

# Children's Administration

P e r f o r m a n c e R e p o r t 2 0 0 2

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

Dennis Braddock, *Secretary, DSHS*  
Rosalyn Oreskovich, *Assistant Secretary*  
Children's Administration



December 2002

## Numbers to Remember

To Report Child Abuse or Neglect

1-800-562-5624

or

1-866-EndHarm

To Become a Foster or Adoptive Parent  
Childcare Resource and Referral Services

1-888-794-1794

1-800-446-1114



“We are charged with serving and protecting those least equipped to protect themselves: Washington’s abused and neglected children.”

— Rosalyn Oreskovich, Assistant Secretary





# Table of Contents

Message from the Assistant Secretary .....	1
Mission .....	2
Vision & Guiding Principles .....	3
Introduction .....	4
Overview - Children’s Administration Activities .....	5
Overview - Comprehensive Service Delivery .....	6
Achieving Results - Safety .....	7
Children will be safe from abuse and neglect: CPS referrals .....	8
Safety overview .....	9
Defining abuse and neglect .....	10
Initiate timely investigations .....	11
Reduce chronic maltreatment/families chronically referred to CPS .....	12
Reduce recurrence of maltreatment/children who are re-abused .....	13
Reduce recurrence of maltreatment/children’s cases staffed with CPT teams .....	14
Improve safety when returning children home .....	15
Increase safety for children in out-of-home care/children abused in licensed care .....	16
Increase safety for children in out-of-home care/foster home health and safety checks .....	17
Child Fatality Review Process .....	18
Achieving Results - Permanency .....	20
Permanency overview/number of children in out-of-home care .....	21
Children adopted .....	22
Children placed in guardianships .....	23
Children returned to parents (reunifications) .....	24
Length of time to return child to parents .....	25
Decrease length of stay without increasing re-entry/length of stay for children in care .....	26
Decrease length of stay without increasing re-entry/children re-entering care .....	27
Increase stability for children in out-of-home care/no more than two placements .....	28
Decrease over-representation of minority children in care .....	29
Increase relative placements .....	30
Preserve connection with significant people/child and parent visitations .....	31
Achieving Results - Well-Being .....	32
Well-Being overview .....	33
Increase worker visits with children /children visited quarterly by their social worker .....	34
Children are supported in age appropriate vocational and educational programs .....	35
Youth in care who receive Independent Living Services .....	36
Achieving Results - Supporting Client Outcomes .....	37
Supporting Client Outcomes overview .....	38
Number of licensed foster homes available .....	39
Number of minority foster homes available .....	40
Foster care licensing applications that take more than 90 days to complete .....	41
Accomplishments .....	42
Challenges .....	44
Making a Difference .....	46
Appendix A - Acknowledgments .....	48
Appendix B - Glossary, Frequently Used Acronyms .....	49
Appendix C - Strategic Plan Summary .....	50
Appendix D - Organizational Structure .....	52
Appendix E - Region and Field Office Map .....	Inside Back Cover



# Message from the Assistant Secretary

I am pleased to present the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services Children's Administration Annual Performance Report.

As an agency responding to an ever growing and changing community, we are charged with serving and protecting those least equipped to provide for and protect themselves: Washington's abused and neglected children.

We remain committed to the work of ensuring safety, permanency and well-being for children. In these difficult times, it is even more important that we work hard to provide the quality services that will make a difference in the lives of those we serve. These children and families have many strengths and often make great efforts to overcome the issues that bring them into the child welfare system. It is incumbent upon us to deliver positive, supportive services, even as we face very significant budget constraints.

The Children's Administration continues to develop our performance measurement system in an effort to assess performance in key service areas of safety, permanency, well-being and supporting client outcomes. Our talented staff and service providers make a difference every day in the lives of children and families. Even while we work hard to provide quality services, we also recognize the importance of a healthy organization in order to provide the hopeful, positive message to our clients that allows us to more effectively accomplish the vital work that we do.



