ACNJ Child Protection Data Report

Introduction

New Jersey's troubled child protection system captured national attention in January 2003 with the death of Faheem Williams. That spurred a major overhaul of the state's child welfare system, beginning in 2003 and formalized in July 2004 in a sweeping settlement of a lawsuit filed on behalf of New Jersey's foster children.

Since then, New Jersey has seen three shifts in state leadership, massive structural change on the state and local levels, significant turnover in staff and millions of additional dollars invested into protecting children and strengthening families. And yet, we have no concrete way to objectively determine if any of these efforts have made a difference for the children and families inside this critical child protection system.

After all this time, decisions continue to be made with insufficient and sometimes inaccurate information.

The Association for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) is committed to ensuring that decisions about children's lives are made on sound information and that state leaders and the public are fully informed. It is the public debate that has kept reform moving forward and will be necessary to ensure success. ACNJ believes that it is critically important to begin to create a baseline of data to ensure that decisions are grounded in fact and that there is strong accountability, not just for public dollars, but more important, for outcomes for children.

That is why ACNJ has developed this child protection data report. While we have in the past included child protection data in our Kids Count and special reports, none have been as comprehensive a picture as we've attempted to present here.

The data in this report show that despite the serious and continued problems in implementation, there has been progress in most of the key indicators of child outcomes. In some cases, the improvement has been slight, but it is still important to know that our collective investment is paying dividends and so must be sustained.

While it is important to recognize the positives, the advances must be viewed in context. For example, while the number of children leaving foster care for permanent homes within 12 months has improved, the fact remains that almost 50 percent of children linger in temporary placement a full two years after being taken from their families. And while the number of children freed for adoption without an adoptive home has dropped, 470 children are legally free and still waiting for a permanent family.

ACNJ sees this report as a baseline of data to provide a factual foundation for the continued debate about and measurement of reform efforts. These reports will also raise critical issues that must be addressed along the way to creating a system that truly protects children and strengthens family.

Key Findings

The statistics presented in this report suggest that New Jersey has made some progress in protecting children. The state still has a long way to go before its child welfare system protects all children and strengthens all families. But, these statistics do demonstrate that a strong investment in children can produce results.

That is why it is crucial that we stay the course, with necessary corrections, and continue to invest in protecting our most fragile citizens – abused and neglected children.

Child Protection Trends

- In 21 of 29 measures of child well-being, children under supervision of the state Division of Youth and Family Services were faring better after child protection reforms began than before.

- Children fared worse on five measures. In three areas, little has changed.

- Keeping children safe from abuse and neglect showed the strongest, most consistent improvements, with all five measures posting strong gains from 2000 to 2004 and into 2005.

- Five of the nine measures of safety and stability in foster care improved, including a 13 percent jump in the percent of sibling groups placed together in foster care and a 7 percent increase in the percent of foster children living close to home. On the downside, foster children were more likely to move to different homes while in state custody.

- Slight improvements occurred in eight out of 10 measures of state efforts to place foster children in permanent homes. Still, nearly half of children who entered foster care in 2003 were either still in care or had no permanent home two years later.

- After seeing an upswing in 2003, the percent of adoptions finalized within 24 months of the last time a child was removed from home dropped in 2005 to pre-reform levels.

- Although fewer juveniles are in lock-up, many still languish in foster care without ever finding a permanent home. Since 2001, there has been a 25 percent jump in the percent of youth, ages 18-plus, who simply aged out of the system or who ran away from foster care. At the same time permanent exits dropped 23 percent.

> The years used in cohort data typically represent the year that a group of children entered or exited the system and measures their experience over time. So 2004 data measures the experience of children who were in the system in both 2004 and 2005.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

We have divided this report into two primary sections: The System and The Outcomes. The systems data is most useful in understanding what type of pressure the system is under and how it is responding.

The outcomes data can tell us how children are faring inside this system, whether reforms are resulting in more children being kept safely at home and whether those children who must be removed from their families are finding safe, permanent homes within a reasonable amount of time.

The outcomes data is tied to four broad goals of New Jersey's child welfare reform plan:

- Keep children safe from abuse and neglect.

- If foster care placement is necessary, the state must do everything possible to safeguard and stabilize children under its care.

- Once placed in foster care, the state must do everything possible to find children safe, permanent homes within a reasonable amount of time, whether with birth parents, relatives or adoptive parents.

- Children should not grow up in foster care but when they do the state must help them transition to adulthood.

WHY IT MATTERS

The indicators used in this report are generally viewed to have important implications for children who have been abused or neglected. Following is a brief explanation of the importance of each area of indicators.

Keeping Children Safe. All the indicators in this section can tell us how well the system is detecting and treating children who are abused and neglected, thus preventing children from being hurt again in the future.

Safety & Stability in Foster Care. While in foster care, the state has a high level of responsibility to assure that children are safe and in stable settings. The indicators in this section measure the experience of children while in foster care, which can affect them for the rest of their lives. Being placed with relatives and siblings, close to home and staying in one setting can help lessen the shock of being removed from your birth parents. Obviously, being abused while in care, bouncing from home to home or being far from siblings and family in an unfamiliar area worsens the trauma.

It is also important for the state to have an adequate supply of available foster homes. Without that, caseworkers are often forced to place children in unsuitable settings or leave them in unsafe family situations.

