



**Department for Children & Families**  
**Family Services Division**

Ken Schatz  
Christine Johnson

January 9, 2020 House Human Services

The background features several sets of concentric, curved lines in shades of gray, some solid and some dashed, creating a sense of motion and depth. A blue rectangular box with a white border and a small white triangle at the bottom center is positioned on the left side of the page.

# Family Services Division

## Our Mission

We engage families, foster and kin caregivers, partner agencies and the community to increase safety and law abidance for Vermont's children and youth.



## Family Services Division

### Primary Service Areas:

- Child Abuse and Neglect  
Intake/Emergency Services
- Child Safety Interventions –  
Investigations and Assessments
- Family Support Services to High Risk  
Families
- Juvenile Probation
- Children in Custody
  - Abuse/neglect
  - Delinquency
  - Child Behavior

# Primary Focus of FSD in 2020



1. CHINS Reform
2. Proposed closure of Woodside
3. Raise the Age (Act 201) Implementation
4. Child Registry Review Unit Capacity
5. Strategic Plan-Year 2 Implementation

# CHINS Reform

## Recommendations:

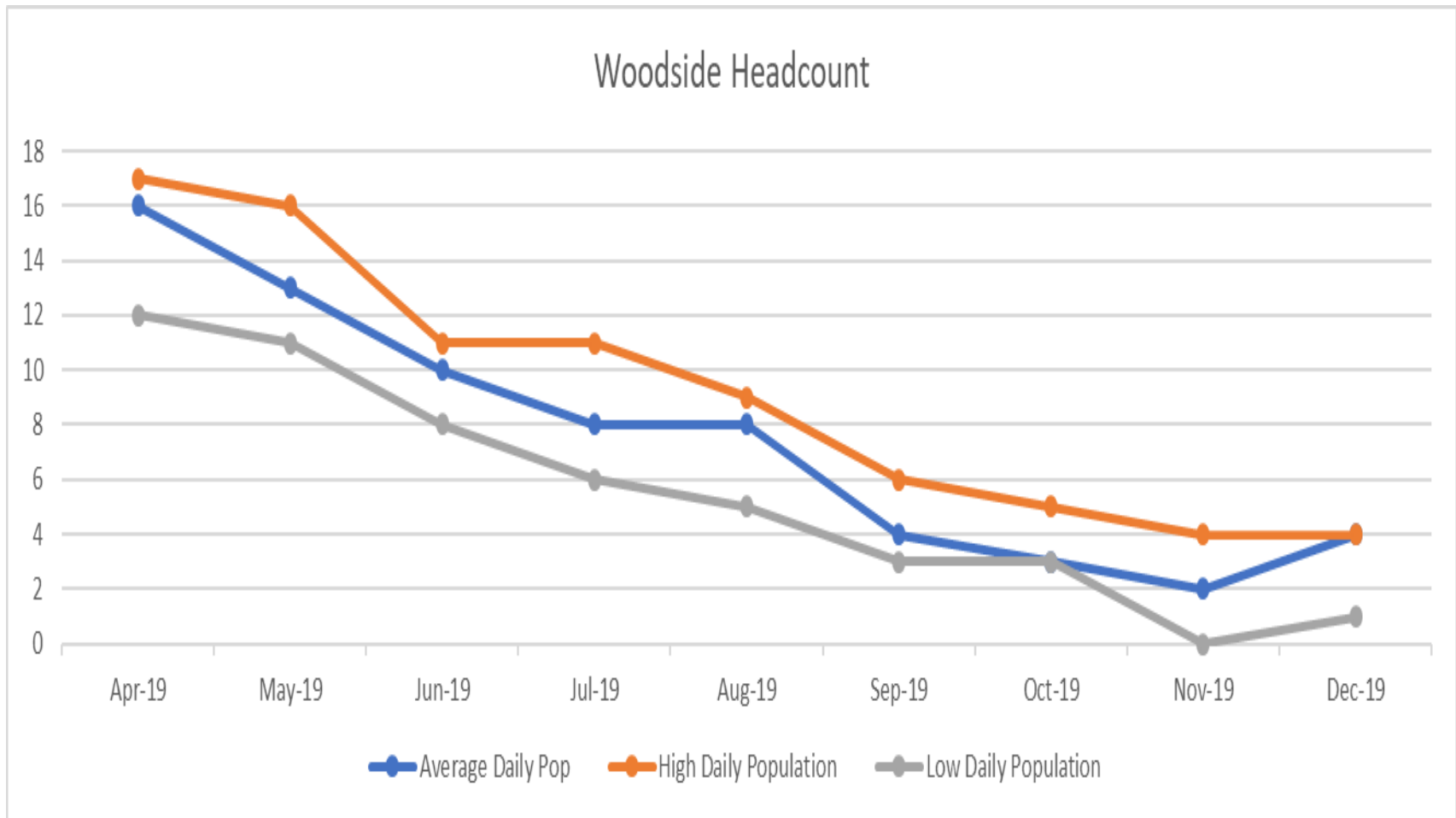
- Judicial Master
- Treatment Court Pilot
  - Chittenden County
- Home Visiting
- System of Care Report (Judiciary)
- Mediation Pilot
- Peer Navigators – Parental supports

