



March 19, 2009

BRAAM FOSTER CARE REFORM TRENDS¹

This document examines trends in Children's Administration (CA) compliance with the *Braam* Implementation Plan. The first year of measurement for the plan was FY 2005, but not all Outcomes have been measured since that year. Data reported by Calendar Year (CY) was gathered through the Foster Parent Survey.

SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT

More youth in care are in stable placements

- Percent who experience two or fewer placements during their current out-of-home episode increased 0.9% since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 86.4%
 - FY 2007 – 85.5%
 - FY 2006 – 84.7%
 - FY 2005 – 85.5%
 - *Comment:* CA came close to reaching the FY08 Benchmark of 88%.

Health outcomes of youth in care have improved

- Percent receiving mental health assessments within 30 days of request increased 5.4% between 2007 and 2008
 - FY 2008 – 85.7%
 - FY 2007 – 80.3%
 - *Comment:* CA reached the FY08 Benchmark of 80%.
- Percent receiving mental health and substance abuse screenings every 12 months increased 12.6% between 2006 and 2007
 - FY 2007 – 56.5%
 - FY 2006 – 43.9%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to reach the FY07 Benchmark of 75%.
- Percent receiving mental health services by the same provider (mental health continuity) increased 13.4% since 2007
 - CY 2007 – 88.8%
 - CY 2006 – 75.4%
 - *Comment:* CA reached the CY07 Benchmark of 80%.

¹ Data reflects statewide performance. Regional performance may vary greatly. Some data not available for all years due to shift in measurement or lack of administrative data.

Fewer youth in care are placed in unsafe/inappropriate settings

- Percent safe in out-of-home care² increased 0.15% since 2005
 - FFY 2007³ – 99.77%
 - FFY 2006 – 99.57%
 - FFY 2005 – 99.73%
 - FFY 2004 – 99.64%
 - *Comment:* CA’s performance reached the federal safety standard (federal FY07).
- The number of youth placed in adult mental health facilities decreased from 13 to 0 since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 0 children
 - FY 2007 – 0 children
 - FY 2006 – 7 children
 - FY 2005 – 13 children
 - *Comment:* CA reached the FY08 Benchmark of 0.
- The number of youth with overnight stays in Department offices or inappropriately in hotels, motels, apartments decreased from 3 to 0 since 2007
 - FY 2008 – 0 children
 - FY 2007 – 0 children
 - *Comment:* CA reached the FY07 Benchmark of 0. CA’s data explains that 3 hotel placements were made but met appropriate administrative exceptions.⁴

More youth in care receive visits from social worker every month

- On September 1, 2008, CA implemented a policy requiring monthly visits (not exceeding 40 days apart) to all children in out-of-home care and requiring visits in the first week of placement. Since implementing the policy, CA has provided monthly “snapshot” administrative data, showing the percentage of children visited by their social worker for *each* month following September 2008
 - December 2008 – 71.7% (seen by other – 2.3%)⁵
 - November 2008 – 70.9% (seen by other – 2.1%)
 - October 2008 – 72.1% (seen by other – 2.4%)
 - September 2008 – 71.9% (seen by other – 3.2%)
 - *Comment:* While the monthly snapshot data indicates what percentage of children saw their social worker in a given *month*, CA’s FY08 data (all prior to full implementation of the policy) indicates that CA complied with the policy in only 10.5% of cases. The Benchmark for CY07 was 85% and for CY08 is 95%. The Outcome is based on CA meeting the monthly visit policy for *each and every* month of the entire calendar year. Thus, the 10.5% rate

² Safety in out-of-home care monitors the percent of children who are *not* victims of a founded report of child abuse or neglect by a foster parent or facility staff member.

³ This Outcome is calculated by federal fiscal years (FFY)—FFY07 is the most recent data available.

⁴ The exceptions, which have been deemed acceptable by the *Braam* Oversight Panel, include: (1) an appropriate licensed foster family or relative caregiver is not available, administrative approval has been granted, and adequate supervision is provided for the child; and (2) the youth has an Independent Living Plan authorizing such placement.

⁵ Significant weather issues may have prevented some visits from happening in December 2008.

means that CA did not provide a monthly visit for each and every month of the calendar year to nearly 90% of children.

- Prior to the monthly snapshot data, CA's compliance was measured through the Foster Parent Survey and showed some improvement⁶
 - CY 2007 – 43.2%
 - CY 2006 – 37.9%
 - *Comment:* Although it is difficult to compare the different data sources and, thus, unclear how much CA's performance has improved, it is clear that CA's performance improved according to the Foster Parent Survey. It also seems that since implementing the monthly visit policy, CA's performance has likely improved.

Separated siblings are provided visits more frequently

- Percent reporting adequate sibling contacts (two or more monthly visits or contacts) increased 4% since 2007
 - CY 2007 – 52.4%
 - CY 2006 – 48.4%
 - *Comment:* Though performance shows modest increases, CA failed to reach the FY07 Benchmark of 70%. However, Foster Parent Survey data from CY07 and CY06 was gathered prior to the implementation of CA's new sibling visitation policy and prior to the new funding in 2008 from the Legislature for this purpose. Upon receiving funding, CA and a majority of parent-child visitation providers negotiated new contracts that would allow providers to include services for sibling visitation.