Finding Permanent Homes For Foster Children. The longer children spend in foster care, the less likely they will find a permanent home. The indicators in this section all measure how well the state is getting children into permanent homes within a reasonable amount of time.

Help Youth Transition to Productive Adulthood. All too often, children grow up in foster care. When they reached 18, they were traditionally released to live on their own, often without any family ties or other supports. These indicators measure how the state is treating youth who reach maturity while in foster care and who need help transitioning to adulthood.

ACNJ included two broader measures in this section: juveniles committed to state-run secure facilities and juveniles in county detention. Many of these youth are also DYFS-involved or could be in DYFS treatment placements, instead of lockup, if appropriate placements were available. So these measures are closely related to the functioning of the state's child welfare system.

NEW JERSEY MUST FIX DATA DEFICIENCIES

Like its history of protecting children, New Jersey's track record for collecting data about abused children has been spotty at best. That is improving, largely as a result of the court settlement. There are, however, a few caveats, missing pieces and the need to explain certain types of data and indicators presented in this report.

The data come primarily from the state Department of Human Services, Office of Children's Services, the state Division of Youth and Family Services' Data Analysis Unit and Chapin Hall Center for Children, which contracts with New Jersey to analyze data. A complete list of data definitions and sources appears in Appendix A. ACNJ encourages our readers to look closely at definitions to truly understand what these numbers count. In addition, Appendix B provides data on additional years for a closer look at trends.

Wherever possible, we have used "cohort" data, which is considered more accurate than data that measures characteristics about children who are in the system on a particular day, referred to as "point-in-time" data. Cohort data measures the experience of a set group of children over time.

The years used in cohort data typically represent the year that a group of children entered or exited the system. For example, when measuring the percent of children who were abused within 12 months of an unsubstantiated allegation of abuse, the latest available data is for 2004. Some of these children, however, would have suffered abuse in 2005 because the data examines incidents over a 12-month period. That means 2004 data will also measure the experience of children who were in the system in 2005.

Throughout the report, we have tried to use 2002 as a baseline – the year before the Faheem Williams case was discovered, spurring significant changes in both community and state response. In some cases, however, data for this year is unavailable so we have used the closest or most relevant statistics.

It is also important to understand that New Jersey simply lacks many relevant data that should be used to measure whether a system is protecting children and strengthening families. A glaring area of data deficiency is on services delivered and the effectiveness of those services, especially about cases in which children have an open DYFS case, but remain in their own homes. This is the vast majority of DYFS cases and, despite years of calling for relevant information about these cases, it is still unavailable. The new administration must tackle this problem.

Another major problem is that much of the data measures the experience of children during only one "spell" in foster care. We know that many children, unfortunately, move in and out of the system. Little is available to measure the experience of these "deep-end" cases and it must be.

We also have no accurate way to measure how foster children are faring, beyond indicators like the amount of time they spend in care or the number of placements they have. We don't know, for example, how these children perform in school or how many suffer from severe behavioral or emotional problems. The state must develop concrete ways to measure these and other important areas to develop a deeper understanding of the system and the children affected by it.

At the state's request, ACNJ has left out data that measure outcomes by a child's racial breakdown. State officials say existing data is unreliable because racial makeup is missing for a substantial percentage of children, thus skewing the overall statistics. They promise, however, to have reliable racial data available next year.

Despite these data deficiencies, ACNJ felt it was imperative to move forward with this report at this time, in the hopes that more comprehensive and reliable data will be developed soon.

New Jersey Child Protection Report Card

Keeping Children Safe

	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change	Better/ Worse
Children with substantiated abuse report within 6 months of previous substantiation	2001/2004	6.3%	5.0%	-21	Better
Children with substantiated abuse report within 12 months of previous substantiation	2002/2004	9.5	7.2	-24	Better
Children with substantiated abuse report who had previous unsubstantiated report	2002/2004	4.8	4.3	-10	Better
Children re-abused after reunification with birth family	2002/2004	5.1	4.8	-6	Better
Children re-entering foster care after being reunited with birth family	2002/2004	30	24	-20	Better

Safety & Stability in Foster Care

	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change	Better/ Worse
Children abused in foster care by state-approved caregiver	2001/2004	0.59%	0.53%	-10	Better
Children with 2 or more foster care placements	2002/2005	53.7	60.1	12	Worse
Children with no more than 2 foster care placements	2002/2005	86.2	82.4	-4	Worse
Children placed in family setting	2003/2005	77.5	79.1	2	Better
Children placed in institutional settings	2003/2005	22.5	20.9	-7	Better
Sibling groups placed together (2-3)	2003/2005	56.2	63.5	13	Better
Sibling groups placed together (4+)	2003/2005	27	27.8	3	Same*
Children placed within 10 miles of home	2002/2005	58.3	62.2	7	Better
Number of available foster homes	2004/2006	3,913	4,005	2	Same*

Finding Permanent Homes For Foster Children

	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change	Better/ Worse
Median length of stay in months	2002/2004	11.5	10.5	-9	Better
Average length of stay in months for current placement	2001/2005	22.2	16.5	-26	Better
Average length of stay in months for all placements	2001/2005	31.5	27.6	-12	Better
Children reunified within 12 months of entering care	2001/2005	59.5%	58.6%	-2	Worse
Children leaving foster care for permanency within 12 months of entering care	2001/2004	36.2	39.1	8	Better
Children with no permanent home 24 months after entering care	2001/2003	50.4	46.8	-7	Better
Children with no permanent home 36 months after entering care	2001/2002	41.8	40.1	-4	Better
Children with adoptions finalized within 24 months of last removal from home	2001/2005	16.3	16.9	4	Same*
Number children legally free for adoption with no finalized adoption	2002/2005	2,570	2,348	-9	Better
Number children legally free for adoption, but have no adoptive home	2003/2005	555	470	-15	Better

