



District of Columbia Government Child and Family Services Agency



**Annual Public Report
FY 2011**

MISSION

The mission of the Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) is to promote the safety, permanence, and well-being of children and families in the District of Columbia.

PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT ON PERMANENCY

In 2009, CFSA adopted the following philosophical statement on permanency to guide the practice of establishing the lifelong connections that are essential to a child's overall well-being:

Permanency is reunification, adoption, guardianship or legal custody. When these options are exhausted, CFSA will assure the establishment of an enduring connection with at least one committed adult who is safe, stable and able to provide the following components of a supportive relationship: 1) physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and spiritual well-being; 2) respect for racial and ethnic heritage and traditions; 3) respect for maintaining natural bonds with the birth family; and 4) lifelong support, guidance and supervision to the youth as the youth transitions from foster care to self-sufficiency.

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Introduction

In 1997, the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA), Public Law 105-89, was signed into law, making it the first substantive change in child welfare legislation since the *Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980*, Public Law 96-272. The intent of the federal ASFA is to ensure that children and youth in foster care achieve permanency through reunification or, if reunification is not possible, then permanency shall be achieved through an alternative plan in as safe and as timely a fashion as possible.

Reflecting the service delivery and best practices requirements included in the federal ASFA, the District of Columbia established the DC Adoption and Safe Families Amendment Act of 2000 (DC ASFA) in March 2000. In addition to federal compliance, the DC ASFA requires CFSA to implement and maintain system-wide operational improvements for the District's child welfare system.

The Child and Family Services Agency's (CFSA) 2011 Annual Public Report (APR) details CFSA's efforts to achieve the permanency and child safety requirements included in the DC ASFA while reinforcing the principles and guidelines of the federal ASFA. To this end, CFSA's 2011 APR details the Agency's accomplishments and efforts to meet the requirements of DC ASFA.

The following information is presented in the report:

- A review of the Agency's DC ASFA-related accomplishments during FY 2011 (October 1, 2010 - September 30, 2011).
- Additional Agency accomplishments that are currently ensuring quality services to children and families.
- Statistical analyses of FY 2011 data that relates to CFSA's foster care population, including data on placements and exit data.
- A description of the methods for the evaluation and assessment of the Agency's functioning, including findings from internal and external sources that determine areas of focus for improving CFSA case practice and outcomes.
- A preview of priority areas of focus for FY 2012.
- Recommendations for possible future legislation and/or service developments that will further the mission of the Agency.

Requirements of DC ASFA

1. Abused and neglected children shall have case plans reviewed periodically to determine safety and progress toward achieving permanence.
2. Reasonable efforts are made to reunify children with their families, unless contrary to the child's safety.
3. Reports of abuse and neglect are expeditiously investigated and appropriate action is taken.
4. Families of abused and neglected children are provided necessary services to ameliorate problems and, when possible, to reunify.
5. Quick action is taken to implement a permanency plan of adoption or another appropriate alternative planned permanent placement if family preservation or reunification services are unsuccessful.
6. Criminal record checks are performed as part of the licensing process for all prospective kinship caregivers, foster or adoptive parents, or legal guardians.
7. Administrative reviews and permanency hearings are held in a timely manner for all children adjudicated as neglected.
8. Heard in neglect and parental termination cases is provided to a child's placement resource, foster or pre-adoptive parent, kinship caregiver, legal guardian, as well as the child's therapist.
9. Procedures related to interstate adoptions and medical assistance are established.

1: Review of Accomplishments in FY 2011

The following accomplishments are organized according to the nine DC ASFA requirements cited in the *Introduction* to this year's APR:

1. Abused and neglected children shall have case plans that are reviewed periodically to determine safety and progress toward achieving permanence.

In-Home and Out-of-Home Procedural Operations Manual (POM)

In an effort to improve upon safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for children and youth, CFSA has implemented an *In-Home and Out-of-Home Procedural Operations Manual (POM)*. The information and guidance in this POM is carefully aligned with CFSA's Practice Model and its core tenets, including practice approaches that are child-centered, strength-based, solution-focused, family-focused, community-connected, culturally competent, and responsive. The POM also integrates a variety of Agency initiatives into a logical and clear flow that describes how families are served from case opening to case closure. Further, the POM provides step-by-step guidance on how to engage family members, assess immediate and long-term needs, implement effective case plans, and monitor overall progress to determine if goals and plans are sufficient to achieve timely permanency. Best practice "tips" are included for each step of the process, such as how ongoing assessment of a case plan can provide greater understanding of when goals have been achieved and when CFSA's involvement may no longer be needed. Lastly, a mandatory training of the *In-Home and Out-of-Home POM* was completed by all program and private agency staff in January 2012.

Visitation Policy

In April 2011, CFSA updated its [Visitation Policy](#) to integrate the case-management responsibilities of the Family Support Worker (FSW) and Nurse Care Manager (NCM) staffing positions that were introduced at CFSA within the past year. Both FSWs and NCMs perform visits to children who are in out-of-home placement, and augment oversight, supervision, and case planning. As new additions to CFSA's case-management team, FSWs and NCMs play important roles in ensuring timely and effective visitation for children and their families. The updated CFSA [Visitation Policy](#) acknowledges their input into its processes and addresses their practice expectations surrounding visitation.

The [Visitation Policy](#) also includes important new process benchmarks and requirements for each of the following visitation domains: social worker visitation with children in foster care, social worker visitation with parents of children in foster care, and sibling and parental visits for children and youth in foster care. As of October 2010, CFSA has also implemented a new and important overarching visitation requirement that social workers must develop (in concert with appropriate clients and stakeholders) a written visitation schedule outlining the timing, location, frequency, and duration of visits. The development of this formal schedule increases accountability among all involved parties and promotes frequent and quality visitation. The Agency additionally developed a series of best-case practice scenario-specific visitation requirements that have been fully integrated into the updated policy.

2. Reasonable efforts are made to reunify children with their families, unless contrary to the child's safety.

Connecting Dads Initiative

In response to case practice concerns regarding identification and engagement of fathers in the lives of children and youth in the child welfare system, CFSA launched the Connecting Dads initiative in FY 2011. Led by a workgroup focused on dramatically improving the frequency and quality of fatherhood engagement, this initiative increases the promotion by front line staff of a child's right to be connected with both parents, and the inherent benefit in making and maintaining that connection. At the same time, parents have the right and responsibility to be connected with their children, and to benefit from the inherent advantages of these connections for parents as well as for children. The commitment of the Connecting Dads workgroup is to ensure that as many fathers as possible are involved in the lives of their children at whatever level they are able – whether through reunification or as a placement option, or as a supportive lifelong connection that serves to encourage youth during the transition to adulthood.

The Connecting Dads workgroup is comprised of child welfare professionals from various disciplines within the Agency and yet is supported by a larger community-involved advisory group made up of researchers from the academic community and other human services stakeholders. The workgroup specifically approaches the issue of fatherhood engagement from a day-to-day practice perspective, drilling down to units within the Agency to support and monitor workers' efforts to involve fathers in visits and case planning. During the summer of 2011, CFSA leadership also called for an Agency-wide push to rekindle efforts to locate absent fathers or, in cases where fathers were known and have been involved, to bolster that involvement through increased participation in visitation and the case planning process. These efforts continue to promote more wide-spread outreach and engagement of fathers.

3. Reports of abuse and neglect are expeditiously investigated, and appropriate action is taken.

Revised Investigations Policy

In April 2011, the Agency made significant revisions to the [Investigations Policy](#) that have resulted in a series of new investigation standards and detailed procedures, all of which are incorporated into policy guidance along the continuum of front-end services.

Following formal issuance of the [Investigations Policy](#), CFSA finalized and implemented a comprehensive step-by-step guide to conducting investigations in May 2011. The CPS Investigation Procedural Operations Manual (IPOM) is an easy-to-use reference tool for investigating child abuse and/or neglect allegations received by the Agency's Child Protective Services (CPS) Hotline. Designed specifically for the CPS social worker, the IPOM provides hands-on, step-by-step procedures for giving children the immediate attention they need for their safety and protection, followed by long-range planning for their permanency and well-being. It reinforces the guiding principles of the CPS Administration:

- Quality and Competence
- Excellence
- Accountability
- Efficiency
- Timeliness

The updated policies and the newly-published IPOM work in tandem to address all practice expectations and process requirements associated with investigations, and to provide social workers with the roadmap and tools to perform timely and effective investigations.

In addition, CFSA has addressed this third DC ASFA requirement by implementation of the Differential Response (DR) model in 2011. The DR model is designed to address the needs of families that have no immediate safety concerns or criminal violations, and have also not recently been formally substantiated for child abuse or neglect. More information DR is provided in the following section on service provision to children and families.

4. Families of abused and neglected children are provided the necessary services to ameliorate problems and, when possible, to reunify children with their families.

