



DCF Legislative Testimony

January 31, 2024

TESTIMONY OF: Department for Children and Families

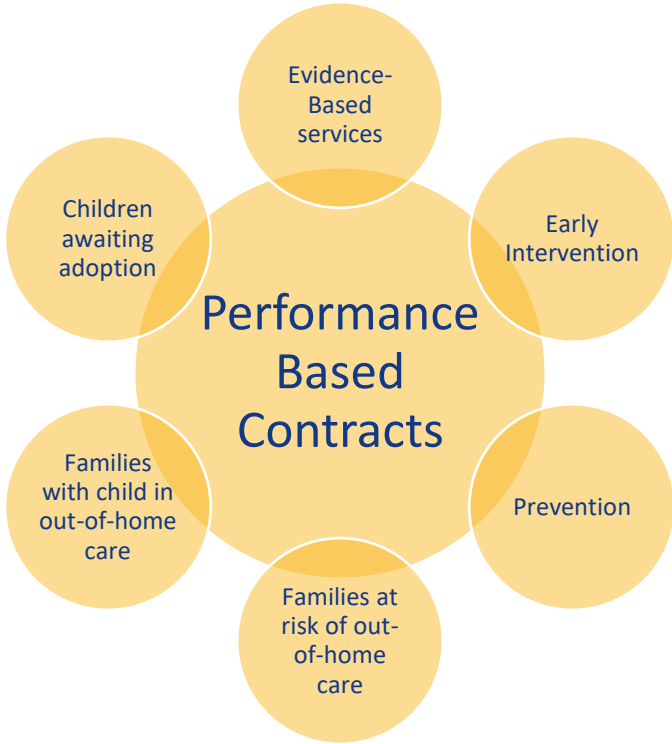
TESTIMONY ON: 2022 HB 2510 Performance Based Grants and Contracts

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The 2022 regular session of the legislature passed House Bill 2510 containing two sections setting forth that the Department for Children and Families (DCF) collaborate to jointly develop a plan for implementation of performance-based contracts.

In 2023, DCF submitted a report in accordance to Section 31 of the bill to address required attributes and considerations for the performance based grants and contracts to the Governor, House Committee on Children and Seniors, and the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare.

Section 32 of 2022 HB2510 set forth the requirement for an updated agency performance-based grants and contract report to be submitted to the Governor, House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care, and the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare by January 31st, 2024.



This report includes a progress update on the prior submitted plan, as well as a proposal for the reinvestment of savings from reduced foster care caseloads into evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs designed to prevent the need for or reduce the duration of out-of-home placements.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Family Resource Centers | Establish evaluation method for Family Resource Centers | Jul. 23 –

The method has been established. The Kansas Department for Children and Families contracted with researchers at the University of Kansas beginning in July 2023 to co-design and implement a robust evaluation to understand implementation and impact of Family Resource Centers. Evaluators, working iteratively in collaboration with DCF, Kansas Children’s Service League, and representatives from each funded FRC, co-developed and finalized a rigorous mixed-methods evaluation plan that leverages multi-level data administrative and primary data collected from families, together with qualitative inquiry. The goal of this evaluation is to understand the impact of local Family Resource Centers on improving family and community well-being, understand and expand the reach of FRCs within the community, and develop, promote, and strengthen an interconnected network of social service providers in local community. This evaluation aims to assess impact of FRCs according to the following outcomes: 1) improving well-being at the family and community levels; 2) connecting families to community-based services to meet needs and build skills to thrive; 3) preventing and reducing child welfare contact, involvement, and entry into the foster care system in the target communities; 4) building a strong provider network evidenced by increase connections between local social service providers; and 5) normalizing help-seeking, evidenced by decreased stigma associated with help-seeking and increased help-seeking behaviors in the community. This plan was finalized and endorsed by all partners for implementation in November 2023. Next steps include building system infrastructure to support data collection, training of program staff to align with evaluation procedures with ongoing technical assistance, and launch of data collections, which is anticipated in early 2024.

School Based Grants

Develop outcomes for school based supportive grants | Sep. 23 –

The outcome measure developed is to decrease the number of Family In Need of Assessment (FINA) reports to DCF and data has begun to be tracked. The Southwest and Wichita regions continually works with their respective school districts to talk about the outcome in their school-based programming grants. School based programs grants are currently in the Emporia, Hutchison, and USD 259 in Wichita school districts. The Hutchison Support Liaison provided the following feedback from her experience and processes alongside students and families, which highlight the preventative work happening in the schools:

“There are good things happening all the time! But recently I’ve had the pleasure of helping a student who is a mother and a young adult. She didn’t have a great support system when we made contact. Related to her needs for food, I got her signed up with WIC, on Food Assistance, have helped provide her basic parenting skills, have helped walk her through her baby’s first illness, helped her get resources locally to support her in her breast-feeding journey and got the family signed up with early head start all while she’s finishing up her degree. I just feel like that story embodies the purpose of this position. Not only am I helping our student with her basic needs, but I’m helping to set up our future students with better life situations and hopefully helping to break the cycle of foster care in her family.

