

Children's Administration
Performance
Report 2008

Public and Legislative
Accountability for Child Safety,
Permanency, and Well-being

Susan N. Dreyfus
Secretary, DSHS

Randy Hart
Interim Assistant Secretary,
Children's Administration



Message from the Assistant Secretary

It is my pleasure to present the 12th annual Children's Administration Performance Report.

In Fiscal Year 2008 Children's Administration staff worked toward ensuring the safety of children and well-being of families amid very challenging social and economic circumstances.

Children's Administration sustained system improvements within the context of increasingly stringent federal, legislative, and judicial requirements and unforeseen budget shortfalls. One constant we faced is that while we strive to improve outcomes in one area of child welfare, we cannot allow other areas of child well-being to suffer. Ultimately, all of our labors are toward improving the safety and quality of life for Washington state's most vulnerable children.

In Fiscal Year 2008, we demonstrated improved outcomes in child safety, permanency, and well-being. For example, social workers made great strides toward the performance goals of seeing children soon after referrals are received, depending on the urgency and safety of the child; visiting children in foster homes every 30 days, increased from every 90 days; increasing the number of children who were able to return home to their families; placing more children with relatives when they needed to be removed from their homes; and reducing the average number of cases each social worker carried.

All of these improvements and the vital work we do every day is the result of an incredibly dedicated workforce, community partnerships, invested lawmakers, and concerned community members.

I am pleased with our progress and we need to celebrate our successes, but our work is never done. There are areas where we must redouble our efforts while never wavering on our primary commitment to child safety. We continue to work toward addressing some of the most critical demands of our work by:

- partnering with families and communities to keep children safe from abuse and neglect;
- teaming with caregivers to best meet the needs of children;
- working to reduce disproportional representation of children and youth of color in the child welfare system; and
- supporting staff with better tools and training.

We will continue striving to protect children and preserve families.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randy Hart', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Randy Hart, Interim Assistant Secretary

Contents

Message from the Assistant Secretary.....	i
Table of Contents	1
Vision, Mission, and Impact	2
Our Priorities.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Overview - Children's Administration Activities.....	5
Overview - Comprehensive Service Delivery.....	6
Overview - Child Demographics	7
2008 Results	
Safety	8
Safety Overview (CPS Referrals)	9
Alleged Victims in Accepted CPS Referrals by Type of Abuse or Neglect.....	10
The Legal Definition of Child Abuse and Neglect.....	11
Children Seen Face-to-Face by a Social Worker Following a Referral	
Accepted for Investigation within Policy Timeframes.....	13
Children Who Did Not Experience Re-abuse	14
Children Who Are Placed in Out-of-Home Care Due to Abuse or Neglect	
With Prior Placement Due to Abuse or Neglect.....	15
Children Who Are Free from Abuse or Neglect in Out-of-Home Care.....	16
Foster Homes Receiving Health and Safety Checks.....	17
Child Fatality Review Process	18
Permanency	20
Permanency Overview (Children Cared for in Out-of-Home Placement).....	21
Children Returned to Their Parents.....	22
Children Reunified Within 12 Months of Placement.....	23
Children Adopted	24
Children Adopted Within 24 Months of Placement	25
Children Placed in Guardianships	26
Length of Stay for Children in Care	27
Children Re-entering Care	28
Children with No More Than Two Placements.....	29
African American and Native American Children in Long term Care	30
Children Placed With Relatives.....	31
Children Wait.....	32
Well-Being	34
Well-Being Overview.....	35
Children visited every 90 days and increased to every	
30 days by their social worker	36
High School Diploma, General Equivalency Development	
Diploma, or Educational or Vocational Enrollment	37
Youth in Care Who Receive Independent Living Services,	
Transitional Services, or Educational Training Voucher.....	38
Supporting Client Outcomes	39
Supporting Client Outcomes Overview	40
Licensed Foster Homes Available for Children	41
Availability of Minority Foster Homes	42
Foster Home Licensing Applications Which Take	
More Than 90 Days to Complete.....	43
Family Means Something More	44
Resources: Important Numbers and Links.....	46
Strategic Plan Summary.....	47
Glossary and Acronyms	48
Children's Administration Organizational Structure 2009	49
Children's Administration Organizational Structure 2008	50
Region and Field Office Map.....	51
Acknowledgements	52

One Department, One Vision,
One Mission, One Core Set of Values

Our Vision

Safe, healthy individuals, families, and communities.

