



Working for Kentucky's Future ... Our Children



2011 Annual Report

Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards



CFCRB volunteers are important advocates for Kentucky children in out-of-home care

John D. Minton Jr.
Chief Justice of Kentucky

Kentucky children in out-of-home care have a special group of people advocating on their behalf. Nearly 800 men and women volunteer with the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards to help these children obtain permanent placements as quickly as possible.

Kentucky law requires Citizen Foster Care Review Boards to review the cases of children who are in the custody of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services due to dependency, neglect and abuse. Through regular monitoring, CFCRB volunteers can make informed recommendations to judges on permanency plans that are in the best interests of the children.

The Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts provides oversight and support to the CFCRB program. In Fiscal Year 2011, 759 CFCRB volunteers conducted 19,839 reviews of 9,283 children in out-of-home care. You will find this information and more in the 2011 CFCRB Annual Report, which provides current statistics, legislative recommendations and updates on initiatives related to the work of the review boards.

I am especially pleased that in January 2011 the Supreme Court of Kentucky adopted the first family law rules to be uniform statewide. This means that all family law cases, including those pertaining to adoption and dependency, neglect and abuse, will be handled in a consistent manner in every Kentucky county. That's good news for families and children in out-of-home care, who can depend on judges, attorneys and the parties involved to follow the same family law rules when working to ensure a child's safety, permanency and well-being.

The new family law rules, along with the adoption of best practices and the fast growth of interested party review, are positive developments that are benefiting children in out-of-home care.

Just one person can make a difference in a child's life. CFCRB volunteers prove that every day and I want to thank each of them for their extraordinary commitment to Kentucky's children.

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Progress Report on Kentucky Children in Foster Care

Patrick Yewell, Executive Officer
Department of Family and Juvenile Services, Administrative Office of the Courts

CFCRB Executive Summary for Fiscal Year 2011: July 1, 2010 – June 30, 2011

I am pleased to present the annual report for the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards. CFCRB volunteers provide a direct service to judges by monitoring children placed in out-of-home care and providing findings and recommendations to the court on every child reviewed by local boards.

This report offers a detailed analysis of the children served by the CFCRB, the activities of the review boards and the support services provided by the Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts. You will also find the recommendations that CFCRB volunteers submitted to the state legislature in hopes of improving services for children in care.

Here are several significant findings from FY 2011:

- 759 CFCRB volunteers conducted 17,730 paper reviews and 2,109 interested party reviews for a total of 19,839 reviews of 9,283 children.
- The average length of stay for children in care was 20.2 months, a slight decrease over the 20.24 months reported in FY 2010.
- 40 percent of the children reviewed by the CFCRB were released through reunification to parents or primary caregivers in FY 2011. Another 24 percent of the children were released through placement with relatives.
- The percentage of children aging out of care has increased to 14 percent in FY 2011 compared with 13 percent in FY 2010 and 11 percent in FY 2009.
- Of the children reviewed, those ages 5 and younger were the largest age group (34 percent) and those ages 16 to 20 were the next largest age group (25 percent).
- Children experienced an average of 3.03 placements per commitment, a slight decrease from the 3.15 placements per commitment in FY 2010.
- Slightly more children achieved adoption, with 20 percent exiting from care due to a finalized adoption compared to 19.8 percent in FY 2010.

However, children who exited from care due to a finalized adoption spent 36.6 months in care compared to 36.1 months in FY 2010.

- The boards using interested party review as the standard for reviewing all cases grew to 24 percent in FY 2011 compared to 18 percent in FY 2010.

Continuing education for CFCRB volunteers remained a priority, with 513 volunteers receiving training at 37 trainings offered throughout the state. In addition, family services coordinators offered 12 one-day guardian ad litem trainings – six advanced seminars and six basic programs. The name was changed from Guardian ad Litem Training Seminar to Legal Training for Dependency, Neglect and Abuse Cases to better represent the attorneys, child welfare professionals and CFCRB volunteers who complete the trainings.

The Best Practices/Model Court Initiative has two new pilot sites in Boyle/Mercer and Jessamine counties. These jurisdictions join Jefferson, Fayette, Daviess and Hardin counties in following the best practices promoted by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

The Supreme Court issued the first statewide uniform Family Court Rules of Procedure and Practice in January 2011. The AOC Department of Family and Juvenile Services provided administrative support to this important initiative and continues to encourage efforts to adopt best practices, especially in child protection cases, as the standard.

We welcomed Paula Atkins from Muhlenberg County as the CFCRB state chair for FY 2011. Paula's leadership skills and spirit of collaboration have benefited the children we serve and improved services to our volunteers.

I applaud the CFCRB volunteers for their selfless devotion to improving the lives of Kentucky's children in out-of-home care. Our volunteers are instrumental in helping these children achieve permanency to last a lifetime.

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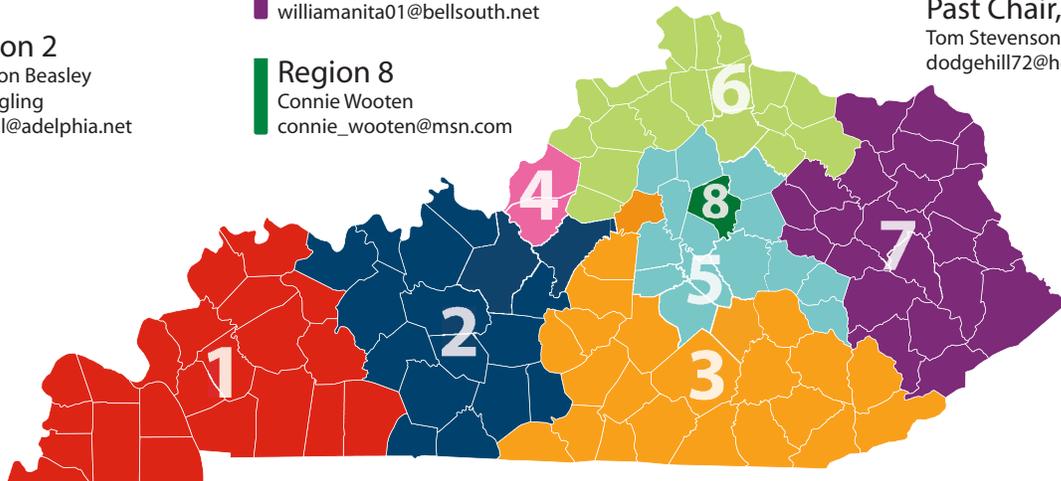
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CFCRB Mission

To ensure safe, permanent, timely placement of Kentucky's children in out-of-home care.

CFCRB Vision

- » With respect to children in care: To ensure adequate and necessary services are provided to families and children with the utmost importance given to safety, well-being and permanency.
- » With respect to the judges we serve: To provide timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed information about children in care so as to promote knowledgeable permanency decisions.
- » With respect to CFCRB volunteers: To promote awareness and understanding regarding children's issues through educational opportunities at local, regional and state levels.
- » With respect to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services: To provide meaningful, respectful feedback regarding paths to permanency.

Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards

2011 Recommendations for Legislative and Policy Reform

Kentucky Revised Statute 620.320(5) requires the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards to evaluate and make annual recommendations to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the governor and the Legislative Research Commission regarding the laws of the commonwealth and the practices, policies and procedures within the commonwealth that affect permanence for children in out-of-home placement.

Ensure that children, who are of appropriate age, are receiving independent living skills training and options.

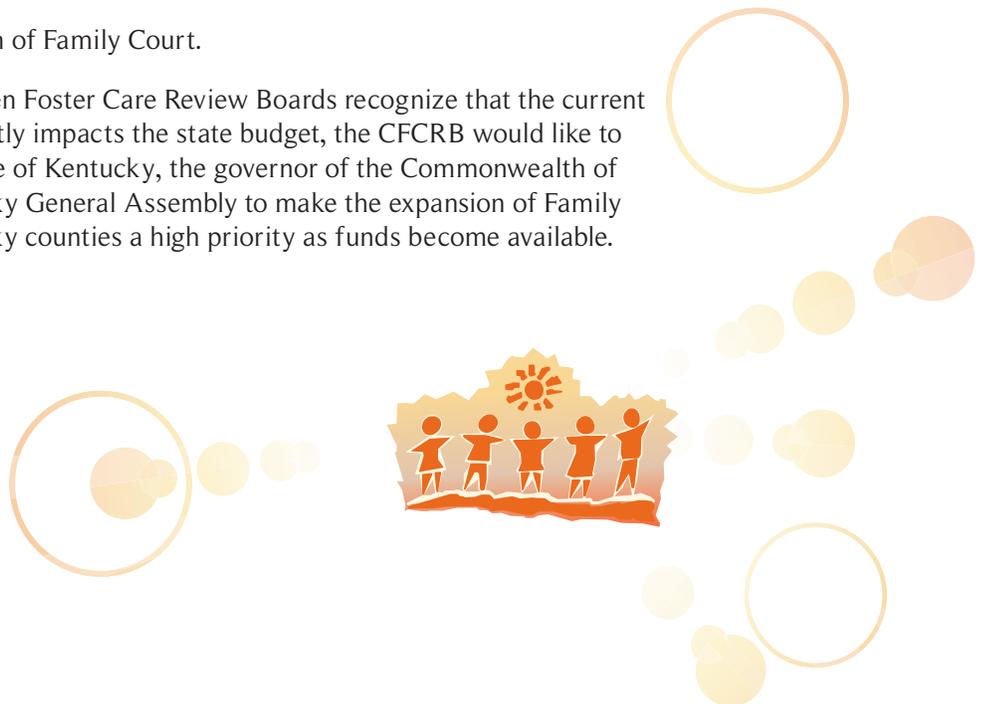
- ☞ Redefine “independent living” in KRS 600.020(30) to mean the development of a plan for independent living, including skills necessary to enable a committed child to establish independent living arrangements. This shall include the development of an independent living plan to be presented to, and approved by, the court prior to when a child ages out of commitment.
- ☞ Revise KRS 620.140 relating to the dispositional alternatives for a dependent, neglected or abused child in order to extend the time within which a child could elect to participate in state or federal educational programs or obtain Cabinet for Health and Family Services assistance in establishing independent living arrangements, including reinstatement of commitment, to 12 months after the child has attained the age of 18.

Meet the educational needs of children.

- ☞ Amend KRS 620.250(1) to require that the most recent educational record of the child be supplied by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and obtained by the Cabinet via any electronic portal or system maintained by the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. This information could include, but not be limited to, the child’s grades, absences, homework, suspension, expulsion, detention or other disciplinary measures taken by the school, as well as any individual education plan relating to the child.

Support the statewide expansion of Family Court.

- ☞ While the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards recognize that the current economic downturn directly impacts the state budget, the CFCRB would like to encourage the chief justice of Kentucky, the governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky and the Kentucky General Assembly to make the expansion of Family Court into all 120 Kentucky counties a high priority as funds become available.



Questions & Answers

Out-of-Home Care Demographics

What are the ages of children in foster care?

Of the 9,283 children reviewed by CFCRB volunteers in FY 2011, the youngest was 3 months old and the oldest was 23 years old (due to extended commitment). The average age was 10.31 years. Children age 5 and younger were the largest age group (33.5 percent) to be reviewed. Children between the ages of 16 to 20 were the next largest age group (25 percent) to be reviewed.

The age analysis is based on children who were in out-of-home care on June 30, 2011, and includes children who were released from the Cabinet's custody any time during the fiscal year.

What gender are children in out-of-home care?

The gender of children in out-of-home care is almost evenly split, with 50.4 percent male and 49.6 percent female.

What race are children in foster care?

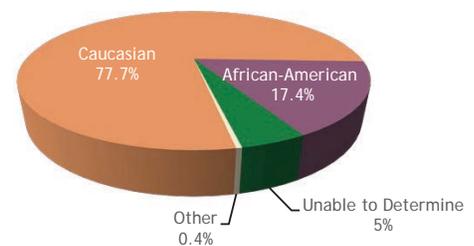
Of the children in foster care, 78.4 percent are Caucasian, 16.6 percent are African-American, 4.6 percent are unable to be determined and 0.4 percent are other races. The other races include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander.

Children by Age

By Age	# of Children
0-5 Years	3,110
6-10 Years	1,853
11-15 Years	1,862
16-20 Years	2,347
21 Years & Older	111
Total	9,283

Children Reviewed	9,283
Lowest Age	0.329
Highest Age	23.55
Average Age	10.31

Children by Race





Time in Out-of-Home Care

What is the average length of stay by age group for children in out-of-home care?

Active children – children who were still in care at the end of FY 2011 – experienced an average length of stay of 22.76 months. Inactive children – children released at any time during the fiscal year – experienced an average stay of 17.28 months. The overall average length of stay for FY 2011 was 20.2 months, which represents little change from the average length of stay of 20.24 months reported for FY 2011.

The chart illustrates the average length of stay for children by age. Children over age 15 continue to remain in care longer than younger children and are experiencing an overall average of 31.18 months in care, compared to 13.76 months in care for children age 5 and younger.

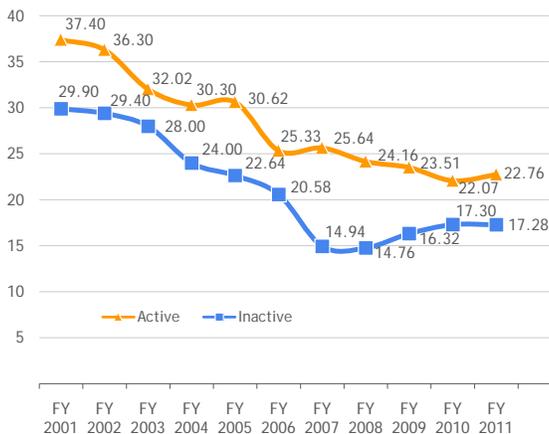
Average Length of Stay in Months as of 6/30/2011

Age in Years	Active	Inactive	All Children
0-5 Years	15.90	11.72	13.76
6-10 Years	18.37	15.07	16.87
11-15 Years	22.10	15.15	19.36
Over 15 Years	34.74	27.38	31.18
Overall	22.76	17.28	20.20

Note: Statistics captured in this chart represent all children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011. The term “active children” describes children whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year and who were still in care on June 30, 2011. “Inactive children” describes those whose cases were reviewed during the fiscal year but were released prior to June 30, 2011.

