

CHILD WELFARE SERVICES REALIGNMENT REPORT

OUTCOME AND EXPENDITURE DATA SUMMARY

April 2014 Annual Report to the Legislature

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OUTCOME AND EXPENDITURE DATA
SUMMARY

2011 Realignment of the Child Welfare System

SB 1013 added Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10104 to require CDSS to annually report to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature, and publicly post on the Department's internet website, a summary of outcome and expenditure data that allows for monitoring of changes over time that may have occurred as a result of the 2011 Realignment of the child welfare system.

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Summary of Findings

This report is the second annual report on the impact of 2011 Realignment on the child welfare system. Child welfare outcomes in California have been relatively stable over the past three years. Further, there does not appear to be any negative consequences of having transferred fiscal responsibility for the program to the county level. There has been a slight increase in referrals in some counties, which could be the result of general economic conditions or due to the publicity surrounding several child welfare cases. These “high profile” cases can often raise awareness in the public at large and lead to increased mandated reporter activity. Two counties, including Los Angeles which represents approximately 34% of the child welfare population, have been operating under a Title IV-E waiver during this period. The evaluation report for these counties can be found at <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG1333.htm>.

Safety Constellation

Referral rates have remained relatively constant since 2008. There has been a slight increase from 51 per 1,000 children in 2008 to 53 per 1,000 children in 2012, and most markedly between 2011 and 2012. Substantiation rates (referrals that are confirmed through an investigation) for 2008 to 2012 have decreased slightly from 10.2 per 1,000 children to 9.3 per 1,000 children, while rates of entry have remained almost unchanged, varying between 3.3 to 3.4 for the same time period. Child welfare practices of investigating referrals within policy time frames continue to remain above state standards and children continue to be protected from further maltreatment (recurrence of maltreatment has remained stable), based on the current data collection and display methodology. Lastly for safety, statewide performance on monthly caseworker visits with children continues to improve, with a 10 percent change increase between FY 2009 and 2013.

Placement and Caseload Constellation

There has been a significant and constant decline in the foster care caseload. Caseload has declined nearly 50 percent from 107,998 in 2000 to 53,112¹ in 2013. Since 2009, the number of children for whom their first placement is with a relative has increased from 16% to 24% in 2013, while the proportion of children placed in group homes has decreased from 18% to 13%. Relative homes continue to be the predominant placement for children in care and the proportion of children experiencing placement changes remains stable. Finally, for entries into foster care in calendar years 2006 through 2010, length of stay for the most recent cohort was 6 fewer days in care. However, in 2010 there was a 22 day increase in days in care.

Permanency Constellation

For children entering care for the first time, there have been moderate increases in the proportion of children exiting to reunification within 36 months of entry from 58% in 2006 to 61% in 2010. For children entering care between 2008 and 2012, there has been a moderate decrease in the proportion of children who reunified within 12 months from

¹ This figure includes Child Welfare Agency only and children ages 0-17.

43.5% in 2008 to 38% in 2012. The proportion of children re-entering foster care within a year has increased from 11.1% in 2008 to 12.7% in 2012. While there may be some overlap, the two measures are not restricted to the same group of children.

Introduction

The California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is the single state agency responsible for the administration and supervision of the Child Welfare Services (CWS) system, a system authorized through the federal social security act, Subparts IV-E and IV-B and throughout various chapters of the Welfare and Institutions Code. Oversight and monitoring of the CWS system, including development of programmatic and fiscal policy, and training and technical assistance requirements are central to this responsibility. The fiscal and programmatic administration of CWS programs continues to be data informed to ensure compliance with state plan requirements, and to guarantee maximization of federal financial participation for these programs.

The CDSS increased its level of data utilization to oversee county child welfare systems as a result of the passage of Assembly Bill (AB) 636 (Steinberg, Chapter 678, Statutes of 2001). Programmatic data have provided greater accountability for child and family outcomes across California, and serve as the foundation for this annual report to the Legislature required by Senate Bill (SB) 1013 (Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review, Chapter 35, Statutes of 2012). SB 1013 added Welfare and Institutions Code Section 10104 to require the CDSS to annually report to the appropriate fiscal and policy committees of the Legislature, and publicly post on the Department's internet website, a summary of outcome and expenditure data that allows for monitoring of changes over time that may have occurred as a result of the 2011 Realignment of the child welfare system. Performance measures and process data contained in this report are statewide and reflect a cross section of child welfare practices that impact child and family safety, permanency², and well-being, many of which were developed pursuant to AB 636. Currently, California is reforming the quality assurance system for child welfare services to reflect a shift a model of continuous quality improvements. These changes will allow for systematic review of the data coupled with assessments of the changes that occur in demographics, programs, and practices that account for positive or negative trends. Future reports will be able to address a number of questions that arise through the use of case record reviews coupled with these administrative data. Data³ contained in this report were drawn from the Child Welfare System/Case Management System and are available in the publically accessible CDSS/UC Berkeley Dynamic Report system: http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/⁴. County-specific data can be found at: <http://www.childsworld.ca.gov/PG3197.htm>.

² While the definition of "permanency" is complex and should consider social, emotional and legal aspects, for the purposes of this document, it means exiting foster care to a permanent family through reunification, guardianship or adoption.

³ Over time changes in the data noted in the report are calculated as percent change rather than absolute differences in order to account for the varying "sizes" of the units of data.

⁴ Figures 1-8a and 9-14 in this report were prepared by the staff of the California Child Welfare Indicators Project, CSSR, UC Berkeley using CWS/CMS 2013 Q3 extracts and can be found via the web at http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

Organization of the Report

The analysis that follows is organized into three separate constellations: 1) Safety Outcomes, 2) Placement and Caseload Outcomes, and 3) Permanency Outcomes. Analysis is structured around constellations of outcomes instead of singular measures because of the complexity of the child welfare system in its service delivery to children and families with multifaceted and changing needs. The data operate collectively in that changes in one part of the system can have a significant effect on other areas.

Examining longitudinal outcome data requires caution and attention to a number of key analytic considerations. The following should be borne in mind when reviewing the data and trends outlined in the report:

- Child welfare is a system and data related to this system are interconnected; measures should not be viewed in isolation.
- Comparing data between various counties on any given measure has limitations due to economic, geographic, and demographic differences that may require different prevention and intervention strategies from one county to the other.
- In small counties, a small number of children, even one family, can create significant shifts in data.
- Performance in any given year needs to be viewed in the context of prior performance.
- Individual county data may differ from statewide data due to local demographics, economics, size, and other factors.

The CDSS continues to monitor county claiming of federal funds; therefore counties are required to claim actual costs for the realigned programs in the same manner prior to the implementation of 2011 Realignment. Expenditures for all realigned programs displayed on the Realignment Expenditure Summary (Attachment A⁵) compare two years of actuals prior to the implementation of 2011 Realignment--to the years after realignment. The percentage from year to year has been identified as follows:

- Less than zero (0) percent change
- Between zero (0) percent and fifty (50) percent change
- Between fifty (50) percent and one hundred (100) percent change
- Above one hundred (100) percent change

The expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 2009-10 and FY 2010-11 only capture the non-Federal share that is comprised of state General Fund (GF) and county share. For FY 2011-12, and FY 2012-2013 the non-Federal share is comprised of Local Revenue Fund (LRF) and county

⁵<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/cdssweb/entres/pdf/Expenditures/RealignedExpenditures2014.pdf>

share since 2011 Realignment shifted the funding from the State to the local governments. Because counties have up to nine months to submit revisions to their expenditures, FY 2011-12 data have now been finalized and may differ from last year's report.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

A: Safety Constellation

The California Child Welfare System's paramount goal is keeping children safe from abuse and neglect. Child welfare agencies in the state must ensure that children who have been found to be victims of maltreatment are protected from further abuse whether they remain at home or are placed in an out-of-home setting. For children at risk of being removed from their homes, the child welfare agency must appropriately consider providing services to families in crisis to prevent or remedy abuse or neglect. The intent here is preserving families and keeping children safely in their own homes, when possible.

Over a decade ago, the Differential Response strategy was piloted in 11 counties. Today, the majority of counties use this strategy to some degree. Differential Response is a child welfare practice that allows for a comprehensive set of responses when a child welfare agency receives a report of suspected abuse or neglect. Responses include prevention and early intervention, engaging families to address issues of safety and risk, and improving access to a broad range of services for families who were formally involved in the CWS and those who choose to participate voluntarily. The Department and counties implemented a standardized safety assessment process to ensure the consistent evaluation of a child's immediate safety and risk levels.

