

Supporting Licensed Foster and Kin Caregivers



DCF FAMILY SERVICES
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Children in DCF Custody Must Live in Licensed or Approved Settings



Living Situation (10/31/2013)	Number of Children/Youth
Kinship Care	247
Foster Care	457
Residential Care	186
Institution	19
Independent Living	10
With Parents	59

Who Must Be Licensed?



- Any family who will care for a child in DCF custody.
 - Relatives (Kin Caregivers)
 - Non-Relatives (Foster Parents)
- The same licensing standards are used for both groups.
- Kin caregivers get some training specific to their situations; they then join non-related foster families for the balance of their training.

Preference for Kin Placement

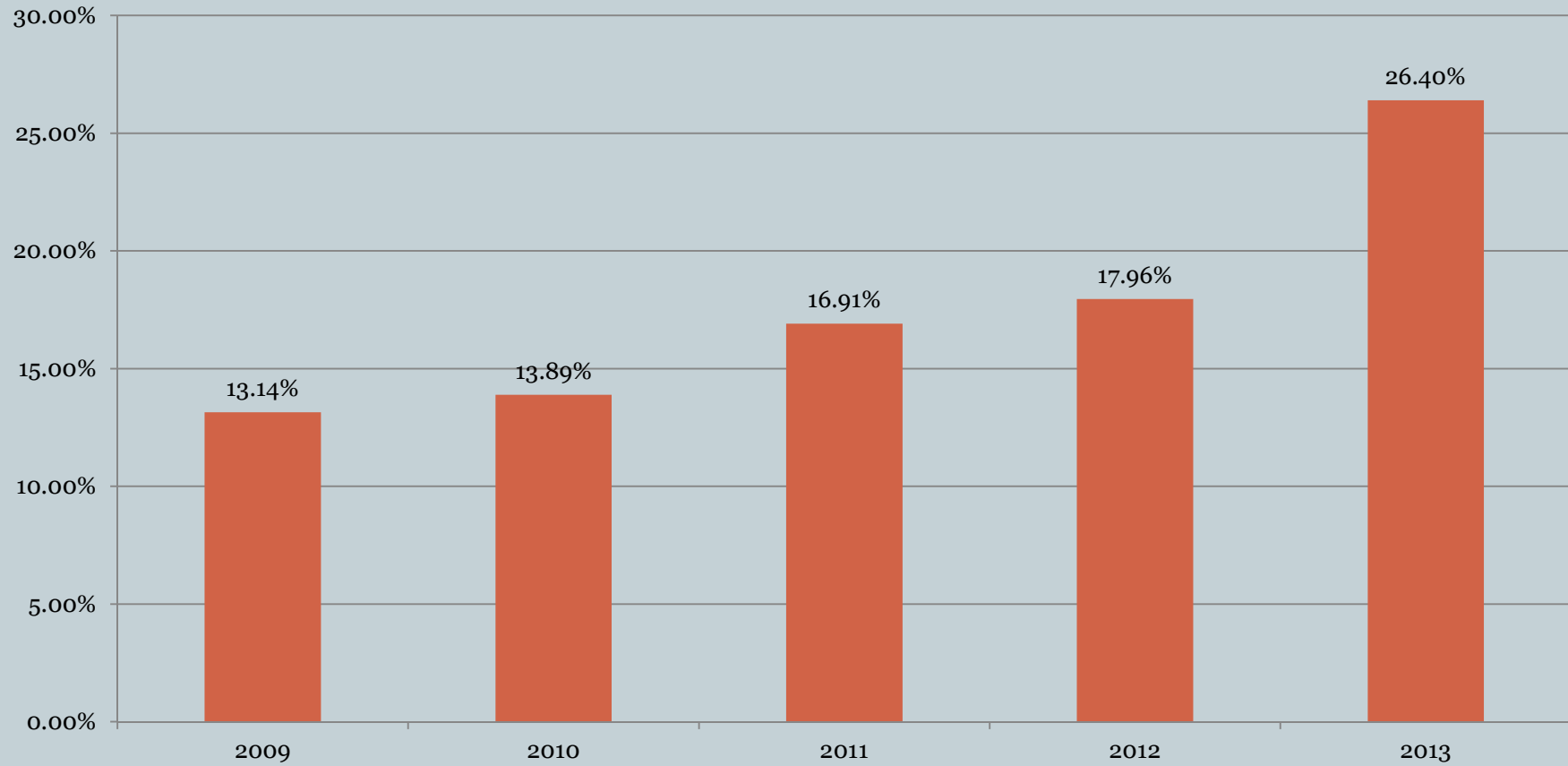


- Both state and federal law require DCF Family Services to locate and engage kin.
- The decision about whether or not to place a child in DCF custody with a relative is based on specifics of the situation:
 - First, are the kin licensable?
 - If so:
 - ✦ How will the relationship between the child's parents and the proposed caregiver impact case planning?
 - ✦ Do the kin live near enough so that parent-child contact can occur according to plan, typically 1-5 times per week?
 - ✦ For children in school, will the child experience disruption in their education?
 - ✦ Does the child have any special needs that require proximity to certain services?

Focus on Kinship Care



% of Children in Kinship Care



Foster Care Licensing Requirements



- **1030 current licensed foster homes**
 - 294 are child specific/kin
 - 270 additional homes currently “in application”
 - Grant approx. 250 licenses of 500 applied for annually
- **Background checks**
 - Child Protection Registry/Adult Protection Registry
 - Nation-wide finger print supported Criminal History
 - DMV, Court Records, Child Support, Corrections, etc.
 - Review registries and criminal records of household members age 16 and older.

Foster Care Licensing Requirements



- **Residential Licensing & Special Investigations Unit**
 - Visits/inspect homes for licensure
 - Separate from social workers who place children in homes
 - Respond to abuse and regulatory allegations against homes
 - Prioritizes licensing of homes with placed children and youth
- **Licensing Evaluation and Expectations**
 - Ability to care and supervise children