Our Mission

DSHS will improve the safety and health of individuals, families, and communities by providing leadership and establishing and participating in partnerships.

Our Impact

Together we will decrease poverty, improve the safety and health status of citizens, increase educational and employment success and support people and communities in reaching their potential.

Our Priorities*

Health

- Behavioral and primary health care integration through person-centered health care home
- Chronic care self-management
- Improved quality, cost, and effectiveness
- Improved nutrition

Safety Net

- General Assistance-Unemployable (GA-U) redesign
- Access to benefits and supportive services

Special Populations

- Elders and people with disabilities who need a system of long-term care and supports
- Populations with health disparities
- Transitioning youth – bridging to adulthood
- Children and youth at risk and/or with special needs
- Tribal governments and communities with disproportionate representation in DSHS programs

Children, Elders, People with Disabilities, and Families

- Safety, permanency, and well-being as outcomes experienced while in care
- Build community capacity
- Strengthen and support families
- Prepare for the aging of Washington's population

*DSHS remains fully committed to all populations that are eligible for services, however, the priorities identified above will receive increased emphasis by the department.

Introduction

Protecting the children of Washington state from abuse and neglect is the Children's Administration's top priority.

The Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration was established in an effort to help families and communities protect vulnerable children from abuse and neglect.

Protecting the children of Washington state from harm is the Administration's top priority. The Administration recognizes that only after the safety of a given child is adequately addressed can the necessary services and supports be applied toward the preservation and improved well-being of that child's family.

The Administration must meet numerous federal, legislative, and judicial mandates in the course of daily operations. Moreover, there are other entities that require high levels of performance accountability. The Children's Administration itself engages in continuous self-assessment to find ways to improve the quality of life for children and families, enhance business processes, and act as good stewards of state resources.

This report, the 12th annual Children's Administration Performance Report, documents the Administration's efforts toward improving child safety and permanency, and child and family well-being. This document includes all information contained in the Children's Services Annual Quality Assurance Report, which features performance outcome data in compliance with RCW 43.20.870 and RCW 74.13.031(5). Additional performance outcome measures and information are provided to report progress on the Administration's four priority goal areas:

1. Safety
2. Permanency
3. Well-Being
4. Supporting Client Outcomes

Data in this document is for State Fiscal Year 2008 from July 1, 2007, through June 30, 2008, except where specifically noted.*

The data is primarily drawn from the Case and Management Information System (CAMIS), an automated system which stores

data regarding referrals, placement, case activity, contracts, licensing, and other case-specific information. Additionally, the Administration relies upon regional hand counts for a few measures which to date have not been captured by the automated system.

FamLink

Children's Administration's Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS) called FamLink is the new case management tool transforming the way staff does business.

FamLink Release One launched in February 2009. It is one of the most important business tools available in supporting quality practice and consistency of service to children and families in Washington state.

The system provides:

- practice tools in support of child safety, permanency, and well-being
- information about families and staff who work for children
- services for children and families
- payments to our providers

This integrated system creates an environment that allows supervisors and staff to review cases monthly online in FamLink, which enhances the teamwork necessary for serving children and their families.

Release Two is scheduled for Spring 2010 and will expand FamLink functionality; broaden our interface capabilities; increase worker access to safety information; and enhance our fiscal roles in provider payment.

*Calendar Year noted as CY, Fiscal Year noted as FY, Federal Fiscal Year noted as FFY.

Overview

Children's Administration Activities

The Children's Administration provides responses to direct services, information and referral, and general inquiries to about 200,000 individuals or just over three percent of the state's population annually.

In Fiscal Year 2008, the Administration received more than 91,000 requests for new services. Many of those requests concerned families in turmoil seeking access to resources or supports. These lower risk families are often referred to community-based service providers who help families manage crises and restore family stability.

Annually the Administration processes referrals of alleged abuse or neglect regarding about 1 out of every 36 children in the state.

At any given time there are about 10,000 children in out-of-home placement. At the end of FY 2008 about 3,900 of those children were in placement with relatives, preserving critical family connections for those children.

About 7,500* children entered Washington state out-of-home care and about 7,100 exited care. Most of the children exiting care were able to return home to the families from which they were removed.

Fiscal Year 2008 Children's Administration Service Delivery Activities**



*The number of children placed in out-of-home care consists of all children in an open out-of-home placement event, including children in guardianships and tribal custody.

