



Annual Report to the Legislature

Foster and Adoptive Home Placement

RCW 74.13.031 (2)

December 1, 2007

Department of Social & Health Services
Children's Administration
Division of Program & Practice Improvement
PO Box 45710
Olympia, WA 98504-5710
360 902-8400
Fax: (360) 902-7903



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Executive Summary

This report is prepared in compliance with RCW 74.13.031 (2), which requires the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), Children's Administration (CA) to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on the agency success to:

- (a) Meeting the need for adoptive and foster home placements;*
- (b) reducing the foster parent turnover rate;*
- (c) completing home studies for legally free children; and*
- (d) implementing and operating the passport program required by RCW 74.13.285. The report shall include a section entitled "Foster Home Turn-Over, Causes and Recommendations."*

During Fiscal Year 2007 the CA activities related to recruitment and retention resulted in the following:

(a) Meeting the need for adoptive and foster home placements:

- There were 5,965¹ licensed foster homes, of which 1,348 were newly licensed, an increase in both from FY 2006.
- There were 1,456² licensed minority foster homes at the end of FY 2007, virtually unchanged from FY 2006.
- 1,280³ adoptions were finalized, down slightly from FY 2006 when 1,291 children were adopted.
- Over 70 percent of the adoptions finalized were for children by foster parents.
- 179 children were newly registered with the Washington Adoption Resource Exchange, to expand recruitment options for children in need of a permanent adoptive family. Of those children, 116 were also registered with the Northwest Adoption Exchange to expand recruitment options nationally.
- Relative placements for children/youth remained constant for the same period in time for July 07 and July 06 at 38.2%.⁴

¹ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download September 2007

² Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download September 2007

³ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Placement download September 2007

⁴ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Permanency download July 2007

(b) *Reducing the foster parent turnover rate:*

- Provided statewide support services through contracts with three private agencies.
- Provided training and education opportunities in a variety of ways, including mandatory pre-service training, the annual foster care conference, web-based training, and class room training. In FY 2007, 770 classes were provided and attended by 13,747⁵ participants. The foster care conference was attended by over 500 participants; 330 foster parents received scholarships to attend the conference, which included hotel, meals and travel expenses.
- Implemented an Annual Self-Assessment and Development Plan to ensure foster parents get the support and training they need.

(c) *Completing home studies for legally free children:*

- Provided adoption services to an average of 1,310 families at any given time, all of whom will have a home study completed prior to the adoption being finalized.

(d) *Implementing and operating the Passport Program*⁶:

- Completed 3,242 passports in FY 2007 on children eligible for the program.

⁵ The number represents duplicate participants

⁶ Passport is now called a Comprehensive Health Report

Foster Care Recruitment

The Children's Administration (CA) utilizes a variety of activities and community resources to recruit foster and adoptive parents across the state. Foster home recruitment targets families interested in providing temporary foster care for children in out-of-home-care.

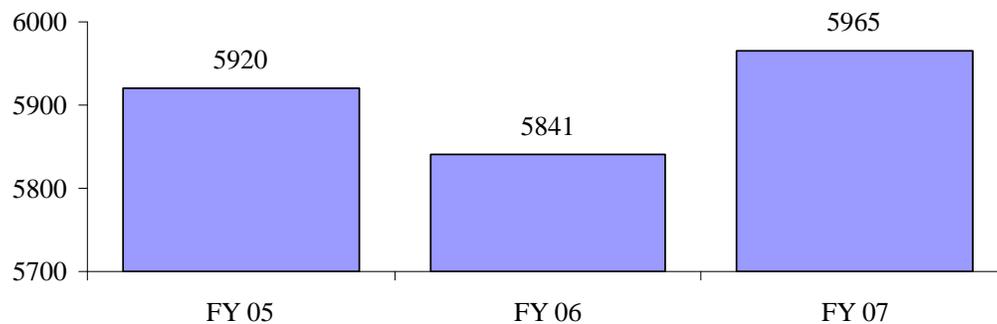
An adequate pool of foster homes contributes to placement stability for children by providing CA with greater ability to:

- Match a child's needs with a family who has the necessary strengths and skills to meet those needs;
- Provide a home in a neighborhood and educational district in which a child lives; and
- Increase the ability to place siblings together or close to each other.

