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LASHAWN A. V. BOWSER PROGRESS REPORT
FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 1–DECEMBER 31, 2019



**Center for the
Study of
Social Policy**
Ideas into Action

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LaShawn A. v. Bowser
Progress Report for the Period April – December 31, 2019

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report on the performance of the District of Columbia's child welfare system for the period of April 1 through December 31, 2019¹ is prepared by the *LaShawn A. v. Bowser* court-appointed Monitor, the Center for the Study of Social Policy (CSSP). As Monitor, CSSP is responsible to the Honorable Thomas F. Hogan of the United States District Court for the District of Columbia and is required to independently assess the District of Columbia's performance in meeting the outcomes and Exit Standards set by the *LaShawn* Exit and Sustainability Plan (ESP)² in accordance with the *LaShawn* Modified Final Order (MFO)³.

The Monitor's last report on *LaShawn* performance was released on May 24, 2019. With few exceptions, this current report is based on performance data from the District's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) for April 1 through December 31, 2019⁴ to determine progress in meeting the ESP Outcomes to be Achieved.

The ESP, approved by the Court last year, recognizes the substantial achievements the District has made in many areas over the past decade, and removed from direct court monitoring 56 Exit Standards that have each been achieved and sustained over several years⁵. Within the ESP remain 24 performance and outcome measures to be achieved before the District fulfills its legal obligation under *LaShawn*. For each outcome, an Exit Standard(s) has been identified and is the target against which outcome achievement and sustained performance are measured.

The remaining measures fall within seven general areas of practice including: 1) child protective services (CPS) investigations; 2) case planning and services to families and children to promote safety, permanency, and well-being; 3) social worker visits to children experiencing a new placement, visits between social workers and parents, and visits between parents and their children; 4) appropriate and stable placements for children in foster care; 5) timely permanency; 6) timely provision of dental care, and distribution of Medicaid numbers and cards to caregivers for children in foster care; and, 7) maintaining appropriate caseloads for social workers.

¹ Prior monitoring reports have included performance for 6-month periods. Per agreement of the Parties and the Court, this report includes performance for a 9-month period.

² Exit and Sustainability Plan (Dkt. No. 1201-2), August 29, 2019.

³ Modified Final Order (Dkt. No. 222 (order adopting MFO); Dkt. No. 222-2 (MFO)), January 27, 1994.

⁴ In some instances where December 2019 performance data are not available, the most recent performance data are cited with applicable timeframes.

⁵ These 56 Exit Standards are categorized as Outcomes to be Maintained, and the Defendants and Court Monitor are not required to report performance data for these measures to the Court unless there is a reason to believe that they have not been maintained. Pursuant to the ESP, in the Court Monitor's discretion, or at Plaintiffs request, the Court Monitor may request data and information on specific Outcomes to be Maintained.

A. Methodology

The primary sources of information about performance are data provided by CFSA. The Monitor reviews extensive aggregate and back-up data for select measures and has access to hard copy and electronic case records in FACES.NET⁶ to verify performance.

The Monitor conducted the following supplementary data collection and verification activities during this period:

➤ ***Assess the Quality of Investigations***

The Monitor and CFSA jointly conducted a review of a statistically significant sample of child protective services (CPS) investigations closed in January 2020 to assess the quality of investigations conducted during the monitoring period.

➤ ***Validation of Visits between Parents and Workers and Parents and Children***

The Monitor conducted validation of twice monthly visits between parents and workers and weekly visits between parents and children to ensure that acceptable efforts to arrange required visits were made for instances where the worker documented the visit did not occur but efforts were made.

➤ ***Validation of Collaborative Referrals for Low or Moderate Risk Families***

The Monitor and CFSA jointly conducted a review of a statistically significant sample of CPS investigations closed in September 2019 to assess if those families whose circumstances were assessed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse or neglect and were in need of and agreed to be referred for services were connected to a Collaborative or other community-based agency to meet their needs.

