

have been successful in some cases. During the last quarter 16 staffings were held with three of these staffings resulting in maintaining the placement. Services in Oklahoma that continue to be available to these families include Comprehensive Home Based Services, Systems of Care, and Community Mental Health as well as others. Staff are trained to utilize these services for families when needs are identified.

6.7 Adoption Dissolutions

Operational Question:

Of all children whose adoptions were finalized over a 24 month period, what percentage of those children did not experience dissolution within 24 months of finalization?

Data Source and Definitions:

A finalized adoption is defined as the legal consummation of an adoption. An adoption dissolution is defined as the act of ending an adoption by a court order terminating the legal relationship between the child and the adoptive parent. This term applies only after finalization of the adoption.

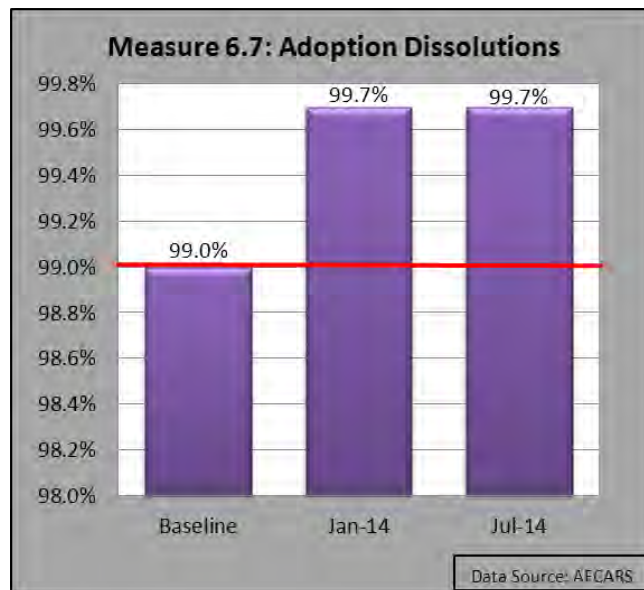
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All children who had a legalized adoption during the 24 months ending March 31, 2012.

Numerator: All children who had a legalized adoption during the 24 months ending March 31, 2012 that did not dissolve in less than 24 months.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				99.0%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children with a legalized adoption between 10/1/2009 and 9/30/2010	2,969	2,979	99.7%
4/1/2013 – 3/31/2014	All children with a legalized adoption between 4/1/2010 and 3/31/2012	3,055	3,063	99.7%
Target by 6/30/2016				99.0%



Commentary:

DHS maintains an extensive post adoption services continuum. The majority of adoptive families in Oklahoma receive some type of post adoption assistance, which includes but is not limited to, monthly reimbursement, medical assistance, child care, difficulty of care and referral for services. Every time the monthly reimbursement for foster families has

been increased, it has included an across the board increase based on the negotiated post adoption assistance received by each family. During this review period, adoptive families receiving monthly reimbursement increases in May and July, 2014.

SECTION 3: Process and Quality Indicators

3.1: Frequency of Worker Contacts

Operational Question:

What percentage of the total minimum number of required monthly face-to-face contacts occurred with children who were in foster care for at least one calendar month during the reporting period?

Data Source and Definitions:

This measure is calculated using the criteria for the federal visitation measure. However, the measure differs from the federal measure in that this measure does not include children in tribal custody or children placed out of state.

- The Data reflects the total number of required monthly contacts due to children in Out-of-Home Care over the course of 12 months and the number of total required monthly contacts made for those visits.
- Only one monthly contact per month is counted even though multiple visits may have been made during the month.

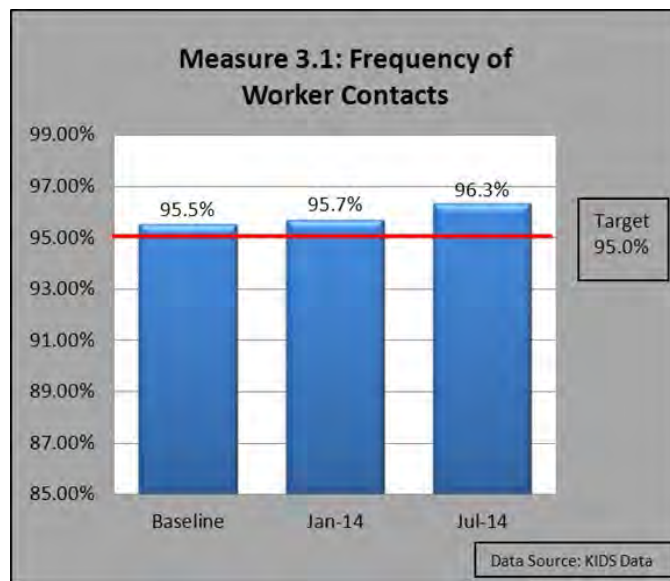
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

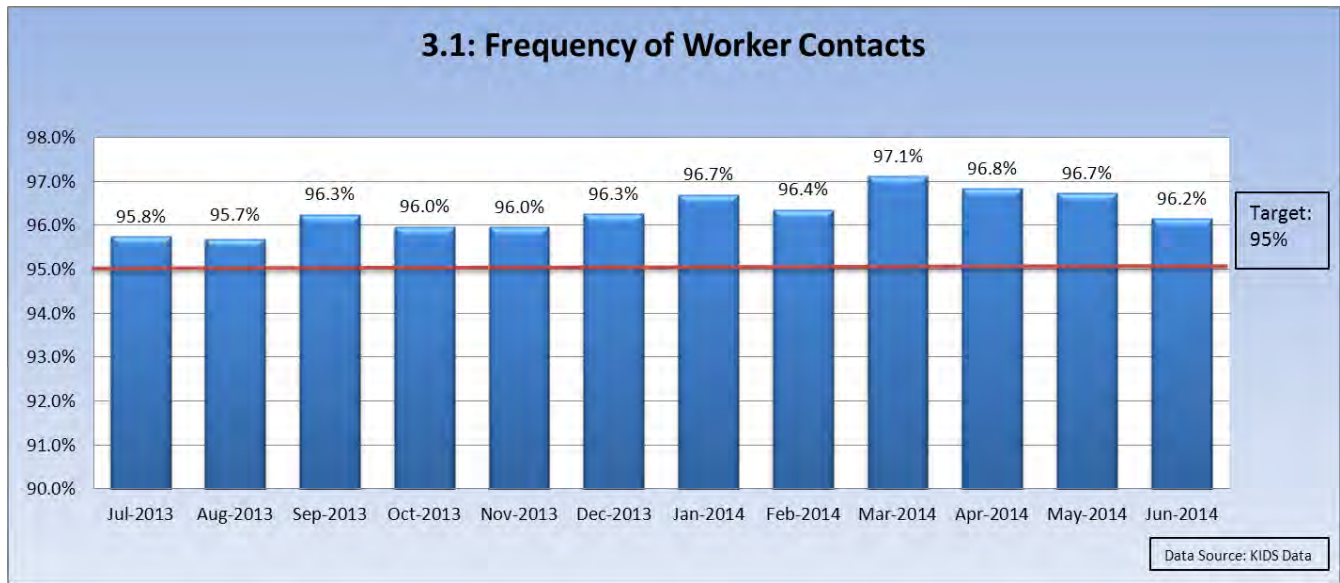
Denominator: The number of required monthly contacts due between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

