

Overview of Child Welfare Services in California

Presentation to Assembly Sub #1

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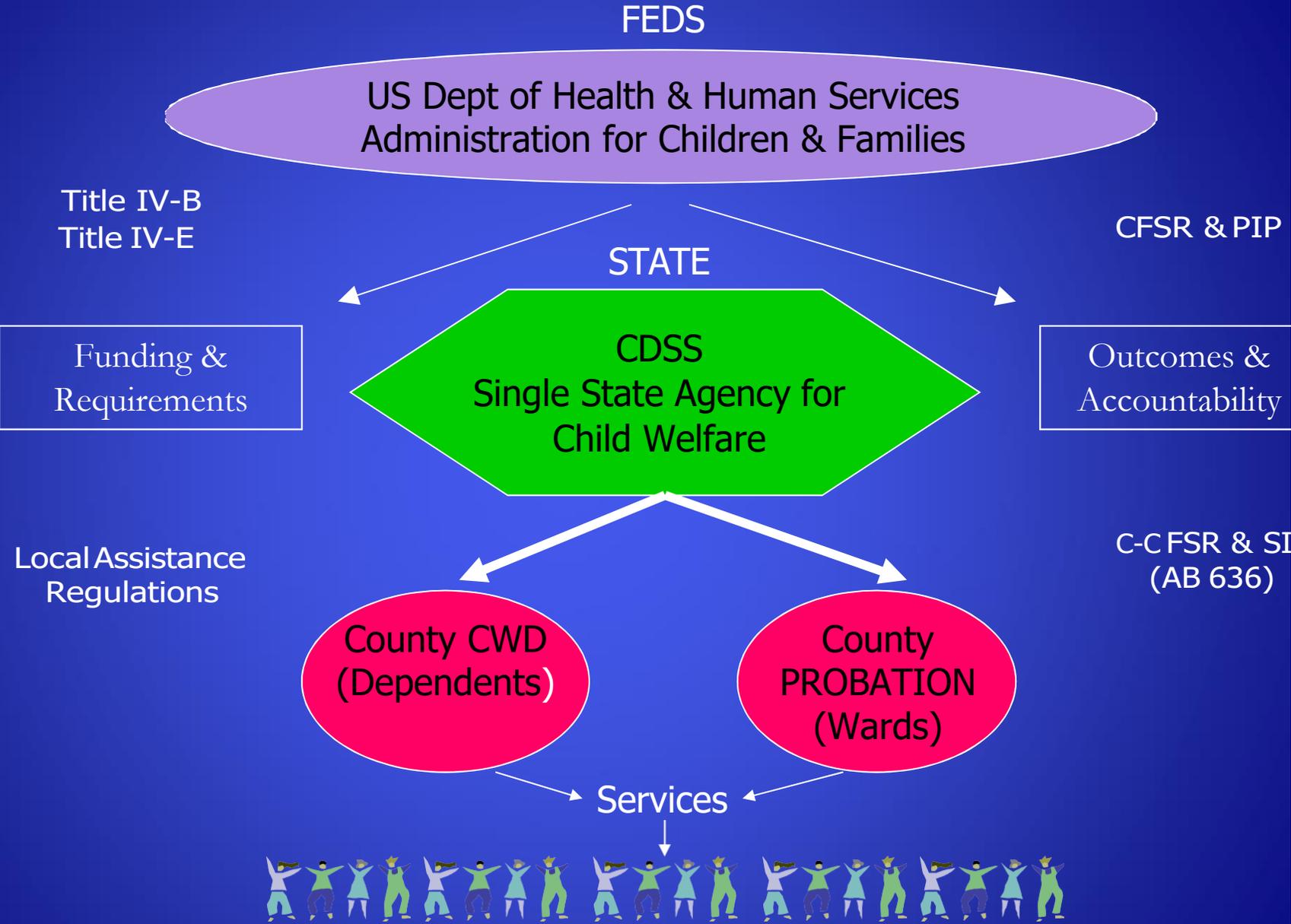
Context of Foster Care

- Child Welfare Services (CWS) System: broad array of service systems for vulnerable children and families
- Child Welfare Agency:
 - Single State Agency: CDSS
 - CWS administered county child welfare and probation agencies
- Foster Care: a component of the CWS system serving children removed from families