Help Youth Transition to Productive Adulthood

	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change	Better/ Worse
Number ages 18+ in Medicaid extension (Chaffee)	2002/2006	167	337	102	Better
Number juveniles committed to state-run secure facilities, ages 15-19	2001/2005	1,262	1,031	-18	Better
Number juveniles in county detention (average daily population), ages 15-19	2001/2004	987	806	-18	Better
Non-permanent exits from care, ages 18+	2001/2005	58.2	72.6	25	Worse
Permanent exits from care, ages 18+	2001/2005	31.8	17.2	-23	Worse

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers represent a percent of children. More detailed explanations of data can be found in Appendix A.

*These indicators have seen uneven fluctuations over the past several years, making it difficult to assign a better or worse rating. ACNJ has chosen to code these as "same," even though the data show slight improvements. Please see graphs Appendix B for more detailed data on these measures.

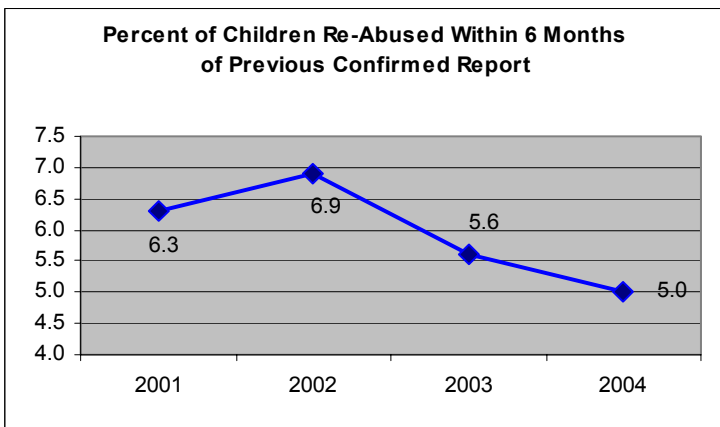## THE OUTCOMES

Child Safety Improves

All five measures of child safety posted improvements from 2002 to 2004. Children were less likely to be abused again after coming to the attention of the state Division of Youth and Family Services. They were also less likely to be abused or return to foster care after being reunited with their birth families.

Even with these improvements, however, New Jersey still has a very high rate of children who go back to foster care after they have been sent home. This raises two questions:

- Is DYFS returning children home prematurely?
- Once returned, is the state providing adequate supervision and support to ensure children remain safe?

Caution should also be used when interpreting the re-abuse rates. It may seem that 4.3 percent is a small fraction of children being abused after an unproven report has been made. But that translates to an alarming 1,300 children. Additionally, the rate increases to 6 percent – or 1,800 children – 12 months after an unproven abuse report, according to a Chapin Hall Center for Children analysis.

Add to this the roughly 1,500 children who re-enter foster care after being returned home and there are still a significant number of children who suffer abuse again after coming to the attention of the state. This data highlights the need to look more closely at the DYFS in-home cases. Historically, little useful information has been available to determine how the state helps children who have an open DYFS case, but who remain with their birth families. This should be a focus of the state's efforts to develop more relevant data. This data should look at both investigation and services to determine what could be done to prevent more abuse or neglect after a report has been made.

Percent of Children Re-Abused Within 6 Months of Previous Confirmed Report
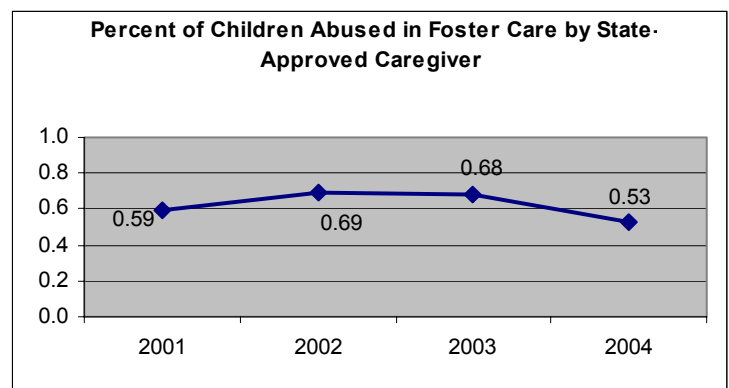

Foster Care Safety Improves; Instability Worsens

Five of the 9 measures of child safety and stability in foster care improved, two were worse and two remained essentially unchanged.

The strongest statistical progress in this area was seen in placing small groups of siblings together. In 2005, about 64 percent of small siblings groups (2-3) were placed together, compared to 56 percent in 2003, a 13 percent improvement. Large sibling groups saw only a very slight improvement in their chances of getting a home together.

From 2001 to 2004, the incidence of abuse and neglect in foster care dropped from .59 percent to .53 percent. This is the first time since 2001 that New Jersey successfully met the federal standard of .57 percent.

Fortunately, the number of children who suffer abuse in foster care at the hands of their state-approved caregiver is small so the statistical decrease appears larger than it would with a larger universe of children. Still, the gains from 2002 and 2003 were even more pronounced, suggesting that safety assessments of children in foster care conducted in 2004 may have helped keep foster children safer.

