



AGENDA

- CWAC Charge
- COVID Updates
- PIP
- APSR Feedback on Permanency
- Plus/Delta

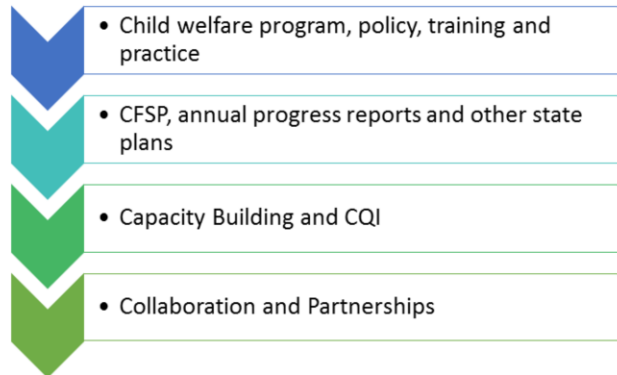


Who is Here?



Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) Charge

CWAC: collaborative advisory group working together to achieve system outcomes.



Kristin Zagar, Division Director, reviewed our charge: CWAC is a collaborative advisory group whose charge is partner and advise how we get to our outcomes as a **system**. We are working on developing our partnerships in meeting the outcomes.



Kristin Zagar, Division Director, went over CWAC's chart and introduced folks newer in their roles with the Division:

Denise Johnson, IT Portfolio Program Manager

Tiffany Gardner, QAA Program Manager

Morgan Nelson, In-Home/Prevention Program Manager

COVID UPDATE: Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021

Are you between the ages of 18-27 and previously a teen in foster care?
If so, you may be eligible for COVID-19 financial relief.

Visit **FosterMyFuture.com**

Scan this QR code for more information!

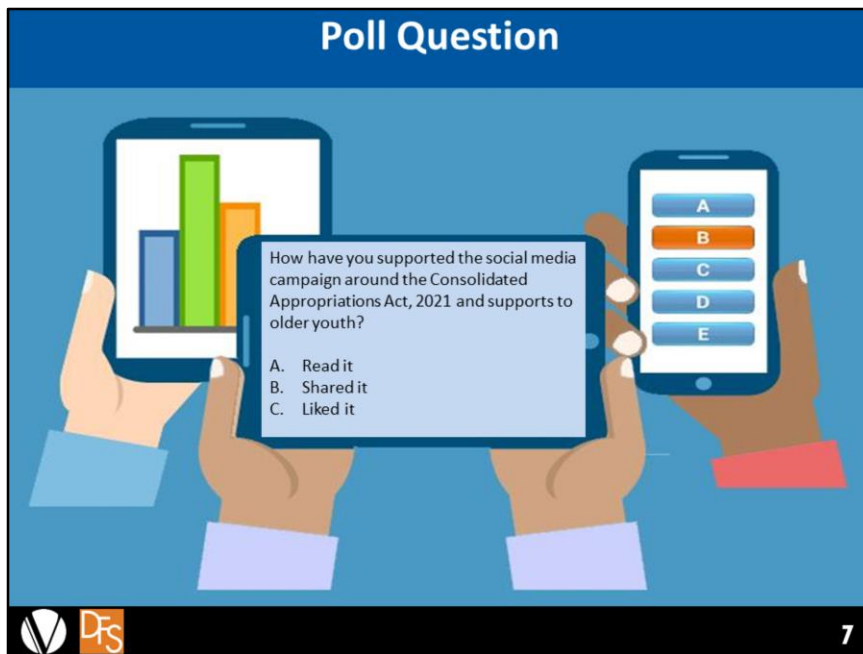
Visit COVID.Virginia.gov/app to download the COVID-19 Virginia Resources mobile app for streamlined access to critical and actionable resources from 2-1-1 Virginia, CommonHelp, and other state and federal agencies.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



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- Signed into law on Dec 27
- No youth to age out of care through Sep 30, 2021 and extra support available to older youth who have aged out.



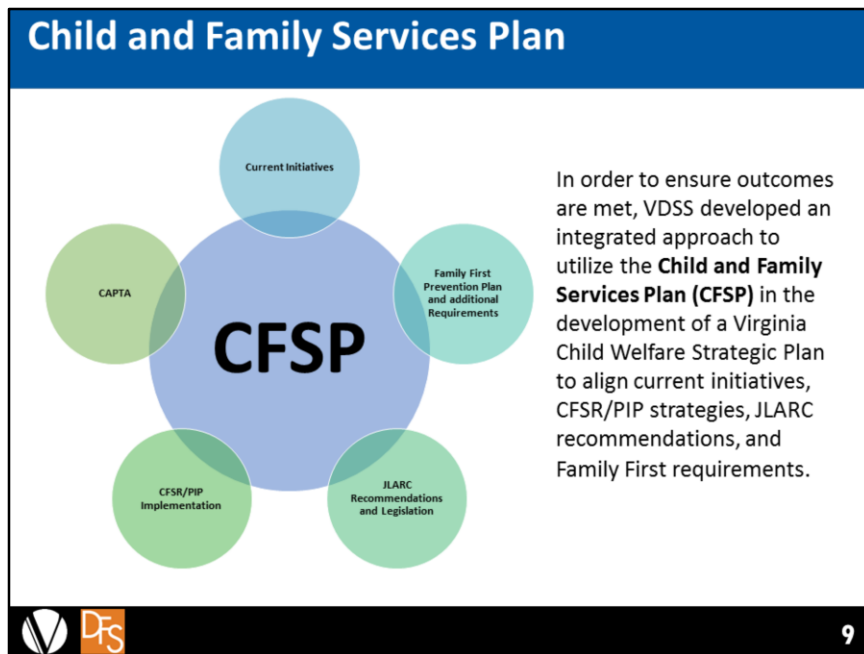
Consolidated Appropriation Act, 2021 and we asked CWAC members how they supported the social media campaign around the Act:

Results: A) 77% read it B) 58% shared it and C) 40% liked it.

Consolidated Appropriations Act: Support for Older Youth

- Temporary suspension of aging out of foster care.
- Permitting re-entry of youth who have left foster care at age 21 beginning January 27, 2020.
- Temporary suspension of age and education and employment requirements for title IV-E foster care maintenance payments.
- Providing notice to youth and conducting a public awareness campaign of the option for youth to re-enter foster care.
- Additional Chafee funding and Maximum ETV funding increased to \$12,000 from \$5,000 per youth per year through FFY22.





The CFSP sets forth the vision and goals to be accomplished to strengthen Virginia's child welfare system. We aligned all of our current initiatives and state and federal requirements into the CFSP. The CFSP includes the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) statewide self assessment. Part of the CFSR self assessment includes any Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) activities we have since we are on a PIP because we didn't pass the CFSR. With this current CFSP, there was a concerted effort to make our strategic plan align with our PIP activities.

Annual Progress and Services Report (APSR)

APSR due each Federal Fiscal Year

- Report summarizes
 - Progress made toward outcomes;
 - Identifies technical assistance needed for the upcoming year; and,
 - Details Federal funding spending and QAA Reviews.



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The APSR, which is an annual report on our CFSP, is due June 30th to our federal partners. Report summarizes

- Progress made toward outcomes;
- Identifies technical assistance needed for the upcoming year; and,
- Details Federal funding spending and QAA Reviews.

