

STATE OF COLORADO



Colorado Department of Human Services

people who help people

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Reggie Bicha
Executive Director

November 28, 2012

Senator Pat Steadman
Chair, Joint Budget Committee
Legislative Services Building, 3rd floor
200 East 14th Avenue
Denver, Colorado 80203

Dear Senator Steadman:

The purpose of this report is to meet the statutory criteria in 19-3-214, C.R.S., which requires:

"Placement Reporting. (1) Each county department shall maintain and update on a monthly basis a report of the number of children who have been removed from their homes and placed in the temporary legal custody of the county department for the preceding month. The report shall indicate whether a child who has been placed out of the home has been placed with relatives. (2) The state department shall submit an annual report to the joint budget committee of the general assembly no later than December 1 of each year that compiles the monthly reports of the number of children who have been placed out of the home in each county or city and county for the preceding year as required pursuant to subsection (1) of this section".

The placement reporting table located at the end of this document is information that was collected in the State Department's Automated System (Trails). The summary provides the context for information contained in the table and an explanation about the fields contained in the placement reporting table.

For additional questions please contact Julie Krow, Director, of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families at 303-866-5414 or by email at Julie.Krow@state.co.us.

Sincerely, -

Reggie Bicha
Executive Director

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Senator Pat Steadman
November 28, 2012
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Enclosure

cc: Representative Claire Levy, Vice-Chair
Representative Crisanta Duran
Representative Cheri Gerou
Senator Mary Hodge
Senator Kent Lambert
Ms. Amanda Bickel, Joint Budget Committee staff
Ms. Nikki Hatch, Deputy Executive Director of Operations
Ms. Julie Kersick, Director, Office of Economic Security
Ms. Julie Krow, Director, Office of Children, Youth, and Families
Mr. Will Kugel, Budget Director, Colorado Department of Human Services
Ms. Levetta Love, Director, Colorado Works Program
Mr. Lloyd Malone, Director, Division of Child Welfare Services
Ms. Dee Martinez, Deputy Executive Director of Enterprise Partnerships
Mr. Jay Morein, Director, Office of Performance and Strategic Outcomes
Ms. Ann Renaud, Office of State Planning & Budgeting
Ms. Sarah Sills, CDHS Legislative Liaison
Mr. Henry Sobanet, Director, Office of State Planning & Budgeting
Mr. John Ziegler, Staff Director, Joint Budget Committee

Placement Reporting Summary Pursuant to 19-3-214, C.R.S.

Reporting Period: September 1, 2011-August 31, 2012

Colorado Department of Human Services

Date Due: December 1, 2012

Summary from the Reporting Period (percentages are rounded)

During the reporting period, 4,552 children/youth (*unduplicated count*) were removed from homes of their family or caretaker statewide. Of these, approximately 85% of the removals occurred in the 10 large counties. There were 281 fewer children/youth removed (*unduplicated count*) from the ten large counties compared to the 2011 annual report.

Annual report	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Unduplicated count of child removals statewide	4,552	4,833	5,139	5,456	5,871
Unduplicated count of child removals in the ten large counties	3,859	4,140	4,306	4,694	5,015

Statewide in 2012, there were 280 (6%) fewer children/youth removed from their homes (*unduplicated count*) compared to the 2011 annual report. There was also a 6% rate of reduction between 2010-2011. The number of children/youth removed (*unduplicated count*) has decreased by 22% since the 2008 annual report.

The following information provides examples of statewide decreases and increases in the *number of removals (unduplicated count)*:

Between report years 2010 and 2012 the number of counties with a decline in the number of children/youth removed from their homes has been stable and was 33 and 31 (respectively).

Ten Large Counties

- The number of children/youth removed from their homes declined in seven of the 10 large counties by 2% to 40% (El Paso, Boulder, Pueblo, Arapahoe, Denver, Larimer, and Adams) and ranged from three to 231 fewer children/youth.
 - Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, and Pueblo counties have decreased the number of children/youth removed for two consecutive reporting periods (2011 and 2012).
- The number of children/youth removed increased in three of the 10 large counties by 1% to 44% (Weld, Jefferson, and Mesa) and ranged from three to 134 removals.
 - Jefferson and Weld counties had an increase in the number of children/youth removed for two consecutive reporting periods (2011 and 2012).

Mid-Size Counties

- The number of children/youth removed declined in 10 mid-size counties from 4% to 69% (Las Animas, La Plata, Saguache, Logan, Delta, Alamosa, Montrose, Chaffee, Huerfano, and Moffat), and ranged from one to 38 removals.
 - Alamosa, Las Animas, La Plata, and Moffat counties had a decrease in the number of children/youth removed for two consecutive reporting periods (2011 and 2012).
 - Moffat County had a 69% decrease with nine fewer children/youth removed than in 2011.