A1. Referral, Substantiations and Entry Rates

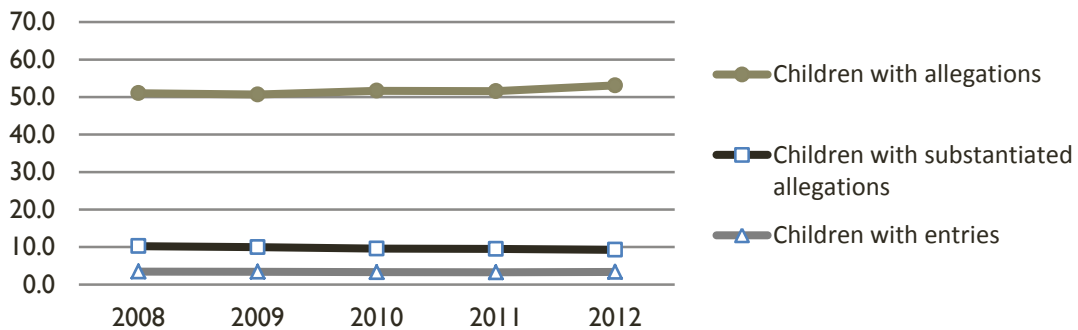
Referral rates tell us how many children with at least one maltreatment allegation are reported to a county. The numbers are represented as *per 1,000 children* in the general child population.

Substantiation rates tell us how many children with an allegation of maltreatment have had that allegation confirmed through an investigation. The numbers are represented as *per 1,000 children* in the general child population.

Entry rates tell us how many children have entered foster care as a result of a substantiated allegation. The numbers are represented as *per 1,000 children* in the general child population. Generally, substantiation rates can highlight systemic and practice issues, assist in evaluating the effectiveness of existing strategies, and/or inform planning for prevention, intervention and treatment of abuse and neglect.

Figure 1 illustrates that referral rates⁶ have slightly increased from 51 per 1,000 children in 2008 to 53 per 1,000 children in 2012, and most markedly between 2011 and 2012. Substantiation rates for 2008 to 2012 have decreased slightly from 10.2 per 1,000 children to 9.3 per 1,000 children, while rates of entry have remained almost unchanged, varying between 3.3 to 3.4 per 1,000 children for the same time period. These decreases and stabilization of rates may be attributed to a combination of factors such as the increased use of standardized safety assessment tools, evolving child welfare practices related to engagement of children and their families during investigations and providing in-home supportive services, and strategies that provide alternative services, such as Differential Response.

Figure 1: Rate of children with allegations, substantiations, and entries (per 1,000)



Type of Referral Rates	Per 1,000 / Number	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Children with allegations	Per 1,000	51.0	50.7	51.7	51.6	53.1
Children with allegations	n	486,045	471,624	479,097	475,249	486,991
Children with substantiated allegations	Per 1,000	10.2	10.0	9.6	9.5	9.3
Children with substantiated allegations	n	97,456	92,627	88,789	87,495	84,920
Children with entries	Per 1,000	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.4
Children with substantiated allegations	n	32,816	31,653	30,670	30,068	30,760
Child population (0-17 years)	N	9,525,912	9,307,822	9,270,132	9,214,425	9,170,526

A2. Referrals Evaluated Out

Not all referrals received are investigated by the child welfare agency. On average, as many referrals are evaluated out as are substantiated (see Figure 2). Referrals that are evaluated out are not assigned to an Emergency Response (ER) social worker for investigation. Some examples of situations where a referral is evaluated out include:

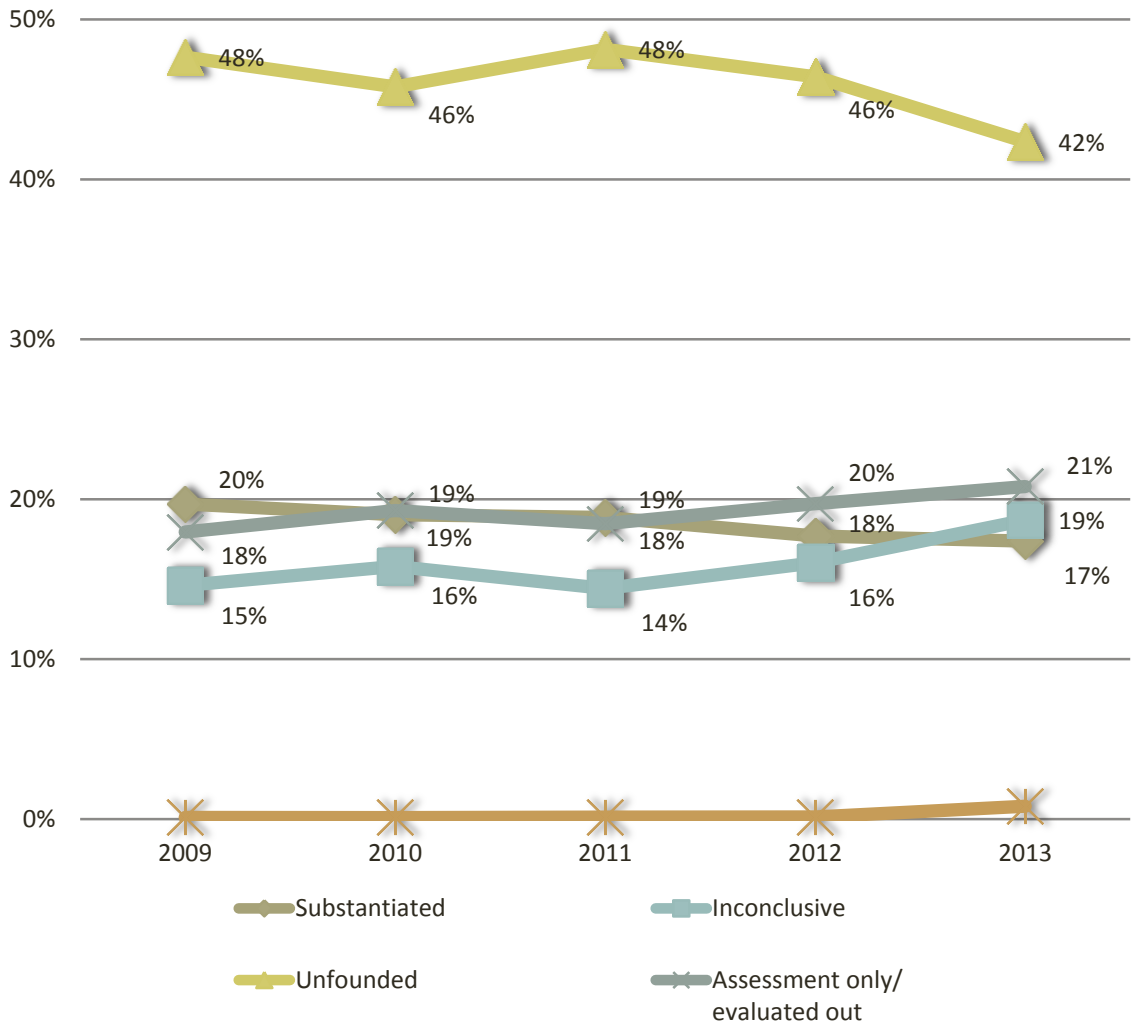
- Insufficient information is provided in the initial report (e.g., an anonymous person calls the ER hotline to report that “A mom is beating her child in a local shopping center” then hangs up).

⁶ Referral rates are determined by the unduplicated state count of children with a child maltreatment allegation.

- The alleged perpetrator is not a parent or caretaker, in which case the allegation is more appropriately referred to local law enforcement.
- The reported incident does not meet the statutory threshold for child abuse or neglect (e.g., two adolescent siblings in a physical altercation).

Criteria or thresholds influencing ER investigations may vary due to informal and formal changes in local policy or practice, differences in state or federal regulations or instructions, (or their interpretations), training needs, and other factors. Routine studies of referral data over time may signal the need for further analysis if the proportion of referrals that are evaluated out in a certain jurisdiction varies significantly over one or more time intervals. Also, analysis of the referrals that are evaluated out can help identify emerging or recurring issues for families in the community that do not meet the threshold for intervention. This can inform the county's prevention/early intervention and Differential Response efforts in assisting families in mitigating crises before they increase in complexity, or otherwise escalate to a level that requires child welfare intervention. The state and counties have begun an effort to enhance the continuous quality improvement system. This effort intended to evaluate which practice efforts impact progress in prevention measures.

