



# **Overview of Services and Programs DCF-Family Services Division**

***Presentation to the Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee***

Presented by:

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# Family Services 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.**

We achieve our mission by working with families to:

- *Keep children and youth safe,*
- *Keep youth free from delinquent behaviors,*

*And if that is not possible:*

- *Caring for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody and attending to their well-being, while working towards safe reunification.*

*And if that is not possible:*

- *Achieving other forms of permanency for children and youth in DCF or conditional custody by providing them with safe, supportive, lifelong connections.*

# Four Key Outcomes

## **Safety**

**Permanence:** timely, safe

- Return home
- Adoption
- Guardianship

## **Well-being**

- Measured by health, mental health, and school success.

## **Law abidance**

- Youth are free from delinquent behavior



# FSD Structure

## District Offices

- 12 throughout state
- 180 Family Services Workers plus other staff

## State-wide Direct Service Units

- Centralized Intake: Child Protection Hotline and after hours emergency response
- Residential Licensing and Special Investigations Unit

## Central Office

- Provides support to district offices, oversees policy and practice, manages budgets, grants and contracts, and maintains communication with federal partners

# Child Abuse and Neglect Intake

Community members may contact centralized intake during the workday to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Our Emergency Services Program accepts reports after hours.

**20,779 reports in 2018**

**20,078 reports in 2019**

**15,722 reports in 2020**



# Investigations & Assessments

Specialized social work staff conduct child abuse investigations and assessments, with primary focus on the immediate safety of children.

- Districts conduct most assessments.
- Special Investigations Unit focuses on regulated facilities and schools.



**3,618 in 2020**

# Central Office

## Operations

- Supervision of District Directors and statewide functions

## System of Care Unit

- Supports quality service delivery through the contracted system of care, including foster care, kinship care, adoption, residential care and community services
- Includes adoption unit: with approx. 2,200 children receiving adoption subsidy, and post-adoption supports through the Vermont Adoption Consortium and the Vermont Adoption Registry.

# Central Office

## Revenue Enhancement Unit

- Focus on revenues, expenditures, grants and contracts

## Policy, Practice & Performance Unit

- Planning (state and federal)
- Policy development
- Practice supports
- Continuous quality improvement and assurance
- Child and Family Services Review



# Governing Statutes

- **Title 33, Chapter 49**
  - Child Abuse and Neglect Definitions
  - Child Abuse Investigation and Assessment Requirements
  - Administrative Appeal Processes
  - Disclosure of Information
- **Title 33, Chapter 51, 52, and 53**
  - Judicial Procedures Related to Children in Need of Care and Supervision (CHINs) including delinquency and truancy
- **15a VSA on Adoption Proceedings**

# Decision Point: Is the Child Safe?

The first priority of the social worker is to answer the question

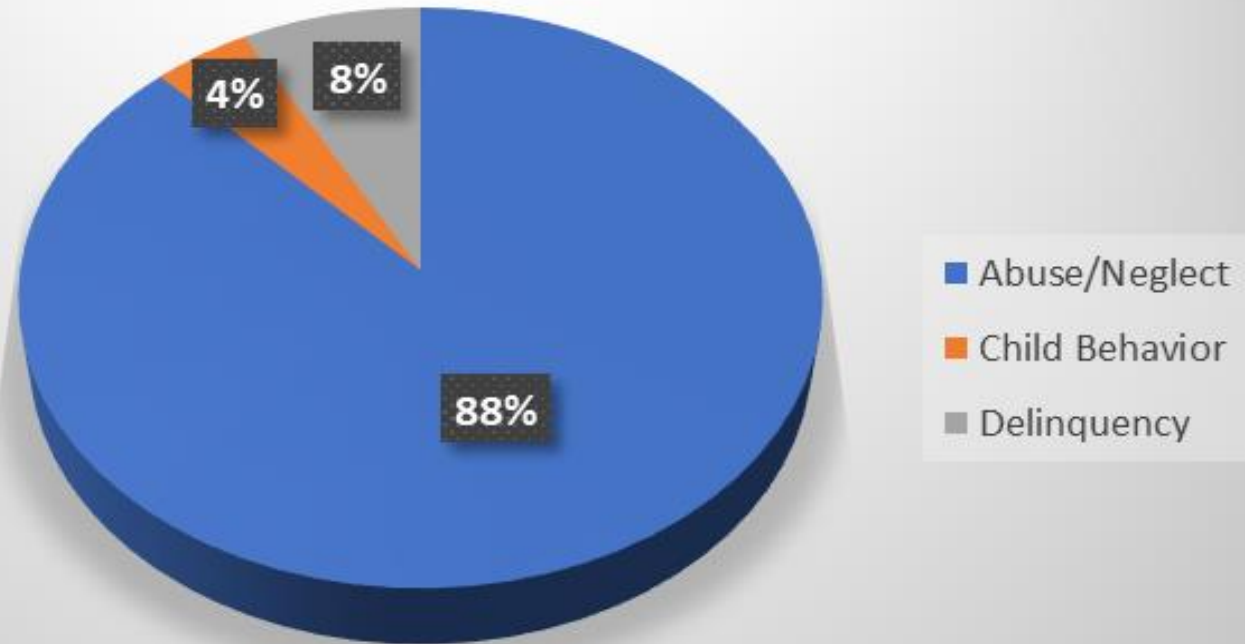
Is the child safe now?



