

Child Protection Oversight Committee  
Family Services Division  
Caseload Update  
Placement Stability Update

Thursday July 29, 2021

FSD Deputy Commissioner Aryka Radke  
FSD Director of Operations Brenda Gooley

# Child Protection Data Update

## # of children in State's custody remains below 1300 since October 2019

- the decline is consistent with court data showing a decrease in the number of CHINS filings

## # of families per case worker has also decreased

- this is attributed to both the decreased caseload and the new positions in Family Services
- current average caseload across the state is about 13 families which is above the statutory requirement of 12 families per worker, but is lower than October when it was 15 families per worker

# Caseload Updates

- ❑ In addition to custody cases, Family Services workers are also assigned cases involving:
  - children under the supervision of the Family Court through a Conditional Custody Order
  - families found to be at high or very high risk of future maltreatment (Family Support Cases- non court involved)
  - youth in the juvenile justice system
- ❑ Current average caseload ratio is 13.2 families to 1 Family Services worker however this varies dramatically around the state does not include:
  - staff vacancies
  - the decreased capacity created by staff in their training period
- ❑ When vacancies and new staff capacity are considered as part of this equation, the caseload average is approximately 16.2 families to 1 Family Services worker

Newport: highest average caseload of approximately 16.3 families per worker

Springfield: lowest with approximately 10.0 families per worker

When adjusted for vacancies:

- Newport: highest caseload average at 27.1 families per worker
- Middlebury: lowest caseload at 10.3 families per worker

## Other Factors to Consider

- Caseload ratios **do not** consider family size
  - Family Services workers are averaging 17.6 children per staff member.
- Due to an escalation of involvement with child behavioral issues without these children coming into custody – we are now including this number in our reports as it affects our caseload.
- Caseload numbers reflect data that is used at the state level to determine workforce allocation.
  - Directors exercise discretion in managing workload based on factors such as staff being on extended leave, staff turnover, intensity of case type, etc.
  - This includes direct level discretion in moving positions from one unit to another to manage workload.

**Family Services Caseload Data – all case types  
(point in time data updated 6/1/21)**

<b>Type of Case</b>	<b>June 2014</b>	<b>June 2015</b>	<b>June 2016</b>	<b>May 2017</b>	<b>June 2018</b>	<b>June 2019</b>	<b>April 2020</b>	<b>June 2020</b>	<b>Aug 2020</b>	<b>Oct 2020</b>	<b>Dec 2020</b>	<b>Feb 2021</b>	<b>April 2021</b>	<b>June 2021</b>
Family Support Cases (families)	411	465	455	553	536	543	403	356	328	310	318	339	368	339
In DCF Custody (children)	1,087	1,291	1,392	1,303	1,350	1,337	1,183	1,171	1,134	1,127	1,131	1,124	1,114	1,092
Conditional Custody Orders (children)	379	485	627	631	745	713	534	493	426	415	439	458	464	510
Youth on Probation/Delinquent No Custody (children)	152	108	178	180	199	308	356	327	279	256	270	275	264	253
Child Behavior – No Custody						43	26	26	24	25	24	23	23	27
<b>Total Caseload</b>	<b>2,029</b>	<b>2,349</b>	<b>2,652</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>2,922</b>	<b>2,944</b>	<b>2,502</b>	<b>2,373</b>	<b>2,191</b>	<b>2,133</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>2,219</b>	<b>2,233</b>	<b>2,221</b>

# Foster Care Update

We place with kin caregivers wherever possible

- We conduct background checks, assess the safety of the home through a district approval and then licensing process
- Caregivers complete 20 hours of training that is provided in-person or online

When suitable kin are not available, we look place the child in their local community in one of our community foster homes.

- Community Foster Caregivers come from all walks of life.
- Caregivers are single, married, gay, or straight. They must be at least 21 year of age.

## Foster Care Data Update

In 2019 we had 961 families inquire about foster care

- 600 of those inquirers completed a Foster Parent application
- 431 families went on to become licensed

In 2020 we had 940 families inquire about foster care

- 534 of those inquirers completed and application
- 305 went on to become licensed.