Numerator: The number of qualifying required monthly contacts made.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				95.5%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children due a visit who were in care at least a full calendar month between 10/1/2012 - 9/30/2013	105,868	110,673	95.7%
7/1/2013 – 6/30/2014	All children due a visit who were in care at least a full calendar month between 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2014	118,824	123,343	96.3%
Target by 6/30/2016				95.0%





Commentary:

The baseline for this measure was 95.5 percent and the target is to sustain 95.0 percent. The visitation rate for all worker visits for FFY13 was 95.7 percent. Over the 12-month period from July 1, 2013 to June 30, 2014, there were 123,343 monthly contacts required and 118,824 monthly contacts made for a rate of 96.3 percent. At the time the baseline was established (SFY12), there were 94,639 required monthly visits. With the current reporting period, there has been an increase of over 28,000 visits required, and DHS has continued to improve the visitation rate in each reporting period.

Consistent monthly visitation by caseworkers with children in care directly impacts the ability of DHS to ensure safety of children in care. This continues to be an area of strength for Oklahoma. The addition of over 450 child welfare specialist positions to Child Welfare between July 2012 and April 2014 contributed to the increase in caseworker visits. The addition of 125 child welfare assistants, who relieve caseworkers from many administrative responsibilities, also helped to maintain performance. There has been an increase in the number of CW workers meeting the workload standard; 38.4 percent for the period of April 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014. This is an increase from the baseline of 27 percent.

3.2: Frequency of Primary Worker Contacts

Operational Question:

What percentage of the total minimum number of required monthly face-to-face contacts were completed by the primary worker with children who were in foster care for at least one calendar month during the reporting period?

Data Source and Definitions:

This measure is calculated similar to the federal visitation measure. However, the measure only counts visits made by the primary case worker. It also differs from the federal measure in that this measure does not include children in tribal custody or children placed out of state.

- The Data reflects the total number of required monthly contacts due to children in Out-of-Home Care over the course of 12 months and the number of total required monthly contacts made by the primary assigned worker.
- Only one contact per month is counted even though multiple visits may have been made during the month.
- To be counted as a valid monthly contact completed by a primary worker, the worker who completed the visit must have had a primary assignment at the time of the visit.

For children in Trial Adoption Cases, the monthly contact must have been completed by the Adoption worker with a primary assignment.

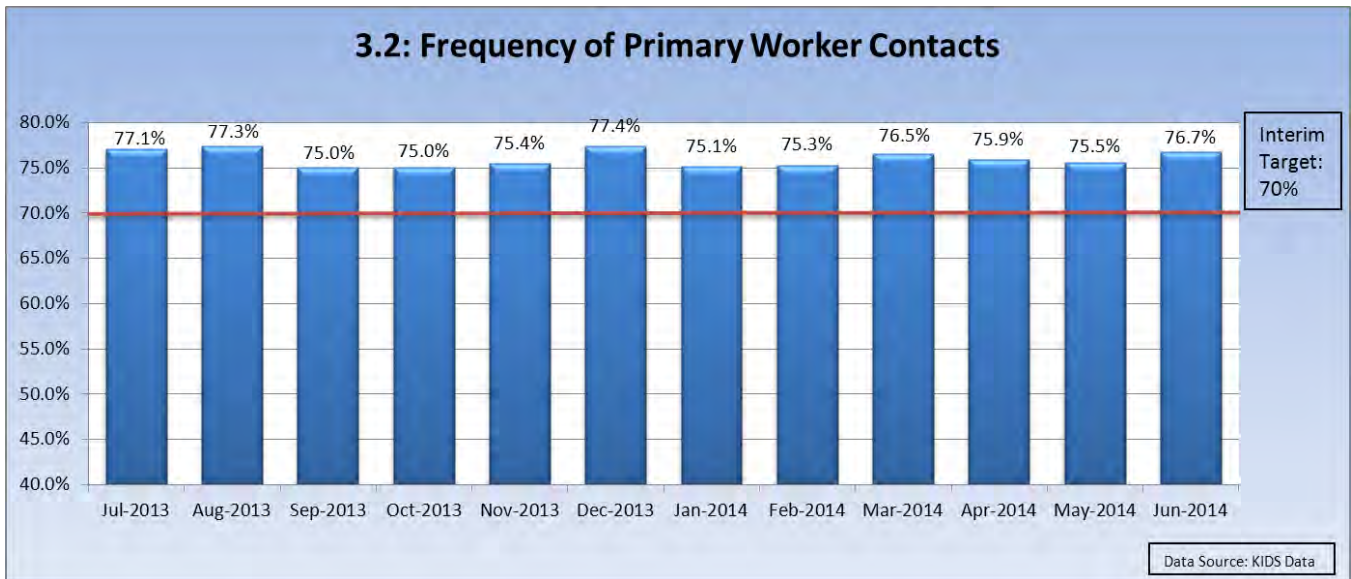
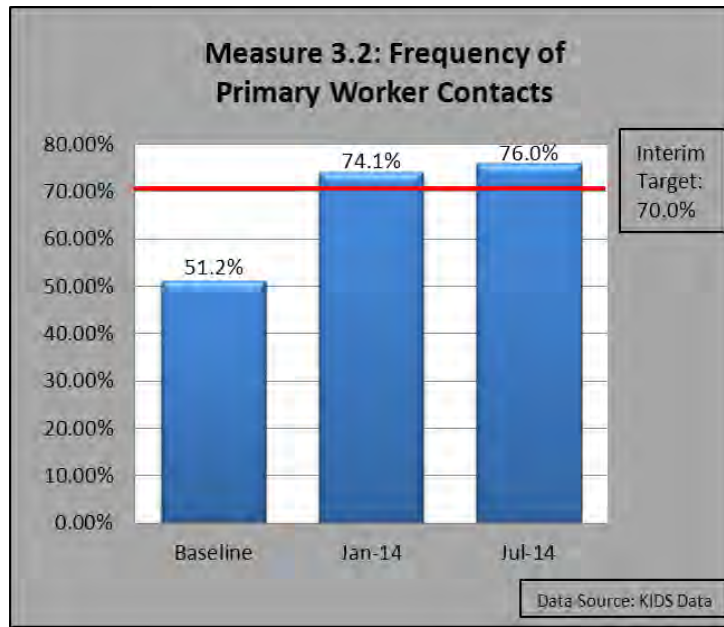
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: The number of required monthly contacts due between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014.

