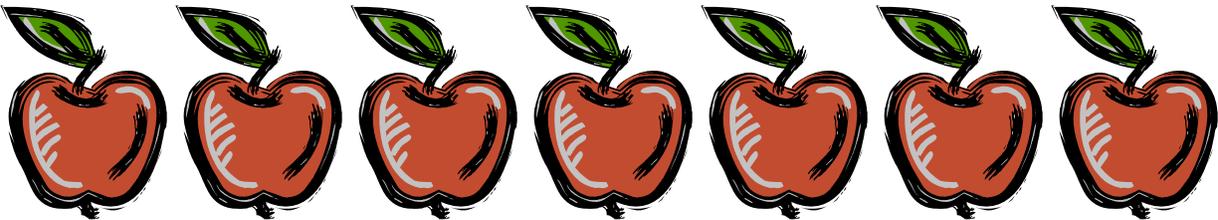




Section B: Program Information

(1) Child Welfare Services

**Child Safety
Child and Family Health and Well-Being
Permanency
Supporting Client Outcomes**



**Children's Administration
Department of Social and Health Services**

Annual Progress and Services Report FY 2007 - FY 2008

Child Welfare Services

Introduction

Protecting the children of Washington State from abuse and neglect is a top priority of the Children's Administration. To achieve this, the Children's Administration is continually working to provide quality services to vulnerable children and families, and to maintain accountability to those who use and those who fund services, as well as to the community at large.

Goals

The Children's Administration's 2007-2011 Strategic Plan identifies objectives, outcomes, and broad strategies in support of our four major goals of:

- ◆ **Child Safety:** Children will be safe from abuse and neglect.
- ◆ **Permanency:** Provide stable, nurturing, and permanent placements as quickly as possible for children who are placed into out-of-home care.
- ◆ **Child & Family Well-Being:** Help families and communities improve the well-being of children in their own homes and in out-of-home care.
- ◆ **Supporting Client Outcomes:** Continuously improve the organization's capacity to achieve excellent outcomes for children and families.

Although our goals and objectives remain clear, continuous improvement requires us to reassess our strategies to make sure we are expending resources to have the greatest impact on reaching them.

The major accomplishments are reported in this section and in the Appendix at the end of the APSR FY 2007. They reflect the most recent data available from the 2006 Children's Administration Performance Report and Washington State's status on the Federal Program Improvement Plan (PIP) as outlined in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan Eighth and Final Quarterly Report (June 2006 – September 2006).

Attached at the end of this section is information on **how to obtain a copy** of the final Comprehensive Improvement Plan Quarterly Report and at the end of this APSR is the **Appendix (1)** Program Improvement Plan (PIP) – Tracking FY 07 – FY 08.

Federal Program Improvement Plan Goals Met in FY 07

CA completed the two year Program improvement Plan (PIP) on September 30, 2006.

Washington State met six (6) of the seven outcome areas related to Safety, Permanency and Well-being and seven (7) out of seven (7) related to systemic areas. The placement stability target (item six (6)) is the only target not met. Our final report (8th quarter report) indicated a performance of 84.7% while the performance target is 86.1%. An approval by Region X was granted to track and achieve this target within the non-overlapping year.

All PIP action steps were completed within the two year PIP period, however, full implementation of a few items occurred outside the PIP time frame. For those items not fully implemented, Region X approved the state's request to include and track the items via the APSR. Therefore, we continue to track and report on these ongoing efforts. Specific details on these projects are provided in Appendix 1 at the end of this APSR.

➤ Child Safety Highlights

CA staff response time to allegations of abuse or neglect is getting faster. During FY 2005, CA policy was changed in April 2005 to require social workers to make face-to-face contact within 24

hours of a referral of a child assessed to be at risk of imminent harm. The federal improvement goal was met in FY 2005 (goal of 80% of children seen) and exceeded in FY 2006 (goal of 90% of children seen). The CA policy was changed in August 2005 to require social workers to make face-to-face contact with children within 72 hours of a non-emergent referral. The federal improvement goal was met in FY 2005 (goal of 80% of children seen) and within a few percent of meeting the goal in FY 2006 (goal of 90% of children seen).