- Huerfano, Alamosa, and Montrose counties had lower percentages of change and a higher reduction in the number of children/youth removed, which were 16, 17, and 38, respectively.
- The number of children/youth removed increased in eleven mid-size counties from 4% to 78% (Montezuma, Fremont, Douglas, Teller, Eagle, Conejos, Otero, Broomfield, Garfield, Morgan, and Rio Grande), and ranged from 1 to 19 children/youth removed.
 - Douglas and Fremont counties had an increase in the number of children/youth removed for two consecutive years, and a low percentage of change in the number.
 - Rio Grande increased the number of children/youth removed by 78%, which was an increase from four children/youth in 2011 to 18 in 2012.
- The number of children/youth removed remained the same in Prowers.

Small Counties

- The number of children/youth removed remained the same in seven small counties and one mid-size county (Cheyenne, Grand, Hinsdale, Mineral, San Juan, San Miguel, and Sedgwick).
- The number of children/youth removed declined in 14 small counties by one to 14 removals with percentage changes of 23% to 100% (Archuleta, Custer, Jackson, Ouray, Summit, Kit Carson, Lincoln, Lake, Routt, Gunnison, Yuma, Washington, Rio Blanco, and Elbert).
- The number of children/youth removed increased in 11 small counties by one to eight removals with percentage changes of 7% to 100% (Bent, Crowley, Gilpin, Kiowa, Park, Dolores, Baca, Clear Creek, Pitkin, Costilla, and Phillips).

The 54 small and mid-size counties accounted for 15% (693) of the number of children/youth removed from their homes statewide (unduplicated count), which is a 1% increase from 2011. The previous three bullet points demonstrate that the removal of several children/youth or sibling groups can significantly impact county data in small and mid-size counties. Transitory circumstances such as families traveling through, or visiting in, a county with their children/youth and whose safety is compromised, or children/youth that have run away from their county of residence and are taken into temporary legal custody in another county can also affect data.

During the reporting period, there were 4,809 children/youth (*duplicated count*) that were removed from their homes. This is a decrease from the previous year (5,089). Of these children/youth, 54% (2,603) were placed in *county custody*, representing a 3% increase from 2011.

Annual report	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Duplicated count of removals	4,809	5,089	5,421	5,742	6,160
Number of children/youth placed in county custody	2,603	2,608	2,847	3,065	3,477
Percent of children/youth placed in county custody	54%	51%	53%	53%	56%

Kinship Care and Kinship Family Foster Care

Of 4,809 children/youth (*duplicated count*) that were removed, 30% (1,424) were placed into *kinship care as the first service entered*. In comparison to 2011, this represents a 4% increase. Kinship families are required to have fingerprint-based criminal background checks, an inquiry regarding any confirmed child abuse and neglect in all states of residence for the past five years, and an assessment of their appropriateness to meet the needs of the relative children/youth placed in their care. Legal custody of the children/youth is frequently awarded to these families by the court upon recommendation by the county department.

Relative and non-relative kinship caretakers may apply for Medicaid and child-only Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) benefits. The monthly minimum TANF benefit is \$128; however several county departments established a higher monthly benefit for families. The caretakers are not required to have legal custody, and they must provide documentation to demonstrate that they are responsible for the care of the child/youth.

Three percent (3%) or 136 of the children/youth that were removed (*duplicated count*) were placed into *kinship foster care as the first service entered*. There was a slight increase in 2012 compared to the previous year as identified in following the table. The trend is consistent with a decline in the general out-of-home population since 2008. The decline may be partially explained by a number of factors, including:

- Increased family engagement strategies such as family group conferencing, family group decision-making or other types of family meetings;
- Safety planning so that the child/youth can remain safely in the family home;
- Increased provision of in-home services; or
- In some circumstances the kin do not want to, or cannot, meet the requirements for kinship family foster care home certification.

Eight of the 10 large counties identified kinship foster care as the first placement service entered for 76 of 136 children/youth (of 3,859 unduplicated count removals).

The data also indicates that during the reporting period:

- Fremont County placed 52 of 89 children/youth (58%) with kinship (31) or kinship foster care (21) as the first placement service they entered compared to 20 (25%) in 2011.
- Broomfield County placed 21 of 30 children/youth (70%) with kinship (9) or kinship foster care (12) as the first placement service they entered compared to nine (47%) in 2011.

When a child/youth is removed from the family home, the county department attempts to place the child/youth with an appropriate relative or individual he/she knows. The county department and the kinship caregiver determine whether the arrangement is the best option. When the county department seeks legal action through a dependency and neglect (D&N) action, external stakeholders such as the court, Guardian ad Litem (GAL),

and Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA), or other family/extended family members may also participate in the decision-making.