California CWS System Overview

- State supervised/County administered system
- Continuum of services
 - Prevention, emergency response, (Screening and investigations) family maintenance and family reunification, permanency, independent living preparation and transitional housing
- Outcome oriented (federal and state)
- Federal, County and Local Revenue funded
 - \$5.4 billion from federal, state, realigned, and county funds

California: State-Supervised, County-Administered CWS System



Key Federal Policies for CWS

- Federal Adoptions and Safe Families Act (PL 105-89) Promoted incentives for adoptions and establishment of an oversight system
- Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (PL 110-351) extends foster care for youth up to age 21
- Child Welfare Services Improvement and Innovations Act (PL-112-34) Promoted coordinated health care services, educational stability, sibling visitation and revised requirements for completion of monthly case worker visits
- Prevent Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (PL 113-183) (HR 4980) new requirements to better serve commercially sexually exploited and children; additional emphasis on permanency efforts

Child Welfare System Improvement and Accountability Act (2004)

Supported the CDSS objective to protect children vulnerable to child abuse and/or neglect by increasing the attention paid to the effectiveness of the child welfare system through implementation of an outcome based system of oversight.

The outcomes included in the reviews fall into three domains: safety, permanency, and child and family well-being.

Safety

Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Child and Family Well-Being

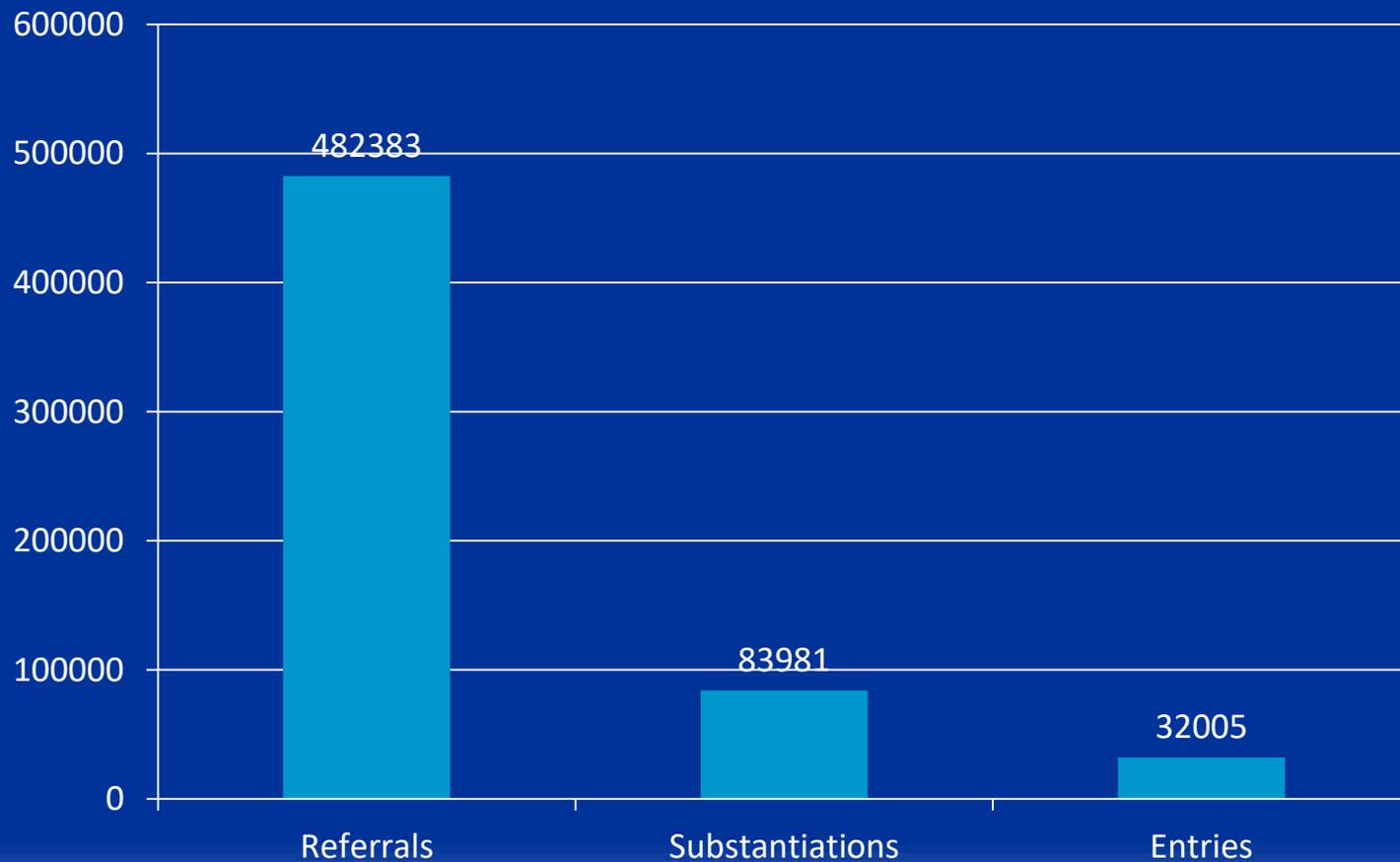
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