 - Inclusion of children in family and community
 - Discipline; Health Care, Nutrition, Cultural Heritage
 - Safe physical environment
 - Support child or youth's case plan

How Do We Pay Foster and Kin Caregivers?



- Foster care reimbursement is meant to cover the cost of room, board, clothing and incidentals.
 - It is not “income”. Essentially, foster parents are volunteers.
 - It is not taxable.
- Basic foster care rates are based on USDA estimates on the costs of raising a child in a rural state;
 - Foster parents are rewarded for years of experience and completion of training, by getting higher rates.
- Foster parents are also reimbursed for travel and transportation costs - same rate as employees.
- Higher rates are paid in situations in which the needs of the child require higher levels of supervision and support by foster parents – up to \$54/day.
- We pay higher rates for children with extreme medical needs.

How Do We Support Foster Parents?



- Social Workers are the first line of support
- Each district has 1 Resource Coordinator, whose job is specifically focused on recruitment, retention and support to foster and kin families, including support to local foster parent associations.
- Most districts have a part-time foster parent on payroll, who focuses on peer support.

Foster, Kin and Adoption Training



- **Child Welfare Training Partnership supports:**
 - 3 FTE Training Coordinators working statewide;
 - Part time training teams in each district, consisting of a trainer paired with a foster parent to deliver foundations training by teleconference and on-site in 12 districts;
 - Advanced training dollars available locally;
 - Annual caregiver training conference, free to foster and adoptive families (including lodging and meals) – sponsored by the Vermont Foster Parent Association

Vermont Foster and Adoptive Family Assn



- Annual grant from DCF supports VFAFA activities;
- Jointly contracted full time Foster Parent Liaison supports board activities and works on system issues related to kin and foster care.

Vermont Kin as Parents



- Annual grant to VKAP provides partial support.
- Foster care liaison provides some technical assistance and support.

Vermont Adoption Consortium



- A network of agencies who provide post-permanence services and supports to adoptive and guardianship families.
- DCF contracts for support and coordination of the Consortium.