



INDIANA DEPARTMENT
OF
CHILD SERVICES

Annual Report
to
The Indiana State Budget Committee
and
The Indiana Legislative Council

Submitted by:
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For the year ended
June 30, 2011



Protecting our children, families and future

Pursuant to IC 31-25-2-4, once every twelve (12) months, the Department of Child Services (DCS) is required to submit a report to the Budget Committee and the Legislative Council that provides data and statistical information regarding caseloads of child protection workers. This report details:

- Description and recommendations for best management practices and resources required to achieve effective and efficient delivery of child protection services;
- The Department's progress in recruiting, training and retaining caseworkers;
- The methodology used to compute caseloads for each child protection worker;
- The statewide average caseloads for child protection caseworkers and whether they exceed the standards established by the Department; and
- A written plan that indicates steps that are being taken to reduce caseloads if the report indicates that average caseloads exceed caseload standards.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Beginning December 2005, DCS embarked upon a comprehensive practice reform initiative. DCS engaged national and local organizations for guidance and support to improve the system that cares for its abused and neglected children. This collaboration marked the beginning of Indiana's practice reform efforts. The centerpiece for Indiana's Practice Reform includes the TEAPI Practice Model, infrastructural and systemic changes, staff expansion and training, policy making and revisions, and new legislative amendments. Over the course of the last six years, DCS launched a number of initiatives to improve the manner in which child welfare is administered in Indiana.

Safely Home, Families First

DCS is always working to achieve improved outcomes for children and families by reviewing existing and emerging research to continually guide and inform our Practice. There is significant research showing that placement in the least restrictive, most family-like setting is in the best interest of children. In fact, both federal and state laws require that, along with child safety, the least restrictive environment is a primary concern when consideration by DCS is requested for placement of a child.

One of DCS's values is that the most desirable place for children to grow up is in their own home - as long as the family is able to provide safety and security for the child. There are some situations when our decisions regarding the safety of a child lead us to determine the removal from the home is in the best interest of that child. In these circumstances, we weigh the possible risks of leaving a child with his/her own family knowing there is trauma when a child is removed from the home.



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When a child cannot be safely maintained in the home, we are committed to finding absent parents and relatives who may be willing and able to care for the child. We look for family members who know the child and who are familiar and comfortable to the child. These relatives have established relationships, and as such the trauma of removal is mitigated because the child is with people who know and desire to help the child feel included in their family. Our own Practice Indicators demonstrate that when children are placed with relatives they are more likely to find permanency faster than when they are placed in non-relative environments.

After careful review of this information and data we have centered our efforts over the next two years around the concept of keeping children in their own homes or with relatives. We refer to this concept as “Safely Home—Families First”. This is nothing new, but in fact is a renewed and heightened effort to provide for the well-being of our children by identifying those protective factors that will help keep a child at home safely, helping family members find resources and their own informal supports, as well as quickly locating relatives in the event a child is not able to remain in the home. There are many aspects to this effort including: the expansion of in-home support services, wraparound services, intensive family preservation, intensive family reunification and others. Having those services available in a timely manner, at times when the services are needed and with the flexibility to adjust to the needs of the family are absolutely necessary to the success of our Safely Home—Families First efforts.

Children desire and deserve to remain with their own families, to sleep in their own beds, and to be surrounded by their own belongings. They want to go to the same school, see their friends, and learn from the teachers they know. All children also should have a permanent lifetime home where they know they belong and are loved. They deserve to have that permanency established in a timely manner. It is important this Agency acknowledge and want those things for them, and strive to do the best we can to ensure that children are with their own families when they can be so safely. After considering all the independent research, reviewing the successes of other states, and evaluating our own practice reports, the fidelity of our Practice Model demands that we focus on meeting this basic longing for each individual child, which is why DCS is committed to Safely Home – Families First.

Consistent with the agency’s practice of managing by data, during SFY 2011, DCS created a quarterly report to monitor the Safely Home, Families First initiative. This report will be produced quarterly to evaluate data on placement type, average number of placements, number of siblings placed together, average length of stay in out of home care and adoptions. The first report for the quarter ending March 31, 2011 is available on the DCS website.



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Foster Care Reorganization

In late 2008 DCS initiated a massive reorganization of its foster care system. The agency was guided by a member of the Eli Lilly and Company Six Sigma team, who helped DCS use the six sigma process to identify issues with the current system, develop goals to transform it, implement action steps and measure outcomes. Throughout 2009, a work team including members from all divisions of the agency met weekly every Friday for 4 hours to plan for the massive overhaul of the DCS foster care system. The original work plan included 7 goals, all designed to improve various aspects of our foster care system including the support we provide to our foster parents, how we assess and place children entering foster care, foster parent training, identifying and matching children with available foster parents, and the foster family home licensing rules.

In 2010, the foster care reorganization workgroup partnered with the various divisions to implement action steps included in the work plan and to continue discussions about how to further refine and improve the foster care system. The agency placed particular emphasis on refining the role of newly assigned Foster Care Specialists in licensing and providing support to DCS foster parents, as well as revisions to the foster care licensing rules and foster parent training curriculum.