Differential Response (aka Partnering Together)

In July 2011, CFSA began implementation of its newly-developed Differential Response (DR) model as the result of a process that began in the fall of 2009 with the convening of a District-wide DR workgroup. Participants in the workgroup included representatives and experts from CFSA and the DC Departments of Human Services, Mental Health, and Youth Rehabilitation Services; DCPS; and the District's Metropolitan Police Department. These efforts culminated in September 2010 with the *Differential Response Implementation Plan*.

DR (also known as “dual track,” multiple track,” or “alternative response”) greatly changes the way CPS handles certain abuse and neglect reports. The model provides the Agency with tools to discern the gravity and clinical intensity of various reports. It then adjusts the response and intervention accordingly. Most importantly, DR recognizes the reality that allegations of child abuse and neglect vary widely. Reports related to an isolated incident of a parent's failure to provide supervision or even multiple incidents of truancy from school are very different than repeated beatings or sexual molestation of a child. Severe allegations require a traditional CPS investigation. But when a child's safety is not immediately threatened, CPS can conduct a family assessment that looks at needs and strengths. Research shows that when families participate in an assessment which is non-adversarial, they are more receptive to and likely to engage in helping services. An assessment leads to service options the family can choose to accept, but unlike an investigation, there is no finding or entry of names into the Child Protection Register.

This model has worked in a number of states for several years. Evaluations have shown the following benefits:

- Better protection for more children over time as a result of engaging parents and providing effective support during the process of change.
- A decline in repeat reports of abuse and neglect.
- Increased satisfaction and relationship building between families and child protection workers.
- Effective and cost-neutral use of resources.

In 2012, CFSA will begin evaluating the implementation of Differential Response in several different ways. Pre and post-implementation surveys have been designed to determine the effectiveness of the preparation for the rollout of DR and to assess staff understanding of the initiative changes over time. In addition, CFSA's Quality Assurance staff will continue to participate in regular meetings with the DR staff and with related stakeholders in order to provide continuous input and feedback on any challenges faced by the program. Further

evaluation will involve a series of case reviews that include interviews with the workers and families. This aspect of the DR evaluation is designed to assess the ability of staff to engage effectively with families and to provide appropriate services and interventions outside of formal child welfare involvement. Finally, CFSA is collecting information on DR-participating families to determine rates of recidivism (i.e., re-referrals to CPS for the same or different types of allegations). The information will be compared with outcomes for similar families who have participated in DR. As a result of these evaluation techniques, CFSA will be able to ensure that children continue to be protected, and to determine whether additional mechanisms or refinements are needed to strengthen the program.

Through implementation of the DR model, CFSA and its District and community partners seek to achieve enhanced safety of children and more skillful engagement with families. In addition, there is a defined goal to increase family and employee satisfaction and to establish a continuum of services that consists of government, community-based, and neighborhood resources.

Increased Collaboration between CFSA and the DC Department of Mental Health (DMH)

CFSA and the Department of Mental Health (DMH) are continuing their partnership to build the District's capacity for effectively meeting the mental health needs of children and families receiving in-home and foster care services. In addition to the Crisis Mobile Response services such as the Children and Adolescents Mobile Psychiatric Services (ChAMPS) program (a 24-hour, 7 days-a-week intervention for youth facing a behavioral or mental health crisis), DMH contracts with a dedicated network of Choice Providers who provide diagnostic, assessment, and therapy services to CFSA clients and families in the District and Maryland.

CFSA, DMH, and the Choice Providers have also developed quarterly tracking reports that document timeliness of service referral and inception. These reports are used during bi-monthly management meetings to identify and build upon performance achievements. The intent of this oversight is to reduce delays in the provision of critical mental and behavioral services and interventions.

Reducing attrition among the pool of specialized mental health providers is also a joint priority of CFSA, DMH, and the Choice Providers. During FY 2010, Choice Providers experienced turnover among highly-trained professionals, which adversely affected the timeliness and efficacy of services to youth and children. With a recently re-calibrated and very competitive Medicaid rate for specialized services, this sort of activity can no longer be attributed to a lack of compensation. CFSA and DMH therefore continue to explore other potential reasons for attrition so that strategies can be tailored to enhance retention.

Lastly, in the area of mental and behavioral health, CFSA made language access for non-English speakers another FY 2011 priority. While the vast majority of children and families receiving services (either in-home or out-of-home) are English speaking, there is a growing population of non-English speakers who require mental health services. The Choice Providers must be prepared to adequately address this population's needs. CFSA is further working with DMH to assess the level of language needs of District residents in general (and CFSA clients in particular), and to identify the appropriate resources to address those needs.

5. If family preservation or reunification services are unsuccessful, quick action is taken to implement a permanency plan of adoption or another appropriate alternative planned permanent placement.

CFSA Permanency Forums

CFSA devoted its second annual leadership event at the end of FY 2010 to a three-part series of permanency forums. This event provided an opportunity for an expanded group of community stakeholders, including youth and birth parents, to identify, prioritize, and consider how to resolve key barriers to permanency for children and youth in foster care, particularly the large number of “legacy” youth growing up in the District’s child welfare system.

The 2010 Permanency Forums identified potential challenges and recommendations for next steps to address barriers to placement with kin. In December 2010, the final report was shared with internal and external stakeholders ([2010 Child Welfare Permanency Forums: From Barriers to Results](#)). Permanency Forum participants developed four workgroups to address the following priority issues:

- Improving communication between youth, families, and social workers
- Educating stakeholders that permanency can be achieved through adoption for all children and youth, regardless of age
- Using safe, calculated flexibility when licensing kinship and foster parents
- Improving engagement of families (birth, kinship, foster, and adoptive)

The individual workgroups continue to meet regularly and have devised plans of action with tangible work steps to address specific, identified issues/barriers to permanency. A reconvening was held in April 2011 to report on the progress of the workgroups to-date. The participants also came together in early July to report out on the status of work completed and next steps.

In particular, licensing requirements for kinship caregivers were identified as a barrier. By the time the final report was released, a dedicated workgroup had already begun to identify what modifications could potentially be proposed to make licensing regulations more suited for expediting kinship placements. Through the discussion and feedback, CFSA and the stakeholder participants developed a plan to begin the process of changing regulations for kinship care by taking advantage of the option reinforced in the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Public Law 110-351) to waive non-safety-related licensing requirements for kinship caregivers. The process of changing regulations includes legal review and public comment, which may take some time to achieve. In the interim, CFSA is determining which factors are related to safety and which are not, and will be recommending amended language for the District of Columbia Municipal Regulations. The Agency’s Executive Policy Team will also be working (concurrently) to amend policies so that flexibility in the licensing process for kin is reflected in practice procedures.

Under the Fostering Connections legislation, child welfare agencies must have a mechanism in place to exercise due diligence to identify and notify all adult relatives of a child’s removal from his parents within 30 days of that removal. Both in compliance of this legislation and in order to promote early family engagement in case planning, especially in instances where a child has been removed from his/her parents’ care, CFSA has revised its policies and practice for notification of adult relatives. Further, in the course of completing its Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP), the Agency revamped its [Diligent Search Policy](#) to improve practice around locating parents and family members of youth in foster care.

During FY 2011, the Agency implemented the relative notification process. CFSA created a new standard notification packet¹ for adult relatives of children who have been removed from their caretakers and placed into foster care. The packet responds to the requirements outlined in the Fostering Connections legislation, and includes all of the following information:

- A business letter that notifies the relative that the child has been removed, emphasizes the importance of maintaining family connections for that child, and outlines various placement options that the relative might consider providing, and otherwise provides information on how to participate in the child's case planning.
- A *Frequently Asked Questions* (FAQ) brochure that provides detail on the various options that the adult relative may wish to pursue with respect to case planning and involvement.
- A *Relative Interest* form that the packet recipient may complete and submit to CFSA to formally indicate their interest (or lack thereof) in participating in the child's case plan.
- A *Relative Search* form that the packet recipient can fill out with the contact information of additional relatives whom he/she believes might also be willing to become involved in the child's case planning.

Because willing and capable kin always represent the best placement option for a child in foster care, enhancements to the relative notification process represent a major step forward with respect to child-specific recruitment for foster placement, and potentially adoptive placement. In concert with CFSA's efforts to increase flexibility in the licensing process for kin, the Agency hopes that these practice advances facilitate improved permanency outcomes for youth in foster care.

Mockingbird Family Model for Kinship Resource Parents

The Mockingbird Family Model (MFM) continues to thrive as an "extended family" support model for CFSA resource parents. It is designed to increase quality support and respite services for resource parents, and to further secure the permanency, well-being, and safety of children. Using a "constellation" design where satellite homes are developed around one central "Hub" home, this model ensures that the parents in the Hub home are available to provide various support services to the satellite parents and the children in their care.

Continuing the excellent work of the MFM project, a specialized kinship constellation was launched in early FY 2011 that established a supportive network solely for kinship resource parents. This initiative strengthens peer and Agency relationships, and ensures placement stability prior to guardianship finalization. Throughout FY 2011 and beyond, CFSA will continue promotion of the MFM project to private child placing agencies. CFSA will also reinforce MFM as a viable and effective means of providing foster care services to the geographic wards in the District that have a high concentration of children and families involved in the child welfare system.