Numerator: The number of qualifying monthly visits made by a primary worker.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				51.2%
10/1/2012 – 9/30/2013	All children due a visit who were in care at least a full calendar month between 10/1/2012 - 9/30/2013	81,971	110,673	74.1%
7/1/2013 – 6/30/2014	All children due a visit who were in care at least a full calendar month between 7/1/2013 – 6/30/2014	93,760	123,343	76.0%
Interim Target by SFY13				65.0%
Interim Target by SFY 14				70.0%
Interim Target by SFY15				80.0%
Final Target by SFY16				90.0%



Commentary:

The baseline for this measure was 51.2 percent and the interim target for SFY14 is 70.0 percent, with the final target of 90.0 percent by June 30, 2016. The visitation rate for all worker visits completed by the primary worker for FFY13 was 74.1 percent. Over the 12 month period from July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014, there were 123,343 monthly contacts required and 93,760 of those, were monthly contacts made by the primary worker for a rate of 76.0 percent. At the time the baseline was established (SFY12), there were 48,497 monthly contacts made by primary workers. With the current reporting period, there has been an increase of over 45,000 monthly contacts made by the primary worker for a 25 percent increase.

3.3: Continuity of Worker Contacts by Primary Workers

Operational Question:

What percentage of children in care for at least three consecutive months during the reporting period were visited by the same primary caseworker in each of the most recent three months, or for those children discharged from DHS legal custody during the reporting period, the three months prior to discharge?

Data Source and Definitions:

This measure looks at the percentage of children in care for at least three consecutive months during the reporting period who were visited by the same primary caseworker in each of the most recent three months, or for those children discharged from DHS legal custody during the reporting period, the three months prior to discharge. This measure does not include children in tribal custody children or children placed out of state.

- Only one contact per month is counted even though multiple visits may have been made during the month by different workers.
- To be counted as a valid monthly contact completed by a primary worker, the worker who completed the visit must have had a primary assignment at the time of the visit.

For children in Trial Adoption Cases, the monthly contact must have been completed by the Adoption worker with a primary assignment. If the child went into Trial Adoption status in the last three months of the reporting period or if a child in TA’s adoption finalized in less than three months, then they are excluded from this measure.

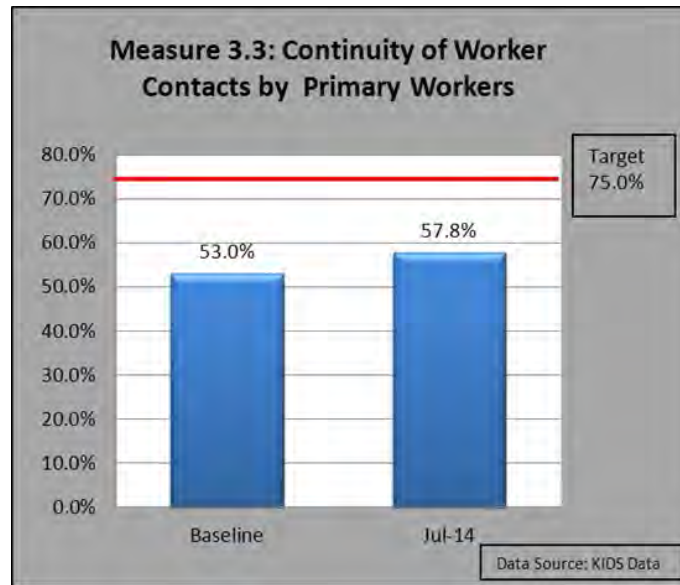
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: Number of children in custody for at least three consecutive months between October 1, 2013 – March 31, 2014.

Numerator: Number of children who were seen for three consecutive months by the same primary caseworker for the last three months of the reporting period, or for those children discharged from DHS legal custody during the reporting period, the last three months prior to discharge.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				53.0%
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All children in care at least 3 full calendar months between 1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	5,901	10,218	57.8%
Target by 12/31/2014				75.0%



Commentary:

The continuity of contacts made by primary workers has increased slightly from the baseline measure, yet still short of the target of 75 percent. To improve practice in this area, DHS has focused on increasing the consistency of visitation by the same worker and to incrementally eliminate the use of visits by secondary workers. The first phase was elimination of secondary workers for children placed in contiguous counties. This initiative was accomplished the first year of the plan. CWS Memo 14-10 was issued on July 3, 2014 and sets forth timelines for eliminating secondary assignments for Permanency Planning and Family Centered Services cases. Training on this memo and changes in practice will be highlighted during the first quarter trainings in SFY15 throughout the state.

Level I and Level II Permanency Planning trainings provide much guidance in the area of contacts and visits with families and children. Additionally, caseworkers in Tulsa and Oklahoma Counties will benefit from the **Sooner Sentinel Site Project** (SSSP) as described previously in 6.2d . DHS has partnered with Casey Family Programs, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group to bring national partners in child welfare to share training, coaching, and consultation related to:

- *Critical Thinking*: What goes into a decision? How do we make good ones?
- *Engaging and Building Trust* with families so they can reach their goals
- *Leadership Development*: All of us are leaders. How do your strengths get recognized?
- *Team Decision Making*: Families are engaged when they are involved in critical decisions. How do we make the very best placement decisions together?
- *Early Childhood Development and Brain Science*: What's best for babies and toddlers?
- *Family Finding*: Going the extra mile to find kin and relatives to support children and parents when they are experiencing a crisis.
- *Recruiting Resource Families*: finding and keeping the best resource families for the children we serve

SECTION 4. Capacity indicators

2.1: New Family Foster Care Homes

Operational Question:

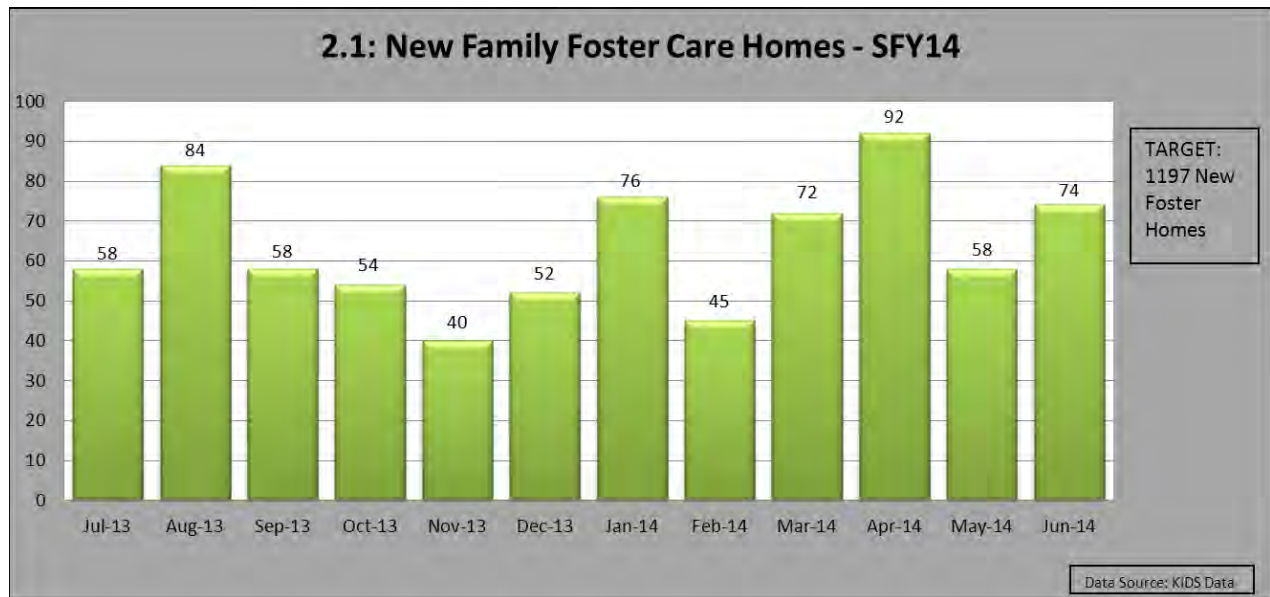
How many new foster homes, including Contracted Foster Homes, Emergency Foster Homes, Family Foster Homes, Shelter Host Homes, and Supported Homes were opened during SFY14?

Data Source and Definitions:

Total Count of New Foster Homes includes all Contracted Foster Care Homes (CFC), Foster Family Homes, Emergency Foster Care Homes (EFC), Shelter Host Homes (SHH), and Supported Foster Homes by the month that they were opened using the agreed upon criteria. Beginning in SFY15, Shelter Host Homes and Emergency Foster Care Homes will not be included in the new home count. (This measure does not include Kinship, Adoptive or Tribal Foster Homes.)

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population		Result
Baseline			1704 foster homes open as of 7/1/2013
07/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All CFC, Foster Family Homes, EFC, SHH, and Supported Foster Homes opened during the first half of SFY14	346 Homes	763 Total Homes opened in SFY14
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All CFC, Foster Family Homes, EFC, SHH, and Supported Foster Homes opened during the second half of SFY14	417 Homes	
Target by 6/30/2014			1197 additional homes opened



Commentary:

There were a total of 763 (unique) new homes opened during SFY14 with a net gain of 266 homes. There were 1,692 homes open on July 1, 2013. This is reduced from the original baseline of 1704 homes open on July 1, 2013 due to data

entry lag in the KIDS system. During the year, 841 homes were opened and 575 homes were closed, which left 1,958 homes open on July 1, 2014. The count of net gain only counts unique homes, even though a resource family may provide more than one type of foster care. This measure also excludes any out-of-state foster homes.

Recruiting and maintaining an adequate pool of resource family homes for children in care continues to be a challenge. During SFY14, CWS and the foster care partners recruited and approved 763 foster homes. This number did not reach the established target. Ongoing recruitment and retention strategies include: (1) improving customer service; (2) establishing private contracts for recruitment, retention and support of Bridge Resource Families; (3) creating more support groups; (4) providing technical assistance to agencies and CWS staff; (5) increasing reimbursement rates; (6) conducting quarterly visits to foster homes by resource staff; and (7) increasing public awareness of need for more homes and number of waiting children.

All CWS staff were required to complete a mandatory **customer service training** focused on understanding and supporting foster families. Along with required training, performance in good customer service to foster families is now listed on the employee performance evaluation. This focus ensures staff members realize it is everyone's responsibility to improve customer service – not just the Bridge unit.

Four **Resource Family Providers** are well on their way to building their programs. There is statewide coverage with at least two providers in each Region. All four agencies have accepted placement of children. This effort impacts every other area of the system and is anticipated to, among other things, successfully expand availability of quality placement options and supports to ensure safety of children, reduce shelter utilization, improve placement stability, and achieve positive permanency outcomes for children. The metrics for these contracts center on placement availability, keeping siblings placed together in the same school districts, placement stability, and achieving permanency. Agencies are not reimbursed until a child is accepted into placement. They are paid a daily rate per child for supporting the family in caring for the children. While they are recruiting for all ages, the agencies were asked to center their early efforts on ensuring children under the age of 6 years old are with families.

Resource Family Partner agencies are using their expertise to recruit and approve families in a more timely manner. These agencies experienced difficulties in hiring new staff. DHS provided support to the agencies through allowing families to be trained through the DHS contract, rather than waiting for training provided by the contractors. The recruitment process is monitored by the Bridge Resource Support Center. Many families in the application process were encouraged to move to an RFP agency in order to continue in the approval process.

Technical assistance (TA) was provided to CWS staff, tribes, and foster care agencies. This TA included market segmentation, social media, and other efforts to improve recruitment and retention. DHS hosts an annual Recruitment and Retention Conference inviting foster care partners. Through the TA provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a series of trainings focused on targeted recruitment began in May, 2014 and continues to be available for CWS staff, RFP agencies, tribal partners, faith-based partners and others.

The first of five **incremental reimbursement** increases was implemented in Year 1; however, budget shortfalls early in Year 2 prevented the agency from moving forward with the second increase until May, 2014 when DHS found the needed funding to provide this increase.

The Year 3 Budget included funding for the planned incremental increase. It is unknown, at this point, what direct impact this initiative had on foster parent recruitment or retention.

DHS continues to make quarterly visits with DHS resource parents. A **Resource Parent Contact Guide** was created utilizing feedback from resource parents and current Child Welfare staff. The majority of comments were positive. A program has been created to help determine quarterly visits dates by entering the resource approval dates. Resource families report quarterly visits are helpful and the intent is to increase support to families thereby improving retention. Visits have provided an opportunity to have stronger working relationships between families and resource staff. Overall

responses from families has been positive. Resource workers are finding frequent contact with families may lead to less concerns and complaints. At this time there have been more than 400 quarterly visits completed for adoption and more than 3,500 for foster care. This is believed to be a critical strategy to improving customer service and retention of foster families.

Community involvement has increased with recruitment and support of foster parents. Groups such as Project 111¹, Count Me in 4 KIDS², OK Foster Wishes³, Oklahoma Lawyers for Children⁴, National Resource Center for Youth Services, Oklahoma Foster Parents Association, many churches and other groups throughout Oklahoma have demonstrated how creative and important community partners are in this process.