- If not, what needs to be done to promote safety?
- Is out of home placement necessary?
- If the child must leave home, is a familiar person available to provide short-term care?
- Is DCF custody a necessary element to promote safety?

Structured Decision Making  
Assessment of Danger and Safety  
Is The Child Safe?

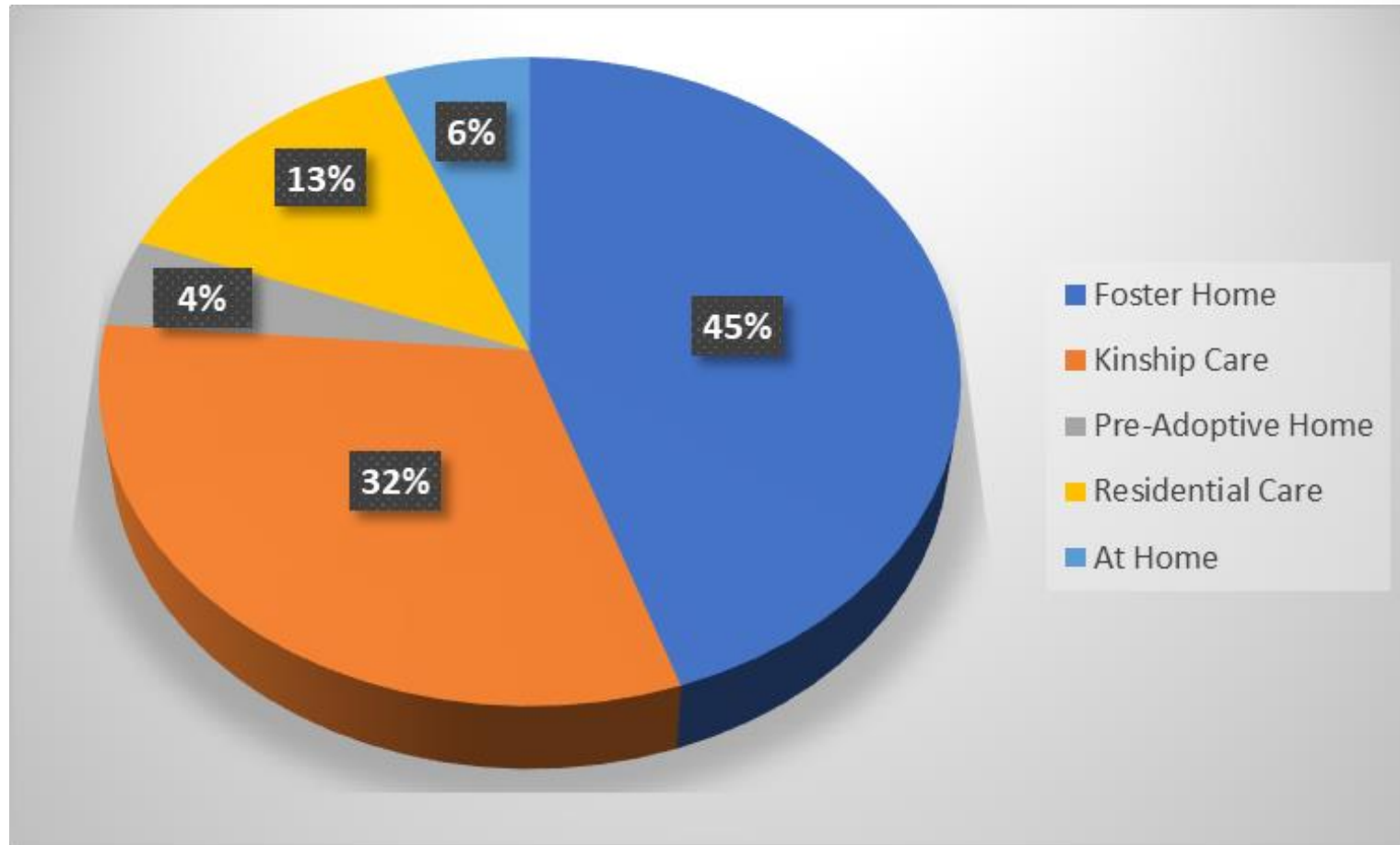
# Reasons for DCF Custody



Data Source: FSD Quarterly Management Reports; Q3 2020 C2 tab.

Data Note: Percentages are point-in-time by case type as of 9/30/2020.