Child Welfare Caseload Characteristics

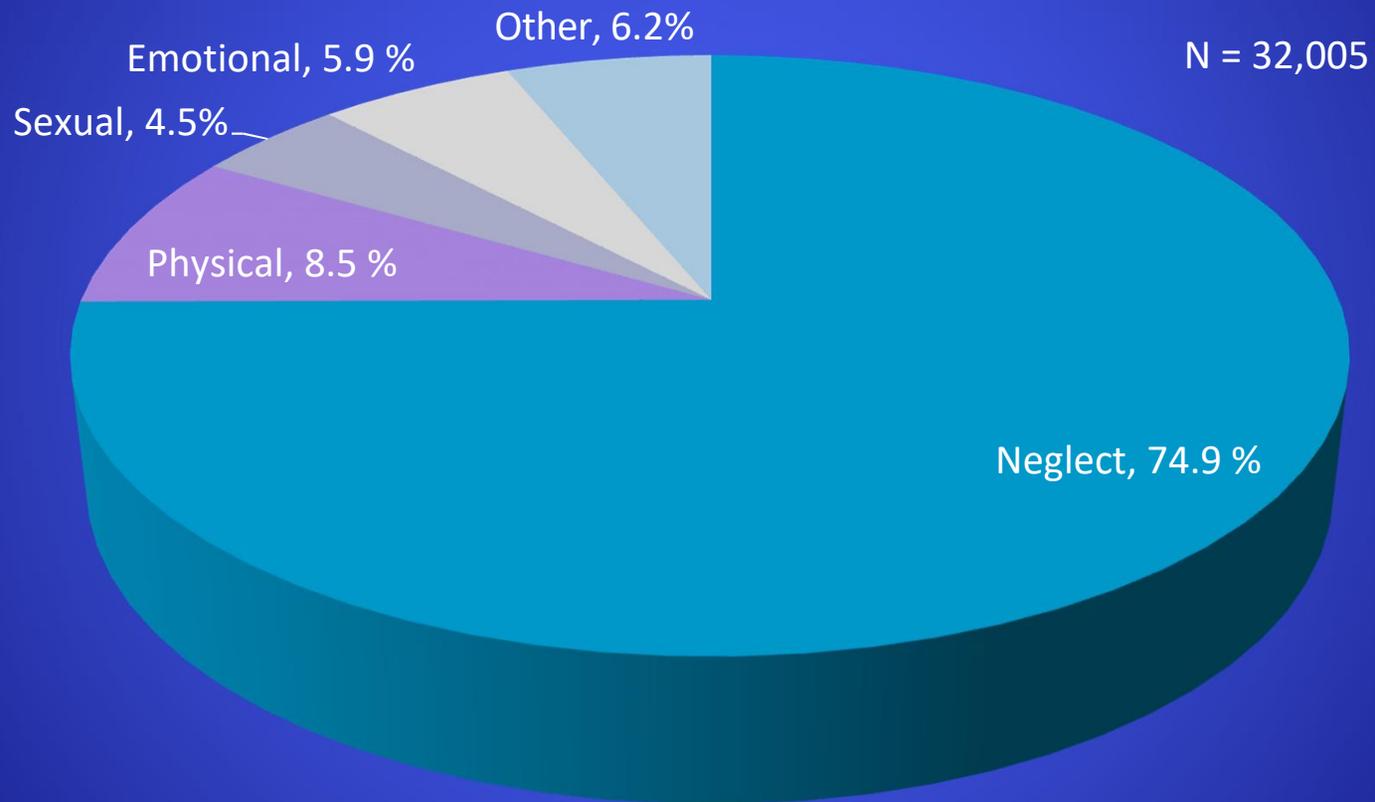
Using data to promote improved
outcomes for children and families

