



DCF Legislative Testimony

August 4, 2025

TESTIMONY OF: Laura Howard, Secretary Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: Committee Special Data Information Requests

1) HOW THE FOSTER CARE CASE MATTER CAME TO DCF

A child may be removed into the custody of the Secretary into out of home placement in foster care for more than one reason of abuse, neglect or contributing factor of a family in need of assessment and service (FINA). DCF has an ability to designate in a child's record a primary reason for removal. If any contributing factor in a child's reason for removal was for any type of abuse or neglect, (e.g. physical abuse, lack of supervision, etc.) then the overall primary reason for removal is considered to be related to abuse or neglect. If there are no allegations or harm from abuse or neglect among the contributing factors to the need to enter foster care, the overall primary reason for removal is FINA.

DCF may request through an application for petition for a child in need of care to be removed into the custody of the Secretary and out of home placement or the request to enter foster care may come from an entity other than DCF such as a county or district attorney. The table below reflects by the overall reason for removal the number of children whose custody request was initiated by DCF or an entity that was not DCF.

Table 1: Number of Children by Related Reason for Removal and Requestor

Quarter	Abuse Neglect					FINA				
	DCF		Non DCF		Total	DCF		Non DCF		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#
2024 Q4	228	64%	125	35%	355	114	48%	122	51%	238
2025 Q1	210	63%	119	36%	332	137	59%	93	40%	232
2025 Q2	244	63%	140	36%	386	153	56%	118	43%	272

Children and youth who have a need to enter foster care may experience police protective custody (PPC) for a period of up to 72 hours excluding weekends and holidays if a law enforcement believes a child will be harmed if not immediately removed from the place or residence where the child has been found or reasonably believes the child is experiencing a behavioral health crisis and is likely to cause harm to self or others. Further, in 38-2231 (b) effective July 1, 2025, a law enforcement officer shall explore other options to separate the child from the source of harm before removal of a child.

Table 2: Number Of Children by Related Reason for Removal with And Without Police Protective Custody Experience in That Removal

Quarter	Abuse Neglect					FINA				
	No PPC		PPC		Total	No PPC		PPC		Total
	#	%	#	%	#	#	%	#	%	#
2024 Q4	130	37%	225	63%	355	119	50%	119	50%	238
2025 Q1	121	36%	211	64%	332	109	47%	123	53%	232
2025 Q2	148	38%	238	62%	386	113	42%	159	58%	272

The below table shows out of the number of children who have entered the custody of the secretary each quarter, how many had any type of prevention referral, family prevention case plan, or service referral before their entry into care.

TABLE 3: Children removed into foster care with prevention service history prior to this foster care event						
	CY2024 Q4 (October 1, 2024- December 31, 2024)		CY2025 Q1 (January 1, 2025- March 31, 2025)		CY2025 Q2 (April 1, 2025-June 30, 2025)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Had a prevention plan or referral to FPS or FFPSA any time prior this entry into foster care	255	43.00%	236	41.84%	295	45.25%
Did not have any referral to FPS or FFPSA any time prior this entry into foster care (e.g. have never received a prevention service from DCF)	338	57.00%	328	58.16%	357	54.75%
Total children removed	593	100.00%	564	100.00%	652	100.00%

In the most recent quarter, **127 of the 295 children/youth** who had received prevention services prior to removal had a **referral for prevention services within the past two years (7/1/23–7/1/25)**. This indicates that **approximately 43%** of those with a prior prevention plan received services within that two-year window.

The table below breaks down this group of 127 children/youth by **type of prevention service**. Notably, **about 63%** had a prevention plan for **Family Preservation Services**.

Table 4: CY2025 QTR. 2 Children in Custody Who had Prevention Referrals with in 2 Years of Entering Custody.	
Type of Prevention Services	CY25 QTR. 2 Statewide Totals
FPS Tier 1	5
FPS Tier 2	13
FPS	62
Family Centered Treatment	9
Fostering Prevention	3
Healthy Families	6
Kinship Navigator	8
Multi-Systemic Therapy	7
Parents as Teachers	6
Parent-Child Interaction Therapy	3
START	3
Seeking Safety Total	2
Total	127

2) AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN FOSTER CARE

Foster care is intended as a temporary arrangement that is used when children cannot remain safely in their parents' care due to abuse, neglect, parental incapacity, or other unsafe circumstance. Once children are separated from family in foster care, states are responsible to achieve permanency for the child through services, supports and court hearing processes.