DHS continues to utilize social media and public service announcements to recruit foster families. DHS partnered with the Oklahoma City NBA Thunder Team to highlight the need for foster and adoptive families in Oklahoma through their television program, website and social media accounts.

¹ Project 111 is a non-profit committed to partnering with the faith community in foster parent recruitment. www.project111.org

² Count Me In 4 Kids is a community-led collaborative with the goal of engaging all of Central Oklahoma in meeting the needs of the children in foster care. www.itsmycommunity.org/count-me-in-for-kids.php.

³ OK Foster Wishes advocates and serves by bringing awareness to the foster care crisis and connecting the community with various opportunities to serve Oklahoma's children affected by abuse, neglect and abandonment. www.okfosterwishes.com

⁴ Oklahoma Lawyers for Children created a volunteer program to assist with expediting home studies in Oklahoma County. www.oklahomalawyersforchildren.camp9.org

2.3: New Therapeutic Foster Care Homes

Operational Question:

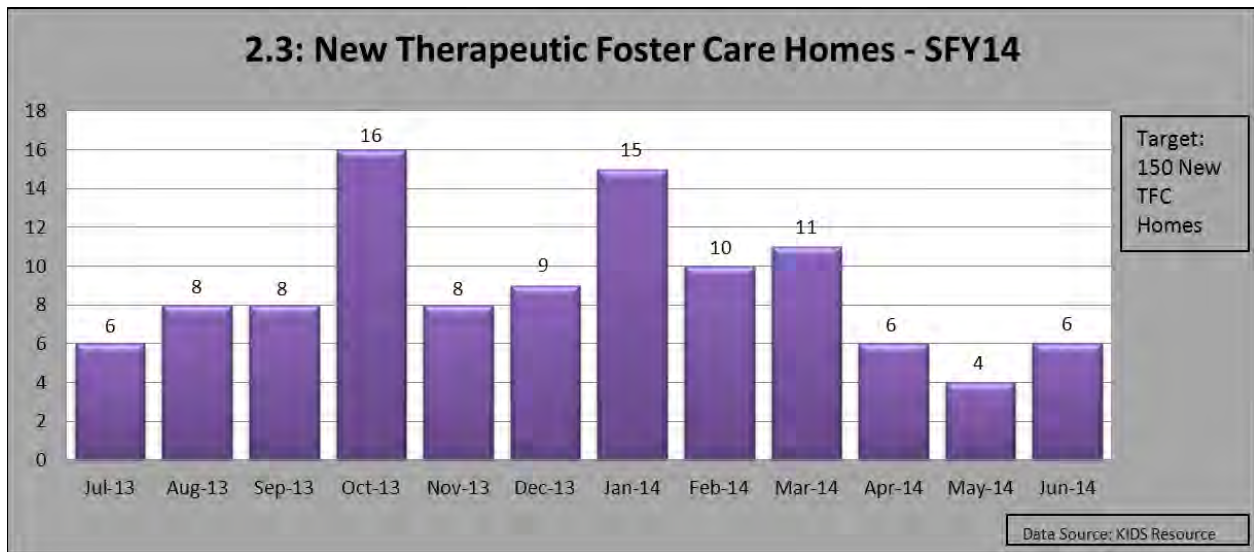
How many new therapeutic foster care homes were opened in SFY14?

Data Source and Definitions:

Total Count of New Therapeutic Foster Homes includes all new TFC Homes, by month that they were opened using the agreed upon criteria.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population		Result
Baseline			548 TFC homes open as of 7/1/2013
07/1/2013 – 12/31/2013	All new TFC homes opened in the first half of SFY14	55 TFC Homes	107 Total TFC Homes opened in SFY14
1/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All new TFC homes opened in the second half of SFY14	52 TFC Homes	
Target by 6/30/2014			150 additional homes opened



Commentary:

There were a total of 530 TFC homes open on July 1, 2013. This is reduced from the original baseline of 548 homes open on July 1, 2013 due to data entry lag in the KIDS system. During the year, 125 homes were opened and 181 homes were closed, which left 474 homes open on July 1, 2014. Of the 125 TFC homes that opened during SFY14, 107 of these TFC homes were counted as new homes, according to the Pinnacle Plan criteria. The count of net gain only counts unique homes, even though a resource family may provide more than one type of foster care.

TFC agencies continue to struggle with meeting recruitment and retention goals. The absence of funding designated for recruitment and retention is continually cited as a barrier by agencies. TFC agencies are included in all recruitment/retention training provided to traditional level foster care providers. Data driven recruitment continues to be the emphasis and monthly data is provided to TFC agencies containing demographic information of those youth on the TFC waiting list. TFC agencies are now required to document recruitment and retention activities on their monthly report to the TFC Program Supervisor. Three TFC providers are teaming with Marland Children’s Home in an effort to

recruit TFC foster homes for youth who have completed the group home program and can step down to a less restrictive environment. The plan is to extend this effort to group homes throughout the state. Efforts have continued by TFC Program staff to correct KIDS data in order to provide accurate information for program analysis. As of July 15, 2014, the number of children in need of therapeutic foster care placement is 198. Of those, 35.9 percent are ages 13-17 years old. Beginning July 1, 2014, TFC foster parents will receive an additional \$150.00 each month when providing care for a teenager. This strategy is put into effect to target recruitment for the largest age group in need of therapeutic care.

Steps have been initiated to facilitate the transition to a performance-based contract. A performance-based contract will strengthen accountability for the development and retention of TFC homes designed to meet the specific needs of children and youth requiring this level of care.

7.1 Worker Caseloads

Operational Question:

What percentage of all Child Welfare Workers meet caseload standards, are close to meeting workload standards, or are over workload standards?

Data Source and Definitions:

Utilizing the standards set forth in the Pinnacle Plan, each individual type of case is assigned a weight and then the weights are added up in order to determine a worker’s caseload. The consolidated workload tracking process allows Oklahoma to factor in the worker’s “Workload Capacity.” The chart below represents the consolidated workload tracking process. A snapshot is taken every morning at 12:00 am of the workload of all Child Welfare workers. The entire workload of workers with a qualifying assignment to a case (CPS, PP, FCS, Adoption, and Resource) are calculated and compared against the caseload standards. The workload is classified as meeting standards if it is 100 percent at or below a caseload. If the workload is over 100 percent but less than 120 percent of a caseload, it is considered to be “over but close”, otherwise the workload is considered to be over the standard. The measure tracks each worker - each day to determine if they meet the standard, and this is called a “worker day”. Work performed by Child Welfare Specialists, is broken into multiple categories. This measure will look specifically at all Child Welfare Workers (Total), Permanency Planning, Preventive/Voluntary, Investigation, Adoption, Bridge, and Comprehensive Workers.

