

**OUR GOAL:**  
Help families  
and communities  
improve the  
well-being of  
children in out-  
of-home care

To describe Katie as “bright” would be an understatement. Add “determined,” “dedicated,” “persistent;” throw in “funny” and “unassuming” and you’re getting closer. Katie’s academic accomplishments this year include:

**The Presidential Education Award for Educational Excellence.** The award includes a pin with the Presidential Seal, a beautiful certificate, and a recognition letter signed by President George W. Bush.

**The Gold Award** for outstanding academic achievement on the WASL examinations.

**First prize in the Accelerated Reader (A.R.) Awards.** Recipients must have read selected books at their reading capability, and must pass computerized comprehension tests and provide summaries of stories read. Katie’s prize was a \$50.00 gift certificate to a local bookstore.

**Award for being in the volunteer choir at school;** choir members practice on their own time and perform at assemblies and other events.

**Member of the school band.**

Katie says, “My Mom is the reason I’m so good at reading,” referring to her foster mom, who responds, “We worked on it together from the first day she came to us.” Now, Katie is “always reading,” and has to have extra reminders to do the dishes. She and her mom have moved on to improving Katie’s writing and speech articulation. Katie says she’s “not much of a talker,” but her expressiveness shines through in her conversations.

On a personal note, Katie has been with her foster family for five years. Her first foster placement was at age four, where she remembers an “outburst” of pets. She had never had pets, and that experience led to an ongoing love of animals. Now, she has her own cat, and helps take care of the family dog. Katie has a number of brothers and sisters in the area where she lives, and visits with them about twice a month. She wants to know that they are doing OK. She says she has a couple of special friends at school, whom she will “keep forever.” Katie’s favorite foods are broccoli, carrots, and menudo.

Katie plans to attend college to become a marine biologist or a veterinarian specializing in zoo animals. She is maintaining her cultural ties and traditions, through language, dance, and art classes. She will continue to participate in the band in middle school, and will keep up with her reading, both for academics and for fun. Congratulations to Katie and her foster parents for all they have accomplished, and best wishes for a very bright future.

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Medical, educational, emotional, and developmental progress is important to the well-being of a child. It is important to assess the needs of children in these areas and provide services to meet their needs, so that children can grow into healthy well-adjusted adults. Many of these areas are assessed using the Child Health and Education Track screening tool and other services which are monitored through case reviews.

Over the past year, efforts have been made to refine a database to track annual graduation rates.

Data from the information system and case review is now available to monitor the well-being objectives of increasing worker visits with children, and children in placement are supported in age-appropriate educational and development programs.

These objectives are monitored using the following performance measures:

- Children who are visited every 90 days by their social worker
- High School Diploma, General Equivalency Diploma, or educational/vocational enrollment
- Youth in care who receive Independent Living Services



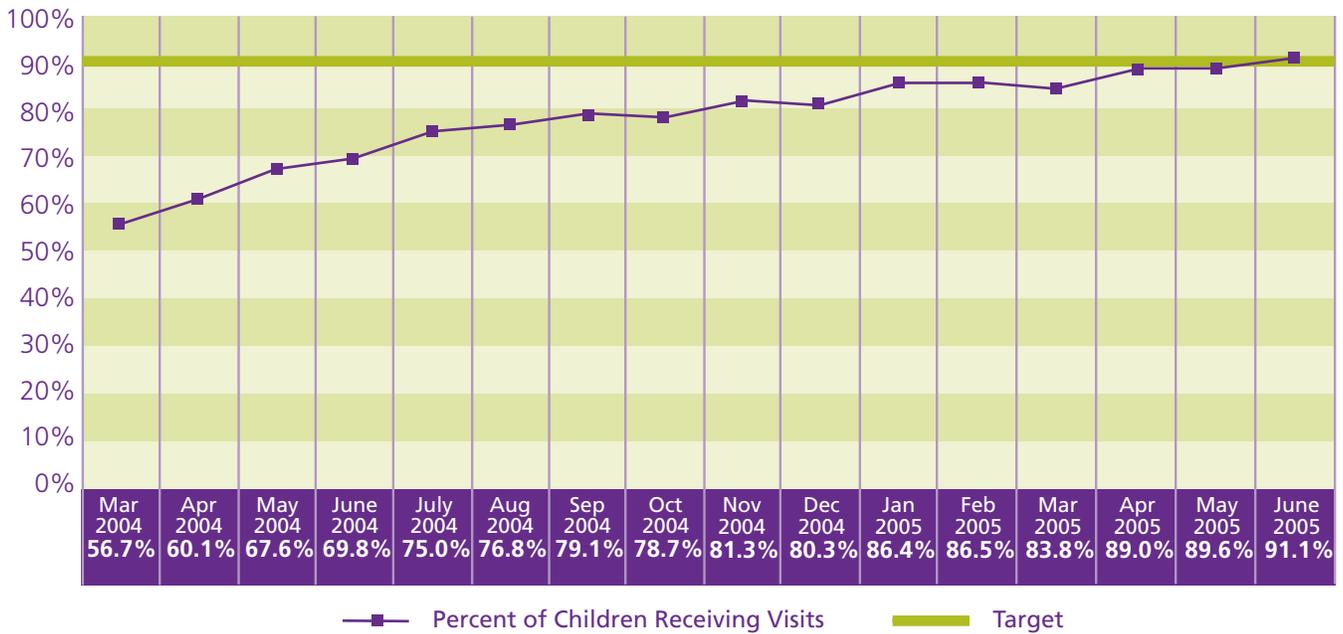
**OBJECTIVE** Increase worker visits with children  
**MEASURED BY** Children visited every 90 days by their social worker