# Foster Care Data Update

1219 active foster care licenses as of  
7/21/21

- We license both kin and non-relative homes
- 34% of children/youth in care placed with kin

Foster parents are volunteers who receive a  
stipend to meet the child's basic needs

- Standard foster care rate ranges from \$18.70 (child aged 0 to 5) to \$29.72 (teen aged 13-18, with the highest training level for the caregiver)
- A range of enhanced reimbursement is provided for high needs youth and medically fragile children (\$35 to \$100 per day)



# Why pay such close attention to placement stability?

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**For children in foster care, the number of placements can impact daily functioning and adjustment as well as the child welfare agency's ability to move the child to permanent placement in a timely manner.**

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Because of the seriousness of long-term consequences for children, *placement stability within 12 months of entry into foster care* was one of the three outcome measures established as the national standard of Permanency Outcome 1 for the first round of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR).

*Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS, 2004.*

What do we see when we look at our data?



## PPP Placement Stability Data Project 2021

All Tables are % of Row Total (Stratification by Factor)

Gender	Stability Unmet		Stability Met		Total #	Total %
	#	%	#	%		
Female	276	40%	413	60%	689	100%
Male	319	43%	429	57%	748	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>100%</b>

Age Group	Stability Unmet		Stability Met		Total #	Total %
	#	%	#	%		
0 - 2	80	29%	200	71%	280	100%
3 - 5	119	43%	161	58%	280	100%
6 - 8	85	38%	141	62%	226	100%
9 - 11	72	43%	94	57%	166	100%
12 - 14	74	44%	95	56%	169	100%
15+	165	52%	151	48%	316	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Age group is a factor in placement instability, particularly older children/youth at 44% and 52%. Gender is not a considerable factor.*

Data represents placements that occurred within FFY2018 and FFY2019 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019)

*Case types (youth beyond parental control and adjudicated delinquent) are a factor in placement instability.*

PPP Placement Stability Data Project 2021						
All Tables are % of Row Total (Stratification by Factor)						
Case Type EOM	Stability Unmet		Stability Met		Total #	Total %
	#	%	#	%		
CC	468	39%	719	61%	1187	100%
DC	49	49%	51	51%	100	100%
UC	65	64%	36	36%	101	100%
VC	3	21%	11	79%	14	100%
CF	1	25%	3	75%	4	100%
CS	7	24%	22	76%	29	100%
DP	1	100%		0%	1	100%
DY	1	100%		0%	1	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data represents placements that occurred within FFY2018 and FFY2019 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019)

## PPP Placement Stability Data Project 2021

**All Tables are % of Row Total (Stratification by Factor)**

Length of Stay Group	Stability Unmet		Stability Met		Total #	Total %
	#	%	#	%		
less 12 months	196	37%	337	63%	533	100%
12 - 23+ months	262	43%	346	57%	608	100%
24 - 35+ months	128	46%	151	54%	279	100%
36 months or more	9	53%	8	47%	17	100%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>595</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>1437</b>	<b>100%</b>

Data represents placements that occurred within FFY2018 and FFY2019 (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2019)