CFSP and APSR Online

CFSP Public page:

https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/cfs_plan.cgi

- ✓ Click the title of the plan to access
- ✓ Includes annual reports on the plan after they are approved

Fusion page (for LDSS staff):

<https://fusion.dss.virginia.gov/dfs/DFS-Home/Child-Family-Services-CFS-State-Plan>

- ✓ Includes annual reports on the plan



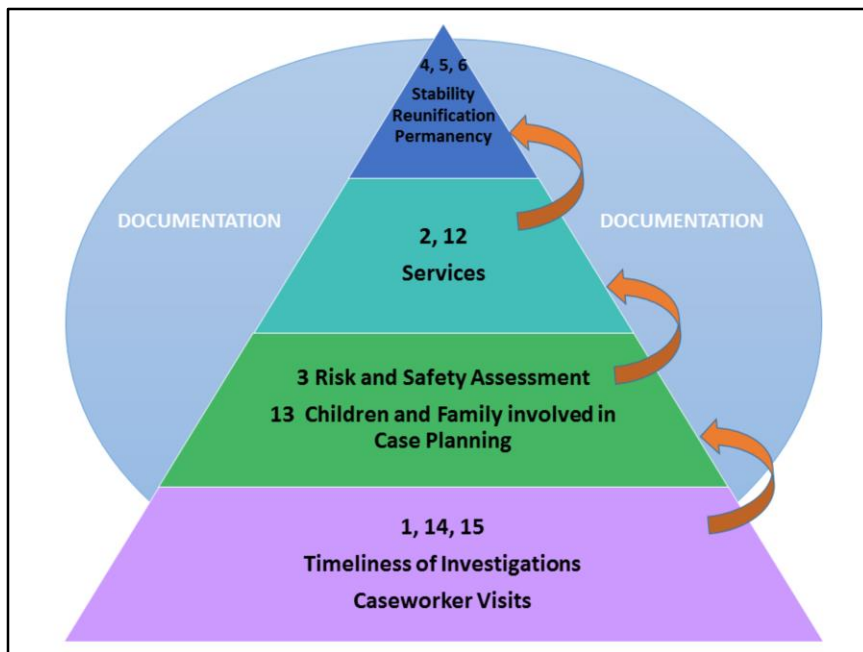
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Encourage everyone to review the plans so we are all working together towards goals and we can comprehensively serve families.

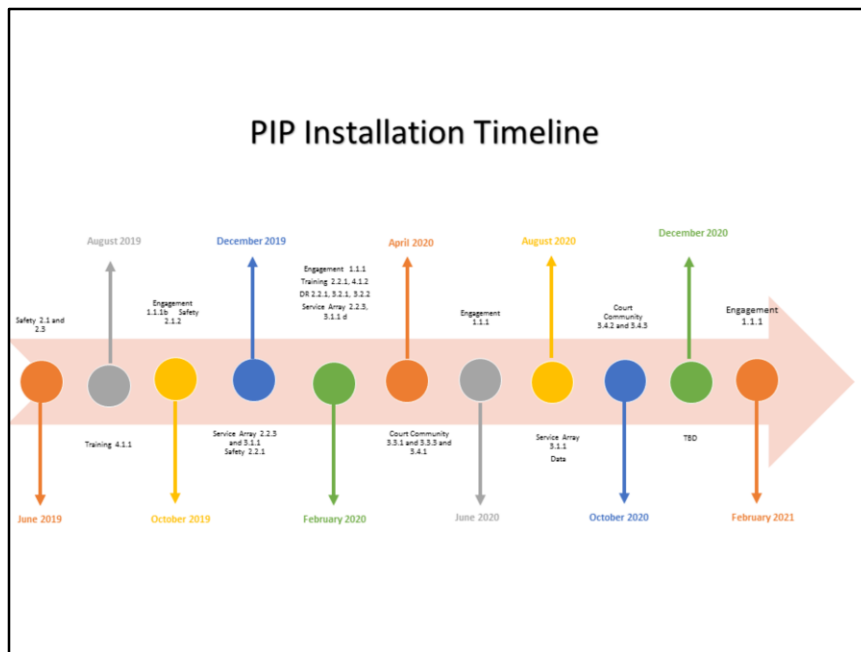
PIP PIP Hurray

PIP
PIP
Hurray!!!






The taxonomy shows the 10 CFSR items; they build upon engagement. Starting at the base of the taxonomy: If we are getting out to see our families in a timely manner and our visits are quality and as frequent as needed, so that we will be able to complete risk and safety assessments and engage children and families in case planning, so that we will be able to provide the appropriate services, so that our children will achieve safety, stability, be reunified in a timely manner, and achieve permanency.



PIP team started meeting in June 2019 and each meeting focused on a different PIP strategy. Workgroups were created and every other month we came together to install the strategies. We installed 27 strategies as shown on the slide to work towards achieving our goals. And now we are moving towards sustainability.

PIP Data Measures Review MP 10												
CFSR Items Requiring Measurement	PIP Baseline ¹	PIP Goal ²	MP1	MP2	MP3	MP4	MP5	MP6	MP7	MP8	MP9	MP10
1 Timeliness of Initiating CPS Reports	77%	88%	68%	70%	74%	71%	72%	70%	76%	83%	78%	84%
2 Services to Family to Protect Child and Prevent Removal /Re-entry	68%	77%	61%	60%	74%	71%	62%	49%	58%	77%	85%	82%
3 Risk and Safety Assessment and Services	49%	56%	50%	59%	59%	59%	60%	54%	51%	67%	71%	71%
4 Stability of FC Placement	71%	79%	61%	73%	86%	70%	71%	77%	80%	89%	95%	89%
5 Permanency Goal	66%	75%	73%	73%	65%	74%	77%	55%	58%	81%	81%	80%
6 Achieving Goal	39%	48%	39%	34%	30%	27%	30%	36%	45%	57%	61%	61%
12 Needs and Services	39%	46%	27%	30%	43%	33%	31%	29%	26%	37%	43%	46%
13 Child and Family Involvement Case Planning	35%	43%	30%	41%	44%	35%	41%	45%	43%	51%	54%	64%
14 Caseworker Visits with Child	57%	64%	56%	66%	64%	61%	70%	76%	76%	83%	80%	77%
15 Caseworker Visits with Parent	34%	42%	19%	22%	42%	42%	36%	33%	34%	43%	51%	62%
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The 10 CFSR items in our PIP; we are only short one in measurement period (MP) 10 to reaching our goals.