Re-design of the Placement Services Administration

Throughout FY 2011, CFSA has been in the process of a phased redesign of its Placement Services Administration (PSA). The focus of the redesign includes strategic structural changes

¹ As of June 2011, the letter is being revised and is currently under review for legal sufficiency; the FAQ document is in draft form and undergoing review prior to finalization and dissemination to staff.

in the roles and functions of CFSA and private agency social workers and staff, as well as enhancements to the range of placements and the assessment and matching process. This process has included the development of a new policy along with staffing preparation to manage the centralized placement function that encompasses both CFSA and the private agencies. This new process allows CFSA to improve placement stability for children and youth in privately purchased out-of-home placements. The following key elements are included in the PSA redesign:

- *Five-Day Assessment Phase for All New Removals* – In the 5 days immediately following a child’s removal from the home, CFSA engages in a formal intensive information gathering and placement “diagnostic” assessment period. The formal Family Team Meeting (FTM) process will also be used to properly inform case stakeholders of the individualized needs and available resources for the child.
- *Comprehensive Resource Development for the Continuum of Care Model* – CFSA has established a continuum of care from traditional foster care through specialized congregate care settings, as well as varied independent living programs. Moving forward through the use of Human Care Agreements (HCAs), CFSA will have the flexibility and capacity to ramp up or scale down various placement types within the continuum, based on the variable and changing needs of the population it serves.
- *Placement Resource Intake Meetings* – Within 72 hours of a child’s placement or re-placement, CFSA requires social workers to convene formal Placement Resource Intake meetings with the age-appropriate child and the foster parent (or facility staff) for the specific purpose of exchanging critical child-specific information, and for ensuring uniformity of understanding regarding service needs, visitation, treatment expectations, contact information, and roles and responsibilities for all participants. This new process step increases accountability and enhances communication among social workers, foster care providers, and children or youth in the foster care system, resulting in a reduction of early placement disruptions and replacements.
- *Placement Resources Utilization Review* – CFSA will be completing quarterly reviews of placement utilization in comparison with placement capacity in order to make adjustments as necessary.
- *Centralized Placement Approvals* – Despite the best efforts of a child’s case management team, there are circumstances in which a child under CFSA or private agency case management requires a planned or unplanned placement change. The reasons for these placement changes are many, and may be based upon the recommendation of a replacement staffing or upon imminent risk associated with the current placement. Regardless of the cause or nature of the change, as of March 2011 all such placement changes require the formal (and prior) approval of PSA before the placement change can occur. PSA now has a 24-hour triage system that allows for rapid response and approval when and if the case requires.

Increased Practice of Concurrent Planning

In May 2011, CFSA revised its [Permanency Planning Policy](#) to address concurrent planning in a more uniform way and on a more consistent basis for appropriate cases. The Agency worked

with the Court Improvement Project (CIP) of the DC Superior Court (DCSC) to draft and agree upon a Joint Philosophical Statement on Concurrent Planning, which became a guiding principle in developing policy for reunification and Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) cases. Social worker procedures for concurrent planning in both instances are robust, but the central tenets are as follows:

- If it is safe and appropriate for the child, promote and maintain family connections for youth in foster care at all stages of the case, even if reunification is no longer an option.
- Always consider kin as first potential resource for permanency.
- Maximize teaming to minimize placement disruptions.
- Be transparent with parents and stakeholders and keep all participants in the permanency plan accountable for its outcomes.
- Periodically discuss other permanency options with youth who have a goal of APPLA, and explore other possible options for a permanency goal.

Concurrent planning involves a regular and periodic re-visitation and reassessment of every child's permanency goal. CFSA's ongoing Structured Decision Making (SDM™) assessments and bi-annual case plan updates, combined with the evaluative feedback of Structured Progress Reviews² and the ongoing oversight of Family Court permanency hearings, keep program staff and family stakeholders on task and in focus for action steps that need to be undertaken in order to affect timely permanency.

A key strategy in CFSA's commitment to concurrent planning for youth with a goal of APPLA is the Permanency Opportunities Project (POP). The POP provides specialized permanency support for all children in foster care who are in need of permanency. The POP Teaming unit is trained to partner with the child's ongoing social worker, supervisor, and permanency specialist for the express purpose of removing barriers to permanency and/or identifying potential permanency opportunities. Methodologies include child-centered recruitment, case staffing, and case mining (i.e., the permanency specialist intensively reviews cases for identification and connection with the child's family, extended family members, and other persons with significant involvement in the child's life).

6. Criminal records checks are performed for all individuals seeing approval or licensure as kinship caregivers, foster or adoptive parents, or legal guardians.

As in previous years, CFSA continues to strictly enforce this requirement both at the initial licensing stage and during licensing renewal for homes licensed in the District. The Agency does not issue a license without the results of local and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) criminal background history checks. Prospective foster and adoptive homes in other states must also complete criminal background checks, although the process for renewal may differ from the District's practice due to state regulations.

7. Administrative reviews and permanency hearings are held in a timely manner for all children adjudicated as neglected.

CFSA and the Family Court of the DC Superior Court work collaboratively to meet the federal mandate that when a child enters foster care, a "permanency hearing" occurs within 12 months after the child's removal from home and at least once every 6 months thereafter for as long as

² The SPR process is detailed in the "CFSA Methods of Assessment and Evaluation" section of this document.

the child remains in care. DC AFSA also requires the Court to rule that CFSA has made “reasonable efforts” to implement the child’s permanency plan. As a result, the Family Court has updated permanency hearing court orders to prompt judges to clearly articulate the reasonable efforts CFSA made to implement children’s permanency plans.

In addition to the Family Court permanency hearing process, CFSA also engages in an SPR (detailed in the “CFSA Methods of Assessment and Evaluation” section of this document). During the SPR process, the Agency actively encourages participation of family, youth, and stakeholders to strengthen practice in general and outcomes for individual families in particular. SPR also provides a forum for evaluating CFSA (and private agency) case practice in general as well as performance on federal and local benchmarks, including the requirements mandated by the Fostering Connections legislation, the CFSR PIP, and the Agency’s newly-developed Exit Plan. The following considerations are discussed during the SPR:

- Appropriateness of permanency goal, barriers to permanency, and next steps
- Appropriateness of placement, unmet service needs, special review, and corrective action
- Indications that CFSA made good faith efforts to locate (through diligent search) and notify adult relatives of the child’s removal from the home
- Evidence of best interest determinations regarding sibling placement, and documentation of sibling visitation
- Evidence of best interest determination regarding educational stability
- Biological family and age-appropriate child involvement in case planning (including signatures on hard copy case plans)
- Documentation of medical screenings, evaluations and/or treatment, and (where appropriate), a description of diagnosis, medication, dosage, goals and objectives of therapy, and progress thereof
- Quality and currency of the child’s case plan
- Attendance (or lack thereof) of biological family at the SPR
- Frequency and quality of social worker visitation with child and family
- Evidence that the Agency has filed a motion for Termination of Parental Rights (if applicable, or as required under the federal guidelines of the Adoption and Safe Families Act)

The SPR process is among the Agency’s most effective quality assurance vehicles for assessing service and permanency planning for children who have been in care for at least 180 days. Each review examines child and family well-being indicators, focuses on permanency for children, identifies emerging issues, triggers timely responses from program management staff, allows Quality Improvement staff to reexamine performance and progress, and affords the direct service staff an independent assessment of their case progress. The SPR also provides CFSA with an ongoing opportunity to assess whether children, youth, families, and/or foster families are receiving the services and supports they need.

Beyond its utility as a Quality Assurance mechanism, the SPR process also provides another valuable opportunity for family engagement in case planning. The SPR unit has made a

concerted effort in this regard throughout FY 2010 and 2011 to enhance its outreach and communication strategies for maximizing attendance of age-appropriate children and youth, and family members. Whereas the primary tool for notifying stakeholders of an upcoming SPR is a written notification (generated from CFSA's FACES.net management information system), SPR staff are also required to proactively seek out accurate contact information for parents, especially fathers, and other adult relatives of children in foster care. SPR staff members therefore work closely with social workers as well as with staff from the CFSA's Diligent Search Unit to identify and locate these stakeholders as appropriate, and then to reach out to them directly to advise them of the upcoming SPR and to invite their participation.

8. Notice and Opportunity to Be Heard in neglect and parental termination cases is provided to certain individuals.

The District has remained in compliance with notice requirements under DC ASFA legislation through compliance with District statutes and rules governing judicial proceedings in abuse and neglect cases. Specifically, Rule 10 under the DC Superior Court Rules for Neglect and Abuse Proceedings mandates that parties to a case shall be provided notice and "opportunity to be heard". The Rule further defines which other parties and/or persons shall also be entitled to such notice and opportunity. Rule 11 requires that a copy of the Agency's petition for termination of parent rights (TPR) along with a summons to appear in court be served on any parent, guardian, or custodian named in the case.

DC Code §16-2357 mandates that notice be provided to all parties to the case once a motion to terminate parental rights is filed. The same provision requires the presiding judge to direct that the issuance of a summons and a copy of the motion be sent to the affected parent, or other appropriate persons, either directly or constructively through some form of public notification such as posting or publication. As a general practice, proceedings to terminate parental rights do not advance unless proper notice has been issued.

