

# OVERVIEW OF DCF, DUTIES, RESPONSIBILITIES, CONTRIBUTIONS.

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHILD WELFARE OVERSIGHT - OCTOBER 5, 2021



# OVERVIEW



## THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

What is the “child welfare system” and who is involved?



## REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

Who takes and investigates reports of child abuse/neglect?



## PREVENTION SERVICES

What programs exist to keep youth out of foster care?



## FOSTER CARE

How do youth come into state custody and how are they cared for?



## AGING OUT

What happens to foster youth that become adults while in state custody?



## HOW IT'S GOING

What is the current state of child welfare?



## MOVING FORWARD

What is DCF’s vision moving forward?



# THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM



# OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

## G O V E R N A N C E

Federal Guidance

State Law and Policy

Best Practice Standards

Child welfare begins in the...

**COMMUNITY**

...with primary prevention.

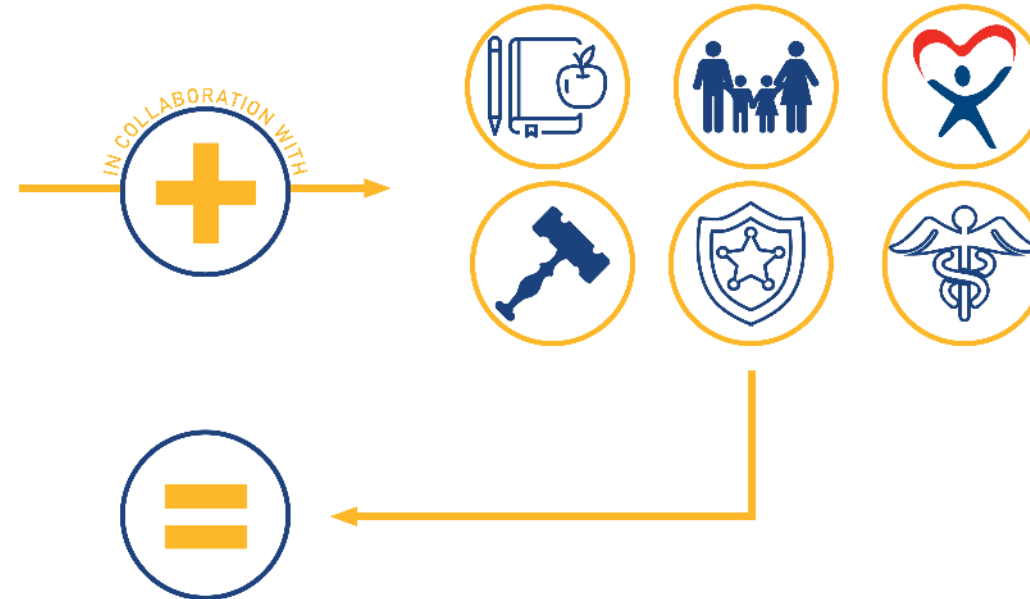


# OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

## DCF PRIMARY FUNCTIONS



## PARTNERS



## STRATEGIES FOR PROTECTING CHILDREN

Strong safety, resiliency and prevention networks

Strong KPRC capacity

Resources to prevent the need for foster care

Evidence-based approaches for parent and relative engagement and work alongside crossover youth

Increase timely permanency, placement stability and health care coordination for children in foster care



# OVERVIEW OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Child welfare efforts are made possible by our **FOUNDATION.**

## **Strong Workforce:**

Recruit and develop child welfare workforce partnerships and practice implementation

## **Informed Decisions:**

Outcomes-based, safety- and data-informed alongside families in communities

## **Evidence-Based Practice that Engages Families:**

Mental Health, Substance Use, Parent Skill Building, Kinship Navigation

## Our strategies for protecting children lead to our **GOALS AND SUCCESS FACTORS**



- Timely and consistent report screening, safety assessment and planning alongside families