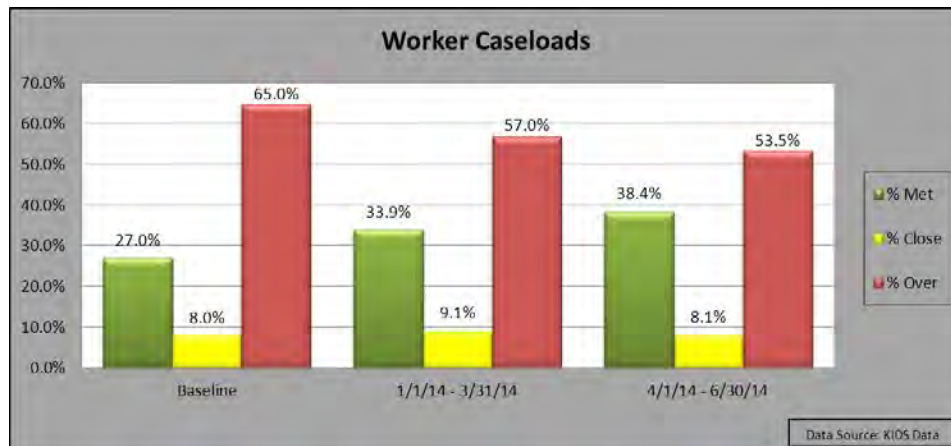
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

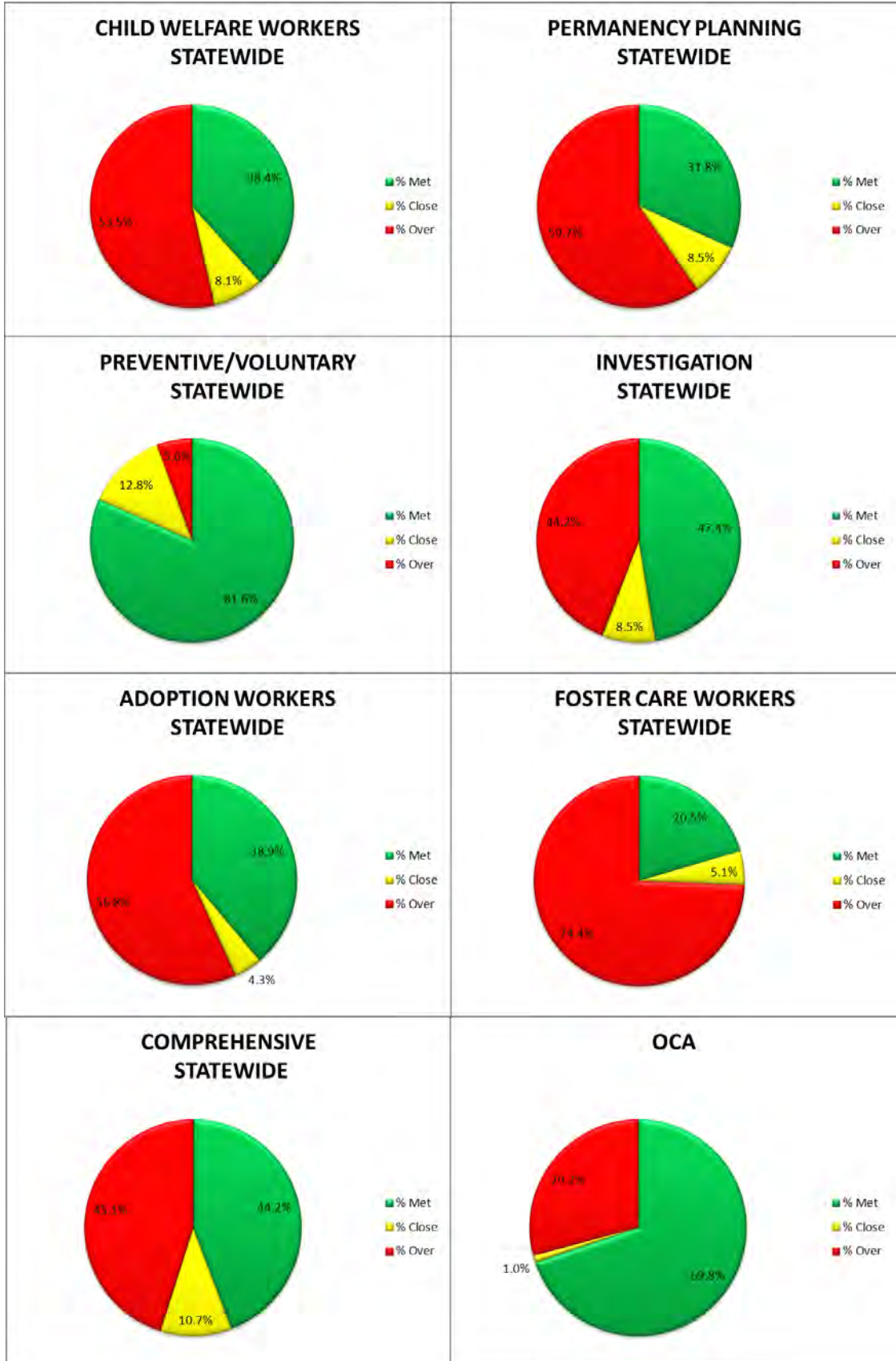
Denominator: The number of worker days worked by all child welfare workers in Bridge - Adoptions, Bridge – Foster Care, FCS, Investigation, and Permanency Planning between 4/1/2014-6/30/2014.

Numerator: Number of worker days where workers met the standard carrying a caseload of 100 percent or less of their calculated workload capacity.

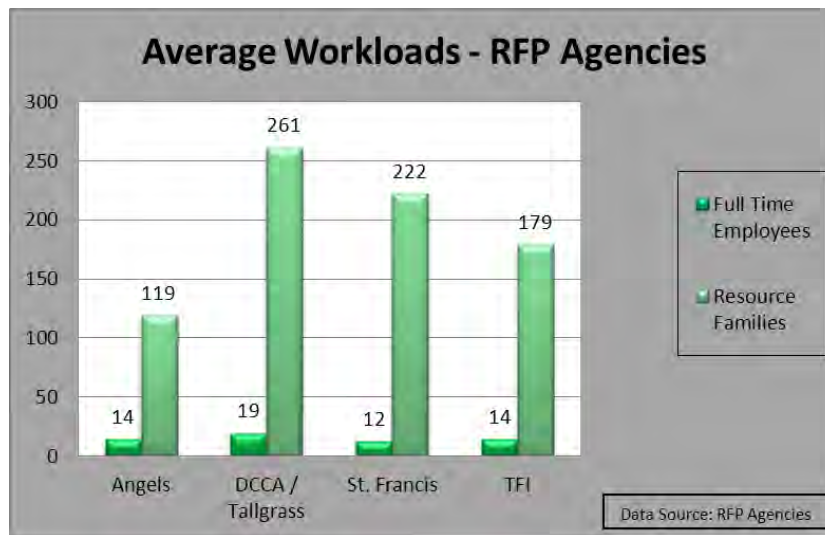
Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				27.0%
1/1/2014 – 3/31/2014	All caseload carrying workers with a worker type of Adoptions, Foster Care, FCS, Investigation, and PP	32,995 Days	97,330 Days	33.9%
4/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All caseload carrying workers with a worker type of Adoptions, Foster Care, FCS, Investigation, and PP	42,620 Days	126,095 Days	38.4%
Target by 6/30/2016				90.0%