Court hearings are used to review the status and determine the permanent placement and goals of children who have been separated from their families into foster care. Federal law guides states to emphasize timely permanency and states exercise discretion in implementation. Effective July 1, 2025, a permanency hearing shall be held within nine (9) months of the date the court authorized the child's removal from the home and not less frequently than every six (6) months thereafter (K.S.A 38-2264 (f)).

Data on length of stay for children in foster care is displayed for children who have exited care (exit cohort) in a period. This table provides length of stay data by days and months for children who exited foster care during the most recent quarter.

Table 5 (a): 2025 Q1 (January 1, 2025-March 31, 2025)

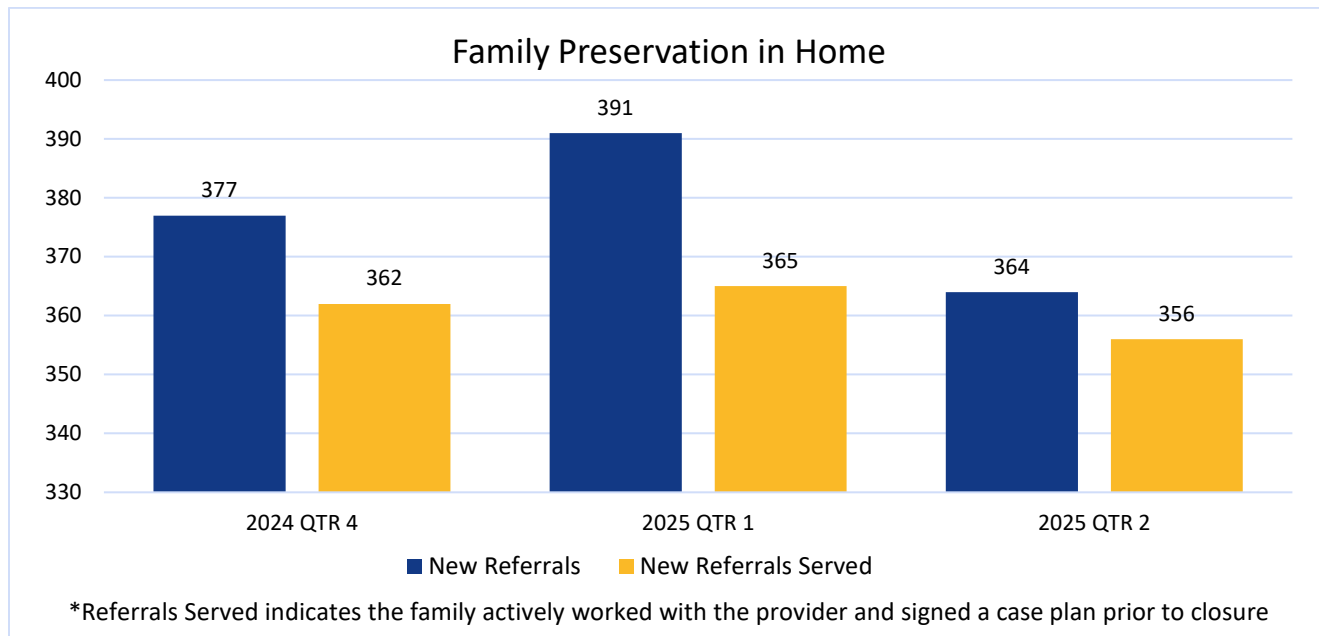
	Total	Max Age	Min Age	Avg Age	Max Days	Min Days	Avg Mos
Adoption	101	16	1	8	3,409	442	47
Emancipation	96	21	18	18	5,011	23	41
Custodianship/Guardianship	29	17	0	10	1,757	20	18
Other	6	19	0	10	700	43	15
SOUL Family	7	19	16	17	1,889	238	28
Reunification	271	18	0	8	2,619	2	10
Transfer	12	18	1	11	1,527	8	15
Total	522	128	36	82	16,912	776	174

Table 5 (b): 2025 Q2 (April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025)

