

The eldest of a large sibling group, Brianna entered care early in her adolescence due to severe neglect and a home environment ruined by her mother's drug abuse. Initially, Brianna struggled, running from several placements resulting in a stint in detention.

As a young teen, Brianna found herself pregnant, in detention as the result of some poor choices and the influence of her baby's father, and in need of some stability in her life. Her DCFS social worker placed Brianna in a home that specialized in working with pregnant teens. The foster parents were home-schooling the children in their care and Brianna took the initiative to home-school herself.

Brianna experienced a very complicated pregnancy resulting in several trips to the emergency room. She spent her last trimester on complete bed-rest. Still, undeterred from her goals, Brianna kept up with her schooling in addition to handcrafting beautiful baby clothes.

Brianna gave birth to a little girl and the two fared well in placement. When her daughter was a year old, Brianna requested a placement change and a home was identified that would accommodate them both. Brianna continued her studies and began working at a fast-food restaurant. She was promoted after only three months and was scheduled to enter into management training when tragedy struck. On her daughter's second birthday, Brianna was in a serious car accident which left her with broken vertebrae and many other injuries. Under the circumstances, Brianna felt her daughter could be better cared for in a foster home, and the little girl was placed in a home where one of Brianna's siblings already resided. The foster mother of two of Brianna's other siblings traveled four hours per day to visit Brianna in the hospital and to bring her siblings. The social worker learned that patients could receive e-mail while hospitalized, so the e-mail address was given out to family and friends. The foster mother caring for Brianna's baby became good friends with the parent fostering Brianna's siblings, which helped greatly in facilitating visitation.

Even while recuperating and spending as much time and energy as possible maintaining a bond with her toddler, Brianna remained committed to her schooling. She finally healed enough to return to the job which her employer held for her. Brianna graduated from high school this summer and has already been accepted to a local university.

Brianna is described by her social worker as, "a remarkable young woman, who is resourceful and intelligent. She presents as someone much older than her years, with her vocabulary and social skills. She has done a remarkable job raising an absolutely gorgeous little girl."



OUR GOAL:
Continuously improve the organization's capacity to achieve outcomes for children and families

Progress

The administration contracts with agencies to offer additional support and resources to foster families. In Fiscal Year 2005, the following supports were created, implemented or enhanced:

Hubs:

A family that serves as a coordinating center to share information and support with other families

Buddy Systems:

Pairing veteran foster parents with new foster parents to help with information sharing, resources, and support

Support Groups:

Groups of foster, adoptive, and kinship parents who meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual concern

Mentoring:

Foster and kinship parents who have demonstrable knowledge of the foster care system and who assist others in navigating the system

The Children's Administration actively seeks qualified families who are willing to open their homes to vulnerable children until those children can be returned to their families of origin or an alternative permanent plan is achieved.

Through the Resource Family Training Institute, the administration provides workshops, online training, resources, and support to foster families and relative caregivers.

The administration monitors the licensed resources available to care for children through the following measures:

- Licensed foster homes available for children
- Availability of minority foster homes
- Foster care licensing applications which take more than 90 days to complete.



OBJECTIVE Adequate quality resources are available for foster care, behavior rehabilitation services and adoption

MEASURED BY Licensed foster homes available for children

At any given time there are approximately 9,200 children cared for in the homes of substitute caregivers. Of those, about 6,000 are placed into licensed care. Most of these children will return home to their parents and many will be adopted, but they need loving families to stay with while an appropriate permanent home is secured.

The Children's Administration endeavors to engage substitute caregivers to provide temporary homes for children. These families are recruited in an effort to meet the physical, emotional, developmental, and cultural needs of children while they are in care.