It should be noted that in calculating the average length of stay, children who were in care less than 24 hours are counted as “zero” on the spectrum of length of time in care. These are children who may have been in the process of being removed from the home when a suitable relative assumed custody of the child. When taking into account these zeros, it may actually skew the average to the lower end of the spectrum.

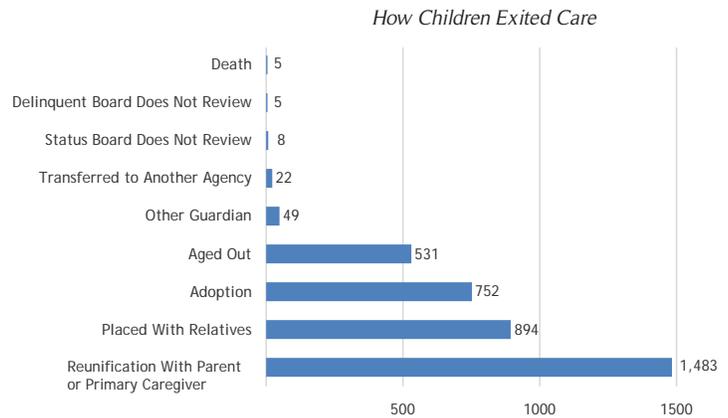
Average Length of Stay in Months as of 6/30/2011



Exiting Out-of-Home Care

Why are children released from out-of-home care?

The majority of children – 40 percent – were released from care through reunification with parents or primary guardians. This is consistent with the 39 percent reported for FY 2010. The next largest group of children exiting care – 24 percent – was through placement with relatives. This is a slight decrease from the 26 percent reported for FY 2010. The number of children aging out of care continues to rise. In FY 2011, 14 percent of youth aged out of care, compared to 13 percent in FY 2010 and 11 percent in FY 2009. The chart shows how the remaining children exited care.

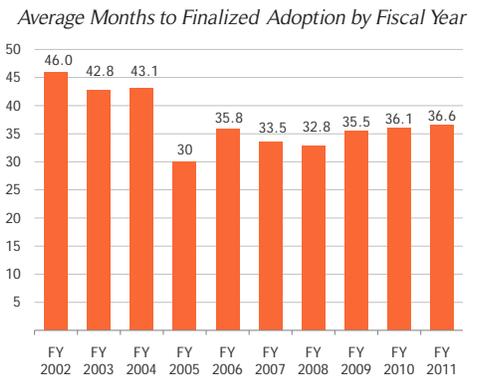
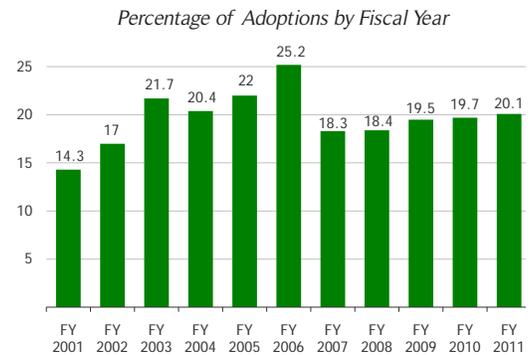


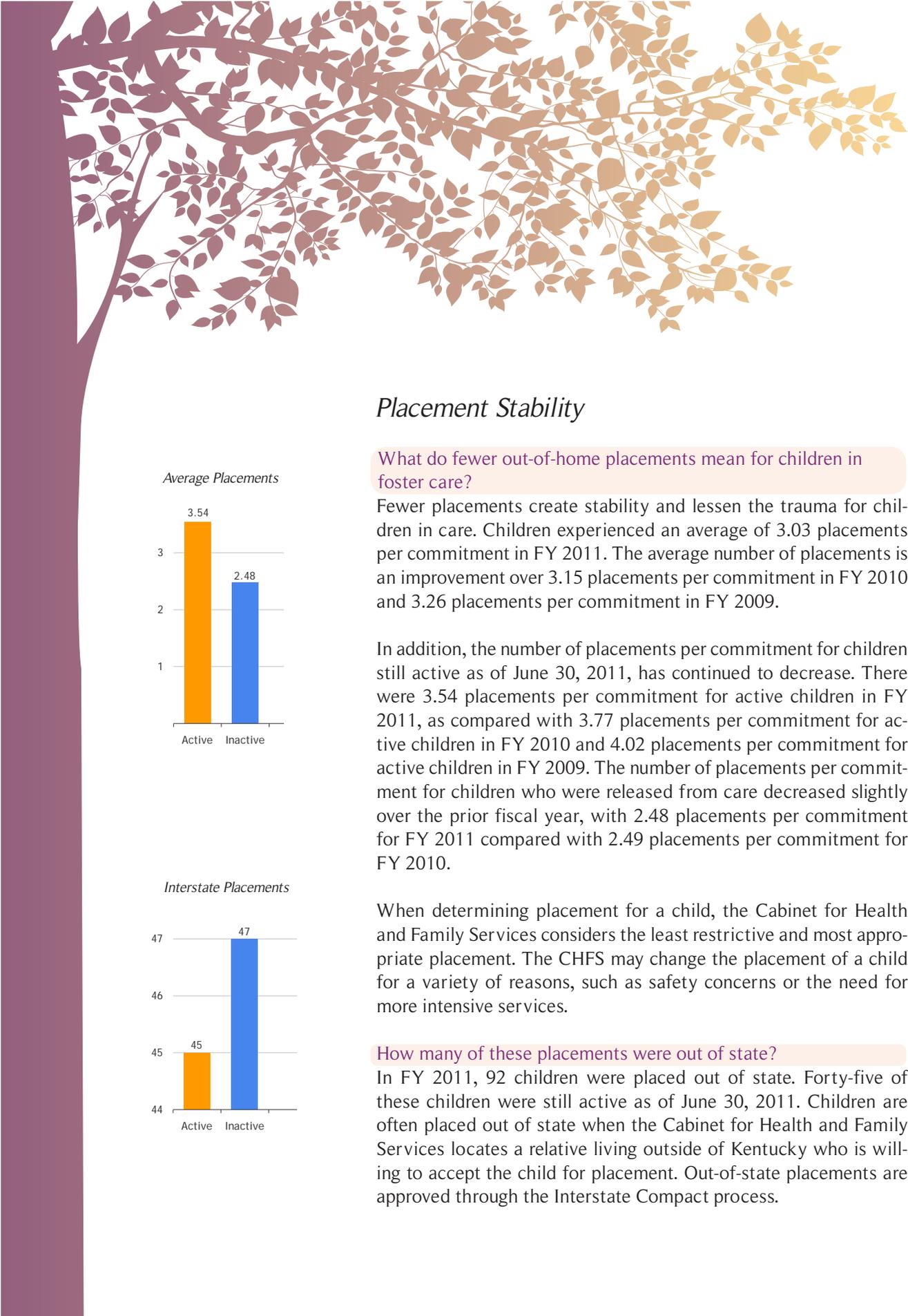
What percentage of children in out-of-home care were adopted?