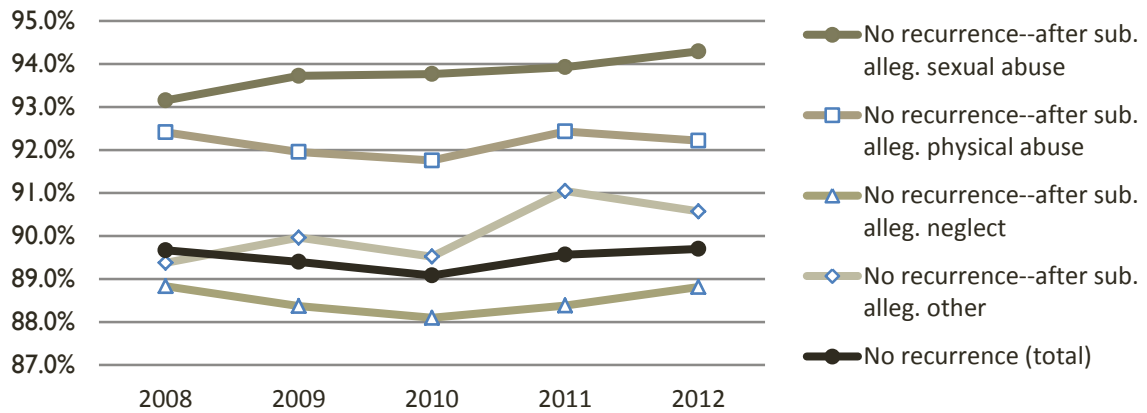
Figure 2: Children and youth with allegations, by disposition type



Disposition Type	Percentage/ Number	Jul 2008 – Jun 2009	Jul 2009 – Jun 2010	Jul 2010 – Jun 2011	Jul 2011 – Jun 2012	Jul 2012 – Jun 2013
Substantiated	%	20%	19%	19%	18%	17%
Substantiated	n	94,596	90,015	89,731	85,092	83,607
Inconclusive	%	15%	16%	14%	16%	19%
Inconclusive	n	70,175	74,726	68,621	77,064	89,916
Unfounded	%	48%	46%	48%	46%	42%
Unfounded	n	228,838	216,530	229,075	223,069	203,793
Evaluated out/Assessment Only	%	18%	19%	18%	20%	21%
Evaluated out/Assessment Only	n	86,214	91,215	87,883	94,782	100,033
Not yet determined	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Not yet determined	n	472	421	570	649	3836
Total	N	480,295	472,907	475,880	480,656	481,185

A3. Recurrence of Maltreatment

Recurrence of maltreatment is a federal measure of the proportion of children who did not have another substantiated report within six (6) months following the substantiated maltreatment report during the first six months of the reporting period. Although not federally required, the CDSS makes additional data available for a range of follow-up periods from six to 24 months. For this report, Figure 3 shows recurrence of maltreatment within 12 months. As illustrated in Figure 3, children who were victims of substantiated neglect are more likely than any other allegation type to experience another substantiated maltreatment allegation within the next 12 months. These data have remained fairly unchanged in the last four years. The measure provides counties and stakeholders with a look at an important outcome for children: freedom from reported abuse or neglect. It is a cursory look, however, as the measure is limited in its ability to establish a causal linkage between one or more prevention or intervention strategies and a county's relative success on the measure. Use of the measure can potentially help the state and counties identify prevention and intervention strategies that work – or perhaps those that do not work.

Figure 3: Maltreated during 6-month period: no recurrence within 12 months

		Jan-Jun 2008	Jan-Jun 2009	Jan-Jun 2010	Jan-Jun 2011	Jan-Jun 2012
No recurrence--after sub. alleg. sexual abuse	%	93.2%	93.7%	93.8%	93.9%	94.3%
	n	2,898	2,554	2,467	2,227	2,049
Maltreated 6-month period--sexual abuse	N	3,111	2,725	2,631	2,371	2,173
No recurrence--after sub. alleg. physical abuse	%	92.4%	92.0%	91.8%	92.4%	92.2%
	n	4,238	3,840	3,940	3,920	3,436
Maltreated 6-month period--physical abuse	N	4,586	4,176	4,294	4,241	3,726
No recurrence--after sub. alleg. neglect	%	88.8%	88.4%	88.1%	88.4%	88.8%
	n	22,266	22,699	24,147	25,175	25,099
Maltreated 6-month period--neglect	N	25,065	25,686	27,409	28,484	28,260
No recurrence--after sub. alleg. other	%	89.4%	90.0%	89.5%	91.0%	90.6%
	n	7,697	6,318	6,441	6,864	5,899
Maltreated 6-month period--other	N	8,612	7,023	7,195	7,539	6,513
No recurrence (total)	%	89.7%	89.4%	89.1%	89.6%	89.7%
	n	37,099	35,411	36,995	38,186	36,483
Maltreated 6-month period (total)	N	41,374	39,610	41,529	42,635	40,672

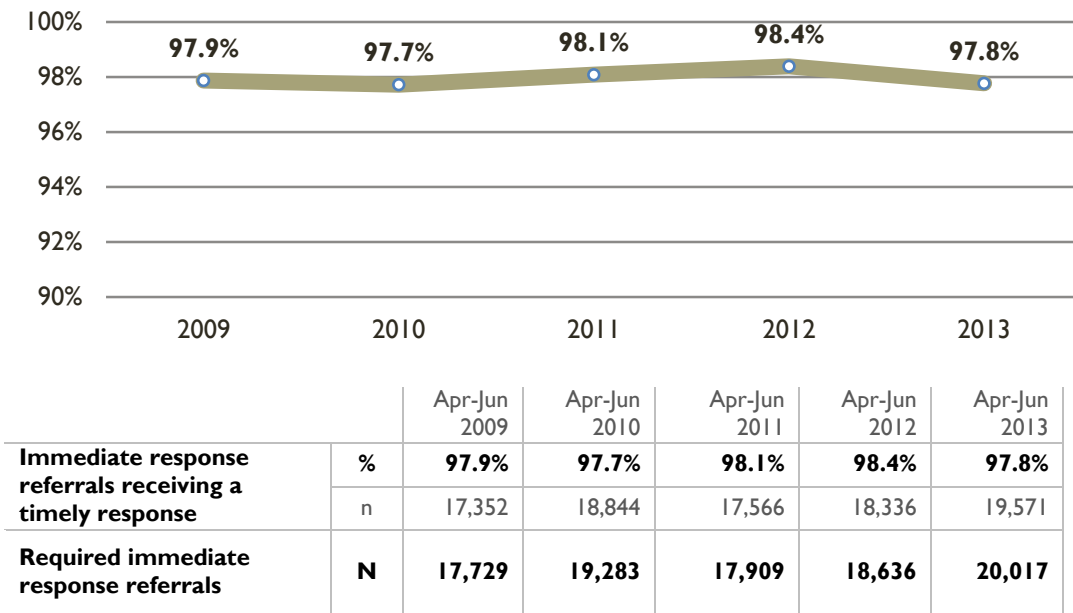
A4. Timely Response to Child Abuse Investigations

Timely response to child abuse investigation data for both immediate and ten-day are used to assess performance for state and federal standards and monitoring. These measures inform whether investigations commenced and contact was made with the alleged child victim within the required timeframe. They also help identify possible causes for success, and barriers to improvement, potential solutions, and strategies for change. Finally, it may offer insight into the effects of changes in policies and practice, particularly at the local level.