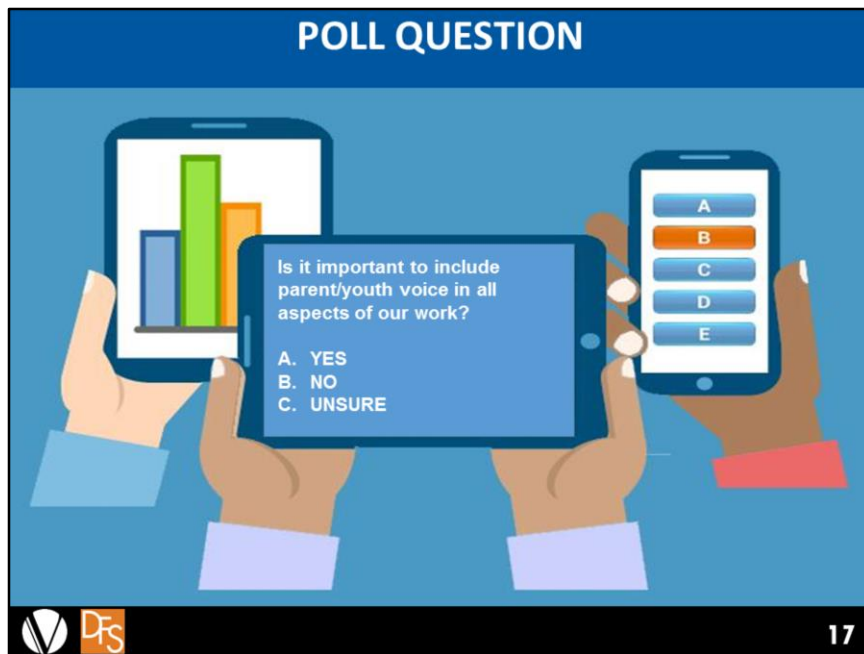
Foster Care

Kin-First Culture

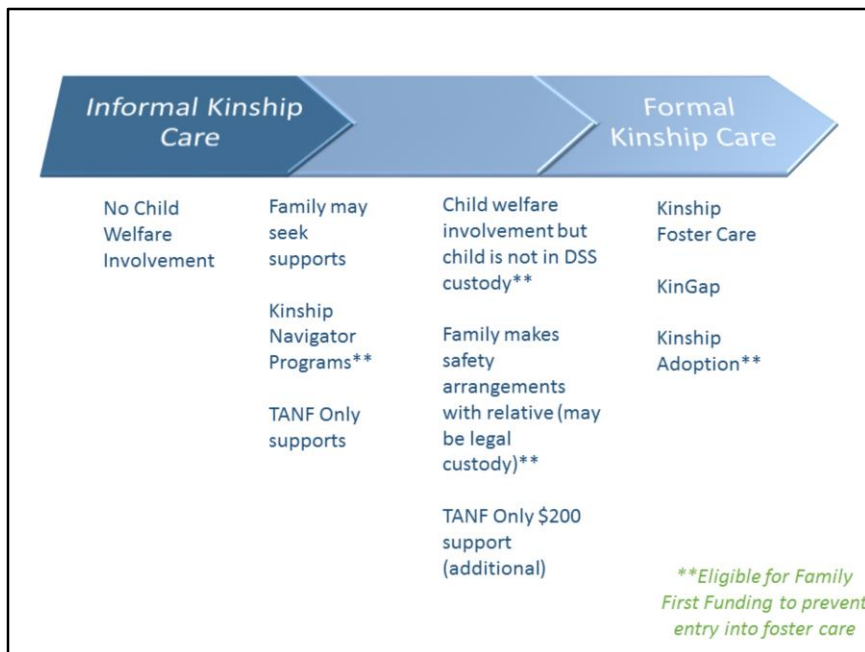


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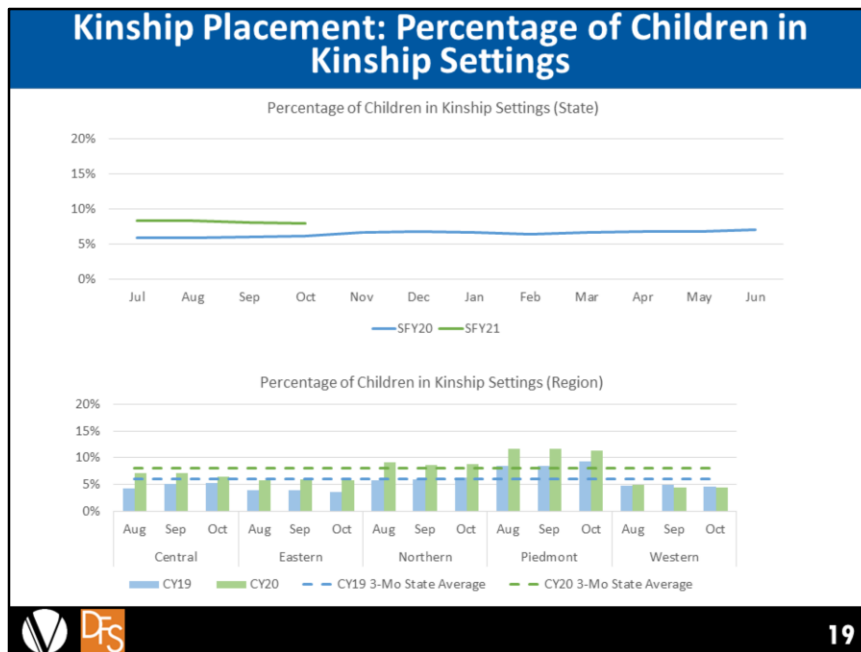
Garrett Jones, Resource Family and Family Engagement Program Manager, discussed what does it mean to be a kin-first culture and the importance of include family voice.



We asked CWAC members if it was important to include parent/youth voice in all aspects of our work and results were 100% said YES.



The kinship continuum includes informal care to formal care. As a community, starting from the informal end of kinship care to the formal end with child welfare involvement, we should be embracing the values of kin-first culture in our work and lifting up youth and family voice in the process.



Claire Kimberly, Permanency Data Analyst, shared data on current kinship foster care placements and reported it is getting higher. Also, children first placed in congregate care settings are less likely to enter kinship settings. 46.2% of children that were first placed in CC spend almost all of their time in a CC placement. 66.7% of children first placed in a CC setting spend less than 25% of their total time in a FC home. For children who moved from their original CC placement, 43% were moved to another CC placement. 10-13 year olds were more represented in being moved to kinship foster care placements when compared to the other age groups.

Kin-First Culture


- Families are the experts on themselves
- Driving and included in decision-making
- Opportunity to rely on one another for support





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We believe that if we are a kin-first child welfare community, we will reduce the number of CC settings and the length of time in CC settings. In addition, we should see a decrease racial inequities and disparities in child welfare. Children who maintain strong connections to their families and communities have better outcomes. It is not only about placement, it's about connection and support. Prioritizing a child's connection with their relatives and fictive kin means including relatives and those adults that are important to the child and family in decision-making.


Parent, Youth, and Family Voice










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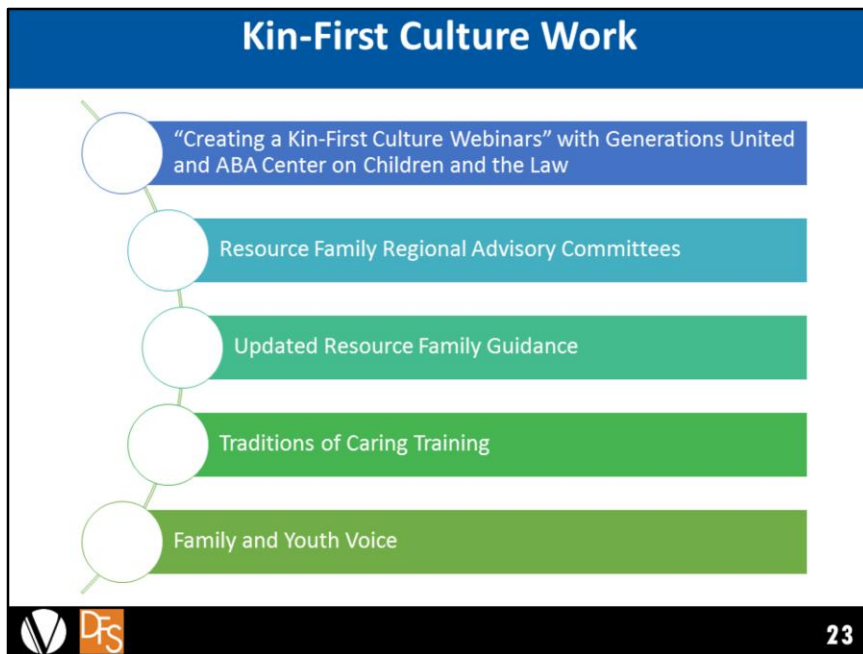
Parent, youth and family voice is important at every level including state and system level. DFS has partnered with Casey Family Programs and the Children's Trust Fund Alliance to help us create a Parent Advisory Council to guide and inform our work at the state-level. We currently have a planning committee that includes 4 parents with lived experience. At this time, we are looking to create a parent council with parents who are in a parental capacity, such as a child's biological parent, legal custodian or guardian and was involved with child welfare while in a primary caretaking role. We will be looking to all of our partners to help us in recruiting those parents. Brenda Sampe, Project Manager (b.sampe@dss.virginia.gov) is leading that work so please reach out to her with ideas, referrals and questions.