Building community capacity is an increasingly important objective so that children and families can receive the services and support they need within the communities in which they live. As part of DSHS, we are committed to the integration of services including the "No Wrong Door" initiative. "No Wrong Door" projects are examples of how DSHS is working to provide services to shared clients in a coordinated and cost-effective manner.

In an effort to evaluate and improve the services we provide consistent with nationally recognized standards, the Administration is working to become nationally accredited in all 44 field offices by 2006. Accreditation will help support us in making sure our clients receive consistently high quality services throughout the state and will improve accountability to clients, communities, the legislature and the public.

In Fiscal Year 2002, the administration demonstrated improvement in quality of care for children and families in the following areas:

- Implementation of a new risk assessment and safety planning process as part of the Kids Come First Action Agenda.
- Increased the total number of foster homes available to care for children.
- Increased the percentage of foster children placed with relatives.
- Increased the percentage of children regularly visiting with their parents/permanent caregivers while placed in out-of-home care.
- Doubled the number of former foster youth ages 18-21 who received Independent Living Transition Services.

In this our sixth annual performance report, we examine our efforts to ensure safety, provide permanency, foster well-being and support client outcomes in every Children's Administration program throughout Washington. This report describes our successes, our struggles and the stories of amazing children who remain our inspiration.

While aware of the difficult tasks in the year ahead, we remain undaunted and dedicated to rising to the challenge. We are committed to continuing efforts toward recruitment and retention of quality foster homes to care for children.\* We will remain focused on ensuring permanent homes for children in care. We are preparing for the 2004 Child and Family Services Review, which determines whether our state is in compliance with federal mandates in key service areas. We will continue to work tirelessly to promote the safety, permanency and well-being of children throughout Washington State.

The children are depending on us.

  
Rosalyn Oreskovich, MSW  
Assistant Secretary

\* If you are interested in becoming a foster parent, please call 1-888-794-1794



The mission of the Children's Administration is first to **protect** abused and neglected children, to **support** the efforts of families to care for and parent their own children safely, and to **provide** quality care and permanent families for children in partnership with Tribes, foster parents and communities.

*Protecting children, supporting families,  
providing quality care with our partners.*

## Vision

The Children's Administration seeks to be an organization that provides excellent services which produce successful safety, well-being and permanency outcomes for children and families. We strive to be innovative and results driven, responsive to changing needs, accountable, and guided by a commitment to professionalism and excellence in the field of child welfare. We endorse and encourage an environment of trust and mutual respect. We promote teamwork and embrace our partnerships with Tribes, foster parents and communities in the design and delivery of child and family services we would be proud to offer our own families.

## Guiding Principles of the Children's Administration

### We Believe Children Who Have Been Abused and Neglected Deserve Quality Services

We believe the safety of children is the first priority when making decisions about where they live when their parents are unable or unwilling to properly care for them. Protecting children is primarily the responsibility of families and communities, and we intervene to protect children only when families are unable to do so. We first seek permanent homes with parents, then with extended family members to maintain important family connections and heritage, and finally seek permanent homes with non-relatives. We support family and community partnerships that protect children, provide stability and expedite permanency in children's placements.

### We Support Families and Build on Their Strengths

We believe that families are the best place for children to grow and develop. The family is the best and most effective structure to assure stability, nurturing, care, and safety for its members, and families are responsible to provide for their children and make decisions concerning their children's welfare. We strive to recognize and support family strengths and culture, to discover options, to help families make choices, and to help them understand the results of their choices.

### We Join With Foster Parents as Essential Partners in Caring for Children

We embrace the principles of the *Foster Parents' Rights and Responsibilities* statement, which guide the course of the relationship between foster parents and the administration toward a mutual goal of fostering safe, healthy children. We value foster parents as members of the child's team and advocates for children in their care, with the right to a supportive relationship with the agency.

