Out-of-Home Care Trends:
Past Success & Future Practice

Dependency Summit
August 24, 2010

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OVERVIEW: Trends in Out-Of-Home Care

Florida achieved a 36% reduction in the number of children in Out-of-Home Care between December 31, 2006 and August 15, 2010. However, what started as a rapid decline has slowed considerably and shows signs of trending back up. The number of children in Out-of-Home Care decreased in every month from January 2007 through April 2009. However, although there was a net 6.8% decline in Out-of-Home Care between April 2009 and present, the number actually increased during 7 of the past 15 months. Overall trends are shown in Table 1.

### Table 1: Average Monthly Change in Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care for 6 Month Periods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6 Month Period</th>
<th>Percent Reduction from Prior Period</th>
<th>Average Monthly Change</th>
<th>Number of Children in OOHC at End of Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December 31, 2006</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. – June 2007</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-412</td>
<td>26786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – Dec. 2007</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>-357</td>
<td>24646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. – June 2008</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>-289</td>
<td>22913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – Dec. 2008</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>-369</td>
<td>20702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. – June 2009</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-176</td>
<td>19649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July – Dec. 2009</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>-178</td>
<td>18583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. – June 2010</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average Jan. 2007 – June 2010</strong></td>
<td><strong>5%</strong></td>
<td><strong>-254</strong></td>
<td><strong>18584</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summarized from Child Welfare Services Trend Report

Although there is substantial month-to-month variation, the general trend has worsened in recent months. Table 2 provides more detail for 2010, showing that 3 of the last 4 months have produced increases in the number of children in Out-of-Home Care.

### Table 2: Monthly Change in Children in Out-of-Home Care in 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Change Since Prior Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>-29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>-20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>-175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>-206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>117</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summarized from Child Welfare Services Trend Report

Part of the recent increase in Out-of-Home Care may be attributable to seasonal influences, such as the typical increase in removals seen every year associated with the end of the school year. However, between January and June in 2007, 2008 and 2009 reductions in Out-of-Home Care of 5% or more were achieved, so the 0% reduction between January and June 2010 was not due to typical “seasonal influences.” To focus on the recent increase in Out-of-Home Care and to remove “seasonal influences,” the majority of the following analysis compares April - June of 2010 to the same quarter in prior years.
Factors Affecting Trends in Out-of-Home Care

Statewide Trends:

- **Possible Causes:** The recent trend in Out-of-Home Care is due to a) declines in the proportion of children who discharged from care and b) slowing declines in the number of removals. As a result of these changes, the number of children entering care exceeds the number leaving care in several recent months.

- **Discharges:** As the number of children in out of home care declines, naturally, the number of children discharged from care will tend to decline. However, in recent months, discharges have dropped more rapidly. The number of discharges fell by 30% between the April - June quarter of 2009 and the April - June quarter of 2010. This appears to be a major contributor to the slowed reductions in Out-of-Home Care.

- **Removals:** Reversing the trend from prior years, there was actually a small increase in removals between the April - June quarter of 2009 and the April - June quarter of 2010.

- **Hotline Calls & Reports Received:** The recent upward trend in removals may be partly due to the increase in hotline calls and reports received. However, the fact that decreases in Out-of-Home Care were achieved in 2008 despite increases in reports received suggest that this may not have been the primary factor affecting the trend in removals.

- **Removals due to PNA Reports:** The trend in removals may also be partly due to the rapid rise in Parent Needs Assistance (PNA) reports received since departmental policy expanded the types of calls treated as PNAs in January 2010. However, in April – June 2010, a) the number of removals following a PNA report are small (35) compared to the total number of removals (3,596), b) the increase in removals following PNA reports over the same quarter in the prior year (77) is small compared to the change in the trend in removals, and c) the decrease in removals appears to slow prior to the change in policy regarding PNAs. So, again, this does not appear to be the primary factor affecting the trend in removals.

CBC Trends:

- These general trends appear to be relatively consistent across CBCs. Nearly all CBCs showed smaller declines in the number of children in Out-of-Home Care between the April - June quarters of 2009 and 2010 than they experienced between the same quarters of prior years.

- In keeping with statewide trends, approximately 15 of the 20 CBCs had a leveling or increase in the number of children in Out-of-Home Care associated with a) faster declines in the number of children discharged from care and b) slowing declines in the number of removals.

- The few CBCs who deviated from this trend tended be smaller and had less success in reducing Out-of-Home care prior to 2010.
Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care
as of June 30th for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>26786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>22913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>19649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>18584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out-of-Home Care Rates (per 1,000 Children) as of June 30th for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

- **2007**: 6.43
- **2008**: 5.47
- **2009**: 4.68
- **2010**: 4.49
Statewide Number of Removals, Discharges, and Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Percent Change in Statewide Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (as of End of the Month) from Prior Month (with Trendline)
Statewide Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Number of Removals and Discharges During the Months of April, May, and June for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Removals</th>
<th>Discharges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>5893</td>
<td>4578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>5296</td>
<td>3854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4559</td>
<td>3535</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3596</td>
<td>3191</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Removal Rates (per 1,000 Children) During the Months of April, May, and June for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>3.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Number of Hotline Calls Received and Reports Accepted for the Months of April, May, and June for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

Calls Accepted as Abuse/Neglect Reports
Calls Not Accepted as Abuse/Neglect Reports
The increase in PNA reports received in 2010 is associated with the expansion in the types of calls the hotline recorded as PNAs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>PNA Reports Received</th>
<th>Children Removed w/in 30 Days of PNA Report Received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>1263</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>1478</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>1628</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>9829</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The increase in PNA reports received in 2010 is associated with the expansion in the types of calls the hotline recorded as PNAs.*
Number of Discharges During the Months of April, May, and June for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

- 2007: 5893
- 2008: 5296
- 2009: 4559
- 2010: 3191
This chart shows the statewide percent change between the April - June quarter of consecutive years.