Entering Foster Care

Referrals, Substantiations & Entries 2013



Reason for Removal from Home



Role of the Court

- Ensure due process and that basic rights of children and parents (and tribes) are enforced when children are in the custody of the state
- Ensure the legal obligations of governmental agencies to provide services are met
- Make any order necessary for the best interest of the child:
 - Care, custody, placement, conduct, supervision, support, education, medical care, etc.
- Ensure a level of accountability in each case.

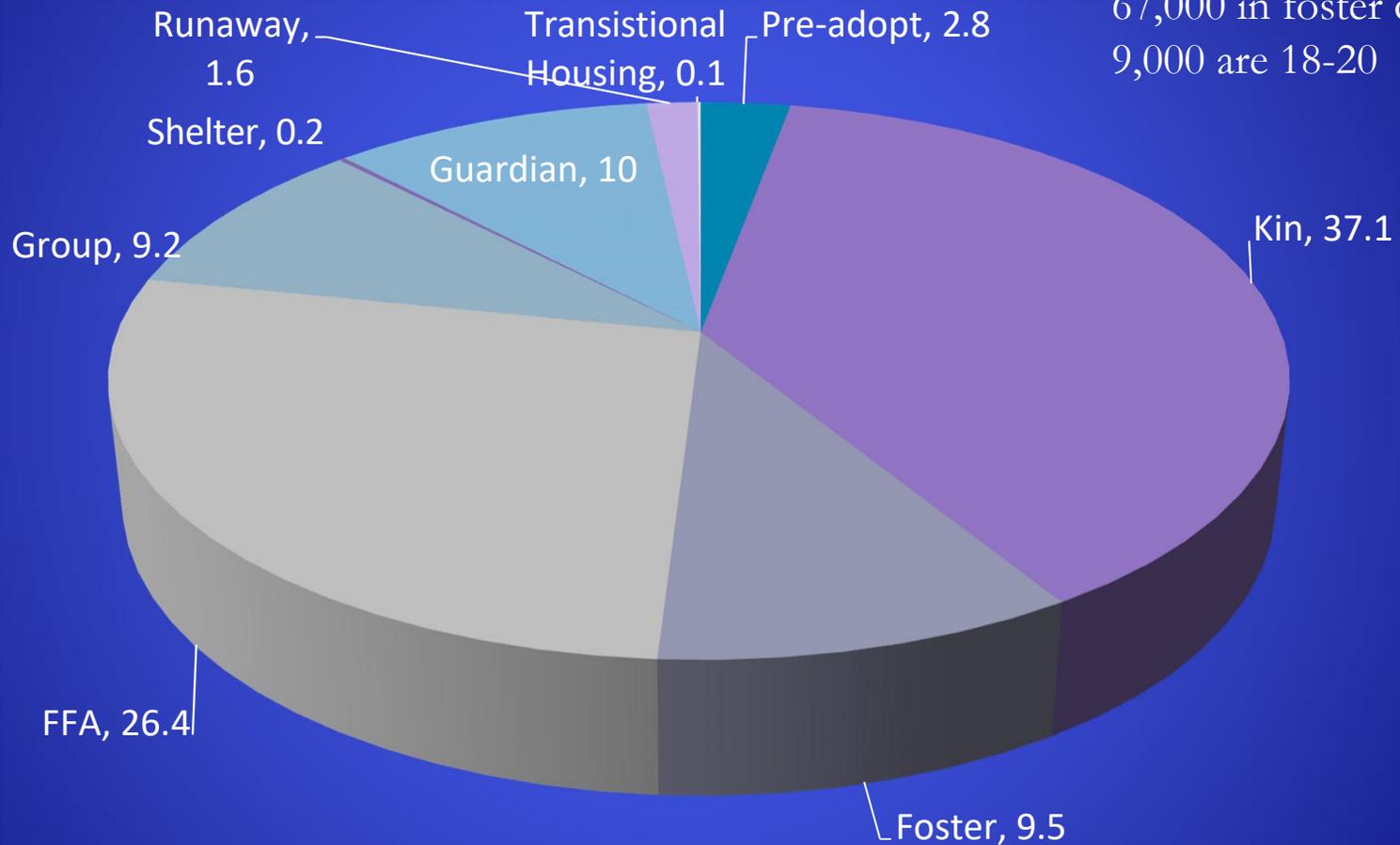
Types of Foster Care Placements

- Foster Family Homes (FFH): licensed and monitored by public agency
- Kin: Relatives & Non-Related Extended Family Members (NREFMs)-Approved and monitored by county agency
- Foster Family Agency (FFA): Foster home certified and monitored by private, non-profit agency
- Group Homes: Residential treatment/Congregate care
- Non-related Legal Guardians: Non dependents