Twenty percent of the children released from out-of-home care achieved permanency through adoption in FY 2011. Children who exited care because of a finalized adoption spent 36.6 months in care prior to adoption. Although the percentage of children achieving adoption increased slightly over FY 2010, the time spent in care before a finalized adoption was slightly more than the 36.1 months reported in FY 2010.

These two charts show the percentage of adoptions and average number of months to finalized adoptions.

Note: The variance in the statistical comparison between FY 2005 and FY 2006 may be due to the implementation of the Children's Automated Tracking System (CATS). In FY 2005, the reasons for release were gathered from individual CFCRB case reviews. Since CATS was launched in 2006, release information has been obtained primarily through downloads from TWIST, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' data-tracking system.

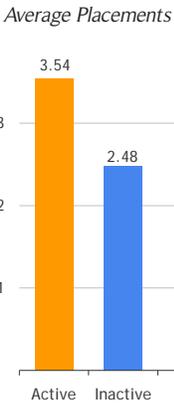




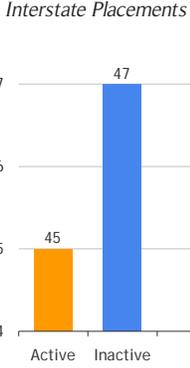
Placement Stability

What do fewer out-of-home placements mean for children in foster care?

Fewer placements create stability and lessen the trauma for children in care. Children experienced an average of 3.03 placements per commitment in FY 2011. The average number of placements is an improvement over 3.15 placements per commitment in FY 2010 and 3.26 placements per commitment in FY 2009.



In addition, the number of placements per commitment for children still active as of June 30, 2011, has continued to decrease. There were 3.54 placements per commitment for active children in FY 2011, as compared with 3.77 placements per commitment for active children in FY 2010 and 4.02 placements per commitment for active children in FY 2009. The number of placements per commitment for children who were released from care decreased slightly over the prior fiscal year, with 2.48 placements per commitment for FY 2011 compared with 2.49 placements per commitment for FY 2010.



When determining placement for a child, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services considers the least restrictive and most appropriate placement. The CHFS may change the placement of a child for a variety of reasons, such as safety concerns or the need for more intensive services.

How many of these placements were out of state?

In FY 2011, 92 children were placed out of state. Forty-five of these children were still active as of June 30, 2011. Children are often placed out of state when the Cabinet for Health and Family Services locates a relative living outside of Kentucky who is willing to accept the child for placement. Out-of-state placements are approved through the Interstate Compact process.

Establishing Permanency Goals

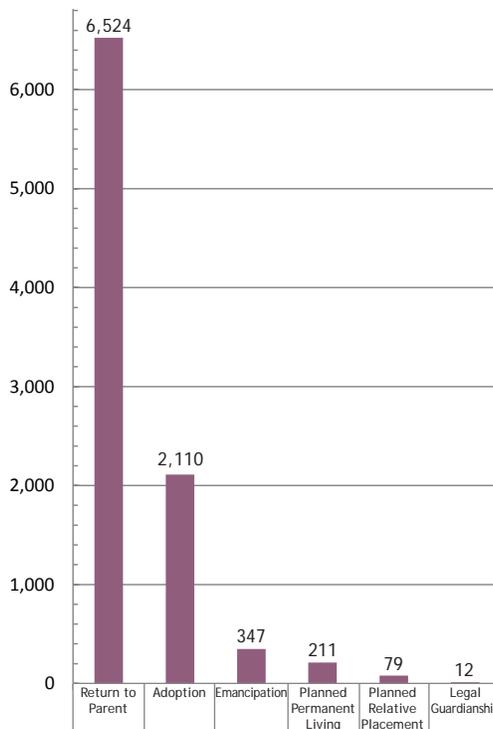
How is the permanency goal established and defined?

The Cabinet for Health and Family Services establishes a permanency plan for each child who enters foster care and his or her family. The plan is filed with the court and addresses the reason the child is in custody. The plan focuses on achieving objectives and completing tasks to ensure the child obtains a permanent home as quickly as possible.

The chart defines permanency goals that have been established for children. Return to parent and adoption remain the permanency goals for the majority of children reviewed by the CFCRB.

Children who remain in the custody of the Cabinet for 12 months after their initial placement are scheduled for a permanency hearing through the local court to determine their future status. At this hearing, the court addresses whether the child should be returned to the parents, placed for adoption, placed with a permanent custodian or provided with another type of permanent living arrangement.

Permanency Goals of Children in Foster Care



CFCRB Overview

What is the Citizen Foster Care Review Board?

The Kentucky General Assembly created the Citizen Foster Care Review Board in 1982 in response to federal legislation aimed at decreasing the amount of time children spend in foster care. Today 759 volunteers serve on 140 review boards throughout Kentucky.

CFCRB volunteers are appointed by their chief Family Court or District Court judge to review the cases of children placed in the custody of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services due to dependency, neglect or abuse.

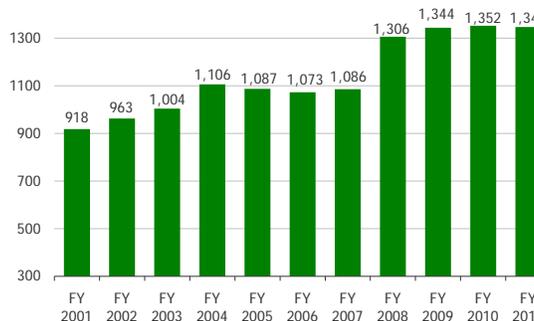
Volunteers regularly review each child's case with a particular focus on the out-of-home placement and the permanency plan established by the Cabinet. Based on information obtained from the reviews, the volunteer makes recommendations to the judge to ensure the child is placed in a safe and permanent home in a timely manner.

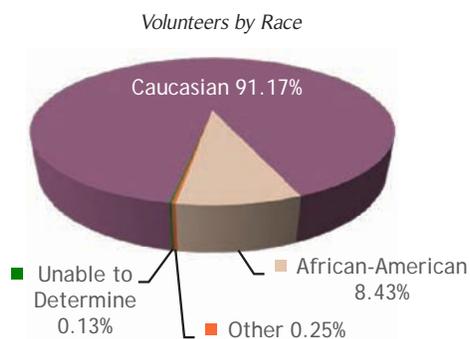
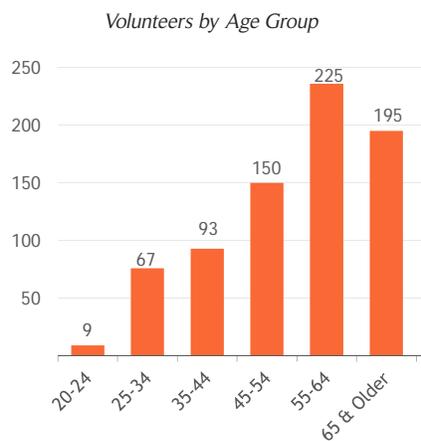
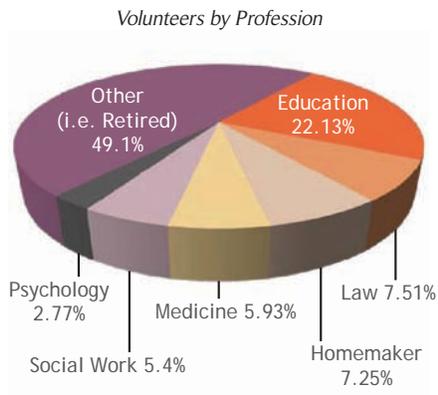
In FY 2011, the volunteers held 1,347 meetings and conducted 19,839 reviews on 9,283 children in out-of-home care.