- Collaborate to implement evidence-based prevention and child welfare programs
- Support families, relatives and youth to navigate systems for access to meaningful resources
- Increase children placed with relatives
- Collaborate to remove barriers to legal permanency



- Amplify university partnership for practicums and increase recruiting and job advertisement media



# THE KANSAS PROTECTION REPORT CENTER



- The Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC) is the entity responsible for taking reports of alleged child abuse/neglect in the state of Kansas
- Receives reports of alleged abuse/neglect 24 hours-per-day 7-days-per-week
- Reports are made via the toll free phone-number, web intake, fax, and mail
  - Phone: 1-800-922-5330

A woman with dark hair, wearing a dark top, is holding a folder and looking towards the camera. She is in a library or office setting with bookshelves in the background. The image is overlaid with a blue tint.

# REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION





# REPORTING

- Reports received by the KPRC are evaluated by Intake Specialists
- Intake Specialists consider the contents of the report and safety/risk factors to form an initial assessment decision using Structured Decision Making
- Initial assessment decisions must be made within a half working day of the report being received
- Reports are either:
  - Assigned for investigation
  - Not assigned for further assessment



A report is made to Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC). An intake protection specialist uses Structured Decision Making (SDM) to determine the assignment of the report.



Report is dispatched to DCF Regional Service Center if it meets all criteria of abuse/neglect or family in need of assessment (FINA).



The report is assigned to a Child Protection Specialist (CPS) to visit and assess family.



CPS and family work together to find the best solution for their problem or prevent the child from entering foster care.



# MANDATED REPORTERS

- Anyone who suspects a child may be a victim of abuse/neglect can make a report to the KPRC, but some professionals are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect
- This includes but is not limited to:
  - Persons providing medical care
  - Persons licensed by the state to provide mental health services
  - Teachers
  - Child care providers
  - Firefighters, law enforcement officers, emergency services personnel



# INVESTIGATION

- The KPRC received 67,378 reports of alleged child abuse/neglect in FY 2021
- 37,940 of these reports (57%) were assigned for further assessment
- Reports meeting criteria for investigation are assigned with one of the following assignment types:
  - Abuse/Neglect – physical abuse, physical neglect or sexual abuse
  - Family in Need of Assessment (FINA) – child with challenging behavior or not attending school





# INVESTIGATION

- Investigations must be conducted within certain timeframes based on assignment type and facts of the case
- Reports of abuse/neglect must be responded to within either the same day or 72 hours depending on the severity of the report
- Family in Need of Assessment reports are assigned a 7 working-day response unless the case involves an infant positive for substance, a child under the age of one, or a report of a child engaging in self-harming behaviors
- In FY 2021, 95% of reports assigned had a timely contact with the victim/family





# INVESTIGATION

Child Protective Services staff investigate reports.

Investigatory activities may include:

- Interviews with the reporter and witnesses
- Interviews with the child victim
- Interviews with family members
- Interviews with the alleged perpetrator
- Visiting the scene of alleged maltreatment
- Collection and review of records
- Making and documenting behavioral observations





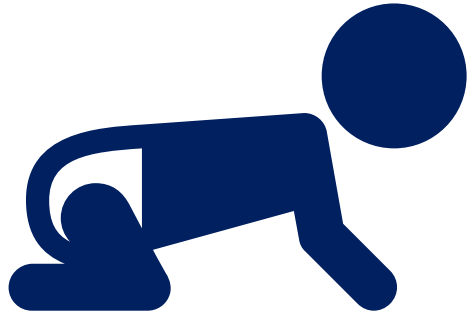
# INVESTIGATION

- After the completion of an investigation a determination is made as to the allegations made in the initial report to the KPRC
- Additionally, an assessment is completed with the family to determine if a referral to community-based or prevention services would be beneficial
- In FY 2021 92% of reports investigated were unsubstantiated
- If there are reasonable grounds to believe abuse or neglect occurred DCF must take steps to protect the child(ren)'s well being





# MANDATORY REFERRAL FOR INFANTS TO COMMUNITY SERVICES



- Children under the age of one are our most vulnerable population.
- Providing families with services and supports early may help prevent future maltreatment.
- On July 1, 2019, DCF added policy requiring DCF Child Protection Specialists to engage and assist families with a child under the age of one with a referral to a Parent Skill Building program.