To further support notification of interested individuals in ongoing hearings, CFSA's Office of Planning, Policy and Program Support (OPPPS) continues to send notification of upcoming permanency hearings to caregivers to ensure their attendance and participation in the hearings.

9. Procedures related to interstate adoptions and medical assistance are established.

DC ASFA requires that any child who was eligible for adoption assistance payments during an initial adoption that occurred on or after October 1, 1997 is to maintain that eligibility in a subsequent adoption if the initial adoption was disrupted either because the adoptive parents died or their parental rights were terminated. Additionally, DC ASFA requires CFSA to have established procedures for providing interstate adoptions and medical assistance. Since the passage of the DC ASFA legislation in 2000, CFSA has consistently addressed the DC ASFA requirements pertaining to interstate adoptions and medical assistance procedures.

2: Additional Practice Improvements during FY 2011

The following additional accomplishments were achieved during FY 2011 as a result of teaming amongst frontline social workers, administrative staff, senior leadership, and community partners. These accomplishments represent additional supports and services that are available to children and families and promote successful outcomes expected of CFSA under DC ASFA and other legislation.

The Safe and Sound Project

The Safe and Sound Project Steering Committee was convened in March 2009 as a new Model Court initiative under the leadership of the Honorable S. Pamela Gray of the District of Columbia's Family Court. The purpose of the project, which was first implemented in January 2011, has been to reduce the number of child welfare cases that convert from in-home cases to court-involved foster care cases. To accomplish this goal, meetings are held at the East River Family Strengthening Collaborative (ERFSC) to develop Family Action Plans that offer resources and supports to families that may have been reticent to engage with the system but may benefit by services that facilitate safe case closure. In advance of the first Family Action Meeting, family members are asked to suggest potential team members to attend the meetings and to provide support to the family. In addition to those recommended by the family, other team members include a Family Court judicial officer, direct services staff and managers from CFSA, and a parent mentor from the Parent Advocate Project.³ Additional team members may include an ERFSC family support worker and representatives from CFSA sister agencies (such as the Department of Mental Health, Addiction Recovery and Prevention Administration, and District of Columbia Public Schools). By the end of FY 2011, ten families had been successfully recruited to join the project. Five of these families have completed all of the identified action steps and their cases have been closed. The initiative will be expanded in FY 2012 to include more families.

Additional Fatherhood Engagement Efforts

CFSA accomplishments in the area of permanency include the launch of the PADRE model to improve fatherhood engagement, including improvements to policy, guidance, and accountability measures in the area of visitation, and renewed efforts to break down barriers to permanency for all youth in foster care.

Established in FY 2011 as the result of the work promulgated by CFSA's fatherhood engagement group, the PADRE model guides practice improvement in the following areas (letters are italicized to indicate the acronym, PADRE): *Practice Standards*, including policies and procedures, staff *Accountability*, case *Documentation*, collective and individual *Responsibility* for the practice improvements, and social worker *Education*.

Independent Living Services for Older Youth

CFSA's Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) will be engaged in FY 2012 with [Sasha Bruce Youth Works, Inc.](#) and Synergistic, Inc. to provide expanded independent living support services for up to 800 youth, ages 15-21, who are either currently in foster care or who have left foster care sometime after they turned 15 years old. Youth for whom OYE's Independent Living Specialists have completed the Ansell Casey Life Skills Assessment will be referred to the

³ The Parent Advocate Project is a CFSA-funded initiative implemented by Adoptions Together, Inc. Specially-trained Parent Advocates are matched with birth parents to support them during their involvement with the child welfare and court systems.

program. The two contracted providers specialize in working with young adults in the District, and offer an array of services that are being tailored to meet the individual needs and goals of each youth referred to the program. The program offers services and supports across four domains:

Educational – Academic mentors will provide tutoring and educational advocacy and support. Youth wishing to pursue a college education will receive assistance preparing for standardized exams such as the ACT and SAT as well as career exploration opportunities.

Vocational – The providers will include career mentoring and discernment support services. They will assist participants in the pursuit of vocational preparation and training programs, and real life work experience opportunities through internships, apprenticeships, and volunteer opportunities.

Career Exploration – For youth who have achieved their educational or vocational training goals, the providers offer resumé building, interview coaching, career planning, and job search and application support and assistance.

Life Skills – Irrespective of where youths are on their educational or career paths, the providers will work with participants to ensure that they have the basic life skills to be self-sufficient adults. The suite of life skills services includes social relationship and communication coaching, daily living skills and time management, housing and money management support, self care, and (if necessary) parenting education and support.

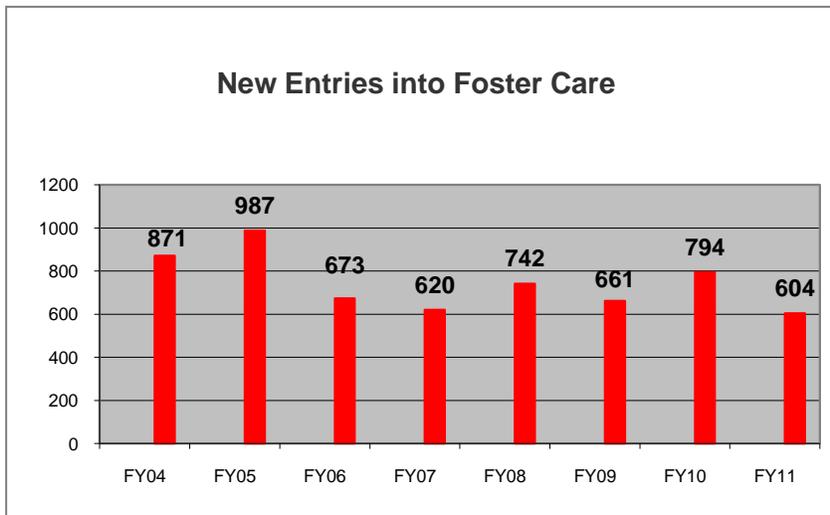
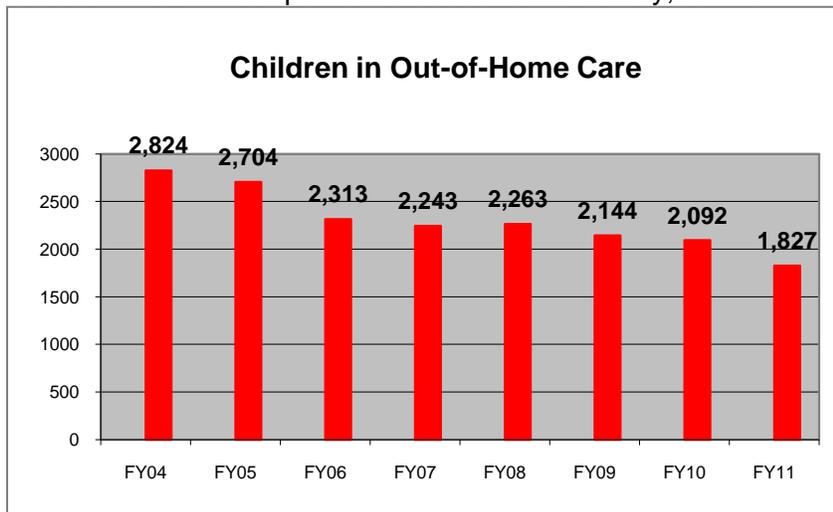
CFSA's intent is for these community-based partners to apply their expertise with this population to augment the existing independent living services that OYE currently offers.

3: Statistical Analysis of Foster Care Cases and Permanency Outcomes

CFSA's FACES.NET management information system contains a wealth of case-specific data from which statistical reports are developed. Agency management assesses system-wide performance with these reports to improve daily practice and to inform long-term strategies for adapting to changes in population and needs. The following are highlights of FY 2011 findings about children and youth in the District child welfare system.

In FY 2011, the number of children in out-of-home placement dropped for the third consecutive year.

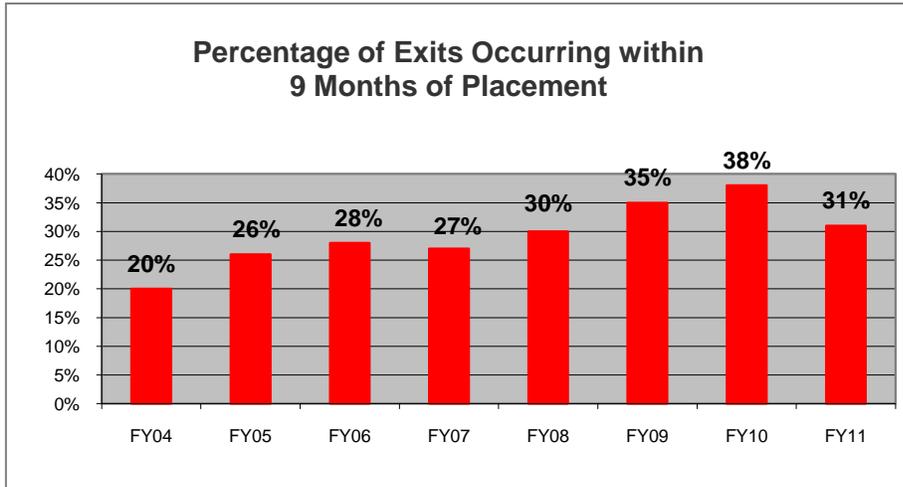
The foster care population has been trending downward for the past decade. Since FY 2004, CFSA has experienced a 35% reduction in the size of its foster care population. As of the end of FY 2011, just over 1,827 youth were in foster care. Only once since 2004 has the foster care population risen at the time of the Annual Public Report child count.⁴ Additionally, for the second year in a row, the Agency experienced a slight reduction in the percentage of youth ages 13-21 years who make up total foster care population. Currently, youth in this age group make up 53% of the foster care population, whereas in FY 2009 they made up 56%.



