Core Services Program Evaluation Annual Report

State Fiscal Year 2009-2010
July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

Colorado Department of Human Services
Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare
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TRIWEST GROUP

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Submitted to:

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Office of Children, Youth and Family Services
Division of Child Welfare
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September 2010

STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

September 23, 2010

The Honorable Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor of Colorado
136 State Capitol
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Governor Ritter:

This letter is sent as a cover to the Core Services Program Evaluation Annual report being submitted pursuant to the requirements of C.R.S. 26-5.5-104 (6) that are as follows:

> "On or after July 1, 1994, the Executive Director of the State Department shall annually evaluate the statewide Family Preservation Program (Program) and shall determine the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the Program. On or before the first day of October of each year, the Executive Director of the State Department shall report such findings and shall make recommended changes, including budgetary changes to the Program to the General Assembly, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and the Governor. In evaluating the Program, the Executive Director of the State Department shall consider any recommendations made by the interagency Family Preservation Commission in accordance with section 26-5.5-106. To the extent changes to the Program may be made without requiring statutory amendment, the Executive Director may implement such changes, including the changes recommended by the commission acting in accordance with subsection (7) of this section."

The following are the background and findings of program effectiveness, cost efficiencies, and recommended changes for the State Fiscal Year 2010-2011 (SFY 2011) Core Services Program evaluation:

Background:

The Core Services Program was established within the Colorado Department of Human Services in 1994 and is statutorily mandated to provide strength-based resources and support to families when children are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement and/or are in need of services to maintain a least restrictive setting. The Core Services Program (formerly known as Family Preservation) has been in operation for sixteen (16) years.

Program Effectiveness:

Children Served

Children eligible to receive Core Services are at imminent risk of being placed outside the home and/or are in need of services to maintain a least restrictive setting. This refers to children who, without immediate intervention, services, and support would very likely have been removed from the home and placed under county or tribal custody.

A total of 15,226 children (unduplicated count) were identified in the Trails data system as having received at least one Core Service during SFY 2010. This represents a five percent (5%) decline over the previous year. As was observed last year, it is possible that children with less severe needs have been diverted from Core Services and served through community partnerships like the HB 1451 Collaborative Management Program. Another explanation may be that while fewer children are being served, they are receiving more intensive evidence-based/promising practices and/or longer duration of services.

A smaller decline was observed in the duplicated number of service authorizations over the year, down from 46,587 in SFY 2009 to 46,197 in SFY 2010. Both county commissions and participating families reported an effort on the part of counties to more precisely target service delivery to the needs and preferences of the family in order to increase engagement in services. A better targeting of services to meet the needs of families could explain this decrease.

Program Outcomes

In addition to the Division of Child Welfare requirements and desires to evaluate program effectiveness, the federal standards defined through the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) and measured in the Colorado Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), help to shape the specific evaluation goals, as outcome data will be used for both state and federal oversight. Within these two sets of criteria, the ultimate assessment of the effectiveness of the Core Services Program will be the degree to which these services aid the Division of Child Welfare in meeting its mission to "help Colorado's children live in safe, healthy, and stable environments."

Successfully Maintaining Children in the Home - A central goal of the Core Services program is to keep children and families together, whenever appropriate and possible, by serving children who are at risk for out-of-home placement. On this measure, the Core Services Program is successful. Nearly all children with discharges in SFY 2010 who were at home at the time Core Services began were maintained in their home during their Core Service episodes. Overall, only eight percent (8%) of these children were placed out of the home during their service episode. In addition, children who received Core Services were less likely to experience an out-of-home placement during the 12 months following discharge from services.

Safely Maintaining Children in the Home – Only three percent (3%) of families participating in Core Services had a founded report of child abuse during the time that Core Services were being delivered. In addition, for children discharged in SFY 2009, only two and a half percent (2.5%) had a founded report of child abuse in the twelve (12) months following their Core Services participation, compared with thrity-seven percent (37%) with a founded report in the twelve (12) months directly preceding their engagement with Core Services.

Serving Children in the Least Restrictive Setting – Of those children discharged during the state fiscal year, twenty-two percent (22%) were in an out-of-home placement on the date they began Core Services. Close to two-thirds (62%) of these children left the out-of-home placement and moved to a less restrictive setting (including returning home) during their Core Services episode.

Cost-Efficiencies
The average cost per day for children participating in Core Services (as estimated based on actual costs data and length of service for children served in counties entering all service authorizations) is $15 per child per day, compared with a cost of $69 per day for children in out-of-home placement. Given that Core Services cost less than out-of-home placement and lead to a reduced use of these more costly out-of-home placements, the overall program represents a cost-efficient way of providing services to children and families. In addition to being the most cost-effective option, this practice of serving children in the home and keeping families together is often in the best interests of the child and family.

Overall Expenditures:

Costs of the Core Services Program
In SFY 2010, a total of $45,456,711 was allocated to the Family and Children's line and expended through the Core Services Program. This amount, overall, is lower than the total allocation available in the last state fiscal year (SFY 2009). The reason for this apparent reduction is the removal of the Administrative Case Management (ACM) line from the Core Services allocation, representing a net $2.3 million decrease. However, the actual 100% Core Services line item was increased by $608,593 in order to re-balance funding with the ACM line removed. This means that direct service dollars available to the counties increased slightly this year, although the counties lost over $2 million in administrative funds associated with Core Services.

As reported in this year's Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Report, insufficient funding remains a challenge to provide adequate Core Services programs in order to prevent out-of-home placements. Each year, many counties and tribes use additional funding sources to support Core Services in their communities.

Family Voice:

During an open-forum family call-in event held by the evaluation team in July 2010, families described the positive impact of including them in meaningful ways in the service planning process. These families reported that increased efforts to enhance family voice and choice in services increased the engagement level of families in services and directly contributed to outcomes.

Recommended Changes:

Overall, I am pleased with the progress of the State, counties, and the participating tribe in the delivery of the Core Services Program to the children, youth, and families of Colorado. The Department continues to address audit concerns proactively with the TriWest Group program evaluation consulting service, the Legislative Auditor, the Legislative Audit Committee, and the General Assembly to complete any needed technical modifications in the statutes to clarify intent and provide consistent guidance in services parameters, including but not limited to: target service population, services eligibility criteria, and evidence-based service types.

The current report represents continued forward progress in realizing a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program. This report fulfills the legislative mandate and serves as a foundation for future evaluation and reporting that will further explore the impacts and processes of the Core Services Programs. In addition, the report points to successful Core Services Program operations and positive impacts for Colorado's children and families.

The Division of Child Welfare and the county and Tribal Family Preservation/Core Services Commissions have undertaken a comprehensive effort to improve services for children and families. These efforts have brought significant attention and improvements to the overall array of services across the state.

Department recommendations for SFY 2011 are:
- Continue to improve information tracking by focusing on more consistent data entry practices across counties,
- Continue current efforts in the further integration of a comprehensive risk and needs assessment in case planning for all children served by the Program,
- Continue supporting evidence-based services and promising practices that are proven to be effective,
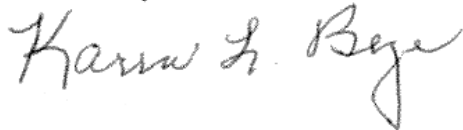- Continue monitoring level of need and level of available resources.

In closing, the Department recognizes the staff of each county department for their willingness to continue to provide valuable input to data enhancements for the Child Welfare Core Services Program in Trails. Without their time and patience, the Core Services Program would not be able to extrapolate accurate reporting data, monitor contract spending, measure program success and outcomes, nor ensure a high level of program accountability.

If you need more information, please contact Melinda S. Cox, Core Services Program Administrator, at 303-866-5962.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Beye
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: Jim Carpenter, Chief of Staff

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Acknowledgments

This report reflects the effort of many people. TriWest Group and the Division of Child Welfare worked closely together and received input and data from the many participating counties and tribal nations. In particular, we would like to thank the following County Directors and Core Services staff for their efforts to enhance the Core Services Program and for their specific contributions to this report.

Executive Summary

The Core Services Program was established within the Colorado Department of Human Services in 1994 and is statutorily mandated to provide strength-based resources and support to families when children are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement and/or in need of services to maintain a placement in the least restrictive setting possible.

The Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) section authorizing the Core Services Program also mandates that the Department annually provide ". . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program." This report is prepared in response to this mandate and to provide meaningful decision support for the Division of Child Welfare and county Core Services Programs.

Goals of the Core Services Program

With this mandate in mind, the Core Services Program has four broad goals:

1. Focus on family strengths by directing intensive services that support and strengthen the family and protect the child;
2. Prevent out-of-home placement;
3. Return children in placement to their own home, or unite children with their permanent families;
4. Provide services that protect the child.

Flexible Local Implementation - The four goals listed above are the foundation for the Core Services Program. From this foundation, each of 64 counties and one Colorado tribal nation (the Southern Ute Indian Tribe) designs a unique set of required and tailored services resulting in a multifaceted pattern of services, opportunities and implementation challenges across the state.

Family Preservation - The Core Services Program is based on a solid foundation of research and practice in family preservation. Family preservation services are generally short-term, family-based services designed to support families in crisis by improving parenting and family functioning while keeping children safe. These services were developed largely in response to the over-reliance on out-of-home care that characterized services over the past quarter century. Family preservation services grew out of the recognition that children need a safe and stable family and that separating children from their families and communities removes them from natural supports and often causes trauma, leaving lasting negative effects.

The Core Services Program builds upon the family preservation research base and is anchored in the conviction that many children can be safely protected and treated within their own homes when parents are provided with services and support and empowered to change their lives. In Colorado, a subsection of the legislation mandating the Family Preservation Commissions defines "family preservation services" as assistance that focuses on a family's strengths and empowers a family by providing alternative problem-solving techniques and child-rearing practices, as well as promoting effective responses to stressful living situations for the family. This assistance includes resources that are available to supplement existing informal support systems for the family. There are nine designated types of "family preservation services" and this array of services constitutes the Core Services Program.

Scope of the Current Report

> *The ultimate purpose of this evaluation is to provide information that can be used to improve Core Services Programs.*

This report marks the third year of a multi-phased evaluation approach developed by TriWest Group in partnership with the Division of Child Welfare and informed by the state and local leadership of the Core Services Program. This year's report continues to build on three general cohorts of children served by the Core Services Program each year:

- Cohort 1 – Those children entering services in a given state fiscal year,
- Cohort 2 – Those children receiving services in a given fiscal year,
- Cohort 3 – Those children discharging from services in a given fiscal year.

This year's report has four objectives:

1. To describe the implementation of the Core Services Program.

2. To continue to address requirements specified by the Legislative State Audit in May 2007 to develop a method to calculate an accurate cost per child that can be used to compare the costs and benefits of the Core Services Program.

3. To report on 12-month outcomes for SFY 2009 discharge cohort (children who ended a Core Services episode during SFY 2009). These outcomes include: maintaining child safety (as measured by substantiated child abuse), maintaining children in the home whenever possible and minimizing re-engagement with Core Services.

4. To describe county-specific implementation challenges and opportunities.

Data Sources - Data for this report comes from three primary sources:

1. Colorado Trails Automated Case Management System[1] (commonly referred to as Trails) – Extracts from Trails are the primary source of data for this report. These extracts include information regarding the children served, the types and lengths of services provided, service outcomes (leave reasons), child placement history, and reports of child abuse and neglect.

2. Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Reports – Each county (except where exempt) is required by state statute to complete a Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Report. While not statutorily required to do so, the Southern Ute Tribe also submits this Report. For the past three years, counties have sent these reports directly to TriWest Group (the contracted program evaluator) for analysis and inclusion in the annual program evaluation report (please see Appendix A for a template of the county report).

3. Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS) – CFMS provides the total actual expenditures for the Core Services Program, for the entire state and for individual counties. It includes specific expenditures for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Services and Special Economic Assistance.

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[1] Known nationally as the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

A detailed discussion of the structure, content and limitations of these data sources is found in the *Evaluation and Methods* section of the report.

Core Services Program Overview

The Core Services Program is an important component of each county's child welfare efforts. The Program provides flexibility for counties to provide services specific to the needs of each family in an effort to minimize unnecessary out-of-home placements, and when out-of-home placements are needed to support children in the least restrictive setting possible. The Core Services Program is made up of nine designated service types:

1. Home Based Intervention
2. Intensive Family Therapy
3. Life Skills
4. Day Treatment
5. Sexual Abuse Treatment
6. Mental Health Services
7. Substance Abuse Services
8. Aftercare
9. County Designed Services

Within the parameters set in statute, each county is encouraged to determine the most appropriate mix of services based on community need and resource availability. Some counties receive additional Core Services funding specifically targeted to provide evidence-based services to adolescents in home and community-based settings. In SFY 2010, a total of $4,088,723 was allocated for evidence-based services to adolescents. Evidence-based services are programs that have been proven effective in reducing the need for higher cost residential services. These programs help counties avoid or reduce the length of costly out-of-home placement when appropriate.

Variations in County Use of the Trails Data System

Over the past several years, the Core Services Annual Evaluation Report has noted challenges in using Trails data to describe services provided and their impact on children and families. These challenges stemmed from variations in data entry and limitations in some Trails data fields. Division of Child Welfare policy mandates that all services be entered into Trails. The Division provides training to support this requirement. One-half (51%) of counties enter data in Trails for all Core Services provided and, as the impact of incomplete data entry becomes more widely understood, Core Services Coordinators across the state are increasing efforts to improve data entry practices.

Data entry practices vary across purchase options used to provide Core Services. There are three types of purchase options used by counties and each purchase type has different data entry requirements in order to ensure payment occurs:

1. Fee-for-Service Contracts:
   Complete data is available in Trails for all fee-for-service contracts across counties.
2. Fixed Rate Contracts:
   Counties can purchase services from private providers using fixed rate contracts. Under these contracts, only one service authorization during the month needs to be entered into Trails in order to process payment (even if the provider served a number of children in that month). Some counties enter all service authorizations under fixed rate contracts while others do not.

3. County-Provided Services/Direct Delivery:
Counties also have the option to provide services using their own qualified staff. As with fixed rate contracts, some counties enter all county provided services into Trails and others do not.

> *Core Services County Commission Reports indicated they are underfunded, requiring counties to pull in supplemental funding from other sources.*

The Division of Child Welfare encourages counties to enter into fee-for-service contracts as often as possible to maximize accountability of providers and accuracy of Trails data. Beginning in SFY 2011, counties will be required to provide additional documentation in their Core Services Plan for fixed rate contracts. A detailed discussion of the implications of Trails data availability is found in the *Implementation of Core Services* section of the report.

Children Served During SFY 2010

A total of 15,226 children (unduplicated count) were identified in Trails as having received at least one Core Service during SFY 2010. This represents an almost 6% decline over the previous fiscal year (SFY 2009), which experienced a 9.7% decrease in children served compared with SFY 2008. The decrease could be due, in part, to the reduction of Core Services funds created by the elimination of administrative case management funds from the Core Services line item. Alternatively, County Core Services Coordinators report increased efforts at the local level to utilize all available funding sources and to more carefully match each family's needs and resources to the most appropriate funding source. Coordinators report that use of federal funds through Medicaid, when families are eligible, and grant funding when possible, allows Core Services funding to be preserved for families with no other funding source. Additionally, partnerships through Collaborative Management Programs - HB 1451 might reduce the number of children served through Core Services programs by promoting service delivery through other avenues.

Total Number of Children Served: Core Services Program					
	SFY 2006	**SFY 2007**	**SFY 2008**	**SFY 2009**	**SFY 2010**
Total Unduplicated Count	19,006[2]	19,152[3]	17,793	16,066	15,226

Services Provided - Overall, the number of service authorizations (as entered into Trails) for this state fiscal year is slightly lower (3%) than for last year. This is consistent with the decrease in the number of children served as described above.

Number of Service Authorizations **Entered into Trails**		
	SFY 2009	**SFY 2010**
Total Duplicated Count	47,587	46, 197

Despite the decrease in service authorizations, most counties report the need for Core Services increased this fiscal year as people continue to struggle financially in the current economic climate. Most County Coordinators report increased efforts to match services with the specific needs and stated preferences of families as the reason for lower service authorizations in their counties. The best

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[2] This number is taken from the SFY 2006 County Commission Report.
[3] This number is taken from the SFY 2007 County Commission Report.

practice literature points to increased family voice in service planning and better targeting of services to needs, leading to fewer services per family and more effective services for families.

Types of Core Services Provided - The following description of services includes only those 33 counties for which Trails data is assumed to be complete. Using these counties, some extrapolations to trends in statewide patterns are made.

Distribution of Service Authorizations across Core Service Types[4]
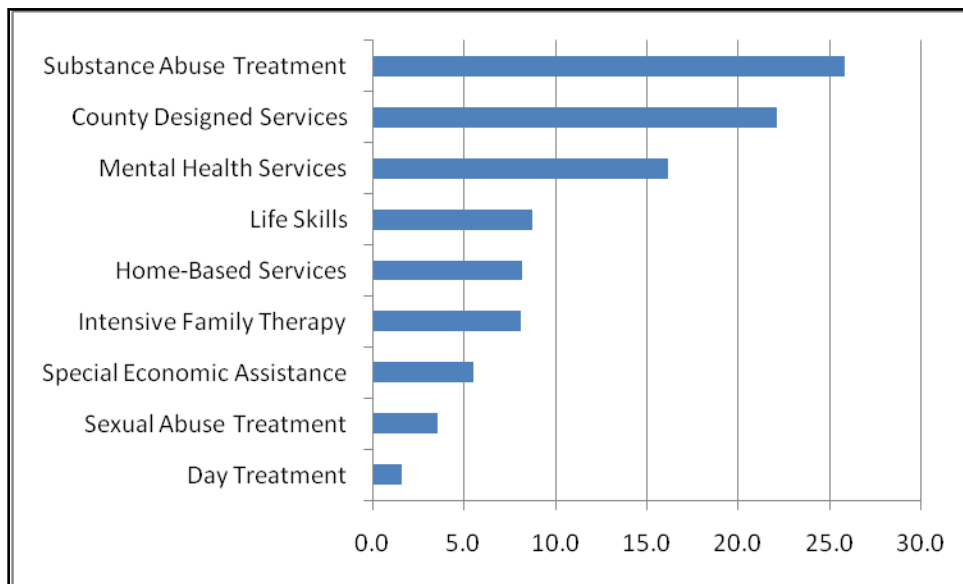
More than three-quarters of the children served (77%) received more than one type of Core Service in counties that enter all service authorizations into Trails. One-third received two different types of service, and the remaining 43 percent received three or more different types of Core Services throughout the fiscal year.