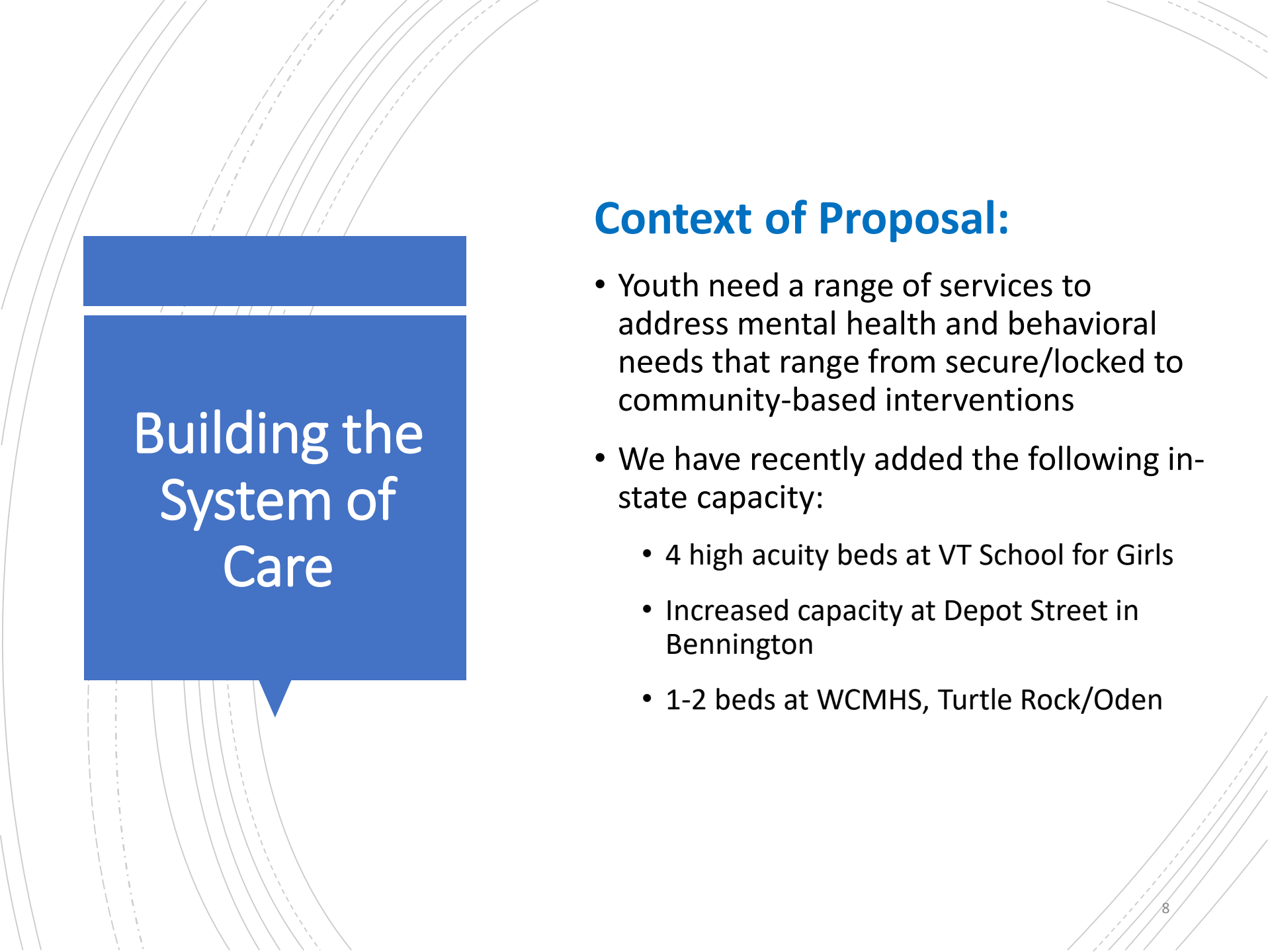
# Proposed Closure of Woodside

## Context of Proposal:

- Population has varied from 0-5 youth since August
- \$5.8 million dollar budget not sustainable with a low population
- Currently there are 50 staff employed by FSD at Woodside
- VSEA has vowed to oppose the closure
- We're building the system of care to address the continuum of needs of youth
- A report will be submitted concerning Woodside on January 15, 2020
- Legislation is needed to change statute enabling the closure of Woodside