➤ ***Validation of Caseload Data***

The Monitor validated caseload size and assignment of cases between April and December 2019 for caseworkers within Entry Services, including CPS investigations, in-home services, and permanency.

➤ ***Quality Service Reviews***

Information about the quality of services, assessing for safety, and case planning and practice is collected through Quality Service Reviews (QSRs). QSR data is then used to assess performance for four select Exit Standards. The QSR is a case-based qualitative review process that requires interviews with the key persons who are working, and are familiar with, the child and/or family whose case is under review. Using a structured protocol, trained QSR reviewers synthesize the information gathered and rate how well the child is functioning and how the system is performing

⁶ FACES.NET is CFSA's State Automated Child Welfare Information System (SACWIS).

to support the child and family. Reviewers provide direct feedback to social workers and supervisors as well as a written summary of findings to expand and justify QSR ratings. As part of *LaShawn* monitoring, Monitor staff are lead reviewers for approximately two QSRs each month reviews are conducted⁷ and participate in weekly oral case presentations⁸.

Between January and December 2019, a total of 133 QSRs were completed to assess safety, case planning, and service delivery. Of these 133 cases, 54 cases involved a child receiving in-home services, and the remaining 79 cases involved a child placed in out-of-home care.

➤ ***Validation of Training Data***

The Monitor conducted validation of pre-service training data for social workers and supervisors, and in-service training data for foster parents.

➤ ***Validation of Timely Licensure of Foster and Adoptive Parents***

The Monitor conducted additional validation of data for those foster and adoptive parents whose licensure took more than 150 days from beginning training to receive a license to determine if the delay was due to circumstances outside of the District's control.

➤ ***Other Monitoring Activities***

The Monitor meets frequently with senior leadership and managers at CFSA and attends some CFSA meetings, including the CFSA Internal Child Fatality Review Committee. Additionally, the Monitor participates as a member of the City-wide Child Fatality Review Committee and routinely collects information from external stakeholders, including contracted service providers and advocacy organizations.

B. Report Structure

This monitoring report assesses the District of Columbia's child welfare system's performance between April through December 2019 in meeting the ESP Exit Standards. Section I provides an introduction to this report and outlines the methodology. Section II provides a narrative summary of the District's progress in improving outcomes during this nine-month period, as well as other current updates. In Section III, the summary tables provide the Court with a consolidated update of the District's performance as of December 2019⁹ on the ESP Outcomes to be Achieved and progress toward completion of program and practice policies identified in the ESP. Section IV provides further discussion of the data, and an assessment of whether the District has met the required Exit Standard(s) for ESP Outcomes to be Achieved.

⁷ The Monitor provided reviewers for 15 QSRs between January and December 2019 and CSSP staff participated in almost all oral case presentations during the period.

⁸ Each case is presented to a panel consisting of CFSA representatives from the QSR unit and Monitor staff to ensure inter-rater reliability on QSR ratings.

⁹ In some instances where December 2019 performance data are not available, the most recent performance data are cited with applicable timeframes.

II. SUMMARY OF PERFORMANCE

Over the nine-month monitoring period, CFSA demonstrated increased focus and energy in meeting required levels of performance on the remaining 24 *LaShawn* Outcomes to be Achieved. Leadership and staff routinely review and track data to assess monthly performance and barriers to achieving compliance for specific measures, and modify and adjust strategies where needed. CFSA also met most of the specific placement resource commitments it made in the ESP and continued to build its internal accountability and public reporting processes and procedures.