In Wichita (USD 259), our partnership includes “Family Resource Liaisons” who are master’s level social workers. As of November 2023, the Family Resource Liaisons made 183 contacts, within the school year, in four of the schools they serve. Outcome data had not previously been tracked but has recently begun. The contacts listed include multiple interactions with the same student/family as typically families have needs which are ongoing and support is needed. The Family Resource Liaison reports it is rare a family only needs a one-time support. Some of the reasons for needed support have included mental health needs, attendance and connection to community resources and concrete supports.

Hutchinson USD-Communities Supporting Families Grant Students Served Monthly/Intakes Received						
Month	# Students Served SFY24	# Students Served SFY23	# of FINA referrals reported by education SFY24	# of FINA referrals education by KSDE SFY23	# of FINA referrals education by KSDE SFY22	#of FINA referrals education by KSDE SFY21
July	0	0	1	0	0	0
August	44	38	3	4	1	0
September	64	30	9	8	3	10
October	58	56	6	3	4	7
November	59	43	5	5	4	24
December	41	36	3	6	10	9
January		58		6	2	9
February		62		7	5	4
March		64		5	10	8
April		47		6	12	18
May		28		10	8	3
June		0		0	0	1
Children Served	266	462				
Total # of intakes received by District			27	60	59	93

Schools served within Wichita USD 259 include Enterprise Elementary, Woodman Elementary, Truesdell Middle School, and South High School. The elementary and middle schools all feed into South High as discovered through research for the grant. The schools all report appreciating the Family Resource Liaisons being immersed in the schools and are known for being able to assist students/families in need. Each liaison serves two schools. Through the DCF partnership with USD 259 Social Work Department, who supervises the liaisons, DCF has received positive feedback from the schools due to the added value they bring to the student and families. Each school has voiced the desire to have their own 100% liaison.

USD 259-Family Resource Specialists Families Served/Intakes Received						
Month	# Students Served SFY23	# Students Served SFY22	# of FINA referrals reported by education in 67217 SFY23	# of FINA referrals reported by education in 67217 SFY22	# of A/N referrals reported by education in 67217 SFY23	# of A/N referrals reported by education in 67217 SFY22
July	0	0	0	1	4	0
August	20	0	11	3	15	7
September	26	26	11	18	50	26
October	108	55	17	21	40	40
November	110	16	10	14	23	42
December	46	19	8	19	8	18
January		66		20		30
February		41		16		26
March		41		25		21
April		31		23		38
May		111*		33		20
June		0		0		0
Children Served	310	295	57	193		
Total # of intakes reported by educators			114	386	59	93

*101 contacts were truancy letters sent for May FY22

Develop common measures overlapping other early childhood or data trust partners | Oct. 23 –

Common measures for parent skill building programs are developed and still being considered by the agency, however, have not been identified to implement with DCF parent skill building programs. The Kansas University-Center for Public Partnership and Research (KU-CPPR) held a summit on 12/11/2023 to launch and share the Early Childhood Integrated Data (ECID) Distinct Count Dashboard with stakeholders. This distinct count project will identify overlap in the service deliveries of early childhood services with families who come into contact (of same aged children) with DCF; however, does not yet address a common well-being measure.

This data count project is an important step in understanding families and what common measures might have greatest value to implement. To understand our early childhood mixed delivery system, it was important to strive for an unduplicated count of children served across agencies with early childhood programming. The dashboard uses data from across agencies and de-duplicates so agencies can better understand where children are geographically, where services are located and accessible and where gaps in programming or accessibility are present. Agencies will be able to use this data to understand where to focus in promoting existing programs or information toward future programming implementation. Early childhood services act as a significant protective factor against removal into foster care in Kansas.