	Total	Max Age	Min Age	Avg Age	Max Days	Min Days	Avg Mos
Adoption	158	18	1	8	3,869	427	41
Emancipation	133	21	18	18	5,258	99	45
Custodianship/Guardianship	15	20	7	13	5,597	364	44
Other	5	18	5	15	2,643	601	42
SOUL Family	7	18	16	17	3,695	596	48
Reunification	282	17	0	9	1,765	1	14
Transfer	11	18	0	9	2,300	1	17
Total	611	21	0	13	5,597	1	36

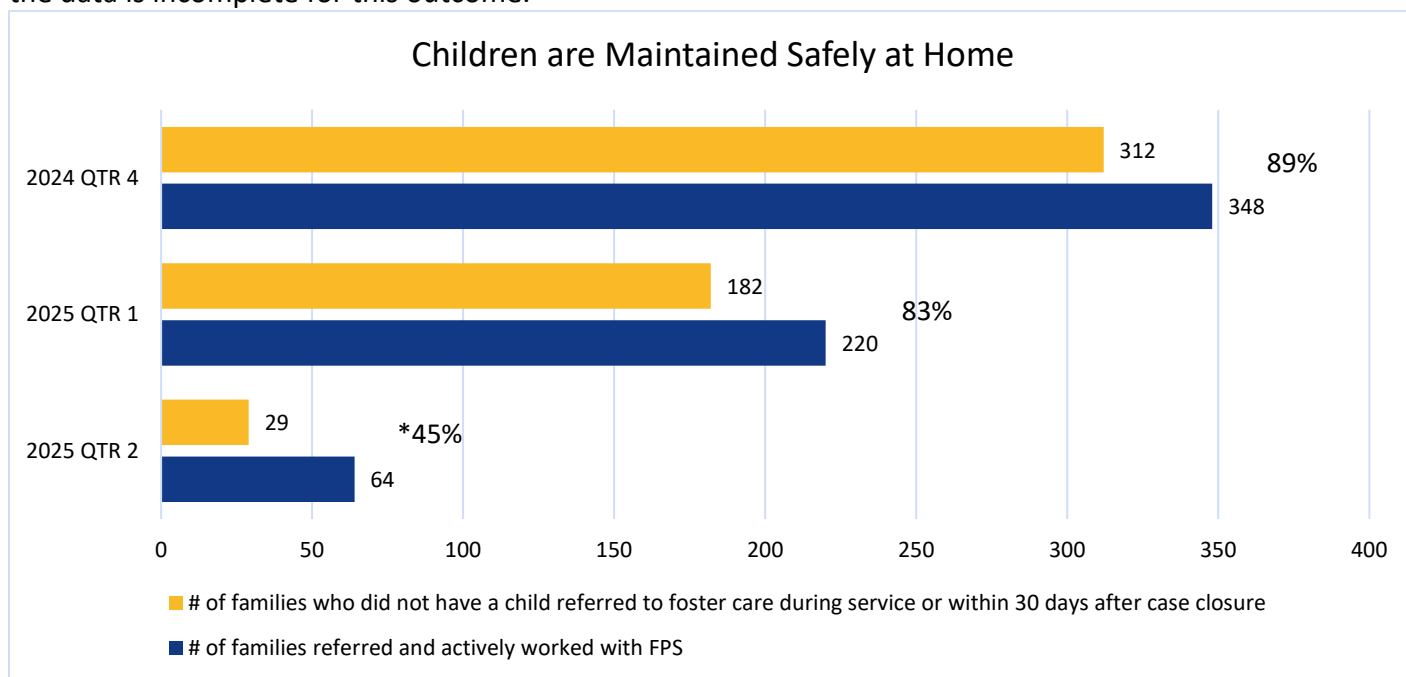
3) PREVENTATIVE SERVICES PROVIDED

Family Preservation provides voluntary services alongside families to build on family strengths and reduce the risk of children being placed in foster care. Family Preservation providers will determine with family the intensity of service provided. Data provided below reflects the number of families referred in a quarter.



One outcome in the contracts for family preservation is that families referred for family preservation services will not have a child placed outside the home into the foster care program during the service period or within 30 days of case closure. Data below reflects performance by quarter with that outcome.

2024 is the most recent FY with complete data, 91% of families had children safely maintained at home and did not enter foster care. Below is a depiction of the last 3 calendar quarters, however, until all referrals end the data is incomplete for this outcome.

