

CITIZEN  
FOSTER  
CARE  
REVIEW  
BOARD  
2003  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



Working for Kentucky's Future ...  
Our Children



**E**very year thousands of children enter Kentucky's foster care system as a result of abuse, neglect and dependency. Citizen Foster Care Review Boards play a key role in protecting these children by reviewing the case of each child in the custody of the Cabinet for Families and Children at least once every six months.

As a result of this major undertaking, which is mandated by state statute, review boards provide an invaluable service to Family, Circuit and District Court judges throughout the Commonwealth. But even more importantly, Citizen Foster Care Review Boards guard the safety and well-being of the 6,000 children currently in foster care in Kentucky. We extend our gratitude to the 740 dedicated volunteers who commit their time and energy to this important endeavor.

*Joseph E. Lambert  
Chief Justice of Kentucky*

# FY 2003 CFCRB Annual Report

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*From the General Manager's Perspective:*

## Highlights and Summary FY 2003



*Patrick Yewell*

*General Manager, Department of Dependent Children's Services  
Administrative Office of the Courts*

I am pleased to present the 2003 Citizen Foster Care Review Board annual report. This report describes the activities of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board and provides a detailed analysis of the children in Kentucky's foster care system.

I greatly appreciate the many CFCRB volunteers who devote numerous hours to advocating for Kentucky's children. This year alone, the Citizen Foster Care Review Board conducted 21,056 reviews of 8,072 individual children at more than 1,000 board meetings.

This daunting task has revealed a number of significant findings, which are highlighted below. However, I invite you to read this entire report as it provides a comprehensive look at children in foster care and offers insight into the operation of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board.

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- Children experience an average of 32 months in foster care. The average length of stay has decreased from last year's average of 36 months.
  - There has been a slight reduction in the number of children who have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. This year, 67 percent of children had been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months while last year more than 70 percent of children had been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months.

- The number of adoptions has increased as well. In 2001, 14.3 percent of the children reviewed were adopted. During the past year, 21.7 percent of the children reviewed were adopted.
- The average length of time between entry into care and adoption is 42.8 months, representing a decrease from last year's average of 46 months.
- CFCRB reported that the parent(s) did not sign the most recent out-of-home case plan in 40 percent of the cases reviewed.
- A total of 2,153 files provided to local boards for review did not have enough current information for a sufficient review to be conducted.
- The percentage of African-American youth in foster care is declining. Last year, African-American youth made up more than 22 percent of Kentucky's foster care population. African-American youth now make up 18.7 percent of Kentucky's foster care population. However this percentage is still more than twice as much as the actual percentage of youth who are African-American in Kentucky (9 percent).
- CFCRB volunteers believe that the medical, psychological and educational needs of children in foster care are met 96 percent of the time.



# FY 2003 Findings and Conclusions: *State of the CFCRB*

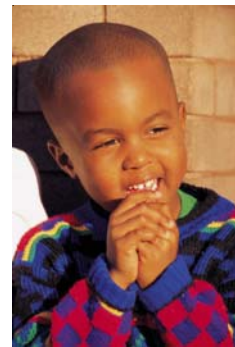
CFCRB reviews, in conjunction with the data collection efforts of Dependent Children's Services, have revealed a number of interesting statistics relating to the children in Kentucky's foster care system. Many of the statistics demonstrate that improvements have been made over the past few years. These statistics have generated some enthusiasm among CFCRB volunteers as well as child welfare and court professionals. However, many of the statistics reveal stubborn trends which reinforce the premise that much work still remains for court and child welfare professionals throughout the Commonwealth.

This detailed analysis was produced from data gathered from CFCRB reviews and data reported to the AOC central office from local boards during the past fiscal year. In addition, some of the statistics presented for comparison purposes have been gathered from other sources.

## Data Sources

- CFCRB reviews
- Cabinet for Families and Children files
- Court forms
- 2002 CFC *All Families Matter* outcome report
- Kentucky Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Final Report

CFCRB statistics pertain to all the children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2002, and July 1, 2003. "Active" cases represent those children who were in state custody as of Aug. 1, 2003, and "inactive" cases represent those children whose cases were reviewed at some point during the fiscal year, but were no longer in the custody of the state as of Aug. 1, 2003.



According to Kentucky statute, review boards are required to review the cases of all children who are in the custody of the Cabinet for Families and Children (the state) due to abuse, neglect and dependency at least once every six months. Children who were in temporary custody of the state for 45 days or less have been excluded from the analysis. Individual statistics represent the number of cases that had the required information necessary for its computation and some statistics are based on a sampling of cases.

Findings are divided into four sections:

- √ CFCRB Activity Highlights
- √ Demographics
- √ Permanency and Stability
- √ Service Delivery

## *CFCRB Activity Highlights*

Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers maintained a heavy schedule last year that permitted them to conduct 21,056 reviews of 8,072 children. Review boards are required to conduct case reviews at least every six months until the child is placed permanently or exits the custody of the Cabinet for Families and Children.

Copies of reviews become part of the child's court record and Cabinet for Families and Children case file, and are used to communicate case facts and board recommendations to the judge assigned to the case. Copies of individual reviews are provided to support staff and are used to gather the data necessary to present the statistics in this report.

This section looks at review board activity along with an in-depth analysis of the more than 8,000 children who were reviewed by Citizen Foster Care Review Boards in FY 2003.