Slowed Declines in Out-of-Home Care Partially Driven by Decreased Discharges between the April - June Quarters of Consecutive Years

* This chart shows the statewide percent change between the April - June quarter of consecutive years.
Percent of Discharges by Reason (Aging Out, Reunification, Guardianship, and Adoption Only) for the Months of April, May, and June for 2007 - 2010, Statewide

- 2007: 48.7% - 16.4% - 29.7% - 5.2%
- 2008: 48.2% - 21.8% - 24.1% - 5.9%
- 2009: 46.0% - 24.8% - 22.0% - 7.2%
- 2010: 43.8% - 24.2% - 23.2% - 8.8%
Change in Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care from Prior Year (as of June 30th)

Big Bend CBC
CBC of Brevard
CBC of Seminole
Child and Family Connections
ChildNet
Children's Network of SW FL
Community Partnership for Children
Eckerd Youth Alternatives
FamiliesFirst Network
Family Services of Metro-Orlando
Family Support Services of N. FL
Heartland for Children
Hillsborough Kids
Kids First of Florida
Our Kids
Partnership for Strong Families
Sarasota Family YMCA
St. Johns County
United for Families

2007-2008
2008-2009
2009-2010
Examining Your Trends in Out-of-Home Care

Monthly Trend Charts can be challenging to read because a) some measures change a lot from one month to the next and b) it can be hard to distinguish between a “seasonal influence” and a “new trend.” The following questions and tips may help you examine trends in your area.

Examining Out-of-Home Care Trends:
1. Does your overall trend in Out-of-Home Care (dashed dark blue line) slope down (to the right) steeply, indicating success in reducing the number of children in care?
2. In recent months, has the actual number of children in Out-of-Home Care (solid dark blue line) gone from near the trend (dashed dark blue line) to above the trend? From below the trend to near or above the trend? Have the actual numbers flattened out or increased? These can be signs that your successful trend may be slowing or reversing.
3. How many months has the actual number exceeded the trend? How many months has it been flat or increased? The longer it has been, the more confident you can be that this is a real trend, not just a seasonal influence or “bad couple of months.”
4. If you think “seasonal influences” are affecting what you are seeing, look back at the same time period in prior years. Did the same thing happen back then? How long did that last? And did it push your actual numbers above the trend in the past? If you answered “no” to any of these questions, it’s not likely that seasonal influences explain your trend.

Examining Removals and Discharges:
1. When discharges exceed removals, you have more children leaving care than entering care, so the number of children in care should be going down. But when removals exceed discharges, your population in care is growing.
2. Trends in removals and discharges can be harder to read because they tend to vary a lot from month to month and have different seasonal influences. For example, removals tend to increase temporarily at the end of the school year and decrease during the winter holidays. And discharges tend to increase temporarily in November (for Adoptions Month) and June (when adoptions must be finalized and entered to “count” for the fiscal year).
3. So, it’s easiest to start by looking at your trend lines. The fact that your trend line for discharges (dashed purple line) slopes down does not indicate your Out-of-Home Care population is growing. As your Out-of-Home Care population shrinks, the number of children you discharge from Out-of-Home Care will likely shrink too. Is your discharge trend line falling more steeply than your Out-of-Home Care trend line? If yes, you are discharging a smaller proportion of the children who are in Out-of-Home Care.
4. Are your discharge and removal trend lines parallel or converging? When the trend line for discharges (dashed purple line) is above your trend line for removals (dashed light blue line) your Out-of-Home Care population should generally be getting smaller. When the trend line for discharges is below the trend line for removals, your population should generally be growing.
5. Are your recent numbers “bucking the trend?” The trend line just gives you a sense for what’s happening overall. But in recent months are your actual numbers going a different direction from your trend? Are your actual removals above your actual discharges? If yes, the actual number of children in care will be increasing.

Of course, examining these trends does not tell the whole story. But it can start the conversation about how things look in your area compared to the state and whether there have been changes in local practices and conditions.
CBC of Brevard Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
CBC of Seminole Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Child and Family Connections, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
ChildNet, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Community Partnership for Children Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
FamiliesFirst Network Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Family Services of Metro-Orlando, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Family Support Services of North Florida Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Heartland for Children Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Hillsborough Kids, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Kids Central, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Our Kids of Miami-Dade/Monroe, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Partnership for Strong Families Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Sarasota Family YMCA, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
St. Johns County Board of County Commissioners Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
United for Families, Inc. Count of Removals, Discharges, and Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care (at the end of the month)
Where to Find Additional Data

Additional data can be obtained from the website for Florida’s Center for the Advancement of Child Welfare Practice.

http://centerforchildwelfare.fmhi.usf.edu/kb/PerfData/Forms/AllItems.aspx

Once there, you will find a copy of the powerpoint presentation, supplemental information used in the analysis, as well as a number of links to our “Spinner Reports.” These are excel pivot tables that allow you to view trend data on many of the measures used in this analysis. These reports are a good resource of information on frequently asked questions related to child welfare trends.

The Spinner Report containing most of the information used in this analysis is the Child Welfare Services Spinner. The direct link to it is:


If you need help navigating these reports, or have additional questions not covered by them, please contact:

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