



Eric J. Holcomb, Governor
Terry J. Stigdon, MSN, RN, Director

Indiana Department of Child Services
Room E306 – MS47
302 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2738

317-234-KIDS
FAX: 317-234-4497

www.in.gov/dcs

Child Support Hotline: 800-840-8757
Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline: 800-800-5556

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TO: Zachary Q. Jackson, Director, State Budget Agency

FROM: Director Terry J. Stigdon, MSN, RN

SUBJECT: Agency Overview – Budget Transmittal Letter – FY 2022-23

Introduction

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) is the state agency charged with providing child protection and IV-D child support for Hoosier children. DCS was established in January 2005 by an executive order of Gov. Mitch Daniels. DCS protects children who are victims of abuse or neglect and strengthens families through services that focus on family support and preservation. The department also facilitates prevention services, adoption, foster care and child support payments throughout the state of Indiana.

Mission: The Indiana Department of Child Services leads the state's response to allegations of child abuse and neglect and facilitates child support payments. We consider the needs and values of all we serve in our efforts to protect children while keeping families together whenever possible.

Vision: Children will live in safe, healthy and supportive families and communities.

Values: We at the Indiana Department of Child Services empower our team, in collaboration with state and local partners, to make decisions in the best interest of every child in our care by embracing:

- Respect for all.
- Racial justice.
- Diversity and inclusion.
- A culture of safety.
- A commitment to continuous improvement.

Structure and Organization

The Indiana Department of Child Services is led by the director. These positions report directly to the director: deputy director of child support; deputy director of staff development; deputy director of juvenile justice initiatives and support; deputy director of field operations; deputy director of child welfare services; deputy director of permanency and practice support; and the chief of staff.

DCS' infrastructure includes local offices that cover all 92 Indiana counties, organized into 18 geographical regions. In State Fiscal Year 2013, DCS created an additional region to encompass central office family case managers (FCMs) from the institutional assessment unit and the collaborative care unit, for a total of 19 regions. In 2010, DCS centralized its hotline operations in Indianapolis, and in 2013, added three regional hotline sites located in Blackford, Lawrence and St. Joseph counties. A fourth regional hotline site opened in Vanderburgh County in June 2014. This ensures callers receive assistance quickly when making a report and are not subject to long wait times.

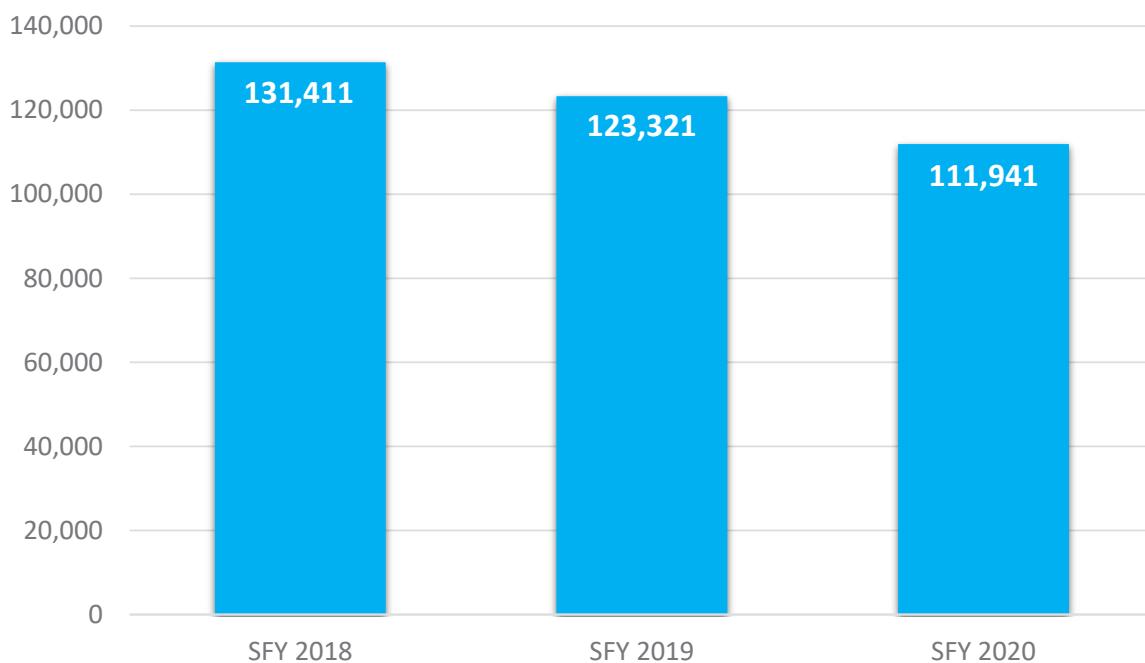
The following is an overview of the programs DCS currently delivers to Hoosier children and families.