Fewer youth in care are running away from placements

- Percent of children running from placement decreased 0.4% since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 3.6%
 - FY 2007 – 4.1%
 - FY 2006 – 4.1%
 - FY 2005 – 4.0%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to reach the FY08 Benchmark of 3.0%.
- When youth run from placement, the average number of days on the run decreased by 10 days since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 33 days
 - FY 2007 – 39 days
 - FY 2006 – 42 days
 - FY 2005 – 43 days

⁶ Foster parents were asked to respond to the following question: "In [calendar year the survey measured] about how often did this child's social worker have a private and individual face-to-face visit with this child either at home or outside of the home?" The choices were: "several times a month;" "about once a month;" "about every other month;" "about every three months;" "about every six months;" "once in the whole year;" and "never in [calendar year]." Only the first two choices were considered compliant with the Outcome.

- *Comment:* Though the number of days is decreasing⁷ and though CA reached the FY08 *statewide* Benchmark of 35 days, it failed to reach the FY08 Benchmark because of significant regional variability.

Caseworker caseloads are slowly reaching Council on Accreditation standards

- Percent of caseworkers with 18 cases or fewer increased 16.63% since September 1, 2008 (over the course of 5 months)
 - January 1, 2009 – 66.53%
 - December 1, 2008 – 54.92%
 - November 1, 2008 – 57.28%
 - October 1, 2008 – 51.15%
 - September 1, 2008 – 49.9%
 - *Comment:* Some of this increase is due to cleaning up data as CA moves to a new data system. As recently as November 2007, CA reported the *statewide average* caseload was 25:1 for Child and Family Welfare Services, which means that some caseworkers could have had caseloads significantly higher than the recommended 18 cases. Now that CA is reporting caseloads based on the number of caseworkers with fewer than 18 cases, rather than a statewide average, it appears CA has made improvement on decreasing caseload sizes in recent years.

Protection measures for sexually aggressive youth (SAY) have increased

- Percent of foster parent/relative caregivers reporting that they received specialized training to care for a child identified as sexually aggressive and a safety and supervision plan met their needs increased 10.3% since 2007
 - CY 2007 – 55.0%
 - CY 2006 – 44.7%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to reach CY07 Benchmark of 95%. Note that Foster Parent Survey data from CY07 and CY06 was gathered prior to the implementation of the CA's SAY policy change.

LITTLE OR NO IMPROVEMENT

Fewer beds for youth in care

- Ratio of beds to children decreased by 0.08 since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 2.23
 - FY 2007 – 2.22
 - FY 2006 – 2.27
 - FY 2005 – 2.31
 - *Comment:* CA is meeting the FY08 Benchmark of 1.8. However, performance has dropped since 2005 as the FY10 Benchmark of 2.0 is approaching.

⁷ A factor in this decrease may be CA's revision to the "run" policy (2006). CA also points to the increased use of Family Team Decision Meetings and an improved response to children's mental health needs.

Fewer youth are placed with siblings

- Percent of siblings placed with all other siblings decreased 2.9% since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 56.7%
 - FY 2007 – 58.3%
 - FY 2006 – 58.9%
 - FY 2005 – 59.6%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the FY08 Benchmark of 65%.
- Percent of siblings placed with at least one other sibling decreased 3.1% since 2005
 - FY 2008 – 79.0%
 - FY 2007 – 79.3%
 - FY 2006 – 80.1%
 - FY 2005 – 82.1%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the FY08 Benchmark of 90%.

No statistically significant movement in adequate care for medically fragile children

- Percent medically fragile children receiving adequate care increased by only 0.2% since 2007
 - CY 2007 – 75.1%
 - CY 2006 – 74.9%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the CY07 Benchmark of 85%.

No statistically significant movement in protection measures for physically aggressive youth (PAY)

- Percent of foster parent/relative caregivers reporting that they received specialized training to care for child identified as physically aggressive and a safety and supervision plan met their needs remained the same since 2007
 - CY 2007 – 44.7%
 - CY 2006 – 44.7%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the CY07 Benchmark of 95%. Note that Foster Parent Survey data from CY07 and CY06 was gathered prior to the implementation of the CA's PAY policy change.

No statistically significant movement in foster parent training and information

- Percent foster parents reporting adequate foster parent training decreased 2.2%
 - CY 2007 – 86.4%
 - CY 2006 – 88.6%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the CY07 Benchmark of 90%.
- Percent foster parents reporting adequate foster parent support decreased 0.7%
 - CY 2007 – 75.6%
 - CY 2006 – 76.3%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the CY07 Benchmark of 80%.
- Percent foster parents reporting adequate foster parent information decreased 0.4%
 - CY 2007 – 72.4%
 - CY 2006 – 72.8%
 - *Comment:* CA failed to meet the CY07 Benchmark of 80%.