### We Partner with Tribes and Communities in Serving Children and Families

We value partnerships with Tribes, communities, and public and private agencies to promote the safe and healthy growth and development of children in their own homes and in out-of-home placement. We encourage open communication and we work with communities to resolve issues. We strive to make decisions openly, with as much consultation and shared decision-making as possible. We support federally and non-federally recognized Tribes and off-reservation Indian organizations and their rights to provide for and nurture their own children.

### We Value Diversity and Respect

We value the racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity of our clients and staff. We are committed to tolerance and exceptional customer service which reflects respect and appreciation for diverse needs. We strive to provide services to children and families that are individualized, community based, culturally appropriate, and responsive. We work to develop and maintain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the people that we serve and contributes to the quality of life of our clients and the communities that we serve.

### We Encourage Excellence in All We Do

We encourage staff to be innovative and resourceful, making efficient use of state resources, while providing exceptional quality service. We strive to be open, caring and capable and to be accountable for the choices we make. Employees deserve to be supported and nurtured so they can support and nurture each other and the families we serve. We are committed to building on the strengths of others and to developing a professional and competent workforce.

# Introduction

The Children's Administration strives to provide quality services to Washington's most vulnerable children and their families.

In an effort to report findings about service delivery to key stakeholders as well as to maintain public and legislative accountability, this report is produced annually.

What began in 1996 as a ten-page statistical account of performance regarding legislative mandate, has evolved into an annual qualitative and quantitative account of the child welfare system in Washington State. The report strives to demonstrate system reform being championed by people committed to improving the quality of life for children and their families.

The data in this report is provided in response to legislative mandate in RCW 43.20A.870 and includes detailed responses to specific information required in legislative mandate through the Children's Administration's four priority goal areas.

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

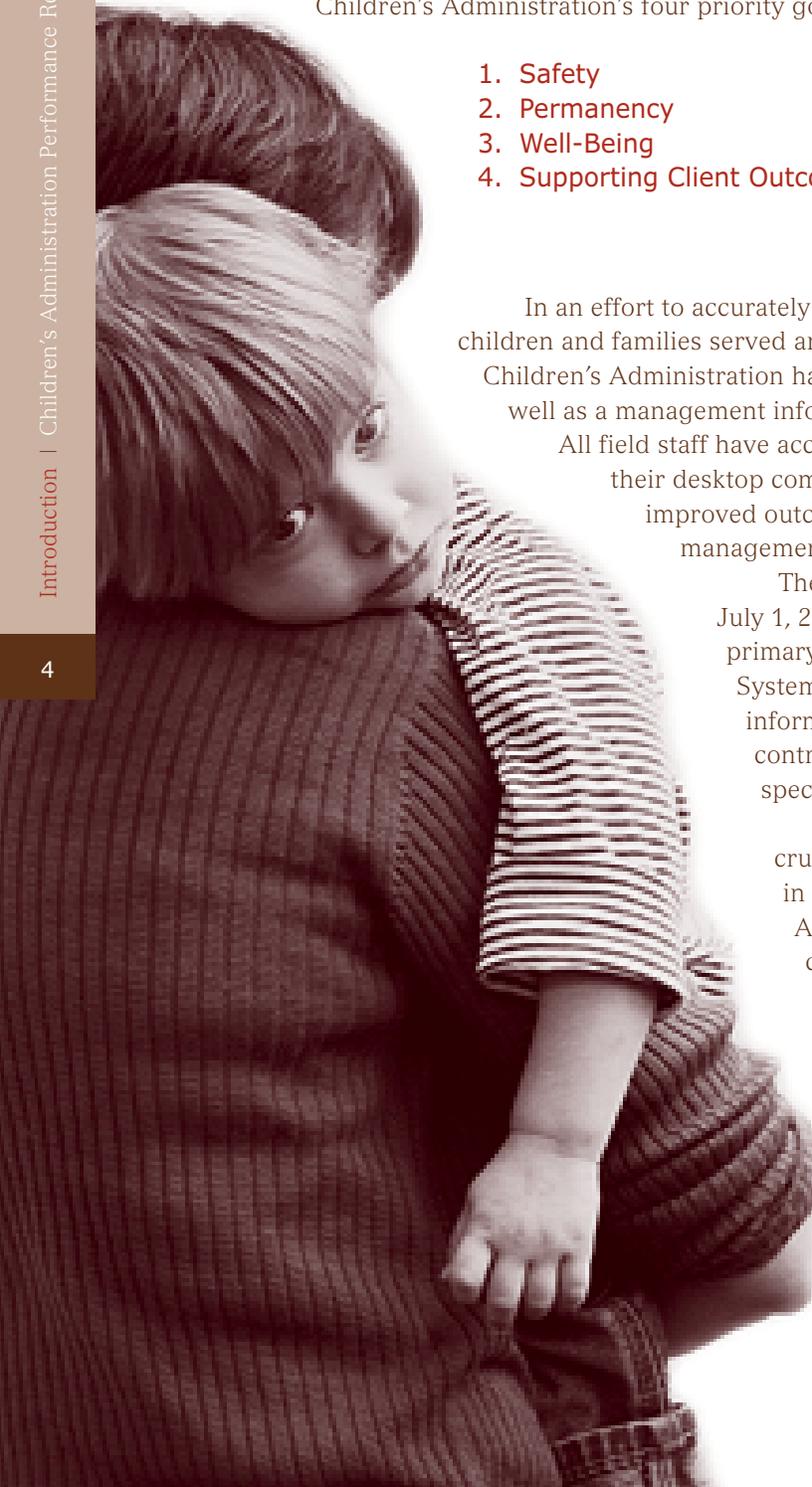
In an effort to accurately and adequately report on the number of children and families served and to track the specific services provided, the Children's Administration has developed a series of performance measures as well as a management information system designed to collect and store data.