Assessments of Child Abuse & Neglect

A primary responsibility of the Department of Child Services is to conduct assessments of allegations made to the Indiana Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline. In SFY 2020, the agency opened nearly 112,000 assessments, an average of roughly 9,300 per month. Assessments opened have steadily decreased each fiscal year since SFY 2018 as DCS has worked to ensure the agency provides the right care to the right child at the right time.

An assessment is initiated within 2 hours, 24 hours or 5 days, depending on the severity of the allegation. Conducting an assessment requires an FCM to interview all parties involved, including the alleged perpetrator and victim, the victim's parent(s), caregiver or guardian, report source (if known), other household members, relevant family supports and other witnesses. The FCM visits and inspects the home to ensure a safe environment, takes photos of any injuries and documents any issues or concerns. The timeline of an initial assessment varies widely based on the complexity of the allegation and the number of potential contacts that must be made (e.g., a child fatality case is significantly more involved than a neglect assessment), but FCMs complete most assessments within 40 days of the initial report made to the hotline.

Assessments of Child Abuse and Neglect Opened by State Fiscal Year



Assessments opened have decreased each fiscal year since SFY 2018.

In-Home Care

In-home services include a broad array of preservation and reunification services, including the agency's newly-implemented Family Preservation Services, designed to prevent the unnecessary removal of children from their home. Keeping children with their primary caregivers improves outcomes for them and reduces trauma and out-of-home placements. These services target families that are in crisis and are at risk of having their children placed into foster care. The comprehensive and evidence-based services funded through this program are delivered to families in their own homes and include education on child development and effective parenting; substance use disorder treatment; domestic violence services; family and individual mental health therapy; and concrete supports to families so children have safe, stable and secure housing. In addition to Family Preservation Services, DCS also funds reunification and adoption services and the Guardianship Assistance Program to help children who have been removed from their primary caregivers return safely to their families, or, when that is not possible, to find and support permanent adoptive families for them.

Out-of-Home Care

DCS values the opportunity for every child to grow up in their own homes, as long as they can do so safely. When working with a family, DCS strives to utilize services and community supports to allow children to remain safely with their caregivers, preventing the disruption and trauma of a removal. However, it is sometimes necessary to remove a child from the home, at least temporarily, to ensure the child's safety.

When children are removed from their homes, DCS utilizes a variety of placement options, including licensed and unlicensed relative placements, DCS and private foster homes, and residential treatment facilities. DCS utilizes out-of-home care only when there is no other alternative to ensure a child's safety and well-being from abuse or neglect.

Child Services Operations

Child Services Operations includes DCS staff critical to carrying out the mission and activities associated with all other program areas. The Child Services Operations program is made up of five key areas:

1. **Child Welfare Field Operations** – Local office child welfare staff (family case managers, supervisors, local office directors) provide services to abused and neglected children and their families. Family case managers (FCMs) and their supervisors are responsible for ensuring that each report of child abuse and neglect is assessed in a timely and thorough manner; additionally, they are responsible for case management and service referral for children and families who are involved in formal cases through the court system or informal adjustments that are approved by judges and monitored by the local office.
2. **Legal Operations** – The legal team (staff attorneys, deputy chief counsels, chief counsels) provides legal representation for the agency to ensure the courts have all necessary information in order to determine a path to permanency that is in the best interest of the child. DCS attorneys at the local level handle all DCS court proceedings including CHINS cases, termination of parental rights cases, DCS-involved adoptions and administrative appeal cases.