Barriers to Accessing Services - Over SFY 2010, 85% of counties (55) reported barriers to providing needed services to families. Of these 55 counties, 46 (84%) identified transportation and/or distance to services as a primary barrier. Several counties gave examples of clients needing to travel 60 miles or more (up to 300 miles) to access services in other parts of their county or in other counties. Other barriers relate to challenges faced by parents who are trying to meet the requirements of their Family Services Plan in addition to working and managing the day-to-day needs of their children. Counties continue, as in past years, to identify a lack of providers and limited provider capacity as critical barriers. An overall lack of qualified providers and high turnover in rural areas remains a concern. A lack of specific types of providers was also cited, including multilingual/multicultural providers and providers qualified to offer evidence-based, in-home services. In terms of limited capacity, substance abuse treatment was cited most often.

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[4] Note – numbers in figure represent percentages.

Program Costs and Effectiveness

This report examines program effectiveness using data describing:

1. Successful completion of services – the positive disposition of the child's case at the time Core Service delivery ends;

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Eighty-one percent (81%) of children discharged in SFY 2009 did not return for additional Core Services in SFY 2010.

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2. Serving children in the home or in the least restrictive setting possible – lowering the incidence and length of out-of-home placement during service delivery and after Core Services end; and

3. Child safety – lowering the incidence of child abuse and neglect during service delivery and after Core Services end.

Generally, children leaving Core Services are likely to have successfully completed services, with 44.6% of discharges described as positive, 23.7% described as neutral and 15.8% described as negative. These findings are presented in detail in the *Costs and Effectiveness* section of the report.

Another measure of program effectiveness is recidivism, or returns to services. For this report, a "return to service" is defined as the start of a new service episode after a break longer than two months (62 days) following a discharge. Overall, 81% of children discharged in SFY 2009 did not return for additional core services within 12 months.

Maintaining Children in the Home - A third indicator of program effectiveness relates to maintaining children at home or the least restrictive setting possible. Research is clear that child outcomes are significantly better when children are maintained in their homes and communities. The vast majority (92%) of children participating in Core Services stay at home. Of those beginning Core Services in an out-of-home placement,

<div style="float:right; border:1px solid; padding:8px;">

The vast majority (92%) of children participating in Core Services remain home. Of those beginning Core Services in an out-of-home placement, two-thirds return home or move to a less restrictive setting.

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two-thirds return home or move to a less restrictive setting. Similarly, the proportion of children experiencing out-of-home placement after Core Services was significantly lower than the proportion placed out-of-home prior to Core Services.

Child Safety – One of the most obvious, and critical, indicators of effectiveness relates to keeping children safe. For children participating in the Core Services program, the proportion of substantiated cases of child abuse dropped significantly during and 12 months after children received Core Services – from 37% to 3%. This pattern held true for all counties.

Enhancing the Core Services Program – Ideas from County Commissions

County Core Services Commissions were invited to offer suggestions to enhance or improve the delivery of Core Services. The most frequently cited suggestions fell into three categories. These suggestions are discussed in greater detail in the body of the full report.

1. Increase flexibility in the use of Core Services funding - County Commissions are clear in their recognition and appreciation of the current high level of flexibility in the Core Services Program.

However, 30 counties commented that added flexibility in some areas could benefit Core Services Program outcomes.

2. Enhance resources available to Core Services programs - Thirty-nine (39) counties agree on the need for increased capacity for the Core Services Program overall. Specifically, counties pointed to the need for enhanced capacity in intensive, home-based services; substance abuse treatment services; psychiatric evaluation services; County-Designed services; evidence-based treatment services; Spanish language services; and day treatment for elementary school children.

3. Changes to the allocation methodology - Five counties specifically requested changes in the way county Core Services allocation amounts are determined. County Commissions that commented on this issue believe the allocation methodology is based on historic factors and is no longer equitable.

Observations

The Core Services Program appears to be Functioning as Intended – Data analyzed and presented in this report indicates that the Core Services Program is successfully addressing its mission to strengthen Colorado families and keep children with their families and in their communities, while also maintaining child safety. Based on the range of information available to this evaluation, the Core Services Program appears to be functioning as intended, serving the children and families targeted by the authorizing legislation and providing appropriate services and support.

> *Core Services outcomes demonstrate that children can be safely maintained in the home with services at a lower cost than out-of-home placement.*

Core Services Cost Less - Overall costs per day for out-of-home placements are significantly higher than costs per day for children being served in Core Services. Safely maintaining children in their homes not only costs the state less than an out-of-home placement, but most often this course of action also represents what is in the best interest of the child and the family.

Core Service Types Demonstrate Positive Outcomes – All of the nine Core Services types show positive outcomes. While there has been interest in identifying differences in effectiveness across service types, it appears to be more important to focus on matching children and families with services that address their types and levels of risks and needs. This was supported in discussions with families and in the County Commission Reports.

Need for Greater Integration of Risk and Needs Assessment with Case Planning – The Core Services Program serves children who have complex and often multiple risk factors for out-of-home placement. Currently, the general level and type of risk is recorded in the Imminent Risk Section of the Family Services Plan by the child's caseworker, and the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) is used in Child Protection Cases. Effective tools, like the NCFAS or Child and Adolescent Strengths and Needs (CANS) can gauge not only the child's level of risk, but also the specific areas where services are needed to mitigate that risk and support safety and stability. Program-wide use of a standardized validated risk and needs assessment in case planning would support consistent decisions regarding the intensity and restrictiveness, as well as types of services. This would allow more consistent matching of services to child and family needs and enhance quality assurance and evaluation efforts.

Reported Decrease in the Number of Children Served – Data point to a slight decline in the number of children served and the number of service authorizations recorded in Trails over the past two years. This may be understood, in part, in the context of challenging fiscal reality; counties are turning to other sources of funding first, and reserving Core Services for children and families with no other payment source. In addition, counties have reported greater efforts to target services more carefully to the needs of children and families, often resulting in fewer but more intensive services, to improve family engagement and long term outcomes.

Recommendations

TriWest Group recommends the State Division of Child Welfare standardize data entry policies to assure complete data is available to adequately assess program effectiveness and understand costs and savings of the Core Services Program. TriWest Group also continues to recommend close collaboration with Trails data experts to investigate potential data system and data entry improvements to increase consistency of data entry without dramatically increasing workload of county staff.

Family preservation services are an important component of an effective continuum of child welfare services if they can be targeted to appropriate children and families and tailored to their specific needs, challenges and strengths. For this reason, we continue to recommend that the Core Services Program Coordinators and leadership continue to explore the integration of an empirically validated risk and needs assessment into case planning decisions. Tools like the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (used in Colorado in Child Protection Cases) or the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment (CANS) are used in many states to support responsive case planning that matches service intensity and restrictiveness to child and family risk levels while also matching specific service types to the identified needs of children and their families. This comprehensive approach to risk and needs assessment supports consistency in matching services to child and family needs and provides valid data for program monitoring and improvement as well as evaluation and reporting.

The Division has been working on the issue of statewide, consistent implementation of a risk assessment tool. In the current fiscal environment, the costs of such an endeavor suggest that it will likely be a long-term process of implementation.

Other recommendations include integrating systems for the current evaluation with ongoing quality assurance efforts to promote meaningful, high-quality data that is used for continuous quality improvement. Based on reports from the County Commissions, we recommend continued attention and promotion of collaborative efforts. Similarly, State leadership and technical assistance is important to sustain quality of services and commitment among local leadership. Finally, the value of involving families in planning services is clear – we recommend prioritizing efforts to support the inclusion of child and family voice and choice across the system.

Background and Introduction

The Core Services Program was established within the Colorado Department of Human Services in 1994 and is statutorily mandated to provide strength-based resources and support to families when children are at imminent risk of out-of-home placement and/or in need of services to maintain a placement in the least restrictive setting possible.

The Colorado Revised Statute (C.R.S.) section authorizing the Core Services Program also mandates that the Department annually provide ". . . an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program." This report is prepared in response to this mandate and to provide meaningful decision support for the Division of Child Welfare and county Core Services Programs.

Goals of the Core Services Program

With this mandate in mind, the Core Services Program has four broad goals:

1. Focus on family strengths by directing intensive services that support and strengthen the family and protect the child;
2. Prevent out-of-home placement;
3. Return children in placement to their own home, or unite children with their permanent families;
4. Provide services that protect the child.

Flexible Local Implementation

The four goals listed above are the foundation for the Core Services Program. From this foundation, each of 64 counties and one Colorado tribal nation[5] (the Southern Ute Indian Tribe) annually develop locally meaningful guiding principles and service opportunities. Each jurisdiction designs a unique set of required and tailored services resulting in a multifaceted pattern of services, opportunities and implementation challenges across the state. In addition, policies guiding documentation and tracking of services and expenditures differ from county to county. However, each county and tribe share a common mission to support the children and families of their communities and have the desire and obligation to deliver services that are meaningful to the families that receive them while remaining accountable to all citizens in the community. To support accountability and to ultimately enhance the Core Services Program, this evaluation embraces the diversity of Core Services implementation across the state. This diversity presents opportunities to find commonalities across effective strategies, share information about successes and how cost efficiencies can be achieved, and use local experiences to strengthen the overall state program.

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[5] Both Colorado tribal nations, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Indian Tribe are eligible to participate in the Core Services Program. To date, only the Southern Ute Indian Tribe has opted to participate.

Focus on Outcomes

It is the intent of the Division of Child Welfare to examine and report the effectiveness of the Core Services Program with a primary focus on outcomes for Colorado's children. This year's report continues to follow cohort groups to explore outcomes in more detail. Cohort groups were introduced for the first time in the State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2009 report and each subsequent year will build on this foundation to provide more useful and specific outcomes information that will help move toward a comprehensive, outcomes-driven evaluation of the Core Services Program. Additional information regarding the cohort approach is provided in the Evaluation Methods section.

Context of the Current Report

Commissions and County Commission Reports

Family Preservation Commissions, also known as Core Services Commissions, are mandated oversight groups in each county. These Commissions are local interdisciplinary, multi-agency committees responsible for evaluating the family preservation program and making recommendations for change at the local level and at the state level through an annual report. These commissions were established in statute during the 1993-1994 legislative session. C.R.S. 26-5.5-106 sets forth the composition and duties of the commissions as follows:

1. "The governing body of each county or city and county shall establish a family preservation commission for the county or city and county to carry out the duties described in subsection (2) of this section. The commission shall be interdisciplinary and multi-agency in composition, except that such commission shall include at least two members from the public at-large. The governing body may designate an existing board or group to act as the commission. A group of counties may agree to designate a regional commission to act collectively as the commission for all such counties.

2. It shall be the duty of each commission established or designated pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to hold periodic meetings and evaluate the family preservation program within the county or city and county, and to identify any recommended changes to such program. On or after July 1, 1994, the commission shall submit an annual report to the executive director of the state department. The report shall consist of an evaluation of the overall effectiveness and cost-efficiency of the program and any recommended changes to such program. The report shall be submitted on or before the first day of September of each year."

Not all counties are required to have a Family Preservation Commission. However, those counties that do not have a commission are required to spend all of their Core Services 80/20 funding on purchased or contracted services (not county provided services) as directed in the Colorado Children's Code (19-1-116, 1.5). Fifty- three (53) of the 64 counties and one tribe (Southern Ute) reported that they have a Family Preservation Commission and provided a membership list as part of their annual report.

Regardless of whether a county has a Family Preservation Commission, each is required to submit an annual Family Preservation/Core Services Report. All 64 counties and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe submitted annual reports directly to TriWest Group (the contracted program evaluator). Data from those reports is incorporated into analyses and reporting to provide a county-specific context to the

quantitative findings. Copies of each county or tribal report are available by request from the Division of Child Welfare. The Family Preservation/Core Services Report template is provided as Appendix A.

Family Preservation

The Core Services Program is based on a solid foundation of research and practice in family preservation. Family preservation services are generally short-term, family-based services designed to support families in crisis by improving parenting and family functioning while keeping children safe. These services developed largely in response to the over-reliance on out-of-home care that characterized services over the past quarter century. Family preservation services grew out of the recognition that children need a safe and stable family and that separating children from their families and communities removes them from natural supports and often causes trauma, leaving lasting negative effects.

The Core Services Program builds upon the family preservation research base and is anchored in the conviction that many children can be safely protected and treated within their own homes when parents are provided with services and support and empowered to change their lives. Several studies have found that these services are effective in reducing placement, especially when used as early intervention (Nelson, 2000). Adolescents in families that participated in preservation services are placed out-of-home less often than children in matched control families.

> **Core Services Program Goals**
> 1. Focus on family strengths by directing intensive services that support and strengthen the family and protect the child;
> 2. Prevent out-of-home placement;
> 3. Return children in placement to their own home, or unite children with their permanent families;
> 4. Provide services that protect the child.

In Colorado, a subsection of the legislation mandating the Family Preservation Commissions defines "family preservation services" as assistance that focuses on a family's strengths and empowers a family by providing alternative problem-solving techniques and child-rearing practices, as well as promoting effective responses to stressful living situations for the family. This assistance includes resources that are available to supplement existing informal support systems for the family. There are nine designated types of "family preservation services" and this array of services constitutes the Core Services Program.

Historically, the annual report has been submitted by the Division of Child Welfare, in compliance with the above statute, and has represented a compilation of the individual county Core Services/Family Preservation Commission reports submitted each year to the Division. The evaluation approach and report content has changed in recent years, with increased emphasis on evidence-based services and promising practices within the state and child welfare services, and as the statewide Colorado Trails Case Management System (Trails) has provided access to more systematic and detailed quantitative data regarding children and families served by the Core Services Program.

Scope of the Current Report

This report marks the third year of a multi-phased evaluation approach developed by TriWest Group in partnership with the Division of Child Welfare and informed by the state and local leadership of the Core Services Program. This year's report continues to build on three general cohorts of children served by the Core Services Program each year:

- Cohort 1 – Those children entering services in a given state fiscal year,
- Cohort 2 – Those children receiving services in a given fiscal year,
- Cohort 3 – Those children discharging from services in a given fiscal year.

These cohorts, introduced for the first time in last year's report (SFY 2009) are the foundation of a longitudinal outcome analysis that will continue to evolve over the coming years and that can be used to: 1) quantitatively assess the implementation of Core Services in relation to the statutory mandates of providing services to families with children at imminent risk of out-of-home placement and/or children in need of services to maintain placements in the least restrictive setting; 2) highlight program outcomes based upon the four main goals for program effectiveness; and 3) explore potential cost efficiencies associated with the delivery of Core Services. Further, these cohorts will allow the evaluation, across annual reporting periods, to follow the progress of the Core Services Program in making the right services available at the right time to children and families at risk, in implementing intensive services that support and strengthen families, and to track service effectiveness by examining outcomes for cohorts of children as they leave the Core Services Program.

As the evaluation continues to evolve and additional data in Trails becomes available or is identified for use in these analyses, we expect that the cohort groups can be further divided based on the risk and need areas. This year, for the first time, we are able to examine placement status prior to and during participation in Core Services. Additional details are included in the Evaluation Methods section. The purpose of this evaluation is to provide stakeholders with information on both the successes and opportunities for improvements that can lead to local and state changes within the Core Services Program. Long-term evaluation objectives include additional analysis and reporting on longitudinal data on safety, permanency and well-being outcomes.

As part of the evolutionary process for the Core Services evaluation, this year's report has four objectives:

- To describe the implementation of the Core Services Program. This includes a description of the risks and needs of children and families at risk of out-of-home placement and/or in need of services to maintain the least restrictive setting served by the program, and descriptions of the services provided to support and strengthen families.

> *The ultimate purpose of this evaluation is to provide information that can be used to improve Core Services Programs.*

- To continue to address requirements specified by the Legislative State Audit in May 2007 to develop a method to calculate an accurate cost per child that can be used to compare the costs and benefits of the Core Services Program.

- To report on 12-month outcomes for SFY 2009 discharge cohort (children who ended a Core Services episode during SFY 2009). These outcomes include: maintaining child safety (as measured by

substantiated child abuse), maintaining children in the home whenever possible and minimizing re-engagement with Core Services.

▪ To describe county-specific implementation challenges and opportunities in order to 1) provide context for the quantitative descriptions of children served and services provided, and 2) to highlight specific positive county experiences and suggest ways to address challenges experienced by local communities.

Structure of the Current Report

Following this Background and Introduction section, the **Evaluation Methods** section provides a brief presentation of the evaluation methods used in developing and presenting this report. This includes data sources and dates of collection, as well as the general assumptions and parameters for analysis, organized by each subsequent section of the report.

The next section of the report is a **Program Overview** providing details about the structure of the program itself. Descriptions of specific types of services included in the Core Services Program, county allocations of Core Services funds and additional Evidence-Based Services awards are included in this section.

The next section of the report is **Implementation of the Core Services Program**. This section describes the outputs and activities of the Core Services Program, including services used by counties and specific gaps and barriers to accessing services. The section provides a general overview of the distribution of services across the state. This description includes an overall view of the Core Services Program as well as county-level data. Also included in this section is an examination of variations in data entry practices across counties for the purpose of creating subsets of complete data for analysis.

The next section of the report discusses the **Program Costs and Effectiveness**. Total costs and average costs per child are presented based on type of service. Program effectiveness is explored using subsets of complete data and cohorts to compare outcomes across recent fiscal years.

The final section of the report presents a brief discussion of **Observations and Recommendations** from this year's report.