Percent of Children Abused in Foster Care by State-Approved Caregiver

Kids Still Bounce Around in Foster Care

Another stubborn problem area remains the fact that most New Jersey foster children still find themselves moving from place to place while in care, making this an even more unsettling experience. The percent of foster children with two or more placements increased 12 percent from 2002 to 2005. This statistic overlooks institutionalized children, who tend to stay in the system longer and have more placements, thus making the numbers appear better than they actually are.

Permanent Homes Elusive

The longer children spend in the instability of foster care, the more likely they are to suffer from lifelong problems.

Unfortunately, New Jersey has shown little progress in ensuring that vulnerable children grow up in safe, permanent homes. Although eight of these 10 measures did show improvement, the change in most areas was very small.
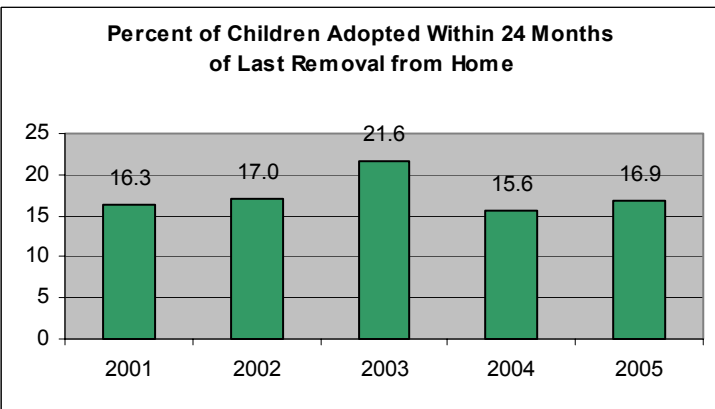
Just 39 percent of children who entered care in 2004 had found a permanent home within one year. Of those who entered care in 2002, 40 percent were still growing up in the instability of foster care a full three years after the initial placement or had left the system to a "non-permanent" exit, such as aging out or running away.

As discouraging as these numbers are, they likely underestimate the problem. A child is deemed to have a "permanency exit" when he returns home, goes to live with a relative, is adopted or has been granted a legal guardian. However, other statistics show that nearly one-quarter of children who are reunified with their families are back in care within 12 months.

Plus, this data looks only at the current "spell" in foster care, ignoring the reality for thousands of children who move in and out of the foster care system. This is one of the most glaring deficiencies in the data – the lack of reliable information about these children and how the state is helping them. This, too, must be addressed as the state develops its data capabilities.

Children in need of adoption also suffered setbacks over the past few years. The percent of children who have a finalized adoption within 24 months of their last removal from home has hovered between 15 and 17 percent from 2001 to 2005, with the exception of 2003 when there was a jump to 21.6 percent.

State officials believe this blip was caused by a family court focus on adoption that year. Later, the reform movement siphoned attention away from the adoption system, as workers were diverted from adoption tasks to perform safety-related functions, such as conducting assessments of foster homes. The dismantling of the Adoption Resource Centers in 2004 also created havoc in the adoption field, with no new system created to replace the old one. The state must provide enough resources to meet both of its basic responsibilities: protecting children and ensuring that they have permanent homes.

Percent of Children Adopted Within 24 Months of Last Removal from Home

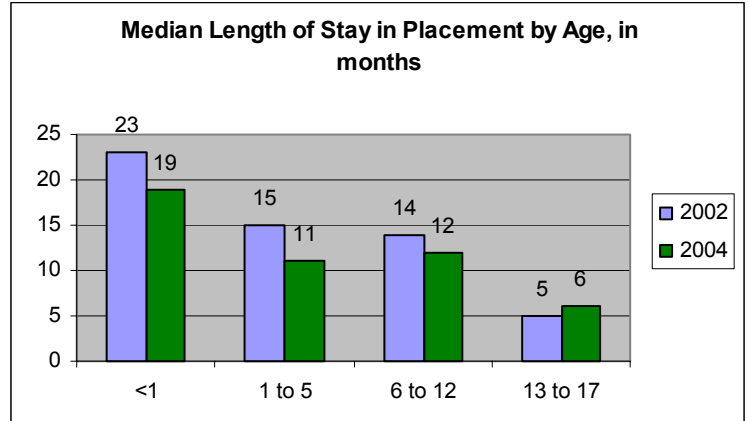| Year	Percent
2001	16.3
2002	17.0
2003	21.6
2004	15.6
2005	16.9

Length of Stay Decreases

While New Jersey has a difficult time finding permanent homes for children, the numbers do show that, on average, children are spending less time in care. The median lengths of stay for children 12 and under all decreased from 2002 to 2004.

