

Kansas Department of  
Social and Rehabilitation Services  
Don Jordan, Secretary



Special Judiciary  
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## Review of Foster Care System

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# Special Judiciary

Chairman O'Neal and members of the committee, I am Don Jordan, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information to facilitate your review of the foster care system.

## 1. What are the current responsibilities of SRS, KDHE as they relate to foster care?

KDHE, pursuant to K.S.A. 65-601 et seq. is responsible for license and regulation of child placing agencies. When a court places children in the custody of the Secretary of SRS, the child must be placed with a relative or in a child care facility licensed by KDHE. Children placed into custody are referred to one of five licensed child placing agencies under contract with SRS for services necessary to achieve reintegration or some alternative permanence for the child.

- SRS manages recruitment, training, licensure preparation and ongoing support of foster parents through a contract to coordinate activities of child placing agencies who sponsor foster homes.
- SRS investigates allegations of child abuse or neglect in a child care facility regulated by KDHE and notifies KDHE when the report involves a facility licensed or regulated by KDHE.

## 2. Are foster care parents adequately compensated for their services and the expenses they undergo?

One measure of adequate compensation is to ask whether recruitment efforts are successful and whether we're able to maintain a sufficient number of family foster homes. Family foster homes are the best alternative when it is not possible to maintain children safely with their own parents or other relative. While the number of children in care has sometimes increased, the percentage in family foster homes remained at or near 60%.

Point In Time	Total Number of Children in Out Of Home Placement	Percentage of children in Family Foster Home Setting
June 2003	5,014	60%
June 2005	4,963	59%
June 2007	5,691	58%
Aug. 2008	5,360	59%

The foster home placement rate covers basic needs including food, clothing, school expenses and nonmedical transportation. The daily placement rate does not cover child care costs, however, expenses for child care are covered or purchased for the foster parent through the child welfare case management contracts. Extraordinary transportation or clothing expenses may also be reimbursed. The actual rate is part of a placement agreement signed with the foster parents and is based on the child's needs. Sponsoring agencies provide a wide range of supports in addition to financial compensation in order to successfully recruit and maintain a sufficient number of foster homes. Statewide, the majority of foster home rates range from \$19.00 to \$128.00 per day. In rare circumstance of very high needs child, the rate may be \$153.00 per day. Below is a distribution foster care payment amounts for August 2008:

Aug 2008 Foster Care Rates	Payment Rate as Proportion of All Licensed Family Foster Placements
\$19-29 per day	16%
\$30-49 per day	52%
\$50-69 per day	23%
\$70-89 per day	5%
\$90-109 per day	2%
\$110-129 per day	1%
\$130 or more per day	1%

**3. What is the rate of movement of foster care kids from home to home, and how can that movement be minimalized?**

Placement stability for children placed in foster care is a primary child welfare concern. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services sets outcome measures for the states and evaluates performance through Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR). The current national median is 83.3 % of children in care for 12 months or less have 2 or fewer placements during that first 12 months. At the time of Kansas' CFSR in June of 2007, our performance was at 74%, and a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) has been developed to improve placement stability. Kansas data reflects:

- Progressive improvement: SFY 06 performance was 73%, 74% for SFY 07, and 77% for SFY 08.
- Children ages 5 and younger have fewer moves in their first year of care than older youth, and exceed the national median for placement stability (86% of children ages 5 and younger have 2 or fewer placements in first 12 months).
- Children age 6 and older have the greatest need of improved placement stability ( 71% of children age 6 and older have 2 or fewer placements in first 12 months).
- Older youth with mental health and behavioral issues are most likely to have more than two placements in the first 12 months according to the Kansas CFSR Final Report.
- The Program Improvement Plan addresses placement stability by focusing on education and support for foster parents caring for older youth with mental and behavioral issues.

**4. Review the current statute that deals w/inconsequential care (why families that provide care for children over 30 days have to have foster care licenses through KDHE).**

Kansas law (K.S.A. 65-501 et seq.) requires anyone providing care for a child under 16 unrelated by blood, marriage or adoption to be licensed by KDHE. By regulation KDHE has limited application of the requirement to situations where care exceeds 30 days.