Evaluation Methods

Data Sources

Data for this report comes from three primary sources:

1. Colorado Trails Automated Case Management System[6] (commonly referred to as Trails) – Extracts from Trails are the primary source of data for this report. These extracts include information regarding the children served, the types and lengths of services provided, service outcomes (leave reasons), child placement history, and reports of child abuse and neglect. Trails is a dynamic case management system in which users can update, add, and delete records on an ongoing basis as new information becomes available or as errors are discovered and corrected. The SFY 2010 data for this report reflects what was in the Trails system as of July 26, 2010. Historical data for this report is taken from previous years' extracts rather than new data extracts in order to ensure consistency across the reporting period.

   The Division of Child Welfare continues to enhance Trails in order to provide the most accurate information possible. For example, ongoing improvements to the Leave Reasons field allow users to capture more detail regarding the disposition of a child's case at the time a specific treatment episode ends. This and other enhancements continue to make a much larger and more comprehensive data set available for analysis and reporting. Continued efforts to improve the system promise even more meaningful information from Trails for future reporting, thereby supporting the Core Services Program in its ongoing commitment to developing more effective quality assurance and evaluation approaches over time.

   Colorado has a state supervised, county administered Child Welfare system. Statewide policy and training dictate that every child receiving a Child Welfare service be entered into Trails. Due to differences in county policies, it has been reported that not every child who benefits from services is entered. The number of children entered into Trails is lower than the actual number of children served because of differences in data entry practices across counties. This issue has led to some steps being taken to attempt to generalize averages and costs across the state, based on what is currently known about the degree to which all service authorizations are being entered into Trails. This is discussed later in this section and again in the Costs and Outcomes section of this report.

2. Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Reports – Each county (except where exempt) is required by state statute to complete a Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Report. While not statutorily required to do so, the Southern Ute Tribe also submits this Report. For the past three years, counties have sent these reports directly to TriWest Group (the contracted program evaluator) for analysis and inclusion in the annual program evaluation report (please see Appendix A for a template of the county report). Family Preservation/Core Services Commissions and Tribal leaders were asked to respond to specific questions regarding the services available in their communities, program successes and challenges, recommendations for changes to the Core Services Program, and additional

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[6] Known nationally as the State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS)

funding sources. The Commission report allows counties to supplement data from Trails with qualitative information that helps tell the story behind the numbers. Individual county reports are available from the Division of Child Welfare.

3. Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS) – CFMS provides the total actual expenditures for the Core Services Program, for the entire state and for individual counties. It includes specific expenditures for Mental Health Services, Substance Abuse Treatment Services and Special Economic Assistance.

Describing Children Served and Types of Services

Trails is the primary source of data regarding children served and the types and number of services delivered. Differences across counties in the use of the Trails system (in terms of non-mandatory data fields) limit the data presented in this report (please see the Evaluation Methods and Comparative Cost of Core Services sections for details). Data must be interpreted with caution; reminders of specific limitations are inserted occasionally in the Outcomes Section of this report.

Numbers of children served and types of services provided by each county are derived from Trails data and represent an unduplicated count of children served in each county; each child is counted one time, regardless of how many different services were received. Every child receiving *any* core service in SFY 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010) is included in this count.

Unduplicated counts of services are provided, based on the information that is entered into Trails. In addition, a matrix is provided which outlines the counties for which full service authorization information is available. This data is used to estimate costs and outcomes across some Core Services types.

Time Periods for Involvement
Children are divided into five main cohorts/groups based on the time of their involvement in Core Services, as follows:
1. **SFY 2010 Children Served** - all children who began their service episode prior to June 30, 2010 (end of SFY 2010).
2. **SFY 2010 New Services Cohort** - children served in SFY 2010 who began a distinct service episode[7] during the fiscal year.
3. **SFY 2008 Discharge[8] Cohort** - children who ended a distinct service episode during SFY 2008 and did not return to service within two months (62 days)[9].
4. **SFY 2009 Discharge Cohort** - children who ended a distinct service episode during SFY 2009 and did not return to service within two months (62 days).

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[7] A distinct service episode is defined as the date of the first service authorization occurring in this fiscal year and which contains an authorization with an end date, and no additional service authorization is present.
[8] Discharge is defined as the end of a distinct Core Service episode (as defined above) without a new service beginning.
[9] The two-month (62 day) time period was determined, in consultation with Core Services Coordinators, to be a reasonable length of time to assume that a service episode had actually ended (as opposed to a case where services are continuing, but a new authorization has not yet been entered into Trails).

5. **SFY 2010 Discharge Cohort** – children who ended a distinct service episode during SFY 2010 and who have not had a new service episode begin.

Discharge Cohorts

Each discharge cohort of children from the previous state fiscal year is used in this report to examine 12-month outcomes for children served by Core Services.

Describing Core Services Implementation

The number of actual service units delivered reflects a duplicated count of children. In other words, a single child may be counted multiple times, once for each service received. All services authorized in Trails in SFY 2010 are included in this count. In addition, duplicated counts of services are included for this fiscal year. These counts represent the total number of authorizations, with a single child often receiving more than one authorization. Frequency distributions and means (averages) are used to describe child characteristics and service units.

Information from county and tribal Core Services Commission Reports is used throughout this report. For example, types of services used in each county are summarized in the Program Overview Section and frequency of service availability is included in the Implementation of Core Services Program Section. These Commission Reports also provide contextual data for the Outcomes Section and additional details regarding how counties acquire supplemental funds to meet the needs of their communities. In addition, information is collected on specific program accomplishments, county collaborative efforts, evidence based practices, and recommendations for changes to the Core Services Program. Commission reports comment on local factors driving higher costs of services and other factors that promote cost efficiencies or cost savings. Most of the data presented from counties is qualitative and summarized in narrative form. Where possible and appropriate, frequency distributions are used to describe county implementation efforts. Please see Appendix A for the template for this year's Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Reports.

> *County Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Reports provide much of the information used to describe services to children and families across the state.*

Describing Costs of the Core Services Program

As noted above, county practices vary in the ways in which data is entered into Trails. This most likely produces an unknown undercount of services provided and makes cost estimates per child and per service difficult to determine. Services delivered by the Core Services Program can be paid for in three different ways: 1) "fee for service" contract with a private provider, 2) "fixed rate contract" with a private provider, or 3) provided directly by the county. In some cases counties may set up a fee for service or fixed rate contract in order to pay for services provided by another county.

> *Most cost analyses in this report are based on data from the 33 counties with complete data.*

When there is a fee-for-service contract in place, the provider is paid for each individual service provided to a specific child (or family, on behalf of the child). In order to process payment, each service must be entered into Trails. Costs for fee-for-service units are recorded in Trails by individual child. Therefore, an actual cost per child can be calculated under the fee for service payment structure.

Counties were surveyed regarding data entry practices for SFY 2010. There were 33 counties that reported entering complete service authorizations. These services were compared against data contained in the contracts extract and Colorado Financial Management System (CFMS), which is used to report overall expenditures for all Core Services and for Substance Abuse Treatment and Mental Health Treatment services specifically. For other Core Services, complete cost data is not available. Estimates have been made based on service length and contract costs, but because full CFMS expenditure data is not reported, these estimates may not accurately reflect all program costs.

Describing Program Effectiveness: Core Services Outcomes

The following indicators are used to describe Core Services outcomes: successful completion of services, maintaining children in the home, and reducing the incidence and length of future out-of-home placements. Child safety is also explored through substantiated child abuse findings prior to, during and following receipt of Core Services. More outcomes regarding safety, in addition to permanency, will be included in next year's evaluation report.

Discharge from Core Services is currently captured as the Leave Reason recorded in Trails at the time a service authorization ends. The possible "pick list" of Leave Reasons is shown below, mapped to variables used in the analysis.

Table 1: Leave Reasons used in Analysis matched with "Pick List" from Trails	
General Leave Reason used in Analysis	**Trails Pick List**
Positive Reasons	
In Home-Case Successfully Closed	In Home-Case Successfully Closed Family Preservation Success
In Home without Service Follow-up	In Home without Service Follow-up
In Home Follow-up with Additional Core Services	In Home Follow-up with Additional Core Services
Negative Reasons	
Family Refused/Inactive/Failed to Comply	Client refused service Inactive Core Service Parents failed to provide adequate safety
Out-of-home Placement	Out-of-home Placement Out-of-home with another Core Service
Runaway	Runaway
Neutral Reasons	
Administrative	Business Office Correction Case Transferred To Another County Contract Expired/Opened in Error Payee Wrong Code Provider Closed
Child/Family Moved	Moved out of County/Agency/State
Client Health Issue[10]	Death Hospitalization

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[10] If a client health issue is the result of abuse or neglect the leave reason would be considered negative not neutral.

Table 1: Leave Reasons used in Analysis matched with "Pick List" from Trails	
General Leave Reason used in Analysis	**Trails Pick List**
Closed upon Assessment	Closed upon Assessment
Transfer to New Service or Provider/Type	Same Provider/Same Service Same Service Type/New Provider
Other	Other

Leave Reasons are reported for children in the SFY 2010 discharge cohort, meaning their array of Core Services (each defined as an episode) ended during this fiscal year. Because children often had multiple authorizations during a single episode, the Leave Reason associated with the last service authorization is used to describe the disposition of the child's case at the time services ended.

Maintaining Children in the Home
For this report, maintaining children in the home is defined as the avoidance of an out-of-home placement occurring during the Core Services episode. Proportions of children maintained in the home are derived from identifying children who do not experience an out-of-home placement beginning during their Core Services start and end dates.

Return to Core Services
For this report, return to Core Services is defined as a new Core Service authorization occurring in Trails at least two months (62 days) after the Core Service episode has ended. Any new authorization occurring in less than two months would be considered a continuation of that episode and not a return to service. The two-month (62 day) time period was determined, in consultation with Core Services Coordinators, to be a reasonable length of time to assume that a service episode had actually ended (as opposed to a case where services are continuing, but a new authorization has not yet been entered into Trails).

Program Overview

Core Services Provided by Counties

The Core Services Program is an important component of each county's child welfare efforts. The Program provides flexibility for counties to provide services specific to the needs of each family in an effort to prevent out-of-home placements. Core Services are also used to support families as the children return home, move to less restrictive settings, or are maintained in the least restrictive placement available. In addition, if permanent placement outside of the home is required for the child's safety and well-being, Core Services are used to support permanent placements. As set out in statute (C.R.S. 26-5.5-103), the purpose of Core Services funding is to provide "family preservation services," defined as assistance that focuses on a family's strengths and empowers a family by providing alternative problem-solving techniques and child-rearing practices, as well as promoting effective responses to stressful living situations for the family. This assistance includes resources that are available to supplement existing informal support systems for the family. Core Services funding is allocated individually to each of the 64 Colorado Counties and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe[11].

> *"Core Services are very effective in our county. Because of Core Services we have minimal out-of-home placements and a reduced number of voluntary Child Protection cases. We also have a reduced number of absences, behavior issues at school and at home and reduced school dropout rates."*
>
> *Comment from County Commission Report*

The Core Services Program is made up of nine designated service types. A more detailed description of each service types is included later in this report:

1. Home Based Intervention
2. Intensive Family Therapy
3. Life Skills
4. Day Treatment
5. Sexual Abuse Treatment
6. Mental Health Services
7. Substance Abuse Services
8. Aftercare[12]
9. County Designed Services

Within the parameters set in statute, each locality is encouraged to determine the most appropriate mix of services based on community need and resource availability. While all counties are required to ensure access to all of the Core Services specified in statute, the approach to doing so varies according to local need. Each year, counties complete and submit an Annual Plan describing how they plan to use available funding to match services to the specific needs of their families. The Annual Plan must include

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[11] Both the Southern Ute Indian Tribe and the Ute Mountain Indian Tribe are eligible to participate in the Core Services Program. Currently, only the Southern Ute Indian Tribe is participating. For simplicity, this report uses the term "county" as inclusive of both counties and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Just as each county faces unique opportunities and challenges, so does the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, including local family needs, regional and ethnic cultural needs and unique local government policies and priorities.

[12] After Care is the only Core Service type that is not required to be in each county's annual plan. Funds are not specifically designated for the provision of After Care, rather After Care services provide support during transitions from one service level to another or from a service to independence. For this reason, After Care services are not reported on separately.

details regarding allocation of Core Services funding locally. The following table shows the percentage of counties that utilized each type of service during SFY 2009 compared to SFY 2010.

Table 2: Core Services Utilization by Counties

Core Service Type	Percent of Counties Using[13]	
	SFY 2009	SFY 2010
Mental Health Services	93%	92%
Substance Abuse Treatment	88%	97%
Intensive Family Therapy	80%	92%
Special Economic Assistance	100%	100%[14]
Home-Based Services	71%	95%
County Designed Services	69%	78%
Life Skills	67%	62%
Day Treatment	51%	95%
Sexual Abuse Treatment	51%	89%

Program Changes and Core Service Allocations for SFY 2010

Table 3 shows total Core Services allocations for SFY 2010. This amount, overall, is lower than the total allocation available in the last state fiscal year (2008-2009). The reason for this apparent reduction is the removal of the Administrative Case Management (ACM) line from the Core Services allocation, representing a net $2.3 million decrease. However, the actual 100% Core Services line item was increased by $608,593 in order to replace some of the funding lost when the ACM line was removed. This means that direct service dollars available to the counties increased slightly this year, although the counties lost administrative funds associated with Core Services.

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[13] Based on Core Services County Commission Reports.
[14] All families are able to receive Special Economic Assistance. No single family received in excess of $400 during the state fiscal year.

Table 3: SFY 2010 Core Services Program Allocations			
County Name	Allocation	County	Allocation
Statewide	**$45,456,711**[15]	Kiowa	$55,331
Adams	$4,582,189	Kit Carson	$130,690
Alamosa	$671,447	Lake	$139,757
Arapahoe	$4,262,544	La Plata/San Juan/Southern Ute[16]	$1,041,122
Archuleta	$267,953	Larimer	$1,658,248
Baca	$44,473	Las Animas	$285,927
Bent	$88,297	Lincoln	$370,780
Boulder	$2,407,455	Logan	$370,189
Broomfield	$323,294	Mesa	$1,220,752
Chaffee	$294,964	Moffat	$477,616
Cheyenne	$40,217	Montezuma	$312,114
Clear Creek	$121,399	Montrose	$474,190
Conejos	$127,969	Morgan	$659,013
Costilla	$81,379	Otero	$456,529
Crowley	$28,237	Ouray/San Miguel	$255,426
Custer	$27,255	Park	$172,660
Delta	$388,129	Phillips	$40,384
Denver	$7,432,646	Pitkin	$35,158
Dolores	$30,750	Prowers	$334,439
Douglas	$216,746	Pueblo	$1,288,751
Eagle	$113,538	Rio Blanco	$120,940
Elbert	$295,433	Rio Grande/Mineral	$76,269
El Paso	$5,040,832	Routt	$318,898
Fremont	$779,938	Saguache	$94,895

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[15] Counties' allocations do not add to the statewide total due to rounding to the nearest dollar.
[16] The Southern Ute Indian Tribe receives $50,000 of Core Services funding administered by La Plata and not included in these totals.

Table 3: SFY 2010 Core Services Program Allocations			
County Name	**Allocation**	**County**	**Allocation**
Garfield	$444,649	Sedgwick	$33,134
Gilpin	$86,926	Summit	$225,073
Grand	$174,301	Teller	$526,645
Gunnison/Hinsdale	$84,229	Washington	$107,145
Huerfano	$137,390	Weld	$1,421,439
Jackson	$27,603	Yuma	$248,325
Jefferson	$3,882,688		

Evidence-Based Service Awards

Some counties receive additional Core Services funding specifically targeted to provide evidence-based services to adolescents in home and community-based settings. In SFY 2010, a total of $4,088,723 was allocated for evidence-based services to adolescents. Evidence-based services are programs that have been proven effective in reducing the need for higher cost residential services. These programs help counties avoid or reduce the length of costly out-of-home placement.

These funds are allocated to counties through a Request for Proposals (RFP) process and are reflected in the overall Total Core Services Allocations report. The services provided through these funds are a strong asset to the Core Services Program, allowing Colorado families to receive state-of-the-art services that might not otherwise be available.

> *Evidence-based service awards represent a strong asset to the Core Services Program, providing Colorado families with proven approaches to supporting adolescents in the community.*

Each county receiving an evidence-based services award must submit a complete program needs assessment, service description and projected outcomes. They must also document historical outcomes demonstrating how the specific services reduce the need for higher cost, more restrictive settings or residential services[17]. The Division of Child Welfare collaborates with each Core Services Program Coordinator to ensure outcome data is compiled and progress toward the goal of each program is monitored.

The SFY 2010 Evidence Based Services to Adolescents Awards are shown in Table 4, organized by county, amount of approved award, and the approved Evidence Based Service program(s). Twenty-five counties received awards ranging from $11,938 to $356,461. The number of counties receiving awards, and the amounts of each award, are determined by available funds and a competitive application process.

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[17]The additional evidence based programs for adolescents are considered County Designed Core Services. All County Designed data pulled from Trails includes these evidence based programs.