3. **Central Office Staff Support** – Central office divisions were established to oversee, manage and support the delivery of services and programs to abused and neglected children and their families and to children at risk of abuse or neglect. These divisions develop, implement and manage effective programs, policies and support tools for staff working with abused and neglected children and their families. Central office operations staff ensures compliance with federal, state and local laws regarding child abuse and neglect and administers federal grants and funding to support abused and neglected children and their families.
4. **Staff Development and Training** – The child welfare training program delivers training to new and experienced child welfare staff and foster parents. The practice model team is housed in this division and is responsible for training all DCS staff on the practice model and its appropriate application. A fundamental tool of the practice model is the Child and Family Team Meeting (CFTM), which brings together all of a child’s formal and informal supports to discuss the child’s well-being case progress. CFTMs ensure all voices are heard, and a child’s path to permanency has been vetted by all applicable parties. The division encompasses the agency’s peer coach consultants, who are expected to assist DCS staff with fidelity, sustainability, and refinement of skills in promoting the practice model. The division also houses the agency’s leadership advisors, who are responsible for facilitating trainings and building leadership capacity throughout the agency.
5. **Business Operations and Administration** – This comprises all activities necessary to operate local offices, along with child abuse and neglect hotline locations.

Permanency and Practice Support

DCS believes that permanency for a child means a safe, stable home; family; love; unconditional commitment and lifelong support. In 2019, the division’s adoption unit was expanded to offer further support to families seeking permanency through adoption, with the goals of ensuring the time between the termination of parental rights and adoption exceeds no more than one year. Additionally, the department believes that every youth exiting foster care should have at least one permanent connection with a caring, committed adult who will provide them with guidance and support as they make their way into adulthood, and DCS works diligently to connect those caregivers with resources to help them and the youth succeed. The permanency and practice support program includes access to services designed to remove inefficiencies, increasing the number of children achieving permanency through reunification, guardianship, adoption, or another permanent, planned living arrangement.

Older Youth Services

The goal of the older youth services program is to help youth practice living interdependently by helping them to build their own lifelong supportive network of caring adults. The programs focus on the development of relationships as well as the necessary skills and knowledge required for youth to transition successfully out of the foster care system. The older youth services program includes independent living services (ILS), collaborative care, and voluntary services. ILS and collaborative care are sets of services and supports designed to assist older youth who are currently in foster care successfully achieve their case plan goal, which can include adoption, reunification, guardianship, or

independent living. These programs are primarily focused on helping those youth who are expected to turn 18 while in foster care to transition into self-sufficient adults, but the programs can be implemented concurrently with other goals like reunification, guardianship and adoption. Voluntary services are an array of services including case management, skill development, and concrete supports such as room and board assistance and help with college tuition for youth who are emancipated from foster care but are not yet 23 years old. All older youth services are individualized and flexible to help each youth develop their own path to successful adulthood, focusing on their education, career and relationships.

Prevention

The DCS prevention program includes a broad service array intended to prevent child abuse and neglect. The goal of all prevention services is to reduce the need for referrals to child protective services or involvement with the juvenile justice system. Services include Healthy Families Indiana and Community Partners for Child Safety, as well as primary prevention efforts through Prevent Child Abuse Indiana. In addition, delinquency prevention is provided by Youth Service Bureau organizations.

Juvenile Justice

The juvenile justice program includes the funding for services for children with pending delinquency matters and is ordered by local juvenile courts in Indiana. Pursuant to IC 31-15-2-7, DCS is the Indiana agency responsible for administering Title IV-E funds. Both child welfare services and juvenile delinquency (JD) services (both of which are eligible IV-E services) were historically funded at the county level. In 2008, as a part of property tax reform, funding for these services transferred from the county to the state. While responsibility for the case management associated with juvenile delinquency cases remain with local county probation departments, in order to retain the ability to claim federal reimbursement, funding to pay for JD services was transferred to DCS.

The juvenile justice program makes available to county probation departments all services within the DCS service array for use with the juvenile delinquency population. Services include placement in residential treatment facilities, licensed childcare agencies (group homes), foster care and community-based services.