Only teenagers showed an increase in length of stay, which may reflect positive new state policies that expect case-

workers to keep cases open after a youth turns 18 so the state can provide services to help young adults make the transition to independent living.
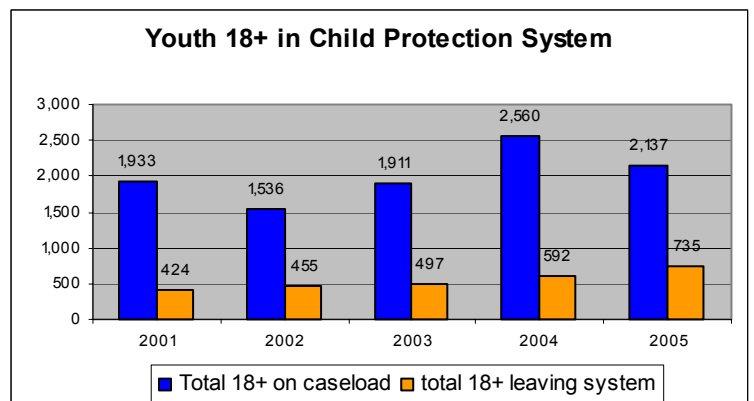
Again, though, this data may underestimate the problem. The cohort data only measures a child's current spell in foster care. So if a child has been in and out of care for several years, the data would only reflect the length of stay of the most current placement.

Median Length of Stay in Placement by Age, in months

Age	2002	2004
<1	23	19
1 to 5	15	11
6 to 12	14	12
13 to 17	5	6

Growing up in Foster Care

New Jersey has lost ground in efforts to ensure that older youth find permanent homes and do not simply turn 18 in foster care and then "age out" of the system. Since 2001 there has been a steady 25 percent increase in the percent of youth, ages 18+, who age out or run away from foster care. That coincided with a 23 percent drop in the percent of youth who left foster care for reunification with family, adoption or guardianship.

The reasons behind this change are unclear. Some of this may be due to data differences. The actual number of youth, 18+ aging out of the system has risen 73 percent from 2001 to 2005, reflecting new state policies to routinely keep cases open after a youth turns 18. Hopefully, these youth are leaving the system a little older and better equipped to function as adults. To understand this change better, however, it is important to know how old these youth are when they leave the system and whether they have benefited from extra supports, such as transitional housing and scholarships, before they strike out on their own.

Youth 18+ in Child Protection System

Year	Total 18+ on caseload	total 18+ leaving system
2001	1,933	424
2002	1,536	455
2003	1,911	497
2004	2,560	592
2005	2,137	735

THE SYSTEM
More Abused Children Strain System

The number of children in New Jersey's child protection system has burgeoned since 2002, with 22 percent more children on the DYFS caseload in 2006 than in 2002. Some of this is attributable to an increase in reports of child abuse and neglect, especially following the very high-profile child death and starvation cases that surfaced in 2003.

But the data suggest cases that capture big headlines have more influence on the political and systemic response, rather than on the community's response to child abuse and neglect. This is seen most dramatically in the data from New Jersey's central child abuse hotline.

When the hotline opened in July 2004, the directive from then DYFS-director Ed Cotton was to screen out cases that did not adhere to a strict definition of abuse and neglect. The thinking was that DYFS should use its limited resources to focus on the highest risk cases.

In the hotline's first six months, the state opened an average of roughly 2,200 child abuse/neglect investigations per month. But widespread reports indicated the state was screening out cases that should have been opened for investigations. After several months of negative publicity on the hotline, state officials made changes to its operation, including a directive to screen in more reports.

During 2005, the number of child abuse investigations increased to an average of 3,600 investigations per month. During that same time period, the total number of calls coming in to the hotline actually dropped 6 percent. In the first four months of 2006, the increase was even more dramatic, with an average of 5,000 investigations opened each month.

These statistics strongly suggest that the rise in abuse/neglect investigations was due to the state's response – screening in more cases, not a surge in reports of suspected abuse and neglect from the community.

These extreme swings highlight the need for clear, consistent and concise directives to screening staff on what to accept for an investigation. Current guidelines are too unwieldy. Strong training and experienced screeners are key to ensuring a steady, consistent and appropriate response to calls of suspected child abuse and neglect. The state's initial response to these reports are critical if the system is to protect children.
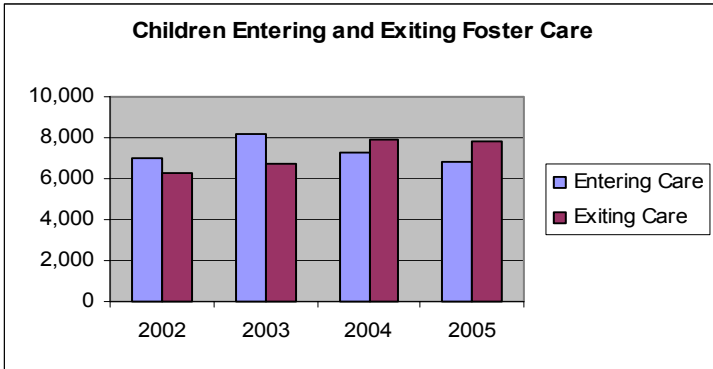
Child Abuse Hotline				
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**% Change**
Total average monthly calls	18,923	17,759	20,390	8
Number opened for abuse/neglect investigation (average monthly)	2,176	3,597	5,042	132
Percent opened for abuse/neglect investigation (average monthly)	11	20	26	136
Number opened for child welfare assessment (average monthly)	1,548	1,168	1,255	-19
Percent referrals opened for child welfare assessment (average monthly)	8	7	6	-25
Total average monthly referrals	3,725	4,400	6,523	75

Fewer Kids Entering Foster Care;
More Leaving

Following the Faheem Williams case in February 2003, the number of children entering foster care jumped 17 percent.

Since then, the number entering care has steadily declined, while the number leaving has increased.