### *What is a Case Review?*

Case reviews occur when:

1. Findings, recommendations and comments pertaining to a child in foster care are provided to judges and the staff of the Cabinet for Families and Children, and/or
2. The status of a child in foster care, or his or her file is determined and reported to the central office.

### *CFCRB Activity Highlights*

**The number of reviews conducted by review boards has increased by more than 48 percent since 2001. During FY 2003, the review boards conducted 21,056 reviews of 8,072 children.**

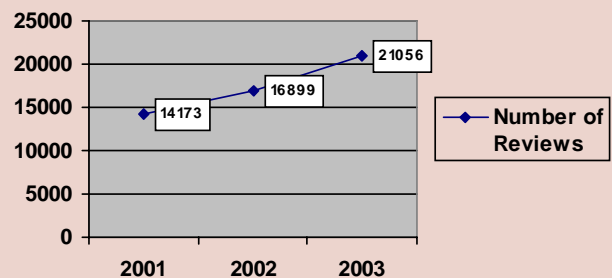
**A total of 2,153 files provided to local boards for review did not have enough current information for a sufficient review to be conducted. A total of 255 files requested by local boards were not provided for review. While these numbers are alarming, they are down from last year's total of 2,479 files that were not up to date and 492 files that were not provided for review.**

**Of the children reviewed, 3,124 were released from the custody of the Cabinet for Families and**

Children while 4,948 of them were still in foster care as of Aug. 1, 2003.

**The number of board meetings has increased by 20 percent since 2001. During the past year, the review boards conducted 1,000 board meetings. Each board held an average of seven board meetings.**

**2001 - 2003 Number of Reviews**

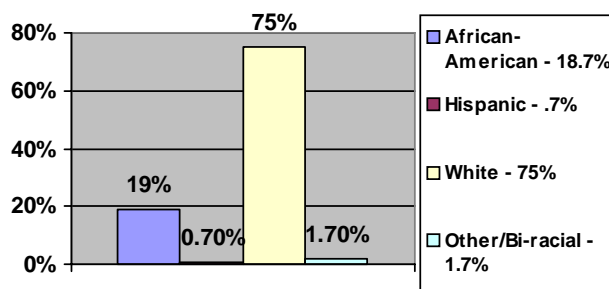


## Demographics

The following statistics reveal characteristics of the individual children who are in foster care in Kentucky.

- The average age of a child currently in foster care is 10.6 years old.
- The average age at release for a child is 10.4 years old.
- Almost 30 percent of the children released from foster care during the past year were 15 years of age or older at the time of their release.
- Almost 30 percent of children currently in foster care are age 15 or older.
- 22.1 percent of children in foster care are 5 years old or younger.

**Race of Children Reviewed**



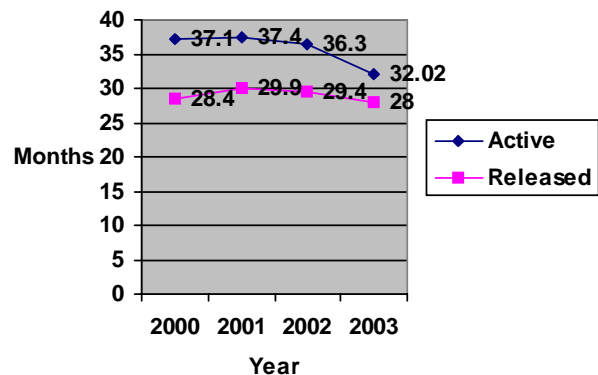
- Males and females are equally represented in the foster care system at 49.6 percent and 50.4 percent, respectively.
- African-American youth are disproportionately represented in Kentucky's foster care system. African-American youth make up just 9 percent of Kentucky's juvenile population yet constitute 18.7 percent of the children in foster care that were reviewed during the past year.

## Permanency and Stability

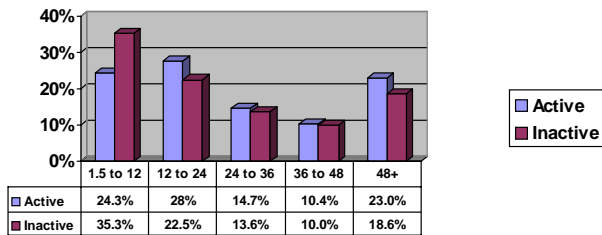
These statistics indicate the length of time Kentucky children stay in foster care.

- Active children spend an average of 32 months in foster care. The median length of stay for active children is 22.9 months.
- Inactive children spent an average of 28 months in foster care. The median length of stay for inactive children is 18.7 months.
- The average length of time children spend in foster care in Kentucky has steadily decreased since 2001.
- There has been a reduction in the number of children who have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. In 2002, more than 70 percent of active children had been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months. This year, 67 percent of active children have been in foster care for 15 of the last 22 months.
- A little more than 24 percent of the active children have spent 12 months or less in foster care. However, 23 percent of active children have spent 48 months or more in foster care.