Of kinship care and kinship foster care as the first service entered, the former is used most frequently.

- The 10 large counties identified kinship care as the first service entered for 1,334 (94%) of 1,424 children/youth; and
- The small and mid-sized counties identified kinship care as the first service entered for the remaining 90 children/youth (6%).

Scenarios that may occur based upon county department policy, practice, and kinship caregiver input:

- The kinship caregiver becomes the legal custodian through the court and applies for child-only TANF and Medicaid benefits.
- The county department maintains legal custody and the kinship caregiver applies for child-only TANF and Medicaid benefits. This practice is not widely used by county departments.
- The kinship caregiver is a temporary resource (emergency visitation status) for up to 60 days while the county department identifies, locates, and notifies additional appropriate relatives as potential temporary and/or permanent options for the child/youth, and the county department maintains legal custody.
- The child/youth is placed in emergency visitation status for 60 days with the kinship caregiver and the county department works towards certification of kinship family foster care. The county department maintains legal custody.
- The county department provisionally certifies the relative or individual known to the child/youth for 60 days until the kinship caregiver is fully certified. The county department retains legal custody. Non-safety exceptions to the foster care requirements may be approved through an appeal process, and effective December 1, 2012, county directors have the authority to waive non-safety certification requirements established in rule pursuant to HB12-1047 without the current appeal process.

Annual report	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008
Duplicated count of child removals	4,809	5,089	5,421	5,742	6,160
Number of children/youth with a first service of kinship care	1,424	1,305	1,132	1,230	1,113
Percent of children/youth with a first service of kinship care	30%	26%	21%	21%	18%
Number of children/youth with a first service entered in kinship foster care	136	123	177	168	231
Percent of children/youth with a first service entered in kinship foster care	3%	2%	3%	3%	4%
Total percent of children/youth with first service entered in kinship care and kinship foster care	33%	28%	24%	24%	22%

When an emergency out-of-home placement is necessary for a child due to imminent safety issues and a relative or individual known to the child/youth cannot be located immediately for out-of-home placement, the child/youth is placed in a non-relative family foster care home. Federal and state laws require the county departments to conduct intensive family finding activities to locate all potential relatives that can care for the child/youth within 30 days following the removal from the parents' or legal custodian's home. When an identified relative agrees to become either a kinship caregiver or a kinship family foster care provider, this is the next (second) service entered into Trails and is not reflected in this report.

- 15 small counties and seven mid-size counties did not enter kinship or kinship foster care as the first service. Of these, three small counties did not assume the legal custody of any of the children/youth that were removed.

Placing children/youth with kinship caregivers upon removal provides the opportunity for the child/youth to remain with people with whom they have a relationship. This situation maintains their identity as a family member, maintains their culture, reduces trauma, and promotes opportunity for permanency if the child/youth cannot be safely reunified. In situations when the child/youth is safely reunified and he/she may not have had significant contact with the kinship caregiver prior to the placement, ongoing or permanent connections may be established, increasing the support network for the child/youth. Placement with kinship caregivers upon removal also prevents a contentious case regarding permanency for a child/youth when a non-relative foster parent and a kinship caregiver who may have entered the case later in the process both want to be the permanent option for the child/youth.

Senator Pat Steadman

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In summary, from September 1, 2011-August 31, 2012, approximately 280 fewer children/youth were removed from their homes (*duplicated count*) compared to the previous reporting period. Of the 4,809 removals (*duplicated count*), 33% percent of the children/youth were placed into either *kinship care* or *kinship foster care as the first service entered*. This indicates a trend of increased use of kinship care and kinship foster care as the *first service entered* since 2008, while at the same time the number of removals from the home has steadily decreased.

Description of Annual Report

Column 1: *Identified county:*

Column 2: *Number of children:* This is an *unduplicated* count of children/youth who were removed from their home at some point during the year. This means each child /youth is counted once.

Column 3: *Number of removals:* This is the *duplicated* count of the number of children/youth who were removed from their home at some point during the year. More than one removal occurred for some of the children/youth during the timeframe of the report. This means the child/youth was removed from their home, then reunified with their parent/guardian, and then removed again.

Column 4: *Placed in county custody:* Of the children/youth who were removed from their homes, this indicates the number of children/youth who were placed in the legal custody of the county departments. The number of children/youth who are in the legal custody of county departments is significantly lower than the number of removals (unduplicated and duplicated count columns 2 and 3 respectively). This may occur for different reasons. For example, when children/youth are in imminent danger, the county department or local law enforcement may release the child to a relative or another individual who has a relationship with the child. The relative or individual will provide safety for the child until the family issues can be resolved. In another scenario, the county department may recommend to the court with jurisdiction that the child be released to the care and legal custody of the relative or identified caretaker. In some cases, the child will be released to the non-custodial parent and the county does not pursue legal custody.