Workload Standards April 1, 2014 - June 30, 2014				
Worker Type	Worker Days	% Met	% Close	% Over
BRIDGE - ADOPTION	6315	38.9%	4.3%	56.8%
BRIDGE - FOSTER CARE	12882	20.5%	5.1%	74.4%
COMPREHENSIVE	10960	44.2%	10.7%	45.1%
PERMANENCY PLANNING	52611	31.8%	8.5%	59.7%
PREVENTIVE/VOLUNTARY	2461	81.6%	12.8%	5.6%
INVESTIGATION	39648	47.4%	8.5%	44.2%
OCA	1218	69.8%	1.0%	29.2%
STATEWIDE TOTAL	126095	38.4%	8.1%	53.5%



Agency	Full Time Employees	Resource Families	Average Workload
Angels	14	119	8.5
DCCA / Tallgrass	19	261	13.7
St. Francis	12	222	18.5
TFI	14	179	12.8

Commentary:

In the current quarter, there was an average of 1,385 workers in Bridge – Adoptions, Bridge – Foster Care, Comprehensive, Permanency Planning, Prevention, Investigation, and OCA. For the partner agencies, based on the workload standard of 22 families, as of June 30, 2014 all agencies are currently at 100 percent for meeting workload standards.

The total number of Child Welfare workers meeting the standards has trended upward over the last three quarters from a baseline of 27 percent to 38.4 percent as of June 30, 2014. Although the target date of June 30, 2014 to have 90 percent of staff meeting caseload standards has not been met, significant efforts are underway to reduce caseloads and meet the established standard by a new target date of June 30, 2015.

Over 795 full-time employment positions were added to CWS in SFY13 and the first half of SFY14. Ninety-one percent of these positions directly involved services to children and families. This hiring push constituted a major effort towards achieving caseload standards established in the Pinnacle Plan. With the assistance of the DHS Human Resources Management Division and the DHS Office of Communications, a recruitment campaign of unprecedented measure was undertaken to find the qualified applicants who would fill the newly created positions. Job fairs and advertising campaigns in both traditional and social media helped bring in prospective Child Welfare Specialists. By analyzing the hiring process, DHS has markedly reduced the agency's hiring time for new CWS workers. What had taken a month after a conditional offer of employment was made has now been reduced in many cases to less than two weeks. A new administrative assistant position was developed and implemented to relieve caseworkers from many administrative responsibilities and thereby permit greater attention to the children under the Agency's care.

While there has been a slight decline in worker turnover during SFY14, the high turnover rate continues to create challenges to reaching caseload standards. The Department is working to better understand ways to reduce staff turnover, but the most commonly cited reasons staff leave the agency are high caseloads and the stress of the work. Ongoing strategies to improve the turnover rate include:

- (1) Improving worker/supervisor ratios;
- (2) Implementing caseload standards;
- (3) Providing mentoring programs for new workers and supervisors;
- (4) Conducting competency assessments (HOT Testing);
- (5) Requiring certification of all CWS levels;
- (6) Improving technology;
- (7) Improving collaboration with communities and key stakeholders;
- (8) Increasing staff salaries; and,
- (9) Instituting management teams focused solely on child welfare

Moving towards a ratio of five workers to each supervisor has been a crucial first step in reducing turnover. It was determined that a supervisor supporting five workers instead of the traditional six to nine workers would be more successful in mentoring, supervising, and supporting front-line staff. This was an early goal nearly realized with the addition of 115 new supervisor positions. The challenge has been relieving supervisors of the need to carry their own caseloads due to ongoing caseworker shortages. A supervisor handling an assigned caseload is inhibited in her ability to fully engage and mentor her assigned caseworkers. Also proving a challenge is addressing those vacancies created by workers promoted into supervisory positions. These realities have prompted the agency to work diligently to fill not just the newly allocated Pinnacle Plan positions, but also those positions left vacant by promotions, and normal turnover.

During SFY13 and SFY14, DHS training a total of 1,081 new Child Welfare Staff in DHS's CORE Academy. Faced with such a large influx of new workers presented training challenges which included having a sufficient number of trainers, obtaining adequate space for training, and making comprehensive revisions to training materials in order to reflect plan targets and shifts in practice. During the first 18 months of the Pinnacle Plan, training staff worked diligently to accommodate additional CORE training sessions. Unfortunately, problems arose as other DHS divisions competed to utilize a limited amount of training facilities. In January 2014, DHS responded to this need by investing the resources to locate and renovate a new building which comfortably accommodates the larger number of CWS training sessions and increased number of trainees. This new training facility is large enough to handle three CORE sessions consecutively and can capably accept the larger number of staff undergoing Level 1 and 2 training courses after their completion of CORE.

As a result of these efforts, DHS not only trained 627 new child welfare specialists in SFY14, but the agency's training staff has also implemented new competency assessments and certifications for all front-line staff and are in the beginning stages of piloting a Field Training Program for new staff.

The first of five incremental pay increases for CWS staff was implemented in Year 1 of the Pinnacle Plan. The second pay increase had been initially delayed by a funding shortfall. Due to a significant dedication of resources, however, the agency was able to implement a five percent pay increase for CWS staff effective April 1, 2014. Additionally, effective July 1, 2014 an additional pay increase of 6.25 percent or above was implemented.

7.1 Continued - Supervisor Caseloads

Operational Question:

What percentage of Child Welfare supervisors meet caseload standards, are close to meeting workload standards, or are over workload standards?

Data Source and Definitions:

This measure looks at Supervisor Units in regards to the worker standard per unit. There are two parts to determine if a supervisor unit meets the standard. First, the measure looks at the number of child welfare workers each supervisor is currently supervising in his or her unit. The target is for each unit to have a ratio of five Child Welfare Workers to one Supervisor. If a Unit has a ratio of 5:1 or less, they are considered to meet the standard. Units are “close” if they are 1-20 percent over with a ratio of 6:1. All Units with a ratio of 7:1 or over are considered “Over”. Each worker accounts for 0.2 percent of a supervisor’s workload capacity. Secondly, the measure looks at any of those supervisors who are currently supervising caseload carrying workers and also have case assignments on their own workload. Because these workload assignments deduct from a supervisor’s capacity to supervise their workers, this additional caseload must be factored into the measurement. If a supervisor has less than two case assignments this will not be calculated into the measurement. For any other assignments on a supervisor’s caseload, these will be calculated at the same weight as a worker’s caseload and then added to the supervisor capacity, which includes the number of workers being supervised. With this combined calculation of the supervisor’s workload capacity, it is then determined how many of these supervisor units are meeting the workload standard.