# Woodside Data





# Building the System of Care

## Context of Proposal:

- Youth need a range of services to address mental health and behavioral needs that range from secure/locked to community-based interventions
- We have recently added the following in-state capacity:
  - 4 high acuity beds at VT School for Girls
  - Increased capacity at Depot Street in Bennington
  - 1-2 beds at WCMHS, Turtle Rock/Oden



# Building the System of Care

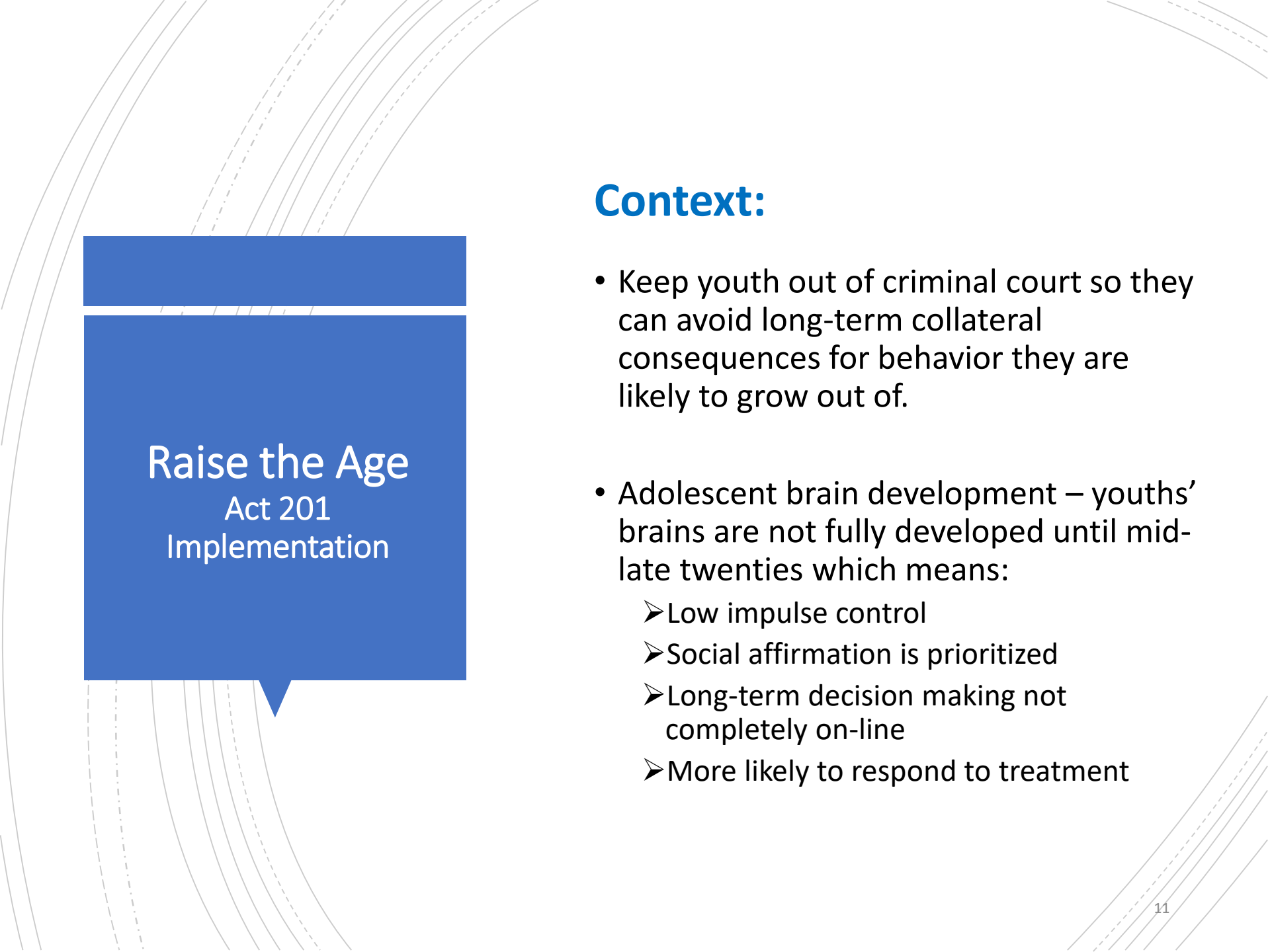
## Context of Proposal:

- Current in-state capacity:
  - 2 Assessment resources:
    - Community House
    - VT Assessment Center
  - 1 Hospital diversion program-NFI
  - 6 Crisis stabilization programs
  - 12 Community-based group homes
  - 7 Intensive residential programs
- Current out-of-state capacity:
  - 19 residential programs:
    - 9 located in New England
    - 2 NY and PA
    - 8 in AR, FL, IN, TN, VA

## Proposed Closure of Woodside / Building System of Care

### Timeline and Next Steps:

- Residential system of care study - RFP issued in conjunction with DMH
- Additional capacity for small secure, community-based program and/or intensive community-based interventions - RFP January 9<sup>th</sup>
- Change statute to enable the closure of Woodside
- Timeframe for Woodside closure – end of FY20
- Continue building the continuum of care to meet need of violent youth when applicable



**Raise the Age**  
Act 201  
Implementation


## Context:

- Keep youth out of criminal court so they can avoid long-term collateral consequences for behavior they are likely to grow out of.
- Adolescent brain development – youths’ brains are not fully developed until mid-late twenties which means:
  - Low impulse control
  - Social affirmation is prioritized
  - Long-term decision making not completely on-line
  - More likely to respond to treatment

## Raise the Age Act 201 Implementation

### Context:

- Act 201 expands Family Court jurisdiction to include 18 and 19-year-olds and includes the planning for that expansion.
- Presumption of diversion for low- to moderate-risk youth.
- For youth under 18, most cases must begin in the Family Division.
- 10- and 11-year-olds stay in the Family Division and may never go to the Criminal Division.
- Report link:  
<https://legislature.vermont.gov/assets/Legislative-Reports/20191101-Vermont-RTA-DCF-Report-Final.pdf>



**Raise the Age**  
Act 201  
Implementation

## Timeline and Next Steps:

- Formation of the Juvenile Services Unit to include:
  - Juvenile Services Director (New position)
  - Juvenile Justice Operations Manager
  - Adolescent Services Operations Manager
  - Juvenile Justice Coordinator - OJJDP/compliance focused/federally funded

## Child Registry Review Unit Capacity

### Context:

- The Child Registry Review Unit processes child abuse substantiations, substantiation reviews, and expungement requests for the Child Abuse/Neglect Registry.
- When a review is requested, there is currently a 6-7-month delay. During this delay, the substantiated person is not on the registry and could work with children putting them at risk of harm.