One of the foster care reorganization goals was to utilize designated FCM staff to serve as foster care specialists in each region. These specialists manage all aspects of the licensing process, provide ongoing support to DCS foster parents, and recruit new DCS foster parents. Specialists were selected and trained beginning in mid-2009 and into the first part of 2010.

During much of 2010, the role of the specialist was more clearly defined. New processes and protocols were released and specialists engaged in a massive review and clean up of licensing files. They also spent a great deal of time reaching out to foster parents in an effort to get to know them better and identify ways in which they could help support them in the work they do. The foster care specialists and their supervisors developed recruiting plans and goals for their region. The foster care specialists, supervisors and central office foster care unit also developed materials and share tools via the foster care SharePoint, and they brainstorm ideas, share information and troubleshoot issues through conference calls and regional meetings. The specialists have had a tremendous impact in the Agency's ability to recruit, license and support DCS foster homes. DCS believes that having staff dedicated to supporting, licensing and recruiting foster parents is critical to the success of the foster care reorganization. In order to continue progress in this area, during the spring of 2011 the agency hired an additional 22 foster care specialists.



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Centralized Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline

In January 2010, DCS established the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline (Hotline) to ensure consistent handling of calls alleging child abuse and neglect. The Hotline streamlines the Agency's approach to taking reports, improves the Intake Specialists' ability to gather information from callers, and expedites the process of preparing comprehensive reports and disseminating those reports to local offices for assessment. The Hotline also allows Family Case Managers in the local offices to spend more time partnering with children and families because they are no longer responsible for handling intake functions. DCS Intake Specialists are specially trained to ask probing questions to obtain comprehensive information about a number of factors including those that may impact worker safety.

The centralized Hotline unit began taking calls January 1, 2010 in Marion County. Throughout 2010 DCS continued a gradual, planned transition of counties to the new system. This transition was completed on August 30, 2010 when the Hotline began taking calls for the entire state. By utilizing a gradual, planned transition the agency was able to continually monitor and evaluate the new centralized intake process and make adjustments as necessary. For example, during the first phase of implementation DCS was able to use data from the new system to predict peak call times. In response DCS adjusted the shift times for Intake Specialists to ensure that the appropriate number of staff was on hand to handle the high call volume.

The Hotline hired and trained new staff as it rolled out in additional regions. The Hotline is now staffed with trained Intake Specialists and at least one Supervisor every shift, twenty-four hours per day, seven days a week, 365 days per year. These Intake Specialists gather information from callers, determine whether the information provided meets statutory criteria for DCS to conduct an assessment, and if appropriate, route reports directly to DCS local offices for response and assessment. The Hotline staff includes: the Hotline Director, Assistant Director, 9 Intake Supervisors, 71 Intake Specialists and an Administrative Assistant.

Hotline staff utilize a number of reports to help monitor performance of the Hotline. These reports allow the Hotline staff to analyze a broad array of data including: number of calls received hourly, daily, weekly, monthly and annually; wait times for both law enforcement and non law enforcement reporters; call volume broken out by time of day; average length of call; average number of calls received per weekday vs. weekend; average speed of answer; and number of calls responded to by worker. In 2010, the Hotline Director and other DCS staff also worked with the Midwest Child Welfare Implementation Center to develop a quality assurance process for evaluating Hotline performance. DCS piloted the new Hotline QSR process using data from the first quarter of 2011. The Hotline statistics are staggering. In 2010, the Hotline performed as follows:

- The hotline handled 102,686 calls;



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- 45% of all calls were answered in less than 8 seconds;
- 56% of all calls were answered in less than 30 seconds;
- 59% of all calls were answered in less than 1 minute;
- The average speed of answer was 01:43 for non-LEA callers, 00:44 for LEA callers;
- The average caller spent 11:23 speaking with an intake specialist;
- The hotline took an average of 354 calls per business day for all of 2010;The hotline took an average of 468 calls per business day since statewide roll out;
- The hotline took an average of 100 calls per weekend day for all of 2010. The hotline took an average of 125 calls per weekend day since statewide roll out; and
- Annual call volume for 2010 was distributed across time intervals as follows:

Time Period	Percentage
12a- 4a	3%
4a- 8a	3%
8a- 12p	32%
12p- 4p	38%
4p- 8p	16%
8p- 12a	8%

Managing by Data

As a component of its practice reform efforts and in conjunction with implementation of the new practice model, DCS implemented several strategies to track and analyze outcomes and implement strategies to improve delivery of child welfare services. Specifically, DCS developed a SharePoint site, which houses a series of innovative data reports designed to measure the outcomes needed to maintain a healthy child welfare system. These data reports, known as Practice Indicator reports, offer management staff the statistical information necessary to identify both strengths and weaknesses in order to develop strategic action plans on a local, regional or statewide basis.

The Practice Indicator reports allow DCS to analytically rather than anecdotally measure our impact and progress to produce positive outcomes for families. Prior to the implementation of the Practice Indicator reports there was a tendency to focus on individual case outcomes or individual county practices while ignoring the big-picture perspective as to how DCS performs as a system for all families involved with the agency on both an individual and statewide basis. Information included on the DCS SharePoint is analyzed, trended, and made more user-friendly for line staff not only to help individual children and families, but also to guide the agency in



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