Fewer Children Placed With Relatives

Children Entering and Exiting Foster Care

Of special interest is the rise and fall of the percent of foster children initially placed with relatives. For children entering care in 2003, 41.5 percent were initially placed with relatives. That jumped to nearly 45 percent in 2004 when the state began reimbursing caregiver relatives at the same rate as non-related foster parents.

But the percent dropped in 2005 to 38 percent – worse than the base year measure. This decline followed the enactment of new state requirements that all foster homes – related and unrelated – be licensed. This suggests that some relatives either do not want to meet or cannot meet the state's training and licensing requirements.

Legal Guardianships Soar

Perhaps no aspect of the child welfare system has seen more changes over the past few years than the adoption system. In 2002, the state created kinship legal guardianship (KLG) as an alternative to adoption for relatives who do not want to sever their kins' parental rights, but who want to give the children a permanent home. About two years later, the state dismantled the adoption system, clos-

Children Under DYFS Supervision

	2002	2006	%
Children under DYFS supervision	49,625	60,622	22
Children supervised in home	38,816	49,318	27
Percent children supervised in-home	78	81	4
Children in out-of-home placement	10,812	11,304	5
Percent children in out-of-home placement	22	19	-14
Total families under DYFS supervision	26,185	31,906	22

Note: DYFS supervision means a case is open on the child. Most children remain in their family homes while under supervision, during which caseworkers are supposed to help address the problems that caused the abuse or neglect.

Child Abuse Substantiations

	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change
Child abuse/neglect reports	2002/2004	37,424	42,149	13
Number of substantiated (proven) reports	2002/2004	8,236	7,964	-3
Percent of reports substantiated (proven)	2003/2004	20	19	-5

ing the former Adoption Resource Centers (ARCs) and moving adoption functions into the local offices. The effects of both of these changes is evident in the data.

Since 2002, the number of DYFS-sanctioned kinship legal guardianships has soared, going from 8 in 2002 to 817 in 2005, according to the Administrative Office of the Courts. After ARCs were closed in 2004, the number of adoption placements and finalizations both dropped in 2005, 20 and 7 percent respectively.

KLGs are a good alternative to adoption under certain circumstances. But they should not be used as an easy way to dispose of potential adoption cases. Legal guardianship does not afford the same security and supports that adoption does. A legal guardian also has weaker rights than adoptive parents, including being unable to deny violent or drug involved parents access to children without asking a judge for permission.

The state should take a closer look at the KLGs to ensure they are appropriate outcomes for these children.

It is also clear that dismantling the adoption system without an alternative in place has hurt the permanency prospects for many children awaiting adoption, as adoption takes a backseat to more pressing child safety issues. State officials must revisit and enact recommendations made by the Adoption Services Advisory Committee to ensure children who cannot return home are given loving, adoptive homes.

Creating a Competent Workforce

Perhaps one of the most important areas of reform is creating a responsive, competent workforce that includes seasoned supervisors and solid caseworkers.

New Jersey has more caseworkers now than it did several years ago. Still, caseloads remain high because more children are under supervision. And one-third of the workforce are trainees, who cannot carry full caseloads, creating pressure on other workers.

State officials say previous caseload measures misrepresent the real number of workers who were carrying more cases than standards demand. In this report, we have presented only the most recent data as a baseline. In subsequent reports, we will add these to the outcomes measures in gauging the state's progress toward achieving the goal of creating an effective child welfare system.

DYFS Staffing as of March 2006	
Total Caseload Carrying Staff	2,025
Number of Trainees	704
Percent Trainees	35
Percent Meeting Caseload Standards	
Abuse/Neglect Investigators	21
Permanency Caseworkers	49
Percent Workers by Caseload Size	
1-10 Families	33
11-20 Families	41
21-30 Families	20
More than 30 Families	6

Adoption	Years	Base Year	Most Current	% Change
Adoption placements	2002/2005	1,224	1,090	-11
Finalized adoptions	2002/2005	1,266	1,315	7
Total final subsidized adoptions	2002/2006	7,107	9,959	40
Kinship Legal Guardianship filings (DYFS)	2002/2005	8	817	10,113
Kinship Legal Guardianship filings (private)	2002/2005	29	385	1,228

APPENDIX A

DATA DEFINITIONS AND SOURCES

KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

Children with substantiated abuse report within 6 months of previous substantiation. Calculated based on state data provided to the federal government for the Child and Family Service Reviews. Numbers represent a percent of all children with at least one substantiated allegation in 2001 and 2004 who had another substantiated allegations within six months of the first.

Children with substantiated abuse report within 12 months of previous substantiation. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Counts children with a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect who do not enter out-of-home care and who have a second substantiated allegation within 12 months of the first. Numbers represent a percent of all children with at least one substantiated allegation in 2002 and 2004.

Children with substantiated abuse report with previous un-substantiated report within 12 months. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Counts all children entering the system in 2002 and 2004. Numbers represent a percent of all children with at least one unsubstantiated allegation in 2002 and 2004 who had a substantiated report within 12 months of the unsubstantiated report.

Children re-abused after reunification with birth family. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all children leaving foster care in 2002 and 2004 to be reunited with a birth parent who had a substantiated allegation of abuse or neglect within 12 months of being returned to their birth parent(s) or other relatives.

Children re-entering foster care after being reunified with biological family. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all children leaving care in 2002 and 2004 who re-entered care within 12 months. Excludes children who left foster care for adoption or who aged-out of the system.