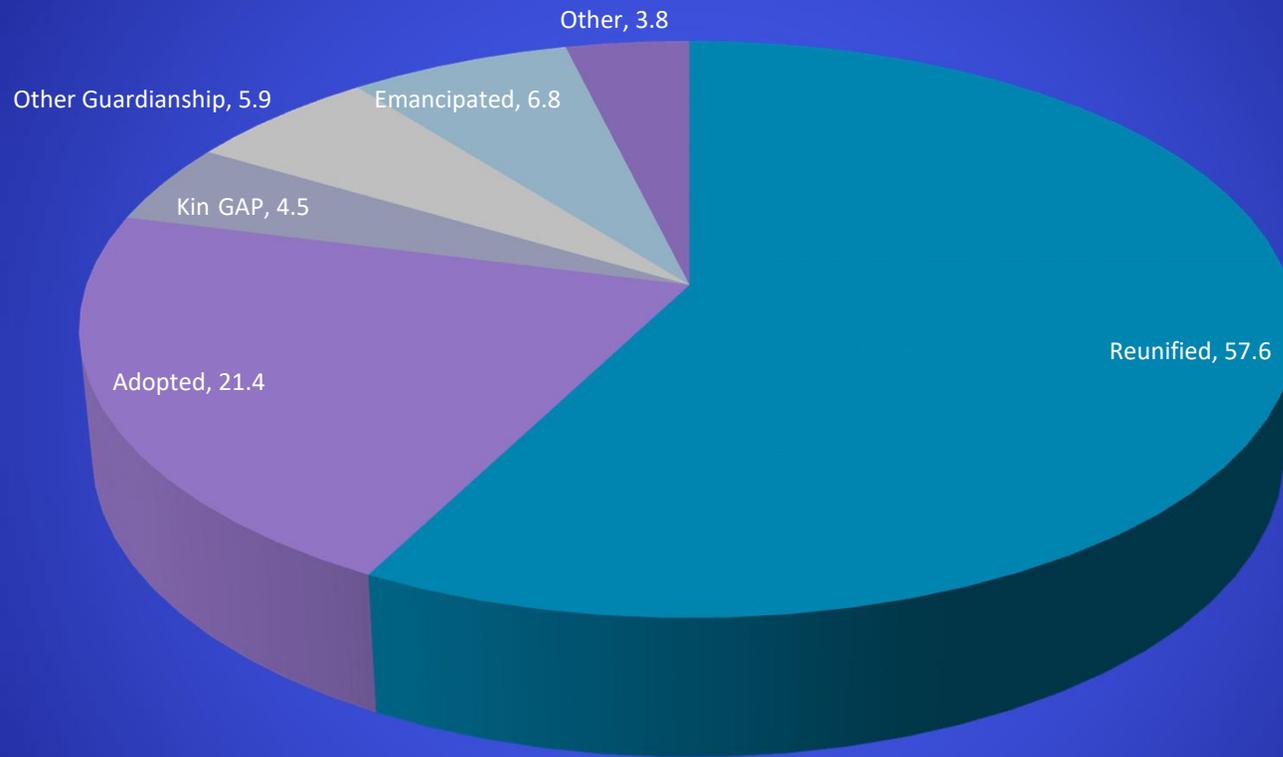
Where Children are Placed

Ages 0-17, Percentages, October 2014

Currently:
67,000 in foster care
9,000 are 18-20

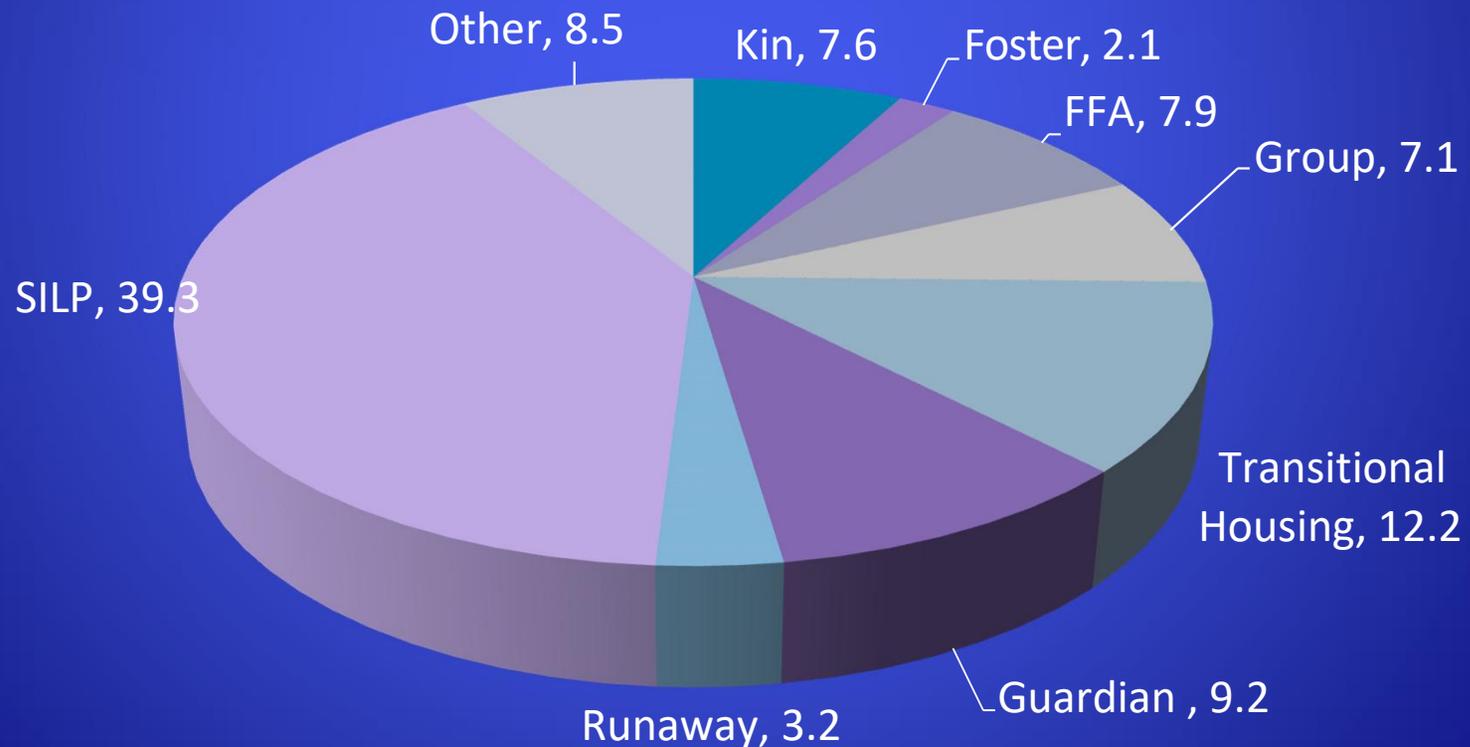


Exits from Foster Care



After 18 (AB 12)

- Foster care up to age 21 for young adults that meet specified employment/education criteria.
- 9,173 participating youth, ages 18-20
- Where young adults are placed:



Current Initiatives

- Continuum of Care Reform (SB 1013)—Reform of group homes and foster family agencies to better meet the needs of children in foster care
- Approved Relative Caregiver Funding Option: increased payments to relative caregivers of nonfederally-eligible foster children at county option
- Resource Family Approval (AB 340)-new process and standards for approving caregivers of foster children
- Preventing and Addressing Child Trafficking (PACT)—federal grant; 5 years, total of \$1.25M
- Quality Parenting Initiative – increase the supply of quality foster parents & improve partnerships between counties and foster parents
- CWS-NS—replacement case management system for caseworkers
- Continuous Quality Improvement (AB 636) – revamping California’s Child Welfare Accountability System