⁴ From September 30, 2007 to September 30, 2008, there was a net increase of 20 youth in foster care.

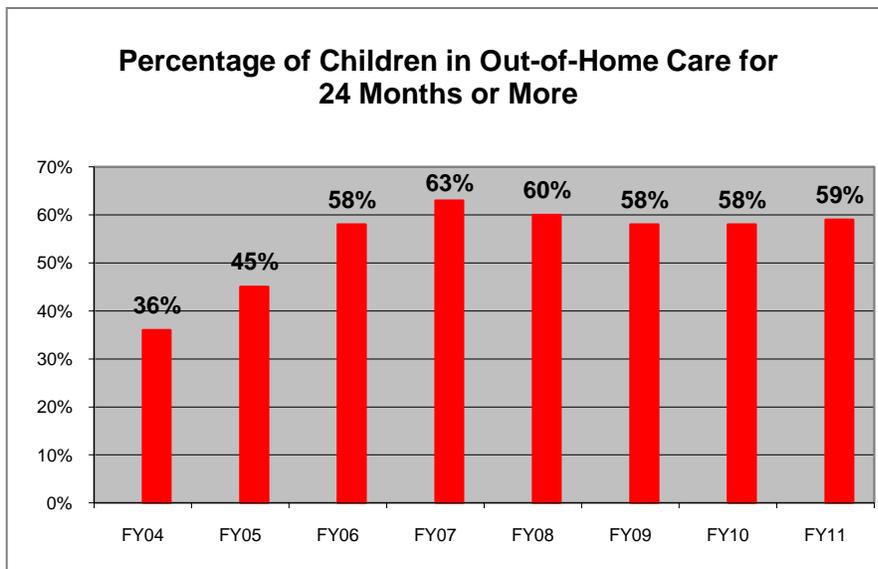
In FY 2011, CFSA experienced a drop in the percentage of exits occurring within 9 months of entry into Foster Care.

The longer a child remains in out-of-home care, the less likely s/he is to reunify with family. The vast majority of children who leave care within 9 months of entry reunify with their primary caretaker. Of the 876 foster care exits that occurred in FY 2011, 271 (31%) left within 9 months of entry, and 223 of those youth left for family reunification.



The percentage of youth in foster care for greater than 24 months remained generally unchanged.

At the end of FY 2011, 59% of children in foster care had been in care for 24 months or more.⁵ However, the number of youth (n=240) who entered into this category during FY 2011 decreased significantly from the prior fiscal year (n=307). CFSA continues to strive toward the overall ASFA goal of reducing the number of children languishing in out-of-home care.



⁵ Please note that in the FY 2008 Annual Public Report, CFSA erroneously reported that its percentage of children in foster care for greater than 24 months in FY 2004 and FY 2005 was 68% and 63% respectively. Those figures were corrected to 36% and 45% respectively in the FY 2009 report and have carried over into this FY 2011 report.

Statistical Analyses

The following tables are based on FACES.net management information reports, which reflected the status of children on the last day of FY 2011 (September 30, 2011). Groups of tables address information requirements for this report as listed in the Child and Family Services Agency Establishment Act of April 2001 (Appendix A).

Information requirement - *Total number of children in care, their ages, legal status, and permanency goals*

At the end of FY 2011...

- A total of 1,827 children and teens were in out-of-home care, which is the lowest count in the 8 years that CFSA has been compiling the Annual Public Report.
- The percentage of older children in foster care (ages 13-21) remained for the second consecutive year at 53% of all children in out-of-home care. The trend is downward compared to 56% in FY 2009 and 58% in FY 2008.
- The permanency goal of Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) applies only to youth whose other permanency options have been explored and exhausted. The percentage of youth in foster care with a permanency goal of APPLA continued to trend downward through FY 2011. By year's end, only 24% of youth in foster care had a goal of APPLA.
- Along with the gradual decrease in the number of children in care, there has been a re-distribution of the permanency goals of this population. In FY 2004, 59% of youth in foster care had permanency goals of either APPLA or Adoption, and 33% had either Reunification or Guardianship. In FY 2011, 45% had goals of either APPLA or Adoption, and 53% had either Reunification or Guardianship.



District Children in Foster Care by Permanency Goal <i>Point in Time: End of FY 2011</i>	
Goal	# of Children
Reunification	591
Alternative Planned, Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)*	455
Guardianship	378
Adoption	361
Legal Custody**	8
Data Unavailable#	34
Total	1,827
*APPLA includes goals of Independent Living, Long-Term Foster Care, and Long-Term Residential Treatment.	
** For these youth, the goal is custody with the non-custodial parent.	
# Data entry anomalies prevent actual goals from being reflected. These 34 children should be evenly distributed among all Permanency Goals.	

District Foster Children by Legal Status <i>Point in Time: End of FY 2011</i>	
Status	# of Children
Committed	1,568
Shelter Care	172
Administrative Hold	71
Data Unavailable#	15
Relinquished	1
Total	1,827
Data entry anomalies prevent actual statuses from being reflected. Totals in this category should be evenly distributed among the other status categories.	

District Foster Children by Age <i>Point in Time: End of FY 2011</i>	
Age (in years)	# of Children
<1	35
1	90
2	73
3	82
4	74
5	64
6	63
7	81
8	61
9	61
10	56
11	57
12	61
13	75
14	77
15	86
16	121
17	137
18	148
19	147
20+	178
Total	1,827

Information requirement - Number of children who entered care during the year (by month), their ages, legal status, and primary reasons for entering care

In FY 2011...

- A total of 604 children and teens entered out-of-home care, which is a 24% reduction from last year's figure and an 8-year low for foster care entries.
- Since FY 2008, there has been a slight decrease by 3% in the percentage of foster care entries with neglect as the primary reason for entry into care. During that same period, there has been a 12% increase in the prevalence of parental incarceration, an 11% increase in prevalence of physical abuse, and a 10% increase in parental substance abuse affecting children entering care.

Foster Care Entries by Child Age and by Month, FY 2011

Age	2010			2011									Total by age
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
<1	3	6	4	11	6	6	6	5	5	4	11	11	78
1	2	2	3	9	5	4	1	2	3	2	7	4	44
2	5	4	1	3	2	4	3	3	4	1	4	2	36
3	3	4	4	3	4	6	4	3	4	3	6	4	48
4	4	5	2	3	2	4	5	3	0	1	1	4	34
5	3	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	3	4	3	27
6	1	1	3	3	1	5	3	3	7	1	3	4	35
7	4	2	0	1	4	1	6	2	1	3	1	3	28
8	4	3	4	2	2	4	2	3	4	1	2	2	33
9	4	2	1	1	1	4	3	3	1	0	2	1	23
10	3	0	3	3	1	7	7	3	1	2	0	0	30
11	1	4	2	2	4	6	2	1	1	2	1	1	27
12	5	2	1	2	3	3	4	0	1	1	3	6	31
13	1	1	3	4	4	0	3	1	0	0	3	1	21
14	2	4	3	1	4	3	4	0	1	4	3	2	31
15	1	2	4	2	4	3	3	4	4	1	1	1	30
16	1	5	1	1	3	3	0	5	1	1	2	1	24
17	2	6	0	2	1	6	1	3	3	2	2	1	29
18**	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
19**	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total by mo.	50	57	41	56	53	71	60	45	42	32	56	51	614*

* CFSA actually placed 604 unique children in FY 2011, but 10 of these children entered, exited, and re-entered out-of-home placement during the year.

** These young people were in care before the start of FY 2011. Two came back into care when protective supervision arrangements disrupted. Two others were placed following prolonged absence episodes, and one came back into foster care following the death of her legal guardian.

Foster Care Entries by Legal Status and by Month, FY 2011													
Status	2010			2011									Total by status
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
Administrative Hold	39	97	38	46	45	60	41	33	33	24	52	45	493
Data Not Available#	5	6	1	4	4	3	7	1	1	2	2	2	38
Shelter Care	3	6	0	3	2	6	9	7	7	4	0	2	49
Protective Supervision	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Committed	3	8	2	3	2	2	3	4	1	2	2	1	33
Total by month	50	57	41	56	53	71	60	45	42	32	56	51	614*

* CFSA actually placed 604 unique children in FY 2011, but 10 of these children entered, exited, and re-entered out-of-home placement during the year.
Data entry errors prevent actual legal status from being reflected. These 38 children should be evenly distributed among all legal status types.