SAFETY AND STABILITY IN FOSTER CARE

Children abused in foster care by state-approved caregivers. Calculated based on state data provided to the federal government for Child and Family Service Reviews. Numbers represent a percent of all children in care in 2001 and 2004 who had a substantiated report of abuse or neglect during that year. Counts only children abused by foster parent or staff at shelters, group homes or institutions for children. Rate is a percent of all children who were in care any time during the year.

Children in regular or relative foster care with 2 or more placements, point in time. Placement Statistics for Children in Foster Care Regardless of Case Goal, as of 10/4/02 and 10/1/05, DYFS Data Analysis & Reporting Unit. Numbers represent the percent of children in regular or relative foster care on 10/4/02 and 10/1/05 who had two or more placements. Excludes children in institutional settings.

Children with no more than 2 placements. Calculated based on state data provided to the federal government for Child and Family Service Reviews. Numbers represent a percent of all children in foster care for less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home who had no more than two placements.

Children placed in family setting. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of children entering care in 2003 and 2005 who have spent 50 percent or more of their time in care in foster home, relative home or treatment home.

Children placed in institutional setting. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of children entering care in 2003 and 2005 who have spent 50 percent or more of their time in a group home, residential treatment center, shelter or other institutional setting or a combination of those settings.

Sibling Groups Placed Together (2-3). Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all sibling groups of two or three entering care together in 2003 and 2005 who were placed together. Counts only siblings entering their first spell of care with at least one other sibling who also entered his first spell within 30 days of first sibling. First placement is considered the location of the children after seven days.

Sibling Groups Placed Together (4+). Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all sibling groups of four or more entering care together in 2003 and 2005 who were placed together. Counts only siblings entering their first spell of care with at least one other sibling who also entered his first spell within 30 days of first sibling. First placement is considered the location of the children after seven days.

Total children placed within 10 miles of home. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all children entering care in 2002 and 2005 who were placed within 10 miles of home. Because of decoding difficulties, Chapin Hall was unable to determine home locations for 22 percent of the 20,788 children who entered care during 2003, 2004 and 2005, so statistics only count 78 percent of children entering care in those years.

Number of available foster homes. Statewide Summary of Foster Homes as of March 4, 2004 and March 3, 2006. Numbers exclude suspended homes and restricted homes, which are only open to certain children (primarily relatives or friends), and relatives who are presumed eligible but have not yet been state approved. State officials are currently reviewing this data because of concerns over accuracy.

FINDING PERMANENT HOMES FOR FOSTER CHILDREN

Median length of stay in months. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the median number of months that children who entered care in 2002 and 2004 spent in care. Median means that half the children who entered care in a given year had a stay less than the indicated number of months, while the other half had a longer stay.

Average length of stay in months for current spell (point-in-time). DYFS Data Analysis Unit, Placement Statistics for Children in Regular Foster Care and Relative Support Care Regardless of Case Goal, as of 9/7/01and 10/1/05. Numbers represent the average number of months that children in foster care on those dates had spent in care in their current placement. Excludes children in residential treatment homes, shelters, group homes and other institutional settings.

Average length of stay in months for all placements (point-in-time). DYFS Data Analysis Unit, Placement Statistics for Children in Regular Foster Care and Relative Support Care Regardless of Case Goal, as of 9/7/01 and 10/1/05. Numbers represent the average number of months that children in foster care on those dates had spent in care for all placements. Excludes children in residential treatment homes, shelters, group homes and other institutional settings.

Children reunified within 12 months of entering care. Calculated based on state data provided to the federal government for Child and Family Service Reviews. Numbers represent the percent of all children reunified with family in 2002 and 2005 who were reunified within 12 months of entering care.

Children leaving foster care for permanency within 12 months of entering care. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of children entering foster care in 2001 and 2004 who left within 12 months to be reunified with their family, adopted or to live with a legal guardian.

Children without permanent homes 24 months after entering care. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all children entering care in 2001 and 2003 who were still in placement or had moved to a non-permanent placement, such as aging out or runaway, within 24 months of entering care.

Children without permanent homes 36 months after entering care. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all children entering care in 2001 and 2002 who were still in placement or had moved to a non-permanent placement, such as aging out or runaway, within 36 months of entering care.

Children with adoption goal who were adopted within 24 months of entering foster care. Calculated based on state data provided to the federal government for Child and Family Service Reviews. Numbers represent the percent of all children adopted from foster care in a given year who were adopted within 24 months of the latest removal from home.

Number of children legally free for adoption but not adopted. Department of Human Services. Cases in which parental rights have been terminated but an adoption has not been finalized. Many of these children are living with families that will adopt them.

Number of legally free children with no adoptive home identified. Department of Human Services. Cases in which parental rights have been terminated but an adoption has not been finalized and no adoptive home has been identified for the child.

HELP YOUTH TRANSITION TO PRODUCTIVE ADULTHOOD
Number in Medicaid extension (Chaffee). DYFS Data and Analysis Unit, Caseload Activity Reports (SISM-5) for periods ending 3/1/02 and 3/3/06. Number of youth 18+ who are former DYFS cases who have been enrolled in Medicaid's Chafee extension program.

Number of juveniles committed to state-run secure facilities. As reported by the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC). Counts all juveniles committed to state institutions operated by the JJC in a given year.

Number of juveniles in county detention. As reported by the Juvenile Justice Commission. Average daily population of juveniles in county detention for each year.