### Next Steps:

- Additional staff capacity is needed to address the backlog

A blue graphic consisting of a horizontal bar at the top and a larger rectangular box below it. The larger box has a white speech bubble shape at its bottom center. The text "FSD Strategic Plan" is written in white inside the blue box.

## FSD Strategic Plan

## Context:

- A new strategic plan was completed in May 2019
- Goals focus on:
  - Clarifying our scope of work to align with existing resources and priorities
  - Continuous quality improvement
  - Building a resilient workforce/improving retention
  - Communication strategies
  - Engaging partners
  - Recruiting and retaining foster and kin families
  - Improving technology and business practices
- Utilized road shows in the fall of 2019 to share the plan with staff in the district offices



## FSD Strategic Plan

### Context:

- In Year 1, we worked with the Capacity Building Center for States to create a change management framework and strengthen our use of data.
- This included development of a standard process for practice implementation that includes staff voices and engages community agencies.
- We also created a set of key outcome measures:
  1. Length of time cases are open
  2. Use of kinship placement
  3. FSW face-to-face contact with children





## FSD Strategic Plan

### Context:

- We implemented Policy 158, Case Consultations with Central Office, to improve access to different levels of supervision and support.
- We reached out to our stakeholders in each district to participate in stakeholder meetings; over 70 responded to the invitation. Quarterly stakeholder meetings are occurring as a result.
- We enhanced our annual child protection report to improve how we share key messages through data.



## FSD Strategic Plan

### Next Steps:

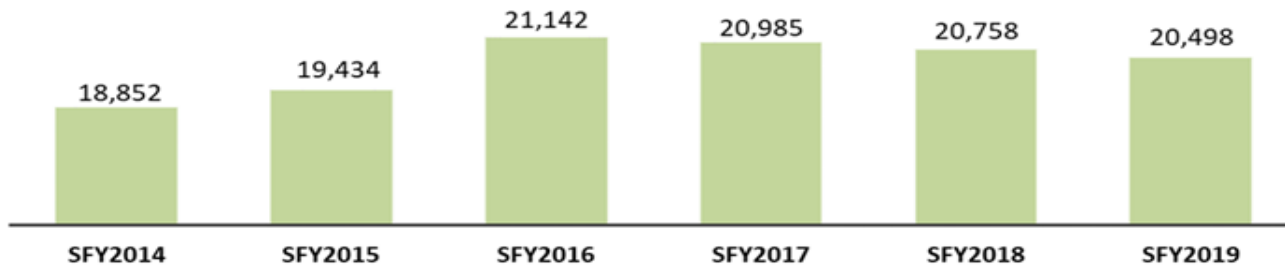
- Year 2 implementation includes tracking the key outcome measures discussed above.
- Continue to use data to drive decisions and provide accountability.
- Use the strategic plan as an on-going tool to help us measure progress and needs across the Division.