Table 4: Evidence Based Service Awards		
County Name	**Award Amount**	**Evidence Based Service Program**
Statewide	**$4,088,723**	
Adams	$292,897	Youth Intervention Program
Alamosa	$63,837	Intensive Mentoring Project
Arapahoe	$571,345	Multisystemic Therapy – Savio Direct Link/Multisystemic Therapy – Synergy
Archuleta	$83,970	Moral Recognition Therapy and Responsibility Training
Broomfield	$56,707	Multisystemic Therapy
Chafee	$98,147	Mentoring
Conejos	$62,436	Mentoring
Costilla	$39,514	Intensive Mentoring Project
Denver	$226,173	Multisystemic Therapy
Elbert	$157,035	Multisystemic Therapy Family Coaching/Youth Mentoring
El Paso	$248,639	Multisystemic Therapy
Fremont	$92,991	Functional Family Therapy
Garfield	$22,427	Adolescent Mediation Services
Gunnison/Hinsdale	$39,186	Family and Youth Mentoring
Huerfano	$11,938	Reconnecting Youth
Jefferson	$424,801	Multisystemic Therapy Team Decision Making
Kit Carson	$19,629	Functional Family Therapy
La Plata/San Juan/ Montezuma, Dolores/Archuleta	$314,233	Adolescent Dialectical Behavioral Therapy Multisystemic Therapy
Larimer	$196,833	Family Group Conferencing NYPUM National Youth Program Using Mini-Bikes
Mesa	$290,522	Rapid Response Day Treatment to Adolescents
Montrose	$64,995	Promoting Healthy Adolescent Trends (PHAT)
Pueblo	$182,605	For Keeps Program
Summit	$21,810	Mentor Supported Substance Abuse Treatment
Teller	$115,159	Multisystemic Therapy
Weld	$390,894	Teamwork, Innovation, Growth, Hope and Training (TIGHT) Multisystemic Therapy

Implementation of the Core Services Program

This section discusses data entry practices across counties and explains the ways in which this report accommodates known variations in the Trails data available for each county. This section also includes the number and demographics of children served and the impact of local collaborations on Core Services delivery.

The term "children served" includes the child who is considered to be "Participating as a Child (PAC)" as well as other family members and caregivers who received services on behalf of the child. The flexibility of the Core Services Program allows services to be provided not only to the identified child(ren), but also other family members and caregivers when necessary. The Trails data system requires services to be tied to a child even if the service is provided to an adult family member or caregiver. Therefore, for purposes of this report, references to "children served" or "services received by children" refer to all services – those delivered directly to the child and those delivered to other family members on behalf of the child.

Variations in County Use of the Trails Data System

Over the past several years, the Core Services Annual Evaluation Report has noted challenges in using Trails data to describe services provided and their impact on children and families. These challenges stemmed from variations in data entry and limitations in some Trails data fields. In order to better understand these issues, this year's report takes a closer look at county data entry practices and includes analyses using data from counties for which Core Services funding utilization is accurately represented by Trails data.

> *Data entry practices vary significantly across the state. Complete data is available for just over half the counties.*

Trails data enhancements will be implemented over the next state fiscal year to help to improve functionality. These enhancements include: enhancing the leave reasons for Core services authorizations to include discharge setting, outcome code and leave reason. Other enhancements include identifying who is receiving services on behalf of the child.

Division of Child Welfare policy mandates that all services be entered into Trails. The Division provides training to support this requirement. One-half (51%) of counties enter data in Trails for all Core Services provided and, as the impact of incomplete data entry becomes more widely understood, Core Services Coordinators across the state are increasing efforts to improve data entry practices.   However, data entry practices vary across the state. Two primary reasons seem to explain incomplete data entry practices. The first is the demand on resources, especially among smaller counties with fewer staff. Counties report staff shortages and large workloads; deploying staff time for data entry is perceived as a lower priority when contrasted with directly serving families. The second explanation is the existence of alternative local databases where services are tracked according to local need. In addition to these explanations, the fact that the Trails data system does not require complete data entry in order for counties to purchase and provide services results in a lower priority given to Trails data entry by some counties.

Data entry practices vary across purchase options used to provide Core Services. There are three types of purchase options used by counties and each purchase type has different data entry requirements in order to ensure payment occurs.

Purchase Options
1. Fee-for-Service Contracts:
    Counties can purchase services from private providers under fee-for-service contracts. In order for providers to be paid for these services, the exact type of service, as well as service units, length of service and costs, must be entered into Trails for each child receiving services. Complete data is available in Trails for all fee-for-service contracts across counties.
2. Fixed Rate Contracts:
    Counties can purchase services from private providers using fixed rate contracts. Under these contracts, only one service authorization during the month needs to be entered into Trails in order to process payment (even if the provider served a number of children in that month). Some counties enter all service authorizations under fixed rate contracts while others do not.
3. County-Provided Services/Direct Delivery:
    Counties also have the option to provide services using their own qualified staff. As with fixed rate contracts, some counties enter all county provided services into Trails and others do not.

The Division of Child Welfare encourages counties to enter into fee-for-service contracts as often as possible to maximize accountability of providers and accuracy of Trails data. Beginning in SFY 2011, counties will be required to provide additional documentation in their Core Services Plan for fixed rate contracts. Additional documentation will include monthly contract amount, services provided, cost per service, cost per child, how the contract is being monitored for accountability, and the county's rationale for using a fixed rate contract instead of a fee-for-service contract. For more information on requirements for the County Core Services Plan please refer to Agency Letter CW-09-35-A at the Colorado Department of Human Services website (www.CDHS.state.co.us).

Trails data enhancements in the Core Services Program Area continue to be a priority for the Division. Throughout SFY 2011, new Trails builds will be rolled out that are designed to make data entry easier for counties, to better capture Trails Leaves Reasons, and to better link service authorizations to all children and family members who receive Core Services.

Addressing Known Variations in Data Entry Practices

To provide meaningful interpretations of service delivery and outcomes, we must first understand the quality and completeness of the available data. In response to a survey, 63 out of 65 counties provided detailed information regarding their data entry practices for each purchase option. Using this information in conjunction with other resources (please refer to the Evaluation Methods section for further explanation), subsets of counties and services types were created for which data appears to be complete.

The table below shows each county for which all service authorizations (although not necessarily the service details, costs, etc.) are entered into Trails, by service type. It is possible for counties to have complete data for most, but not all, service types. This can occur, for example, if mental health and substance abuse services are purchased under a fixed rate contract while other services are purchased under a fee-for-service contract. The matrix below shows the breakdown of Core Service Types provided by each county and all service authorizations that are available from Trails. A checkmark

indicates that a county has the service available. Highlighted cells indicate data for that category is assumed to be complete in Trails (Please see Evaluation Methods section for further information).

County Name	Home Based Intervention	Intensive Family Therapy	Day Treatment	Life Skills	Sexual Abuse Treatment	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services	Aftercare	County Designed Services
Table 5: Services Utilized by County shaded cells indicate complete data ✓ indicates service utilized in SFY 2010[18] as reported by county X indicates service was not provided in SFY 2010									
Adams	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Alamosa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Arapahoe	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Archuleta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Baca	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Bent	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Boulder	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Broomfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Chaffee	✓	✓	X	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓
Cheyenne	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Clear Creek	✓	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Conejos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Costilla	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Crowley	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Custer	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Delta	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Denver	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Douglas	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Eagle	X	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Elbert	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
El Paso	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Elbert	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[18] All counties ensure that all services are available. However, not all service types are provided in any given fiscal year.

| **Table 5: Services Utilized by County** |
| shaded cells indicate complete data |
| ✓ indicates service utilized in SFY 2010[18] as reported by county |
| X indicates service was not provided in SFY 2010 |

County Name	Home Based Intervention	Intensive Family Therapy	Day Treatment	Life Skills	Sexual Abuse Treatment	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services	Aftercare	County Designed Services
Fremont	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Garfield	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gilpin	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Grand	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Gunnison/Hinsdale	✓	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Huerfano	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jackson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Jefferson	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kiowa	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Kit Carson	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Lake	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
La Plata	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Larimer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Las Animas	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Lincoln	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Logan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Mesa	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Moffat	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Montezuma/Dolores	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Montrose	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Morgan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Otero	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Ouray/San Miguel	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Park	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Phillips	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Pitkin	X	X	X	X	X	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prowers	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 5: Services Utilized by County

☐   shaded cells indicate complete data

✓   indicates service utilized in SFY 2010[18] as reported by county

X   indicates service was not provided in SFY 2010

County Name	Home Based Intervention	Intensive Family Therapy	Day Treatment	Life Skills	Sexual Abuse Treatment	Mental Health Services	Substance Abuse Services	Aftercare	County Designed Services
Pueblo	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Rio Blanco	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
Rio Grande/Mineral	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Routt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓
Saguache	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X
San Juan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sedgwick	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	X
Southern Ute	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Summit	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	X	✓	✓
Teller	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Washington	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓
Weld	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Yuma	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X

The table above lists 14 counties that provided all nine Core Services Types *and* have complete data for all service types. An additional 19 counties that provided fewer than nine services types have complete data for the services they do provide. In total, then, there are 33 counties (51%) for which complete data is available in Trails. For many of the analyses in this report, subsets were created from counties and service types where complete data is available.

Table 6, below, lists each county's Core Services allocation, actual expenditures, the number of service authorizations entered into Trails, and whether service authorizations for each county are entered into Trails.

County Name	Allocation	Expenditures[19]	Service Authorizations	All Service Authorizations in Trails? Yes or No
Table 6: SFY 2010 Core Services Allocations, Expenditures and Service Authorizations				
Statewide	**$45,456,711**	$48,342,272	**46,197**	No
Adams	$4,582,189	$4,521,751	2,198	No
Alamosa	$671,447	$755,503	414	Yes
Arapahoe	$4,262,544	$4,285,126	3,792	No
Archuleta	$267,953	$258,043	100	Yes
Baca	$44,473	$23,498	1	Yes
Bent	$88,297	$63,270	61	No
Boulder	$2,407,455	$2,308,173	1,048	Yes
Broomfield	$323,294	$245,986	188	Yes
Chaffee	$294,964	$268,232	46	Yes
Cheyenne	$40,217	$28,925	7	No
Clear Creek	$121,399	$104,220	39	Yes
Conejos	$127,969	$104,373	144	Yes
Costilla	$81,379	$37,443	19	No
Crowley	$28,237	$30,841	40	Yes
Custer	$27,255	$5,788	7	Yes
Delta	$388,129	$344,197	285	Yes
Denver	$7,432,646	$6,781,411	5,773	No
Dolores	$30,750	$16,701	15	No
Douglas	$216,746	$290,369	149	Yes
Eagle	$113,583	$124,119	62	No
Elbert	$295,433	$230,608	90	No
El Paso	$5,040,832	$5,825,774	10,493	No
Fremont	$779,938	$815,218	1,345	Yes
Garfield	$444,649	$305,171	300	Yes
Gilpin	$ 86,926	$75,512	63	No
Grand	$174,301	$179,006	167	No
Gunnison/Hinsdale	$ 84,229	$105,663	48	No
Huerfano	$137,390	$125,049	48	No
Jackson	$27,603	$24,391	7	No
Jefferson	$3,882,688	$4,988,549	5,038	Yes
Kiowa	$55,331	$61,813	--[20]	No
Kit Carson	$130,690	$207,692	74	No
Lake	$139,757	$67,987	161	No
La Plata/San Juan	$1,041,122	$1,062,196	653	Yes

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[19] Expenditures are based on SFY 2010 Core Services Close-Out
[20] No services authorizations were entered for SFY 2009-1010 for Kiowa County.

County Name	Allocation	Expenditures[19]	Service Authorizations	All Service Authorizations in Trails? Yes or No
Table 6: SFY 2010 Core Services Allocations, Expenditures and Service Authorizations				
Larimer	$1,658,248	$3,210,029	5,699	No
Las Animas	$285,927	$286,767	105	Yes
Lincoln	$370,780	$360,609	88	No
Logan	$370,189	$509,338	274	No
Mesa	$1,220,752	$1,263,190	968	Yes
Moffat	$477,616	$368,564	277	Yes
Montezuma	$312,114	$343,588	166	No
Montrose	$474,190	$441,251	264	No
Morgan	$659,013	$691,583	517	Yes
Otero	$456,529	$401,665	136	No
Ouray/San Miguel	$255,426	$233,926	74	No
Park	$172,660	$115,927	85	Yes
Phillips	$40,384	$38,251	18	Yes
Pitkin	$35,158	$10,844	21	No
Prowers	$334,439	$316,782	90	Yes
Pueblo	$1,288,751	$1,446,563	1,809	Yes
Rio Blanco	$120,940	$106,149	74	No
Rio Grande/Mineral	$76,269	$85,518	73	No
Routt	$318,898	$254,161	85	Yes
Saguache	$94,895	$97,683	38	Yes
Sedgwick	$33,134	$44,049	10	Yes
Summit	$225,073	$190,754	107	Yes
Teller	$526,645	$488,554	281	Yes
Washington	$107,145	$81,905	79	Yes
Weld	$1,421,439	$2,059,963	1,898	Yes
Yuma	$248,325	$212,087	86	Yes

The table above illustrates how differences in data entry practices can skew reports of services authorized or services delivered by counties. For example, Jefferson County enters all service authorizations into Trails regardless of purchase option used. Denver County, on the other hand, does not enter all service authorizations into Trails. Trails data shows both counties with roughly 5,000 service authorizations, but Jefferson County's allocation ($3,882,688) is roughly half of Denver County's allocation ($7,432,646). Knowing the difference in the data entry practices of these counties highlights the degree to which Denver County's use of Core Service funds may be under-represented by the data available in Trails. Another example contrasts Moffat County, which enters all service authorizations, with Otero County, which does not. Here, two counties with similar allocations ($477,616 and $456,529 respectively) appear to have wide variation in service authorizations – more than double the number of service authorizations for Moffat (277) than Otero (136). Otero's use of Core Services funding is

significantly under-represented by available Trails data. These examples demonstrate the impact of varying data entry practices on representation of each county and their use of Core Services funding.

In analyzing Trails data for this section, numbers were calculated using a subset of counties and/or service types for which we assume there is complete data. The subset used for each table and figure is included as part of the narrative describing that table or figure. If a subset is not noted, the numbers reported represent totals from all counties.

Children Served During SFY 2010

A total of 15,226 children (unduplicated count) were identified in Trails as having received at least one Core Service during SFY 2010. This represents an almost 6% decline over the previous fiscal year (SFY 2009), which experienced a 9.7% decrease in children served compared with SFY 2008. At that time, it was speculated that the decrease could be due to less data entry into Trails as a result of state personnel budget cuts. However, this year, Trails data entry practices seem stable, based on county reports, so the current decrease may be attributed to different factors.

The decrease could be due, in part, to the reduction of Core Services funds created by the elimination of administrative case management funds from the Core Services line item, impacting all counties in the state. Alternatively, County Core Services Coordinators report increased efforts at the local level to utilize all available funding sources and to more carefully match each family's needs and resources to the most appropriate funding source. Coordinators report that use of federal funds through Medicaid, when families are eligible, and grant funding when possible, allows Core Services funding to be preserved for families with no other funding source. Additionally, partnerships through Collaborative Management Programs - HB 1451[21] might reduce the number of children served through Core Services programs by promoting service delivery through other avenues.

The total count of children served since SFY 2006 is depicted in Table 7.

Table 7: Total Number of Children Served: Core Services Program					
	SFY 2006	**SFY 2007**	**SFY 2008**	**SFY 2009**	**SFY 2010**
Total Unduplicated Count	19,006[22]	19,152[23]	17,793	16,066	15,226

Table 8 shows race/ethnicity and gender of the children served. Most children served by the Core Services Program were White, non-Hispanic (49%) or Hispanic (34%). There was a fairly even distribution of girls (47%) and boys (53%) across the children served. The average age of children served by Core Services was 9.0 years with a range from newborn to 18 years old[24].

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[21] Collaborative Management Programs (CMP) are voluntary local multi-agency committees working together to serve children and families. CMP goals are to reduce duplication, share resources, increase effectiveness of services and improve outcomes for children and families. Agencies involved include county departments of human / social services, judicial district(s), probation services, county health department, school district(s), and mental health centers.

[22] This number is taken from the SFY 2006 County Commission Report.

[23] This number is taken from the SFY 2007 County Commission Report.

[24] Core services may be provided until the client turns 21. However, all children began services at age 18 or lower.

Table 8: Race/Ethnicity and Gender of Children Served		
	Core Services Children Served	
	Number of Children	**Percentage**
Female	7,126	46.8%
Male	8,100	53.2%
TOTAL	**15,226**	**100.0%**
American Indian or Alaskan Native	100	<1%
Asian	64	<1%
Black or African American	1,265	8.3%
Hispanic	4,922	32.3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	29	<1%
White (Caucasian)	7,493	49.2%
Multiple Races	934	6.1%
Missing Data or Unable to Determine	**419**	**2.8%**
TOTAL	**15,226**	**100.0%**

The demographic make-up of children receiving Core Services in SFY 2010 was consistent with the previous year (SFY 2009). Ethnicity among children remained primarily White (49%) and Hispanic (32%). Once again, there were more boys (53%) than girls (47%).

Table 9 below shows the distribution of children served across counties.

Table 9: SFY 2010 Unduplicated Children Served[25] by County						
County Name	**SFY 2008 Children Served**		**SFY 2009 Children Served**		**SFY 2010 Children Served**	
	Number	**Percent of State Total**	**Number**	**Percent of State Total**	**Number**	**Percent of State Total**
State Total	**17,793**	100%	**16,066**	100%	**15,226**	100%
Adams	1,123	6.3%	929	5.7%	1,181	7.7%
Alamosa	211	1.2%	186	1.2%	198	1.3%
Arapahoe	2,008	11.3%	1,397	8.6%	1,579	10.3%
Archuleta	78	0.4%	85	0.5%	68	0.4%
Baca	6	0.0%	1	0.%	1	0.0%
Bent	26	0.1%	29	0.2%	26	0.2%
Boulder	719	4.0%	733	4.5%	554	3.6%
Broomfield	88	0.5%	101	0.6%	83	0.5%

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[25]Clients are unduplicated *within* each county. However, some children were served by multiple counties. These children are counted multiple times, one time for each county. The number of children unduplicated by count adds to 15,260.