Column 5: *First service entered kinship care:* This is the number of children/youth who were placed with relatives or individual(s) with a known relationship to the child/youth and who were *not* kinship family foster care parents. With this type of placement the following generally occurs:

- The child/youth is eligible for Medicaid benefits.
- The caregiver is eligible to apply for child-only Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) payments.
- The caregiver is awarded legal custody of the child/youth through the court with jurisdiction.
- In some situations a voluntary placement agreement may be in effect for up to 90 days before court oversight is required.
- The placement is likely to last an extended period of time.

Column 6: *First service entered kinship foster care:* This is the number of children/youth whose first out-of-home placement was with a relative or individual with a known relationship to the child/youth and who was a kinship family foster care parent. The following occurs:

- The child/youth is generally eligible for Medicaid benefits.
- The caregivers receive foster care maintenance reimbursement.
- The county department has legal custody of the child/youth through a Dependency and Neglect action. In some cases a voluntary placement agreement may be in effect with court oversight.

Colorado Department of Human Services
 Trails System Report
 Division of Child Welfare

State Legislative Report

From: 9/1/2011 To: 8/31/2012

County ID/Name	Number of Children	Number of Removals	Placed in County Custody	First Service Entered Kinship Care	First Service Entered Kinship Foster Care
01 Adams	349	379	193	69	5
02 Alamosa	20	21	8	1	3
03 Arapahoe	425	449	259	66	0
04 Archuleta	2	2	1	0	0
05 Baca	5	5	3	2	0
06 Bent	14	14	8	1	0
07 Boulder	106	114	70	30	5
08 Chaffee	3	3	2	0	0
09 Cheyenne	0	0	0	0	0
10 Clear Creek	15	15	12	0	0
11 Conejos	9	12	5	0	0
12 Costilla	5	5	4	0	1
13 Crowley	8	8	2	2	0
14 Custer	3	3	2	0	0
15 Delta	32	32	14	9	3
16 Denver	822	870	469	419	2
17 Dolores	3	3	2	0	0
18 Douglas	93	96	56	13	0
19 Eagle	10	10	7	2	1
20 Elbert	17	17	12	9	0
21 El Paso	747	811	403	267	1
22 Fremont	89	92	54	31	21
23 Garfield	35	35	21	0	4
24 Gilpin	9	10	4	0	0
25 Grand	6	6	2	0	0
26 Gunnison	7	7	2	0	0
27 Hinsdale	0	0	0	0	0
28 Huerfano	11	13	5	0	0
29 Jackson	0	0	0	0	0
30 Jefferson	571	591	349	289	5
31 Kiowa	2	2	1	1	0
32 Kit Carson	4	4	0	0	0
33 Lake	4	4	2	0	0
34 La Plata	27	32	14	0	7
35 Larimer	169	176	98	41	42
36 Las Animas	23	23	19	6	0
37 Lincoln	7	7	2	1	0

County ID/Name	Number of Children	Number of Removals	Placed in County Custody		First Service Entered		First Service Entered Kinship Foster Care
			Placed in County Custody	Kinship Care	Kinship Care	Kinship Foster Care	
38 Logan	38	42	29	2	0	0	0
39 Mesa	229	235	143	58	13	13	0
40 Mineral	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
41 Moffat	4	4	3	0	1	1	0
42 Montezuma	25	26	22	3	2	2	0
43 Montrose	41	42	24	3	0	0	0
44 Morgan	45	47	28	0	1	1	0
45 Otero	33	34	16	13	1	1	0
46 Ouray	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
47 Park	8	8	5	0	1	1	0
48 Phillips	14	14	2	5	0	0	0
49 Pitkin	3	3	2	0	0	0	0
50 Prowers	7	7	4	0	0	0	0
51 Pueblo	234	249	126	90	0	0	0
52 Rio Blanco	5	5	2	1	2	2	0
53 Rio Grande	18	19	7	0	0	0	0
54 Routt	4	4	3	0	0	0	0
55 Saguache	5	5	4	0	0	0	0
56 San Juan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
57 San Miguel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
58 Sedgwick	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
59 Summit	8	8	1	0	0	0	0
60 Teller	36	37	20	0	0	0	0
61 Washington	7	7	4	1	0	0	0
62 Weld	207	218	97	5	3	3	0
63 Yuma	7	7	2	0	0	0	0
80 Broomfield	30	30	10	9	12	12	0
State Totals	4,552	4,809	2,603	1,424	136	136	0

Note : As the State Total for Number of Children represents distinct individual