At the end of FY 2007 there were a total of 5,965 licensed foster homes, the largest total number in the last three years. This includes over 4,600 foster homes licensed in previous years and over 1,300 foster homes newly licensed during FY 2007. Additionally the number of children placed in relative care has increased since July 2005 from 36.55% to 38.2% in both July 2006 and July 2007. Chart 1 below illustrates the increase in total licensed foster homes over the last three years.

Chart 1⁷

Total Licensed Foster Homes



Statewide Foster Care Recruitment

To enhance recruitment and retention opportunities in Washington contracts were awarded regionally beginning in October 2006. The 18-month contracts for recruitment and retention of foster parents began October 1, 2006 and will run

⁷ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download September 2007

until March 31, 2008. Three contractors were chosen through a formal request for proposal process.

The contracts were awarded to:

- Lutheran Community Services NW (Families for Kids) in Regions 1, 2 and 6;
- Olive Crest (Fostering Together) in Regions 3 and 4;
- Foster Care Resource Network in Region 5.

The contracts are regionally based and include:

- Combined responsibility for recruitment and retention;
- Regionally defined, specific performance outcome measures established for both recruitment and retention;
- Establishment of Oversight Committees in each region comprised of state and contracted staff who meet monthly to discuss and direct the contracted work.

Statewide Recruitment Strategies

The major recruitment strategy continues to focus on a grassroots model. This model encourages currently licensed foster families to mentor potential new families as they go through the licensing process. Grassroots recruitment efforts include:

- Using current or former foster parents as recruiters
- Working with faith-based communities
- Working with schools

In addition to the grassroots method of recruitment, the contracted providers utilize a variety of recruitment strategies including:

- Maintaining a statewide toll free line for recruitment (1-800-760-5340) which is managed by Lutheran Community Services – Families for Kids.
 - ◆ All calls are responded to within 24 hours
 - ◆ Support is provided from initial inquiry through licensing
- Attending large community events
- Advertising through:
 - ◆ Television
 - ◆ Radio
 - ◆ Local Newspapers
 - ◆ Flyers
 - ◆ Brochures

Through the Family to Family initiative, regions are identifying specific neighborhoods with high numbers of children removed from their family's care and targeting recruitment of foster homes in those neighborhoods. Family to Family coordinators are an integral part of the regional oversight committees that meet monthly to determine recruitment needs and coordinate efforts.

Children's Administration and its contractors began using a computer-based program which enables regions to map the locations from which children are removed. The location for foster homes and schools can also be mapped. This enables regions to more readily identify communities where homes need to be recruited to allow children to remain in their communities and schools. The visual display has proven to be a persuasive tool in engaging communities to join CA in caring for their children. Appendix A provides an illustration of the information received for one community in Washington. This type of mapping is being done in several communities around the state.

Children's Administration utilized free technical assistance (TA) through the Administration of Children and Families, the **AdoptUsKids** initiative. **AdoptUsKids** provides TA to help states and Tribes achieve their Title IV-B Child and Family Service Plan requirements and Title IV-E Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) targets on issues that pertain to the development and implementation of quality recruitment and retention services for foster and adoptive families.

The technical assistance was requested to assist Washington to develop and implement targeted recruitment and retention strategies, and develop effective recruitment materials. A two-day technical assistance forum was held in June 2007 which included 52 individuals representing recruitment and retention contractors and CA staff. Two follow-up meetings occurred in September 2007 and December 2007 to identify additional marketing techniques, messaging, and profile identification of successful foster parents in Washington State, to assist in targeted recruitment.

These targeted recruitment strategies are expected to help CA and the contractors as they work diligently to increase the number of licensed foster homes.

Newly Licensed Homes

Recruitment of new foster homes is a challenge in Washington State and nationally. Recruitment remains difficult for both Children's Administration and private child placing agencies. The recruitment challenges in Washington State are similar to those experienced nationwide:

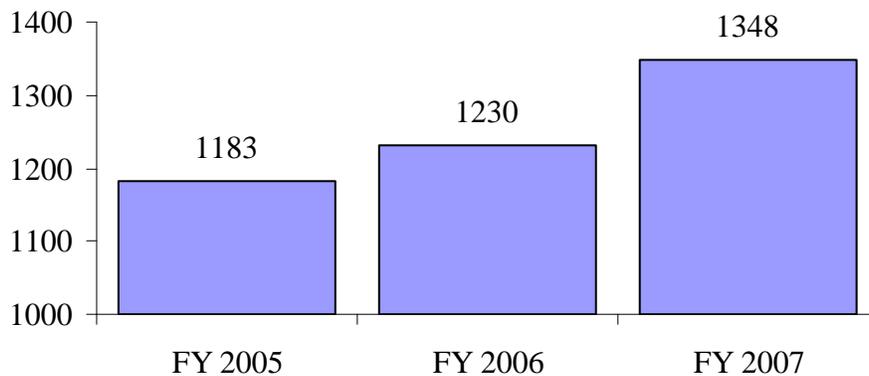
- Children in out-of-home care are presenting more difficult challenges to foster parents;
- Individuals or families may be reluctant to take on additional responsibilities of raising children if they are uncertain about their own job or economic status;

- The number of children in out-of-home care has increased to 10,250,⁸ an increase of more than ten percent since 2005. This increase has resulted in greater pressure to recruit homes for the increased number of children;
- Seventy percent of the children adopted in FY 2007 were adopted by licensed foster parents. Adoption is a positive outcome for children, but also a challenge for placement resources, as foster parents often leave the system when the adoption is complete.

In FY 2007 1,348⁹ new foster homes were licensed, an increase of nearly ten percent over FY 2006. The diligent recruitment efforts and collaboration among state and private agencies and improved licensing processes through the Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) is responsible for this increase. There has been a 14 percent increase in the number of newly licensed foster homes since 2005. Chart 2 below illustrates this growth.

Chart 2¹⁰

Newly Licensed Foster Homes



⁸ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Number of Open Placements– July 1, 2007

⁹ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download September 2007

¹⁰ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Licensing download September 2007

Foster Home Turn-Over: Causes & Recommendations

Retention of foster parents continues to be an issue nationally. CA currently has the highest number of licensed foster homes in the past three fiscal years. Even with this growth, there continues to be a shortage of licensed foster homes. Why foster parents stop fostering and why they stay continues to be an issue nationally. There are many reasons why foster parents stop fostering. Some of these reasons are positive, some are negative and some are beyond agency control.

Foster parents who are supported provide the foundation for a stable pool of homes. They also help attract new foster parents who will take children into their homes by speaking about the rewards of foster parenting and the support they receive. CA continues working toward improving the retention and support of current licensed foster care providers.

In Washington some of the positive reasons for no longer fostering include:

- The foster parent adopts the child they are caring for;
- The foster parent was a relative, kin, or family friend and wanted to foster a specific child and that child has returned home.

Negative reasons why families may leave include:

- Lack of support;
- Negative foster care experience (e.g. child behavior, placement breakdown).

Situations beyond agency control include:

- Changes in the family or extended family (e.g. health concerns, pregnancy, accidents);
- Family leaves the state for personal or employment reasons.

Statewide Retention Activities

Overall retention of foster homes has remained relatively stable over the past several years. CA measures retention using the three year licensing cycle to determine how long families maintain their foster care license. Looking at FY 1995 to FY 2007 69% of licensed homes were still licensed by year three. Retention of foster homes starts dropping during the second three year licensing cycle (the 4th year); with 38% keeping their licenses. CA has implemented several strategies to improve retention such as:

- Annual Self Assessment
- Health and Safety checks of 10% of the licensed foster homes
- Support
- Training

Increasing retention involves Children's Administration staff and contracted service providers.

The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) implemented an Annual Self-Assessment for all licensed foster parents in FY 2007. The Self-Assessment is an opportunity for foster parents to share their training and support needs and other concerns with CA. This will assist CA in determining the types of training opportunities that caregivers need in addition to identifying their support needs.

The Division of Licensed Resources staff continues to provide health and safety checks on ten percent of licensed foster homes each year which provides an additional opportunity for CA to identify and provide the support foster parents need.

The Children's Administration contracts for services to increase the retention of foster homes. Through regional performance based contracts, CA required each contractor to develop a plan for retention that included developing support systems for foster families and relative caregivers.

Support

The Children's Administration has made significant progress in providing support to foster parents caring for children in out-of-home care. Caregivers can receive support through a variety of different mechanisms. It can be as simple as a phone call with a social worker to discuss a child's case or as formal as receiving specific services (training, child care, etc) to assist with the parenting of a child. Support comes not only from the Children's Administration but through a variety of community partners. Some examples of available support are:

Support Groups

Through contracted services with three private recruitment and retention contractors, there have been 50 hubs, buddy systems, support groups and/or mentoring groups developed around the state to provide support to foster families. This is 25 percent more hubs/support groups than they were contractually required to develop.