County Name	SFY 2008 Children Served		SFY 2009 Children Served		SFY 2010 Children Served	
	Number	**Percent of State Total**	**Number**	**Percent of State Total**	**Number**	**Percent of State Total**
Chaffee	35	0.2%	33	0.2%	19	0.1%
Cheyenne	4	0.0%	2	0.%	2	0.0%
Clear Creek	36	0.2%	44	0.3%	32	0.2%
Conejos	59	0.3%	61	0.4%	58	0.4%
Costilla	8	0.0%	9	0.1%	9	0.1%
Crowley	13	0.1%	22	0.1%	23	0.2%
Custer	6	0.0%	5	0.%	6	0.0%
Delta	156	0.9%	107	0.7%	119	0.8%
Denver	3,299	18.5%	2,808	17.4%	2,195	14.4%
Dolores	16	0.1%	10	0.1%	9	0.1%
Douglas	97	0.5%	96	0.6%	97	0.6%
Eagle	112	0.6%	62	0.4%	23	0.2%
Elbert	80	0.4%	66	0.4%	51	0.3%
El Paso	1,612	9.1%	1,654	10.2%	1,582	10.4%
Fremont	294	1.7%	244	1.5%	272	1.8%
Garfield	180	1.0%	145	0.9%	117	0.8%
Gilpin	32	0.2%	28	0.2%	36	0.2%
Grand	52	0.3%	42	0.3%	54	0.4%
Gunnison/Hinsdale	46	0.3%	33	0.2%	31	0.2%
Huerfano	91	0.5%	74	0.5%	36	0.5%
Jackson	8	0.0%	7	0.%	4	0.0%
Jefferson	1,721	9.7%	1,558	9.6%	1,430	9.6%
Kit Carson	34	0.2%	26	0.2%	24	0.2%
Lake	38	1.2%	53	0.3%	49	0.3%
La Plata/San Juan	220	0.2%	211	1.3%	247	1.6%
Larimer	1,868	10.5%	1,926	11.9%	1,865	12.2%
Las Animas	51	0.3%	55	0.3%	60	0.4%
Lincoln	41	0.2%	41	0.3%	40	0.3%
Logan	93	0.5%	83	0.5%	131	0.9%
Mesa	387	2.2%	386	2.4%	385	2.5%
Moffat	157	0.9%	142	0.9%	124	0.8%
Montezuma	112	0.6%	126	0.8%	107	0.7%
Montrose	162	0.9%	150	0.9%	126	0.8%
Morgan	213	1.2%	196	1.2%	169	1.1%
Otero	64	0.4%	49	0.3%	77	0.5%
Ouray/San Miguel	20	0.1%	23	0.1%	30	0.2%
Park	63	0.4%	52	0.3%	31	0.2%

County Name	SFY 2008 Children Served		SFY 2009 Children Served		SFY 2010 Children Served	
	Number	Percent of State Total	Number	Percent of State Total	Number	Percent of State Total
Phillips	15	0.1%	12	0.1%	15	0.1%
Pitkin	12	0.1%	17	0.1%	8	0.1%
Prowers	87	0.5%	84	0.5%	66	0.4%
Pueblo	835	4.7%	788	4.9%	704	4.6%
Rio Blanco	47	0.3%	48	0.3%	34	0.2%
Rio Grande/Mineral	64	0.4%	65	0.4%	43	0.3%
Routt	54	0.3%	36	0.2%	28	0.2%
Saguache	28	0.2%	38	0.2%	27	0.2%
Sedgwick	7	0.0%	6	0.%	4	0.0%
Summit	52	0.3%	43	0.3%	29	0.2%
Teller	123	0.7%	147	0.9%	120	0.8%
Washington	11	0.1%	28	0.2%	33	0.2%
Weld	664	3.7%	720	4.5%	743	4.9%
Yuma	51	0.3%	36	0.2%	46	0.3%

Table 9: SFY 2010 Unduplicated Children Served[25] by County

Services Provided (Statewide and by County): All Children Served

Overall, the number of service authorizations (as entered into Trails) for this state fiscal year is slightly lower (3%) than for last year. This is consistent with the decrease in the number of children served as described above.

Table 10: Number of Service Authorizations Entered into Trails (duplicated count of services)		
	SFY 2009	**SFY 2010**
Total Duplicated Count	47,587	46, 197

Despite the decrease in service authorizations, most counties report the need for Core Services increased this fiscal year as people continue to struggle financially in the current economic climate. Most County Coordinators report increased efforts to match services with the specific needs and stated preferences of families as the reason for lower service authorizations in their counties. The best practice literature points to increased family voice in service planning and better targeting of services to needs, leading to fewer services per family and more effective services for families. One county described this shift as, " . . . let's do what will be most helpful for the family at this time, rather than just throwing a bunch of different services at them to see what will stick."

> " . . . let's do what will be most helpful for the family at this time, rather than just throwing a bunch of different services at them to see what will stick."
>
> *Comment from a Core Services Coordinator regarding the value of the Family Voice*

During an open-forum family call-in event held by the evaluation team in July 2010, families echoed the positive impact of including them in meaningful ways in the service planning process. One mother of a teenage son stated emphatically, "Mentoring works [for my son], therapy doesn't work [for my son]! [They used to] spend money on what they thought the family needed. [It works much better] to find out what the family needs and spend the money that way." With the help of Core Services staff, this mother was successful in getting a long-term therapeutic mentor for her son and agreement to discontinue therapy. From the perspective of Core Services staff, the therapeutic component of their mentoring program can target the same goals they might have for therapy. Mentoring is much less expensive, less restrictive, and in this case, the family feels mentoring is meeting their needs.

> *Increased efforts to enhance family voice and choice in services are perceived to enhance the efficiency of services.*

When asked what advice she would give to a new caseworker, a different parent who had received Core Services suggested, "Listen to the family, try to ease their fear. You have to dig into the family and really understand what is going on."

Types of Core Services Provided

The following description of services includes only those 33 counties for which data is assumed to be complete. Using these counties, some extrapolations to trends in statewide patterns are made.

Figure 1: Distribution of Service Authorizations across Core Service Types[26]
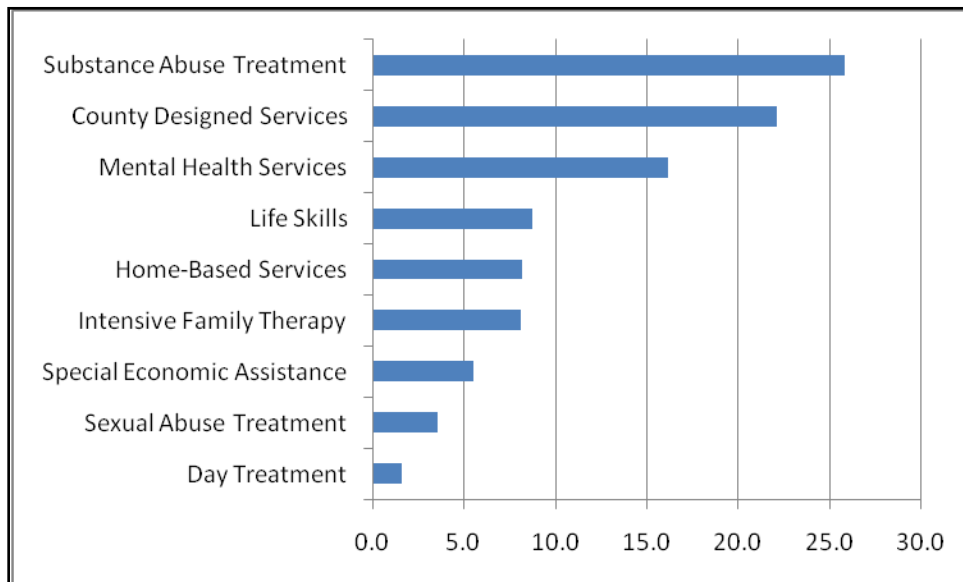
There were significant differences across the 33 included counties in terms of the most frequently authorized Core Service. This reinforces the concept that the Core Services Program benefits from allowing flexibility for counties to structure and deliver services to meet the needs of families in each individual community. However, because of the variation across counties, this data cannot be generalized to those counties for which service authorization data is incomplete.

More than three-quarters of the children served (77%) received more than one type of Core Service in counties that enter all service authorizations into Trails. One-third received two different types of service, and the remaining 43 percent received three or more different types of Core Services throughout the fiscal year.

A preliminary analysis of children receiving multiple service types did not show any general patterns, with one exception: when multiple services were provided, both substance abuse services and Mental Health Services were often provided concurrently. The convergence of these two service types makes sense given the high incidence of co-occurring disorders that were reported by counties.

> Sixty percent (60%) of counties report sufficient access to services for their families. The remaining 40% report that available resources do not meet the needs of families in their communities.

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[26] Note – numbers in figure represent percentages.

Nearly one-quarter of the services delivered were County-Designed services, rather than one of the primary Core Services types. These special services offer flexibility for counties to provide services needed in the community beyond the primary Core Services that are required to be made available.

County Reports of Service Availability and Access

According to statute, all counties are required to ensure that all nine designated Core Service types are available to families. In some counties, all services are available and capacity is sufficient to meet the needs. In others, services are available but capacity is not sufficient, or services are available but must be accessed in other counties. In some smaller counties, services are available but not needed during some years, due to low demand.

Counties have the opportunity each year to discuss service capacity and access issues in their County Commission Reports. This year, more than half (60%) reported that types of available services meet existing community needs, up from 52% last year. When asked which core service types were not available, the most frequent response was day treatment (37%, 24 counties). In some counties, needed services are available but capacity of providers does not meet the demand.

Barriers to Accessing Services

Over SFY 2010, 85% of counties (55) reported barriers to providing needed services to families. Of these 55 counties, 46 (84%) identified transportation and/or distance to services as a primary barrier. Several counties gave examples of clients needing to travel 60 miles or more (up to 300 miles) to access services in other parts of their county or in other counties. Transportation barriers are not limited to rural communities. Urban and suburban communities reported poor public transportation and unreliable personal transportation as barriers. Most rural counties reported a complete absence of public transportation. For one rural county covering over 1,500 square miles *" … the only mode of public transportation is one taxi for the entire county."* Most mountain communities stated significant transportation barriers that grow more challenging in winter. One county shared the following comment:

> *"This is a rural, mountainous area, with significant limitations in alternate routes. As a result, travel times in good weather can be long (1-2 hours), while travel during winter can often be impossible. This not only makes it difficult for clients to get to needed services, but (due to limited capacity) also makes it difficult or impossible to quickly reschedule service appointments that must be cancelled due to travel conditions."*

Sample cost estimate to access services in a neighboring county
In this scenario a working parent needs to travel 60 miles, one-way, one time per week for a 1-hour appointment for mental health services
Transportation costs - $297/month
   120 miles/week = 540 miles/month
   540 miles at $.55/mile = $297/month

Time away from work – 13.5 hours/month
   1 hour appointment each week plus 2 hours of driving each week = 13.5 hours away from work and family each month.

Lost Income – $97.74/month
   13.5 hours away from work each month
   13.5 hours at $7.24/hour (Colorado minimum wage) = $97.74

Frequently-cited barriers relate to challenges faced by parents who are trying to meet the requirements of their Family Services Plan in addition to working and managing the day to day needs of their children. Examples include: limited or non-existent evening and weekend hours for service providers, multiple simultaneous services for families which can result in several appointments each week. Parents must then frequently take time off of work which can result in lost wages and jeopardize on-going employment.

Some counties mentioned increased family engagement as a partial solution to these barriers. Engagement and close collaboration with families throughout the assessment and planning process improves the chances that families will end up with a reasonable schedule of appointments and only those services that match their needs.

Counties continue, as in past years, to identify a lack of providers and limited provider capacity as critical barriers.

An overall lack of qualified providers and high turnover in rural areas remains a concern. A lack of specific types of providers was also cited, including multilingual/multicultural providers and providers qualified to offer evidence-based, in-home services. In terms of limited capacity, substance abuse treatment was cited most often. Specific examples include substance abuse providers using all state provided funds before the end of the fiscal year, thereby significantly limiting their capacity for the remaining months or weeks, and insufficient numbers of clients in rural areas to financially justify maintaining treatment groups locally. Instead, substance abuse providers may offer needed groups only at central locations, resulting in transportation and travel barriers for clients. Some counties mentioned developing strong partnerships with mental health and substance abuse providers to help address these barriers.

Two (2) counties specifically mentioned the lack of funding for services needed for children with developmental or other disabilities. Both of these counties mentioned the need for more intensive and longer-term services than could currently be provided under Core Services in order to achieve and maintain safe placements for these children.

Impact of Local Collaboration Efforts

County Commission Reports over the last three years reveal the evolution of collaboration as a standard way of doing business in Colorado communities, at least when it comes to serving children at risk of out-of-home placement. Counties highlighted many local collaboration efforts and reported substantial benefits as a result of working closely with other community providers and agencies. Many county child welfare departments

> *"The richness of what is available to kids and families is greatly impacted by the collaborative efforts. The constant assessment of service delivery and open communication allow for easier problem solving and addressing of issues that may arise. There are fewer barriers for families to overcome in getting the services they need due to the partnership."*
>
> *Comment from a County Commission Report*

participate in collaborative efforts, including House Bill 1451 collaborative planning teams, Family-to-Family Programs and Promoting Safe and Stable Families. Counties also reported many types of cross system planning efforts, including multidisciplinary planning teams, case review teams, and special treatment court teams (e.g. family drug courts, juvenile drug courts). In addition, several counties have

created collaborative partnerships to meet specific needs in their communities. One county provided the following example of collaboration with multiple school districts.

> *"Child protection caseworkers are specifically assigned to multiple [school districts in the County] to provide immediate response to concerns or allegations of abuse or neglect. An essential resource is provided to the school, which offers education about identifying and preventing abuse and neglect to teachers, school administration and supports to individual children and/or families. This resource helps deter child abuse and involvement in the child welfare system."*

Specific benefits of collaborative efforts include enhancing the cost effectiveness of Core Services funding by decreasing duplication of services, improving use of the full range of available community services, ending or changing services when the client is no longer benefitting, and preventing returns to the Core Services Program due to broader, continuous community support for families. One county provided the following comment that highlights clear and specific benefits of successful collaboration efforts.

> *"[Our] County has one of the lowest rates of out-of-home placements due to our collaboration. We also have one of the lowest commitments to DYC rates in the State. Our collaboration has generated savings that allows us to continue to implement creative programming to keep kids in their homes and community. We have enhanced our philosophy to include a common vision of serving the whole family, not just the child. Many of our newer services are directed toward that end. In particular we rolled out our Juvenile Integrated Treatment Court in January 2009. This Court serves children and families who have significant substance abuse and delinquency issues. Mental Health, Public Heath, Probation, the DA office, GALs, two school districts, Public Defenders, Community Justice Services and SB 94 teams are all participating in this expanded, intensified, family based approach to substance use."*

Program Costs and Effectiveness

How effective are the services delivered to families in fulfilling the Core Services Program mission to strengthen Colorado families and keep children and families together?

In pursuit of this mission, the Core Services Program provides direct services to children, their parents and caregivers to:

> **The Core Services Mission**
> *To help strengthen Colorado families and keep children and families together.*

- Safely maintain children at home,
- Support a successful transition back into the home after removal (reunification),
- Stabilize and maintain out-of-home placements, including foster and adoptive homes, and
- Support transitions to (step down) and maintenance of out-of-home placements in the least restrictive setting.

Three overarching measures of program effectiveness will be examined:

1. Successful completion of services – the positive disposition of the child's case at the time Core Service delivery ends;
2. Serving children in the home or in the least restrictive setting possible – lowering the incidence and length of out-of-home placement during service delivery and after Core Services end; and
3. Child safety – lowering the incidence of child abuse and neglect during service delivery and after Core Services end.

This section of the report describes the costs and outcomes associated with the range of Core Service types delivered over the past fiscal year (SFY 2010). Currently available data allow a calculation of costs per child based only on the children entered into Trails and the total Core Expenditures. The estimated average cost per child, per day is $15, compared to $69 dollars per day for children in an out-of-home placement.

Overall Core Services Outcomes

Table 11: Leave Reasons: SFY 2010 Discharge Cohort (Unduplicated Children)		
Leave Reason[27]	**Unduplicated Count of Children**	**Percent**
Positive Leave Reasons	**5,789**	44.61%
In Home-Case Successfully Closed	3,558	27.42%
In Home without Service Follow-up	1,142	8.80%
In Home Follow-up with Additional Core	1,089	8.39%
"Neutral" Leave Reasons	**3,070**	**23.66%**
Administrative	835	6.43%
Child/Family Moved	271	2.09%
Client Health Issue	17	0.13%

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[27] Please see the Evaluation Methods section for a full list of all Leave Reasons.

Table 11: Leave Reasons: SFY 2010 Discharge Cohort (Unduplicated Children)		
Leave Reason[27]	**Unduplicated Count of Children**	**Percent**
Closed Upon Assessment	778	5.99%
Transfer to New Service or Provider/Type	1,169	9.01%
Negative Leave Reasons	**2,044**	**15.75%**
Family Refused/Inactive/Failed to Comply	905	6.97%
Out-of-Home Placement[28]	1,042	8.03%
Runaway	97	0.75%
Other	**2,067**	**15.93%**
Total	**12,978[29]**	**100%**

Table 12 presents Leave Reasons by county. For this analysis, neutral Leave Reasons have been combined into a single category and runaways have been combined with other negative Leave Reasons. Total percentages for each county do not equal 100% because Leave Reasons included under "other" in the table above are not included in this table.

Table 12: SFY 2010 Core Services Discharge Leave Reasons Percent of Each Leave Reason Type by County							
County Name	**Total SFY 2010 Discharges (Unduplicated Count)**	**Positive Leave Reasons**			**Neutral Leave Reasons**	**Negative Leave Reasons**	
		In-Home Case Successful	**In-Home, Follow up with Core**	**In-Home, No Follow up**	**Neutral Leave Reasons**	**Family Refused/ Inactive/ Failed to Comply/ Runaway[30]**	**Out-of-Home Placement**
Statewide	**12,978**	**27.4%**	**8.8%**	**8.4%**	**23.7%**	**7.7%**	**8.0%**
Adams	871	30.5%	5.4%	6.2%	15.4%	16.6%	5.7%
Alamosa	141	23.4%	17.7%	9.2%	10.6%	9.9%	9.9%
Arapahoe	1,226	25.9%	8.2%	13.6%	11.7%	10.0%	21.0%
Archuleta	64	60.9%	0.0%	0.0%	18.8%	10.9%	1.6%
Baca	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%

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[28] An out-of-home placement may be the most appropriate and least restrictive option for a child and it is therefore not a negative outcome for that child. For purposes of cost effectiveness, out-of-home placement is considered a negative outcome due to associated increased cost.