In order to monitor the health and safety of children in out-of-home care, social workers must make contact with children on a regular basis.

Social workers interact with children on their caseloads through telephone contact and attendance at meetings and appointments related to a child's case. In addition, social workers are required to visit children in person, in their out-of-home placements at least once every 90 days. These visits allow the social worker to assess the child's physical surroundings as well as the child's adjustment to his or her placement and to determine whether or not the placement is meeting the child's needs.

The target for this measure requires that 90 percent of children in care will be visited in their placement every 90 days. The administration has demonstrated significant progress with reference to this measure, improving from a baseline of 56.7 percent in March 2004 to the most recent performance of 91.1 percent in June 2005.

Social Worker Visits with Children in Out-of-Home Care\*



\* Percent of children in out-of-home placement who are seen face-to-face by their social worker in the caregiver's home at least once within the last 90 days.

**OBJECTIVE** Children in placement are supported in age-appropriate educational and developmental programs

**MEASURED BY** High school diploma/General Equivalency Development diploma or educational/vocational enrollment

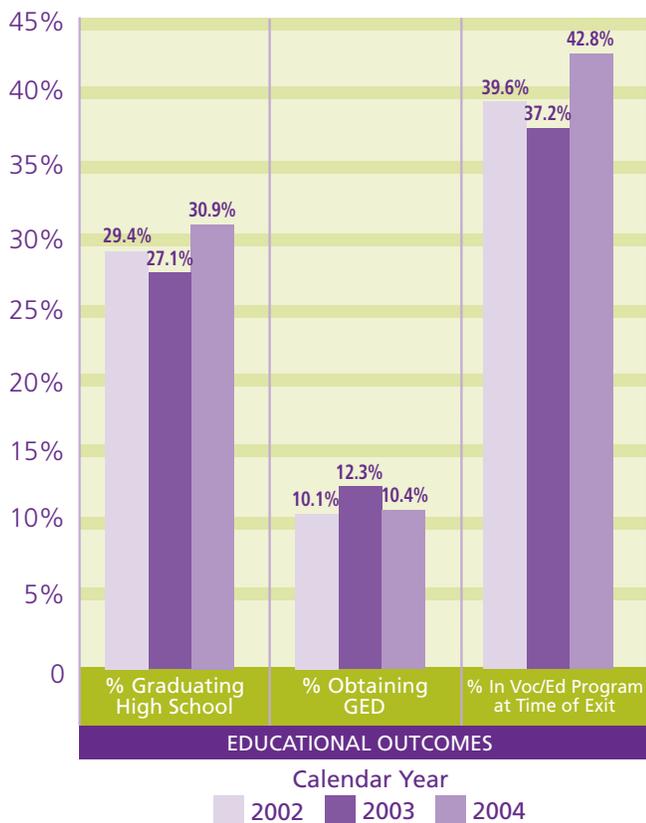
Children who have been removed from their families of origin due to abuse or neglect, may experience difficulty in achieving success in a variety of life domains more so than their peers in stable families. School achievement is often impacted when a child's home life is traumatic or when there is transition from one home to another.

The administration recognizes educational achievement as one means by which a child's or youth's well-being can be assessed. The administration strives to support children and youth in out-of-home care in achieving concrete educational goals. The administration also assesses which youth transitioning into adulthood from out-of-home care received special education services during their time in care, as well as how many youth exiting care have aspirations for higher education.