While the data presented in this report represent performance prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that this report is being written during a time that is unprecedented in our recent history. The pandemic has disrupted families lives throughout the District, and the world, and caused logistical and financial barriers that were entirely unexpected. The District's Mayor, City Council, and CFSA leadership have, and are continuing efforts to respond to this challenge, and have been active and creative in putting in place strategies and procedures to assist and support its workforce, private providers, foster parents, families, and children. Although there have been some difficulties in the District and at CFSA – as well as throughout the country – securing Personal Protective Equipment for staff and providers, CFSA staff have continued their work but in new and different ways. Visits with children and families are regularly occurring, either in person when it is safe to do so, but in most instances virtually. CFSA has made efforts to ensure that children in their custody have the supports they need to continue to participate in their educational services and that parents have access to technology so they can interact with their children and with helping professionals. The child abuse hotline is still operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and investigations are occurring while taking COVID-19 precautions. The Family Court's curtailed pandemic operations are having an impact on timely movement of cases toward permanency, but the District and CFSA leadership continue to seek adaptations, and are keeping their stakeholders and the Monitor informed of developments as they occur.

The discussion below summarizes the Agency's performance within each area of practice remaining to be achieved within the ESP.

CPS Investigations

Four measures in the ESP pertain to CPS investigations. Importantly, CFSA, for the first time, achieved the required level of performance for quality of investigations of alleged child abuse or neglect, with 84 percent of investigations meeting the acceptable quality of investigation standard, exceeding the *LaShawn* benchmark of 80 percent. Additionally, CPS caseloads met required standards for eight of the nine months in this monitoring period. Caseloads dipped below the required level in April 2019 (73%), but have exceeded the final target of 90 percent every other month, and were 100 percent compliant during four months this period.

The other measures that pertain to investigations include performance on process requirements including timely initiation of investigations, timely closure of investigations, and referrals to

community-based services for low and moderate risk families. CFSA's performance for each of these measures was generally similar to performance last monitoring period. Through review and analysis of its performance, CFSA has identified and is working to implement solutions to barriers. For example, timely initiation of investigations requires CFSA staff to make contact with alleged victim children within 48 hours of the referral to the Hotline. In the event the alleged victim children are not contacted, CFSA must demonstrate that efforts were made to contact and assess the children, including, for example, visiting the children's home and school, contacting the reporter for additional information about the children's location, and reviewing databases to verify the children's address. Documentation in many cases reflects that all applicable efforts were made to assess the alleged victim children, however, this was not consistently the case.

CFSA's latest performance on timely closure of investigations within 35 days ranged between 73 and 91 percent monthly, compared to the required standard of 90 percent. CFSA has identified that the standard, as defined in the ESP, does not allow for extensions beyond 35 days if the worker and supervisor determine that more time is needed to safely complete and close an investigation. CPS leaders have been reinforcing the importance of investigation quality with workers, and have been trying to counter a former compliance culture where workers would close investigations just to meet the timeliness standard, sometimes at the expense of the thoroughness of the work. CFSA has identified, and is now collecting data to support, what they believe to be legitimate reasons to extend beyond 35 days to ensure safety and thorough completion of an investigation. Reasons that they believe justify extension include delays in receipt of critical information, uncooperative client, law enforcement delays, the family residing outside of the District, referral reassignment, and child fatality. Although the Monitor has not validated these data, CFSA reports that if April through December 2019 performance data included as compliant those investigations with appropriate extensions, monthly performance would range from 84 to 94 percent, and meet the standard most months.

Finally, the ESP requires CFSA to update its Hotline and Investigations policies, and to disseminate and provide training to staff on the updated policies. Both of these updated policies were finalized on April 24, 2020.

Placement

Results from this monitoring period are mixed on the four outstanding ESP measures related to the placement of children. CFSA partially achieved required performance on the placement stability measure; demonstrated improved performance on the short-term placement measure; and did not achieve required performance on ensuring no children stay overnight at the CFSA building. For the fourth measure – requiring assessments for children experiencing placement disruptions – data were not provided that could be reliably used to assess or report performance¹⁰.