**Source: EMIS report and September 2008 CAMIS download. All numbers are rounded to the nearest 100, with the exception of exits from out-of-home care.

†Unduplicated count of children in placement. Children may experience more than one placement during a fiscal year.

††Unduplicated number of children exiting from out-of-home care. Children may exit from out-of-home care more than once during a fiscal year, and previous Children's Administration Performance Reports used duplicated counts.

‡Other exits include: reached age of majority, transfer of custody, no exit reason was documented, or deceased.

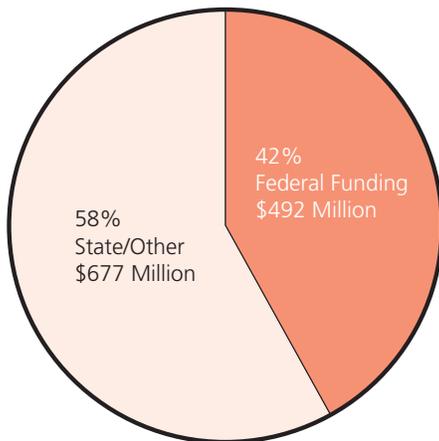
Comprehensive Service Delivery

Children’s Administration is charged with the task of helping families, tribes, and communities protect children from harm and keep them in stable homes. The Administration strives to provide culturally competent services that are easily accessible to families in the communities of which they are a part.

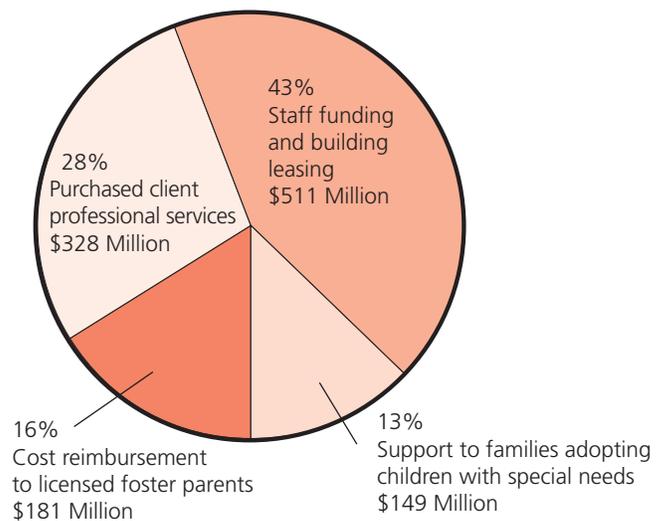
The state is divided into six regions with 45 field offices. The number of offices per region is determined by population density and other factors which indicate need in a given area. In addition to the skilled workforce employed by Children’s Administration, the Administration relies heavily upon community-based contracted service providers throughout the state to deliver the greatest array of accessible services to children and families.

About 48 percent of the Administration’s biennial budget comes from federal funding. The majority of funds distributed, about 57 percent of \$980 million, are used to provide reimbursement to families and facilities caring for children, support families adopting children with special needs, and purchase client professional services designed to help children and to support and stabilize families.

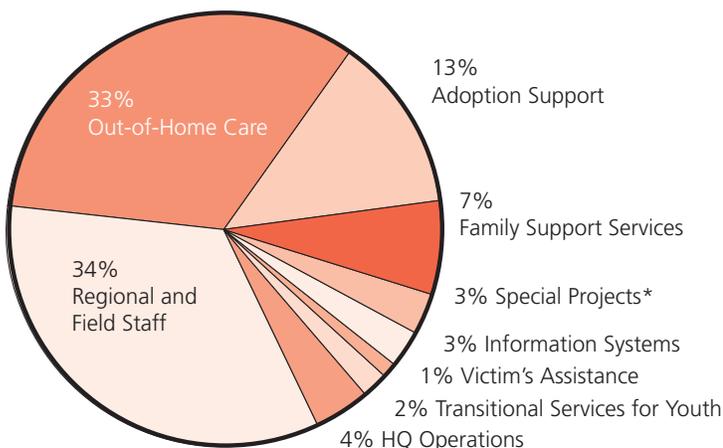
Forty-two percent of the budget comes from federal funds



Fifty-seven percent of the Children’s Administration budget funds services provided by non employees



Children’s Administration provides a wide array of services



*Special projects include: Independent Living Services, Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect grants, Staff Development, Training Academy, Quality Improvement, Indian Child Welfare, and other federal, state, and private foundation grant-funded programs.