Collective Thinking

What does meaningful family voice
look like at a state system level?

What does it mean to have
parent/youth/family voice in all
aspects in our work?





Other work taking place to support Kin-First:

- In December, a 3-part series webinar on creating a kin-first culture – available for LDSS AND community partners
(<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/family/kinship/webinars.cgi>)
- Monthly regional family advisory committees – includes kinship family voice; community partners encouraged to join
- Updated resource family guidance: prioritizing approving kin, utilizing temporary waivers -expansion of time to complete approve process
- Tradition of Caring, pre-service training curriculum - received updates from CWLA - CRAFTT incorporated into their training and offering “train the trainer” to local departments. This is utilized to prepare kinship caregivers
- Parent Advisory Council planning and SPEAKOUT Youth Advisory Board

Breakout

As a child welfare community,

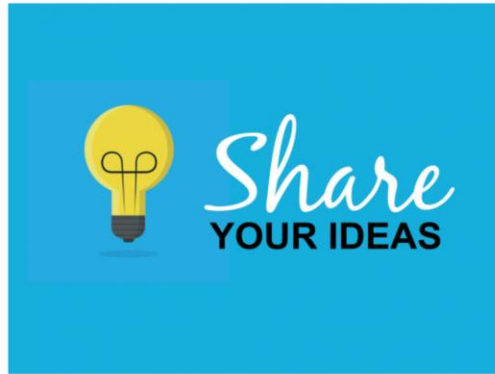
1. What are the values, attitudes, beliefs that need to be addresses so we can move towards the kin-first culture?
2. How can we as a CW community increase kin/fictive kin placements?



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Five breakout sessions occurred to discuss these two questions.

Report Out



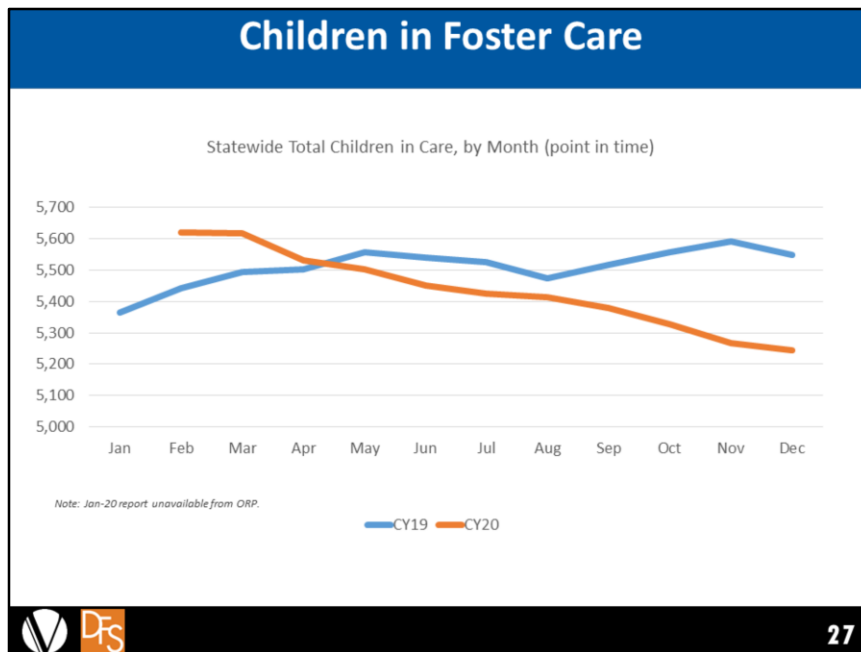
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Pass to Claire