[29]This report assumes that some children will have new service authorizations during SFY 2009-2010 and within 62 days of previous discharge so that they will no longer be considered part of the SFY09 discharge cohort. In these cases, they will become (presumably) part of the SFY 2009-2010 discharge cohort for purposes of the longitudinal outcome analysis.

[30] Runaways were incorporated into this category because the occurrence was infrequent.

Table 12: SFY 2010 Core Services Discharge Leave Reasons
Percent of Each Leave Reason Type by County

County Name	Total SFY 2010 Discharges (Unduplicated Count)	Positive Leave Reasons			Neutral Leave Reasons	Negative Leave Reasons	
		In-Home Case Successful	In-Home, Follow up with Core	In-Home, No Follow up	Neutral Leave Reasons	Family Refused/ Inactive/ Failed to Comply/ Runaway[30]	Out-of-Home Placement
Bent	17	29.4%	0.0%	0.0%	17.6%	17.6%	0.0%
Boulder	468	30.3%	12.4%	20.3%	20.1%	6.6%	4.9%
Broomfield	66	50.0%	1.5%	4.5%	3.0%	3.0%	10.6%
Chaffee	12	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	0.0%
Cheyenne	1	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%	0.0%	0.0%
Clear Creek	27	7.4%	0.0%	0.0%	66.7%	11.1%	0.0%
Conejos	45	33.3%	2.2%	0.0%	11.1%	24.4%	2.2%
Costilla	6	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Crowley	17	29.4%	5.9%	5.9%	35.3%	5.9%	5.9%
Custer	3	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Delta	89	40.4%	6.7%	0.0%	16.9%	15.7%	1.1%
Denver	1,972	9.6%	9.6%	0.7%	26.6%	5.1%	1.3%
Dolores	6	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	33.3%	33.3%	0.0%
Douglas	80	51.3%	10.0%	3.8%	7.5%	8.8%	16.3%
Eagle	20	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Elbert	35	48.6%	2.9%	0.0%	37.1%	2.9%	5.7%
El Paso	1,501	14.5%	8.1%	3.9%	64.8%	2.5%	3.9%
Fremont	240	32.9%	11.7%	3.3%	16.3%	7.1%	22.9%
Garfield	110	20.0%	0.9%	0.0%	64.5%	11.8%	0.0%
Gilpin	22	45.5%	0.0%	18.2%	18.2%	18.2%	0.0%
Grand	42	59.5%	0.0%	0.0%	21.4%	0.0%	11.9%
Gunnison	21	47.6%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	9.5%	0.0%
Hinsdale	4	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%	0.0%
Huerfano	19	47.4%	0.0%	0.0%	21.1%	21.1%	5.3%
Jackson	2	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Jefferson	1,246	39.7%	7.5%	5.7%	11.9%	17.1%	15.5%
Kit Carson	18	38.9%	0.0%	0.0%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Lake	45	42.2%	4.4%	0.0%	46.7%	4.4%	0.0%
La Plata	173	46.8%	9.8%	5.2%	15.6%	9.2%	6.9%
Larimer	1,789	33.7%	17.4%	33.2%	4.5%	2.1%	7.9%
Las Animas	49	30.6%	0.0%	0.0%	30.6%	20.4%	2.0%
Lincoln	34	64.7%	11.8%	0.0%	11.8%	0.0%	2.9%
Logan	9	255.6%	11.1%	155.6%	35.4%	66.7%	22.2%

Table 12: SFY 2010 Core Services Discharge Leave Reasons
Percent of Each Leave Reason Type by County

County Name	Total SFY 2010 Discharges (Unduplicated Count)	Positive Leave Reasons			Neutral Leave Reasons	Negative Leave Reasons	
		In-Home Case Successful	In-Home, Follow up with Core	In-Home, No Follow up	Neutral Leave Reasons	Family Refused/ Inactive/ Failed to Comply/ Runaway[30]	Out-of-Home Placement
Mesa	341	17.9%	1.2%	0.0%	35.5%	4.1%	6.5%
Moffat	119	17.6%	0.0%	0.0%	75.6%	4.2%	0.0%
Montezuma	68	35.3%	5.9%	0.0%	30.9%	7.4%	2.9%
Montrose	82	42.7%	0.0%	0.0%	34.1%	11.0%	8.5%
Morgan	134	60.4%	6.0%	0.0%	11.9%	3.7%	14.9%
Otero	62	32.3%	0.0%	0.0%	66.1%	1.6%	0.0%
Ouray/San Miguel	23	13.0%	0.0%	0.0%	56.5%	30.4%	0.0%
Park	26	61.5%	3.8%	0.0%	3.8%	26.9%	3.8%
Phillips	11	36.4%	0.0%	45.5%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%
Pitkin	7	71.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%
Prowers	53	50.9%	1.9%	0.0%	35.8%	0.0%	1.9%
Pueblo	585	43.9%	2.9%	3.8%	24.3%	11.6%	7.9%
Rio Blanco	30	50.0%	0.0%	3.3%	26.7%	10.0%	3.3%
Rio Grande/Mineral	30	10.0%	0.0%	0.0%	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%
Routt	21	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	19.0%	9.5%	9.5%
Saguache	19	42.1%	21.1%	0.0%	26.3%	0.0%	5.3%
San Juan	3	66.7%	0.0%	0.0%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Sedgwick	4	25.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Summit	25	20.0%	4.0%	0.0%	56.0%	16.0%	4.0%
Teller	105	34.3%	10.5%	4.8%	26.7%	8.6%	7.6%
Washington	28	39.3%	21.4%	0.0%	28.6%	0.0%	3.6%
Weld	605	16.7%	1.7%	0.2%	8.8%	2.5%	9.6%
Yuma	36	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	36.1%	30.6%	8.3%

Return to Core Services

For this report, a "return to service" is defined as the start of a new service episode after a break longer than two months (62 days) following a discharge. Table 13, below, shows the proportion of children discharged during the previous fiscal year (SFY 2009) with a new Core Services episode beginning within 12 months following discharge. This data is presented for the SFY 2008 and SFY 2009 discharge cohorts only, because 12 months has not yet elapsed for most of the SFY 2010 discharges. Overall, 81% of children discharged in SFY 2009 did not return for additional core services within 12 months (18.9% did return for additional core services).

> *Eighty-one percent (81%) of children discharged in SFY 2009 did not return for additional Core Services in SFY 2010.*

While there were slightly more returns to core services for last year's cohort over the prior year, the difference was not statistically significant. In addition, the wide variance across counties may be due to incomplete data in Trails (discussed elsewhere in this report). The "return to core services" measure may not be accurate in cases where the child/family returns to a service not entered into Trails.

Table 13: SFY 2008 & SFY 2009 Discharge Cohorts Returns to Core Services				
	SFY 2008 Discharges		**SFY 2009 Discharges**	
County Name[31]	**Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent Returning**	**Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent Returning**
Statewide	**12,039**	**14.9%**	**12,327**	**18.9%**
Adams	689	4.9%	686	9.5%
Alamosa	122	15.6%	146	29.5%
Arapahoe	1,471	9.7%	1,090	25.6%
Archuleta	52	26.9%	69	20.3%
Bent	15	13.3%	21	38.1%
Boulder	494	18.2%	576	16.5%
Broomfield	46	6.5%	67	25.4%
Chaffee	16	0.0%	26	15.4%
Clear Creek	19	10.5%	1	0.0%
Conejos	26	19.2%	32	34.4%
Crowley	11	9.1%	47	6.4%
Delta	105	5.7%	74	13.5%
Denver	2,573	24.4%	2,365	17.2%
Douglas	59	6.8%	71	18.3%
Eagle	77	2.6%	52	7.7%
Elbert	48	10.4%	58	19.0%
El Paso	1,120	12.3%	1,088	10.0%
Fremont	227	29.1%	212	32.5%

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[31] Only counties with at least 10 discharges in the fiscal year are included here. Low numbers skew the proportions.

County Name[31]	SFY 2008 Discharges		SFY 2009 Discharges	
	Children (Unduplicated)	Percent Returning	Children (Unduplicated)	Percent Returning
Table 13: SFY 2008 & SFY 2009 Discharge Cohorts **Returns to Core Services**				
Garfield	139	19.4%	129	26.4%
Gilpin	15	6.7%	16	0.0%
Grand	36	11.1%	29	17.2%
Gunnison	30	6.7%	24	4.2%
Huerfano	32	3.1%	40	7.5%
Jefferson	1,050	9.9%	1,059	22.1%
Kit Carson	12	8.3%	22	9.1%
Lake	17	11.8%	46	13.0%
La Plata	144	9.7%	138	19.6%
Larimer	1,407	22.5%	1,683	24.8%
Las Animas	33	6.1%	35	8.6%
Lincoln	31	12.9%	34	14.7%
Logan	48	2.1%	33	21.2%
Mesa	269	14.1%	339	24.5%
Moffat	102	17.6%	138	15.2%
Montezuma	42	9.5%	81	18.5%
Montrose	76	9.2%	93	8.6%
Morgan	132	11.4%	164	20.1%
Otero	36	2.8%	24	4.2%
Ouray	12	8.3%	9	11.1%
Park	46	17.4%	43	2.3%
Phillips	12	0.0%	4	0.0%
Pitkin	9	11.1%	14	7.1%
Prowers	59	5.1%	61	8.2%
Pueblo	519	6.0%	543	15.55
Rio Blanco	29	13.8%	43	14.0%
Rio Grande	23	8.7%	53	9.4%
Routt	21	4.8%	21	23.8%
Saguache	9	22.2%	19	10.5%
Summit	30	0.0%	32	12.5%
Teller	73	8.2%	94	23.4%
Washington	9	11.1%	20	15.0%
Weld	317	3.5%	513	21.6%
Yuma	39	2.6%	16	12.5%

Maintaining Children in the Home

As seen in the table below, the vast majority of children being served in Core Services who are placed in their homes at the time Core Services begin, stay in their home throughout their participation in Core Services. This is an important indicator of the success of the Core Services Program.

Table 14: SFY 2008, 2009, 2010 Discharges: Children Maintained at Home During Core Services						
	SFY 2008		**SFY 2009**		**SFY 2010**	
County Name	**Number of Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent Maintained**	**Number of Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent Maintained**	**Number of Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent Maintained**
Statewide	**12,039**	**89.0%**	**12,327**	**93.0%**	**12,978**	**92.4%**
Adams	688	84.2%	686	86.7%	871	91.8%
Alamosa	122	92.6%	146	92.5%	141	94.3%
Arapahoe	1,467	87.9%	1,090	91.3%	1,226	91.9%
Archuleta	52	88.5%	69	98.6%	64	95.3%
Bent	15	86.7%	21	90.5%	17	82.45
Boulder	491	86.8%	576	86.8%	468	88.9%
Broomfield	46	76.1%	67	83.6%	66	93.9%
Chaffee	16	87.5%	26	96.2%	12	100%
Clear Creek	19	94.7%	32	90.6%	27	92.6%
Conejos	25	92.0%	47	93.6%	45	91.1%
Crowley	11	90.9%	12	100%	17	70.6%
Delta	105	84.8%	74	89.2%	89	84.3%
Denver	2,570	93.3%	2,364	93.4%	1,972	93.3%
Douglas	57	84.2%	71	93.0%	80	91.3%
Eagle	77	100%	52	94.2%	20	90.0%
Elbert	48	89.6%	58	100%	35	88.6%
El Paso	1,116	88.5%	1,088	92.8%	1,501	95.1%
Fremont	227	89.9%	212	95.3%	240	94.6%
Garfield	139	94.2%	129	99.2%	110	95.5%
Gilpin	15	80.0%	16	100%	22	90.9%
Grand	36	77.8%	29	100%	42	95.2%
Gunnison	30	86.7%	24	83.3%	21	81%
Huerfano	32	68.8%	40	80.0%	19	73.7%
Jefferson	1,047	88.3%	1,059	92.5%	1,246	91.0%
Kit Carson	12	91.7%	22	90.9%	18	77.8%
Lake	17	88.2%	46	95.7%	45	97.8%
La Plata	144	92.4%	138	93.5%	173	92.5%
Larimer	1,402	92.2%	1,683	97.0%	1,789	92.4%
Las Animas	33	87.9%	35	85.7%	49	93.9%

	SFY 2008		SFY 2009		SFY 2010	
County Name	**Number of Children** (Unduplicated)	**Percent Maintained**	**Number of Children** (Unduplicated)	**Percent Maintained**	**Number of Children** (Unduplicated)	**Percent Maintained**
Lincoln	31	83.9%	34	88.2%	34	94.1%
Logan	48	62.5%	33	87.9%	9	92.4%
Mesa	269	84.0%	339	91.4%	341	95.3%
Moffat	102	92.2%	138	96.4%	119	98.3%
Montezuma	41	92.7%	81	91.4%	68	97.1%
Montrose	75	85.3%	93	92.5%	82	86.6%
Morgan	132	90.2%	164	97.6%	134	89.6%
Otero	36	75.0%	24	83.3%	62	93.5%
Ouray/San Miguel	12	100%	9	88.9%	23	87.0%
Park	46	93.5%	43	100%	26	84.6%
Phillips	12	100%	--	--	11	100%
Pitkin	--	--	14	92. 9%	--	--
Prowers	59	78.2%	61	100%	53	100%
Pueblo	519	100%	543	91.5%	585	89.4%
Rio Blanco	29	82.6%	43	97.7%	30	90.0%
Rio Grande/Mineral	23	95.2%	53	86.8%	30	90.0%
Routt	21	96.7%	21	95.2%	21	76.2%
Saguache	--	--	--	--	19	78.9%
Summit	30	95.9%	32	100%	25	76%
Teller	73	87.5%	94	97.9%	105	94.3%
Washington	8	85.2%	20	95.0%	28	89.3%
Weld	317	82.1%	513	93.8%	605	92.1%
Yuma	39	84.2%	16	81.3%	36	100%

Table 14: SFY 2008, 2009, 2010 Discharges: Children Maintained at Home During Core Services

Out-of-Home Placements

Table 15, below, shows, for children discharged during SFY 2009, the proportion who experienced an out-of-home placement in the 12 months before their Core Services episode, during the episode, and the 12 months following the Core Services episode. Counties with fewer than 10 discharges in the fiscal year are excluded from analysis because small numbers can create large distortions in the percentages.

> *The proportion of children experiencing out-of-home placement **after** Core Services was significantly lower than the proportion placed in out-of-home prior to Core Services.*

County Name	Number of Children (Unduplicated)		Percent with OOH Before		Percent with OOH During		Percent with OOH After	
	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009
Statewide	12,039	**12,327**	49.4%	**39.9%**	11.0%	**15.2%**	21.0%	**10.8%**
Adams	688	686	54.8%	47.6%	15.8%	21.5%	17.6%	12.1%
Alamosa	122	146	20.5%	19.2%	7.4%	17.8%	12.3%	10.3%
Arapahoe	1,467	1,090	35.1%	40.2%	12.1%	19.6%	18.2%	13.0%
Archuleta	52	69	15.4%	7.4%	11.5%	4.4%	7.7%	2.9%
Bent	15	21	46.7%	28.6%	13.3%	14.3%	33.3%	14.3%
Boulder	491	576	52.1%	37.9%	13.2%	21.7%	22.0%	10.6%
Broomfield	46	67	63.0%	49.3%	23.9%	32.8%	21.7%	10.4%
Chaffee	16	26	43.8%	34.6%	12.5%	3.8%	25.0%	11.5%
Clear Creek	19	1	10.5%	12.5%	5.3%	9.4%	15.8%	12.5%
Conejos	25	32	20.0%	12.8%	8.0%	10.6%	12.0%	4.3%
Crowley	11	47	36.4%	58.3%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%	16.7%
Delta	105	74	30.5%	21.9%	15.2%	12.3%	13.3%	5.5%
Denver	2,570	2,365	63.2%	54.8%	6.7%	18.1%	33.3%	17.1%
Douglas	57	71	57.9%	47.9%	15. 8%	8.5%	36.8%	21.1%
Eagle	77	52	11.7%	11.5%	0.0%	7.7%	1.3%	3.8%
Elbert	48	58	33.3%	52.6%	10.4%	1.8%	10.4%	7.0%
El Paso	1,116	1,088	56.9%	48.0%	11.5%	13.4%	21.9%	10.5%
Fremont	227	212	63.0%	42.5%	10.1%	17.9%	31.3%	8.0%
Garfield	139	129	37.4%	19.4%	5.8%	6.2%	21.6%	5.4%
Gilpin	15	16	26.7%	13.3%	20.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%
Grand	36	29	36.1%	17.2%	22.2%	6.9%	13.9%	0.0%
Gunnison	30	24	6.7%	8.3%	13.3%	25.0%	10.0%	12.5%

Table 15: SFY 2008 and SFY 2009 Out-of Home Placements Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[32]

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[32] These categories are overlapping, meaning a single child could be in all three or not have an out-of-home placement at all. Therefore, these percentages will not add up to 100.