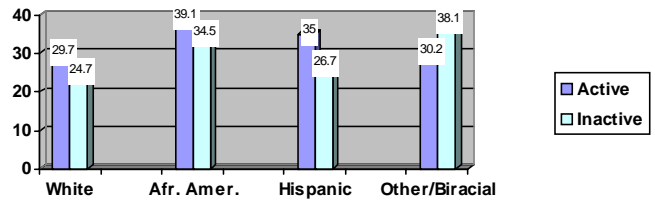
**Average Length of Stay**



Length of Stay Categories



Race and Length of Stay



**Length of Stay by Age**

Age	Active	Released
0 to 5	18.1 Months	16.5 Months
5 to 10	27.7 Months	25.6 Months
10 to 15	36.2 Months	26.2 Months
15+	41.8 Months	38.6 Months

**Length of Stay by Age:** Children who are 15 years or older have spent an average of 41.8 months in foster care. Children who are 5 years old or younger have spent an average of 18.1 months in foster care. As age increases so does length of stay.

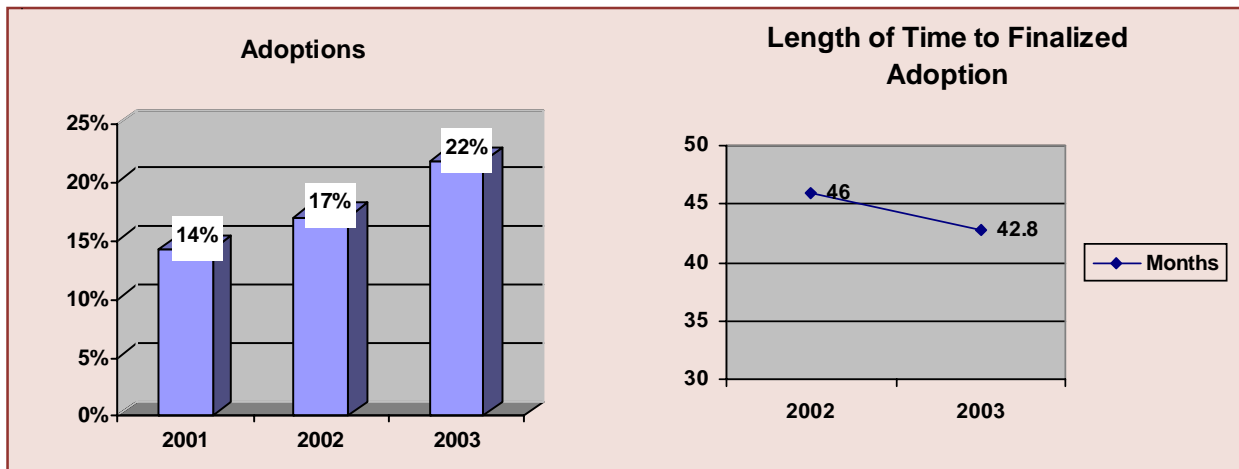
**Length of Stay by Race:** Not only are African-American children disproportionately represented in the foster care system, but they are also likely to experience longer lengths of stay in foster care. Active African-American youth spend an average of 39.1 months in foster care while active Caucasian children spend an average of 29.7 months in foster care. Inactive African-American youth spent an average of 34.5 months in foster care while inactive Caucasian children spent an average of 24.7 months in foster care.

**Length of Stay by Sex:** Males and females spend about the same amount of time in foster care. Active males and females spend 33.2 and 30.7 months in foster care, respectively. Inactive males spent an average of 28.4 months in foster care while inactive females spent an average of 27.5 months in foster care.

**Less Time to Adoption:** During fiscal year 2002, 14.7 percent of children exited care to finalized adoption in less than 24 months, according to the 2002 *All Families Matter* report published by the Cabinet for Families and Children. In comparison, 2003 CFCRB data reveals that 16.1 percent of children exited care to finalized adoption in less than 24 months, suggesting that some progress has been made in the area of adoption.<sup>1</sup>

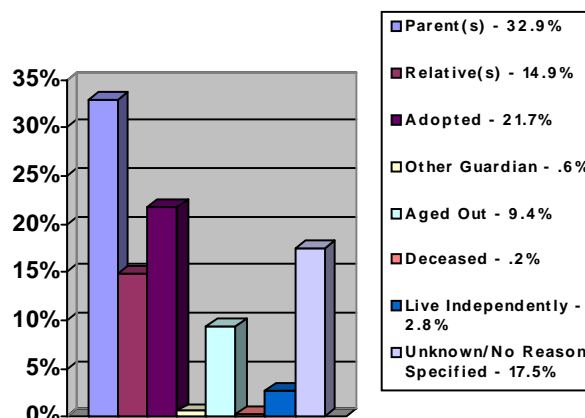
<sup>1</sup> The national standard set forth in the *Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)* is that 32 percent of children exiting care to finalized adoption will do so in less than 24 months. The goal of the Cabinet for Families and Children is to meet this standard by June of 2005.





- The average length of time between entry into care and finalized adoption has decreased. In 2002 the average length of time between entry into care and finalized adoption was 46 months and this year it was 42.8 months.
- The number of adoptions has also increased in Kentucky. In 2001, 14.3 percent of the children reviewed were adopted. In 2002, 16.9 percent of the children reviewed were adopted. This year 21.7 percent of children exited care through adoption, indicating a 52 percent increase since 2001.
- The average length of time spent in foster care for children who were returned to their parent(s) was 14.5 months. Fifty-nine percent were returned to parent(s) in 12 months or less.<sup>2</sup>

**To Whom Children Were Released**



<sup>2</sup> The national standard set forth in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is that 79 percent of children should be returned to their parents, if appropriate, within 12 months or less.