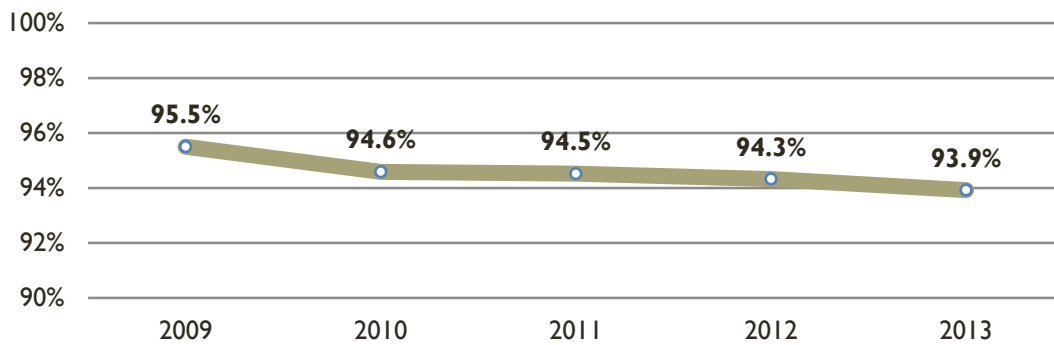
For example, some counties enter a referral from the probate court for a guardianship assessment as an ER referral. These referrals can be left open while the assessment is completed or left open until the probate hearing. These contacts usually happen outside regulatory timeframes for ER and can lead to a county’s shortcoming in meeting performance thresholds for this measure.

As shown in Figures 4 and 5, performance is above the state goal of 90 percent, with immediate responses above 97 percent between 2009 and 2013. The April to June intervals for each year are presented below.

Figure 4: Immediate response referrals receiving a timely response



Ten-day response referrals have been hovering above 91 percent during the 2009 to 2013 time period.

Figure 5: Ten-day response referrals receiving a timely response

		Apr-Jun 2009	Apr-Jun 2010	Apr-Jun 2011	Apr-Jun 2012	Apr-Jun 2013
Ten-day response referrals receiving a timely response	%	95.5%	94.6%	94.5%	94.3%	93.9%
	n	43,575	42,379	41,853	40,217	40,160
Required ten-day response referrals	N	45,627	44,803	44,278	42,635	42,757

A5. Caseworker Visits with Children

This measure is a two-part federal performance measure that focuses on both timeliness and location of the caseworker's visits for children placed in foster care (out of their home)⁷.

Timeliness measures the percentage of monthly face-to-face caseworker visits made with children in foster care placements.

Location measures the percentage of the visits that were made in the child's residence. Federal law requires that at least 50 percent of monthly visits occur in the residence of the child (California's target is set at 51 percent).

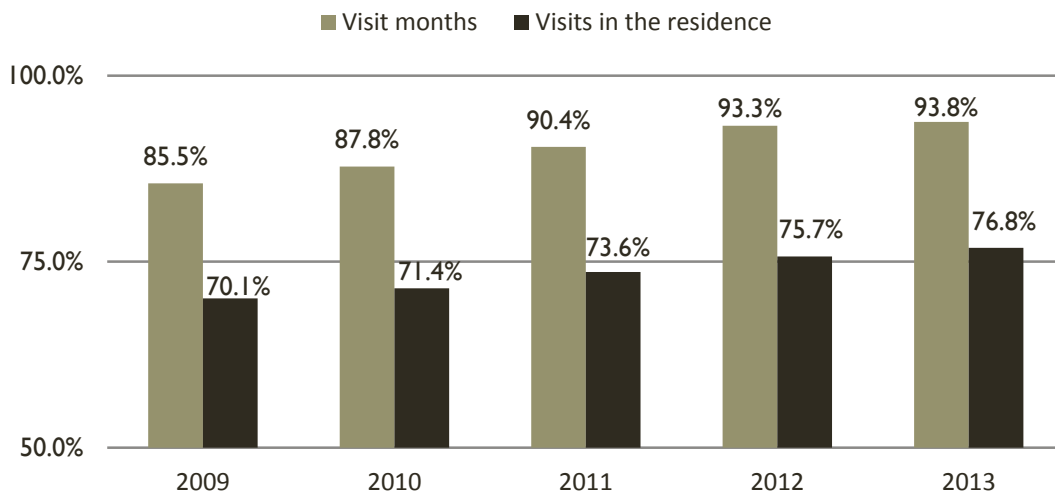
In addition to being a federal requirement, research⁸ demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between frequent caseworker visits with foster children and positive outcomes for these children, such as timely achievement of permanency and other indicators of child

⁷ Due to a change in federal requirements, this measure has been modified accordingly. It is now based on the total number of visits that would occur during the fiscal year if each foster child were visited once every month while in care. In addition, due to the recognized importance of monthly visitation with children who have open cases and remain in their home, modifications are also being made to a state measure to provide supplemental data to the out-of-home population.

⁸<https://www.childwelfare.gov/outofhome/casework/children/visits.cfm>

welfare. The 90 percent mandate was met beginning in Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2011⁹. California continues to make progress in the performance on the proportion of children who are visited each month, increasing from 85.5% to 93.8% from 2009 to 2013. The proportion of visits occurring in the children’s home has increased from 70.1% to 76.8% during the same time period. The federal mandate for children to be visited on a monthly basis will increase to 95 percent in FFY 2015.

Figure 6: Caseworker Visits with Children



		Jul 2008- Jun 2009	Jul 2009- Jun 2010	Jul 2010- Jun 2011	Jul 2011- Jun 2012	Jul 2012- Jun 2013
Visit months	%	85.5%	87.8%	90.4%	93.3%	93.8%
	n	556,538	516,968	507,553	504,121	506,212
Months open	N	650,713	588,874	561,260	540,535	539,730
Visits in the residence	%	70.1%	71.4%	73.6%	75.7%	76.8%
	n	389,902	369,180	373,609	381,555	389,009
Visit months	N	556,538	516,968	507,553	504,121	506,212

⁹ Probation numbers are excluded in this analysis. However, probation numbers will be included in the final federal computation reporting which combines child welfare and probation numbers into one rate.

B: Placement and Caseload Constellation

For children who cannot remain safely in their homes, a constellation of placement and caseload outcomes serves to provide information on the number of children who are in out-of-home care at any given point in time, their initial and subsequent placements, and their stability in those placements. This information is crucial for counties in managing their resources towards achieving the driving goal for children in foster care -- attaining timely permanency. The types of placements included below are the ones used for the majority of children¹⁰; they account for over 90 percent of placements.

- Relatives/Kin
- Guardian
- Foster Family Homes
- Foster Family Agency Certified Homes
- Group Homes

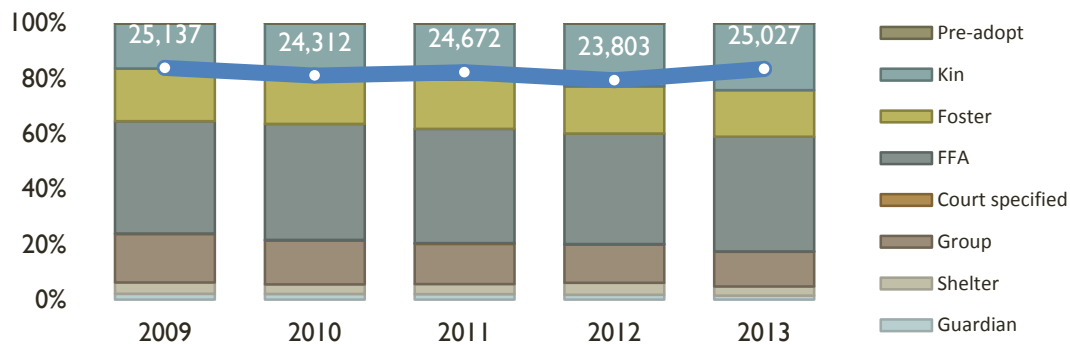
B1. Initial Placements over Time

This measure provides information on children's initial placements when they enter foster care for the first time and how that has changed over time. It does not include children who have re-entered foster care after exiting the system.

For the reason that being removed from parents is a traumatic event for a child, a child's initial placement is important to consider. Federal law and best practices suggest the importance of placing children in the least restrictive, most family-like setting. Ideally, this means placement with relatives or close family friends with whom children are already connected.

Figure 7 displays initial placements by placement type. Since 2009, the percentage of children for whom their first placement is with kin has increased from 16% to 24%, while the proportion of children placed in group homes from 2009 to 2013 has decreased from 18% to 13%. Over the past four years, Foster Family Agencies (FFAs) have accounted for approximately 40 percent of initial placements.

¹⁰ Other placement types include: Shelters, court-specified, small family homes, medical facilities, tribe-specified homes, and Supervised Independent Living Placements.