The CFCRB operates within the Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort. The AOC is the operational arm of the Kentucky Judicial Branch.



Board Meetings by Fiscal Year





Who are CFCRB volunteers?

Each year CFCRB volunteers spend countless hours advocating for the dependent, neglected and abused children in their communities.

Although volunteers vary in age and experience, they share a common commitment to the welfare of Kentucky's children. Of the 759 volunteers in FY 2011, 85 percent were female and 43.74 percent had backgrounds in education, medicine, law, social work and psychology. The volunteers ranged in age from 21 to 89, with an average age of 55. The average length of service was 5.7 years, which demonstrates the volunteers' long-term dedication to the CFCRB program.

What are the requirements for becoming a CFCRB volunteer?

Those interested in volunteering must complete an initial six-hour training session and consent to a criminal record and Cabinet for Health and Family Services Central Registry Check. New volunteers are trained on the following topics:

- ▶ Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services procedures
- ▶ Local Department for Community Based Services procedures
- ▶ Dependency, neglect and abuse case forms
- ▶ Court processes
- ▶ Mental health needs of children in out-of-home care
- ▶ Process for conducting a file review

Once a volunteer has completed this training, a recommendation is made to the chief judge of the local Family Court or District Court for the volunteer to be appointed to the local board. Judges appoint volunteers for three-year terms. Volunteers are given a comprehensive handbook on the program and opportunities to earn the required six hours of continuing education each year.

What cases do CFCRB volunteers review?

Pursuant to KRS 620.270, CFCRB volunteers review the case of each child who is placed into the custody of the Cabinet by a court order for temporary custody or commitment. The reviews are conducted in the county or counties that the local board serves.

The cases include those of children placed for adoptions that have not been finalized, children who have been returned home but remain committed and young adults whose out-of-home commitments have been extended. Children and young adults are also subject to review if they were originally committed as dependent, neglected or abused but have been recommitted as status or public offenders, provided the commitment was not interrupted.

CFCRB Activity by IPR Review Board for Fiscal Year 2011

What resources are needed to conduct a review?

The CFCRB reviews the case of each child or young adult who is in temporary custody or is committed by the court in the county or counties served by the board. The reviews are conducted through the paper case file or an interactive meeting called an interested party review.

Each review board has access to all pertinent information and records maintained by the Cabinet on the parents or person exercising custodial control or supervision for the child being reviewed. The board also has access to all pertinent information and records of the court, the Cabinet and public and private child-care facilities for the child the CFCRB is reviewing. Information and records include, but are not limited to, case permanency plans, case progress reports and case records.

Each local board may request in writing, with a notice of five work days, for the employees of the Cabinet and other agencies to appear at local board meetings.

How often are reviews conducted?

According to statute, every child must be reviewed at least once every six months. But CFCRB volunteers may review cases more often if deemed necessary by the board. The CFCRB reports its findings to the court and to the Cabinet.

Where are reviews conducted?

Reviews are conducted in every county in Kentucky. Larger counties may have multiple boards. Smaller counties in the same judicial circuit or district may join together for a combined board.

The chief Family Court or District Court judge designates where the review will take place. Paper reviews are often conducted at the local office of the Department for Community Based Services. Many of the interested party reviews are conducted in local judicial centers.

Where are CFCRB reviews conducted if a child moves to another county?

Pursuant to KRS 620.270(1), if a child moves to another county due to a pre-adoptive placement or if the Cabinet has moved the child, the responsibility for reviewing cases remains with the local review board that serves the county where the child or young adult who is in temporary custody or is committed by the court.

When does the CFCRB stop conducting reviews?

Pursuant to KRS 620.270, reviews by a CFCRB shall cease when the child is no longer in the custody of the Cabinet or an adoption has been finalized. The case record will document the release.

	IPR Reviews	Children Reviewed
Adair	28	15
Allen	48	32
Barren River	63	63
Big Sandy	25	24
Bluegrass Rural	50	49
Caldwell/Lyon	28	17
Casey	15	11
Christian	16	16
Clinton	34	18
Crittenden	11	7
Cumberland Valley	27	27
Daviess A	120	81
Elliott/Morgan	12	12
Fayette	48	48
Fayette One	10	10
FIVCO	29	29
Fulton/Hickman	37	23
Gateway/Buffalo Trace	67	65
Green	9	6
Green River	8	8
Jackson	1	1
Jefferson	58	56
Jefferson 5	128	90
Jefferson 7	111	73
Johnson	44	38
Kentucky River	41	41
KIPDA Rural	51	49
Lawrence	26	21
Lincoln Trail	38	38
Livingston	11	8
Magoffin	39	28
McCracken B	129	78
McCreary	5	5
McLean	6	6
Meade	46	30
Mercer	28	24
Montgomery	12	9
Muhlenberg	43	24
Nelson	31	31
Northern Kentucky	57	57
Ohio	68	44
Oldham	50	34
Pennyrile	50	46
Pulaski	59	41
Purchase	47	46
Rockcastle	20	20
Russell	14	8
Spencer	30	20
Taylor	38	22
Trigg	16	16
Union	78	45
Wayne	44	31
Webster	5	4
Statewide	2,109	1,618





CFCRB Activity by Review Board for Fiscal Year 2011

	Paper Reviews	Children Reviewed
Allen	7	7
Anderson	197	88
Ballard/Carlisle	32	21
Barren	144	101
Bath/Menifee	48	36
Bell	79	46
Boone/Gallatin	219	84
Bourbon	58	26
Boyd A	98	91
Boyd B	111	107
Boyle	135	72
Bracken/Robertson	14	13
Breathitt	49	19
Breckinridge	87	56
Bullitt	348	168
Butler	51	31
Caldwell/Lyon	6	5
Calloway	181	111
Campbell A	165	75
Campbell B	260	122
Carroll	39	19
Carter	87	66
Casey	8	8
Christian	159	97
Clark	243	58
Clay	155	94
Clinton	4	4
Crittenden	3	3
Daviess A	9	9
Daviess B	243	152
Edmonson	84	51
Estill	77	31
Fayette A	242	108
Fayette B	207	86
Fayette C	204	80
Fayette D	221	93
Fayette E	212	82
Fayette F	226	83
Fayette G	245	86
Fayette H	324	81
Fayette I	194	89
Fayette J	299	80
Fleming	18	18
Fleming/Robertson	43	33
Floyd	121	80
Franklin	175	57
Fulton/Hickman	14	14
Garrard	147	72
Grant	85	46
Graves	122	73
Grayson	414	203
Green	2	2
Greenup	51	49
Hancock	55	20
Hardin A	249	120
Hardin B	268	156
Harlan	163	100
Harrison/Pendleton	19	19
Harrison/Pendleton/Nicholas	62	29
Hart	65	34
Henderson	55	55
Henry	58	23
Hopkins	217	122
Jackson	28	15
Jefferson 1	491	201
Jefferson 2	302	104
Jefferson 3	326	121
Jefferson 4	337	143
Jefferson 5	43	43
Jefferson 6	347	127