**Neglect is Primary Cause for Removal:** Courts are most likely to make a finding of neglect as cause for removal of the child from his or her home of origin. CFCRB volunteers also believe

that neglect is the main reason children are removed from their homes. Dependency is the second most common reason for removal according to courts and CFCRB volunteers.

**Reason for Removal: Court Finding**

Abuse	Neglect	Dependency	Abuse and Neglect	Status
12%	38.6%	36.4%	11.4%	1.5%

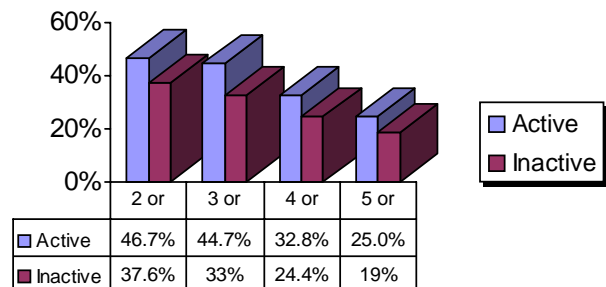
**Reason for Removal: According to CFCRB**

Cause for Removal	Percentage
Neglect	48.1%
Dependency	12.6%
Physical Abuse	10.8%
Abuse and Neglect	9.5%
Reviewer Did Not Report	7.1%
Sexual Abuse	4.1%
Status	3.4%
Sexual Abuse and Neglect	2.7%
Physical and Sexual Abuse	1.1%

- Both active and inactive children average four placements while in foster care.
- Children who were adopted experienced an average of 3.4 placements during their episodes in foster care.
- Children who were returned to their parents experienced an average of 2.7 placements during their episodes in foster care.
- Children who aged out of the foster care system or were released to live independently experienced an average of 7.7 placements during their episodes in foster care.
- Reviewers reported that only 4.6 percent of the children reviewed changed placements more than three times in the six months prior to their review. Last year this number was 4.3 percent.

- Reviewers cited many reasons for placement changes, including health, change in permanency plan, more structure, relative availability, placement with siblings and behavior problems.
- A survey of CFCRB reviews revealed that the placement log was not in 9.2 percent of CFC files.

**Number of Placements**

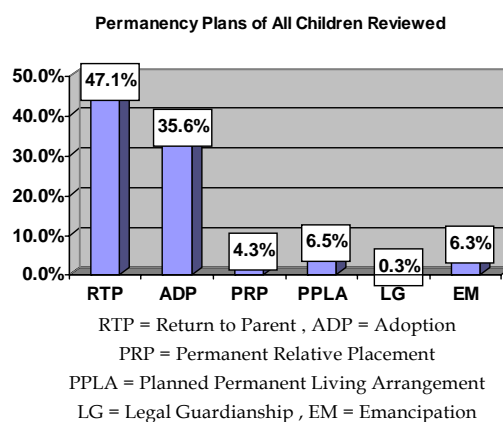


## Service Delivery

The following statistics provide insight regarding the quality and delivery of social services to Kentucky's foster children.

- CFCRB volunteers reported that the medical, psychological, and educational needs of children are being met 96 percent of the time.<sup>3</sup>
- CFCRB reviewers reported that if children have siblings they visit with them 91.2 percent of the time.
- CFCRB reviewers reported that the permanency hearing had been held or was scheduled on or before the appropriate due date for 89 percent of the cases reviewed.
- CFCRB reviewers reported that the parent(s) did not sign the most recent out-of-home case plan in 40 percent of the cases.
- At the time of the review, reviewers are asked if the social worker changed since the last review. Reviewers reported that 18.1 percent of the time the social worker had changed since the last review.
- Return to parent and adoption are the two most commonly pursued permanency goals.
- In 85.9 percent of their reviews, CFCRB volunteers agreed with the permanency plan for the child.
- CFCRB volunteers are most likely to disagree with a permanency plan of return to parent.

<sup>3</sup> One of the outcome measures in Kentucky's Child and Family Services Review final report is that children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs. According to this report, Kentucky partially or substantially achieved the outcome relating to children receiving adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs in 90 percent of the cases reviewed. Data in the CFSR report also revealed that in 95 percent of the applicable cases, the cabinet had made diligent efforts to meet the educational needs of children.



### Volunteer Agreement and Disagreement With Permanency Plans for All Children Reviewed

Permanency Plan	RTP	ADP	PRP	PPLA	LG	EM
<b>Agree</b>	72.8%	98%	93.3%	98.2%	95%	97.7%
<b>Disagree</b>	27.2%	2%	6.7%	1.8%	5%	2.3%

### Percentage of Permanency Plans Broken Down by Active and Inactive Children

Permanency Plan	RTP	ADP	PRP	PPLA	LG	EM
<b>Active</b>	43.5%	40.7%	4.1%	6.4%	.1%	5.3%
<b>Inactive</b>	53.3%	26.8%	4.6%	6.8%	.5%	8%

### Volunteer Agreement and Disagreement With Permanency Plans for Active Children

Permanency Plan	RTP	ADP	PRP	PPLA	LG	EM
<b>Agree</b>	67%	98.1%	92%	98.4%	80%	98.4%
<b>Disagree</b>	33%	1.9%	8%	1.6%	20%	1.6%

