

Summary of Current Status of the Braam Reform Process

Braam Settlement Monitoring Report #4, October 4, 2007

On October 4, 2007, the Braam Panel released its fourth Monitoring Report, covering progress through June 30, 2007. This summary is intended to give an overview of what areas of compliance and non-compliance exist, as well as new policies, programs, and practices implemented by the Department since the settlement. Background information can be obtained at www.braamkids.org or www.braampanel.org.

How many Action Steps have been completed? Of 82 Action Steps, 42 have been fully completed, and the original deadline for completion for 24 Action Steps has passed. Of the remaining Action Steps, five were complete through the performance period, nine are not yet due, and a decision is pending on two.

How many annual Benchmarks have been reached? Of the 13 annual Benchmarks being measured, none have been met for FY 2006 (performance through June 30, 2006), including failure to reach annual benchmarks for the percentage of children who:

- *Placement Stability*
 - Experienced three or more placements during their current out-of-home care by region and for the state as a whole.
- *Mental Health*
 - Received Child Health and Education Tracking (CHET) screens within 30 days of entry to care.
 - Received an Early Prevention Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) exam completed within 30 days of entering care.
 - Received a mental health assessment within 45 days of placement if CHET screen identifies the need.
 - Received mental health screenings every 12 months (annual EPSDT).
 - Received recommended mental health services from a qualified mental health and/or substance abuse provider within 30 days of the completion of an assessment recommending services.
- *Unsafe/Inappropriate Placement*
 - Received a private and individual face-to-face visit from the caseworker for each full placement month, by region and for the state as a whole.
 - Have a history of sexually aggressive or physically assaultive behavior with other children and where the Department's protective measures are met in each placement decision or fully documented.
- *Services to Adolescents*
 - Ran from placement. There are five benchmarks related to decreasing the percentage of children who ran from their placement one or more times and decreasing the length of time on the run.

For which Action Steps are there non-compliance and no plans to comply?

- **Monthly visits.** The Department is required to increase contact between social worker and family, child and caregivers to at least once every 30 days. The Panel has rejected the Department's proposed compliance plans, noting that there is no clear indication of when this policy will be fully implemented.
- **Visits within first week of placement.** The Department is required to increase compliance with the policy requiring workers to visit children in placement within the

first week of out-of-home care. The Panel has rejected the Department's proposed compliance plans, noting that there is no clear indication of when this policy will be fully implemented.

- **Sibling Visits.** The Department has failed to adequately increase the quality and frequency of visits between children and their siblings. Specifically, the Panel found that the Department's revised phase-in plan (which would result in statewide implementation of visits policy sometime after January 2008) represents at least a one-year delay when compared to the approved compliance plan.
- **Caseloads.** The Settlement Agreement called for the Department to develop a plan—by June 30, 2005 to reduce caseloads to COA standards (18:1). The Panel found that the latest compliance plan from the Department does not provide evidence that 18:1 caseloads will be achieved by any clear date.

The Department has also failed to follow through with plans, establish policies, and collect data regarding a number of educational services and services to older youth.

What are some policies, programs, and practices that have been implemented since the beginning of the reform process?

Placement Stability

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Requiring multi-disciplinary staffing meetings for children in multiple placements;
 - Providing emergency respite to licensed foster care and relative caregivers;
 - Increasing the appropriate use of kinship care;
 - Notifications prior to placement changes;
 - Providing placement history to the court;
 - Requiring notices to and involvement of foster parents and youth in hearings and meetings; and
 - Three sites for Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care, upcoming pilots for evidence based children's mental health.

Mental Health

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Requiring children to receive an initial health screening within 72 hours of placement;
 - Ensuring that the health and education plan for each child is updated a minimum every six months;
 - Encouraging the use of a health and education checklist for juvenile court judges;
 - Periodically reassessing foster children's mental health needs;
 - Improving availability and utilization of regional medical consultants; and
 - Ensuring that translation and interpretation services will be available for all children, parents, and other caregivers in order to benefit from MH and/or substance use services.

Foster Parent Training and Information

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Statewide after-hours crisis support line for foster parents and other caregivers;
 - Cross-training between foster parents and staff;
 - Training for foster parents and relative caregivers on policy revisions and engaging families and children;
 - Requiring ongoing training for licensed foster care providers;
 - Providing results and recommendations of Department screenings and assessments to foster parents; and
 - Providing appropriate access to respite care for caregivers requesting and needing this service.

Unsafe/Inappropriate Placements

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Requiring a face-to-face safety assessment with a child suspected to be a victim of child abuse or neglect while in the Department's custody, which shall occur within 24 hours of the report for emergent cases, and within 72 hours of the report for non-emergent cases.

Sibling Separation

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Improving kinship support services;
 - Hiring and training relative search staff to support finding relative resources;
 - Implementing case conferences prior to dispositional hearing; and
 - Implementing strategies to recruit additional licensed foster care and relative caregivers willing and able to accommodate sibling groups.

Services to Adolescents

- ✓ New policies, programs, and practices:
 - Establishing a Youth Advisory Group;
 - Requiring that the Department request the school records of all school age children immediately upon the child entering care;
 - Offering caregivers training on educational advocacy skills;
 - Extending some services to some youth aging out of care;
 - Establishing new procedures for children who are missing in care;
 - Establishing a toll free safe line that can be accessed by every child who runs from care;
 - Developing and implementing strategies to decrease runaway behaviors; and
 - Increasing educational stability for foster children.