	Paper Reviews	Children Reviewed
Jefferson 7	24	24
Jefferson 8	279	117
Jefferson 9	240	105
Jefferson 10	354	164
Jessamine	141	77
Johnson	18	18
Kenton A	410	173
Kenton B	269	150
Kenton C	355	163
Kenton D	218	101
Kenton E	129	55
Kenton F	286	138
Knott	54	35
Knox	91	55
Larue	94	57
Laurel 1	187	116
Lawrence	1	1
Lee/Owsley	72	43
Leslie	39	26
Letcher	87	42
Lewis	47	12
Lincoln	76	43
Livingston	1	1
Logan	101	61
Madison A	222	92
Madison B	232	79
Magoffin	77	53
Marion/Washington	98	66
Marshall	198	99
Mason	10	10
Mason/Bracken	6	6
McCracken A	341	85
McCracken B	31	31
McCreary	235	123
McLean	18	9
Meade	5	5
Mercer	46	36
Metcalfe	33	24
Monroe/Cumberland	48	27
Muhlenberg	4	4
Nelson	39	34
Ohio	25	25
Oldham	19	19
Owen	21	8
Perry	255	135
Pike	92	65
Powell	158	38
Pulaski	63	49
Rockcastle	67	44
Rowan	197	116
Russell	6	6
Scott	183	89
Shelby	292	118
Simpson	43	30
Spencer	5	5
Taylor	13	13
Todd	37	19
Trigg	37	21
Trimble	52	22
Union	15	15
Warren A	223	129
Warren B	209	119
Warren C	172	92
Wayne	25	25
Webster	9	9
Whitley	101	68
Wolfe	38	22
Woodford	102	37
Statewide	17,730	8,465

News & Updates

Supreme Court adopts first uniform rules for family law cases

The Supreme Court of Kentucky announced in January 2011 that it had adopted the first uniform rules for family law cases statewide.

The Family Court Rules of Procedure and Practice apply to all family law cases, which are handled by Family Court judges in 71 Kentucky counties and by circuit and district judges in the 49 other counties without a Family Court. Family law cases include such matters as divorce, termination of parental rights, domestic violence, child support, juvenile

status offenses, adoption and dependency, neglect or abuse.

Deputy Chief Justice Mary C. Noble headed the initiative to develop and recommend uniform rules as chair of the Supreme Court Civil Rules Committee. The Family Court rules are a section of the civil rules.

The rules became effective Jan. 1, 2011, and are having a significant impact on the practice of family law in Kentucky. Previously there were no statewide rules specifically for family law cases. Judges followed the Supreme Court Civil Rules and created local family law rules for their jurisdictions. The new rules are based on best practices in domestic

and child welfare cases in Kentucky courts. They provide a uniform set of rules for judges, attorneys and parties to follow to help ensure safety, permanency and well-being for children and families.

“These rules will change the way family law is practiced in Kentucky,” Chief Justice John D. Minton Jr. said. “The many Kentucky citizens involved in family law proceedings – some of the most sensitive and difficult cases to come before our courts – will benefit from the dedication and vision of Justice Noble and all those who assisted with drafting these rules.”

Continued on page 13

Examples of New Family Court Rules

These examples show how the new rules will affect dependency, neglect and abuse actions, as well as adoptions and termination of parental rights.

- All orders in dependency, neglect or abuse actions must be on the appropriate AOC form.
- Any request for an emergency custody order must be in writing and on AOC form AOC-DNA-2.
- No child is to be removed on a verbal order.
- Separate petitions are to be filed regarding each child; siblings are to be assigned to the same judge.
- Where a continuance or an extension of time is granted, the court shall make findings on the record (written or oral) that the continuance is necessary:
 - In the best interests of the child
 - For accumulation or presentation of evidence or witnesses
 - To protect the rights of a party
 - Other good cause shown
- After a petition has been filed, it shall be dismissed only by court order.
- Attorneys shall file a written entry of appearance.
- Attorneys shall not withdraw except on a motion granted by the court.
- The court shall require the dispositional report three days before the dispositional hearing.
- The court shall require the following to be filed in the court record and provided to all parties:
 - Out-of-home case plan
 - Any visitation agreement included in the case plan or permanency plan
 - Any prevention plan established by child protective services
- No later than six months after a child is placed into foster care, with a non-custodial parent, or other person or agency, the court shall conduct a permanency progress review for any child under 16 years of age when the petition is filed.
- Any new allegation of abuse or neglect or request for removal after permanency has been achieved shall be filed as a new petition.
- When an adoption/termination of parental rights petition is filed in the same county where the dependency, neglect or abuse proceeding was held, any adoption/ termination of parental rights proceeding shall be assigned to the same Family Court division that heard the dependency, neglect or abuse action.
- Separate adoption/termination of parental rights petitions shall be filed for each child and individual case numbers assigned, but sibling cases are to be heard by the same judge.
- If an order terminating parental rights is entered, the court shall conduct a review hearing within 90 days of the entry of the order and at least annually thereafter to review progress toward finalizing placement or adoption for child.
- No request for an adoption hearing shall be made before the filing of the agency report required by KRS 199.510 and guardian ad litem report, if any.
- The hearing on uncontested adoption shall be within 30 days of the request for the final hearing.
- A continuance of an adoption final hearing shall be granted only for good cause shown.



Continued from page 12

“These rules represent the ongoing efforts of the Court of Justice to implement the Family Court amendment to our constitution, which established our Family Courts,” Deputy Chief Justice Noble said. “As time passes, we grow closer to having a true statewide Family Court system. This is a developmental project we are mindful of and determined to achieve.”

The new family law rules were developed with input from stakeholders, including Supreme Court justices, Court of Appeals judges, Family Court judges, circuit and district judges, domestic relations commissioners, circuit court clerks, family law attorneys, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and community partners, including children’s advocacy groups.

The process began in May 2009, when the Supreme Court and the Administrative Office of the Courts jointly hosted a Civil Rules Conference to gather information from judges and domestic relations commissioners to assist with drafting the rules.

As a result of the conference, six multidisciplinary subcommittees were formed to provide input for drafting the new rules. The subcommittees were chaired by judges and included representation from the courts, so-

cial service agencies, attorneys and other family law professionals.

The recommendations for the proposed rules were presented to the Supreme Court in April 2010 and distributed to attorneys statewide through an article in the May 2010 issue of *Bench & Bar*, the Kentucky Bar Association magazine. Attorneys had the opportunity to provide input on the proposed rules at a hearing during the KBA Convention in June 2010. In October 2010, the proposed rules and feedback from the KBA Convention were presented to the Supreme Court, which voted in November 2010 to adopt the rules.