# Corresponding Data

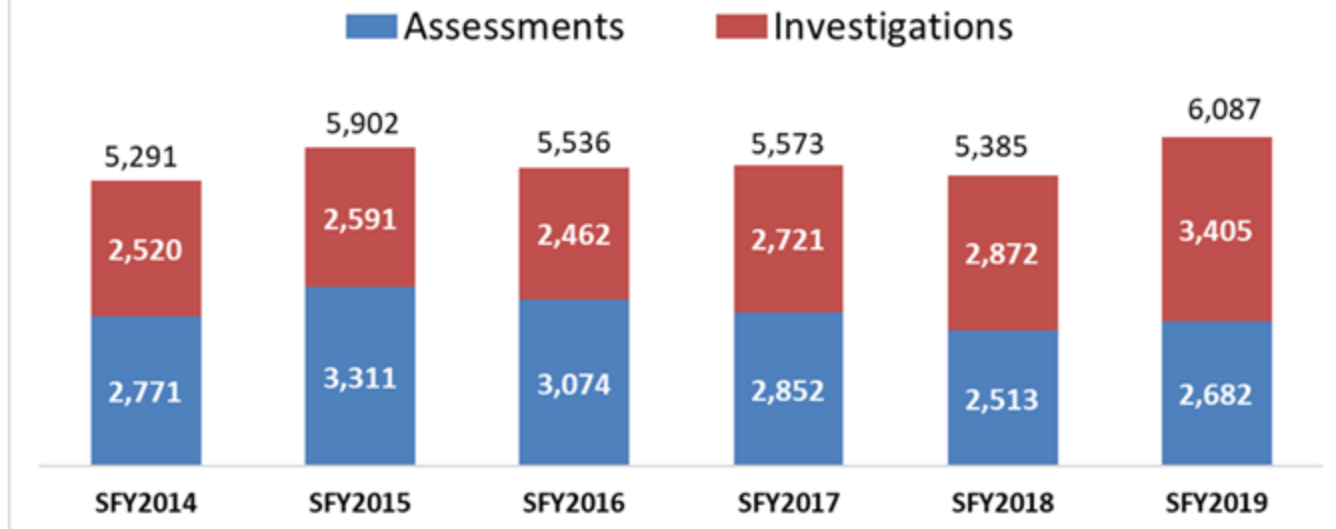


# Intakes and Interventions

## Total Child Abuse/Neglect Intakes

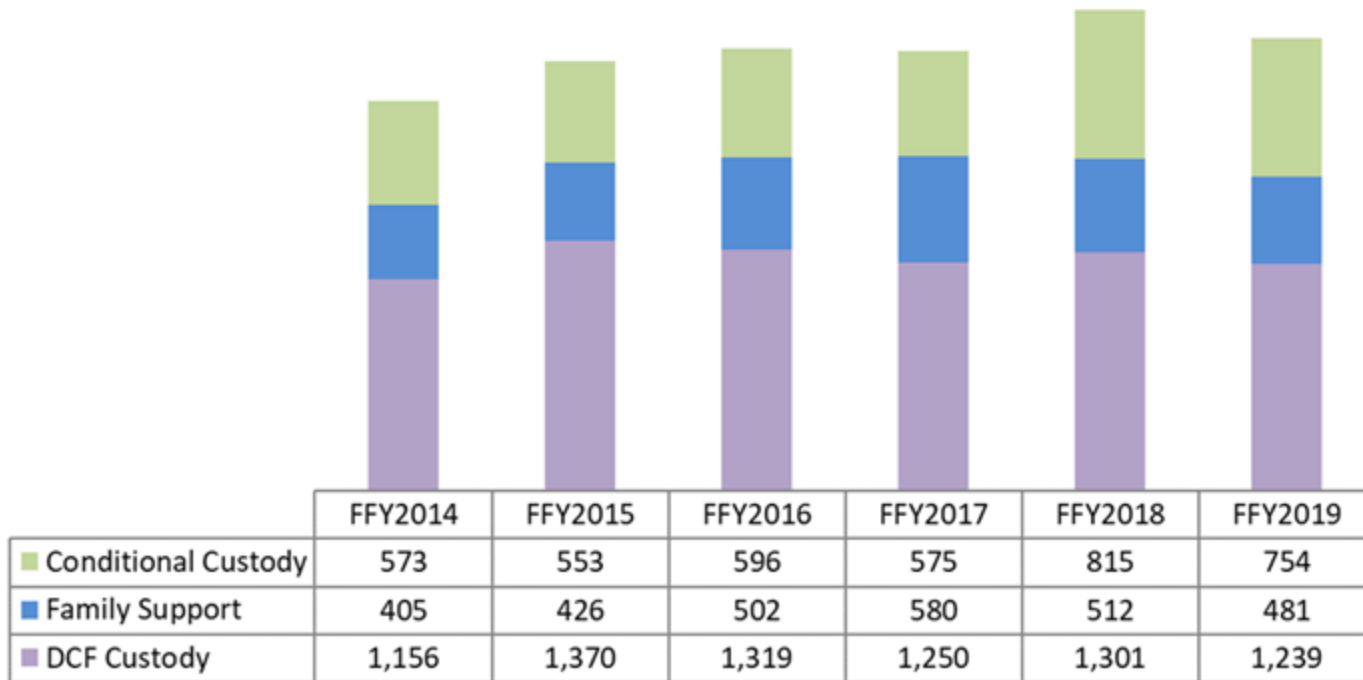