In Calendar Year 2004, the percent of youth receiving a high school diploma was 30.9 percent, a marked increase over the previous reporting period. Youth obtaining their GED decreased from 12.3 percent in Calendar Year 2003 to 10.4 percent in 2004. The most significant increase in 2004 is in the area of educational or vocational program enrollment which showed a gain from 37.2 percent to 42.8 percent.

Of those youth exiting care in 2004, 35.4 percent had received some type of special education services during their time in out-of-home care. In addition 35.4 percent had plans to pursue higher education after transitioning into independence. Over the three years, 62.5 percent of those youth who had obtained high school diplomas had plans for higher education while only 35.8 percent of those who had obtained their GED held the same aspirations.

**Youth Turning 18 in Foster Care Who Graduated from High School, Obtained a GED, or Were Enrolled in an Educational or Vocational Program at Time of Exit\***



\* Percent of youth age 18 or older who have been in care for at least one year and who left care without being placed into a permanent home, or are in a guardianship and receiving services from the administration, for whom educational outcomes could be obtained through records or self report.

**OBJECTIVE** Children in placement are supported in age-appropriate educational and developmental programs

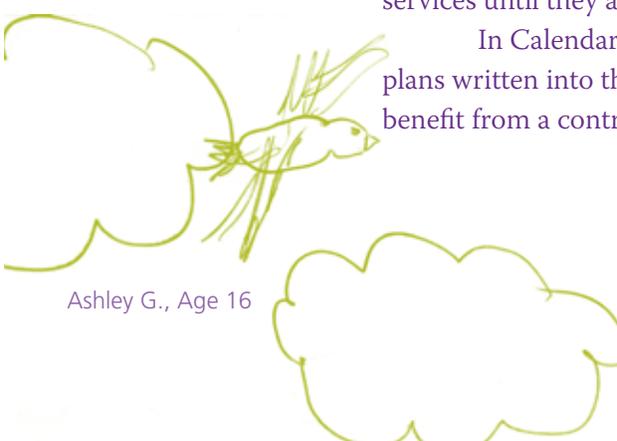
**MEASURED BY** Youth in care who receive Independent Living Services

Youth who reach the age of majority in foster care often begin adulthood at a disadvantage. When questioned, many report feeling unprepared for the responsibilities that their newfound independence requires. They lack the family supports that most young adults take for granted. The result is that, nationwide, former foster youth make up disproportionately high numbers of the population who experience unplanned pregnancies and who become homeless, jobless, or incarcerated.

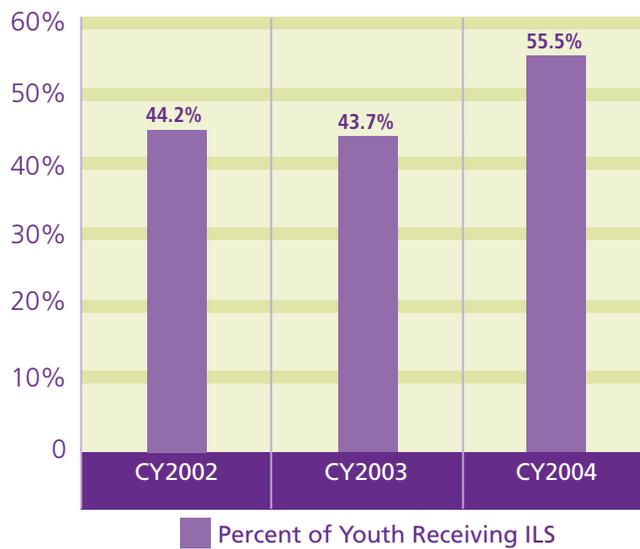
The federal Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, passed in 1999, provides funding to states to support young people transitioning out of foster care. Washington State utilizes Chafee funding to contract with community-based Independent Living Services providers in an effort to reach young people in their own communities.

The Children's Administration begins offering Independent Living Services to youth as young as 13 years old. Those who have exited state care can continue receiving services until they are 21 years old.

In Calendar Year 2004, 79.7 percent of eligible youth had Independent Living plans written into their Individual Safety and Service Plan and 55.5 percent were able to benefit from a contracted Independent Living Program.



Youth Exiting Care After Age 18 Who Received Independent Living Services While in Care\*



\* Percent of youth exiting care after age 18 who received Independent Living Services while still in out-of-home care.