CA has not met the federal standard of 6.1% or less of children becoming victims of re-abuse (10.1% in FFY05). The percentage is going down, but more work is needed to improve practices in this area.

For children in placement due to abuse or neglect with a prior placement due to abuse or neglect, a percentage of 6.3% is the average over FY02 – FY06. This is an improvement over the 7.6% average FY98 – FY01.

Washington's performance has been significantly better FY02 – FY05 than the federal standard of less than 5.7% of children in licensed care experiencing abuse or neglect while in out-of-home placement (.24% in FFY05). CA has also done well in annually performing random sample monitoring of more licensed foster homes than the federal standard of 10% or more (13.4% in FY06).

In addition to the above, the following was also accomplished within Child Safety:

- Provided refresher training on Safety and Risk assessments for all CA staff and supervisors.
- Implemented Family Team Decision Making meetings to engage families, relatives and providers to make the best decisions and plans to keep children safe.
- Developed the CPS/CWS Redesign model (implemented January 1, 2007) to support child safety and the earlier engagement of families in services.

➤ **Permanency Highlights**

The number of children cared for in out-of-home placements has shown an increasing trend since FY04 (8984 in FY04, 9447 in FY05, and 9962 in FY06), while the number of children reunified with their families decreased significantly between FY98 and FY03 (5619 in FY98 to 4629 in FY03) and has remained steady through FY06 (4590). Washington State is meeting the federal standard of 76.2% or more children reunified with their families within 12 months of out-of-home placement (76.3% in FFY06).

The number of adoptions is showing a significant increasing trend in Washington State since FY98 (854 in FY98 to 1291 in FY06). The federal standard of 32% or more children to be adopted within 24 months of placement into out-of-home care is showing an increasing trend and was met in FFY06 (18.9% in FFY98 to 32.6% in FFY06). The trend of placing children into guardianships is decreasing (a high of 651 in FY00 to 392 in FY06) possibly due to the commitment to pursue other preferred permanent plans for children.

The percent of children who have been in care longer than two years has decreased from 41.3% in FY98 to 34.6% in FY06. The median number of days children spend in out-of-home care has decreased from a high of 585 in FY98 to a low of 505 in FY05 and FY06.

Washington State is getting closer to meeting the federal standard of 8.6% or less children reentering out-of-home care within 12 months of reunification (10.3% in FFY06) and the federal standard of 86.7% of children with no more than two placements (85.5% in FFY06).

There is an increasing trend of children in placement with relatives from 29.5% in FY98 to 38.4% in FY06.

In addition to the above, the following was also accomplished within Permanency:

- Implemented the Kinship Care Framework (Initial License, Relative Home Study, Relative Search, Respite, etc.) laying down the foundation for working more effectively with relatives.
- Developed the Visitation Guide to support parent /child and sibling visits.
- Implemented the Shared Planning policy which emphasizes the inclusion of parents, children and foster parents in the decision making process. Strengthened policies to improve engagement with fathers and absent parents.

➤ **Child and Family Health and Well-Being**

CA is in the process of hiring and training additional social workers as part of our plan to increase the frequency of visits to children in person at the child's out-of-home placement from once every 90 days to once every 30 days. The policy now is to require 30-day visits for only the most vulnerable children, those who are dependents of the state but are living with their parents, and there has been an increase from 32.3% to 56.4% between March and September 2006. Washington State is exceeding the 90% target for children in out-of-home placements receiving visits from their social workers every 90 days (92.2%) in FY06.

CA launched a groundbreaking Education Advocacy Program in February 2006 in an effort to assist more youth in foster care to graduate from high school. Nearly 500 children were referred to this program by June 2006. Data is not available yet to evaluate this program's success, however it is hoped that it will increase the number of foster children graduating from high school, obtaining their GED, and entering an educational or vocational program by the time they left care.