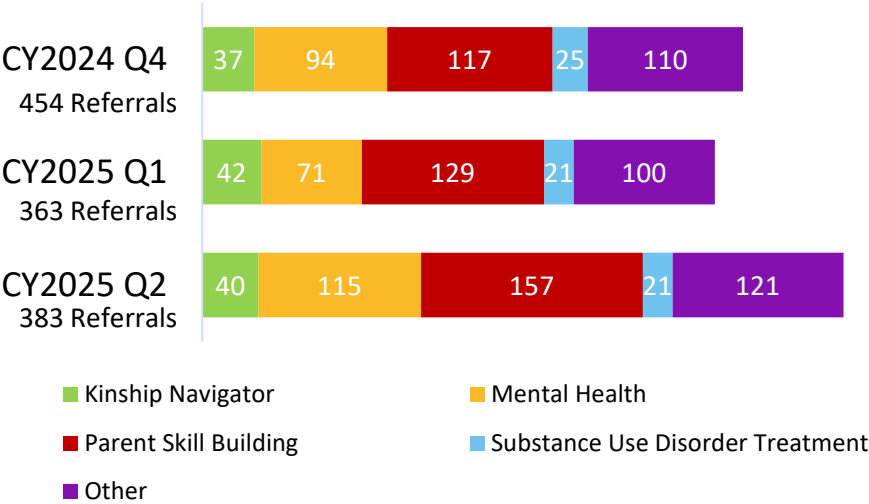


Family First Prevention Service referrals may be made by a DCF protection specialist for any family with a child at risk to enter foster care for any presenting reason. Family first prevention services are also available to any pregnant or parenting youth in foster care. A family may be referred to one or more of four types of services through family first: parent skill building; mental health; substance use or kinship navigation. DCF has grants statewide that began 7/1/23 for 15 family first programs through 12 providers. More information can be found at [Family First Prevention Services Act - Prevention and Protection Services](#). Like family preservation, family first has outcomes to maintain children at home preventing the need for foster care. In FY2024 90% of children and youth who have reached 12 months from the time-of-service referral remained together at home without need for foster care

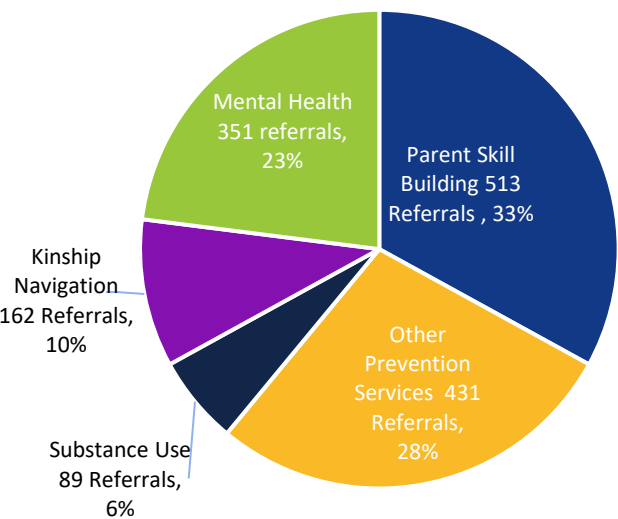
FY2025 Referral total
July 2024-June 2025



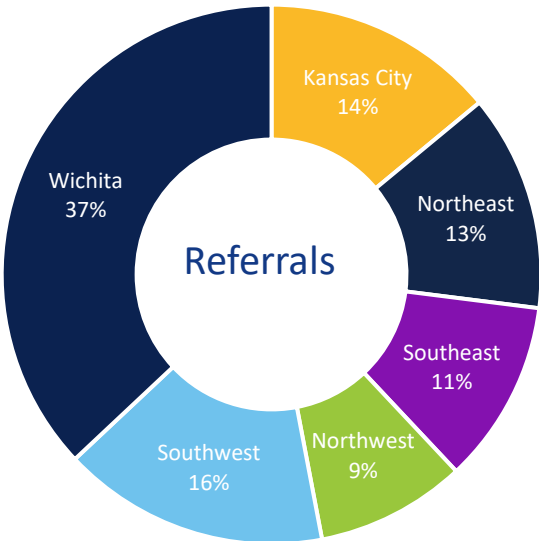
Family First Referrals by Quarter



Referral by Service Type FY2025



Referrals by Region FY2025



4) COST OF A PREVENTION AND FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