All field staff have access to both office-level and client-level data from their desktop computers that allows them to use data toward improved outcomes for children and families and improved management of budgetary resources.

The data in this report reflects the period from July 1, 2001, until June 30, 2002 and is drawn from two primary sources. The Case and Management Information System (CAMIS) is a fully automated source of information about referrals, case related activities, contracts, and licensing actions as well as other case specific data.

Each region reports quarterly on measures crucial to the administration but currently unavailable in the automated system. The Children's Administration continually strives to improve data collection and tabulation methods in an effort to ensure data integrity.

It is the ardent hope of the authors, contributors, and publishers of this document that from within the narrative, data and charts, the faces of children will emerge.



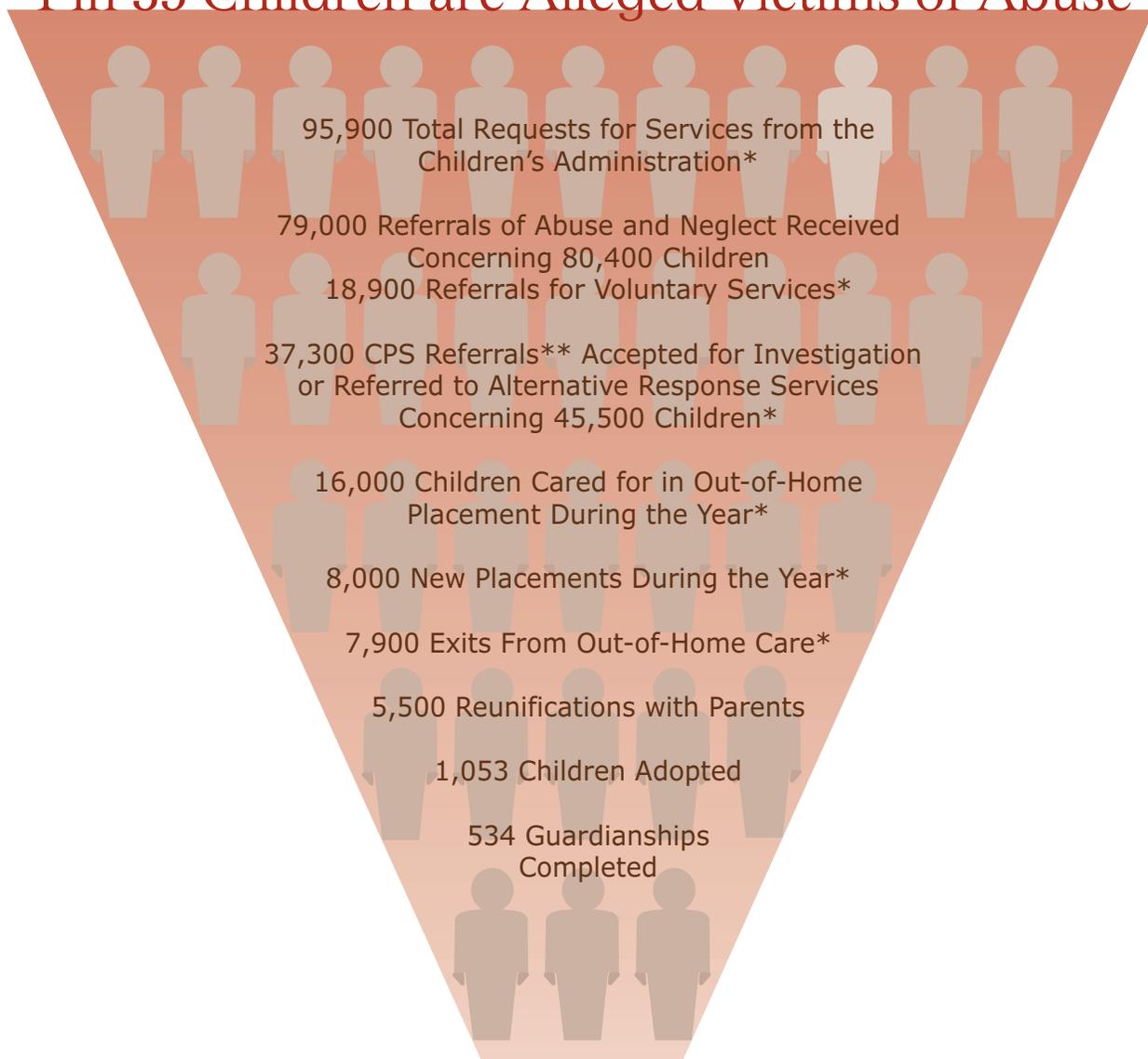
## Children's Administration Activities

Nearly 96,000 referrals for services came across the desks of Children's Administration personnel during Fiscal Year 2002. Each referral determined to be appropriate for Children's Administration services, was assessed, prioritized and met with information, resources or direct service provision.

About one in every 35 Washington state children was reviewed for appropriateness for services and when appropriate was referred to the Children's Administration by someone who believed that child may have been the victim of abuse or neglect. Each of those allegations of abuse or neglect was triaged, investigated and addressed with the level of intervention deemed most appropriate under Washington State law.

A relatively small percentage of children referred for services require long-term placement through Children's Administration. This is due, in part, to the administration's commitment to support families and communities in caring for children in their own homes.

### 1 in 35 Children are Alleged Victims of Abuse



\* Rounded to the nearest 100

\*\* Excludes Division of Licensed Resources CPS referrals

# Overview

## Children's Administration Activities

The Children's Administration provides community-based services through six regions in 44 local offices. Each office and region is designed to provide responsive and culturally competent services for persons within a given geographic area of Washington State.

Direct client services and licensing services are administered through separate divisions in an effort to maintain adequate regulatory oversight.