To assist youth in the development of independent living skills to become self-sufficient adults, voluntary services were offered to youth as young as age 15. During CY05, 53.9% of youth exiting care after age 18 had received independent living services while in care.

In addition to the above, the following was also accomplished within Health and Well-Being:

- Implemented 30-day visits for children whose case is established as an in-home dependency.
- Implemented the Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) policy and guide to improve health care and education outcomes for children.
- Improved education support for children by implementing protocols with 98 school districts to improve communication, collaboration and coordination. Also implemented the Educational Advocacy program to provide assistance and advocacy for school age children and youth.
- Developed a video for adolescents in the foster care system to explain their rights, how the system works and how their voice can be heard.

➤ **Supporting Client Outcomes**

In FY06, CA focused their foster parent recruitment efforts on school-based recruiting and for homes specific to identified placement needs. The number of licensed foster homes available has been in a downward trend since FY03 (6284 available licensed foster homes). In FY06, there were 5841 available licensed foster homes. There is also a downward trend in the number of available minority licensed foster homes from a high of 1663 in FY02 to 1467 in FY06.

Since FY03, it is taking longer for foster homes to go through the process to become fully licensed. Process Improvement Consultants from the Boeing Company have worked with us to carry out a Foster Home Licensing Process Improvement Initiative. After a low in FY03 of 24.1% of foster homes that took more than 90 days to fully license, it spiked to a high of 33.8% in FY05. In FY06, 33.6% of foster homes needed more than 90 days to fully license.

In addition to the above, the following was also accomplished within Supporting Client Outcomes:

- Established Chemical Dependency Counselors in local CA offices to help screen and support families through the substance abuse assessment and treatment process.
- Introduced Evidence Based Practices including Multi-Dimensional Treatment Foster Care and Functional Family Therapy.
- Conducted a formal contract review process to help maximize resources and support better outcomes.

Additional Strategies Planned in FY 08

➤ **Child Safety**

- Redesign the Social Worker Academy training for new employees to support the Practice Model
- Begin implementation of a two-tiered CPS finding system
- Implement substance abuse training curriculum
- Implement Pre-Natal policy
- Implement updated Child Protection Team policy
- Implement Domestic Violence policy for intake and CPS
- Implement Adam Walsh legislation
- Implement ICPC legislation
- Implement Structured Decision Making for Risk Assessment (part of the Practice Model)

➤ **Permanency**

- Continue phase in plan of monthly visits
- Implement new legislation that expands the definition of who can be an unlicensed care giver
- Complete implementation of parent/child/sibling visit policy
- Continue regional and statewide strategies on placement stability
- Continue to expand Family to Family program

➤ **Child and Family Health and Well-Being**

- Implement CHET QA program to reduce the barriers to timely completion
- Track family and caregiver participation in shared planning meetings
- Increase the number of families who receive Family Team Decision Making Meetings (FTDM)
- Complete the development of the Family Assessment tool
- Implement the education mentoring program in four regions
- Implement "Bright Futures" to help foster parent deal with child mental health issues

➤ **Supporting Client Outcomes**

- Implement protocols for collaboration with service providers

➤ **Service Array**

- Work with JLARC to do a service gap analysis
- Continue to expand our capacity to provide evidence-based programs

➤ **Case Review System**

- Implementation of case review for Foster Parents "Right to be Heard" legislation
- Work with the courts to develop an annual report on cases that fall outside of AFSA permanency timeline.

➤ **Quality Assurance**

- Implement case review process for Indian Child Welfare to monitor and improve compliance with Indian Child Welfare Act

➤ **Staff and Provider Training**

- Revise Academy Program to reflect new Practice Model
- Provide training on Structured Decision Making and Solution Based Casework
- Develop expanded training for contracted service providers

Washington State's status on the Federal Program Improvement Plan is contained in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan Eighth and Final Quarterly Report (June 2006 – September 2006).

To review this report, you can go online to <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/CFSR/about.asp>.

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