Oregon Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Progress Report

October 2020 in Child Welfare

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As we begin the Autumn season, often a time of reflection, I am proud of the work that has been accomplished during a time of multiple challenges and evolving dynamic situations.

In September we celebrated National Child Welfare Workforce month. Our Child Welfare workforce continues to grow and build alongside partners, community members, youth, parents, and providers. Workforce, Training and Equity Development are key aspects of the work we are currently doing, some in conjunction with national partnerships involving the Butler Institute and Casey Family Programs.

Having a strong and supported workforce is foundational and is why we continue expanding assistance for staff through targeted trauma aware trainings, peer-to-peer supports, and monthly workforce well-being opportunities. We are actively exploring tools and seeking feedback from staff, which includes encouraging a culture of continuous quality improvement (CQI) and collaboration. I look forward to sharing the forthcoming Vision for Transformation that captures the goals for the Child Welfare Division, including CQI and collaboration, and lays out strategic objectives for a system that believes children do best growing up in a family.

September Highlights

Hired and trained **21 Child Welfare** caseworkers

Weekly health consultations continue between Child Welfare leadership and Senior Health Advisor regarding COVID-19

Children in out-of-state placements **remain at 0**

Children in foster care remain on a downward trend (6,452), **lowest number in 14 years**

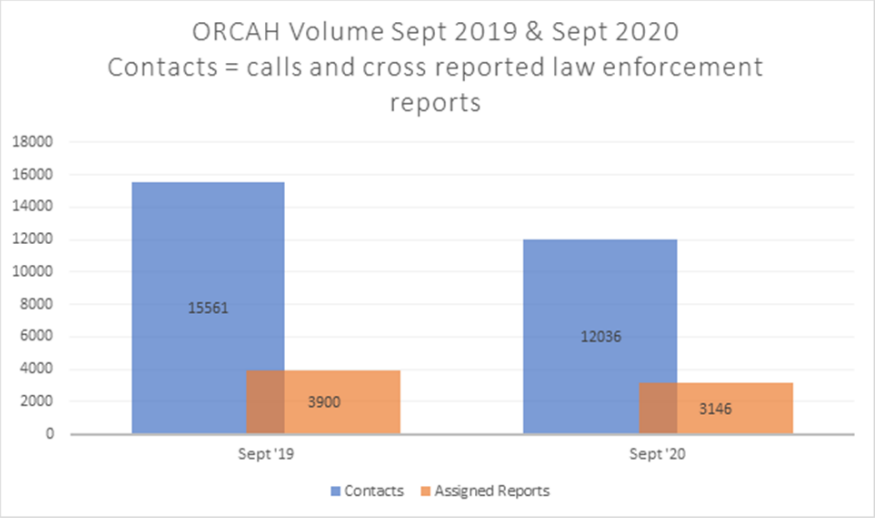
KEEP, the evidence-based skill enhancement program for foster (resource) and kinship caregivers, has enrolled 1,069 caregivers from **34 of Oregon's 36 counties as of Sept. 30**

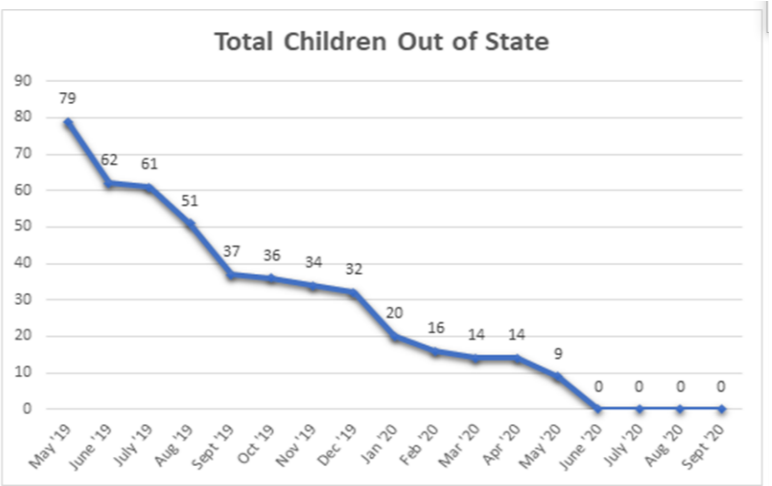
Guiding Principle 1:

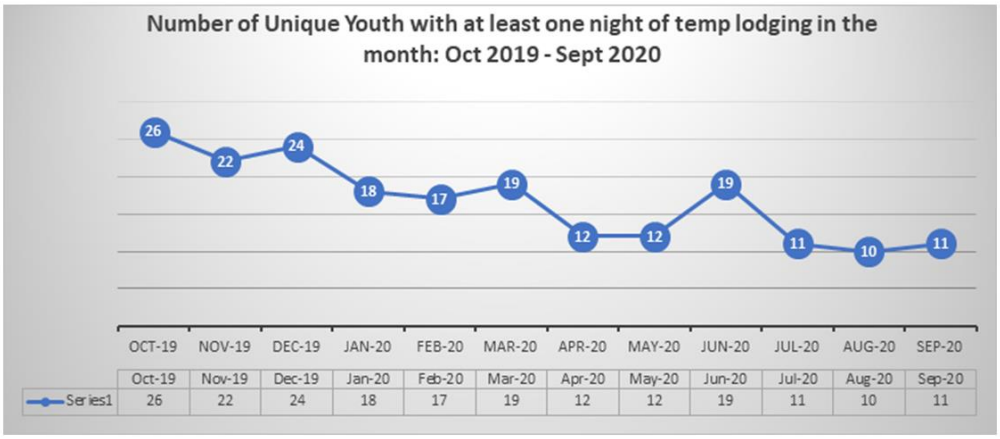
Supporting Families and Promoting Prevention

Significant changes this month to ensure a Child Welfare program that is trauma-responsive, family and community-centered, and focused on safety and prevention.

ORCAH Call Volume







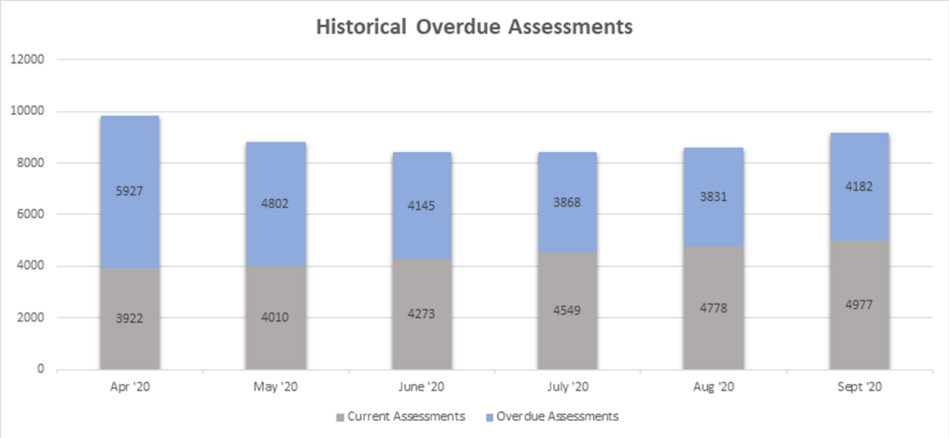
	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20	Jun-20	Jul-20	Aug-20	Sep-20
Series1	26	22	24	18	17	19	12	12	19	11	10	11

Additional Highlights

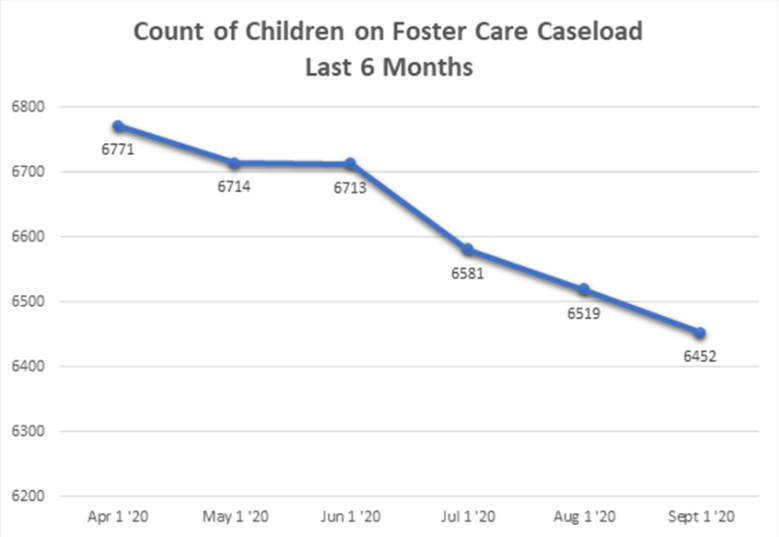
- Average wait times at the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) continued to stay low with an **average of 2.08 minutes** despite gradual call volume increases
- **12,111 contacts** were made through ORCAH in September, with 26% assigned
- The unique number of children in temporary lodging was **11** in September
- A KEEP (foster family/kinship caregiver skills enhancement) **group with ASL interpreters** started during the month of September