Figure 7: First entries to out-of-home care, by placement type¹¹

		Jul 2008- Jun 2009	Jul 2009- Jun 2010	Jul 2010- Jun 2011	Jul 2011- Jun 2012	Jul 2012- Jun 2013
Pre-adopt	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	11	6	10	7	2
Kin	%	16%	18%	20%	23%	24%
	n	4,115	4,362	5,030	5,428	6,058
Foster	%	19%	19%	18%	17%	17%
	n	4,787	4,498	4,388	4,060	4,214
FFA	%	41%	42%	41%	40%	42%
	n	10,214	10,194	10,207	9,523	10,393
Court specified	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	39	44	60	51	33
Group	%	18%	16%	15%	14%	13%
	n	4,416	3,875	3,595	3,290	3,133
Shelter	%	4%	3%	4%	4%	3%
	n	1,029	839	891	1,029	829
Guardian	%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%
	n	526	492	490	414	364
SILP	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	0	2	1	1	1
Total	N	25,137	24,312	24,672	23,803	25,027

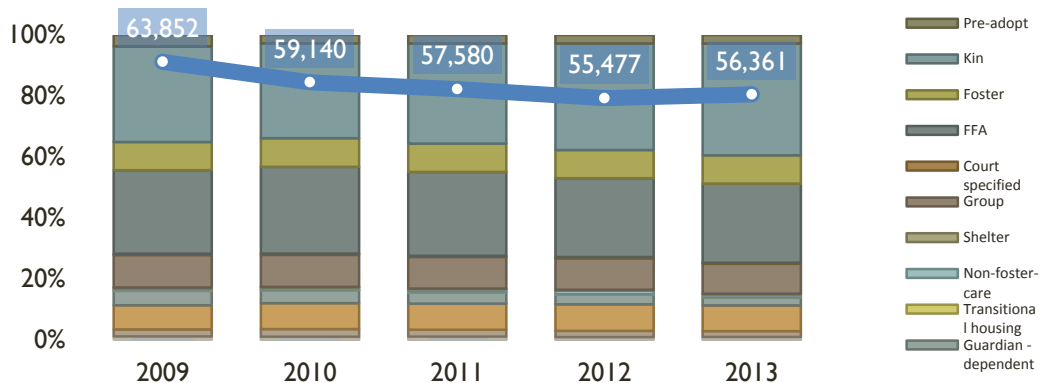
B2. Point in Time by Placement Type

This measure describes the overall foster care caseload over time and the type of placement in which children are living on July 1st, annually. Figure 8a below reflects that on any given day more children in foster care are placed with a relative than in any other setting. Also included in the kin category are children who are placed with someone with whom they are familiar, referred to as “Non-related Extended Family Members”. Over several years, this measure reflects the effect various practice and policy changes may have on the type of placements in which children live. For instance, kinship placements began to decline

¹¹ This figure includes: All Agencies (Child Welfare, Probation, Other), Episode Count: First Entry, Number of Days in Care: 8 days or more, and Ages 0-17 Years.

beginning in 2000 from 44,000 children placed with relatives to a little over 20,000 in 2013. This decline was driven primarily by the implementation of the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program, a program that provides subsidies for children who leave foster care to guardianship with a relative.

Figure 8a: In care July 1, by placement type¹²

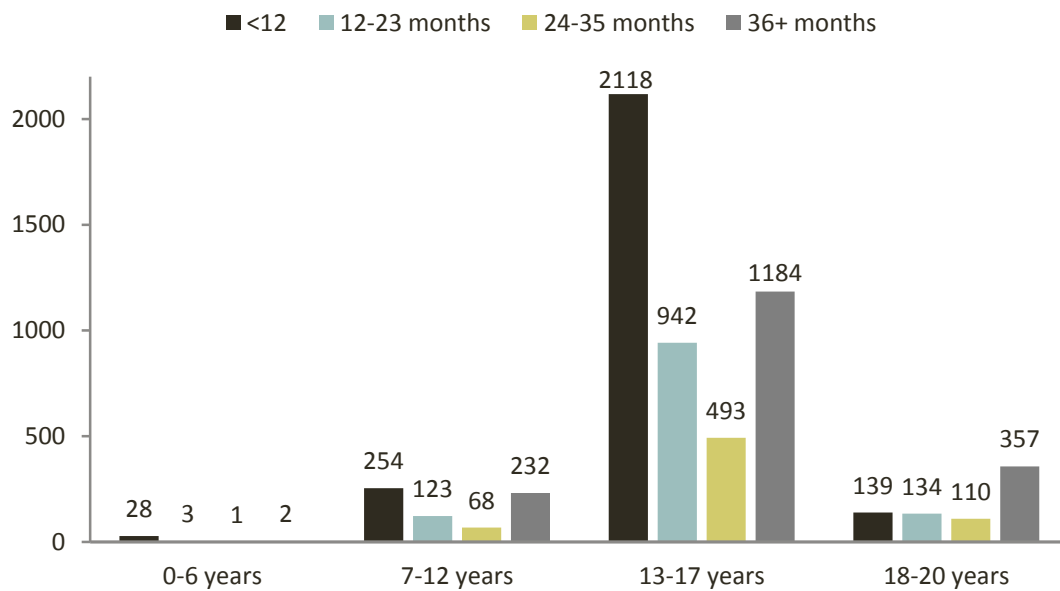


		Jul 1, 2009	Jul 1, 2010	Jul 1, 2011	Jul 1, 2012	Jul 1, 2013
Pre-adopt	%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
	n	2,317	1,571	1,542	1,497	1,536
Kin	%	31%	30%	32%	34%	36%
	n	19,493	17,890	18,481	18,978	20,313
Foster	%	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%
	n	5,732	5,430	5,211	5,040	5,150
FFA	%	27%	28%	27%	25%	25%
	n	17,040	16,380	15,467	14,053	14,365
Court specified	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	261	215	198	206	204
Group	%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
	n	6,611	6,065	5,860	5,600	5,448
Shelter	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	168	139	119	143	125
Non-foster-care	%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	n	379	386	517	650	548
Transitional housing	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	140	97	82	75	57
Guardian - dependent	%	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%
	n	2,934	2,461	2,030	1,726	1,395
Guardian - other	%	8%	8%	8%	9%	8%
	n	4,920	4,886	4,826	4,742	4,676
Runaway	%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
	n	1,439	1,445	1,265	1,108	1,053
Trial home visit	%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
	n	653	540	553	442	480
SILP	%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
	n	0	1	2	1	1
Other	%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%
	n	1,765	1,634	1,427	1,216	1,010
Total	N	63,852	59,140	57,580	55,477	56,361

¹² This figure includes: All Agencies (Child Welfare, Probation, Other) and Ages 0-17 Years.

Group Home Placement numbers for 2013 have been parsed out to show four (4) age groups, the length of time spent in the placement, children ages 0-17 and youth ages 18-20, see Figure 8b. For the largest age group category, 13-17 Years of Age, of the 4,737 children, the majority (45%) of youth in group care have been in care for less than 12 months, the longer stayers (12-36 or more months) make up the remaining 55% (2,619). Since 2009, the total number of children and youth placed in group homes for the same population dropped from 7,033 to 6,188 in 2013 (-12 percent change).