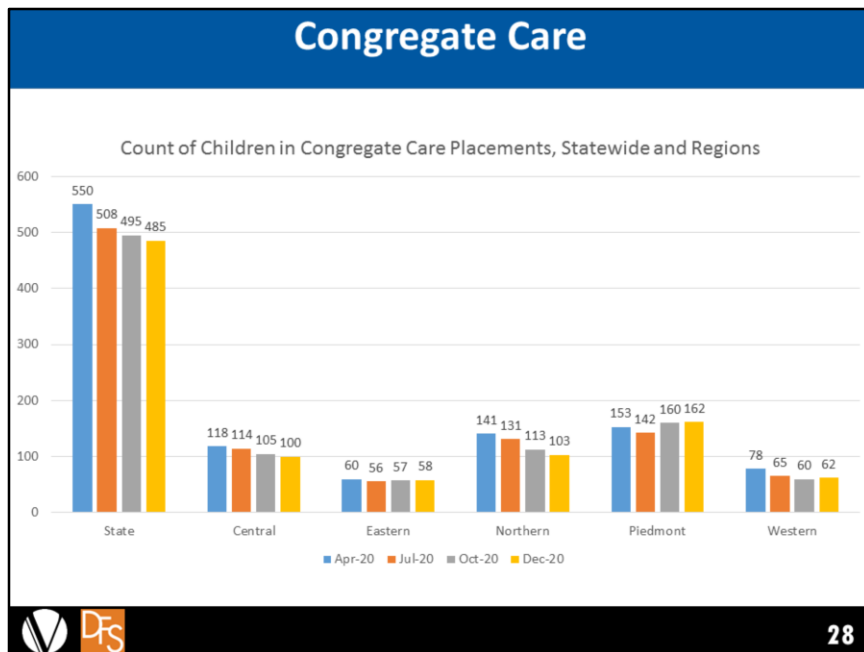
Foster Care

Congregate Care & Permanency Trends

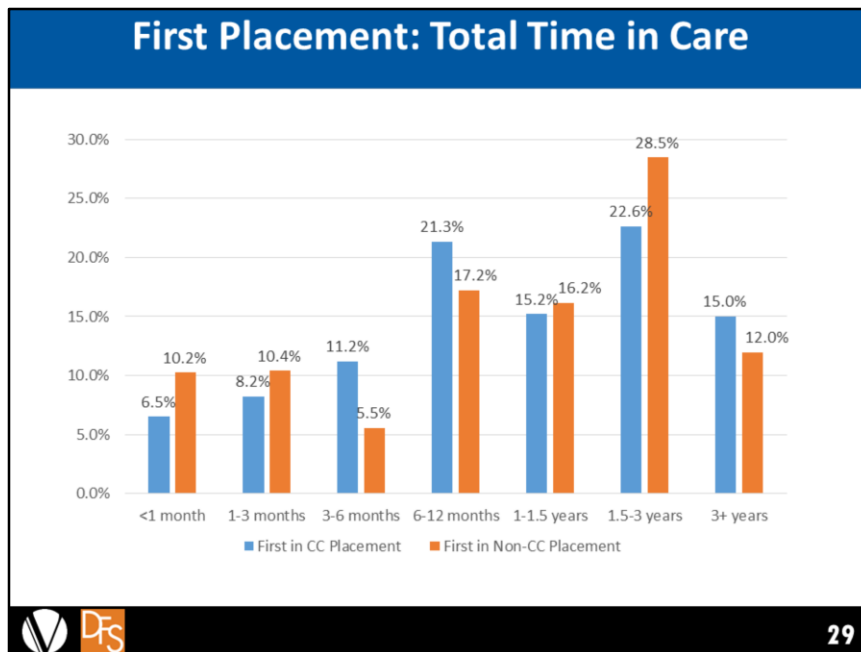




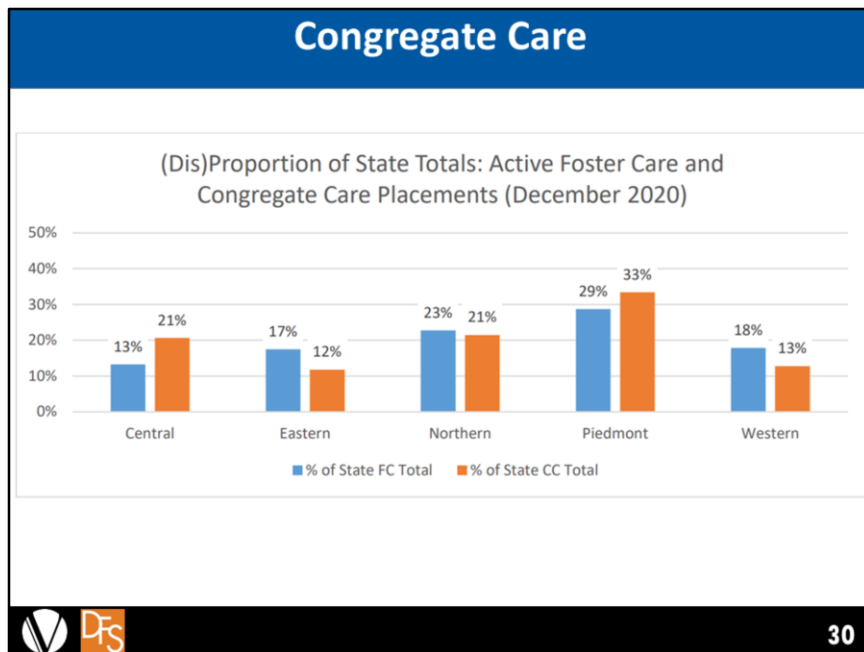
Overall trends we are seeing in foster care. Our total number of children in care has been declining since February of this year at both the state and region levels. After April, that count has been lower than during the same time last year. This trend is also seen when looking at number of entries into foster care.



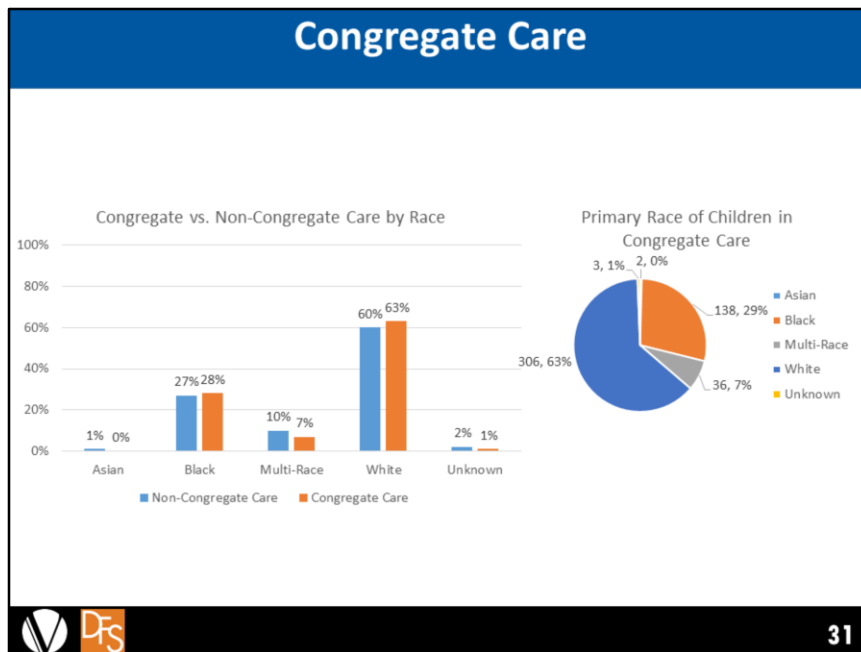
The CQI team have been collecting point in time information on number of children in congregate care; specifically, those listed as being in group or residential placements. Here you will see information that was gathered from four different periods: April, July, October, and December. Our total number of children have steadily declined as a state. Northern and Central regions also had a steady decline over time.



Looking at children who were first placed in a congregate care (CC) setting. This information comes from another data source (Chapin Hall) and includes children that entered care between 2010 and 2019. Our blue sections include children who were placed in congregate care immediately after removal. Our orange sections are any other placements. The average number of days in care for children first placed in CC was 563, but was 542 for those first placed in another setting. Comparing those first placed in CC versus those placed in other settings, we see that children were more likely to be in care for more than 3 years and less likely to be in care for less than 3 months if they were first placed in CC.



The bar chart you see on your screen now represent each region's proportion of the statewide totals for children in foster care overall and for children in congregate care placements. This is from our most recent data collection from December 2020 point in time data. When you see an orange bar higher than the blue bar, you are seeing regions with a congregate care percentage that is higher than their foster care percentage. In other words, these regions have a disproportionately higher amount of children in congregate care, relative to their foster care totals.



This slide continues our understanding of the children that were found in congregate care placements at the end of December 2020. On the right, you will see the racial groups of our 485 children in congregate care from December 2020 point in time data. Our largest percentage (at 63%) was White, followed by Black/African American at 29%. On the left bar chart, you will see how the children in congregate care differed from children in non-congregate care placements. If there is a higher orange bar, there were more children in congregate care placements when compared to non-congregate care.

Collective Thinking

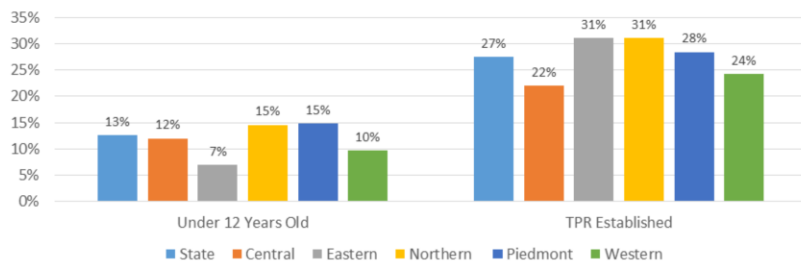
What stands out the most
about the congregate care
data so far?



Congregate Care

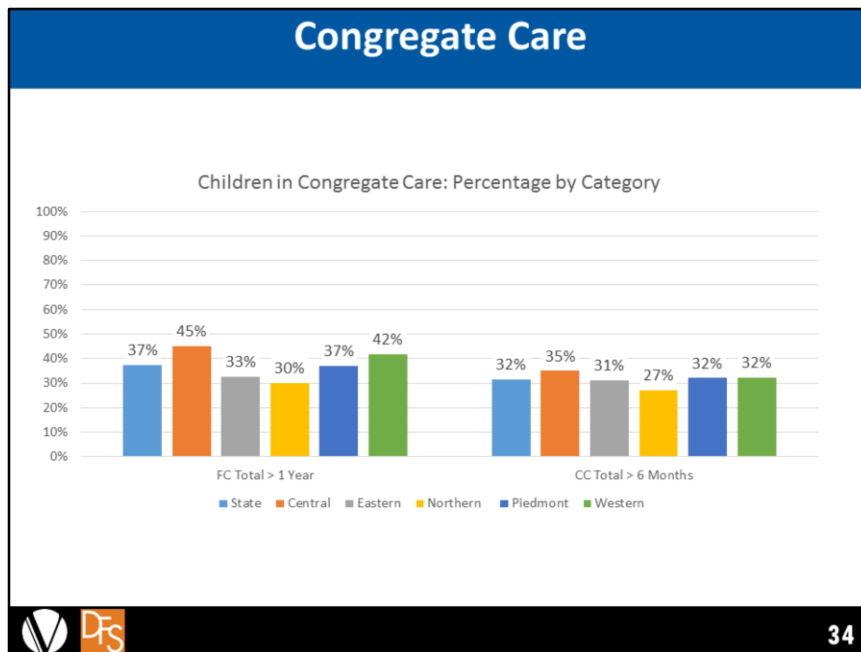
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Children in Congregate Care: Percentage by Category