- A hub is one family at the center of several foster families facilitating monthly meetings and bringing the families together to share resources, ideas, respite and training.
- A support group is foster parents meeting together regularly to connect and network with each other.
- A buddy system is the pairing of a veteran foster parent/family with a new foster parent/family. Sometimes, these individual pairings occur through a hub-type arrangement or support group.
- Mentoring serves as a method to provide guidance and support to foster parents going through the licensing process.

In the first six months of the retention/recruitment contracts (October 2006 – March 2007) over 2,000 individuals had attended a support group or hub meeting.

Crisis Support

Foster parents have additional supports available for crisis situations.

- Children's Administration contracts with a private provider to maintain a statewide after-hours support line which is available when local offices are closed. This telephone support line for foster and relative caregivers provides resource information and referral and crisis support.
- CA contracts with a private provider for neutral third party support for licensed foster parents undergoing a DLR/CPS investigation, referred to as Foster Intervention and Retention Support Team (FIRST). This service is available 24 hours a day.

Specialized Support

Children's Administration has established contracts in four regions to provide critical support services to foster parents caring for sexually reactive children, physically assaultive children or children with other high risk behaviors. There were no bidders during this contract period in two regions, so the services were not available.

Contractors provide:

- In-home case management;
- Short-term therapeutic and educational interventions using evidence-based practices, specifically Cognitive Behavior Therapy and Behavioral Chain Analysis;
- 24-hour a day support for those homes receiving the services.

Respite Support

CA continues to provide respite services to licensed foster parents offering two days of respite per month. Foster parents can accumulate respite of up to two weeks at a time.

Training

Foster parent training is an essential part of retention and support. Training and education provides caregivers opportunities to gain additional skills and knowledge to enable them to care for children in out-of-home care.

A majority of the training for caregivers is provided by the Resource Family Training Institute (RFTI). The staff offer training during the weekdays, weeknights and weekends to meet the needs of caregivers. These training are provided by Resource Family Training Institute and are available to all caregivers (licensed and unlicensed) free of charge.

Prior to licensure or adoptive home study approval, families must attend mandatory training:

- PRIDE pre-service training prior to foster home licensure and/or adoption home study approval.
- Foster parents are required to take HIV, First Aid, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens training as part of the licensure requirements.

Additionally, licensed foster parents are required to have 36 hours of on-going training within each three-year licensing period. This training is available through:

Specialized Class Room Training

RFTI provides training on a variety of topics pertaining to parenting, caring for children, and includes required training courses for families caring for sexually aggressive youth or physically aggressive youth. Classroom training is also available through Pierce College.

On-Line Training

The RFTI website provides video workshops as well as interactive online training. This allows caregivers to take courses at times that are most convenient to them. Upon completion of the training, caregivers are asked to complete an evaluation that queries their understanding of the workshop material and provides them with a Certificate of Completion. This training is available to anyone accessing the site at the following link: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/onGoingVid.asp>

Children's Administration contracts with Pierce College to provide additional on-line training courses for caregivers. Pierce College provides a wide range of training which compliments CA's training and provides an additional avenue of training options for caregivers.

The following training was provided in FY 2007:

1. PRIDE pre-service training
 - 210 classes provided to 3,700 participants
2. First Aid and CPR
 - 220 classes provided to 3,928 participants
3. In-service classroom training
 - RFTI training: 226 classes provided to 3,539 participants
 - Pierce College Training: 51 classes to 359 participants
4. In-service on-line training
 - RFTI On-line Web Based training: 23 classes to 1,941 participants
 - Pierce College on-line training classes: 40 classes to 280 participants

Training opportunities are advertised through the following means:

- Regional web sites
- CA foster parent web site:
<http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/fosterparents/training.asp>
- Monthly newsletter sent to all caregivers
- Quarterly mailing of the foster parent training calendar to all caregivers

Annual Conference

The Children's Administration, DSHS administrations and community sponsors support caregivers through the Annual Foster Parent and Caregiver Conference. The 2006 conference was attended by over 500 caregivers and professionals; where over 35 workshops on behavior management, mentoring youth, listening skills and working with Individual Educational Plans within schools were offered.