Non-permanent exits from care, ages 18+. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all youth, 18 years and older, who left foster care in 2001 and 2005 because they ran away, aged out or moved to independent living.

Permanent exits from care, ages 18+. Calculated by Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago using state data. Numbers represent the percent of all youth, 18 years and older, who left foster care in 2001 and 2005 for adoption, guardianship, reunification or to live with a relative. Independent living is not considered a permanency exit.

SYSTEMS DATA
Children under DYFS supervision. All data in this chart comes from the DYFS Data and Analysis Unit, Caseload Activity Reports, for periods ending 3/1/02 and 3/3/06.

Child abuse hotline. All data in chart comes from Department of Human Services, Offices of Children Services, online data, www.state.nj.us/humanservices.

Child abuse substantiations. 2002 data comes from the New Jersey Child Abuse and Neglect Statistical Reports, published by the NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Youth and Family Services. 2004 data provided by DHS.

Children entering/exiting foster care. Department of Human Services, online data, www.state.nj.us/humanservices.

Adoption placements, finalizations. Department of Human Services, Office of Children's Services.

Total final subsidized adoptions. DYFS Data and Analysis Unit, Caseload Activity Reports, 3/1/02 and 3/3/06.

Kinship Legal Guardianship. Administrative Office of the Courts.

APPENDIX B

Keeping Children Safe

	2001	2002	2003	2004
Children with substantiated abuse report within 6 months of previous substantiation	6.3	6.9	5.6	5.0
Children with substantiated abuse report within 12 months of previous substantiation	N/A	9.5	8.5	7.2
Children with substantiated abuse report with previous unsubstantiated report	N/A	4.8	4.6	4.3
Children re-abused after reunification with birth family	N/A	5.1	5.2	4.8
Children re-entering care after being reunified with birth family	N/A	30.0	29.0	24.0
Number of children re-entering care after being reunified with birth family	N/A	1,434	1,577	1,470

Safety & Stability in Foster Care

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Children abused in foster care by state-approved caregiver	0.59	0.69	0.68	0.53	N/A	N/A
Children in regular or relative foster care w/2 or more placements (point in time)	52.3	53.7	57.6	61.9	60.1	N/A
Children w/no more than 2 placements	86.2	85.1	85	83.1	82.4	N/A
Children initially placed with relative	N/A	N/A	41.5	44.7	38.4	N/A
Children placed in family setting	N/A	N/A	77.5	78.8	79.1	N/A
Children placed in institutional settings	N/A	N/A	22.5	21.2	20.9	N/A
Sibling groups placed together (2-3)	N/A	N/A	56.2	63	63.5	N/A
Sibling groups placed together (4+)	N/A	N/A	27.0	28.0	27.8	N/A
Children placed within 10 miles of home	N/A	58.3	60.5	60.9	62.2	N/A
Number of available foster homes (includes presumed eligible)	N/A	N/A	N/A	5,329	6,109	6,362
Number of available foster homes (excludes presumed eligible)	N/A	N/A	N/A	3,913	4,412	4,005

Finding Permanent Homes For Foster Children

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Median length of stay in months (cohort)	N/A	11.5	11	10.5	N/A
Average length of stay in months for current spell (point-in-time)	22.2	19.9	17.4	16.5	17.2
Average length of stay in months for all placements (point in time)	31.5	28.8	26.9	27	27.6
Children reunified within 12 months of entering care	59.5	63.5	62.2	63.5	58.6
Children leaving foster care for permanency within 12 months of entering care	36.2	35.4	35.4	39.1	N/A
Children with no permanent home 24 months after entering care	50.4	49.9	46.8	N/A	N/A
Children with no permanent home 36 months after entering care	41.8	40.1	N/A	N/A	N/A
Children adopted within 24 months of last entry into foster care	16.3	17	21.6	15.6	16.9
Number children legally free for adoption with no final adoption	N/A	N/A	2,570	2,446	2,348
Children legally free for adoption but have no adoptive home	N/A	N/A	555	530	470

Help Youth Transition to Productive Adulthood

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number in Medicaid extension (Chafee)	N/A	167	234	204	271	337
Number juveniles committed to state-run secure facilities	1,084	1,262	1,159	908	1,031	N/A
Average number juveniles in county detention (daily population)	987	966	933	806	N/A	N/A
Non-permanent exits from foster care, ages 18+ (aging out/runaway)	58.2	59.7	63.1	66.2	72.6	N/A
Permanent exit (adoption, guardianship, reunification, relative care)	31.8	25.0	25.9	23.8	17.2	N/A
Total 18+ leaving system (total)	424	455	497	592	735	N/A
Total 18+ permanency exit	135	114	129	141	127	N/A
Total 18+ aging out	235	262	301	380	518	N/A
Total 18+ run away	12	10	13	12	16	N/A
Total 18+ "other" exit (includes independent living)	42	69	54	59	74	N/A

Children Under DYFS Supervision

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Children under DYFS supervision	49,625	51,705	65,772	62,651	60,622
Children supervised in home	38,816	40,085	52,794	50,613	49,318
Percent children supervised in home	78	78	80	81	81
Children in out-of-home placement	10,812	11,620	12,978	12,038	11,304
Percent children in out-of-home placement	22	23	20	19	19
Total families under DYFS supervision	26,185	27,268	35,086	33,557	31,906