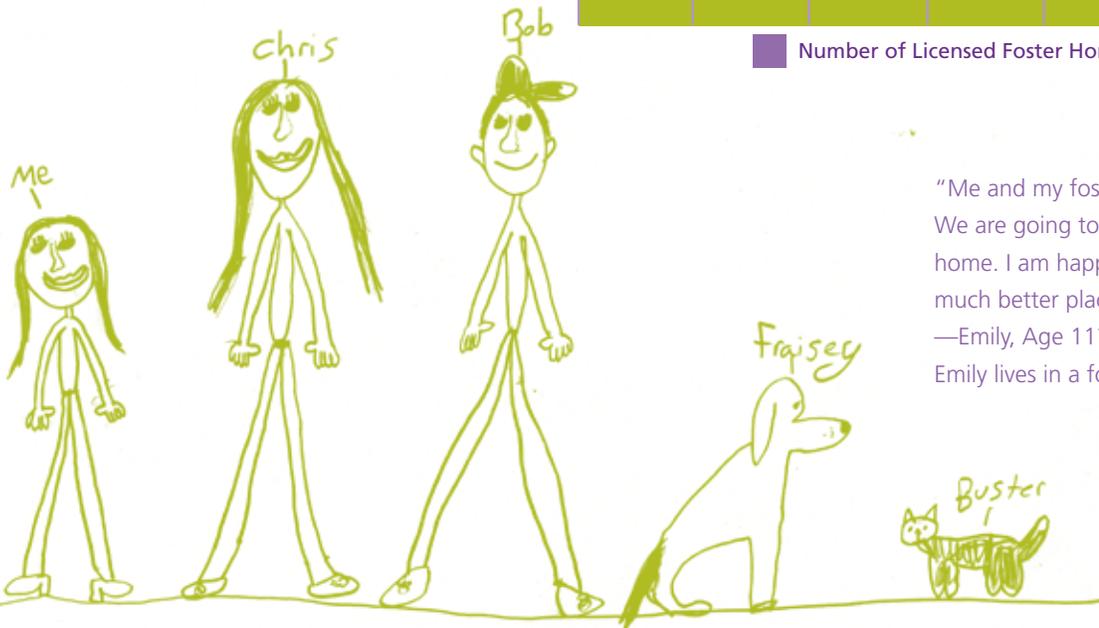
These homes must meet high standards of health and safety, and maintain physical safeguards beyond the expectations of the average home.

In addition, those wishing to provide care for foster children must attend training, pass rigorous background checks, and demonstrate competencies in providing for the health, security, and well-being of children.

Licensed Foster Homes*



Number of Licensed Foster Homes Available



"Me and my foster parents. We are going to my new home. I am happy to be in a much better place."
 —Emily, Age 11½
 Emily lives in a foster home.

* Number of DLR and private agency foster homes licensed to provide care.

OBJECTIVE Adequate quality resources are available for foster care, behavior rehabilitation services and adoption