Assessment of Training Needs

CA contracted with Washington State University's Social and Economic Sciences Research Center for two surveys:

- A broad-based telephone interview survey of a random sample of 2,400 licensed and unlicensed caregivers (relative and non-relative). This survey focused on caregiver views on training, support, information sharing and participation in planning and decision-making related to children in their care. Results of this survey will be included in the 2008 report.
- Mailed on-line survey in April 2007 regarding the training needs of unlicensed caregivers.
- CA will be reviewing the results from both surveys to improve CA's training to both licensed and unlicensed caregivers.
- Survey results: <http://www1.dshs.wa.gov/ca/general/fostersurvey.asp>

Teamwork

The RFTI trainers support on-going outreach and support to caregivers by developing innovative ways to meet families' needs. During FY 2007 some activities included:

- Teaming with community partners to offer additional training and sharing of information.
- Monthly brown bag lunches for caregivers and staff where speakers on topics such as behavior management and community resources are featured. Self-study pamphlets are available.
- Supporting local recruitment and retention contractors by participating in support meetings.

The development of a stable pool of homes is a continual effort and CA is committed to identifying and implementing strategies to accomplish this

Adoption Recruitment

Adoption is not a temporary arrangement between individuals; it is a lifetime social and legal protective measure for children. Adoption for many is not an easy journey; it comes with many unanswered questions, good intentions and is not for everyone. Adoptive parents must go through an assessment that is often intrusive and requires dealing with difficult issues in order for the adoption home study evaluator to determine the fitness of the applicant (RCW 26.33.190). CA staff must have the skills to delicately handle difficult issues and in some cases assist families to understand that love is not enough and that perhaps adoption is not the best plan for them.

There are many factors to consider when choosing a family that can “best meet the needs of a child” on a lifetime basis. It requires keeping the best interests of the child as the focal point of adoption. It requires making placement decisions with known and available information as to which family is the best fit for a particular child. CA uses a shared decision making process to match adoptive parents with children with a plan of adoption.

Adoption Recruitment Activities

CA undertakes a variety of activities to recruit adoptive families for waiting children. These activities include hosting consortiums, specific recruitment contracts with community partners, and the use of local and national adoption exchanges.

Adoption Consortiums

Adoption consortiums are often the first step in recruitment for a child in need of a permanent adoptive family when the birth family and the current caregiver are not a permanent resource. An adoption consortium is a staffing that brings together both state and private agency staff to provide information about a child or children, learn about waiting adoptive families and learn about additional recruitment options. These consortiums occur in all six regions and build relationships with community partners and inter-regional linkages on behalf of children. For some children this is the only level of recruitment needed; for those whom an adoption consortium does not result in a match, adoption exchanges are used.

Local and National Adoption Exchanges

The Children's Administration contracts with the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE), a private agency with 32 years of recruitment experience and expertise, to place children on local and national exchanges. The Washington Adoption Resource Exchange (WARE) is a Washington State only recruitment resource. WARE provides a secure website that is password protected for CA staff and

private adoption agency staff to recruit and match children with approved adoptive families. This website provides current updated information on children in need of an adoptive family and on approved adoptive families.

WARE distributes a photo-listing book that is distributed to Washington State private agencies and CA social work staff who provide adoption services for children and families. The book provides a picture and a brief description of each child and is only accessed by social workers or families that have an approved adoptive home study. The children listed in the WARE book or on the WAREKids website include both children that are legally free and children that are not legally free but have a court approved plan of adoption. CA staff are required to register all children who are not in an identified adoptive home and have a permanent plan of adoption.

During FY 2007 there were 179 new children registered with WARE for a total of 391 children registered during the year. During this past year, 142 children registered with WARE were placed with permanent families.

Children who are registered with WARE for more than 90 days and are legally free have recruitment expanded to a national level that includes registration on the Northwest Adoption Exchange (NWAE) website www.nwae.org. NWAE served 116 new children for a total of 257 children in FY 2007; 95 of these children were placed with permanent families, 40 are on hold with potential pending placements, 23 children were withdrawn, and 99 children are still in need of matching with a family.

During this fiscal year, NWAE received 9,710 adoption home studies from families available to adopt children viewed from the website. Each one of those families received a personal response from NWAE staff. NWAE refers every appropriate family on to the child's social worker. Families that do not have an approved adoptive home study are referred to agencies that can complete the adoptive home study for them.