Figure 8b: In care July 1, 2013, number of group home placements by age and time in care¹³



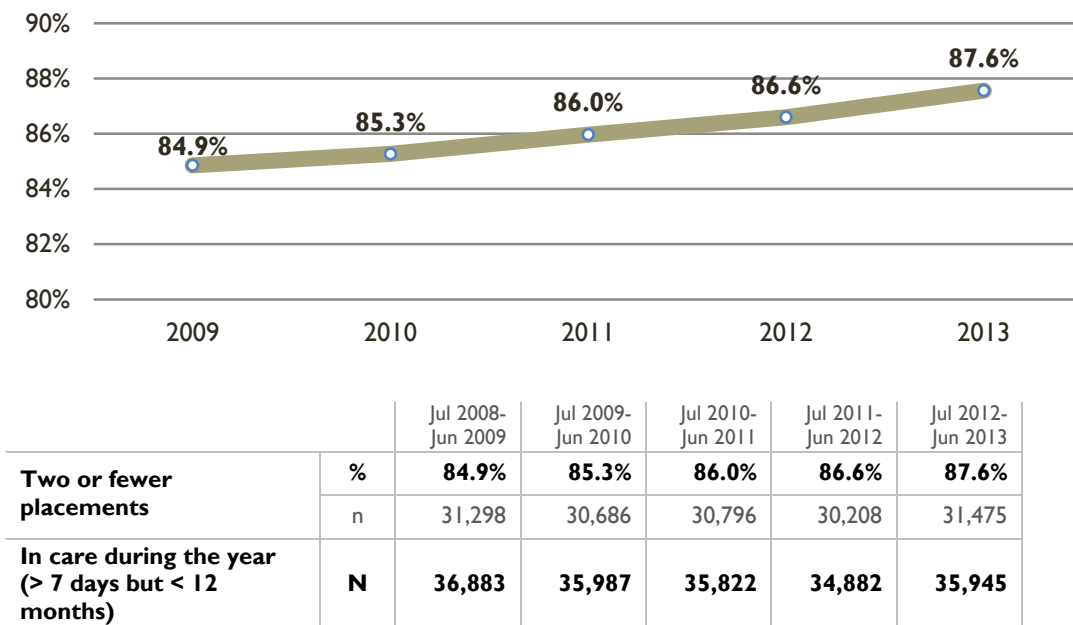
		0-6 years	7-12 years	13-17 years	18-20 years
<12 months	n	28	254	2118	139
12-23 months	n	3	123	942	134
24-35 months	n	1	68	493	110
36+ months	n	2	232	1184	357
Total	N	34	677	4737	740

¹³ This figure includes: All Agencies (Child Welfare, Probation, Other) and Ages 0-20 Years, CSSR, UC Berkeley using CWS/CMS 2013 Q3 extracts and can be found via the web at http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare

B3. Placement Stability

The Placement Stability measure describes the percentage of children who have been in foster care at least eight days and less than 12 months, and who have had no more than two (2) placements. This is one of three federal performance measures on placement stability; the other two measures calculate varying time intervals: 12-24 months and greater than 24 months. Since placement changes can be disruptive to children, it is important to pay attention to the number of placement changes. Stability increases a child's ability to develop healthy, secure relationships and maintain educational achievement. It also increases the opportunity for a child to develop positive, caring relationships with their foster caregivers. Such relationships sometimes result in a child becoming a permanent member of the family when returning home is not possible. When using this data, it is also important to recognize that individual placement changes can be made for positive reasons such as a child moving from a group home to a relative or to a placement to be with siblings. As shown in Figure 9, placement stability has improved from 84.9% in 2008 to 87.6% in 2013, achieving the national standard of 86 percent in 2012.

Figure 9: Placement stability



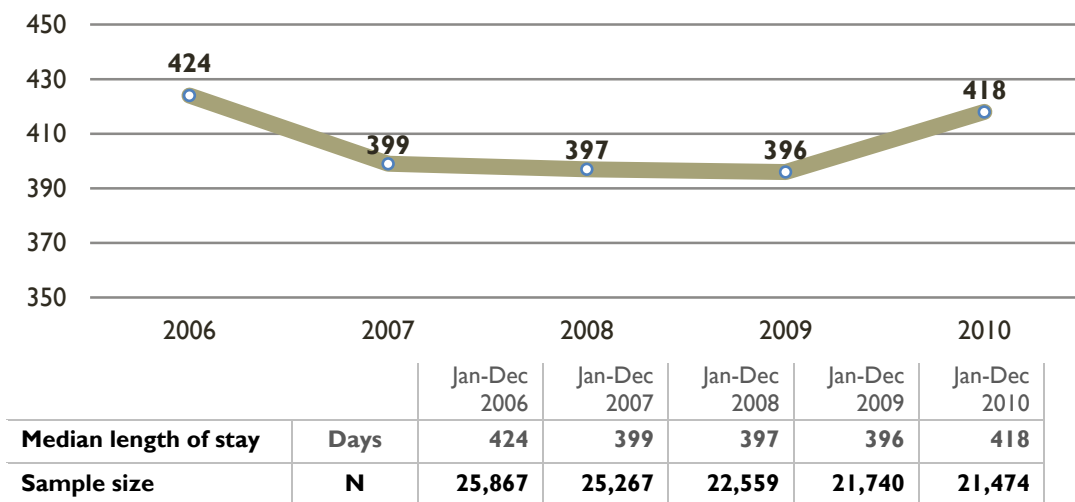
B4. Median Length of Stay

This measure describes the median amount of time children spend in foster care. Length of stay is counted in days and describes how much time it takes for half (50 percent) of the children who entered foster care during a calendar year to exit. This measure provides a useful way to summarize, with a single number, what might be considered a "characteristic" length of stay in foster care. The median differs from the average in that it reduces the effect of outliers such as those children who are in care for very long or very brief periods.

Since foster care is intended to be a temporary intervention for children until they can return home safely or leave foster care to a permanent family, this measure tracks whether children who enter the foster care system exit the system in a timely manner and is displayed in Figure 10. For children entering in calendar years 2006 through 2009, half of those exited 28 days sooner than the earlier cohort. However, in 2010 we see the first increase since 2006 (a 22 day increase), see Figure 10. A number of large counties are influencing the statewide increase. For example, Los Angeles (55 days), Riverside (63 days), and Sacramento (43 days) have significant increases in length of stay although not in the same age groups across counties.

With respect to age, this change is found across all age groups, however particularly notable with 16-17 yr olds increasing by as much (31 days), 1-2 yr olds (32 days), and 1-11 month olds (41 days). Infants typically have longer lengths of stay relative to other ages, and they appear to be influencing the increase in this time span more than other age groups. Upon further examination of the data for children entering foster care in 2009 and 2010, it appears the increase is largely due to increased stays for infants and toddlers, as opposed to older children and youth. This time period coincides with some high profile child deaths and the recession which resulted in budget cuts in child welfare. The combination of heightened safety concern and higher social worker caseloads may have resulted in more caution in returning children home.

Figure 10: Median length of stay, in days



C: Permanency Constellation

When children enter out-of-home care, the central goal of any agency is to provide children with safe, permanent and stable homes. The constellations of permanency outcomes illustrate the types of exits and lengths of time children spend in foster care prior to their exit for the following reasons:

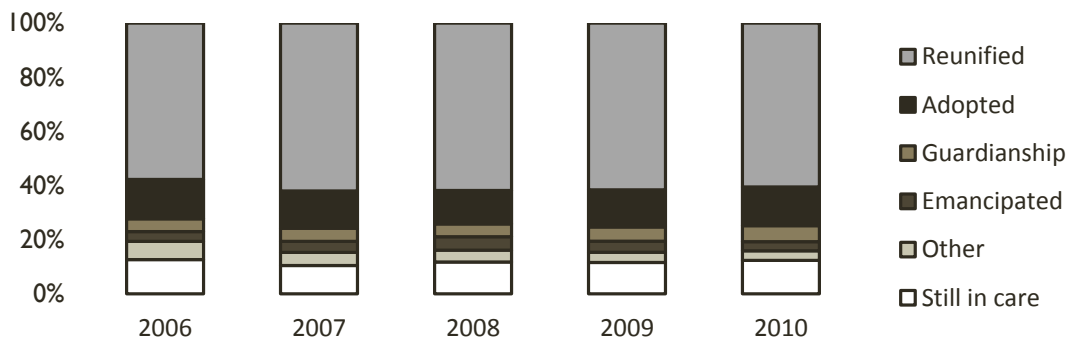
- Reunification
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Emancipation (youth that “age out” of foster care)
- Other includes non-permanency exits such as those children who are adjudicated, incarcerated or ran away

Since it is important that children live with permanent, caring families, when a child has been removed from his or her family, the most desirable goal is to return that child home as soon as it is safe. When that is not possible, the goal is most often to achieve a permanent family through adoption or guardianship.

C1. Permanency within 36 months over time

This measure describes if and how children achieved a permanent family within 36 months of entering foster care. Specifically, it looks three years later at a cohort of children that entered foster care during a six-month period and identifies the percentage that are still in care or, if they left foster care, what percentages were reunified, adopted, entered a guardianship, emancipated or were discharged for some other reason.

As shown in Figure 11, this measure has been relatively stable over time with approximately 60 percent of children reunifying with their families. About 12 percent of children are still in foster care after 36 months.