Child Support

Each state is federally required to have a “single and separate organizational unit” to administer Title IV-D child support services; in Indiana, the DCS Child Support Bureau (CSB) fills that role. CSB is responsible for paternity establishment; support order establishment (both child and medical support); modification, enforcement, and payment processing of child support. CSB maintains a cooperative agreement with county prosecutors who implement the program at the local level. CSB also has cooperative agreements with clerks of Circuit Courts and special hearing officers who adjudicate Title IV-D child support cases. The primary constituents for the child support program are as follows: custodial parties and non-custodial parents who have requested services; custodial parties of those who currently or formerly received TANF; and those with intergovernmental cases.

Strategic Solutions and Agency Transformation

DCS is committed to continuous improvement and quality assurance by researching and evaluating agency policy and practice to identify areas for growth and methods to create and sustain a safe culture.

The Strategic Solutions and Agency Transformation (SSAT) division spearheads continuous quality improvement efforts; quality assurance of services and casework; research and evaluation of services and policies; safe system improvement and safety culture support. This is accomplished by utilizing the principles of Lean, a business methodology aimed at eliminating waste to ensure processes are performed efficiently and effectively. DCS SSAT has adopted and implemented safety science in an effort to better understand the driving factors in child fatalities, near-fatalities and critical incidents. DCS SSAT has a team of dedicated research and evaluation staff that assists the agency in understanding the intersection of data and evidence in order to support best practices within child welfare.

Accomplishments & Challenges During FY 2020–2021 Biennium

The following information reflects the department’s accomplishments and challenges during the FY 2020–2021 biennium:

- **Agency turnover** – A stable workforce is critical in child welfare and child support systems, and maintaining a force of skilled employees is an ongoing agency goal. DCS has seen great progress in this area and continues to push for lower turnover numbers. The rate of turnover in Calendar Year 2017 was 26.7%. In CY 2018, that dropped to 21.9%; in CY 2019, it decreased to 20.6%. In an effort to improve retention numbers, DCS has undertaken an agency-wide initiative to improve workplace culture. These efforts were born of a comprehensive assessment in 2018 by the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group, which determined a culture of fear among staff members prevented employees from doing their best work. In SFY 2019, DCS adopted a series of engagement surveys to gauge the employee experience, allowing managers to make adjustments based on staff feedback. DCS has also recently implemented its TrustLine, a tip line allowing employees to anonymously report concerns within the agency so they can be promptly addressed. The agency also developed three staff-led advisory councils to ensure the voices of frontline staff are heard.
- **FCM caseloads** – Pursuant to IC 31-25-2-5, DCS is required to ensure each region has enough FCMs to allow caseloads to be at not more than 12 active cases relating to initial assessments, including assessments of an allegation of child abuse or neglect; or 12 families monitored and supervised in active cases relating to ongoing in-home services or 13 children monitored and supervised in active cases related to ongoing services who are in out-of-home placements. This is internally referred to as the 12/12/13 caseload standard. DCS statewide compliance with the new 12/12/13 caseload standard went from 88% in July 2019 to 103% in July 2020.
- **Lean principles** – In the past year, DCS has committed to the principles of Lean, a business methodology aimed at helping employees work as efficiently and effectively as possible, eliminating wasteful processes that frustrate workers and the families we serve. DCS has committed to hosting Rapid Improvement Events to address problem areas; these four-day workshops allow a multi-disciplinary group of employees to analyze the current state of a process and determine its desired state, then revise the steps of the process involved as needed, immediately implementing solutions. Lean challenges the agency to complete a Value Stream

Analysis (VSA) related to any area where the agency seeks to improve. The agency's first VSA focuses on the employee experience and was launched in August. Future VSAs will focus on the intake/assessment process and out-of-home placements.