Child Specific Recruitment

Children's Administration contracts with NWAE to provide comprehensive recruitment activities for children who need an adoptive family and for whom other recruitment activities have not been successful. NWAE subcontracts with six to seven private child placing agencies, forming a partnership to provide this child specific recruitment program, known as Specialized Adoption Recruitment Project (SARP). Over the past six years, the program has demonstrated success in matching children with permanent families.

Child specific recruitment includes gaining a full understanding of the child's needs through discussion with the current caregiver, including determining if they might be a resource for the child. A relative search is also conducted, which can

include contacting relatives previously considered to ensure that all possible resources are explored. Focused, individualized and persistent recruitment can and does work for children who are considered the hardest to place.

Children’s Administration increased the total number of children enrolled in the Specialized Adoption Recruitment Project (SARP) to 60 children in FY 2007, from 36 in each of the previous five years. The increase was made to accommodate regions that were requesting additional children to be included in this specialized recruitment program.

Out of the 60 children enrolled in the project, 30 children were placed with adoptive families, 7 children had placements pending, 11 children were withdrawn at the request and/or in consultation with social workers, and 12 children are still waiting to be matched with a family. The children served this year presented with more difficult challenges to recruitment efforts. They were primarily older children (60 percent were age 10 to 16 years old) and several were part of a sibling group (9 sibling groups).

Sixty-two percent of the children enrolled in SARP achieved a permanent placement. While this is a decrease from previous years, the children currently enrolled in the project tend to be older and have more challenging behaviors than in previous years. A breakdown of the 60 children by age is:

Children in Child Specific Recruitment	
Age in Years	Number of Children/youth Enrolled
2-5	8
6-8	14
9-10	11
11-12	15
13-14	10
16	2
Total	60

Of the 12 children waiting to be matched with a family, nine children are over the age of nine and the other three comprise a sibling group, ages 5, 6 and 8.

Child specific recruitment continues to increase the probability of finding a permanent adoptive family for children where regular recruitment methods have failed.

Purchase of Service

The Purchase of Service (POS) program continues to be a successful means for recruitment of adoptive families for hard to place children. The program was

designed in the late 1980's and provides funding to private agencies in and out of the state of Washington to offset the cost of recruitment, training, transitioning and supervision of adoptive placements for eligible children. Eligibility is based upon the child being registered with WARE, and the length of time they are registered prior to identification and placement with an adoptive family.

CA develops individual contracts for each eligible child placed. The contracts are performance based and allow for two payments, one for the adoptive placement and one at the time of finalization of the adoption. If a child disrupts from the placement, the second half of the fee is not paid. The POS program is an avenue to access adoptive placements for children when an appropriate family has been located through a private agency in Washington State or nationally.

In FY 2007, 46 children were referred to the program which resulted in 35 specific contracts for adoptive placements. Four adoptions have been finalized during this fiscal year and the remaining children are pending adoption finalization.

Heart Gallery

The Children's Administration continues to participate in the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Washington State Heart Gallery exhibit which includes a collection of 65 portraits of children, teens, adults, families and seniors supported by DSHS programs. The [Washington State Heart Gallery](#) is a unique portrait exhibit of compelling photographs of DSHS clients. Twenty-two of the Northwest's top photographers volunteered their expertise to create the stunning visual images.

The goal of the Heart Gallery is to inspire the public to step forward as:

- Adoptive and foster families
- Mentors for at-risk teens
- Caregivers and companions to elderly people and people with disabilities
- Supporters for the Governor's Scholarship Fund for youth in foster care
- Potential employers of people with developmental disabilities, or respite care providers for families of people with developmental disabilities

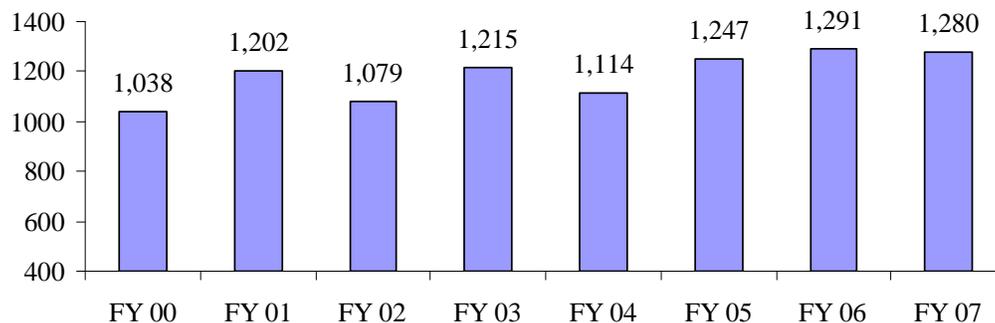
The Washington State Heart Gallery has been well received around the state; however, the overall effectiveness of the program for children in need of adoptive families has not yet been determined. In FY 2007, 20 children in need of a permanent adoptive family were included in the project. Nationally, Washington was the fifth state to start utilizing a Heart Gallery format for recruitment and today there are 48 states participating with over 100 Heart Galleries nationwide. Washington continues to be the only state to expand the Heart Gallery effort to include other programs (mentoring, volunteers and foster parent recruitment).