## Child Safety Interventions by Type



# Caseload Trends

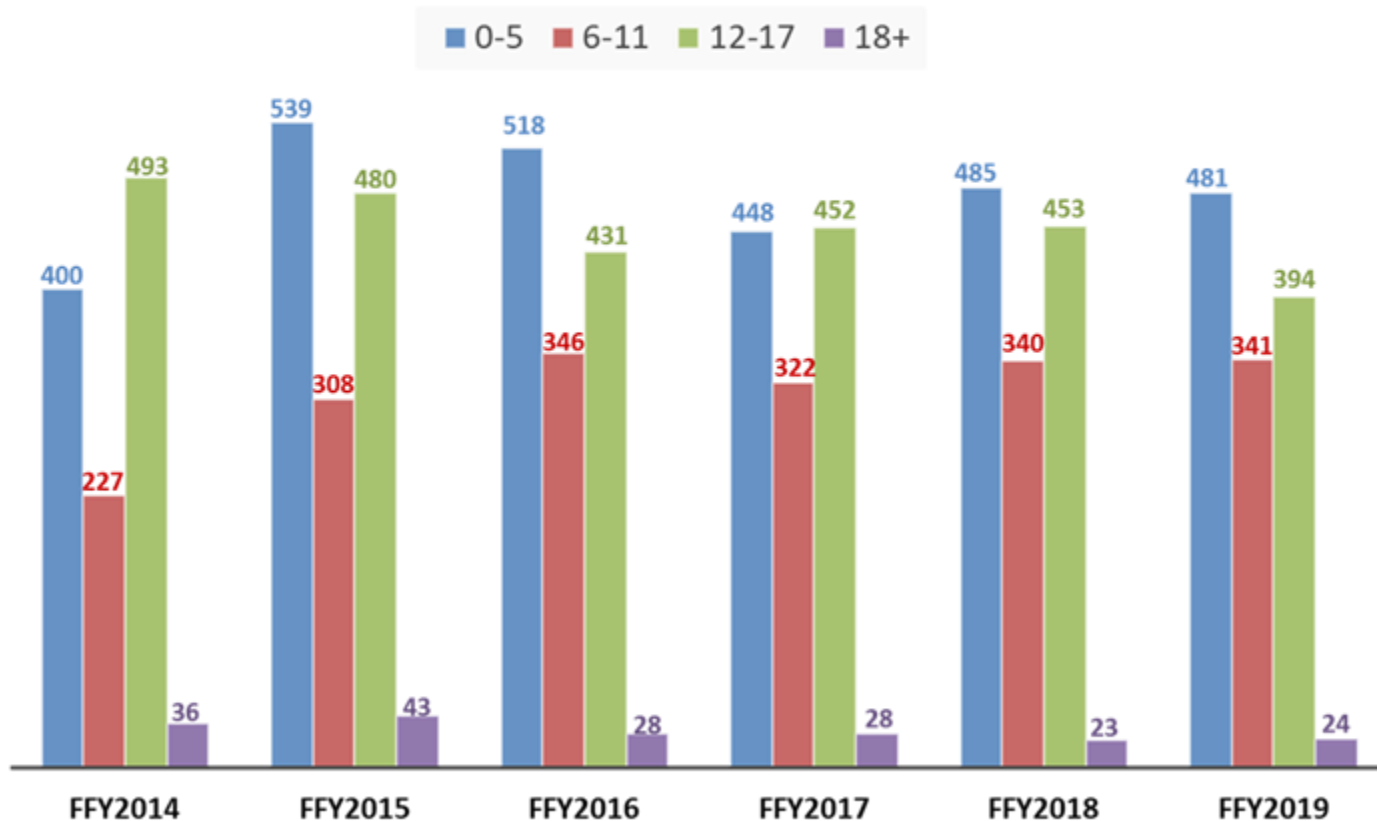
**Caseload Count by Type of Agency Involvement**  
as of Sept 30th