Primary Reasons for Entry into Foster Care in FY 2010	
Reason for Entry into Foster Care	Number of Placements in which Primary Reason was a Factor*
Neglect (alleged/reported)	395
Physical Abuse (alleged/reported)	157
Incarceration of Parent(s)	99
Drug Abuse (parent)	84
Alcohol Abuse (Parent)	31
Inadequate Housing	17
Child's Behavior Problem	17
Abandonment	12
Sexual Abuse (alleged/reported)	9
Death of Parent(s)	9
Caretaker Ill or Unable to Cope	7
Voluntary**	5
Alcohol Abuse (Child)	4
Drug Abuse (Child)	4
Relinquishment	3
Child's Disability	2

*Children may have multiple Primary Reasons for entering care. CFSA actually placed 604 unique children in FY 2011.
** CFSA obtained court custody of all children in this category. "Voluntary" describes the mindset and attitude of the parent/caretaker but is not a descriptor of the legal custody status of the child. These were not voluntary placement agreements.



Information requirement - Number of children in care for 24 months or longer by length of stay in care, including length of stay by permanency goal, number of children who became part of this class during the year, and ages and legal status of these children

In FY 2011 . . .

- 1,070 children and youth were in care for 24 months or more, which is 59% of all youth in foster care. This statistic has remained virtually unchanged since FY 2008.
- The percentage of these youth with the permanency goals of Alternative Planned, Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) continues to decline. In FY 2008, over 52% of these youth had a goal of APPLA, while that percentage stood at 41% by the end of FY 2011. Conversely, the goal of guardianship among this population has increased 12% during that same time period.
- Approximately 13% of the population of youth in foster care reached or passed the 24-month mark in care during FY 2011, which is a decrease of 2% from the percentage of youth who reached that threshold last year.

District Children in Care for 24 Months or Longer by Permanency Goal and Length of Stay					
<i>Point in Time: End of FY 2011</i>					
Goal	Length of Stay in Months (FY 2011)				Total Children
	24-35	36-47	48-59	60+	
APPLA*	30	60	50	300	440
Adoption	69	58	31	138	296
Guardianship	92	68	24	63	247
Reunification	42	11	6	15	74
Legal Custody	2	4	0	0	6
Data Unavailable	5	1	0	1	7
Total Children	240	202	111	517	1,070

* Alternative Planned, Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) includes goals of Independent Living, Long-Term Foster Care, and Long-Term Residential Treatment.



District Children Who Became Part of This Class in FY 2011 by Age and Length of Stay

Key: ■ Children who entered class in FY 2011

Age (in years)	Length of Stay in Months (FY 2011)				Total Children
	24-35	36-47	48-59	60+	
2	23	0	0	0	23
3	19	16	0	0	35
4	16	15	4	0	35
5	15	8	5	4	32
6	15	6	3	5	29
7	14	7	5	7	33
8	13	8	4	4	25
9	9	4	2	10	25
10	6	5	4	4	19
11	11	11	5	7	34
12	4	8	5	11	28
13	4	8	5	19	36
14	8	7	4	21	40
15	9	8	4	34	55
16	14	15	10	42	81
17	18	12	7	55	92
18	14	17	12	90	133
19	18	27	17	77	139
20+	10	20	19	127	176
Total Children	240	202	111	517	1,070



District Children Who Became Part of This Class in FY 2011 by Legal Status and Length of Stay

Key: ■ Children who entered class in FY 2011

Goal	Length of Stay in Months (FY 2010)				Total Children
	24-35	36-47	48-59	60+	
Commitment	239	202	111	515	1,067
Relinquishment	0	0	0	1	1
Data Unavailable#	1	0	0	1	2
Total Children	240	170	111	517	1,070

Data entry errors prevent actual legal status from being reflected.

Information requirement - Number of children who exited care by month, number of children in this class who had been in care for 24 months or longer, ages and legal status of these children, and reasons for their exit from care

In FY 2011 . . .

- There were a total of 876 exits from foster care, 31% of which occurred within 9 months of the child's entry into foster care.
- 18% of exits occurred within one month of entry into foster care. In FY 2010, 23% of exits occurred within one month of entry.
- 52% of exits were for youth who had been in care for 24 months or more, an increase of 4% over FY 2010.



Exits from Foster Care by Length of Stay and by Month, FY 2011

Stay (in months)	2010			2011									Total by stay
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
<1	12	20	3	20	9	24	16	5	14	6	18	9	156
1-4	6	11	5	7	4	4	4	3	5	7	2	3	61
5-8	4	1	12	5	3	6	7	5	5	0	4	2	54
9-12	5	1	0	1	4	6	6	0	10	2	13	7	55
13-23	3	4	14	4	6	15	5	7	10	9	12	5	94
24+	25	49	58	24	33	38	29	26	27	50	45	52	456
Total exits by mo.	55	86	92	61	59	93	67	46	71	74	94	78	876*

* During FY 2011, 872 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year.

Exits from Foster Care by Age and by Month, FY 2011

Age (in years)	2010			2011									Total by age
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
<1	2	1	1	5	0	3	3	0	4	1	3	2	25
1-5	14	29	28	20	22	23	16	12	26	12	22	23	247
6-12	18	25	23	9	16	33	18	17	19	22	36	17	253
13-15	3	9	8	8	5	6	4	6	8	11	10	9	87
16-18	9	10	7	6	5	12	7	4	8	8	4	4	84
19+	9	12	25	13	11	16	19	7	6	20	19	23	180
Total exits by mo.	55	86	92	61	59	93	67	46	71	74	94	78	876*

* During FY 2011, 872 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year.

Exits from Foster Care by Legal Status and by Month, FY 2011

Status	2010			2011									Total by status
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
Commitment	40	55	80	30	46	66	44	33	48	56	62	63	623
Administrative Hold	12	20	3	21	9	21	11	8	16	10	17	9	157
Shelter Care	3	9	8	7	2	3	8	4	7	8	12	4	75
Data Unavailable#	0	2	1	3	1	3	4	1	0	0	3	2	20
Relinquishment	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total by month	55	86	92	61	59	93	67	46	71	74	94	78	876*

* During FY 2011, 876 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year.

Data entry errors prevent actual legal status from being reflected. These 20 children should be evenly distributed among all legal status types.

Exits from Foster Care by Primary Reason and by Month, FY 2011

Reason	2010			2011									Total by reason
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
Reunification	27	35	35	32	27	48	38	19	46	33	51	23	414
Emancipation	9	13	24	11	12	15	17	5	6	16	18	19	165
Guardianship	5	11	15	8	12	17	6	16	5	13	6	15	129
Adoption	4	22	14	1	6	8	1	4	10	8	13	14	105
Living with Other Relatives	7	2	2	7	2	4	5	2	4	4	4	4	47
Placement/Custody to be provided by another District Agency#	2	3	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	3	15
Death of Youth	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total exits by month	55	86	92	61	59	93	67	46	71	74	94	78	876*

Examples of other District agencies to which these children exit include (but are not limited to) the Department of Mental Health, Department of Disability Services, Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services, and Department of Corrections.

* During FY 2011, 872 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year.



Information requirement - Number of children who left care by permanency goal, their length of stay in care by permanency goal, number of children whose placements disrupted by placement type, and number of children who re-entered care

In FY 2011 . . .

- Children living in Traditional Foster Care are nearly 4 times more likely to experience a placement disruption than children living in Kinship Care.
- Children living in Residential Treatment Facilities or Congregate Care are nearly 5 times more likely to experience a placement change.
- 105 children who had at one point been in foster care re-entered out-of-home care during the year. This is a decrease of 16 children since FY 2010.