Finalized Adoptions

The Children's Administration (CA) continues to make every effort to establish permanency for children unable to return to the care and custody of their birth parents through adoption, third party custody, dependency guardianship and long-term care agreements with foster parents or relatives. Permanency through adoption was established for 1,280 children in the care and custody of CA during Fiscal Year 2007.

Chart 3¹¹

Finalized Adoptions



Home Studies for Legally Free Children

The Children's Administration provides adoption services to many families throughout the year; the number of families receiving adoption services is determined by looking at a point in time. In July 2007 there were 1,310 open cases to families receiving adoption services, up from July 2006 with 1,288 open cases. Not all the children adopted from foster care are adopted by families that have completed home studies by CA. Some children are placed with adoptive families that receive services through a private agency either in Washington or in another state.

Adoption services provided by CA to adoptive families include:

- Completion of adoptive home studies, if one has not been done privately
- Child identification
- Transition support for successful placement
- Post-placement services to the child and family
- Assistance with adoption finalization and application for Adoption Support

¹¹ Children's Administration Decision Support Unit; Source CAMIS Placement download September 2007

Passport Program

Implementing the Passport Program

The Passport Program was established in 1998 and continues to be a collaborative program between the Children's Administration, other DSHS administrations, and the local public health jurisdictions statewide.

From 1998-2006, the Passport Program primarily focused on children birth to three years old and children who were moving toward adoption, regardless of their health issues. In 2006, new referral criteria were developed, shifting the focus so that children with significant health needs receive a comprehensive health report through the Passport Program regardless of age.

Operating the Passport Program

Current Referral Criteria

Current eligibility criteria are based on risk factors that identify children and youth who are in greatest need of the services of the Foster Care Public Health Nurse (FCPHN). During the first 30 days of placement, screening specialists review the risk indicators. If any of the risk indicators are present, the screening specialist makes a referral directly to the FCPHN who then determines if the child needs a comprehensive health report or other health related services. The child may also be identified at any time during placement by the assigned social worker as needing the services of the FCPHN. After consultation with the FCPHN, a determination is made regarding eligibility for services

Foster Care Public Health Nurse Services

Foster care public health nurses are contracted to develop a comprehensive health report for eligible children. Public health nurses research and collect health information from birth to present for each child referred. The public health nurse provides a comprehensive report of the child's history, including results from the Child Health and Education Track (CHET) screening report, and a summary of the child's current health status. This report is provided to the assigned social worker and the child's caregiver, along with nursing recommendations, training/consultation, and anticipatory guidance regarding the child's health needs.

Specific responsibilities of the foster care public health nurse include:

- Identifying, gathering, interpreting and compiling all available health history information on referred children into the CAMIS Passport module (or replacement model)
- Alerting the child's social worker immediately upon identification of any significant health issues requiring follow-up prior to completion of the product

- Consulting with the social worker or care provider upon request when a health concern is identified or health-related information and materials are needed
- Facilitating assessment, education and referral to health services, as needed or requested
- Providing a signed health report and recommendations and all obtained medical records to the assigned social worker within five days of completion,
- Providing a signed health report and recommendations to the caregiver

Results

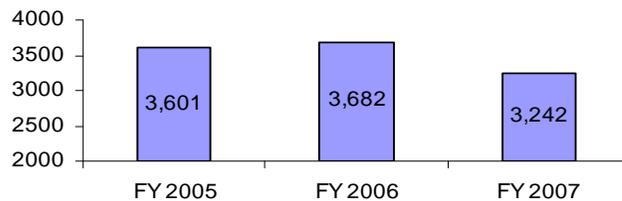
The changes implemented by Children’s Administration in FY 2006 resulted in a reduction in the number of enrolled children; however, it did help to better serve those children and youth who would benefit most from these services. During FY 2007, there were 3,242 comprehensive health histories and recommendation letters completed and 2,551 health and training/consultation contacts.