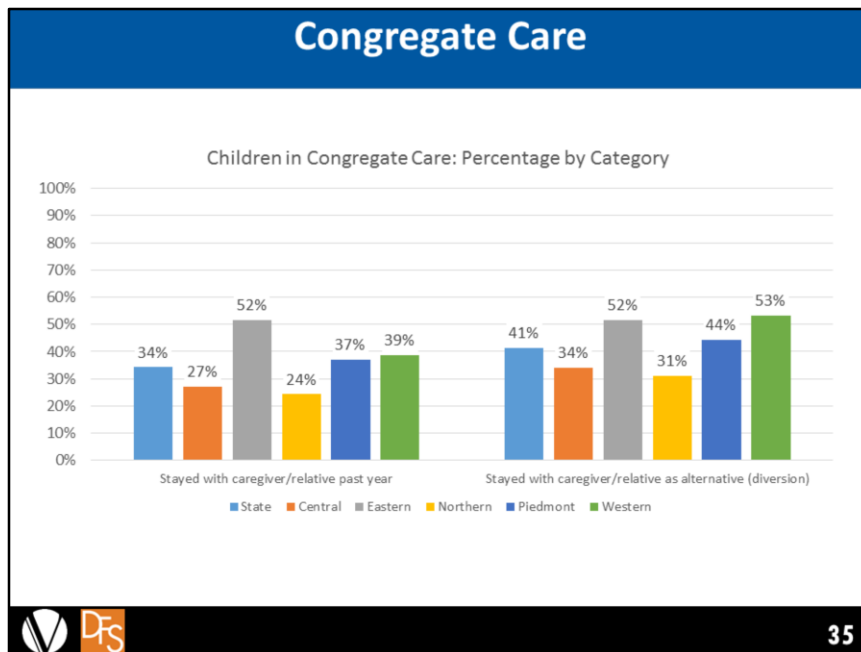


Source: Oasis Extract date: 01/06/21

Taking a look at regional differences. This slide shows the percentage of children by age of the child and whether TPR was established. On the far left, you see that Eastern had the smallest proportion of children under the age of 12 (at 7%). For TPR established, Eastern and Northern had the highest proportion of children with TPR established (at 31%).



Looking at the length of time that children in congregate care have been in foster care and in congregate care placements: Looking at their total time in care, we see that children in congregate care in December 2020 (point in time data) were most likely to be in foster care for more than a year if they were in the Central region. For total amount of time in congregate care placement, these children were least likely to be in congregate care placements for more than 6 months if they were in the Northern region, when compared to other regions.



Looking at information as to whether or not the child had stayed with a caregiver/relative in the past year and if diversion had occurred. Again starting with the left side, we see that Eastern had the highest proportion of children that had stayed with a caregiver or relative in the past year (52%) while Western and Eastern regions were more likely to have children in congregate care that had stayed with a caregiver or relative as an alternative placement (i.e., diversion; 53% and 52% respectively).

Breakout

As a child welfare community, what will it take to move towards the kin-first culture and increase our kinship foster placements:

1. First Placements
2. Placement moves once in foster care

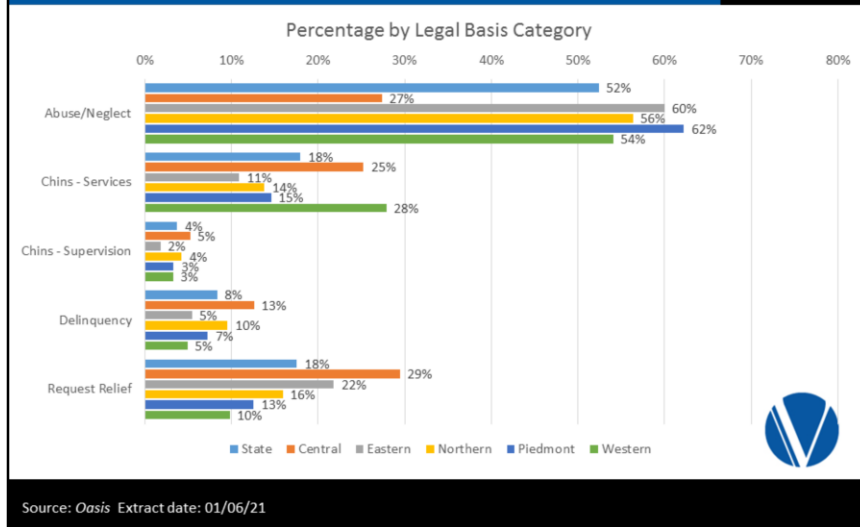


Report Out



Congregate Care

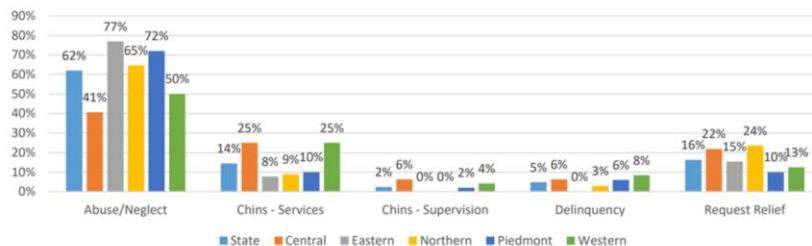
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We have been told that it would be particularly valuable to know more about the children's legal basis code so here you will see, by region, the legal basis code for the 485 children that were in congregate care placements in December 2020 (point in time data). With the exception of Central region, a majority of the children in congregate care placements had the legal basis category of *abuse/neglect*. When compared to other regions, Western was more likely to have a higher proportion of children with *CHINS-Services* (28%) while Central was more likely to have children with *request relief* as their legal basis code (29%).

Congregate Care: More Than 2 Years

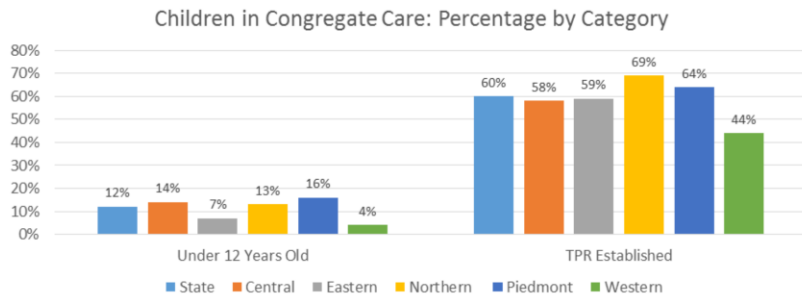
Children in Congregate Care and Foster Care More than 2 Years:
Percentage by Legal Basis Category



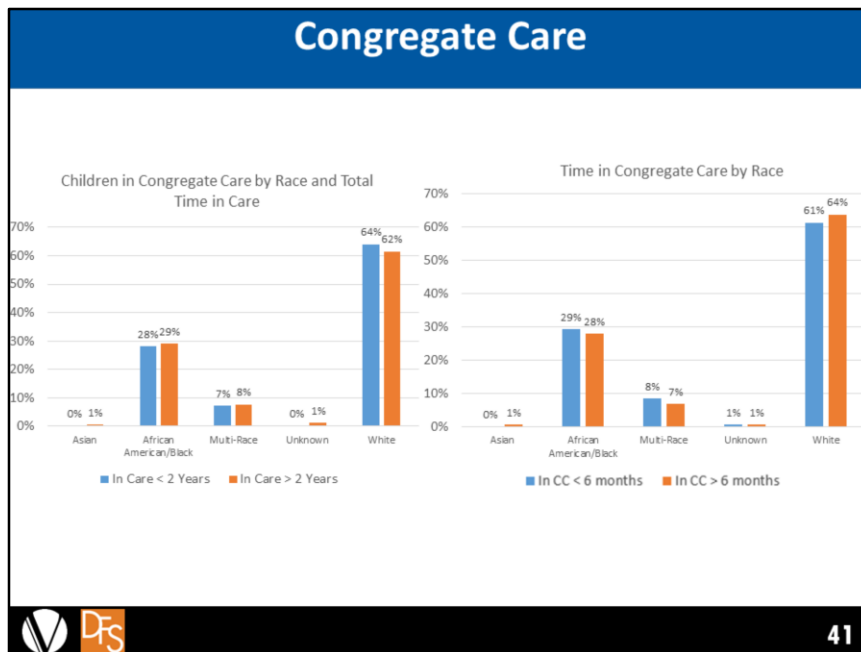
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Now let's take a look at children who have been in foster care for more than 2 years and were in a congregate care setting. There were a total of **182** (or 37.5%) children that were in congregate care in December 2020 (point in time data) that had been in foster care for more than 2 years. Here you see the legal basis codes for that particular subgroup. A majority of these children entered in with the legal basis category of *abuse/neglect* regardless of location.