# Where Children in Custody Live

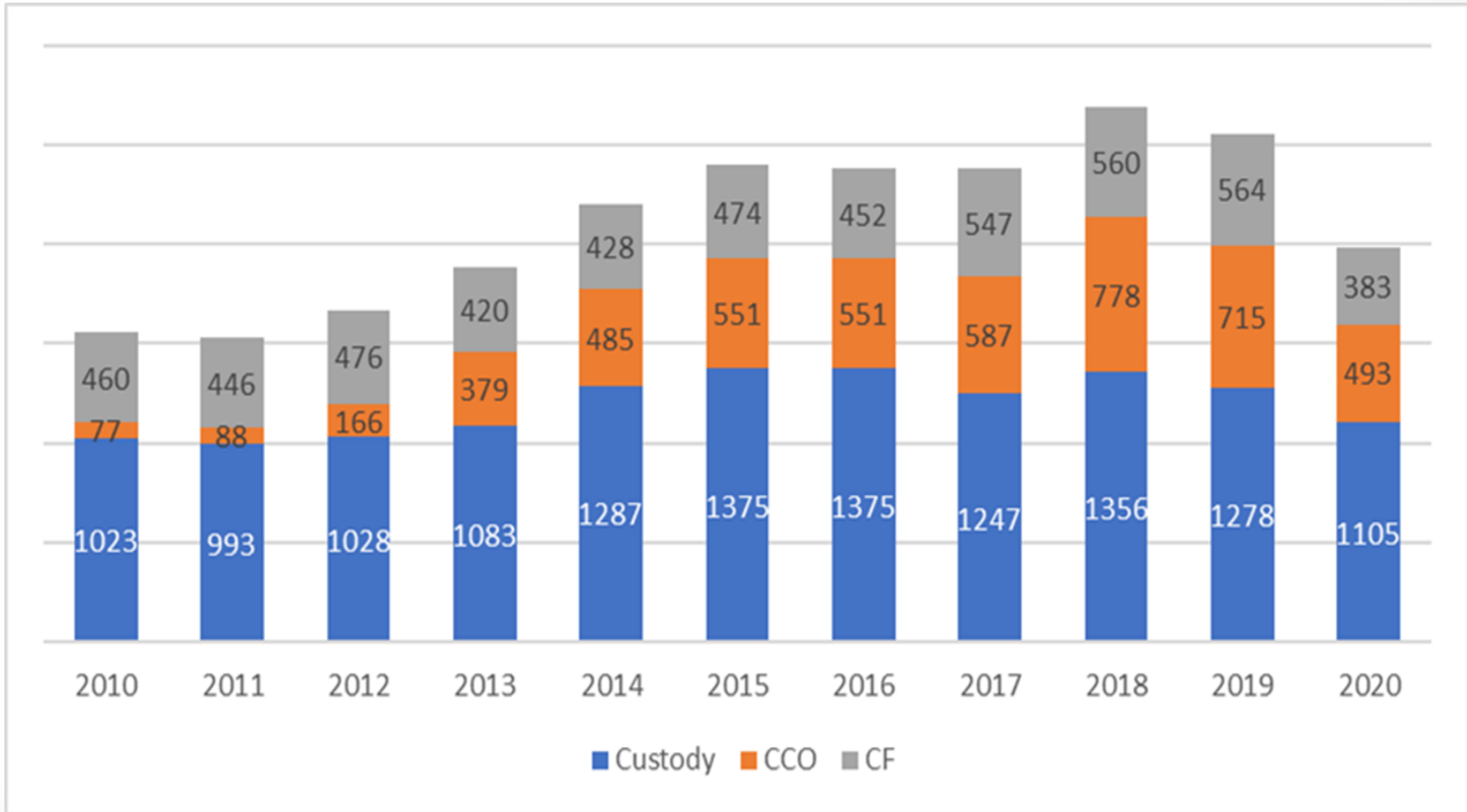


Data Source: FSD Quarterly Management Reports; Q3 2020 C5 tab.

Data Note: Placement type is point-in-time as of the last day of the quarter. Residential care includes Group Home, Institution and Intensive Residential. Percentages for Independent Living and Runaways not displayed as their totals are less than 1% overall.

# Child/Youth involved with DCF

Custody, Conditional Custody (CCO), Family Support Cases (CF)



# Youth Justice

Unlike child protection agencies in most other states, FSD also serves as the state's youth justice agency.

In this role, we:

- Work with youth whose own behaviors put them at risk;
- Supervise youth who are on probation for committing delinquent acts;
- Assess youth to determine their challenges and strengths;
- Place youth in temporary out-of-home care when necessary;
- Work with the youth and parents towards their safe return home; and
- Find permanent homes for youth who cannot safely return home, preferably with extended family members or known connections.

*Family Services Workers supervised 147 youth and were involved with 109 youth who are charged with a crime or delinquency but not yet adjudicated in September 2020*

# Questions?