SFY 26 FAMILY PRESERVATION BUDGET - \$11,593,386

- In SFY2024 DCF **spent** \$9.8M for Family Preservation of the \$13M budget
 - 1,515 Families were served which included 3,323 children
 - \$6,482 was spent per referral (\$2,955 per child)

SFY 26 FAMILY FIRST BUDGET - \$20.8M ALL FUNDS

Mental Health (Multi-Systemic Therapy, Parent-Child Interaction Therapy)	
	SFY25* Expenditures: \$7,129,472.00 spent across two programs serving a total of 353 referrals and 755 children SFY26 Budget \$7,329,472
Substance Use (START, PCAP, Seeking Safety, Strengthening Families)	
	SFY25* Expenditures: \$1,906,950.98 spent across four programs serving a total of 89 referrals and 183 children SFY26 Budget \$2,170,063
Kinship Navigation (Kids2Kin)	
	SFY25* Expenditures: \$324,158.00 spent for one program serving a total of 173 referrals and 304 children SFY26 Budget \$350,911
Parenting Skills (HFA, FCT, PAT/Bright Futures, Family Mentoring, Family Check-Up, Fostering Prevention)	
	SFY25* Expenditures: \$9,397,962.92 across eight programs serving a total of 553 referrals and 1209 children SFY26 Budget \$9,855,586
Other Services (Parent Advocate, Community Support Specialist)	
	SFY25* Expenditures: \$879,936.00 spent across two programs referrals are community-based, rather than directed by DCF SFY26 Budget \$1,078,183

4) COST OF A CHILD IN FOSTER CARE

The Division of the Budget, Department for Children and Families (DCF), Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), Department for Aging and Disability Services (KDADS), and the Legislative Research Department (Consensus Group) meet once each fall and spring to revise the estimates for human services consensus caseload expenditures for the current fiscal year and to develop estimates for the next fiscal year.

The requested caseload estimates regarding Foster Care are below:

Table 6: Consensus Caseload Estimates by Fiscal Year		
	FY 2025 CC Load Estimates	FY 2026 CC Load Estimates
Monthly Cost Per Child	\$5,033	\$5,017
Case Management Cost Per Month	\$13,549,683	\$12,351,435
Placement Costs Per Month	\$13,996,424	\$14,080,364
Other Foster Care Monthly Costs	\$787,227	\$1,084,869

**FY 2026 Consensus caseload estimates will be revised in Fall of 2025. At the same meeting, FY 2027 Consensus caseload estimates will be developed. The agency will update this section once those totals have been finalized.*