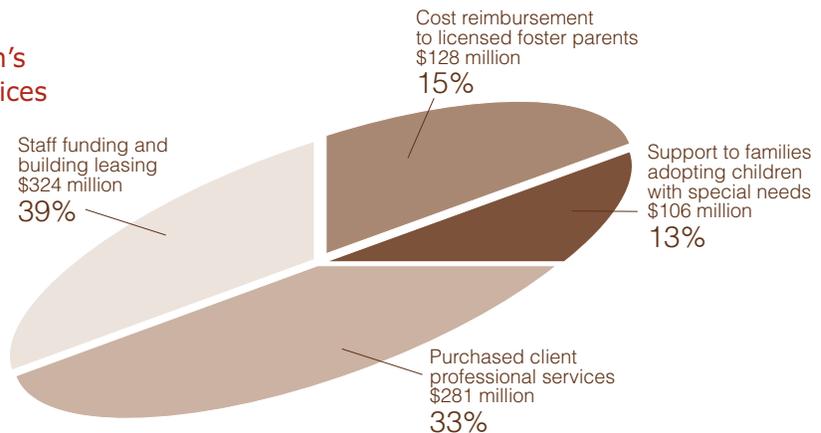
Investigation of child abuse and neglect complaints as well as child protection, family reconciliation, foster care and adoption services for children ages 0-18 are all provided by the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS). The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) provides foster care licensing services and investigates complaints regarding licensed foster homes, licensed facilities and state operated facilities.

## Comprehensive Service Delivery

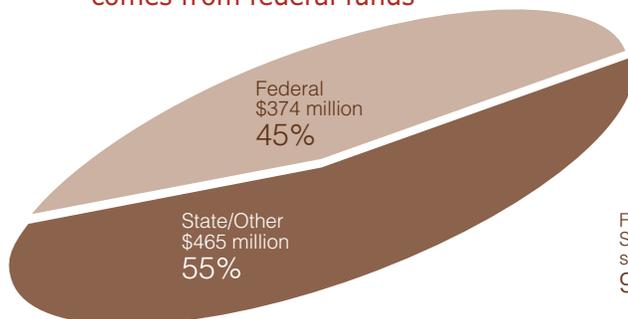
Children's Administration funds an integrated service delivery system to protect children, support families and provide children with safe, permanent homes. Sixty-one percent of the administration's budget is used to purchase services provided by over 6,300 foster parents and other out-of-home care providers, as well as services provided for children and families through 1,500 contracts. In addition, over 7,000 adopted children receive support for their special needs.

The Children's Administration 2001-03 biennium budget totals \$839\* million.

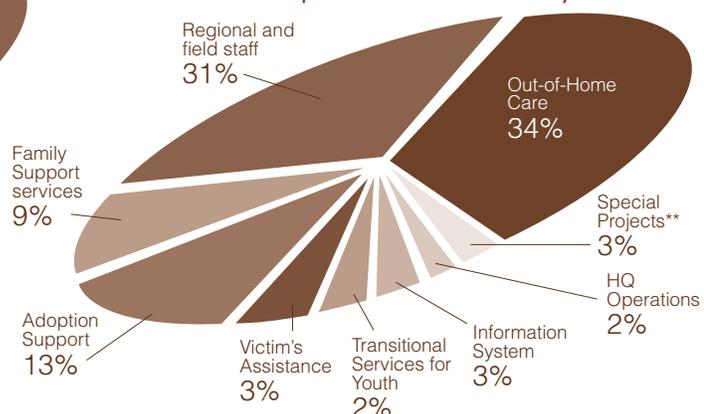
Over sixty percent of the Children's Administration budget funds services provided by non-employees



Forty-five percent of the budget comes from federal funds



Children's Administration funding provides a wide array of services



\* Does not include Family Policy Council Funding.

\*\* Special Projects include: Independent living Services; Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect (NCCAN) grants; Office of Children's Administration Research (OCAR); Staff Development; Academy Training; Quality Improvement Team (QI); Accreditation; Indian Child Welfare and other federal, state and private foundation grant funded programs.