Table 15: SFY 2008 and SFY 2009 Out-of Home Placements Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[32]								
County Name	Number of Children (Unduplicated)		Percent with OOH Before		Percent with OOH During		Percent with OOH After	
	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009	SFY 2008	SFY 2009
Huerfano	32	40	31.3%	17.5%	31.3%	27.5%	18.8%	17.5%
Jefferson	1,047	1,059	51.9%	35.2%	11.7%	17.4%	17.3%	8.0%
Kit Carson	12	22	33.3%	27.3%	8.3%	27.3%	33.3%	4.5%
Lake	17	46	29.4%	11.1%	11.8%	6.7%	17.6%	0.0%
La Plata	144	138	20.1%	21.0%	7.6%	10.1%	14.6%	9.4%
Larimer	1,402	1,683	37.7%	23.1%	7.8%	9.1%	16.0%	4.7%
Las Animas	33	35	18.2%	2.9%	12.1%	17.1%	18.2%	5.7%
Lincoln	31	34	51.6%	35.3%	16.1%	14.7%	19.4%	5.9%
Logan	48	33	47.9%	24.2%	37.5%	15.2%	2.1%	0.0%
Mesa	269	339	61.0%	58.9%	16.0%	19.5%	29.4%	19.2%
Moffat	102	138	21.6%	6.5%	7.8%	4.3%	3.9%	0.7%
Montezuma	41	81	24.4%	29.6%	7.3%	13.6%	7.3%	7.4%
Montrose	75	93	49.3%	30.1%	14.7%	11.8%	13.3%	3.2%
Morgan	132	164	56.1%	31.7%	9.8%	9.8%	12.1%	9.8%
Otero	36	24	63.9%	62.5%	25.0%	20.8%	11.1%	8.3%
Ouray	12	9	8.3%	22.2%	0.0%	11.1%	0.0%	22.2%
Park	46	43	17.4%	11.6%	6.5%	4.7%	8.7%	0.0%
Phillips	12	14	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%
Prowers	59	61	18.6%	11.5%	10.2%	6.6%	0.0%	6.6%
Pueblo	519	543	73.6%	43.6%	21.8%	16.6%	17. 5%	10.7%
Rio Blanco	29	43	10.3%	14.0%	0.0%	4.7%	3.4%	4.7%
Rio Grande	23	53	30.4%	39.6%	17.4%	24.5%	13.0%	20.8%
Routt	21	21	14.3%	9.5%	4.8%	4.8%	9.5%	0.0%
Summit	30	32	20.0%	3.1%	3.3%	3.1%	3.3%	0.0%
Teller	73	94	21.9%	18.1%	4.1%	4.3%	12.3%	9.6%
Washington	8	20	50.0%	21.1%	12.5%	10.5%	12.5%	0.0%
Weld	317	513	60.9%	50.9%	14.8%	7.9%	16.4%	11.2%
Yuma	39	16	28.2%	18.8%	17.9%	25.0%	2.6%	12.5%

Across all but two of the counties reported here, the proportion of children experiencing an out-of-home placement in the 12 months directly following their last Core Services authorization was lower than or equal to the proportion experiencing an out-of-home placement in the 12 months prior to the start of their Core Services episode. While two counties had an increased proportion, both of these counties had very small numbers of SFY 2009 discharges and these small numbers greatly influence the proportion (in each case the increase appears to be one child).

In comparing out-of-home placements 12 months after Core Services across SFY 2008 and SFY 2009, most counties (41 out of 50) mirror statewide data showing decreased proportions of children placed out-of-home in SFY 2009. A similar pattern is seen with proportions of children in out-of-home placements before Core Services. Statewide, the number of out-of-home placements before Core Services was lower in SFY 2009.

Table 16: SFY 2009 Out-of Home Placements Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[33]				
County Name	**Number of Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent with OOH 12 Months Before**	**Percent with OOH During**	**Percent with OOH 12 Months After**
Statewide	**12,327**	**39.9%**	**15.2%**	**10.8%**
Adams	686	47.6%	21.5%	12.1%
Alamosa	146	19.2%	17.8%	10.3%
Arapahoe	1,090	40.2%	19.6%	13.0%
Archuleta	69	7.4%	4.4%	2.9%
Bent	21	28.6%	14.3%	14.3%
Boulder	576	37.9%	21.7%	10.6%
Broomfield	67	49.3%	32.8%	10.4%
Chaffee	26	34.6%	3.8%	11.5%
Clear Creek	1	12.5%	9.4%	12.5%
Conejos	32	12.8%	10.6%	4.3%
Crowley	47	58.3%	0.0%	16.7%
Delta	74	21.9%	12.3%	5.5%
Denver	2,365	54.8%	18.1%	17.1%
Douglas	71	47.9%	8.5%	21.1%
Eagle	52	11.5%	7.7%	3.8%
Elbert	58	52.6%	1.8%	7.0%
El Paso	1,088	48.0%	13.4%	10.5%
Fremont	212	42.5%	17.9%	8.0%
Garfield	129	19.4%	6.2%	5.4%
Gilpin	16	13.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Grand	29	17.2%	6.9%	0.0%
Gunnison	24	8.3%	25.0%	12.5%
Huerfano	40	17.5%	27.5%	17.5%
Jefferson	1,059	35.2%	17.4%	8.0%
Kit Carson	22	27.3%	27.3%	4.5%
Lake	46	11.1%	6.7%	0.0%
La Plata	138	21.0%	10.1%	9.4%
Larimer	1,683	23.1%	9.1%	4.7%

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[33] These categories are overlapping, meaning a single child could be in all three or not have an out-of-home placement at all. Therefore, these percentages will not add up to 100.

Table 16: SFY 2009 Out-of Home Placements Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[33]				
County Name	Number of Children (Unduplicated)	Percent with OOH 12 Months Before	Percent with OOH During	Percent with OOH 12 Months After
Las Animas	35	2.9%	17.1%	5.7%
Lincoln	34	35.3%	14.7%	5.9%
Logan	33	24.2%	15.2%	0.0%
Mesa	339	58.9%	19.5%	19.2%
Moffat	138	6.5%	4.3%	0.7%
Montezuma	81	29.6%	13.6%	7.4%
Montrose	93	30.1%	11.8%	3.2%
Morgan	164	31.7%	9.8%	9.8%
Otero	24	62.5%	20.8%	8.3%
Ouray	9	22.2%	11.1%	22.2%
Park	43	11.6%	4.7%	0.0%
Phillips	14	0.0%	25.0%	25.0%
Prowers	61	11.5%	6.6%	6.6%
Pueblo	543	43.6%	16.6%	10.7%
Rio Blanco	43	14.0%	4.7%	4.7%
Rio Grande	53	39.6%	24.5%	20.8%
Routt	21	9.5%	4.8%	0.0%
Summit	32	3.1%	3.1%	0.0%
Teller	94	18.1%	4.3%	9.6%
Washington	20	21.1%	10.5%	0.0%
Weld	513	50.9%	7.9%	11.2%
Yuma	16	18.8%	25.0%	12.5%

Child Safety

The table below shows, for children discharged during SFY 2009, the proportion for whom there was a substantiated abuse allegation in the 12 months before their Core Services episode, during the episode, and the 12 months following the Core Services episode.

> *The proportion of substantiated cases of child abuse dropped significantly during and 12 months after children received Core Services – from 37% to 3%.*

Table 17: SFY 2009 Substantiated Child Abuse Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[34]				
County Name	**Number of Children (Unduplicated)**	**Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case Before (12 mo.)**	**Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case During**	**Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case After (12 mo.)**
Statewide	12,327	36.8%	3.2%	2.5%
Adams	686	54.5%	3.4%	3.7%
Alamosa	146	33.1%	16.2%	6.2%
Arapahoe	1,090	41.2%	3.3%	2.2%
Archuleta	69	3.8%	3.8%	11.5%
Bent	21	52.6%	5.3%	10.5%
Boulder	576	37.4%	5.1%	2.7%
Broomfield	67	41.3%	14.3%	1.6%
Chaffee	26	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Clear Creek	1	53.6%	3.6%	7.1%
Conejos	32	37.1%	2.9%	5.7%
Crowley	47	54.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Custer	1	50.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Delta	74	29.8%	0.0%	1.8%
Denver	2,365	29.7%	1.9%	2.4%
Douglas	71	35.8%	1.9%	1.9%
Eagle	52	22.9%	2.1%	0.0%
Elbert	58	46.2%	0.0%	5.8%
El Paso	1,088	33.6%	1.7%	1.3%
Fremont	212	19.5%	3.8%	2.7%
Garfield	129	33.6%	4.4%	0.0%
Gilpin	16	15.4%	7.7%	0.0%

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[34] These categories are overlapping, meaning a single child could be in all three or not have a substantiated child abuse case at all. Therefore, these percentages will not add up to 100.

Table 17: SFY 2009 Substantiated Child Abuse Before, During, & After Last Core Service Authorization[34]

County Name	Number of Children (Unduplicated)	Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case Before (12 mo.)	Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case During	Percent with Substantiated Abuse Case After (12 mo.)
Grand	29	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Gunnison	24	11.1%	5.6%	0.0%
Huerfano	40	38.5%	20.5%	17.9%
Jefferson	1,059	37.3%	4.7%	2.7%
Kit Carson	22	11.1%	16.7%	0.0%
Lake	46	20.6%	2.9%	0.0%
La Plata	138	42.5%	2.8%	4.7%
Larimer	1,683	31.7%	3.1%	2.3%
Las Animas	35	38.7%	3.2%	3.2%
Lincoln	34	36.4%	9.1%	3.0%
Logan	33	71.9%	3.1%	3.1%
Mesa	339	43.6%	1.7%	2.1%
Moffat	138	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%
Montezuma	81	13.9%	5.5%	2.7%
Montrose	93	31.5%	2.6%	0.0%
Morgan	164	19.7%	4.4%	7.6%
Otero	24	36.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Ouray	9	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Park	43	43.6%	7.7%	0.0%
Phillips	14	100.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pitkin	1	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Prowers	61	45.0%	1.7%	6.7%
Pueblo	543	50.8%	2.3%	0.8%
Rio Blanco	43	29.7%	10.8%	5.4%
Rio Grande	53	16.7%	2.4%	2.4%
Routt	21	31.3%	6.3%	0.0%
Summit	32	39.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Teller	94	42.8%	1.2%	0.0%
Washington	20	29.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Weld	513	29.4%	0.7%	1.8%
Yuma	16	53.3%	13.3%	0.0%

While 37 percent of children receiving Core Services had a substantiated child abuse report filed in the 12 months prior to beginning Core Services, only three percent had a substantiated case during their Core Services episode or in the 12 months after their Core Services episode ended. This pattern held true for all counties.

Core Service Types

In order to understand the range of services provided to children and families through the Core Services Program, this report outlines, for each service type, the purchase options used, costs and combinations of services received. Following the individual service subsections is a comparison of these data elements across the Core Services types.

> *Children participating in Core Services received, on average, 3 different types of services, complicating efforts to link outcomes to specific service types.*

In examining the costs and outcomes across the service types, the reader may note the general lack of variation in outcomes. However, a likely explanation for the commonalities across the service types is that children and families are likely to receive more than one service type. In cases where multiple services are received (the average is 2.8 out of 8 Core Services types), it is impossible to link the outcome to the specific type of service received. Initial models do not show any difference between children receiving one type of Core Services compared with those receiving multiple services. In the absence of data to link evidence of family risks and needs to services provided, it is difficult to meaningfully explore the effects of county efforts to closely match services to family needs. However, analyses point to overall positive outcomes for the Core Services Program and suggest that families are being appropriately matched to need services. Note, however, that these are short-term outcomes and only speak to child and family experiences during this most recent fiscal year. In subsequent reports, analyses will focus on longer-term outcomes by service types, which are generally subject to greater variation.

Table 18: Matrix of Core Services: Costs and Short-Term Outcomes by Type of Service						
		Average Cost Per Child				
Type of Service	**Total Expenditures SFY 2010**	**Large Counties**	**Medium Counties**	**Small Counties**	**Percent of Children Maintained in the Home**	**Percent of Children Served with Substantiated Report of Child Abuse**
Substance Abuse	$2,916,407	$540	$462	--[35]	91.2%	5.9%
Mental Health	$4,888,933	$1,161	$2,166	$2,308	92.6%	3.1%
Life Skills	--[36]	--	--	--	93.1%	3.5%
Home-Based	--	--	--	--	91.4%	4.9%
Intensive Family Therapy	--	--	--	--	92.4%	3.7%

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[35] The small counties did not expend their Core Services allocation on Substance Abuse Treatment.

[36] CFMS closeout only provides specific expenditures for mental health and substance abuse data. While Trails data includes Fee for Services data for these types of service, it does not consistently include information on fixed rate contract or county provided expenditures, meaning that average costs per child cannot be calculated for these service types. The text of each service type describes average contract expenditures, estimated based on available data.

Table 18: Matrix of Core Services: Costs and Short-Term Outcomes by Type of Service						
		Average Cost Per Child				
Type of Service	Total Expenditures SFY 2010	Large Counties	Medium Counties	Small Counties	Percent of Children Maintained in the Home	Percent of Children Served with Substantiated Report of Child Abuse
Sexual Abuse Treatment	--	--	--	--	93.3%	6.5%
Day Treatment	--	--	--	--	85.0%	5.1%

Substance Abuse Treatment Services

As noted earlier in this report, across the 33 counties with complete data available through Trails, Substance Abuse Treatment Services were the most frequently provided (representing 26 percent of all service authorizations). These services include diagnostic and therapeutic services to assist in the development of the family services plan; to assess and/or improve family communication, functioning and relationships; and to prevent further abuse of drugs or alcohol. In many instances, Substance Abuse Treatment Services are delivered to parents/caregivers on behalf of the child.

> *Substance Abuse Treatment Services were the most frequently provided type of Core Service.*

Close to 78% of Substance Abuse Treatment Services entered into Trails and provided to families included in this analysis were provided via contracts with licensed and certified private providers. The remaining 22 percent were entered into Trails as a "no pay" service (due to use of a fixed-rate contract). County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Substance Abuse Treatment Services totaled $1,855,544 (total expenditures across all counties was $2,916,407). While this service type was the most commonly authorized, it did not represent the highest spending in contract expenditures. See Table 18, above, for a comparison of contract amounts across the Core Services types. The estimated average cost spent per child[37] served in SFY 2010 provided with Substance Abuse Treatment Services varied slightly across counties, ranging from $462 to $540.

Of the children in included counties, nearly all (91.2%) were maintained in their homes during the length of their Core Service episode. Six percent experienced a substantiated report of child abuse during the same time period. There was not a significant difference in these outcomes between children receiving Substance Abuse Treatment Services alone and those who also received other services concurrently[38].

Mental Health Services

Mental Health Services include diagnostic and therapeutic services to assist in the development of the family services plan, and to assess and/or improve family communication, functioning and relationships.

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[37] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.
[38] Chi-Square = 2.05; p>.05.

These services made up 16% of service authorizations for children and families. More than three quarters (77%) of service authorizations for Mental Health Services entered into Trails and provided to families included in this analysis were provided via contracts with licensed and certified private providers. The remaining 23 percent were entered into Trails as a "no pay" service (due to use of a fixed-rate contract). County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the

Almost all (92.6%) children and families receiving Mental Health Services were maintained in their home and only three percent (3%) experienced a substantiated child abuse case.

analysis) for Mental Health Services totaled $2,713,912. The total Core Services expenditures for all counties for Mental Health Services were $4,888,933. The estimated average cost spent per child[39] served in SFY 2010 in Mental Health Services varied greatly across the state, with costs in smaller counties being much larger than in the 10 largest counties.

One quarter (25.6%) of all children and families who received Mental Health Services also received Substance Abuse Treatment Services, 17.9 percent received some type of County-Designed Service and 12.3 percent received Home-Based Services. On average, children and families receiving Mental Health Treatment Services participated in 3.3 different service types during SFY 2010.

Most Life Skills participants (94.0%) were maintained in the home and about five percent (5%) had a substantiated referral of child abuse during their Core Services episode.

For children and families receiving Mental Health Services, almost all (92.6%) were maintained in their homes and only three percent (3%) experienced a substantiated child abuse case during the time they were receiving Mental Health Services. There were statistically significant differences for children receiving only Mental Health Services, compared to children receiving multiple services. However, this difference was actually quite small and could be due to differing levels of risks and needs between children only receiving Mental Health Services and those receiving multiple services.

Life Skills
Life Skills Services made up nine percent (9%) of all authorizations. These services are often provided in the home and are designed to build skills in household management, accessing community resources, parenting techniques, and family conflict management.

Just over one third (34.5%) of Life Skills Services entered in Trails and provided to children and families were provided via contracts with private providers or other counties. This means that the majority of these services are provided by the counties or through fixed-rate contracts. CFMS data

Children and families that received Mental Health Services participated in an average of 3.3 service types over the fiscal year.

does not specify actual allocations for the Life Skills service type and, correspondingly, cost data estimates should be interpreted with caution. County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Life Skills Services totaled $736,756. The estimated average cost spent per child[40] served in SFY 2010 in Life Skills Services was approximately $787 (based solely on number of children served using contracted private providers).[41]

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[39] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.

[40] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.

[41] Cost estimates do not include any county-provided services.

Twenty percent (20%) of all children and families with a Life Skills Service authorization also received County-Designed services. Nineteen percent (19%) of families that participated in Life Skills Services also received Substance Abuse Treatment Services. On average, children and families receiving Life Skills Services participated in 3.1 different service types during SFY 2010.

> *Children and families participating in Home Based Intervention were likely to receive Substance Abuse Treatment and Mental Health Services as well.*

Life Skills participants had similar outcomes to those participating in other Core Services. Most (94.0%) were maintained in the home during their Core Services and about five percent (5%) had a substantiated case of child abuse during their Core Service episode. There was not a significant difference between children receiving only Life Skills Services and those who also received other services.

Home Based Intervention Services

Home Based Intervention Services made up eight percent (8%) of all authorizations. These services are provided in the home and are designed to improve family communication, functioning and relationships. About half (48.2%) of Home Based Intervention Services provided to families included in this analysis were provided via contracts with private providers or other counties. County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Home-Based Intervention Services totaled $ 1,217,474. The estimated average cost spent per child[42] served in SFY 2010 through Home Based Intervention contracted services was $523 per child.

Forty one percent (41%) of all children and families participating in Home Based Intervention Services also received Substance Abuse Treatment Services. Other common services occurring in conjunction with Home Based Intervention Services were County-Designed Services (17.1%) and Mental Health Services (15.3%). On average, children and families participating in Home Based Intervention Services received three different service types during SFY 2010.