Figure 11: Six-month entry cohort: permanency within 36 months

		Jan-Jun 2006	Jan-Jun 2007	Jan-Jun 2008	Jan-Jun 2009	Jan-Jun 2010
Reunified	%	58%	62%	62%	62%	61%
	n	8,430	9,377	7,988	7,563	7,049
Adopted	%	15%	14%	12%	14%	14%
	n	2,123	2,079	1,591	1,677	1,662
Guardianship	%	5%	5%	5%	5%	6%
	n	692	741	616	646	690
Emancipated	%	4%	4%	5%	4%	3%
	n	527	610	637	507	393
Other	%	7%	5%	4%	4%	4%
	n	982	738	569	463	412
Still in care	%	13%	10%	12%	12%	12%
	n	1,851	1,580	1,519	1,421	1,441
Entries during 6-month period	N	14,605	15,125	12,920	12,277	11,647

C2. Timeliness and Permanence of Reunification

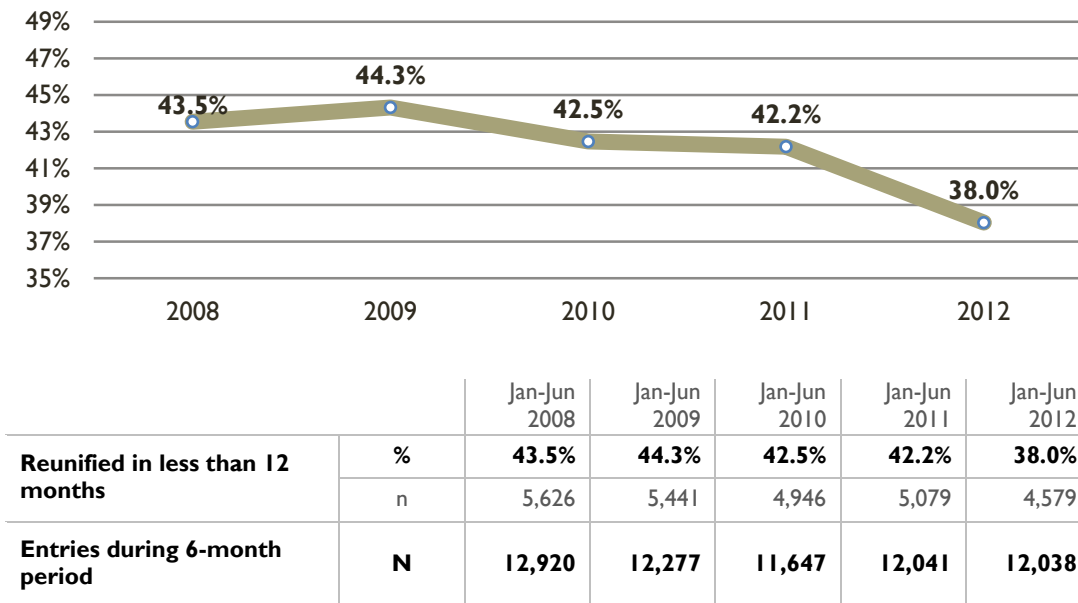
Although the first choice for permanence is to achieve reunification as quickly and safely as possible in order to minimize disruption to the family, reunification cannot be considered a successful outcome on its own. Reunifying children quickly needs to be balanced by ensuring the home is safe and stable. Factors that led to a child being removed must be sufficiently resolved so the child may return and remain at home. Recurrence of abuse or neglect and subsequent interaction with the child welfare system through removal from the home are considered particularly unsuccessful outcomes. While there is overlap, the two measures are not restricted to the same population of children.

Reunification within 12 Months

Reunification within 12 months is one of four federal measures on timeliness and permanency of reunification that describes the percentage of children who entered foster care within a six-month period and reunified within 12 months of being removed from their families. Specifically, this population is children (0-17 years old) entering foster care for the

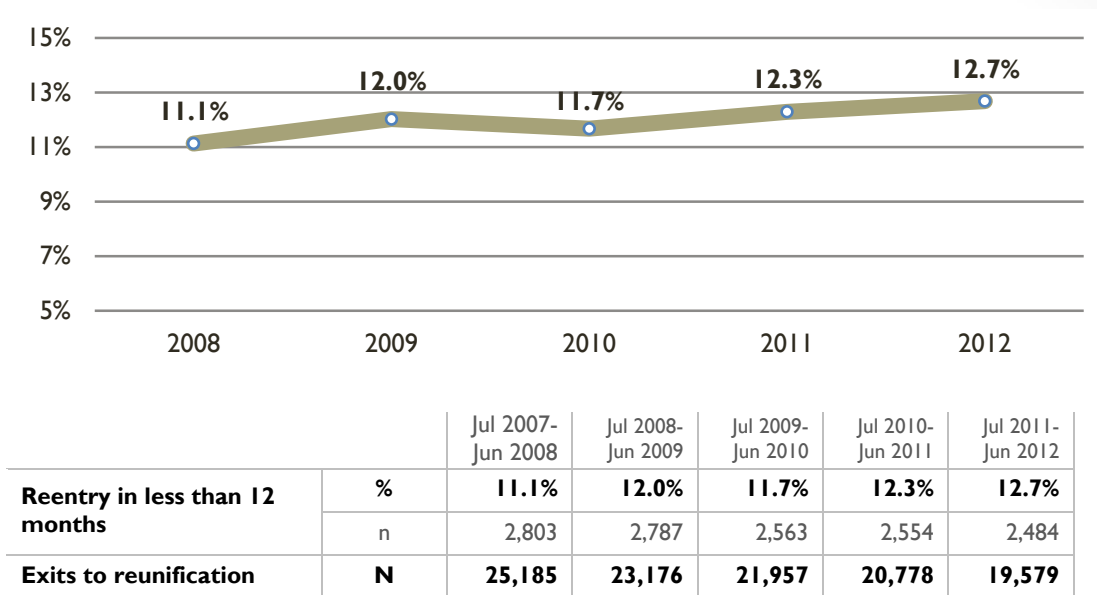
first time. The year describes the year of entry to foster care and refers to the January through June interval. As shown in Figure 12, there has been little variation in the measure; there has been a decrease in the proportion of children who reunified within 12 months from 43.5% in 2008 to 38% in 2012. While some of the same factors affecting the median length of stay may also be affecting this measure, as they are related, further examination of reunification data broken down by age (not illustrated here) suggests the extension of foster care beyond age 18 may be discouraging reunification for 16-17 year olds allowing them to qualify for the extended benefits.

Figure 12: Six-month entry cohort: reunification within 12 months



Foster Care Reentry Rate Following Reunification

The reentry measure describes the percentage of children reentering foster care within a year of returning to their families. Specifically, this is the percentage of children (0-17 years old) who reentered foster care after leaving foster care to return to their family. The year in Figure 13 is the time period in which children left foster care. Foster care reentry rates following reunification provide helpful information in determining whether or not child welfare policies and practices are effective in successfully transitioning children back into their families of origin and whether the services being provided to the children and families during reunification are effective. The proportion of children reentering care within a year has increased from 11.1% in 2008 to 12.7% in 2012. The national goal for reentry is 9.9 percent (or fewer) children reentering care 12 months following reunification.

Figure 13: Reentry in less than 12 months**C3. Status at Exit for Youth Aging Out of Foster Care**

This set of data tracks the status of foster youth at the point they exit foster care at age 18 or older due to having reached the age of majority while still under the jurisdiction of the court. Foster youth who have legally emancipated from foster care under the age of 18 are also included in this measure. The data for 2013 (Figure 14) reflect changes in youth exiting care with the implementation of AB 12, the extension of foster care benefits beyond age 18. This means fewer youth are exiting foster care; therefore, the number of youth included in the data is lower. The information gathered from this population is reported in percentages and is grouped into five categories including:

Educational Achievement is a measure of the percentage of foster youth who exit with a high school diploma or equivalent. This does not include youth who have passed proficiency exams or obtained certificates.

Employment is a measure of the percentage of foster youth who are employed on a full-time or part-time basis upon leaving foster care. Employment is important as work experience will help youth build résumés for future employment. However, it is not expected that all youth would need full-time employment to support themselves as some may enter college or vocational school.

Housing arrangements is a measure of the percentage of foster youth who have any type of housing plan for leaving care, including plans such as living free of rent with friends, living with a biological parent and arrangements for subsidized or transitional housing.