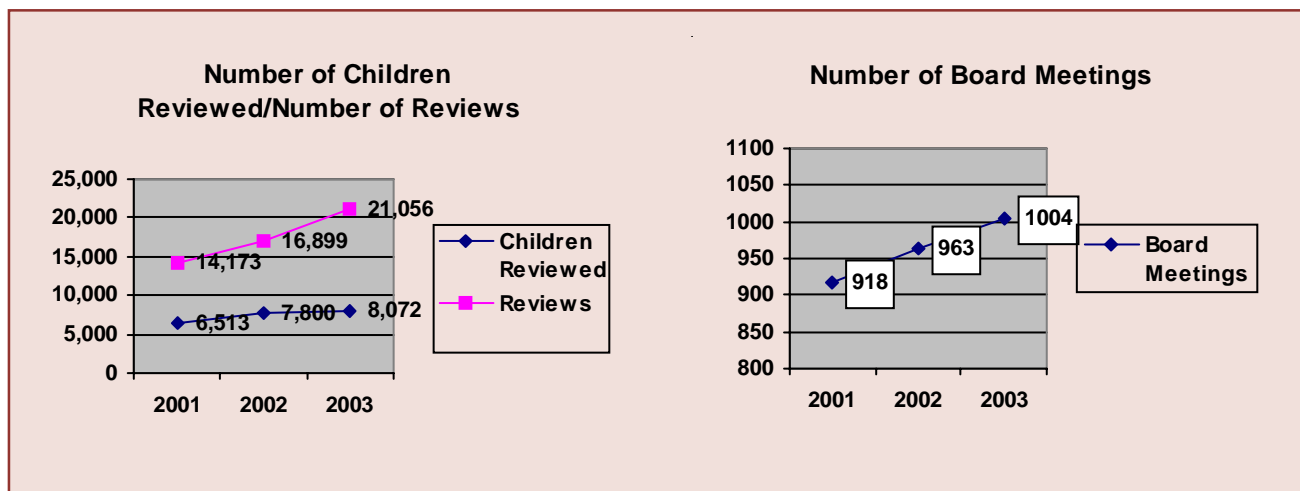
### Volunteer Agreement and Disagreement With Permanency Plans for Inactive Children

Permanency Plan	RTP	ADP	PRP	PPLA	LG	EM
<b>Agree</b>	80.9%	97.7%	95.3%	97.9%	100%	96.9%
<b>Disagree</b>	19.1%	2.3%	4.7%	2.1%	0%	3.1%

## Citizen Foster Care Review Boards: *Volunteers at Work*

During fiscal year 2003, more than 740 volunteers conducted 21,056 reviews of more than 8,000 children. Reviews were conducted at over 1,000 board meetings. In that regard, Citizen Foster Care Review Boards are stronger than ever.

**Who are the Reviewers?** There are currently 742 volunteers serving on 140 boards throughout the state. Some of the more populated counties of the state have more volunteers serving on multiple boards while less populated counties of the state have fewer volunteers serving on one board. Boards are located in all 120 counties throughout the Commonwealth.



- Active volunteers have served on Citizen Foster Care Review Boards for an average of 4.9 years.
- A total of 320 (43 percent) of volunteers have served on boards for five years or more and 94 (12.7 percent) have served for 10 years or more.
- A total of 197 new volunteers were appointed during the fiscal year.
- Thirty-eight percent of volunteers come from the professions of law, medicine, psychology, social work and education.<sup>4</sup>
- The average age of a volunteer is 50 years old. Only 46 of the volunteers are age 30 or younger.
- African-American individuals now make up 6.6 percent of the volunteer base while Caucasian individuals constitute 92.5 percent of the volunteer base.
- Only 17.4 percent of the volunteer population is male while the remaining 82.6 percent is female.
- Volunteers are most likely to hear about the CFCRB from another board member (29.8 percent). Newspaper ads are close behind, with 24.9 percent of volunteers learning about the CFCRB through their local newspaper(s).

<sup>4</sup> Kentucky statute specifies that when practical, at least two members of each review board should come from the professions of law, medicine, psychology, social work and education.

## Other Volunteer Activities

Over the past year, several program level advances have been made under the direction of key volunteer leaders. Many of the advances include the following:

- ✓ The volunteer training manual and the volunteer handbook have been updated and revised.
- ✓ Regional training and volunteer appreciation programs have been developed.
- ✓ A lending library has been created to allow volunteers to use materials at home to earn training hours.
- ✓ A media campaign was launched in Spring 2003 to highlight the role of the CFCRB throughout the state.
- ✓ The CFCRB Web site will be kept up to date.
- ✓ A recruitment poster was produced and distributed through the assistance of CFCRB volunteers; the CFCRB brochure will undergo a revision.
- ✓ The printed newsletter has been given a new design; currently it is mailed and posted on the Web site. Plans are to begin offering the newsletter by e-mail sometime in 2004.
- ✓ CFCRB volunteers helped collect more than 3,500 teddy bears which were distributed to foster care children throughout Kentucky.
- ✓ Legislation requiring that a signed court order be issued when a child is released from the custody of the CFC was proposed during the latest legislative session. While the legislation did not pass, the same legislation will be proposed in 2004.