PREVENTION

Continue Family First Evaluation | Jul. 23 –

Engage current accountability and advisory groups for focused ideas on performance improvements | Fall 23

The Kansas Family First Family Council was formed in July 2021 by the Kansas Department for Children and Families and University of Kansas evaluators and continues to support operations and performance improvement of prevention and protection services in Kansas. The Family Council has currently identified the following activities as central priorities of their work: 1) developing a navigation resource for families that is based in family wisdom and experiences; 2) creating a story bank of qualitative family experiences for illuminating system pain points and opportunities and providing context to quantitative data points and trends; 3) providing family perspective on new state initiatives and championing the council perspective in leadership spaces. The Council is convened by KU twice, annually, in person, and up to monthly virtually for managing ongoing activities and new business. KS DCF participates on the planning committee for the Family Council and routinely brings topics, new initiatives, and policy and practice changes to the Council for review and response. Of note, the Council has reviewed new mandated reporter training language, plans for introducing therapeutic foster care as a new service, and revisions to reporting policies related to Adrian’s law. Of note, the Family Council engaged and toured two new DCF-funded Family Resource Centers

to learn about the initiative, understand the vision, and contribute family perspective to DCF and FRC partners to inform implementation. Future directions include co-developing a formal process for engaging the Family Council early in the process of child welfare policy change discussions to ensure family engagement and power sharing is authentically practiced.

Explore feasibility of incentives and penalties for outcome achievement in FPS and family first grant/ contract amendments or RFP | Jul. 23 –

DCF included (implemented) an incentive/penalty schedule in the new FPS contracts which begin 7/1/24. However, given the difference in number of referrals, scope, the type or nature of service delivery, will not develop an incentive or penalty schedule for the family first grants.

DCF awarded new FFPSA grants which began July 1, 2023. Some grantees were part of initial FFPSA programming and services, and several were new to FFPSA this grant cycle. DCF continues to partner with the University of Kansas Center for Public Partnership and Research (KU-CPPR) in working with our evidence-based providers to create processes and procedures to assist in meeting outcomes when working with very challenging barriers family they service are facing.

Review and award FPS contract | Dec 23

On Dec. 13, 2023, DCF announced contract awards for Family Preservation Services (FPS). The newly awarded FPS contracts will be in place from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2028, with an optional renewal for one additional 24-month period. The 2024-2028 contracts were awarded to the existing contract holders. More than \$11 million will be distributed to three contractors to provide stabilizing safety supports for Kansas families.

Grant Outcomes/Practice Improvements	Interval between Performance Levels	Min	Max	Annual Incentive/ Penalty Percent
Engaged Timely in Family preservation Services (Higher = better)	2.0%	99.0%	& above	1.000%
		97.0%	98.9%	0.667%
		95.0%	96.9%	0.333%
		93.0%	94.9%	0.000%
		91.0%	92.9%	-0.167%
		89.0%	90.9%	-0.333%
Safety During Family Preservation * (Higher = better)	2.0%	99.0%	& above	2.000%
		97.0%	98.9%	1.333%
		95.0%	96.9%	0.667%
		93.0%	94.9%	0.000%
		91.0%	92.9%	-0.333%
		89.0%	90.9%	-0.667%
Children Maintained at Home during Family Preservation Services * (Higher = better)	4.0%	98.0%	& above	2.000%
		94.0%	97.9%	1.333%
		90.0%	93.9%	0.667%
		86.0%	89.9%	0.000%
		82.0%	85.9%	-0.333%
		78.0%	81.9%	-0.667%
		0.0%	77.9%	-1.000%

Family Preservation Contract Outcomes Incentive and Penalty Schedule

- 3 Outcome Measures
- 2 outcomes are weighted more heavily at 200% (indicated with *)
- Bolded amounts represent standards.
- Incentive payments are limited to 5% of allowable expenditures.
- Penalty recoupments are limited to -2.5% of allowable expenditures.

OUT-OF-HOME CARE AND ADOPTION

Adjust outcomes to new federal standards

Outcome standards were adjusted. Federal child welfare national outcomes are established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Federal outcomes are set based on the national performance on specific indicators. In 2022, some of the federal performance outcome indicators and operational definitions were adjusted. The RFP for Case Management providers performance outcome indicators and operational definitions were adjusted to match the federal outcomes. These outcomes will be written into the new CMP contracts.

- Maltreatment in Foster Care changed from 8.50 to 9.07 rate of victimization.
- Permanency in 12 months from 40.5% to 35.2%
- Permanency in 12-23 months from 43.6% to 43.8%
- Permanency in 24+ months from 30.3% to 37.3%
- Re-entry into Care in 12 months (this outcome definition changed so not comparable to previous standard) 8.3% to 5.6%.
- Placement Stability from 4.44 to 4.48 rates of moves

Implement discharge outcomes for DCF residential providers | Jul 23

Discharge outcomes were added to provider agreements in June 2023 and residential providers have signed provider agreements that include these outcomes. DCF Performance Improvement staff and the Group Home Manager are working with residential providers to gather information about the outcomes in their provider agreements. Residential providers are responsible for development and maintenance of measures to track progress toward their outcome goals.