Outcomes for children receiving Home-Based Intervention Services were similar to those for children and families receiving other Core Services. Further, there was no significant variation in outcomes between those exclusively receiving Home-Based intervention Services and those receiving other services as well.

Intensive Family Therapy

Intensive Family Therapy typically involves intervention with all family members and aims to improve family communication, functioning and relationships. These interventions made up eight percent (8%) of all authorizations in the included counties.

Seventeen percent (17%) of Intensive Family Therapy provided through the 33 counties included in this analysis was provided via contracts with private providers or other counties. This means that most of these services (83%) were provided by the counties or using fixed-rate contracts, and cost data estimates should be interpreted with caution. County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Intensive Family Therapy totaled $749,624. The estimated average cost spent per child[43] served in SFY 2010 in contracts for Intensive Family Therapy was $645.

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[42] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.

[43] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.

Families participating in Intensive Family Therapy often received County-Designed Services (19.8%) and Substance Abuse Treatment (19.5%) as well. On average, children and families receiving Intensive Family Therapy participated in 3.1 different service types during SFY 2010.

Outcomes for children and families receiving Intensive Family Therapy were in line with those for children receiving other services. There were no significant differences across children receiving Intensive Family Therapy only and those who received this service in conjunction with other Core Services.

Special Economic Assistance
Special Economic Assistance is provided directly by counties. This assistance represented just under six percent (5.5%) of service authorizations for the 33 counties included here. Because contracts are not used and county service-level expenditures are not available, costs per child cannot be estimated. However, there is a maximum of $400 allowable per family per year. County Commissions would like to see this maximum increased for families when financial barriers prevent families from meeting the needs of their children and/or fulfilling requirements of their family services plan.

Nearly half (47.3%) of all children and families receiving Special Economic Assistance also participated in County-Designed services. On average, children and families receiving Special Economic Assistance participated in 3.2 different service types during SFY 2010.

Sexual Abuse Treatment
Sexual Abuse Treatment refers to therapeutic intervention designed to address issues and behaviors related to sexual victimization, sexual dysfunction, sexual abuse perpetration, and prevention of further sexual abuse and victimization. These services made up four percent (4%) of all authorizations for the 33 counties included in this analysis.

Half (49.5%) of Sexual Abuse Treatment provided to families included in this analysis were provided via contracts with private providers or other counties. County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Sexual Abuse Treatment totaled $849,183. The estimated average cost spent per child[44] served in SFY 2010 in these contracted services was $2,177.

Perhaps because they are so specific and intensive, Sexual Abuse Treatment Services were the least likely to be part of a combination of services provided to children and families. Few children receiving these services participated in other services, with the highest proportion (9.6%) also receiving Substance Abuse Treatment Services. Children and families receiving Sexual Abuse Treatment Services participated in the fewest (1.8) different service types during SFY 2010.

While the percent of children maintained in the home for children receiving Sexual Abuse Treatment Services was similar to the other Core Services types, children receiving Sexual Abuse Treatment Services had the highest rate of substantiated reports of child abuse across the service types.

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[44] Please see the Evaluation Methods of this report for details on how the average cost per child was calculated.

Day Treatment

Day Treatment made up two percent (2%) of all authorizations. This service type represents comprehensive, highly structured services that provide education to children and therapy to children and their families.

Nearly half (47.5%) of Day Treatment Services provided to families included in this analysis were provided via contracts with private providers or other counties. County contracts (for the 33 counties included in the analysis) for Day Treatment Services totaled $ 1,408,856.

One-quarter (25.1%) of all children and families participating in Day Treatment also received at least one County-Designed Service. A smaller percentage (10.3%) also received Mental Health Treatment. On average, children participating in Day Treatment received 2.6 different service types during SFY 2010.

Day Treatment Services had the least positive outcomes across the service types, with 85 percent of children maintained in their homes. The proportion of children receiving these services with a substantiated report of child abuse was slightly higher than the overall at 5.1%

Enhancing the Core Services Program – Ideas from County Commissions

County Core Services Commissions were invited to offer suggestions to enhance or improve the delivery of Core Services. Most counties (51) responded – the most frequently cited suggestions fell into three categories:

1. Increase flexibility in the use of Core Services funding,
2. Enhance resources available to Core Services programs,
3. Changes to the allocation methodology.

County Commissions' comments and recommendations, organized according to these categories, are discussed below.

1. Increase Flexibility in Use of Core Services Funds

County Commissions are clear in their recognition and appreciation of the current high level of flexibility in the Core Services Program. However, 30 counties commented that added flexibility in some areas could benefit Core Services Program outcomes.

Substance Abuse Treatment Options – Twenty-three (23) counties made specific comments about increasing flexibility related to substance abuse treatment. Suggestions included allowing Core Service funds to be used for substance abuse providers outside of the designated Managed Service Organizations (MSO). The reasons cited for these suggestions were limited funding and corresponding capacity of MSOs to meet the needs of Core Services families, limited evening and weekend services, distances families must travel to access services, and lack of treatment options other than traditional group therapy.

Prevention – Consistent with prior year suggestions, ten (10) counties pointed to increased flexibility to support preventative services to help families make changes before the child is at imminent risk of removal. One county pointed to the Differential Response pilot as a timely indicator of the potential efficacy of Core Services funding earlier in a family's involvement with the Child Welfare system.

> " As we in Child Welfare explore new initiatives such as family engagement and Differential Response, widening the use of Core Services funding to meet the needs of families may assist us in reducing risk and enhancing safety of the children of Colorado."

> **Differential Response**
>
> *Differential Response refers to a pilot program in five Colorado counties where case workers have the option to provide services to families with suspected abuse or neglect without making a determination of maltreatment or identifying a person responsible for the abuse or neglect. These families must meet specific criteria, including suspected abuse at no more than a low or moderate severity level.*

General Family Support – Enhanced flexibility in the use of funds to provide general family support was specifically cited by five (5) counties this year. Examples of this type of support include: tutoring, translation, groceries, utility bills, housing assistance, transportation, school supplies, after school activities, childcare, and medications. One county illustrated this issue by commenting,

> *"We feel it is unfortunate to have to place kids [out-of-home] because the parents cannot afford to maintain housing [when they are otherwise capable of providing a safe home for their child(ren)]."*

While Special Economic Assistance funds are being used for family support, the need exceeds the $400 allowable expenditure per family. One county indicated that a family can have $400 in travel costs alone over the course of two or three months, leaving nothing for child care or other critical needs.

2. Enhance Resources Available to Core Service Programs

Thirty-nine (39) counties agree on the need for increased capacity for the Core Services Program overall. Specifically, counties pointed to the need for enhanced capacity in intensive, home-based services; substance abuse treatment services; psychiatric evaluation services; County-Designed services; evidence-based treatment services; Spanish language services; and day treatment for elementary school children. One county articulated the need for additional funding early in the family's involvement in order to keep children in the home rather than use more expensive out-of-home placements. The need for increased capacity is also supported in Table 6 showing 19 counties with expenditures exceeding their Core Services allocation.

3. Changes to the Allocation Process

> *Core Services has not experienced a significant increase in funding to assist with the change in practice from heavy reliance on out-of-home placement to innovative efforts to keep children at home and in their communities.*

Five counties specifically requested changes in the way county Core Services allocation amounts are determined. County Commissions that commented on this issue believe the allocation methodology is based on historic factors and is not equitable. One county mentioned receiving a lower allocation than an adjacent county with a smaller population. Another county suggested an allocation formula that took multiple factors into account and used the example of rural areas that, in spite of lower populations, often face higher costs associated with traveling longer distances to services.

Observations and Recommendations

This final section presents a brief discussion of some observations and recommendations emerging from this report.

Observations

The Core Services Program appears to be Functioning as Intended – Data analyzed and presented in this report indicates that the Core Services Program is successfully addressing its mission to strengthen Colorado families and keep children with their families and in their communities, while also maintaining child safety. Based on the range of information available to this evaluation, the Core Services Program appears to be functioning as intended, serving the children and families targeted by the authorizing legislation and providing appropriate services and support.

> *Core Services outcomes demonstrate that children can be safely maintained in the home with services at a lower cost than out-of-home placement.*

Positive outcomes, in terms of low rates of removal from home and substantiated reports of child abuse during the time children and families are receiving Core Services underscore the program's success. Further, positive outcomes for children during the year following discharge from services offers an indicator that benefits achieved through Core Services are being sustained.

Core Services Cost Less - Overall costs per day for out-of-home placements are significantly higher than costs per day for children being served in Core Services. Safely maintaining children in their homes not only costs the state less than an out-of-home placement, but most often this course of action also represents what is in the best interest of the child and the family.

Core Service Types Appear to Demonstrate Positive Outcomes – Comparing across service types is difficult because, as shown in this report, children and families receive, on average, about 3 different types of Core Services during their service episode. More importantly, the overall efectiveness of a service will be dependent to a large degree on whether it meets the needs of the families. The fact that all of the Core Services types show positive outcomes is further indication that, rather than comparing costs and outcomes across each type of service, it appears to be more important to focus on matching children and families with services that address their types and levels of risks and needs. This was also supported in discussions with families and in the County Commission Reports.

Need for Greater Integration of Risk and Needs Assessment with Case Planning – The Core Services Program serves children who have complex and often multiple risk factors for out-of-home placement. Currently, the general level and type of risk is recorded in the Imminent Risk Section of the Family Services Plan by the child's caseworker, and the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (NCFAS) is used in Child Protection Cases. However, the Core Services Program does not require a comprehensive, empirically validated risk and needs assessment tool to guide placement and case planning decisions for all children. Effective tools, like the NCFAS or Child and Adolescent Strengths and Needs (CANS) can gauge not only the child's level of risk, but also the specific areas where services are needed to mitigate that risk and support safety and stability.

Program-wide use of a standardized validated risk and needs assessment in case planning would support consistent decisions regarding the intensity and restrictiveness, as well as types of services. This would allow more consistent matching of services to child and family needs and enhance quality assurance and evaluation efforts.

Reported Decrease in the Number of Children Served – Data point to a slight decline in the number of children served and the number of service authorizations recorded in Trails over the past two years. This may be understood, in part, in the context of challenging fiscal reality; counties are turning to other sources of funding first, and reserving Core Services for children and families with more intensive needs. In addition counties have reported greater efforts to target services more carefully to the needs of children and families, often resulting in fewer but more intensive services, to improve family engagement and long term outcomes.

> *While the total number of children served decreased slightly in SFY 2010, evidence suggests that services are being targeted to children and families with complex needs requiring intensive services.*

Recommendations

TriWest Group recommends the State Division of Child Welfare standardize data entry policies to assure complete data is available to adequately assess program effectiveness and understand costs and savings of the Core Services Program. TriWest Group also continues to recommend close collaboration with Trails data experts to investigate potential data system and data entry improvements to increase consistency of data entry without dramatically increasing workload of county staff.
Family preservation services are an important component of an effective continuum of child welfare services if they can be targeted to appropriate children and families and tailored to their specific needs, challenges and strengths. For this reason, we continue to recommend that the Core Services Program Coordinators and leadership continue to explore the integration of an empirically validated risk and needs assessment into case planning decisions. Tools like the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale (used in Colorado in Child Protection Cases) or the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths assessment (CANS) are used in many states to support responsive case planning that matches service intensity and restrictiveness to child and family risk levels while also matching specific service types to the identified needs of children and their families. This comprehensive approach to risk and needs assessment supports consistency in matching services to child and family needs and provides valid data for program monitoring and improvement as well as evaluation and reporting.

The Division has been working on the issue of statewide, consistent, implementation of a risk assessment tool. In the current fiscal environment, the costs of such and endeavor suggest that it will likely be a long-term process of implementation.

Other recommendations include integrating systems for the current evaluation with ongoing quality assurance efforts to promote meaningful, high-quality data that is used for continuous quality improvement. Based on reports from the County Commissions, we recommend continued attention and promotion of collaborative efforts. Similarly, State leadership and technical assistance is important to sustain quality of services and commitment among local and state leadership. Finally, the value of involving families in planning services is clear – we recommend prioritizing efforts to support the inclusion of child and family voice and choice across the system.

References

Nelson, K. (2000). What Works in Family Preservation Services. In: Kluger, M.P. Alexander, G. Curtis, P.A.
(Editors). What Works in Child Welfare. Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Annapolis
Junction, MD. pp 11-21

Appendix A

Family Preservation/Core Services Commission Report
Fiscal Year 2009-2010

Colorado County/Tribe name:	

Contact Person for Questions about the Commission Report:

Name:	
Title:	
Phone:	
E-mail:	

TriWest Group is a Colorado-based evaluation company selected to work with The Colorado Department of Human Services to conduct the evaluation of the Family Preservation/Core Services Program and prepare the Department's annual Family Preservation Commission Report.

Each year, local Family Preservation Commissions are required to complete a report on the status of Core Services and the programs available in each County or Tribe. The information you provide through the attached report template will be combined with other sources of information including the Colorado Trails database to form the content for the required annual report. Input from local Family Preservation Commissions provides a context for the quantitative data elements and represents an opportunity for your County or Tribe to tell the story behind the numbers.

INSTRUCTIONS
- Please return completed report by **June 30**.
- Please be sure to include complete contact information above in case we have any questions or there are problems with the transmission of the report to us.
- If possible, please complete the report electronically using MS Word and email completed reports to **Erin Hall** at ehall@triwestgroup.net
- Please mail the membership list and signature page in the envelope provided.
- If e-mail submission of the report is not convenient for you, please fax the report to 970-672-4944 or mail to 3021 Lucinda Ct., Fort Collins, CO 80526
- Please call Erin at **303-544-0509, extension 7** with any questions about the report.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this report!

Capacity and Array of Services

The Trails data system tracks Core Services <u>delivered</u> by each county. Please complete the following questions about the <u>availability</u> of services (including those services that may not have been utilized during this fiscal year) in your county or tribe.

1. If County Designed Services were available, please describe the types of services:

2. Please place a check mark next to the phrase that best describes current service capacity and access. (Check all that apply)

____The menu of Core Services available in our county (tribal area) is adequate to address the needs of children at imminent risk of placement.

____There are services needed in our area that are not currently available.

____Needed services are available, but not at adequate capacity (there are waiting lists).

____Needed services are available, but there are significant barriers to families accessing services.

____Other (please describe):

In the list below, please check any Core Services that are <u>NOT</u> available in your County

____Home Based Intervention	____Mental Health Treatment
____Intensive Family Therapy	____Substance Abuse Treatment Services
____Day Treatment	____Aftercare Services
____Life Skills	____County Designed Services
____Sexual Abuse Treatment	____Other (please describe):

Please describe any services for which there are waiting lists and steps taken/being taken to resolve this:

Please describe the primary barriers to service access for the families you serve:

Overall Effectiveness of Core Services

3. Please describe your perspective regarding the overall effectiveness of Core Services:

   (the following sub-questions are optional, to give you an opportunity to share more about the work in your county/tribe)

   Are there any specific successes or failures you would like to share?

   Is your county (tribe) implementing any innovative services?

   Are there observations regarding impacts on children, youth and families in your county (tribe) that you would like to share?

4. Please describe the policy and program issues in your county (tribe) that affect out-of-home placements)? Are these issues driving increases or reductions in placements? (feel free to add more than three issues)

Issue #1: _____ is driving
_____increases _____reductions in placements?
Please describe:

Issue #2: _____ is driving
_____increases _____reductions in placements?
Please describe:

Issue #3: _____ is driving
_____increases _____reductions in placements?
Please describe:

5. Please describe the policy and program issues in your county (tribe) that affect the length of stay for children placed out-of home. Are these issues driving increases or reductions in length of stay? (feel free to add more than three issues)

Issue #1: _____ is driving
_____increases _____decreases in length of stay?
Please describe:

Issue #2: _____ is driving
_____increases _____decreases in length of stay?
Please describe:

Issue #3: _____ is driving
_____increases _____decreases in length of stay?
Please describe:

6. Has the Core Services funding affected your county's Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) scores for stability in placement?

   Yes ___   No ___   (If yes, please describe).

Collaboration

7. Please check the following collaborative efforts in which your county/tribe participates? (check all that apply)

   ___Family to Family
   ___Promoting Safe and Stable Families
   ___HB1451
   ___Collaborative efforts incorporating Family to Family principles (but not a formal site)
   ___Other collaborative efforts (please describe):

8. Please describe how your collaboration efforts have impacted the overall effectiveness of your Core Services Program.

9. Please describe how your collaboration efforts have impacted the cost-efficiency (either cost-avoidance or cost-savings) of your Core Services delivery.

10. If your county (tribe) could change and/or modify the Core Services Program, what would you recommend?

11. Does your county's (tribe's) Family Preservation/Core Services Commission have any recommended changes to the annual Commission Report?

    Yes ___   No ___   (If yes, please describe).

12. Are there services in your county (tribe) that are supplemented with funds from outside sources? _____Yes _____ No

 If yes, please indicate those services in the table below and the source of supplemental funds. If you are not sure of the actual dollar amount, please estimate the percentage of the Core Services that were funded from that source.
If no, please leave table blank.

Core Service Programs	Supplemented Services with Outside Funds?	Source of Funding and Amount
Home Based Intervention	Yes ___ No ___	
Intensive Family Therapy	Yes ___ No ___	
Life Skills	Yes ___ No ___	
Day Treatment	Yes ___ No ___	
Sexual Abuse Treatment	Yes ___ No ___	
Mental Health Services	Yes ___ No ___	
Substance Abuse Treatment Services	Yes ___ No ___	
Aftercare Services	Yes ___ No ___	
County Designed Services	Yes ___ No ___	

Membership List and Signature Page

Please mail this page only to Erin Hall in the envelope provided, (3021 Lucinda Ct. Fort Collins, CO 80526)

Also, please e-mail entire report to Erin Hall at <u>ehall@triwestgroup.net</u>

Please list all members of your local Family Preservation Commission. Add additional space as needed.

County Name: _____

Family Preservation Commission Members (add space as needed)

1.   6.

2.   7.

3.   8.

4.   9.

5.   10.

_____
Name of Commission Chair

_____
Signature of the Commission Chair