As a result of the FCRPP becoming effective in January 2011, local rules of practice must be revised to conform to the new rules. The AOC hosted a Local Rules Seminar in Louisville in May 2011 to give judges, circuit court clerks and community partners a forum to discuss the new family law rules and guidance on developing local rules. Jurisdictions have since submitted their updated local rules for approval by the Supreme Court.

Note: Domestic and child welfare cases are handled by Family Court judges in the 71 Kentucky counties with a Family Court. In the 49 other counties, the cases are handled by circuit and district judges.

Regional Trainings give CFCRB volunteers knowledge and insight

The Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts provides training sessions to ensure that volunteers with the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards earn the required six hours of annual continuing education.

The 2010 Regional Trainings were held in August, September and October at seven locations across the state. The trainings took place in Eddyville, Highland Heights, Lexington, Louisville, Owensboro, Prestonsburg and Somerset.

Regional trainings give volunteers the opportunity to improve and update their skills in conducting thorough reviews and making meaningful recommendations to the court regarding children in out-of-home care. The trainings included sessions on:

Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008. This session also focused on the Youth Transition Plan for youth aging out of care, increased relative notification when a child comes into care, siblings being placed together and educational stability.

Judge’s Corner. This session included a review of dependency, neglect and abuse court processes and specific information judges would like for the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards to provide.

Family Preservation/Reunification Services. This presentation covered the resources available to families and the referral process for obtaining these services.

Seven volunteers received the CFCRB Outstanding Volunteer Award during the 2010 Regional Trainings.

Children's Advocacy Day prompts legislation to promote child welfare

The Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board was a sponsor for the annual Children's Advocacy Day, which took place Feb. 17, 2011 at the Capitol in Frankfort.

The event began in 2004 to encourage advocates throughout Kentucky to raise their voices on behalf of child and family safety, health, education and economic well-being. It provides an opportunity for hundreds of advocates to bring children's needs and solutions to the attention of state legislators.

Several CFCRB volunteers participated in Children's Advocacy Day, which included a meeting with state legislators to discuss the 2010 CFCRB legislative recommendations. Thanks to the work of these volunteers, the legislature incorporated several of the recommendations into House Bill 73. The original provisions of HB 73 were:

- Amend KRS 600.020 to establish a new definition for "independent living" as it relates to a child committed to the custody of the commonwealth to include the development of a plan for independent living to be approved by the court before a youth ages out of care.
- Amend KRS 620.140 to establish that a child committed to the custody of the commonwealth may request, no later than 12 months after attaining the age of 18 years, to extend or reinstate the commitment.
- Amend KRS 620.250 to allow local CFCRBs to have access to the educational records of children committed to the custody of the commonwealth via any electronic portal or system maintained by the Kentucky Department of Education.

The House of Representatives passed HB 73 on Children's Advocacy Day and the bill was sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Although HB 73 did not make it out of that committee, the CFCRB Legislative Committee noted that more progress was achieved during the 2011 session than in previous years.

CFCRB State Board combines 2010 annual meeting with training program

The CFCRB State Board combined its annual meeting in November 2010 with a training session on how volunteers can meet the needs of judges and the court system.

Fayette Family Court Judge Jo Ann Wise provided the training, which focused on the relationship between judges and the local review boards. CFCRB volunteers make judges aware of issues and concerns through the course of the review process and their relationship benefits children in out-of-home care.

CFCRB volunteers and chairs of the local review boards participated in the training session.

Interested Party Review experiences strong growth as the standard for review boards

Citizen Foster Care Review Boards continued to adopt the interested party review as the standard for reviewing all cases. Thirty-four boards representing 36 counties now use IPR as the standard for review. Twenty-four percent of the boards used the IPR process in 2011 compared with 18 percent in FY 2010, 16 percent in FY 2009 and 1.4 percent in FY 2008. CFCRB volunteers conducted 2,109 interested party reviews in FY 2011.

IPR is an interactive review process that involves CFCRB volunteers, parents, foster parents, service providers, Department for Community Based Services personnel and attorneys for the child and the parents.

The IPR focuses on the case plans for the parents and their child and the progress being made to obtain permanency for the child. Upon completion of the mandatory review, the family services coordinator submits a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations to the judge handling the review.

The local boards that use IPR as the standard for conducting their reviews are:

Adair, Allen, Caldwell/Lyon, Casey, Christian, Clinton, Crittenden, Daviess A, Elliott/Morgan, Fulton/Hickman, Green, Jefferson 5, Jefferson 7, Johnson, Lawrence, Livingston, Magoffin, McCracken B, McLean, Meade, Mercer, Montgomery, Muhlenberg, Nelson, Ohio, Oldham, Pulaski, Russell, Spencer, Taylor, Trigg, Union, Wayne and Webster.

Interested party review is also available through regional IPR boards for the counties that do not have a local IPR board. This makes the IPR process available to children statewide. The 13 regional IPR boards are:

Barren River in Bowling Green, Big Sandy in Prestonsburg, Bluegrass Rural in Lexington, Cumberland Valley in London, Fayette in Lexington, FIVCO in Ashland, Gateway/Buffalo Trace in Morehead, Jefferson in Louisville, Kentucky River in Hazard, KIPDA Rural in Shelbyville, Lincoln Trail in Elizabethtown, Northern Kentucky in Florence and Purchase in Mayfield.

Each regional board meets monthly.



CATS database improves reporting on children in out-of-home care

The Children's Automated Tracking System – CATS – provides case information on children in out-of-home care for the Administrative Office of the Courts, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, the Department for Community Based Services and judges.

The CFCRB also uses the database to fulfill its statutory requirement for reporting on children in out-of-home care to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the governor and the Legislative Research Commission.

Information from CATS determines which aspects of the dependency, neglect and abuse proceedings need improvement, including the termination of parental rights, permanency hearings and placement stability. The system also ensures that the case of every child in state custody is reviewed in a timely manner by the CFCRB.

CATS data stays current through a weekly download of information from TWIST – The Worker Information System – which is maintained by the Cabinet for Health and Family Services. AOC staff can directly access TWIST and view information on any child in the Department for Community Based Services system.

CATS does the following:

- Houses all reviews completed by the CFCRB.
- Sends automated reminders for case reviews.
- Tracks key court dates including adjudications, dispositions and permanency reviews.
- Tracks training hours for CFCRB volunteers.
- Tracks names and addresses of parties relevant to cases, including guardians ad litem, social workers, supervisors and judges.
- Tracks parties who receive notification of an interested party review.

CATS also collects names of children who are statutorily eligible for review and the AOC provides that list electronically to DCBS case workers. The timely, detailed information available from CATS has given judges and child advocates the ability to improve the outcomes of children in foster care.

Best Practices/Model Court initiative expands into three new counties

Two new jurisdictions became Best Practices/Model Court sites in Fiscal Year 2011. They are Boyle/Mercer counties under the leadership of Family Court Judge Bruce Petrie and Jessamine County under the leadership of Family Court Judge C. Michael Dixon. Judges Petrie and Dixon are the first to participate in Model Court projects that cover a circuit instead of just one county.

Four counties – Jefferson, Fayette, Daviess and Hardin – have ongoing Best Practices/Model Courts programs.

The Model Court initiative calls for the courts to work with community partners to address issues that will improve the outcomes for abused and neglected children and their families. These courts are using the best practices proposed by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges Model Courts Project as an innovative way to improve court proceedings involving the mistreatment of children.