5) NUMBER OF FAMILIES/YOUTH WHO RECEIVED CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SERVICES

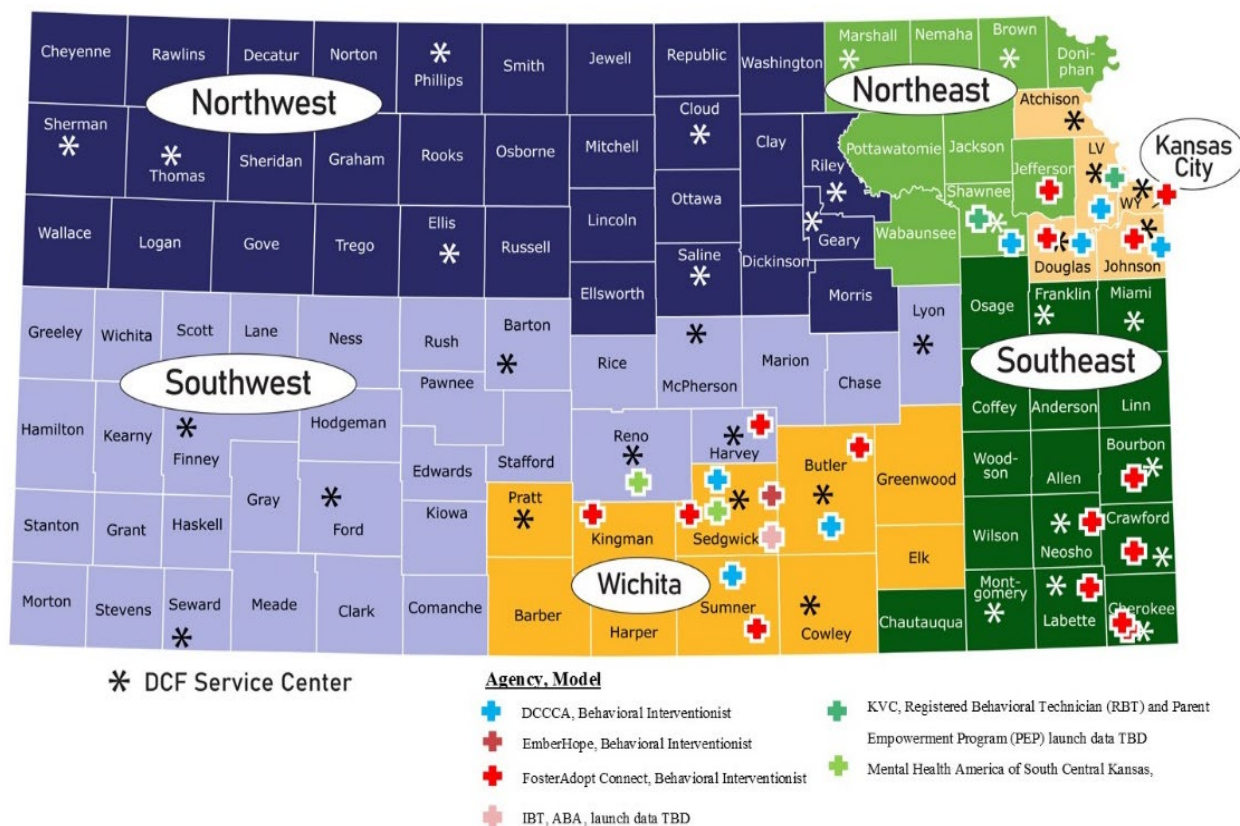
Children's Behavior Intervention (CBI) Services are a Kansas Medicaid eligible service available for children and youth who meet the eligibility criteria through a qualified provider. Anyone can complete a referral for CBI services on behalf of the child/family. Families open with DCF for services might be referred by DCF or a prevention provider or foster care case manager. DCF is the entity that "certifies" or approves the model request for the Kansas Department for Health and Environment Medicaid state plan from a prospective provider. The goal of the intervention is to improve the family dynamic and youth's emotional or behavioral stability.

CBI Child Eligibility

- Youth is between the ages of 3 and 18 (or still in High School)
- Youth regularly displays frequent disruptive behaviors that cause crisis in the family unit
- Severity of behaviors qualify youth for admittance into a mental health facility
- Lack of success or accessibility to other community resources
- Child and Adolescent Functional Assessment Scale (CAFAS) score is at least 70

CBI Children Served

- 2024 Q4: 23
- 2025 Q1: 25
- 2025 Q2: 28



6) LICENSED FAMILY FOSTER HOME INFORMATION

Data is requested by the committee to know how many licensed foster homes will take kids up to age 18; how many homes can take kids with high medical/behavioral needs; what is overall capacity of licensed foster homes; and how many beds there are by age and needs of child, such as high, moderate, mild. Data regarding licensed homes is sourced from Childcare Licensing and Regulation Information System (CLARIS.)

On July 29th, there were 2,159 total licensed family foster homes with a capacity of 5,636 children.