## Spotlight on Case Permanency Plans and Case Progress Reports

Kentucky law specifies that the Cabinet for Families and Children create **case permanency plans** and **case progress reports** to advance a case. Both are required to contain specific information pertaining to the child and must be filed with the court and the Administrative Office of the Courts' Citizen Foster Care Review Board Program.

### Case Permanency Plans

KRS 620.020 defines a case permanency plan as a document identifying decisions made by the cabinet, for both the biological family and the child, concerning action that needs to be taken to ensure that the child in foster care expeditiously obtains a permanent home. KRS 620.230 requires the cabinet to file a case permanency plan with the court and the Citizen Foster Care Review Board Program within 30 days of commitment.

The case permanency plan shall include reasons why the child is in custody of the cabinet, actions

that have been taken with regard to the child, as well as proposed actions that may be taken or are contemplated during the next six months and during the entire duration of the time the child is in custody of the cabinet.

If the child is placed outside of the home, the plan must include reasons why the child cannot be protected adequately in the home and the harm the child may suffer if left in the home. The plan should also identify factors that may indicate when the child can be returned to the home as well as the efforts the cabinet is making to return the child home. Further, the cabinet should define the steps that it will take to minimize the harm to the child as a result of the action, both at the time of removal and on a long-term basis.

The permanency plan should also include a description of the type of home, child-caring facility, child-placing agency or facility where the child is placed. In addition, the statement as to why the placement is appropriate for the child should include:



- Age
- Educational needs
- Medical needs
- Emotional needs relationship with parents
- The number of children the home is authorized to care for and the number of children currently residing in the home.

If the placement is outside of the child's original county of residence, the plan must document that no closer placement was appropriate or available and the reasons why the placement was chosen.

Also included in the plan is a description of the services to be provided or arranged by the cabinet to facilitate the return of the child to the home or to another permanent placement. Objectives and specific tasks for which the parents have agreed to assume responsibility, including a schedule of regular visits with the child, should also be a part of the plan. The services, objectives and tasks outlined by the plan should include a projected time line in which to complete such items.

If the child is to remain in the home, the plan should include a description of the potential harm to the child, what measures are being taken to prevent or minimize the harm to the child, and the reasons why foster care placement is not appropriate for the child.



## Case Progress Reports

KRS 620.020 defines a case progress report as a written record of goals that have been achieved in the case of a child. The cabinet shall file a case progress report at least once every six months with the court and with Citizen Foster Care Review Board. KRS 620.240 requires that the first case progress report be sent to the Administrative Office of the Courts Citizen Foster Care Review Board Program while subsequent reports are provided to the local boards within the case file.

The case progress report should include:

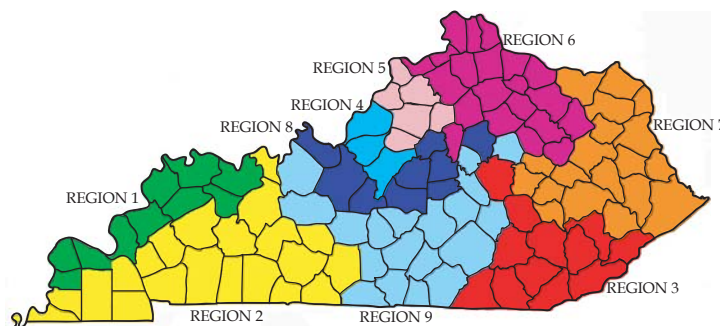
- Length of time the child has been in custody of the cabinet.
- The number, location and date for each placement.
- A description of the services provided to the parent(s) and the results achieved.
- A description of the efforts and progress of the parent(s).
- The barriers to returning the child home.
- An evaluation of the child's current placement and services provided to the child.
- Recommendations for necessary service required to release the child from custody, to return the child home or to facilitate another permanent placement.
- A timetable for the child's return to the home or other permanent placement.

If a return home is not in the best interest of the child, the report should outline a specific recommendation for a permanent placement. If it is appropriate, the report should also include a recommendation for the termination of parental rights. If continued foster care is the best course of action, the report must explain why another permanent placement is not appropriate.

# CFCRB Statewide Regional Updates:

## *Field Coordinator Reports*

*We are pleased to present the following regional reports from our dedicated field coordinators.*



### **Region 1 Update: Submitted by Dolores Smith**

Region 1 consists of 11 boards made up of 77 volunteers. More than 30 new and experienced volunteers attended initial trainings during fiscal year 2003. All of the boards in Region 1 are active and in compliance with statutory guidelines.

This fiscal year marked the interested party review process becoming a regular and integral part of Daviess B CFCRB's schedule. Daviess B conducted three interested party reviews and has already scheduled another review for next fiscal year. Daviess A CFCRB has completed training for the interested party review process and will start conducting these reviews in the next fiscal year.

Other boards in Region 1 have successfully enhanced the review process by inviting DCBS caseworkers and/or supervisors to the CFCRB reviews to discuss cases that are particularly troublesome. Of course, many boards have always consulted with DCBS caseworkers and/or supervisors at their board meetings when questions arise, but for boards that meet later in the day, it has helped to invite the DCBS caseworker and/or supervisor in advance to ensure their presence at the meeting.