Exits from Foster Care by Permanency Goal and by Month, FY 2011													
Goal	2010			2011									Total by goal
	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	
Reunification	29	38	36	40	30	49	37	18	50	39	54	28	448
APPLA†	11	13	23	12	9	16	17	8	5	14	19	19	166
Guardianship	7	12	14	7	12	17	7	14	5	12	6	16	129
Adoption	4	22	13	1	6	8	1	4	10	9	13	14	105
Data Unavailable††	4	1	5	1	2	3	5	2	1	0	2	1	27
Legal Custody	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total by month	55	86	92	61	59	93	67	46	71	74	94	78	876*

† Alternative Planned, Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) includes goals of Independent Living, Long-Term Foster Care, and Long-Term Residential Treatment.
 †† Data entry errors prevent actual legal status from being reflected. These 27 children should be evenly distributed among all legal status types.
 * During FY 2011, 872 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year

Exits from Foster Care by Permanency Goal and Length of Stay, FY 2011							
Goal	Length of Stay in Months (FY 2011)						Total Children
	<1	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-23	24+	
Reunification	156	61	49	48	66	68	448
APPLA†	0	0	0	0	0	166	166
Guardianship	0	0	1	3	13	112	129
Adoption	0	0	0	0	9	96	105
Data Unavailable††	0	0	4	4	6	13	27
Legal Custody	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Total Children	156	89	54	55	94	456	876*

† Alternative Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) includes goals of Independent Living, Long-Term Foster Care, and Long-Term Residential Treatment.
 †† Data entry errors prevent actual legal status from being reflected. These 27 children should be evenly distributed among all legal status types.
 * During FY 2011, 872 unique youngsters exited foster care. Four of these youth exited, re-entered, and exited again within the fiscal year

Placement Disruption Data, FY 2011		
<i>Total # of Children in Foster Care at Some Point During FY 2011</i>	<i># Who Experienced at Least One Placement Change</i>	<i># of Actual Placement Changes</i>
2,614	1,001	1,864

Placement Change* Report, by Placement Type, FY 2011	
<i>Placement Type</i>	<i>Ratio of Placement Changes to Total Placements</i>
Kinship	.16 to 1
Independent Living	.39 to 1
Non-Kinship/Traditional Foster Care	.60 to 1
Group Homes	.77 to 1
Residential Treatment Facility	.81 to 1

*IMPORTANT NOTE: While CFSA attempts to maintain the placement stability of all foster children, in many cases, placement changes are planned with the intent of furthering the child's progress to permanency. In other cases, unforeseen circumstances or crises arise that require CFSA to make an unplanned placement change to a more stable living environment for the child.

CFSA's FACES.net information system does not track unplanned placement changes (or "disruptions") specifically. Rather, the system tracks only placement changes in general, be they planned or unplanned. Therefore, statistics in this table reflect the total number of placement changes that occurred for all children during FY 2011.

4: Methods of Assessment and Evaluation

In FY 2011, CFSA employed both qualitative and quantitative perspectives⁶ to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of service provision. CFSA uses findings and recommendations from internal and external evaluations of services and processes to assist with the development (or amendment) of policy and to improve internal operations and practice in order to achieve quality outcomes for children and families. The following evaluative processes (described in more detail below) are the most useful for providing the Agency's management with insight into the needs of CFSA's service population as well as insight into the accomplishments, strengths and challenges of the Agency's system-wide case practice:

- Structured Progress Review
- DC ChildStat
- Quality Service Review
- Child Fatality Review
- Bi-annual Needs Assessment
- Federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

Findings and recommendations gained from these evaluative processes also allow the Agency to effectively allocate and plan resources according to the needs and priorities that are cited in CFSA's Resource Development Plan (RDP) - *please see the end of this section for a brief overview of the RDP.*

Structured Progress Review

One of many tools employed by CFSA for monitoring and providing oversight to out-of-home cases is the Structured Progress Review (SPR). This oversight process directly facilitates the achievement of identified permanency goals while simultaneously protecting children's safety and well-being. It includes two major components: 1) a thorough case record review by an independent SPR Specialist who reports strengths as well as any identified deficits to the social worker and his or her chain of command, and 2) a facilitated review meeting that assures understanding on the part of all participants with regards to the goals and opportunities for achieving a child's permanency. This time intensive record review focuses both on compliance elements and progress toward the outcome of permanency.

The SPR process is an invaluable strategy for gleaning information to ensure that all case practice steps fulfill best practice standards for child safety, well-being and permanency. For eligible children,⁷ the process begins with the scheduling of an initial SPR within 180 days of the child being placed in foster care.⁸ This is the first formal Agency check point after the Family Team Meeting for reviewing case progress towards permanency. SPRs are then held every 6 months (180 days) for all eligible children under the Agency's care and custody.

Utilizing greater expertise to support permanency for traditionally challenging populations, the SPR process begins with a preliminary review of the relevant client case record a few weeks in

⁶ More information about the ongoing quality-monitoring activities can be found in the CFSA Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) Plan (September 2011).

⁷ Children in foster care ages 0-17 years.

⁸ Children with the following legal status are subject to review by the Office of Structured Progress Reviews: Administrative Hold/Police Hold, Shelter Care, and Commitment.

advance of the scheduled review. Elements of case practice such as provision of services, progress towards permanency, corrective actions, and compliance with federal and local requirements are identified at that time for discussion during the review.

Caregivers, family members, service providers, and youth have an active role during SPR discussions. In addition to discussions, SPR specialists evaluate the progress of the case and develop recommendations jointly with the case management team to help guide the casework toward the best outcomes possible for ensuring safety, well-being and permanency. The SPR recommendations are documented and communicated to the assigned case-managing social workers as well as the senior management connected with each case. Ongoing follow-up occurs between scheduled reviews.

DC ChildStat

Since 1997, the federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics has published [forty key indicators of child well-being](#). Following the federal guidelines, the DC ChildStat provides a regular monthly forum for the thorough review of randomly-selected cases that have been opened with CFSA, including cases referred to private agencies. DC ChildStat also serves as an ongoing needs assessment of case practice, allowing reviewers and evaluators to identify both strengths and areas in need of improvement. Further, DC ChildStat measures progress along various case practice indicators. During DC ChildStat sessions, direct service social workers present verbal and written case-specific and systemic perspectives on case histories, including successes and barriers. Agency leadership participates by providing support and guidance on how to overcome barriers; likewise, the session provides an opportunity to inform administrators and senior management on daily issues affecting quality practice. DC ChildStat procedures also include a review of data from the Agency's statewide automated child welfare information system (SACWIS), known as FACES.net, in addition to relevant data stemming from the Agency's internal Quality Service Reviews.

Quality Service Review (QSR)

The QSR is a detailed case review and standardized analytical process for in- and out-of-home cases that also incorporates interviews with as many members of the family and case management team as possible. The review team rates the case and conducts a debriefing and information-sharing session with both the social worker and the supervisory social worker. These sessions provide constructive appraisal and support for the worker and, following the discussion, a clear plan is formulated for continuing progress. Two months after the review, QSR specialists return to evaluate the extent to which the case management team implemented practice improvement recommendations from the QSR review.

In FY 2011, the QSR Unit continued to develop and expand the ways by which it promotes best practices at the Agency. Of particular note are the following accomplishments:

- The QSR unit conducted a specialized review of 34 youth in foster care nearing exit from the child welfare system. The purpose of the review was to evaluate the effectiveness of services and of transition planning for youth in care for successfully preparing the youth for independence.
- Throughout FY 2011, the QSR Unit continued to infuse QSR data into the monthly DC ChildStat meetings.
- The QSR staff also continued to collaborate with the Agency's Child Welfare Training

Academy (CWTA) to facilitate a training module developed by the QSR Unit for new staff.

- An in-depth, 2-day classroom training was provided for new QSR reviewers.
- QSR reviewer certification was awarded to five new volunteer reviewers in 2011.
- By the end of the 2011 calendar year, the QSR Unit had completed 67 reviews.

Child Fatality Review

In the tragic event of a death of a child known⁹ to CFSA, a multidisciplinary team comprised of CFSA and external stakeholders completes a Child Fatality Review (CFR). During the review, the CFR team examines the circumstances and events surrounding the fatality, regardless of the cause. The review team then critically evaluates the quality of practice during the Agency's involvement with the family, such as level of engagement with the child and family, and identifies challenges in practice that might suggest immediate and/or long-term strategies for reducing preventable deaths. Following the review, the CFR Unit also assumes responsibility for distributing specific recommendations to CFSA management and program staff. Annual Child Fatality Reports are available to the general public via the CFSA website.

Bi-Annual Needs Assessment

Every 2 years, CFSA completes a comprehensive, Agency-wide *Needs Assessment* which evaluates current and projected out-of-home placements and support services within the context of helping children and youth to achieve their permanency goals. The *Needs Assessment* acts as a self-evaluation tool for the Agency and offers insights into the experience of out-of-home care from the multiple perspectives of children and youth, families, providers, and social workers. These insights are combined with statistical analyses of placement and other data to identify needs that presently exist or may exist in the future if appropriate interventions are not put in place. The *Needs Assessment* also examines services and resources needed to prevent entry or re-entry into foster care, as well as supports and resources needed for children and youth to be more stable in their placements. Most importantly, it seeks to identify placement-related factors that support or hinder achievement of permanency goals for children and youth in care.

In 2011, CFSA completed its most recent *Needs Assessment* which identified positive permanency outcomes, such as an increase in family stabilization services, a reduction in the overall time that children remain in out-of-home care, and the projection that the overall number of children placed in out-of-home care will continue to decline. In addition, challenges were identified, as individuals observed an increase in guardianship disruptions, revealing a need to explore the causes behind the disruptions and possible solutions. CFSA will use the findings from the *2011 Needs Assessment* to build upon strategies that have already proven successful and to identify possible solutions to address challenges to placement stability and overall permanency.

⁹ For purposes of these reviews, the definition of a child who is "known" to CFSA includes families that were involved in at least one CPS investigation or had an open CFSA case within the four years preceding the child's death.