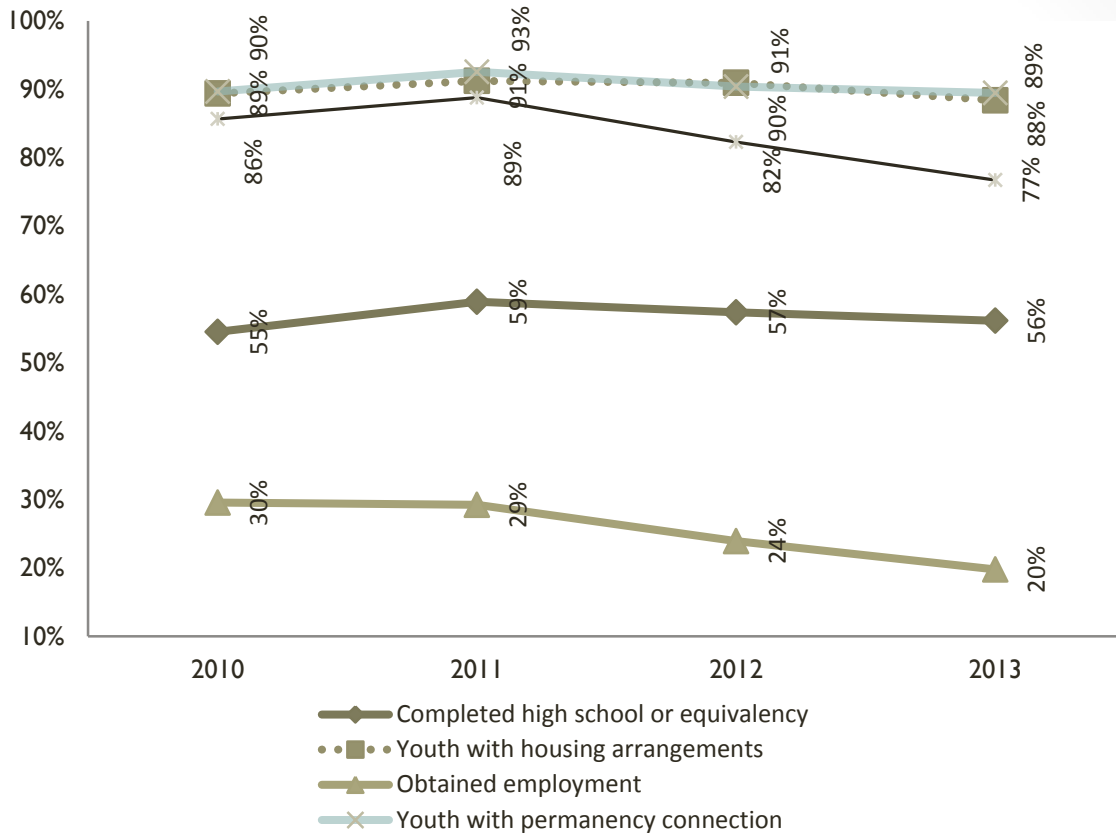
Permanency connection is a measure of the percentage of youth who report having at least one adult they can go to for advice, support and guidance.

An Independent Living Program (ILP) service is a measure of the percentage of youth who have received ILP services prior to exiting foster care. Counties are required to offer ILP services at age 16. However, youth participation in ILP is voluntary.

As shown in Figure 14, although the majority of these outcomes have remained relatively unchanged, there have been notable declines in the number of youth who reported obtaining employment, from 30 percent in 2010 to 20 percent in 2013. These trends are consistent with national patterns in unemployment¹⁴. Another contributing factor could be the economic downturn resulting in youth ages 16 to 19 years old experiencing the lowest rates of employment. The implementation of AB 12 in 2012, whereby a greater number of youth may elect to pursue college or vocational school in lieu of employment as a requirement to participate in the program, may be a factor as well.

¹⁴Bureau of Labor Statistic: <http://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm>

Figure 14: Status at exit of youth aging out of foster care



		Jul 2009- Jun 2010	Jul 2010- Jun 2011	Jul 2011- Jun 2012	Jul 2012- Jun 2013
Completed high school or equivalency	%	55%	59%	57%	56%
	n	1,533	1,514	1,041	789
Youth with housing arrangements	%	89%	91%	91%	88%
	n	2,513	2,344	1,650	1,242
Obtained employment	%	30%	29%	24%	20%
	n	831	751	434	278
Youth with permanency connection	%	90%	93%	90%	89%
	n	2,521	2,378	1,640	1,257
Youth received ILP services	%	86%	89%	82%	77%
	n	2,408	2,281	1,493	1,078
Whereabouts known during quarter	N	2,811	2,569	1,814	1,405

Realignment Expenditures Summary

The following assumptions are based on two years of actual expenditures (FY 11-12 and FY 12-13), both statewide LRF (formerly State General Fund) and county specific, of programs that have been realigned. Because there are only two years of expenditures, these assumptions may only be an indication of county activities.

Please note, adjustment claims (supplementals) are included in the expenditures for Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-12 and are now final. Due to this update, the expenditures may differ from last year's report. For FY 2012-13, expenditures displayed are as of February 2014.

In FY 12-13, LRF statewide distributions were \$1,640,400,000, and increase of \$18M over the FY 11-12 distribution of \$1,622,237,998. The FY 11-12 total budgeted base was approximately \$1.66 B (what GF budget amount was before realignment). The total SCO Distribution was approximately \$1.62 B (based on the vehicle license fees and sales tax). Based on the information above, counties spent less, statewide, than the budgeted base but spent more than the funds distributed by the SCO Distribution account.

In FY 12-13, the total SCO Distribution was approximately \$1.64 B (based on the vehicle license fees and sales tax) excluding the growth amount of \$176M. The total LRF Expenditures for 12-13 were approximately \$1.71 B

As of February 2014, counties are spending more than their LRF SCO Distribution. Based on a comparison of LRF expenditures between FY 11-12 and FY 12-13, there is a significant increase in spending in the After 18 (Extended FC and AAP – Impact), AAP and CWS programs. It may be the case that the growth funding is being spent in these program areas. A late implementation in the After 18 (Extend FC and AAP – Impact) program which can also explain the jump from prior year.

STATEWIDE:

In looking at the most current spending, it appears that counties may be focusing on younger children's programs as opposed to older youth programs. Those programs that show a slight increase in expenditures include:

- **Adoptions**
- **Adoptions Assistance Program**
- **Foster Parent Training & Recruitment**
- **Kinship FC Emergency Fund**
- **Kinship Support Services Program**
- **State Family Preservation**

In contrast, the programs designed for older youth that had a decrease in expenditures. These older youth programs are not required by law or regulation, thus, counties have the option to provide these services. The programs targeting older youth that have experienced a decline in expenditures include:

- **Emancipated Youth Stipends (EYS)**
- **Independent Living Program (ILP)**
- **Supportive Therapeutic Options Program (STOP)**
- **Transitional Housing for Foster Youth (THPP)**
- **Transitional Housing For Foster Youth- Plus (THP+)**

As shown in Figure 14, outcomes for older youth served by these optional programs have shown a decline in the most recent reporting period with fewer youth obtaining housing and employment as well as receiving fewer ILP services. The ILP program allocation is funded primarily from a federal grant. The extended ILP (General Fund) which was realigned, are utilized as matching funds to the federal grant. Because the federal grant has decreased in the past few years, our assumption is the LRF expenditures will also decrease. For ILP, at this point in time last year counties were spending \$15.1M in FY 11-12 as compared to \$13.2M in FY 12-13.

The \$259,000 decrease in transition housing programs (THP specifically) are driven by a number of large counties including Contra Costa, San Francisco and Santa Clara. Similarly, decreases in the THP+ program (\$1.9M) are impacted by spending reductions in Los Angeles and San Francisco (\$1.2M) alone.

CWS Basic

At this point in time last year, counties were spending \$570.1M in FY 11-12 as compared to \$603.9M in FY 12-13. CWS caseloads increased slightly during this time period. In particular, there has been an increase in the number of referrals requiring investigation. Information obtained from counties indicates an increase in staffing. Counties are in the process of hiring nearly 1,000 CWS social workers and giving cost of living adjustments. Overall, the State has improved in the area of making required monthly contacts with children and their families with slight, but steady, increases in performance over the last few years. This improvement may be attributable to increased staffing.