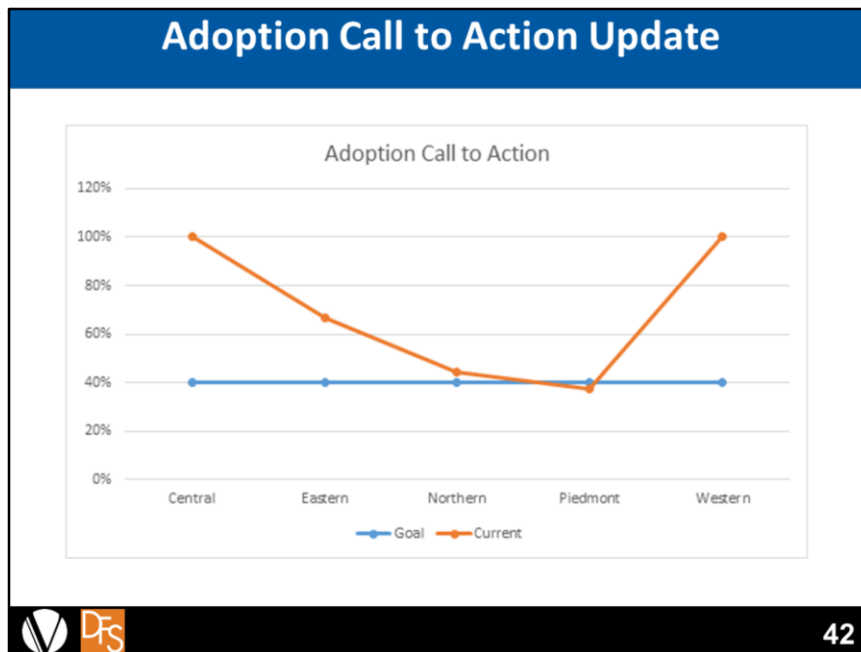
Congregate Care: More Than 2 Years



Here you are seeing the age of the children and whether or not TPR was established for the 182 children that had been in care for more than 2 years. Western region had the smallest percentage of children under 12 for this group, while Northern region had the largest percentage of children with TPR established at 69%.



Sharing time in care by racial groups: on the left, the blue bars represent children who were currently in congregate care in December 2020 (point in time data), but had been in foster care for less than 2 years. The orange bar are those who had been in care for more than 2 years. The chart on the right is similar, but looks at the time in congregate care settings. Blue represents children who had been in congregate care for less than 6 months, and orange was more than six months.



Traci Jones, Adoption Program Manager, gave an update on the Adoption Call to Action. The Adoption Call to Action is a federal initiative by the Children’s Bureau designed to challenge child welfare systems to develop new strategies to achieve timely permanency for children and youth waiting to be adopted. Virginia aligned the Adoption Call to Action with the Congregate Care Review initiative, focusing on children who have the goal of adoption, and in a congregate care placement. Virginia incorporated the ACTA with the second round of our Congregate Care case reviews. Due to the complexity of the cases and limited time remaining in the initiative, our goal was to have 40% of the 31 youth placed in prospective adoptive homes. Of the 33 children in the ACTA initiative; 22 currently have an identified adoptive family, visiting regularly or that they have been placed with, and the adoptive parents are actively engaged in the child's treatment planning; now at 67%.

Breakout

As a child welfare community,

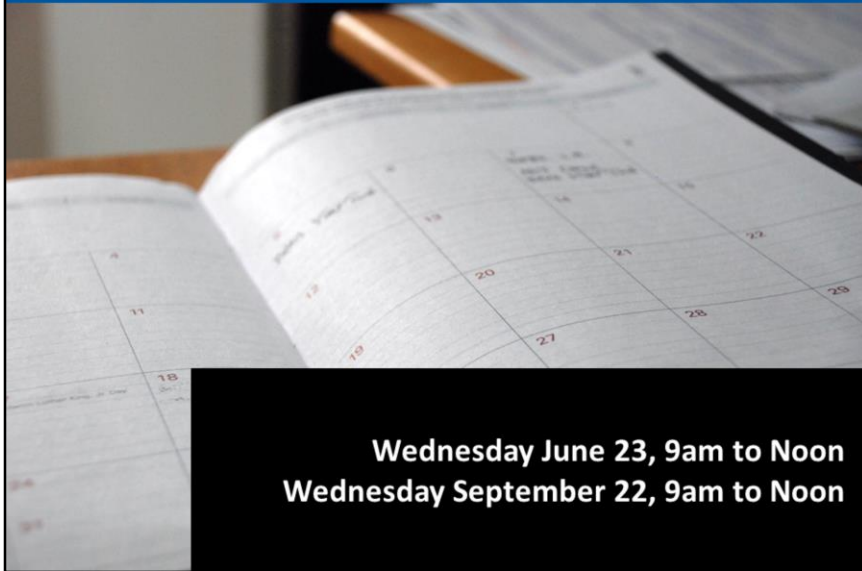
1. What can you do differently to address permanency for youth who are free for adoption (TPR established) and remain in Congregate Care?
2. How can we work with the court community regarding CHINS, Delinquency and Relief of Custody CC entries?



Report Out



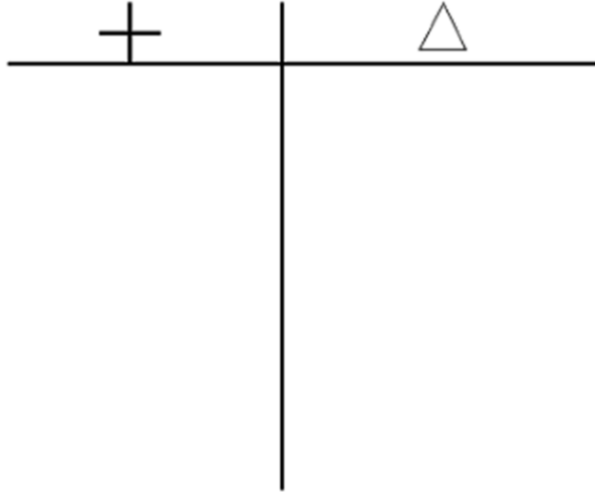
Next CWAC Dates



Wednesday June 23, 9am to Noon
Wednesday September 22, 9am to Noon

Brenda will be sending out invites for September's meeting this week and asked if anyone did NOT receive June's email invitation to please let her know (email Brenda at b.sampe@dss.virginia.gov)

Plus / Delta





**Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) Meeting Minutes
March 24, 2021**

New members of CWAC introduced themselves in the chat:

Elizabeth Bowen, Westmoreland County DSS

Stephenie Howard, Professor, Norfolk State University

Mirely Kennedy, Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) Coordinator, Division of Family Services

Deborah Burton, United Methodist Family Services

Mia Crockett, Families Forward VA CEO

Jackie Cowan, Chesterfield-Colonial Heights DSS

Question re: the Consolidated Appropriations Act about signing agreements. Answer: If not discharged from FC youth do not need to sign an agreement.