Outcomes added are:

Safety (YRCII and QRTP):

- 100% of DCF children/youth placed with Residential Provider will experience no incidence of abuse or neglect in the residential facility. The child will not experience substantiated or affirmed abuse or neglect by a facility employee or volunteer at the residential facility or activity sponsored by the placement.

Maintaining Connections (YRCII and QRTP):

- 90% of DCF children/youth with Residential Provider will have at least two monthly interactions with at least 1 family member, kin, or a supportive person(s) or connection the child has identified.
- 50% of DCF children/youth discharge to a person familiar to the child which may be a relative, as defined by PPS PPM 5234, parent, kin, or previous foster home.

Stability (YRCII and QRTP):

- 65% of DCF children/youth remain stable in family like setting for 6 months following discharge from Residential Provider.

QRTP Treatment Engagement (QRTP only):

- 85% of DCF children/youth will have family and/or familiar supportive person(s)/connections engaged in treatment planning.

Additional updates will be available after the first year of implementation to determine success of residential treatment providers in meeting these outcomes.

Evaluate effectiveness of the failure to place network | Fall 2023

The Standby Bed (SBB) network (formerly called the failure to place network) is a fiscal structure aimed at making an array of placement levels available to youth in care. Effectiveness was evaluated in 2023 through a case review and conversations with youth. To understand how youth might be experiencing being placed with a provider who was also part of the network of SBB, we followed 100 youth for about a year and conducted interviews in 2023 with some of the youth who received SBB placement. In the interviews, youth spoke generally about their placements, concrete needs and desires for permanency or connections with family. Information shared in the interviews was meaningful in general, however, there was not a lot of feedback or specific awareness on the part of the youth that their experience was a resource that prevented a failure to place. The SBB network has become part of the DCF standard services in place and has been a successful tool in decreasing incidents of failure to place incidents for youth in care.

Summary of highlights of youth attributes reviewed reflect:

Regarding Stability:

- 28% of the youth were within their catchment area in the SBB placement.
- 94% had no FTP after SBB
- 35% with only 1 placement since SBB
- 79% have had no runs since SBB

Regarding Demographics - age range 10-18 years

- 54% females
- 61% ages 15 or 16

Regarding Context:

- 54% of SBB were family foster homes
- 46% left SBB for a family foster home
- 20% youth have been released from custody since SBB
- 16 were placed in a SBB who left the network (to become permanent placement)

DCF | 2022 HB 2510 PBC Reinvestment of Savings Proposal

DCF's proposal to the Legislature to comply with 2022 HB2510 Performance Based Grants and Contracts

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) in conjunction with the Division of Budget and the Kansas Legislative Research Division agreed to present the following process to comply with legislation outlined in 2022 HB2510 Sec 31 (b) which requires a plan for the reinvestment of savings from reduced foster care caseloads into evidence-based prevention and early intervention programs designed to prevent the need for, or reduce, the duration of out-of-home placements.

- Twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall, staff from the Division of the Budget, Kansas Legislative Research Department, and DCF meet to review entitlement caseloads and estimate participation and costs for the caseloads. The foster care caseload is one of the caseloads projected each consensus meeting. Following the meeting, KLRD and DoB prepare a summary memo to the Legislature and the Governor including changes needed to the budget for each caseload reviewed and the resulting SGF savings or costs.
- This memo is presented to the Appropriations Committees letting them know of budget adjustments recommended by the Consensus Caseload group. The memo would include the amount of projected SGF savings in foster care if there was any. This would meet the reporting requirement outlined in the legislation.
- The Legislature could then act if they wish to move any of the savings from the Foster Care budget to an evidence-based prevention and early intervention fund.
- 2022 HB2510 also required details of accounting, budgeting, allocation of resources and procedure for legislative consideration. The following outline those changes:
 - DCF will create a new SGF fund to track the Evidence-Based Prevention and Early Intervention revenues and expenditures.
 - Only the SGF savings would move to this new fund when legislatively directed. Federal funds spent in Foster Care are specific to children in out of home placement.
 - If the Evidence Based program is on the Title IV-E Clearinghouse, DCF may be able to match the SGF with 50% IV-E Prevention funds for specific programs after updating the State Prevention Plan.
 - After the Legislature transfers SGF from the foster care fund (Youth Aid and Assistance 1000-7020 Fund) to the Evidence Based SGF Fund, DCF would budget the funds, along with applicable federal funds, in appropriate programs.
 - DCF would attempt to budget the funds to account for expected cash flow to prevent spikes which could be created by starting a program and then suspending the program due to lack of foster care savings.
 - The budgeted and expended funds would be identified and reported each year to the Legislature as part of the Agency's budget presentation to the applicable Appropriations committees.