# ADRIAN'S LAW UPDATE

*“Concerning investigations related to reports of child abuse or neglect, the bill would require that a child who was an alleged victim of abuse or neglect be visually observed by either the employee of the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), or the law enforcement agency investigating the report. The bill would allow either the Secretary for Children and Families (Secretary) or the law enforcement agency to appoint a designee for observation.”*

- On July 1, 2021, DCF added policy to include language from Adrian’s Law to ensure each child alleged to be a victim of abuse/neglect is visually observed.



A family of four is sitting on a light-colored sofa in a bright, modern living room. A man on the left is looking at a tablet held by a woman in the center. A young child is sitting between them, also looking at the tablet. A woman on the right is smiling and looking towards the family. The background shows a white door and a window with blinds. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

# PREVENTION SERVICES



# PREVENTION SERVICES

## Family Preservation

- Four contracts
  - DCCCA (KC and Wichita)
  - TFI Family Services (West)
  - Cornerstones of Care (East)
- Two tiers of service to meet unique needs of each family

## Family First Prevention Services

- 18 grants
  - Mental Health
  - Substance Use Disorder
  - Kinship Navigation
  - Parent Skill Building
- Evidence-based programs
- 50/50 funding match from federal partners

Overall, 1,934 referrals, 89% who have reached 12 month remained together at home without need for foster care



# FOSTER CARE



- DCF does not remove children or decide to take children into state custody
- Only law enforcement and the court have the ability to remove a child from a parent's custody
- If DCF determines it is not possible to protect a child through services it must recommend that the county or district attorney file a Child In Need of Care, or "CINC," petition

# ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE



- Temporary custody hearing held within 72 hours (excluding weekends and holidays) after CINC petition filing to determine if the child shall remain in the home or come into DCF custody
- An adjudication hearing to formally find the child of being “in need of care” usually must be held within 60 days of the filing of a CINC petition
  - The state’s burden of proof is clear and convincing evidence

# ENTRY INTO FOSTER CARE



- After a child has come into state care they will be placed in the setting with a level of care most appropriate for their individual needs
- Placements are reimbursed by DCF based on the type and the child's level of care needs.
- Types of placements include:
  - Relative placement
  - Family foster home
  - Residential facilities
  - Emergency shelters
  - QRTPs
  - Staff secure facilities

# FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS



In FY 2021, among youth in out of home placement...

- ~ 51% were placed in a family foster home
- ~ 35% were placed with a relative
- ~ 8% were placed in a group or residential home
- ~ 42% of children are placed with either a relative or a kin caregiver.



**FOSTER CARE  
PLACEMENTS**



# CASE PLANS

- After a child is adjudicated to be a CINC, a disposition hearing is held in which the court will set the case plan goal for the child
- Placement decisions are a responsibility of case management providers.
- Following disposition, courts must have permanency hearings to evaluate progress towards case plan goals at a minimum of every 12 months
  - The court will continue to have final say over the child's case plan
- Case plan goals include: reintegration with the family, permanent guardianship/adoption, and other planned permanent living arrangements (OPPLA)





- Foster Care Case Management grantees work with grantees to support families, manage individual cases, and achieve case plan goals
- Four case management grantees:
  - Saint Francis Ministries
  - KVC Health Systems, Inc.
  - TFI Family Services
  - Cornerstones of Care