Region 1 volunteers wholeheartedly embraced this year's statewide teddy bear drive for foster care children. They enjoyed being part of something designed to bring comfort to children in foster care.

### **Region 2 Update: Submitted by Kari Hutchison**

The South Central and Southwestern Regions experienced many changes during the 2003 fiscal year. The region took on a new look with the addition of seven new counties: Caldwell, Calloway, Fulton/Hickman, Graves, Hopkins, Lyon and Marshall. Six of the original counties, Cumberland, Grayson, Green, Hancock, Hart and Metcalfe, were added to Region 3.

Region 2 also welcomed several new volunteers with two regional and initial trainings occurring in Warren County. Many current volunteers also

attended these trainings and acquired their six training hours for the year. Interested Party Review training was also conducted. The Warren A CFCRB will be the second board in this region to conduct Interested Party Reviews, starting in November 2003.

I was asked to participate in the Department for Community Based Service Federal Audit that took place in Warren County. The invitation was gladly accepted. It was a great honor for our important community partner.

### **Region 3 Update: *Submitted by Michael Broughton***

Region 3 is comprised of approximately 15 boards. All of the boards are up to date on all case reviews and I am continuing to make an effort to attend all board meetings each month. For the boards that meet at the same time and date, I try to rotate and attend those board meetings every other month. I am active in my recruitment and have had several trainings this year to keep volunteers on all of my boards.

I am still responsible for overseeing the "one legal voice" program in Laurel and Knox counties. This program has exceeded all expectations this past fiscal year on the amount of cases being dealt with. We currently have approximately 72 cases that have court dates set for termination of parental rights. All of the court proceedings are being handled by the Commonwealth Attorney's office in Laurel and Knox counties. The cases are being heard at a more rapid pace and the process is cutting down on the amount of time these children are staying in foster care. Unfortunately, this grant program is scheduled to end July 1, 2004. We are currently in the process of working with the CFC Office of

Counsel in Laurel and Knox counties to ensure that they continue to work hard in the future to schedule and have these court proceedings in as timely a manner as the Commonwealth's Attorney.

As most of you know, I was involved in a car accident last September that required me to have several surgeries this past year. I have had to miss approximately seven weeks of work due to the accident. I would like to thank everyone for your thoughts and cards. I would also like to apologize for the board meetings that I have had to miss because of the accident. I believe I still managed to attend between 85 to 90 meetings during this past fiscal year. I hope to continue getting back into the flow again. I would also like to thank Mae Philbeck who helped take over my boards while I was on leave from work. Mae was assigned to take over four of my counties this past fiscal year to help me catch up and do recruitment for new volunteers. She has helped me tremendously. I hope to oversee Pulaski, Rockcastle, Garrard and Lincoln counties again soon.

### **Region 4 Update: *Submitted by Karma Childress***

During the last fiscal year we have been adjusting to the reorganization of Jefferson County. Region 4 now has a data entry operator who shares an office with me in Jefferson County. This has been a wonderful addition to my area. We communicate on a daily basis, which makes our organizational structure run more smoothly. Jefferson County expanded by adding another board. We now have 10 boards in our area, with four or more members on each board. Jefferson County boards meet the first two weeks in each month and each board is running smoothly.

In the last year we facilitated meetings with the DCBS office to explain what the volunteers are looking for in the case files. I have conducted several meetings with the team supervisors and their workers discussing various ways to improve

communication and a good working relationship among volunteers and DCBS staff. We now have a better relationship with the supervisors and workers in this area.

The caseload in Jefferson County has increased significantly and now each board averages between 15 and 30 cases per month. We held numerous trainings this year, and recruited and trained more than 25 potential volunteers for this area. We also collected teddy bears for the Louisville area and distributed the bears to our Family Court judges to give to children who come to court.

In Nelson County, Therese Johnson is chair of the board there, which currently has six board members that meet every other month. We have conducted one Interested Party Review in this area. This board also collected a number of teddy bears that were

given to the Nelson County DCBS office to distribute to children who are in care. Darlene Hayley, chair of the Bullitt County review board, is doing a great job. She has five members on her board, which meets every other month. This area

has had a problem with cases not being available for review for the volunteers. We are currently working with the DCBS office to rectify this issue. The region is progressing well and will only continue to grow in coming years.

### **Region 5 Update: Submitted by Amy Smitha**

Region 5 boards were in great standing over the past fiscal year. All boards have great volunteers and a lot of new faces that were added to these boards. Region 5 consists of Franklin, Henry, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer and Trimble counties. Henry and Trimble recently split to become two boards. Over the past year, I have held three initial/regional trainings in my area and trained more than 100 new and current volunteers. These new volunteers have only strengthened the current boards.

As in other regions, the interested party review is still being carried out. Shelby County is still the site for my interested party review. The board does a great job and enjoys this type of review.

And finally, I would like to express my sincerest sympathy to the family of Mr. Bill Anderson from Shelby County. The Citizen Foster Care Review Board has truly lost a great volunteer. For more than 10 years, Mr. Anderson served on the Citizen Foster Care Review Board and advocated for the safety, permanency and well-being of Kentucky's children.

His board received a plaque for all the work they did on the teddy bear drive. This plaque was donated to Bill Anderson's wife in memory of Bill. Even when Bill was real sick he still exhibited a great deal of passion for the children of Kentucky.