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is a comprehensive federal assessment of every state's child welfare system and the various areas of practice that support safety, permanence and well-being. Developed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Administration for Children and Families (ACF), the CFSR incorporates three key phases, including a self-assessment, an on-site assessment, and lastly, development of a program improvement plan (PIP). In January 2007, the District submitted its self-assessment to ACF and in June of that same year, District child welfare stakeholders participated in the CFSR on-site review. The review team included both federal and local reviewers who conducted an intensive review of a sample of CFSA foster care and in-home cases to evaluate several practice and systemic functions. Lastly, the process concluded with the development of CFSA's PIP to address any programmatic areas in need of improvement highlighted by ACF during the first two phases of the CFSR process. In January 2009, ACF approved the District's PIP, launching a 2-year PIP implementation period (January 2009 through December 2010) during which the enumerated improvement items had to be achieved to avoid fiscal penalties.

The District's PIP includes the following five central themes:

- Ensuring Safety
- Improving In-Home Services
- Engaging Families and Kin in Case Planning
- Achieving Permanency
- Improving Educational Outcomes

CFSA submitted quarterly progress reports to ACF throughout the 2-year PIP period to measure progress on the benchmarks identified within each of the overall PIP themes. At the conclusion of the PIP implementation period (December 31, 2010), CFSA had successfully implemented the programmatic benchmarks of its plan, including issuance of new policies and training materials, and development of family-focused practice supports and tools. The PIP also included a quarterly Practice Improvement Case Review conducted by trained CFSA quality improvement staff. This limited review was the sole element of the PIP that continued throughout FY 2011. Its intent was to measure Agency performance in two well-being areas (assessment of needs for parents of youth in foster care, and visitation of parents of youth in foster care), and to determine whether CFSA will achieve sufficient enough performance improvement to avoid fiscal penalties. This extended review has assisted CFSA in looking at its practice and initiating specific steps toward improvement. Final determination of Agency performance will occur in FY 2012.

Resource Development Plan

The *Resource Development Plan* (RDP) is designed to organize and establish the agenda for service development priorities that most closely reflect the results and client needs identified through the previously mentioned quantitative and qualitative assessments. In addition, the RDP tracks the continued implementation of action steps that address critical areas highlighted in the bi-annual *Needs Assessment*. On a yearly basis, the RDP updates are completed in the context of the significant tasks the Agency has committed to achieving, including the following priority areas for 2011/2012:

- Development of the Agency's Strategic Plan

- Continued implementation of the provisions of the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008
- Continued implementation of the Partnership for Community-Based Services
- Implementation of Differential Response
- Restructuring of youth transitional living support services
- Completion of the bi-annual *Needs Assessment*

5: Preview of Priority Areas in FY 2012

CFSA's priority areas for FY 2012 are carefully selected to respond to DC ASFA requirements as well as to needs identified by evaluative processes.

1. To Support Periodic Review of Case Plans:

Integrated Case Planning Process

In response to recent changes¹⁰ to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), CFSA and the DC Department of Health Services' (DHS) Economic Security Administration will partner in FY 2012 to develop an Integrated Case Planning Process for families who receive TANF, and are also involved with CFSA. The goal of this process is to work in collaboration to help the family in addressing their needs and accessing resources, while limiting the number of case plans that the family is working toward completing by incorporating all of the goals into one, unified plan. A pilot of the process is scheduled to begin in February 2012. The pilot will include 10 families, four of which will be chosen from the Safe and Sound Project (described above in *Additional Practice Improvements in FY 2011*). The pilot will include families who have an in-home case with CFSA and are approaching the 60-month time limit, in an effort to reach families at greater risk to a decrease in their benefits.

In addition to partnering with the parent in the development of the case plan, CFSA and DHS will continue to team to review progress of the goals and update the plan as needed. To ensure that the families have access to necessary services to be successful with their case plans, CFSA and DHS have also included representatives from the Healthy Families/Thriving Communities Collaborative Council and the DC Department of Mental Health as part of the workgroup to implement the pilot.

2. To Support Provision of Services to Children and Families:

Expanded Supports for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Recognizing the teens are a particularly vulnerable population, especially those youth who are in foster care, CFSA is seeking to change its traditional delivery of services and is looking to incorporate evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention practices into the Agency's core programs for youth in foster care. In partnership with its sister agencies and community partners, CFSA has made a commitment to improve the life prospects for youth in foster care and the reduction in the incidence of teen pregnancy. In line with the Council of the District of Columbia introduced the "Sense of the Council on Achieving Half by 2015 Resolution of 2012." CFSA has identified prevention of teen pregnancy, along with intervention for parenting teens, as an Agency priority and will be leading efforts to address these populations, including teenage boys.

Provision of Annual Credit Reports

Beginning in 2012, CFSA will provide annual credit reports, without cost, for all youth over the age of 16, in compliance with the District's Foster Care Youth Identity Protection Amendment Act of 2010. Reports will be reviewed annually to determine if identity theft has occurred. If identify theft has occurred, or if other concerns are identified, the youth shall also receive

¹⁰ The changes to DC TANF include the implementation of a 60-month time limit, after which recipients will experience a decrease in their benefits, and new employment vendors, as well as an addition of an orientation (to the changes) and assessment to ensure that the customer is referred to the best vendor to meet his or her needs.

assistance (including, when feasible, from any court-appointed advocate for the child) for interpreting and resolving any inaccuracies in the report.

3. To Promote Expedited Permanency Planning:

Individualized Transition Planning for Youth

In FY 2012, Independent Living Specialists in the Office of Youth Empowerment (OYE) will continue to facilitate Youth Transition Planning meetings. Facilitation includes other CFSA administrations and private agency staff to help develop an individualized transition plan that identifies goals related to employment, education, housing, and life-long connections with older youth (18-21) preparing to exit the foster care system. The plan is developed in consultation with the youth and serves as the primary vehicle for connecting youth to specific options on housing, health insurance, education, workforce supports, and continuing adult support serving agencies. In FY 2012, OYE will ensure that 90% of youth aged 18 and older will have a transition plan in place to prepare them for adulthood and life after foster care.

6: Recommendations for Additional Legislation or Services to Overcome Challenges

CFSA's focus for FY 2012 will be to create legislation and amend administrative rules and regulations in accordance with laws passed in the District of Columbia that impact child welfare practice. The following bills and regulations are under consideration in various stages of the legislative process:

Law/Regulation	Action	Purpose/Justification
29 DCMR, Chapter 60 (Foster Homes)	Amend Rule	Streamlines the foster care licensing process, aligns the foster parent training requirements to the licensing period, and amends the backup caregiver and Agency visitation requirements.
Families Together Amendment Act of 2010 (DC Law 18-228)	Create Rule	To authorize the Agency to refer a family for a family assessment in lieu of an investigation in response to certain reports of abuse and neglect, and to provide for a re-referral for investigation when warranted.
Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Amendment Act 2011	Create Law	This bill would amend DC law to conform to the requirements of the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Reauthorization Act of 2010.

Appendix A: Excerpt from the CFSA Establishment Act of April 2001

The Director must:

(10) Prepare and submit to the Mayor, the Council, and the public a report to be submitted no later than February 1 of each year; which shall include:

- (A) A description of the specific actions taken to implement the Adoption and Safe Families Amendment Act of 2000, effective June 27, 2000 (D.C. Law 13-136; 47 DCR 2850);
- (B) A full statistical analysis of cases including:
 - (i) The total number of children in care, their ages, legal statuses, and permanency goals;
 - (ii) The number of children who entered care during the previous year (by month), their ages, legal statuses, and the primary reasons they entered care;
 - (iii) The number of children who have been in care for 24 months or longer, their length of stay in care, including:
 - (I) A breakdown in length of stay by permanency goal;
 - (II) The number of children who became part of this class during the previous year; and
 - (III) The ages and legal statuses of these children;
 - (iv) The number of children who left care during the previous year (by month), the number of children in this class who had been in care for 24 months or longer, the ages and legal statuses of these children, and the reasons for their removal from care; and
 - (v) The number of children who left care during the previous year, by permanency goal; their length of stay in care, by permanency goal; the number of children whose placements were disrupted during the previous year, by placement type; and the number of children who re-entered care during the previous year;
- (C) An analysis of any difficulties encountered in reaching the goal for the number of children in care established by the District;
- (D) An evaluation of services offered, including specific descriptions of the family preservation services, community-based family support services, time-limited family reunification services, and adoption promotion and support services including:
 - (i) The service programs which will be made available under the plan in the succeeding fiscal year;
 - (ii) The populations which the program will serve; and
 - (iii) The geographic areas in which the services will be available;
- (E) An evaluation of the Agency's performance;
- (F) Recommendations for additional legislation or services needed to fulfill the purpose of the Adoption and Safe Families Amendment Act of 2000, effective June 27, 2000 (D.C. Law 13-136; 47 DCR 2850); and
- (G) The comments submitted by a multidisciplinary committee that works to prevent child abuse and neglect and which the Mayor designates to receive and comment on the report.

**District of Columbia Government
Child and Family Services Agency**

**400 6th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20024**

Prepared by:
Child and Family Services Agency
Office of Planning, Policy and Program Support
(202) 724-7100