MEASURED BY Availability of minority foster homes

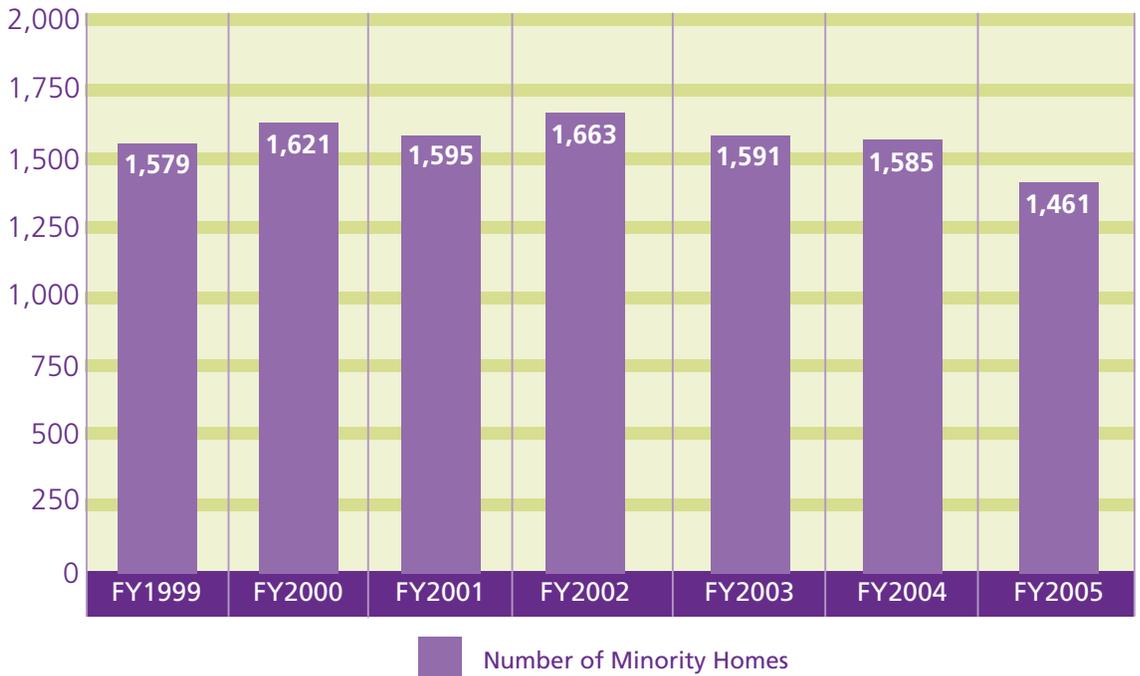


Children who are removed from their families of origin for their own safety and well-being often lose everything that is familiar to them. Not only must they adapt to a changing home environment, different rules and expectations and all new family dynamics, but they must adjust to new foods, new language, and new celebrations.

The Children's Administration strives to make the transition into foster care less difficult by attempting to identify and engage families representative of the racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds of the children in out-of-home care.

Whether it is the presence of a Kwanza kinara (candle holder) during the winter holiday or tamales served at Christmas time, the familiar foods, symbols, language and festivals of a child's culture can do much to show they are valued and have a safe and welcoming place to be.

Minority Homes Available*



* Number of DLR and private agency minority foster homes licensed to provide care.

OBJECTIVE Adequate quality resources are available for foster care, behavior rehabilitation services, and adoption

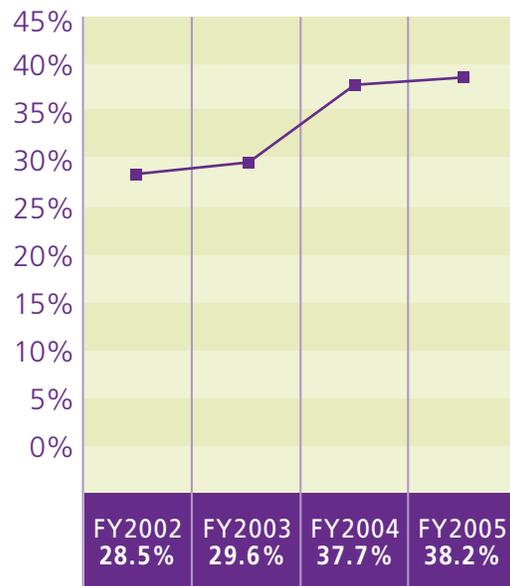
MEASURED BY Foster care licensing applications which take more than 90 days to complete

While every effort is made to ensure that families wishing to act as temporary caregivers have the necessary licensing in place as quickly as possible, child safety is the primary concern.

In addition to completing an application and attending pre-service training, potential foster families must pass background checks. If they have resided in Washington State for fewer than three years, they must have fingerprint checks. The background check process may impede licensors from expediting a foster care license for a particular family. Over the past two years, the thoroughness of the background check process has contributed to the increase in foster care licensing delays.

The administration implemented a unified home study that incorporates all the requirements for both a foster home study and an adoptive home study. This expedites the adoption process for children adopted by foster parents. The unified home study includes a more comprehensive application and screening process, which may also cause the issuance of licenses to be delayed.

Foster Home Licensing Applications Which Take More Than 90 Days*



■ Percent of Foster Home License Applications Pending > 90 Days

“My picture is my foster family and I holding each other around the shoulders. My foster mom is first in line, then my foster dad, then my foster sister, then I.”
—Olivia, Age 12
Olivia lives in a foster home.



* Percentage of foster care licensing applications that take longer than 90 days for a full license to be issued.