Question was asked when the first placement is congregate care, is there any way to tell if they were in the placement prior to entering care? In other words, did we take custody while the child was in the congregate care placement? Lora Smith, Foster Care Program Manager responded that we aren't easily able to pull that information from OASIS – this would have to be done by manually reading narrative of each individual case.

Brenda Sampe, Project Manager, asked: **What does meaningful family voice look like at a state system level? What does it mean to have parent/youth/family voice in all aspects in our work?** Feedback from CWAC included:

- Patience; process may take longer but value outweighs the slower process
- Willingness to change practice based on what youth/family tell us
- Trust
- Listening; their voices/stories are the most important; don't try and convince to follow your plan
- Scheduling times that work for them
- Compensate family and youth for their time since we are paid to be there; include transportation costs
- Not simply treating them as a token
- Commit to inclusive dialogue
- Admit that we have talked the talk, but not walked the walk
- Authentic power sharing – have them make decisions
- Enter parent/youth words into regulation/policies
- Families define meaning; co-designers of their own plans/solutions
- Normalizing kinship care in the larger community then community engagement so there is a network of people engaged who know their own community and advocate on behalf of youth
- Demonstrate how their voices/feedback were incorporated into action
- Be mindful/proactive of our own biases about families and communities and how that affects our decisions and systems
- Having parents involved in interview process of staff that serve families

First Breakout Session: CWAC members were asked: **As a child welfare community,**

1. What are the values, attitudes, beliefs that need to be addressed so we can move towards the kin-first culture?

2. How can we as a CW community increase kin/fictive kin placements?

Group #1: Be more open more to families, listen, families in more control, leadership buys into philosophy of family control, barrier crime list, burden of caseload and getting kin approved, empathy needed for families, really embrace the trauma lens, and using family to help identify placement. Second question: make sure everyone knows about additional funding assistance, address barrier crimes issue, ruling families in versus out, never stop looking for families, and provide personalized care for families, Group #2: We need to overcome past thinking such as the apple doesn't fall far from the tree), smaller agencies may not have staffing capacity to support relative placements – not that they do not want to approve/use relatives. Second question: education for workforce and partners, workers and kin providers provide success stories, need to provide additional supports for kin care, legal work to make kin care permanent, KinGAP funding is helpful and more education around it would be helpful, advocate for kincare from the Director level, and kin can be a support even if not a placement.

Group #3: Agree that we need to get rid of old stereotypes, children do best with kin/families, remove institutional barriers, easier to go with FC versus supporting families, Second question: need better to capture data about kin care outside of FC, need to more depth to relative searches, discuss best practices between agencies

Group #4: We need to stop overly scrutinizing families, training staff and community partners are part of conversations, we put too much emphasis on families being perfect, train staff to engage differently, families are more involved. Second question – educate the courts that foster care is not the answer – share other options; do more prevention work, assess kin all along the the way, unattended consequences of putting workers in unrealistic expectations, federal regulations and root cause need to be used in balance to how we do our work/practice.

Group #5: We need be aware of our own bias, reframe how we think about funding kin to support children, kin with support can support a child with high needs, support starts at CPS. Second question: find the “yes” first and get families to help with that, use CC funding for home placements if possible.

Kristin Zagar asked: What stands out the most about the congregate care data so far? Feedback from CWAC included:

- Interesting that Piedmont region is highest in both relative placement and congregate care.
- The racial disparity
- Black children make up 20% of the child population but 26% of congregate care
- Carrie, Prevention Data Analyst noted: among current entries into foster care overall, African American youth represented about 24% of that population, so the disparity is closer to 24% vs 26% in congregate care
- We are seeing a lower number of families in localities that are able/willing to take a child >12.

Second Breakout Session. CWAC members were asked: **As a child welfare community, what will it take to move towards the kin-first culture and increase our kinship foster placements:**

1. First Placements

2. Placement moves once in foster care

Group 5 – Look at different models, requires time to build relationships, so many demands on workers, scarce resources are an issue, need to expend workforce to get engagement specialists, prioritize retaining family connections even though not placed with the family member, and be intentional about building relationships for children in CC

Group 4: Need to get creative with resources, train workers to better support kin families, some of our own policies may be barriers and need to be reviewed from a kin lens, keep kin relationships strong, help kin with their needs, system changes have happened but need to change attitudes, help kin help bio parents, and engage community stakeholders to move more to kin care

Group 3: Broaden our definition of kin to include non-biological family, make sure all service units are on the same page, make sure workers have a good attitude towards kin care, it can be challenging for CPS worker to assess family member in the heat of the moment, outreach to kin is a lot of work, look at father's family even if he is not in picture, if we are not asking questions we won't know depth of family pool. Second question: keep engaging past initial letter, don't take the "no" and stop, use FPM to promote family and transparency, and engage legal community better to help them see kin care as important.

Group 2: Create an urgency to make first placement kin, use contractors better, kin incentives like FPM incentive funds, and CASA has a first module

Group 1: Use CC placement as interventions not placement options, get CC to change perception of what they provide, provide funding the same with kin care the same as FC, be more creative with placement option (i.e. placed with kin but biological family lives there too), using kin as a resource even if not the actual placement, help with normalcy, and barrier crime fixes

Kristin provided information on data and referenced a link added to the chat:
<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#VA/2/0/char/0>.

Third Breakout Session. CWAC members were asked: **As a child welfare community,**

- 1. What can you do differently to address permanency for youth who are free for adoption (TPR established) and remain in Congregate Care?**
- 2. How can we work with the court community regarding CHINS, Delinquency and Relief of Custody CC entries?**

Group 1: have a clear discharge plan, keep looking for relatives, note that after TPR there are rules that must be considered, and use CSA to do a better job of doing family care. Second question: judges make decisions based on what given - so give them more options, and have constant collaboration between DSS and courts.

Group 2: don't stop looking for kin, CASA advocate for kin, providing more service options, and engage more local stakeholders.

Group 3: reiterate continue to look for kin, make sure youth know they belong and can succeed, be proactive, consideration restoration of parental rights - family can change, sponsored residential, pay for other partners, concurrent planning, identify family early. Second question: court liaison within the agency, identify worker to guide probation officers and courts, better alignment with DSS and DJJ, more info on training that is given to judges, and learn from adoption families regarding what their needs were.

Group 4: child specific recruitment, do we need to look at kin who were previously not approved, photo shoots and videos, and letting the child rewrite their story. Second Question: what are other options and have quarterly meetings with judges.

Group 5: family might be available but not have enough resources - TeamVA can help, 2 tracts for approval and barriers can be large, and need to focus on engagement. Court community: foster care will not repair delinquency and consider which worker has skill set that can advocate with court partners.

Plus/Delta from the meeting:

Plus:

- Other perspectives and ideas to use

- Breakouts work well; length of time was adequate
- Discussion group and thoughtful questions to consider
- Great to hear from our community partners
- People really spoke up in breakouts
- The diversity of participation in the breakouts
- Feeling energized to educate and make changes
- Chat feature helps w/participation
- Love the data
- Polls were nice
- Good information to share
- Welcoming of community partners, including our federal partners
- Nice to reiterate that slides will be sent post-meeting

Delta:

- Try to avoid big meetings back to back to increase participation (PAC meeting tomorrow)
- Audio was touch and go at times
- Would like more tangible information on how to educate our community partners
- Mix up each breakout session group

Note: CWAC requested a list of all of the CWAC members.