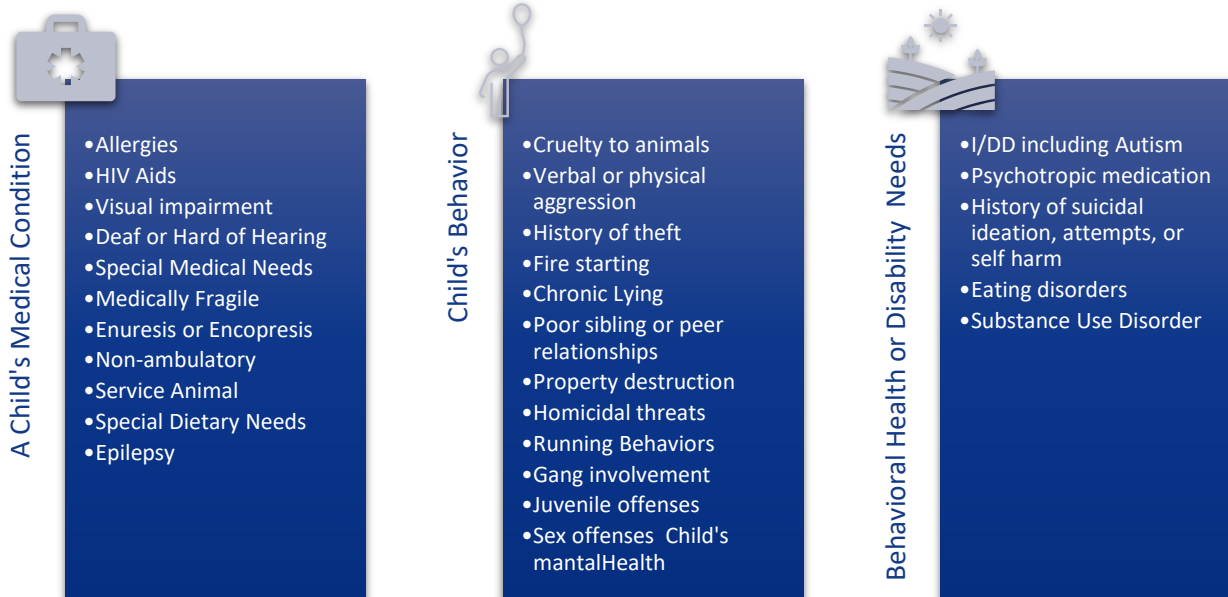
Capacity	Age Groups Served
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avg capacity 2.57 • 36% of homes have a capacity for 2 children, • 29% have a capacity for 4 children • 17% have capacity for either 1 or 3. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 47% of homes serve children serve children infancy and older • 10% serve age 3 and older • 12% age 6 and older • 4% 10 and older • 3% age 13 and older

+ Capacity and Age Group Percentages for relatives and NR Kin & military homes not included, thus does not sum to 100%.

Table 7: Type of DCF Licensed Home	2024 Q4	2025 Q1	2025 Q2
FFH approved exception for dual license	4	3	2
Family Foster Home	1,944	1,895	1894
Family Foster Home NRKIN	233	227	234
FFH Approval – Military Base	1	1	1
FFH Approval – Relative Care	56	58	61
Total	2,238	2,185	2,192

During the licensing and sponsorship process families are asked to provide preferences regarding children or youth who they believe will be a good fit for their home. Families can accept or decline placement of any child or youth regardless of their expressed preferences during the licensing process. General and detailed information gathered from families includes:

Preferred capacity	Age preferences (male and female)	Level of Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Standard •Therapeutic 	Pregnant or parenting youth
	Prior human trafficking or sexual exploitation or sexual abuse victimization	Sexual activity or reactivity of the child or youth	



Of all children placed in out of home placements, 92% are placed in a family-based setting. Regarding levels of care that children need to meet their needs while in a family-based home (relative, kin or licensed), DCF has data in levels of care in a family-based placement on the last day of the month (or quarter.). The data does not reflect children with high acuity in PRTF, group homes (QRTP/ YRC II), emergency shelters, Community Integration Placements or Transitional living (independent living), or on run. Data for the most the last day in a quarter is below.

Level of Care	Count of Children That Month					
	Q4 12/31/2024	% of Total	Q1 3/31/2025	% of Total	Q2 6/30/2025	% of Total
Basic 1	2095	44.1%	2105	43.6%	2061	42.6%
Basic 2	529	11.1%	534	11.1%	545	11.3%
Basic 3	534	11.2%	526	10.9%	536	11.1%
Intensive 1	421	8.9%	418	8.7%	436	9.0%
Intensive 2	638	13.4%	626	13.0%	611	12.6%
Therapeutic	21	0.4%	54	1.1%	68	1.4%
Treatment						
Transition	190	4.0%	196	4.1%	208	4.3%
IDD Waiver	15	0.3%	18	0.4%	19	0.4%
ICPC	212	4.5%	194	4.0%	198	4.1%
Pre-Finalized Adoption	99	2.1%	152	3.2%	160	3.3%
Total	4754	100%	4823	100%	4842	100%