Child Demographics

Child abuse and neglect are issues that impact every facet of American society. No single culture, race, class, gender, age, or belief group is immune from the identified causes of child abuse or the external stressors that can give rise to family tensions.

Evidence shows that while no one group has been proven to abuse their children at higher rates than another, certain children of color tend to come to the attention of child protective services at higher rates, are removed from their homes more often, and remain in care longer than other children.

This disproportionate representation of children of color varies by state with some states seeing higher rates of certain racial groups such as African American or ethnic groups such as Hispanic children. In Washington state, African American and Native American children are significantly overrepresented when compared to the general population. The Administration, in collaboration with various partners, is making concerted efforts to address overrepresentation of children of color and to ensure that their needs, as well as the needs of all children involved in the child welfare system, are met.

Cultural Competence

The Administration strives to ensure that it hires a highly skilled diverse workforce to reflect the children and families we serve and to provide quality services.

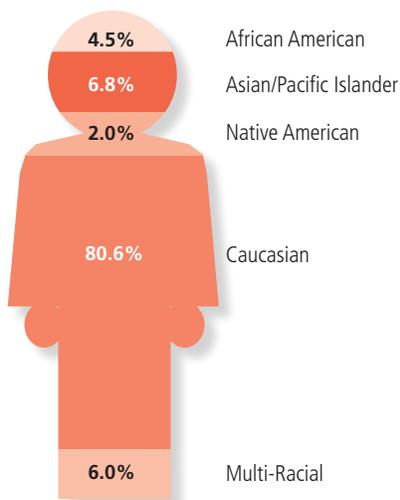
Children's Administration Social Workers by Race/Ethnicity[†]

African American **6.5%**
 Asian **5.1%**
 Caucasian **76%**
 Native American **3.8%**
 Hispanic **8.2%**

[†]Data as of June 30, 2008, provided by the Department of Social and Health Services Office of Diversity Affairs.

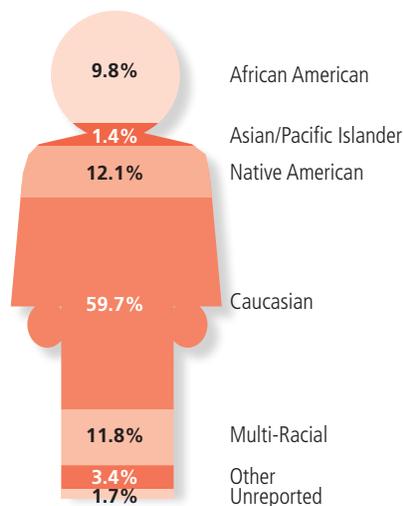
Race

General Child Population*



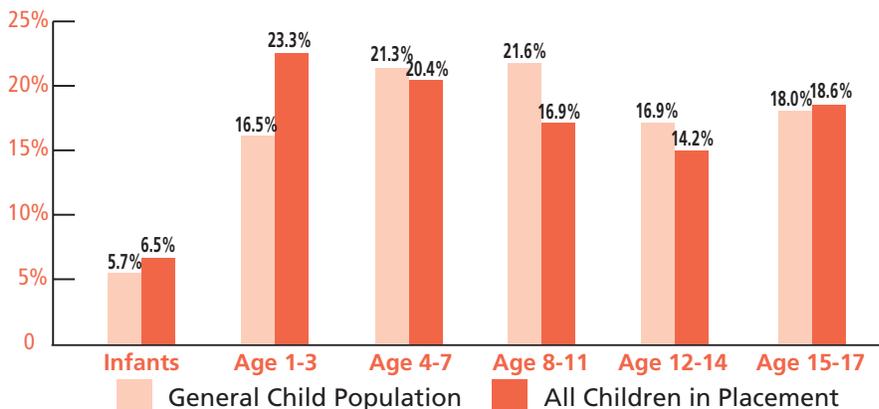
Race

All Children in Placement**



	General Child Population*	All Children in Placement**
Ethnicity		
Hispanic	15.5%	15.5%
Gender		
Male	51.2%	50.8%
Female	48.8%	49.2%

Age General Child Population* and All Children in Placement**



*The Washington State population of children ages 0 to 17 was estimated to be 1,850,300 (rounded to the nearest hundred) as of July 1, 2005. Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

** Based upon the population of children ages 0-17 in out-of-home care in FY08. Source: September 2008 CAMIS download.