# FOSTER CARE CASE MANAGEMENT



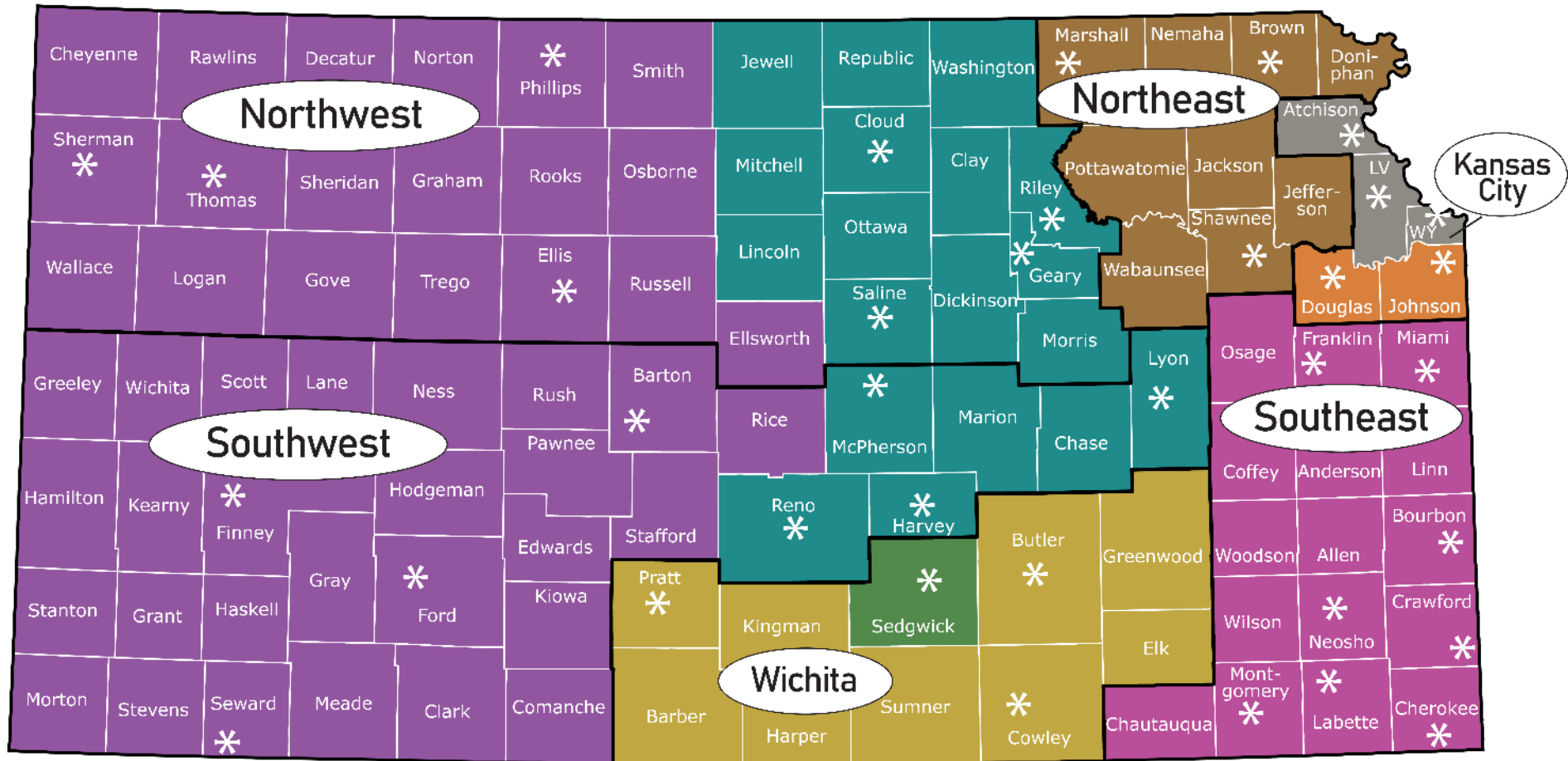
# SERVICES FOR FOSTER YOUTH AND FAMILIES

Services provided by case management grantees include:

- Initial and ongoing screenings and assessments
- Facilitation and engagement for family meetings
- Case plan development
- Placement stability support
- Facilitation of parenting time and parent/child interactions
- Parent skill building
- Coordination/referral to other services (ex: mental health, disability)
- Coordination with MCOs



# DCF Regions & Catchment Areas



- \* DCF Service Center
- AREA #1 *Saint Francis Ministries*
- AREA #2 *Saint Francis Ministries*
- AREA #3 *KVC*
- AREA #4 *TFI Family Services*
- AREA #5 *Cornerstones of Care*
- AREA #6 *KVC*
- AREA #7 *Saint Francis Ministries*
- AREA #8 *TFI Family Services*



- DCF is responsible for the licensure and regulation of all 24-hour-per-day, seven-day-per-week child care facilities in Kansas
- Licensing division strives to ensure facilities are operated and maintained with strict regard for the health and safety of the children residing in them
- DCF conducts initial licensure and ongoing compliance inspections and complaint investigations when necessary
- Also responsible for fingerprinting/background checks for these facilities

# LICENSING



# LICENSING

- Facilities licensed and regulated by DCF include:
  - Child Placement Agencies
  - Family foster homes
  - Group boarding homes and residential centers
  - Detention and secure care centers
  - Attendant care facilities
  - Staff secure facilities
  - Secure residential treatment facilities

A young man with short dark hair is sitting on bleachers, looking off to the side with a thoughtful expression. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The background shows the rows of bleachers receding into the distance.

# YOUTH IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD



# YOUTH IN TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

- Young adults who leave foster care without achieving permanency are provided transition supports to adulthood.
- 478 young people transitioned to adulthood while in foster care in SFY21.
- DCF engages with the Kansas Youth Advisory Council for feedback on the needs of youth who are or who have been involved in child welfare services



# INDEPENDENT LIVING AND CHAFEE SERVICES

- The DCF Independent Living program provides services and supports to youth for a successful transition to self-sufficiency
- Services are offered statewide through Independent Living Coordinators
- Eligibility determined by age and length of stay in state custody
- Services available include:
  - Tuition waivers for postsecondary education
  - Medical coverage through KanCare
  - Independent living subsidies
  - Basic Chafee
  - Education and Training Voucher Program





- DCF is making it a priority to develop and implement innovations to support older youth as they transition to adulthood and self-sufficiency
- Efforts are underway to develop partnerships both externally and internally that will increase economic, employment, and transportation supports for older youth
  - Using VR dollars to support employment
  - Contract awarded for a pilot to support resources for driver's license education, license fees and insurance costs of youth in care
- Incremental increases in monthly independent living assistance payment. Increased to about \$700/ month in SFY22 with plan to increase to \$1,400 in SFY23.