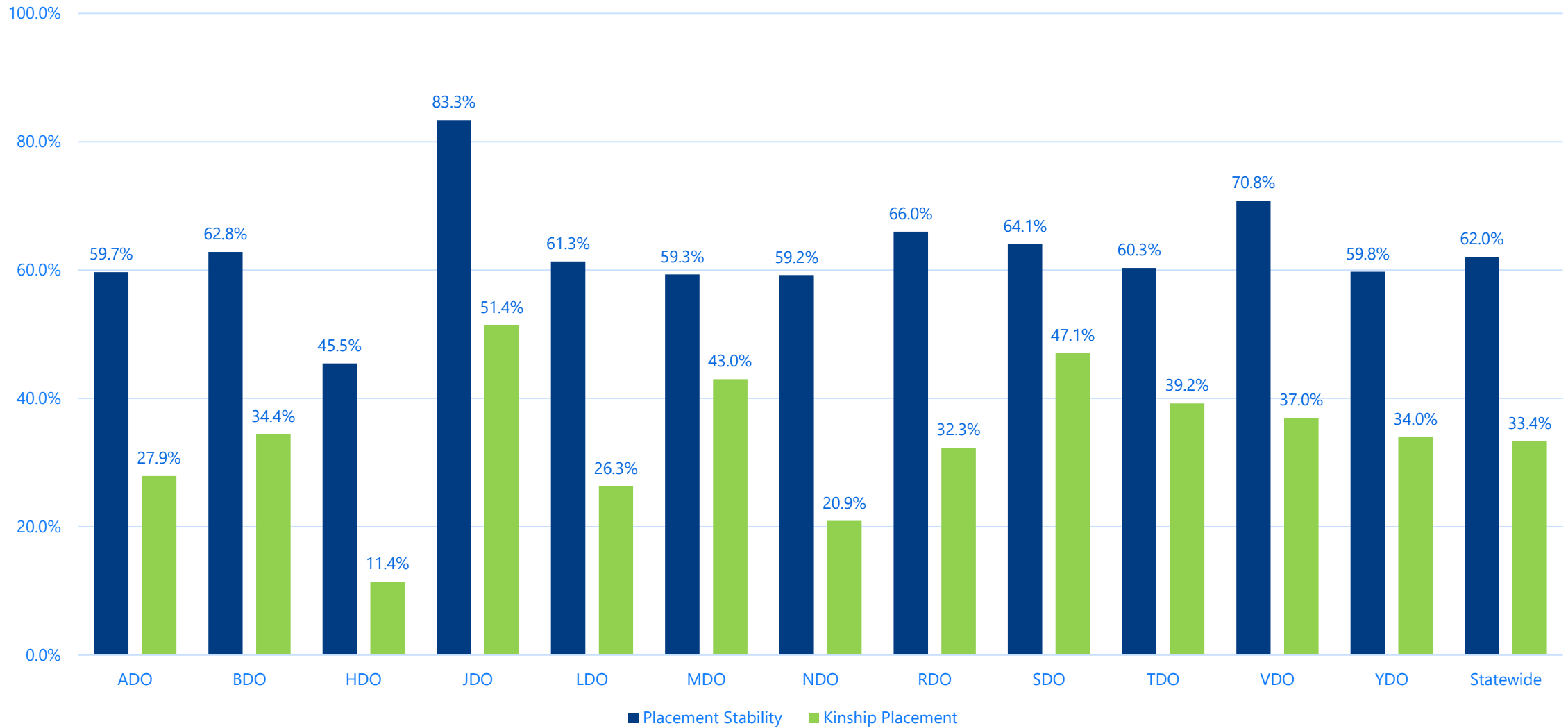
The longer children and youth stay in care the more placement disruptions they tend to experience.

~Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS, 2004; 2005.

*Length of time in custody is a factor in placement stability, with longer stayers experiencing more instability.*

# Placement Stability/Kinship Placement

( Statewide, January 1, 2021 – March 31, 2021)



## Placement with kin

Based on research evidence, kinship or relative placements result in fewer moves, and can have 70% lower rate of disruption.

*~Northern California Training Academy, 2008.*





# What the Research Says about Kinship Care

- Jan 2009 -- Cochrane Collaboration reviewed 62 studies.
- Compared to foster care, children in kinship care experience:
  - better behavioral development
  - better mental health functioning
  - better placement stability
  - same reunification rates
- Also children were:
  - less likely to utilize mental health services.
  - less likely to be adopted
  - more likely to be in guardianship

## Other Research

- Children tend to have more contact with parents.
  - Can be a benefit, but can increase risk if not well-managed.
- Some suggestion that kinship care is less stigmatizing to children.
- Conflict with child's birth family can be a significant stressor.

## Other Challenges

- Kinship caregivers receive fewer services and supports.
- Kinship caregivers access services for the child less frequently.

- References:
- Kinship Care for the Safety, Permanency, and Well-being of Children Removed From the Home for Maltreatment by M. Winokur, A. Holtan and D. Valentine for the Cochrane Collaboration.
  - <http://www.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab006546.html>

# What the research says

## Reasons why minimizing placement change is vital:

- Minimize child/youth trauma
- Lessen child attachment, behavior and mental health disorders
- Decrease school mobility and increase academic achievement
- Maximize continuity in services
- Decrease foster parent stress
- Decrease ambiguous loss for children and youth
- Lower program costs
- Increase the likelihood child/youth will create positive life-long connections



# The importance of worker consistency and how that impacts placement stability

- Worker change may be one of the factors that drives placement instability because of disruptions in support to foster parents and the child/youth. Most importantly, we have growing evidence that it significantly hurts a child's ability to find a permanent home.
- Placement stability may enhance the probability of children's educational, physical, and mental health needs assessed and addressed appropriately (Children's Bureau/ACF/DHHS, 2004).

*Presentation for the California Permanency Conference March 20-21, 2007. Peter Pecora, Ph.D. is Senior Director of Research Services with Casey Family Programs and Professor at the School of Social Work, University of Washington.*