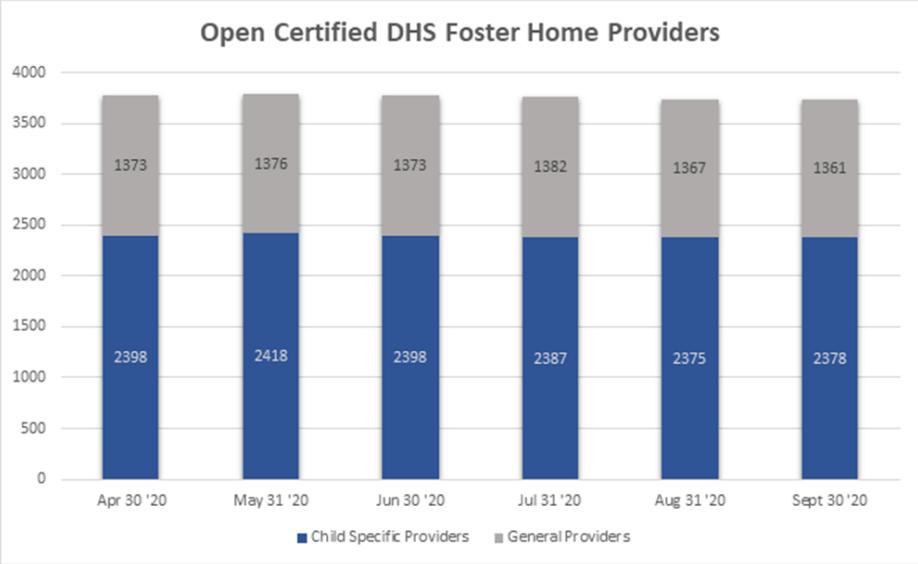
Assessments

In the fall, as children return to school, there is generally an increase in assessments, and we see this trend continuing even through the pandemic.



Children in Foster Care and Foster Homes Available





***Child Specific foster homes** are certified to care for specific kinship and relative children, while **General Providers** are available to all children in care.

Additional Highlights

- The **recurrence of abuse rate was 10.9%** in September, down slightly from 11% in August
- A small residential treatment center opened its doors on Sept. 1, with a focus on **addressing the needs of girls who are survivors of commercial sexual exploitation**
- A statewide **education and resources guide for children in care** has been updated and sent to foster (resource) families with information spanning the state. This information includes resources on accessing school meals, how to connect with the foster care point of contact for each school district, and educational support FAQs

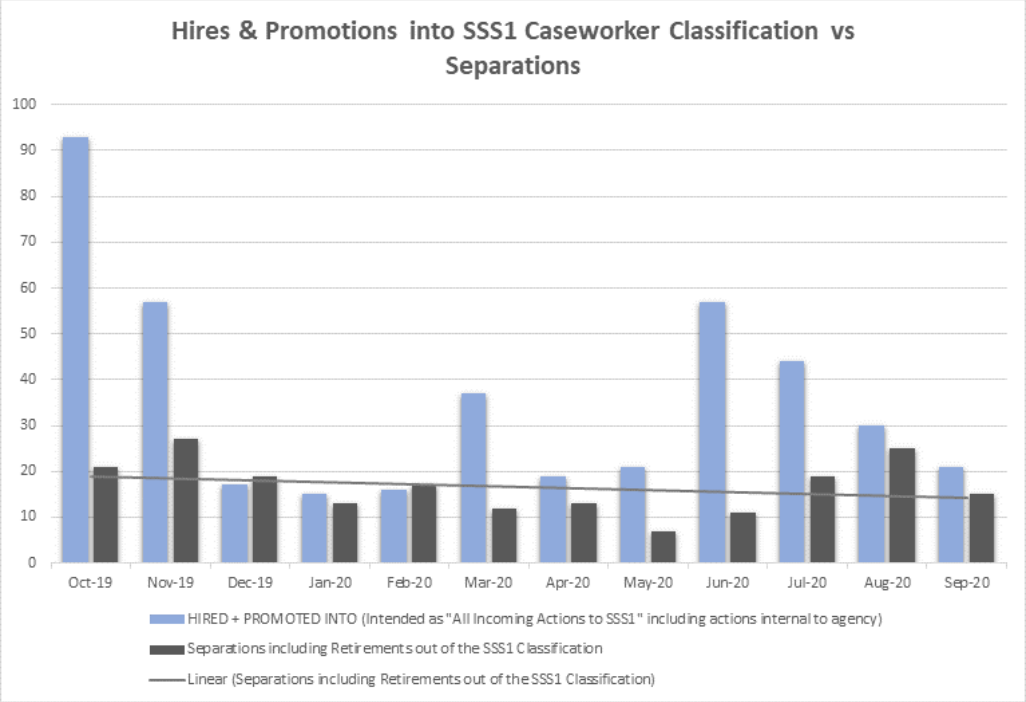
Guiding Principle 2:

Enhancing Our Staff and Infrastructure

Significant metrics for a supported, skilled, and engaged workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

Social Service Specialist (SSS1) Staffing - September

This is a trendline picture of the SSS1 workforce, which includes every type of caseworker position. In September, 21 caseworkers were hired. SSS1 staffing remains steady and hiring and onboarding is continuing predominantly virtually. **Starting in the March 2020 Report, SSS1 staffing numbers are reflective of all SSS1 caseworkers. Separations also include retirements and promotions **out** of SSS1 classification. **Data pulled 10/7***



Guiding Principle 3:

Utilizing Data with Continuous Quality Improvement Systems (CQI)

Data-informed practice supported by modernized information technology systems and tools.

Statewide Transfer Protocol CQI

Developing a statewide transfer protocol is a strategy to improve family engagement through implementing an early warm hand-off and connection to permanency workers for families. The protocol is based on four core values: trauma informed, strengths based, culturally responsive and family driven. We believe that by involving the permanency worker earlier in the family's experience with Child Welfare, there will be an increase in knowledge of family culture, early family engagement in the case plan, and shortened timelines to permanency. We recently finalized a CQI process pulling from a selection of cases, asked qualitative questions from supervisors, caseworkers and the parents connected to these cases.

Additional Highlights

- Child Welfare still receives the bulk of the ODHS public records requests (73% in September) and the average days to close is up slightly to **9.65** days (from last month's 8.88 days)
- **Workforce development and community relationship building meetings** with renowned facilitator, Dr. Jaiya John, started in August and are continuing with Program and District Managers through September
- Child Welfare has continued **collaboration with SEIU** to maintain communication during COVID-19 via the management and facilitation of twice-weekly meetings
- As we continue to analyze and explore strategies for recruitment and retention in our workforce, SSS1 Caseworker Separations data now **allows us to break down that resignation data even further**. In September, of the 13 total resignations, 10 employees indicated reasons other than simply to resign, such as advancement opportunities, relocation needs, or to pursue higher education.

Child Fatality Prevention and Review Team

Oregon Child Welfare is now a member of the National Partnership for Child Safety (NPCS). The NPCS is a collaborative of leaders and critical incident review teams from 19 jurisdictions across the country, with a mission to improve child safety and prevent child maltreatment fatalities by strengthening families and promoting innovations in child protection. The NPCS is sponsored by Casey Family Programs and supported by the University of Kentucky Center for Innovation in Population Health. In September, the CFPRP joined a new Innovation and Implementation Learning Community (I2LC) through the partnership. This learning community will provide opportunities for member jurisdictions to share innovations as they collaboratively learn about various aspects of safety science, implementation science, and sustainable system transformation with a vision of changing practice in ways that improve outcomes for children and families.

In Coming Months

The Child Welfare Division is working to develop the Family First Prevention Services Plan by the end of October. Child Welfare is deliberately and consistently engaging a diverse array of internal and external partners while planning and during implementation of Family First. Four workgroups, composed of Child Welfare leaders, impacted youth, Tribes, birth parents, foster providers, community partners, and service providers are currently helping ensure many voices are included in Oregon's plan development. The plan will be submitted to the federal government for review by Oct. 31.

The forthcoming Child Welfare Vision for Transformation has been developed with partner and community feedback and will be linked here when final.

For questions or feedback about this report, please contact:
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