# HOW IT'S GOING



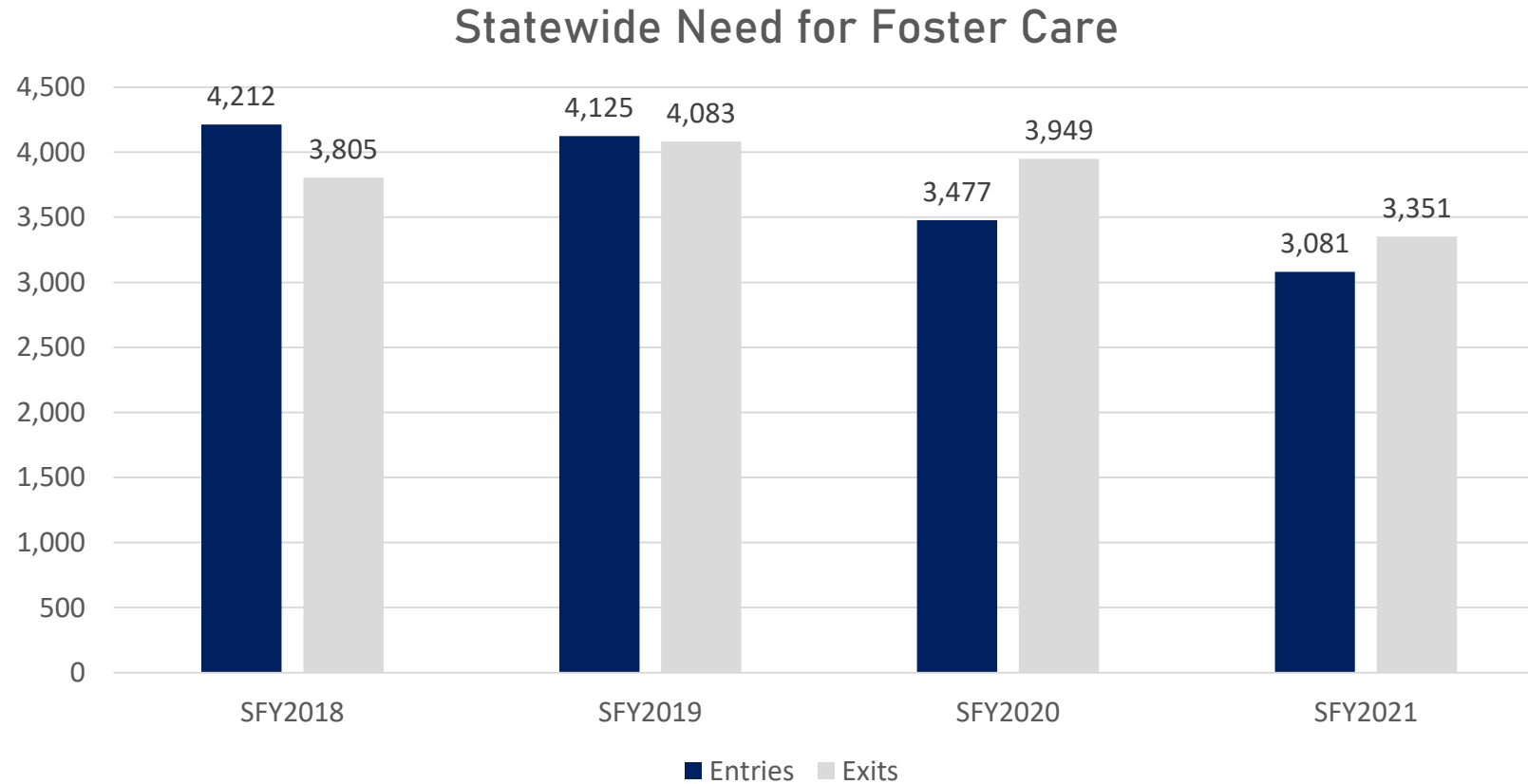


# HOW IT'S GOING – BY THE NUMBERS

Statewide Indicator	Then	Now
CFSR rate of moves	9.9	5.4 - May
Office Stays	129 Jul-Mar SFY20	63 Jul-Jun SFY21
1 or fewer moves in prior 12 months	79% SFY20	79.5% SFY21
CFSR Item 4 Stability	82% (7/19-9/20)	96% (10-12/2020)
Relative Placement	Goal: 29% Actual: 33% (SFY19)	Goal: 50% Actual: 40%