The community partners include Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers, Department for Community Based Services staff, Court Appointed Special Advocates, school personnel, guardians ad litem and mental health professionals.

The Department of Family and Juvenile Services of the Administrative Office of the Courts oversees the Best Practices/Model Court Initiative.

Court Improvement Program boosts work of the CFCRB

The federally funded Kentucky Court Improvement Program supports the Citizen Foster Care Review Boards with enhanced education, the Children's Automated Tracking System (CATS) and the Interested Party Review Program.

CIP activities are designed to meet federal Title IV-B outcomes, which Kentucky adopted in its Child and Family Services Plan for Fiscal Years 2005-2010. These outcomes are:

Safety

- Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency

- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relations and connections is preserved for families.

Well-Being

- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

The CIP has developed these initiatives to promote the safety, permanency and well-being of children in foster care:

- Implementing Best Practices/Model Court sites
- Revising Family Court Rules of Procedure and Practice
- Continuing the Court Improvement Program Task Force/Advisory Board
- Ongoing collaboration and data sharing between the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and the CFCRB
- Continued improvements to the Children's Automated Tracking System

AOC Family Services Coordinators

Area 1

Counties: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, Crittenden, Fulton, Graves, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, McCracken, Trigg

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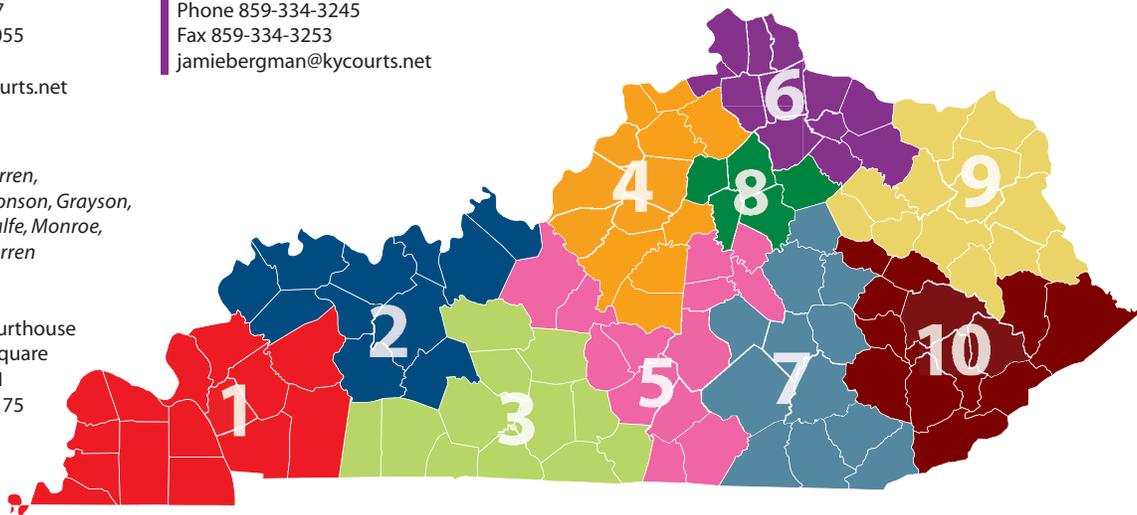
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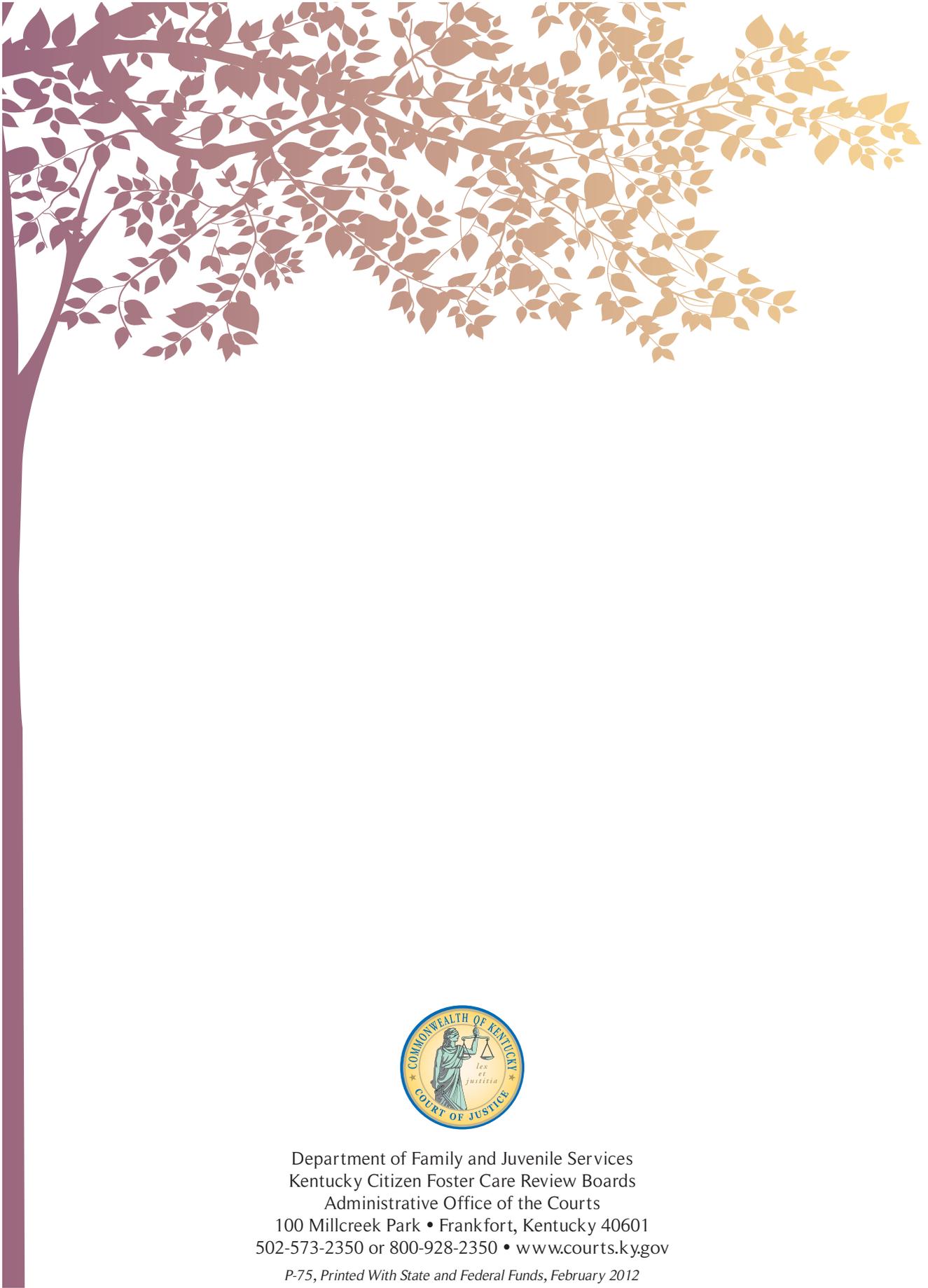
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