### **Region 6 Update: Submitted by Bruce Jones**

The last year brought significant change to Region 6. In fiscal year 2002, the region was comprised of 36 counties with 33 local review boards. Fortunately, this area has received additional staff support. Due to the extra staff, the area now consists of 21 counties with 21 local review boards. As a result, I have attended more board meetings and have increased the amount of trainings in the region. During the past year, I have trained more than 100 potential and experienced volunteers, traveled more than 20,000 miles and attended 189 board meetings.

In addition to the regional and initial trainings, I facilitated meetings with District Court and Family Court judges in several judicial districts. I also held numerous meetings with CFC staff in Northern Kentucky to better enhance our review process. In the Kenton county area, CFC experienced administrative changes that led to the addition of the Kenton E board.

Campbell and Woodford counties conduct interested party reviews on a quarterly basis and these reviews have been found to be a success.

I'm impressed with how the community continues to support foster children. Leslie Robertson, an Owen County foster care review board member who teaches at Northern Elementary in Georgetown, helped her fifth grade elementary class make life books for foster kids in Georgetown.

And Campbell County Family Court Judge Michael Foellger has given away teddy bears and toys to children who enter the foster care system. Cincinnati Bell has a group of volunteers within their organization who makes teddy bears. Recently, I set up a direct link with Campbell County Family Court and Cincinnati Bell so that Judge Foellger would receive teddy bears on a monthly basis.



## Region 7 Update: *Submitted by Debbie Laferty*

There is strength in numbers! With that in mind, Region 7 today is a strong and powerful volunteer organization in Eastern Kentucky!

Over the past year we have added volunteers in most counties, lost volunteers in others. That process, however, is yielding strong and dedicated individuals who are empowered by their care and concern for Kentucky's foster children. Six volunteer trainings and two re-trainings have taken place. I made 198 site visits this past year and drove more than 30,000 miles.

With the addition of two new Family Court judges, which gives us four in the region, permanency for our foster children has become more of a reality. Our judges are active and supportive of our endeavors.

Interested party reviews and expanded reviews are taking place on a regular basis. Volunteers are becoming more involved after seeing firsthand that their voices do make a difference.

## Region 8 Update: *Submitted by Billy Stover*

Region 8 consists of 17 boards and all of these boards are in compliance with statutory requirements. The counties that are included in this region are Anderson, Boyle, Fayette, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Mercer and Washington. I attended 135 board meetings during fiscal year 2003.

During the past year, more than 100 new and experienced volunteers received training at initial and regional training sessions. Hardin County conducts an interested party review once every four months. Fayette County now has a Family Court

served by Family Court Judges Kimberly Bunnell, Gary Payne and Jo Ann Wise.

Other events that have taken place this past fiscal year include a CFCRB booth to recruit potential volunteers at a Lexington Legends baseball game, a CFCRB booth to recruit potential volunteers at the Adoption Fair in Lexington, a "Meet and Greet" with the Fayette County judges, and a statewide teddy bear collection that yielded teddy bears that were provided to children entering foster care.

## Region 9 Update: *Submitted by Mae Philbeck*

Region 9 is comprised of nineteen counties from Hancock Co. in the northwest to Clinton Co. in the south central area to Clark Co. in central Kentucky. Although geographically different, the devotion and collaboration is equal. This area is a pleasure to work in.

The local Citizen Foster Care Review Boards are strong and dedicated to their tasks. The board members are always willing to go the extra mile for any child assigned to them. The local reviewers in each county have established a productive relationship with the DCBS office staff and always

let them know how much they appreciate their help and hard work.

During FY 2003, I traveled more than 20,000 miles and attended all but one of my region's meetings. I came to know the board members well and enjoyed working with them.

All the boards in this region are up and running. They all have a regular meeting schedule and are always up to the task. Two of the boards have started interested party review. These reviews are occurring on a regular basis. All in all, it has been a great year for Region 9.



# Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board: *2003 Recommendations*



Support continued collaboration between the Judiciary and the Cabinet for Families and Children. Efforts should be focused on achieving the goals of Kentucky's Program Improvement Plan, which was implemented based upon the recent federal Child and Family Service Reviews.



Propose legislation to 1) increase the "intent to release" notification requirement from 14 to 45 days and 2) require that a signed court order (with or without further hearing) be issued before a child is released from the cabinet, and that the signed court order be sent to the AOC CFCRB central office.



Support efforts to enhance the recruitment and certification process of foster and preadoptive homes with a primary purpose of promoting the placing of sibling groups together in the least restrictive and most appropriate placement.



Support the continued growth of Family Court and Family Court judges throughout the Commonwealth.



Support the development of a task force to look at recruitment and certification with an emphasis on the length of time it takes to be certified as a foster home, on the procedure involved in the certification process, and on the children who will be placed into the home once certified.



Focus efforts on the placement of children into permanent homes to reduce the number of children who exit the system at 18 having achieved neither adoption or any type of permanent home.



Maintain and increase the quality of direct services delivery.



Continue education of all professionals in the juvenile court system so there is parity throughout the state.



Published By:  
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Printed With State and Federal Funds  
November 2003

Report compiled by John Burgess with the assistance of  
Lyn Lee Guarnieri and Chrystal Satterly  
Submitted Pursuant to Kentucky Revised Statute 620.320