

Department of Human Services

Senate Interim Committee Human Services and Early Childhood

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Child Welfare and Quality Assurance

- Ensuring our work is conducted with fidelity to the laws that govern Child Welfare and to the practice model we use is critically important.
- We have been working on increasing our quality assurance efforts, and we know there are areas that are lacking the rigor needed.
- Through the process of preparing for the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which begins in April 2016, we are adding elements of quality assurance and continuous quality improvement that will strengthen our program statewide.

CIRT Reports 2010-2015

Critical Incident Reviews

- The DHS Director has called for 18 Critical Incident Review Teams (CIRT) since 2010.
- These CIRTs review the Department's actions in a specific case in an effort to identify any systemic issues with a goal of improving the Department's work.
- The teams are multidisciplinary and may meet several times.
- CIRT reports are posted online at <http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/child-abuse/Pages/cirt.aspx>

Systemic Issues Identified in CIRTs

A total of 27 systemic issues have been identified and corrective action plans developed to address those issues.

Examples of systemic issues include:

- Comprehensiveness of assessments
- Comprehensiveness of the screening process
- Cross-system information sharing
- Safety assessment when domestic violence is present
- Child vulnerability determination
- Collaboration and communication of concerns related to foster homes in screening, assessment and recertification
- Contact with community partners during the assessment process
- 4 CIRTs are still in the process of identification and development of corrective actions. One CIRT is in the initial file review phase.

Corrective Actions

The Department has used a number of processes to address the systemic issues found. Examples include audits, training, policy review and adjustment, development of additional protocols, rule revisions, consultation with national experts as well as other processes.

- Oregon Safety Model (OSM) efforts
- Statewide Sensitive Case Review process
- Foster Care Safety Team
- Use of audits to address specific issues such as reliance on Urine Analysis (UAs), screening fidelity, domestic violence training
- Development of a Teen Protocol Outline

Child Welfare Screenings

Screening Process and Challenges

There are 15 Child Abuse hotlines statewide. Staffing of those hotlines varies based on need.

- DHS received 67,863 reports of suspected abuse and neglect (2014). Of those reports, 29,382 were assigned for assessment.
- There have been a number of screening reviews in the last several years. There is currently a statewide review underway.
- There is an identified systemic issue from the CIRT process concerning the comprehensiveness of screenings and the review is helping identify what part of the screening process needs strengthening.
- Quality assurance is difficult with the current structure. Centralized statewide screening may help with fidelity. The Department is currently assessing feasibility, cost, and outcomes.

Cross Reporting of Abuse

Required Cross Reporting

Appropriately sharing information about incidences of child abuse is an essential element of the system to keep children safe.

- The requirements regarding cross reporting are covered in ORS 419B.017.
- Cross reporting is required between Child Welfare and law enforcement agencies.
- In addition, in Child Welfare rules, depending on what is discovered in the screening and assessment process, there are a number of required notifications.
- Child Welfare cross reporting and notifications are required to be documented in the OR-Kids system.

Interaction Between Family Court, Public Safety and DHS on Child Custody Issues

Children's Foster, Residential and Group Homes

Types of Placements for Children Licensed by DHS

- Family foster care is the largest placement category for children in the custody of the Department.
- Family foster care is primarily homes certified by DHS through a SAFE home study process by DHS staff.
- Child caring programs are licensed by the Department.
 - These may be residential facilities or programs that license their own foster homes.

Monitoring, Licensing and Oversight

Family Foster Homes

- Family foster homes are certified by Child Welfare certifiers.
- Allegations of abuse are investigated by Child Protective Service (CPS) caseworkers.
- Monitoring of placements in these homes occurs through a variety of home observations, field visits and interviews by staff, and the assistance of community partners. Staff includes caseworkers with children in the home and certifiers who study the homes.
- Partners who may interact with the homes include Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), children's court-appointed attorneys and the Foster Care Ombudsman.

Child Caring Programs

There are three sections of DHS that license, monitor and investigate child caring programs:

- Office of Child Welfare Programs
- Office of Licensing and Regulatory Oversight
- Office of Adult Abuse Prevention and Investigation.

Transparency of Abuse, Neglect and Financial Management

Transparency

- Transparency in our work is important to the Department.
- It is the Department's intent to release all records that can be legally released.
- There are rules and statutes, both state and federal, that govern what records the department is able to release.
- Child abuse records are confidential unless there is an exception provided that would allow release.
- Child Welfare files contain health information, sensitive personal and private information, as well as reports from other entities.
- In every case, the requirements of the statutes and rules have to be carefully applied to ensure we do not disclose protected information.
- Licensing records are subject to different rules and are much more public.

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The Child Welfare Data Book
<http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/abuse/pages/publications/children/index.aspx>

Oregon Child Welfare Data Set
https://rom.socwel.ku.edu/Oregon_Public/MyHome.aspx

Department of Human Services

www.oregon.gov/dhs

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for all Oregonians***