# Youth in Custody by Age

## CHILDREN IN CUSTODY BY AGE RANGE

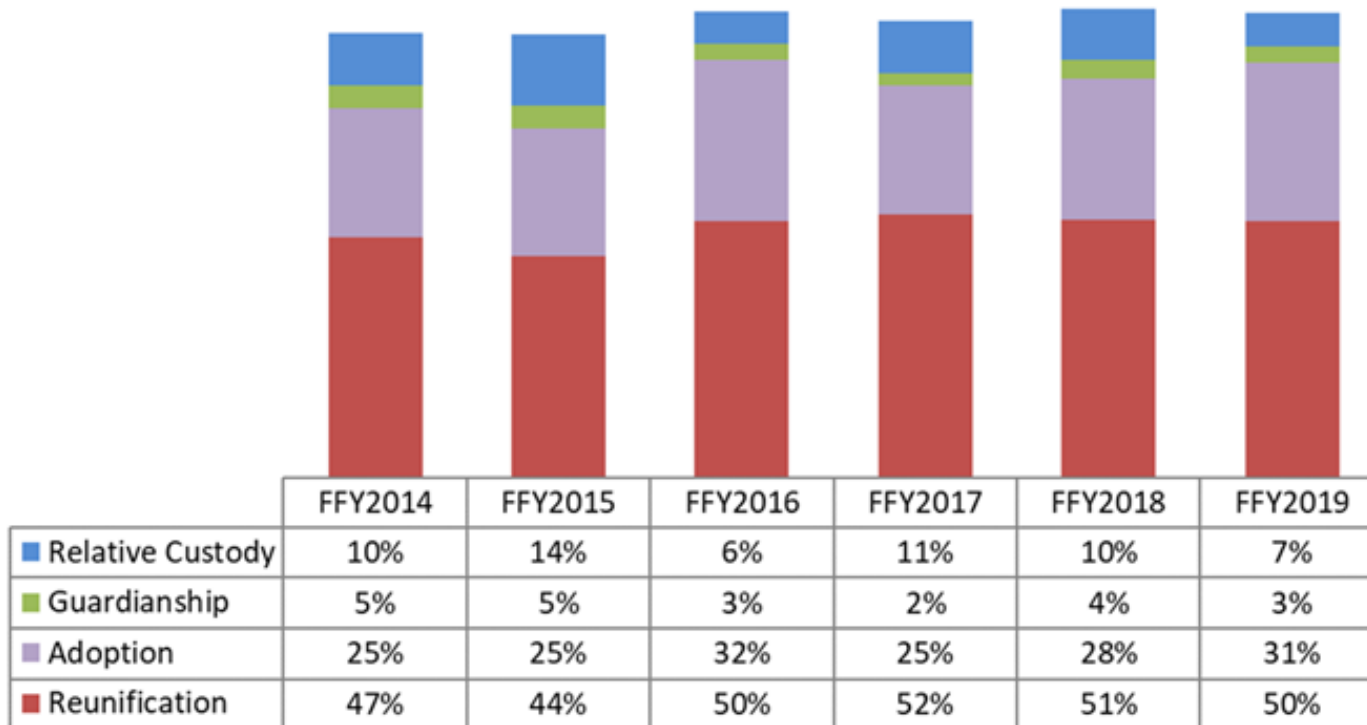
As of Sept 30th



# Permanent Placements

## Children in DCF Custody Who Exited to Permanent Placements

e.g., return home, permanent guardianship, adoption





**Thank you!**

For questions or follow up information, please contact us through

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Or via phone at 802-241-0929