- **Foster parent engagement** – DCS continually seeks ways to better engage foster parents and ensure their voices are heard as we determine the best interest of the children in our care. The agency has created a portal specifically for foster parents, who now have 24-hour access to medical, school and court information about the foster children in their homes. The portal also contains resources for caring for children who have experienced trauma. In SFY 2019, DCS finalized its foster parent court report, a form that gives foster parents the opportunity to be heard in the courtroom, offering invaluable information to help judges make the best decisions possible in the interest of the child. The agency has also expanded its staff of foster parent specialists, who focus on licensing interested families interested in fostering. The specialists also serve as community liaisons, addressing community agencies and faith organizations, answering questions about fostering and educating others about how the community can support existing foster families. The division hosts biweekly meetings with Licensed Child Placing Agencies to ensure needs are being met and questioned, answered. A recent foster parent self-assessment helped the agency better understand the areas where foster parents feel they would benefit from more training. It garnered more than 200 responses.
- **Supervisor to Family Case Manager Ratio** – The best child welfare systems are those in which supervisors have the time, knowledge and skill to develop and support excellent casework practitioners and recognize complex case situations. The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) standard for front-line supervisors is one supervisor for every five employees. The DCS ratio went from 1:8.32 in September 2017 to 1:5.0 in October 2019, and the agency remains compliant with this best practice standard. Better oversight of FCMs and more thorough case management leads to better outcomes for children in care.
- **INvest** – The Indiana Verification and Enforcement of Support (INvest) Project is currently in the planning phase. Prior to June 30, 2020, the INvest team procured Deloitte Consulting as the Design, Development and Implementation (DDI) vendor. Netlogx was procured as the Project Management Office (PMO) vendor. CSG Government Solutions was procured as the Quality Assurance (QA) vendor. KPMG was procured as the Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) vendor. The INvest team attended training on agile development methodology, and execution to build the system using that methodology began Aug. 3, 2020. The INvest team also created an INvest Governance Manual that will guide the Project Management and System Development Life Cycle (SDLC) processes during the project. INvest will pilot in May 2022 and be fully implemented statewide by Nov. 30, 2022.
- **Safe System Improvement Tool** – The Indiana Department of Child Services has hired a Safe Systems director to help the agency better identify factors contributing to child maltreatment using the Safe System Improvement Tool (SSIT). The SSIT, developed in Tennessee in 2015, provides organizations with a standardized process to systematically review critical incident

reviews. The SSIT guides agency leaders as they assess a case from open to close, identifying factors that impacted success along the way. DCS uses the SSIT to analyze cases in which a child died or was seriously injured. The tool will increase the agency's ability to identify child welfare trends across Indiana, allowing DCS leaders to make changes to agency practice when needed to prevent critical incidents. The SSIT also promotes a climate of what leaders call psychological safety – an understanding among staff that issues can be addressed without placing blame – leading to better outcomes for children.

- **COVID-19 response** – The department's mission with regard to child welfare is naturally interpersonal and interactive, which presented unique challenges as DCS adapted to the COVID-19 outbreak. Agency leadership immediately began to acquire needed personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure those in-person interactions remained as safe as possible. The department also quickly issued guidance to transition many of the agency's face-to-face activities to virtual formats and deployed the use of COVID-19 screening questions when virtual interactions were not possible. During the COVID-19 outbreak, certain administrative child support enforcement actions were suspended to provide some level of relief for those individuals suffering from the economic consequences brought on by the virus. To prepare for future emergencies, CSB partnered with the Indiana Prosecuting Attorney's Council (IPAC) to develop guidance for essential child support services that would need to proceed in the event of a full or partial emergency shutdown.
- **Adoption services** – In 2020, the number of adoption consultants in Indiana increased from seven to 19, and two supervisor positions were added. The positions were added to reduce time in care for children with a permanency goal of adoption. With the increased staff, the adoption consultant team is able to provide increased support and guidance to DCS staff as they work to achieve permanency for children through adoption. These staff members have received specific adoption training and are positioned to serve as adoption specialists to field staff and families seeking to adopt. They work to obtain permanency for children and encourage attachment services that are designed to help children and their new parent(s) develop lifelong family bonds. Other achievements of the adoption unit include an enhanced database allowing for better tracking of adoption inquiries made by families seeking to adopt and creation of a digital picture book of Indiana's Waiting Children. The adoption unit is working on a statewide rollout of the Adoption Rapid Permanency Review. The Rapid Permanency Reviews are designed not only to achieve permanency to a targeted group of children but to promote systematic change within the child welfare system by identifying barriers and implementing strategies to remove them.
- **Family Preservation Services** – On June 1, 2020, DCS rolled out its Family Preservation Services. This program offers Hoosier families in-home services coordinated by a single provider. This promotes clear communication, enhanced stability and measurable data. Providers offer a full array of services aimed at keeping children in the home with their caregivers provided it is safe to do so. They are reimbursed through a per-diem model, allowing them to focus on outcomes rather than billable hours. Under Family Preservation Services, more Hoosier children will grow up with their families, which will be better-prepared to offer loving, safe care.