The passport for these children takes significantly more time and reflects their complex medical needs. The average length of time to complete a comprehensive health report now takes between 15 -18 hours.

Chart 4 below provides information on the number of Comprehensive Health Histories completed for the past three fiscal years. The data for FY 07 reflects an 11 percent reduction in children served; however the children served had significant health needs and reflects the new referral criteria.

Chart 4¹²

Comprehensive Health Histories Completed by Fiscal Year



The Passport Program continues to improve the identification of children who can benefit most from the program. Although there has been a reduction in the number of children served; CA and the FCPHN are now providing services to the children most in need of the service.

¹² Children's Administration Passport Hand count

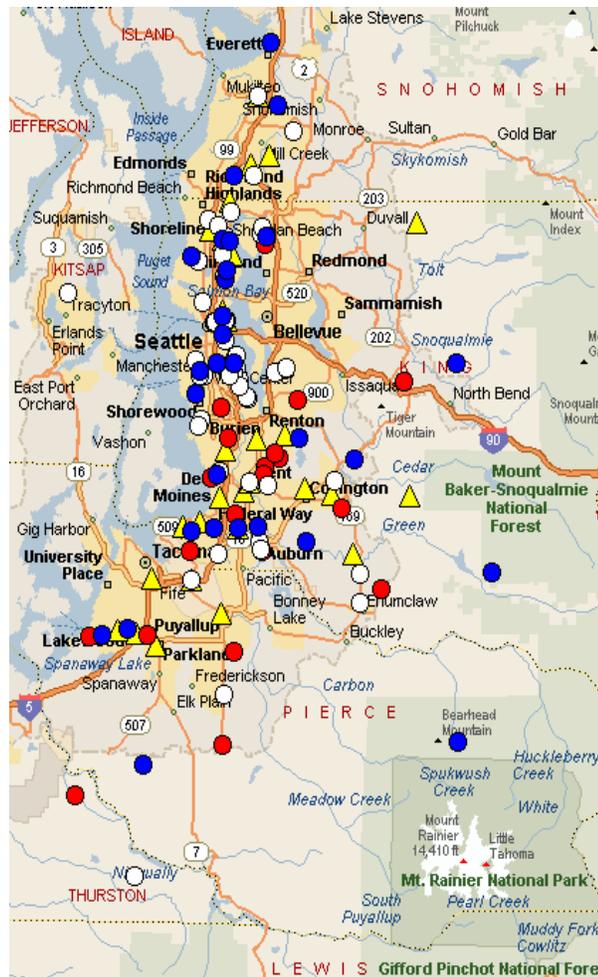
APPENDIX A

Mapping Example Used for Recruitment

This map shows the current placement of the children removed from four zip codes

- 98118 (Seattle) Removal Homes
- ▲ 98002 (Auburn) Removal Homes
- 98122 (Seattle) Removal Homes
- 98003 (Federal Way) Removal Homes

ONLY 7% OF CHILDREN REMOVED FROM THEIR HOMES IN ZIP CODES 98122, 98118, 98002 AND 98003 ARE PLACED WITHIN THEIR ZIPCODE.



APPENDIX B

Licensing Requirements

From inquiry to full licensure there are a number of steps that prospective foster parents must complete. Not every family that begins the process will become fully licensed, either due to a personal decision or as a result of a negative assessment. The foster parent licensing process is designed to:

- Educate families regarding the types and needs of children residing in out-of-home care;
- Identify CA expectations and requirements;
- Enable the applicant to determine if foster parenting is right for their family;
- Allow the agency to assess the appropriateness of each family to meet the health and safety needs of children; and
- Prepare families to meet the minimum licensing requirements (WAC 388-148).

The licensing process includes:

- Completion of 30 hours of pre-service training plus 3 hours of orientation;
- Completion and approval of a criminal history background and child abuse and neglect check on all adults living in the home;
- References checked;
- Home evaluated to meet minimum licensing requirements;
- Completion of a home study that includes an evaluation of the family's ability to care for foster children.

The Division of Licensed Resources (DLR) strives to complete the entire foster home licensing process within 90 days of receiving the complete application.