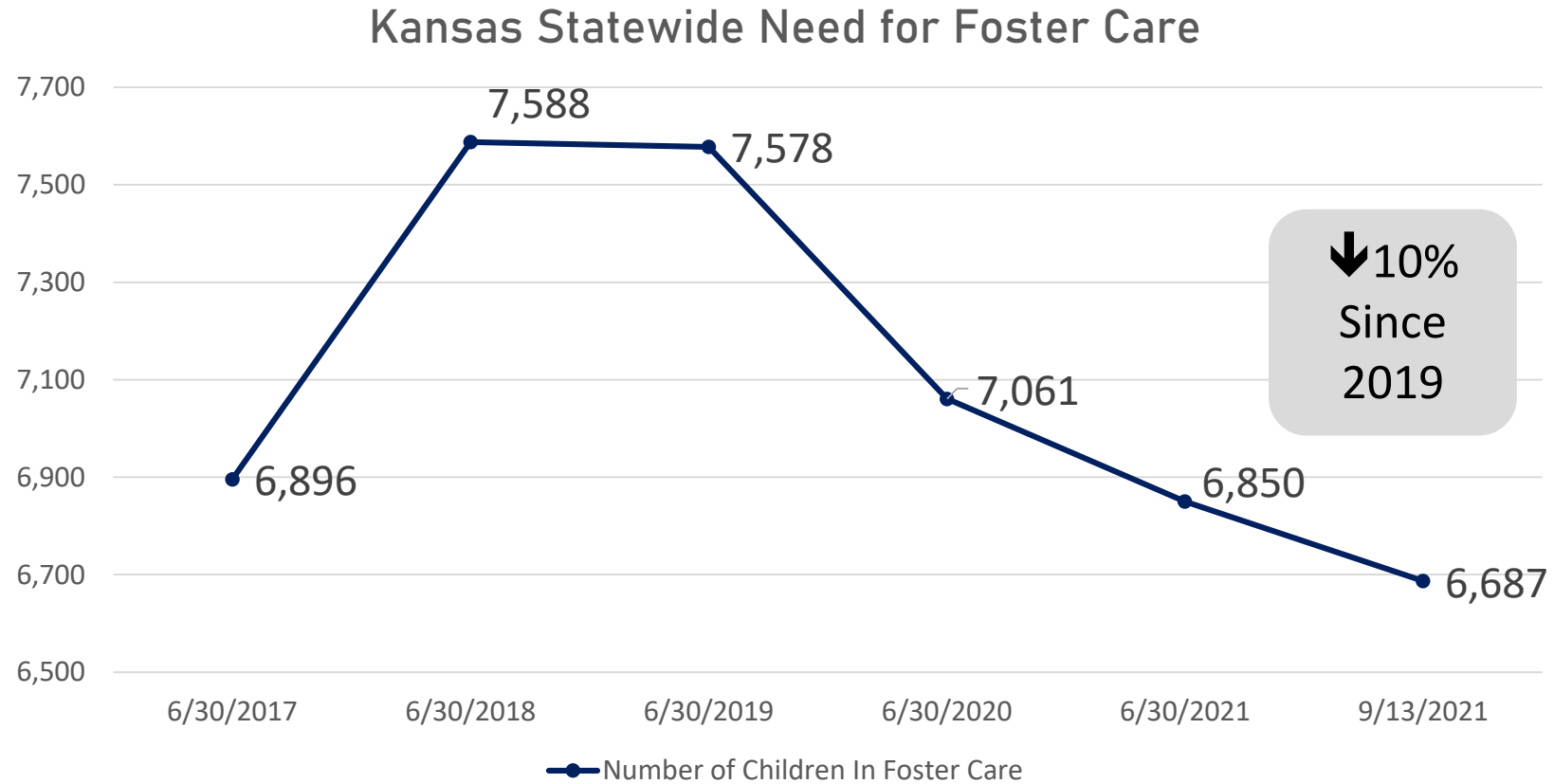


# HOW IT'S GOING – BY THE NUMBERS



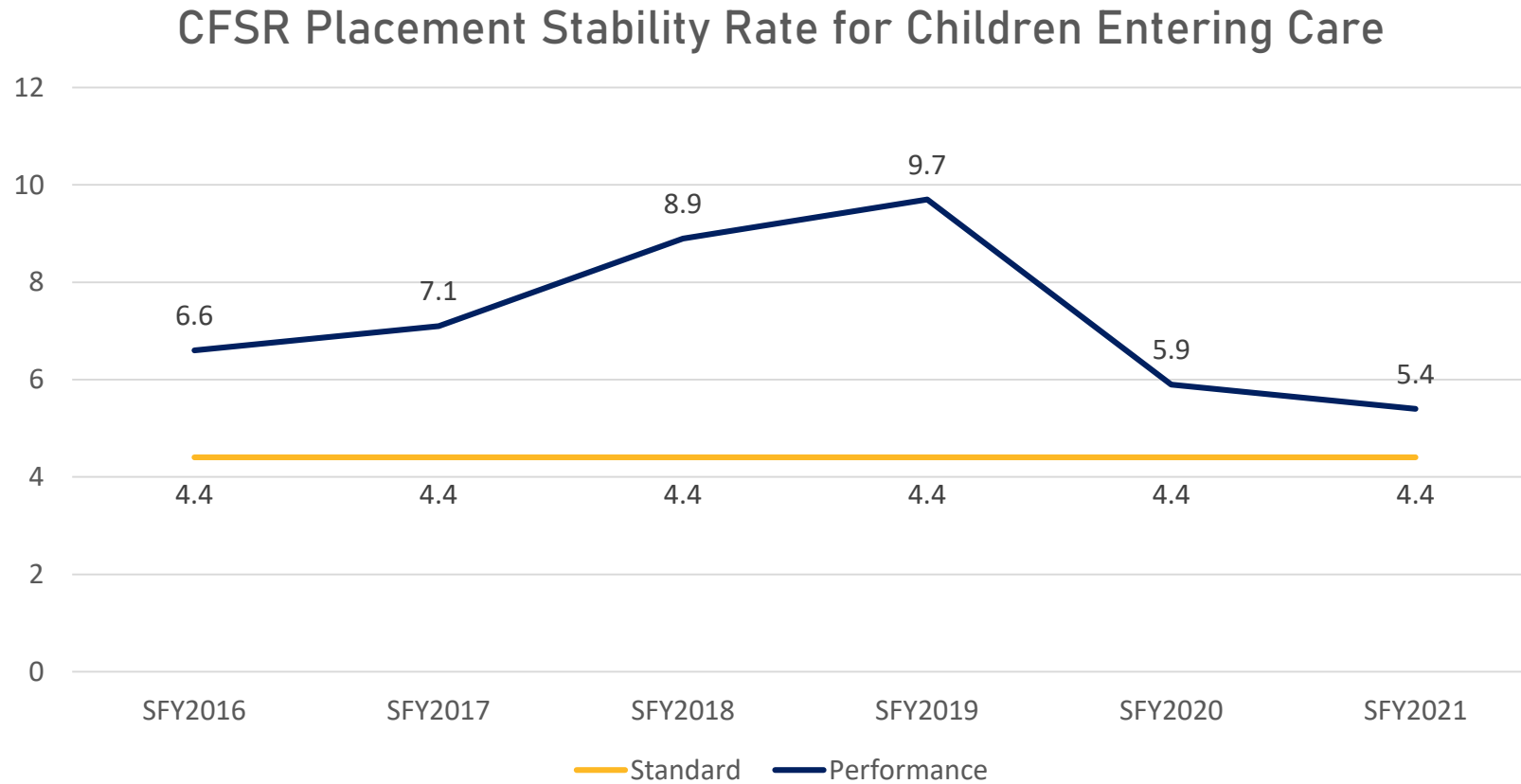


# HOW IT'S GOING – BY THE NUMBERS





# HOW IT'S GOING – BY THE NUMBERS





# LOOKING AHEAD

- Progress has been made, but work remains
- Continue efforts to increase permanency and support placements in family-like settings
- Continue to work alongside families and communities to support and protect children
- Pursue innovations that will achieve better outcomes for all youth in foster care

# QUESTIONS?

A blue-tinted photograph of a crowd of people, likely at a public meeting or Q&A session. Many people have their hands raised, indicating they want to ask a question or make a point. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.