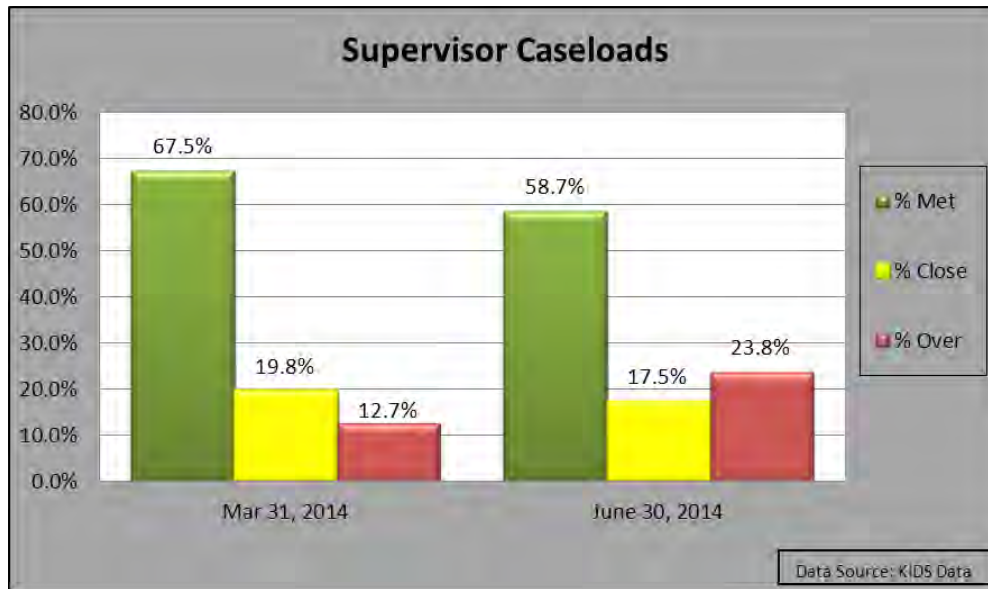
Description of Denominator and Numerator for this reporting period:

Denominator: All current supervisor units currently supervising caseload carrying workers in Bridge - Adoptions, Bridge – Foster Care, FCS, Investigation, and Permanency Planning.

Numerator: All current supervisors with a combined workload of 100 percent or less.

Trends:

Reporting Period	Population	Numerator	Denominator	Result
Baseline				
1/1/2014 – 3/31/2014	All supervisors with a unit currently supervising case load carrying workers	191 - Met	283 Units	67.5%
4/1/2014 – 6/30/2014	All supervisors with a unit currently supervising case load carrying workers	178 - Met	286 Units	62.2%
Target by 6/30/2016				



Commentary:

For the current quarter of March 1, 2014 – June 30, 2014, there are a total of 286 Supervisor Units. As of June 30, 2014 there were 1,363 Child Welfare Worker I, II, and III’s. This calculated to a Statewide worker to supervisor ratio of 4.77 : 1. There were 168 units that met the workload standard, 50 units that were close to meeting the standard, and 68 units that were over the standard. As part of this measure, supervisor workloads must be calculated into the workload standard. There were 122 supervisors with at least one case assignment on their caseload and 61 of those supervisors had more than two assignments. In the previous quarter, there were 100 supervisors with a case assignment and 48 of those had more than two assignments.

Summary

In summary, good faith efforts to achieve substantial and sustained progress toward each Target Outcome have persisted since the onset of reform efforts. DHS is committed to improving outcomes for children and families. The Pinnacle Plan is the roadmap and implementation is thoughtful and strategic. Where delays in implementing specific strategies or reaching target dates have occurred, DHS has documented the reasons and requested appropriate delays from the Co-Neutrals. As noted previously, the additional strain on available resources, including foster parents, caseloads, and shelters created by the increase in the number of children in out-of-home care has created challenges for DHS. These challenges are addressed through continuous quality improvement efforts.

Child Welfare Services (CWS) is undergoing a transformation into a learning organization led by a management philosophy of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). A key Pinnacle Plan commitment is to create a Continuous Quality Improvement system, led by the CQI team, that effectively measures the quality of work, informs leadership and staff of what is and is not working in the system, and works alongside all Child Welfare staff to improve outcomes for children and families. CWS began these efforts with an extensive self-assessment process of the CQI system examining current realities, strengths, and areas of need. The self-assessment process included focus groups, state research, workgroups, and technical assistance. The examination of the system included an understanding and consideration of the history of CQI in CWS and across the nation. It has also resulted in learning applied to the development of a new DHS Child Welfare Services Continuous Quality Improvement Plan that when implemented thoughtfully and effectively will be the primary catalyst for both achieving and sustaining changes in the Child Welfare System that will produce positive outcomes for children and families served. The CQI Plan created by CWS was approved by the Co-Neutrals in 2013 and implementation began during the first half of 2014. A primary goal is to continually expand the ability to shape the future of the organization, which requires a transformation from a "compliance-based" focus to a "learning" organization. As a result, DHS is committed to making continual learning a way of organizational life in order to improve performance and outcomes.

A key component of an effective CQI system is ongoing assessment of needs. As assessment continues, additional strategies may be adopted so that the Agency can fully meet the identified Target Outcomes. For example, DHS strives to keep children safely in their own homes whenever possible. While the Pinnacle Plan does not specifically outline strategies to meet this goal, targeted efforts to achieve this goal continue. Increasing the capacity of families to safely maintain children in their own homes will significantly and positively impact the availability of resources to meet the needs of children in out-of-home care. By decreasing the number of children entering the care of the Department, the strain on resources such as foster parents, caseloads, and shelters will be relieved. To impact this outcome, DHS has applied for a Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, which will allow for the use of IV-E funds in more flexible ways. While not officially accepted, at this time the prospect is good that DHS will be awarded a project and if so, the tentative implementation date is July 1, 2015. DHS has proposed to use the funds in an effort to maintain children safely in their homes, in instances that in the past might have resulted in removal.

Progress to improve outcomes has and will continue to be made. The Department will diligently continue to ensure both the Co-Neutrals and the public are kept abreast of the progress towards achievement of outcomes and good faith efforts to fulfill its Pinnacle Plan obligations.