Objectives for the FY 2022–2023 Biennium

During the next biennium, DCS has eight primary objectives:

1. **Advance racial justice, equity and inclusion** – DCS recognizes that disparities exist for children and families of color across child welfare and support systems, specifically in regard to the likelihood of agency involvement, quality of services provided and length of time to permanency. During this budget cycle, DCS will continue to implement its new Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion Advisory Council, which serves as a starting point for analyzing child services to determine where and why inequities exist, both within the agency and in how the agency serves Hoosier families and children. The group will work to advance racial justice, equity and inclusion within the child welfare system. This work group comprises DCS staff, local and state leaders, and community organizations from across the state who can speak to the specific needs of their communities so we ensure our response is as diverse as the needs of those we serve.

2. **Improve employee retention** – DCS aims to reduce turnover to 17.5% in CY 2020. DCS will enhance the current recruitment plan to remain competitive in the current job market and ensure a sufficient pool of qualified, competent and committed candidates.

The FCMs comprise the largest portion of the DCS team and are therefore a focus of many retention efforts. Having supervisor support appropriate for the workload is an important factor in retaining FCMs. CWLA best practice recommends a 1:5 supervisor-to-FCM ratio as best for providing the necessary coaching and staffing for cases. Mentors, peer coaches, regional training and competitive salaries all contribute to supporting the frontline work in the child welfare realm. A competitive career advancement program for front-line staff with a comprehensive leadership development program will reward the current staff in the child welfare field operations. Retaining the frontline staff will improve timeliness to permanency for children in care. The Employee Experience Value Stream Steering Team will drive the improvements that are necessary to improve the retention of DCS employees.

3. **Implement the principles of the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA)** – DCS plans to implement the principles of the FFPSA by Sept. 29, 2021. FFPSA is part of the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, signed into law on Feb. 9. One major area FFPSA will impact is the way Title IV-E funds can be used. Title IV-E funds previously could be used only to help with the costs of foster care maintenance for children in eligible placements; administrative expenses to manage the program; and training for staff, foster parents and certain private agency staff; adoption assistance; and kinship guardianship assistance. Now states with an approved Title IV-E prevention plan have the option to use these funds for prevention services that would allow children who are candidates for foster care to stay with their parents or relatives. Staying with their loved ones, provided it is safe to do so, supports better outcomes for children.

4. **Improve information technology for the Child Support Bureau** – DCS will continue to move forward with replacing Indiana’s statewide child support system (ISETS) with

INvest as noted above. INvest will allow the agency to take advantage of newer technology; provide a more user-friendly experience for child support workers as well as employers, custodial and non-custodial parents; meet federal program and security requirements. The project was due to move into the execution phase in August 2020. The project will be completed by Nov. 30, 2022.

5. **Enhance child welfare technology to support data-driven decision-making and best practices for child and family outcomes** – The Comprehensive Child Welfare Information System (CCWIS) Project is currently in the planning phase. Accenture was procured as the Design, Development and Implementation (DDI) vendor. The CCWIS DDI team started on Aug. 4, 2020. The CCWIS Project Management Office (PMO) team was recently selected and is expected to start by mid-September. The CCWIS team will also have Independent Verification and Validation (IV&V) on the project starting in October 2020. After the DDI team reviews the requirements and process-mapping completed by the CCWIS Organizational Design vendor, the CCWIS DDI team will begin development of the CCWIS project. The DDI team will have three sprint teams using an agile scrum methodology to replace Casebook functionality within the first 12 months of the project. The completion of CCWIS will position the agency to more effectively implement the principles of the Family First Preservation Services Act. Specifically, CCWIS will streamline the vendor reimbursement/claims process. CCWIS will be completed by July 31, 2022.
6. **Continue our Lean transformation** – In this budget cycle, DCS will continue to implement the principles of Lean, a business methodology that increases value to the customer while eliminating waste in our processes. We will continue to identify processes that need our attention and hold Rapid Improvement Events (RIEs) to ensure we are completing tasks in the most effective and efficient way possible to serve Hoosier families and children. Our Lean transformation will make DCS into an agency of problem-solvers dedicated to continuous improvement.
7. **Create a culture of safety** – DCS will continue to promote an atmosphere that fosters personal and professional growth by respecting those with whom we work and empowering employees to learn, make mistakes and implement change without fear of reprisal. We will continue to address issues reported to our DCS TrustLine, which allows anonymous reporting of agency issues so managers understand what is impacting the employee experience.
8. **Focus agency intervention** – DCS recognizes that our agency's involvement with a family, specifically if we are required to remove a child from their home of origin, can cause trauma that could impact a child, lifelong. The agency will continue to evaluate its response to allegations of child abuse and neglect to ensure our staff is intervening to provide the right service to the right child at the right time. Our involvement should provide temporary placement only if needed and support Hoosiers as they seek to create a safe and healthy environment for the children in their care.

