

PERSPECTIVE

2018 Year in Review

Improving Outcomes for Children (IOC) is our goal. It describes how we deliver child welfare, juvenile justice, and child abuse prevention services. We believe that a community neighborhood approach to service delivery will have a positive impact on children and family safety and well-being.

Right-Sizing

DHS has made progress in reducing the number of children in child welfare placements. Between 2017 and 2018, we had a 9% decrease of children in placement. We want to continue reducing the number of families involved with the department. That's why we're focused on improving safe and timely permanency for children. A priority is to improve how we work with families to address safety issues so that they can reunify quickly with their children.

When reunification is not possible, children may need other permanency such as adoption. For youth in the juvenile justice system, we want to provide more community based alternatives to residential care and to keep kids close to home whenever possible. By addressing these issues, we will continue to right-size the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.

Right-Sizing Is:

- Safely divert more children from being placed with DHS.
- Safe & timely permanency, leading with reunification.
- Continued reduction of congregate care.
- Alignment of programs to serve children most at-risk for involvement with child welfare or juvenile justice.

Decrease in Dependent Placements

2017
6,183
Children

2018
5,614
Children



Placement Type

47% Kinship
39% Foster Care
10.3% Congregate Care

IOC Goal:

Safely Diverting Youth & Families

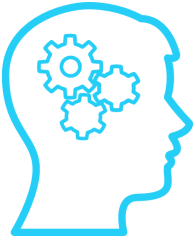
These DHS services help prevent involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems.



1,113

Families referred to Rapid Service Response Initiative

Short term, quick help for concrete needs, such as groceries and paying utility bills.



4,872

Referred to Family Empowerment Services

Case management to help families stabilize and connect to resources such as mental health and primary physical health care.



678

Referrals to CAPTA Services

Case management for families with infants born substance exposed. (CAPTA is the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.)



685

Youth participated in Intensive Prevention Services

Intensive Prevention Services divert youth from the juvenile justice system through programs that focus on helping resolve conflict peacefully and identifying what barriers prevent success at home and school.

Of the 685 youth served, 210 were youth diverted from arrest through our partnership with the Philadelphia Police Department and the School District of Philadelphia.

New Strategies to Divert Families Include:

Family Empowerment Centers

To provide intensive case management help for families at very high risk for involvement with DHS.

**New Strategies to
Divert Families
Include:**

**Funding for
Community Legal
Services**

To provide legal support for families who need help with issues such as landlord-tenant conflict and accessing benefits.

IOC Goal:

Congregate Care Reduction

We believe youth do best when they live in a family setting. We want to limit the use of congregate care to children and youth who have complex physical and behavioral health challenges. For youth in the juvenile justice system, community-based programs are available so that they can live with their families.

At 10.3% of dependent youth in congregate care (residential placements), we're well below the national average. We want to do more and make this number 9% or below over the next year. For youth in the juvenile justice system, use of congregate care has reduced 47% since 2013. We believe that by providing more community-based programs, there will be less need for residential placements. We want to do better for youth in both the dependent and juvenile justice systems.



OUR GOAL
9% & BELOW

Our goal for 2019 is 9% or fewer children and youth placed in residential care.



IOC Goal:

Services for most at-risk children and families

175

Out of School Time Programs (OST): After school and summer programming for elementary, middle, and high school students. DHS funding allowed **15,794** youth to participate in OST programs. DHS funds a majority of the free OST programs in Philadelphia. Next year, our priority is programming that focus on literacy and preparing for high school, college, and careers.

2,645

WorkReady: Paid summer employment for Philadelphia youth. Last year, DHS funded summer work opportunities for **2,645** youth.

2,850

Parent Cafés: Parent-led spaces for caregivers to connect, share parenting tips, and discover what makes them a strong parent. Parent Cafés are open to all. Last year, **2,850** participants attended **217** cafés spread throughout Philadelphia and led by the Community Umbrella Agency partners.

171

Domestic Violence Services: DHS is intentional about finding ways to help families respond to how domestic violence impacts their parenting. We work with the City's Director of Domestic Violence Strategies on case consultations and refer parents to local domestic violence service agencies. Last year we referred **171** families to domestic violence agencies for help with legal support, counseling, and housing.

IOC Goal:

Safe and Timely Reunification or Other Permanency

A huge part of right-sizing the child welfare system is the ability to safely reunify children with their families more quickly. This is called safe and timely reunification. Other types of permanency include adoption or permanent legal custodianship. A priority for the coming year is to develop new strategies that ensure families reunify safely and quickly with their children. When that is not an option, other permanency options must be pursued in a timely way so that children do not remain in the system.

This year with support from the Barra Foundation and the Stoneleigh Foundation, we launched a pilot program, Rapid Rehousing for Reunification. It subsidizes housing for families whose only barrier to reunify with their children is housing.

Challenges

Safe and Timely Reunification

Increasing safe and timely reunification or other permanency is our priority for the coming year and we are developing new strategies to make this happen. First, we continue to prioritize reunification over other permanency options. We are enhancing family engagement as one way to help children reunify more quickly and safely with their families. At the same time, the department is working to reduce delays in the adoption process so that when reunification is not possible, children are assured a permanent home.

Recruiting Foster Families for Teens

Our goal is to continue reducing congregate care. This can only happen if more families are willing to foster teens. While we have many people willing to foster infants and young children, finding homes for teens continues to be a challenge. As we actively recruit homes for teens, we are also reviewing what additional supports teen foster homes need in order to be successful.

Want more data?

DHS quarterly reports are available for download online. Visit www.phila.gov/dhs and select **About Us > Publications**

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Safe & Timely Reunification or Other Permanency

2,211

Children were safely moved out of the system.

1,216

Children were reunified with their family of origin.

840

Children were adopted.

155

Children received a Permanent Legal Custodian.