Key Performance Indicators

These metrics measure progress toward meeting DCS' mission to protect children from abuse and neglect, and to ensure their financial support.

- Percent of current child support collected: The amount of money collected for current support in Title IV-D cases divided by the total amount owed for current support in Title IV-D cases during the year ended each quarter.
 - July 2020 = 66.39%
 - Target = 66.7%
- Absence of repeat maltreatment: The percent of children with no substantiated maltreatment after DCS involvement in last 12 months.
 - June 2020 = 90.34%
 - Target = 95%
- Out-of-Home CHINS time to permanency: Percent of children in out of home placement achieving permanency in 24 months.
 - June 2020 = 67.5%
 - Target = 85%
- Placements per Child: The percent of children in out of home placements with two or fewer total placements.
 - June 2020 = 56.1%
 - Target = 70%
- In-Home CHINS time to permanency: Percent of children that remained in the home achieving permanency within 12 months.
 - June 2020 = 75.2%
 - Target = 87%

Organization Chart

See attachment.

Programs to be Reduced, Eliminated or Replaced

No programs or services for children will be reduced, eliminated or replaced.

Reallocation of Funds

No funds are planned to be reallocated.

FY 2022–2023 Initiatives

DCS requests the following change package:

Restore DCS to 94% of SFY21 agency appropriation.

	17022 Family and Children	12736 Administration
General Fund	53,615,214	51,671,050
Personal Services Contingency	-	(21,250,000)
TOTAL	53,615,214	30,421,050

1. 17022 Family and Children Fund - **\$53,615,214** (General Fund)

The Family and Children Fund supports services for children and families that are not otherwise eligible for federal funding. This change package restores the agency's appropriation to 93% of its State Fiscal Year 2021 appropriation. As stated in the letter, by focusing on serving the right child at the right time with the right services, the agency was able to decrease the number of kids in its care. DCS is shifting toward preventive care and support, allowing families to remain together when this can be safely accomplished, equating to fewer children in out-of-home care. The agency relies on residential facility care only when necessary as research shows a child thrives in a family environment. However, with the continued high acuity of our cases and the uncertainty of how children and families will recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, we know this trend will not continue to the extent that would allow DCS to request a base budget equal to State Fiscal Year 2021 appropriation minus 15%.

2. 12736 Child Services Administration - **\$51,671,050** (General Fund) **(\$21,250,000)** (Personal Services Contingency)

IC 31-25-2-5 sets caseload standards for DCS family case managers (FCMs). DCS statewide compliance with the 12-12-13 caseload standard went from 88% in July 2019 to 103% in July 2020. It took the agency years to meet the caseload standard, and it is critical for the agency to maintain that standard to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the children in care. As mentoring and coaching is also an important part of proper case management, the agency hired the appropriate number of supervisors to meet the recommended best practices supervisor to FCM ratio of 1:5. DCS also hired the necessary attorneys to ensure the case-carrying attorney caseload does not exceed 60 to 75 cases. This request restores the agency's administrative appropriation to 93% of its State Fiscal Year 2021 appropriation. The number of children under DCS care and the number of abuse/neglect assessments will not reduce rapidly enough to allow the agency to cut administrative expenditures by 15% from its State Fiscal Year 2021 appropriation in the FY 22-23 biennium without risk to those we serve. This change package will ensure each child and family receives the optimal level of attention, focus and support necessary to maintain a safe environment for Hoosier children and families.