¹⁰ This is discussed in more detail in the *Placement* section of this report.
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In an effort to improve and expand the number and types of placements available to children in foster care, CFSA agreed in the ESP to five specific commitments. CFSA met most of these commitments, including licensing additional stabilization and assessment respite foster homes, contracting for new intensive foster care placements, and contracting for 12 new placements in congregate facilities for specialized populations including children with autism spectrum disorder, and children with significant therapeutic and behavioral needs. CFSA did not meet the commitment to recruit and license additional foster homes, while also retaining currently licensed homes, for a net increase of at least 25 new foster home placements.¹¹

CFSA's most problematic performance on placement adequacy is that between April and December 2019, there were 62 overnight stays, experienced by 33 unique children, in the CFSA office building. Although some of these overnight stays are the result of logistical challenges (i.e., children arriving at the building very late at night; children unexpectedly leaving or being asked by the caregiver to leave their placement without notice; etc.), CFSA and its private providers continue to experience challenges in securing appropriate placements with necessary supportive services to meet some children's needs and ensure placement stability. CFSA reports that the placement capacity and enhancements in the types of placement resources available that were made in response to ESP Placement Commitments (summarized above) should reduce, and hopefully eliminate, overnight building stays by children. CFSA has also expressed that despite the additional resources, there may always be instances, hopefully very few, when a child will be in the building overnight.

In addition to specific placement commitments, the ESP requires CFSA to update its Placement and Matching policy. This policy was updated and posted on CFSA's website on May 19, 2020.

Visits between Social Workers and Children, between Parents and their Children, and between Parents and Social Workers

There are five ESP standards pertaining to visits: three measure the number of visits occurring each month between workers, children, and parents; and two measure the quality of a social worker's assessment of safety with children during monthly visits. Importantly, CFSA newly met the required level of performance for the two quality measures. Specifically, in 87 percent of *in-home* cases reviewed using the Quality Service Review (QSR) methodology in CY2019, acceptable ratings were provided for both the Child Safety and Safety/Protection Planning Intervention indicators. Similarly, in 91 percent of *out-of-home* cases reviewed using the QSR methodology in CY2019, acceptable ratings were provided for both the Child Safety and Safety/Protection Planning Intervention indicators. These are important accomplishments.

CFSA partially met required performance for social worker visits to children newly placed or experiencing a change in placement. CFSA met or exceeded the required level of 90 percent in the last five months of the monitoring period.

¹¹ Ibid.

The final two visit measures assess visits between parents and workers, and visits between parents and their children. The required level of performance was not met for either of these measures. CFSA has conducted detailed analyses to identify causes, barriers, and potential solutions related to this performance, which are discussed in the *Visits between Children and Social Workers; Between Social Workers and Parents; and Between Children and Families* sections of this report.

Permanency

There are two ESP measures that assess permanency practice: the timely development of child-specific recruitment plans for children with a goal change to adoption; and timely exits to permanency for children in care. CFSA met the first standard. Specifically, 94 percent of children whose permanency goal became adoption during this period had a permanency planning team convene to develop a child specific recruitment plan within 95 days of the goal change.

CFSA partially achieved the second measure, which assesses timely exit to permanency for children in out-of-home placements. The measure includes three sub-parts that must each be met before compliance can be reached for the entire Exit Standard. The measure uses different compliance percentages for distinct cohorts of children based on their length of stay in foster care. The cohort performance data are measured by fiscal year, and current performance is assessed as of September 30, 2019. CFSA achieved the required level of performance for the second cohort of children, with 46 percent of children in care for more than 12 but less than 25 months as of September 2018 exiting foster care to reunification, guardianship, or adoption by September 30, 2019. Performance for the first cohort (children who entered care for the first time in FY2018) and third cohort (children who are in foster care for 25 months or longer on September 30, 2018) was below required levels.

The ESP also requires CFSA to update its Permanency policy. The updated policy was finalized and posted on CFSA's website on May 19, 2020.

Services to Children and Families and Case Planning

CFSA utilizes the Quality Service Review (QSR) process to assess practice in linking and providing services to children and families to promote safety, permanency, and well-being, and the adequacy of case planning with families. For the first time, CFSA met the required level of performance of 80 percent for both of these qualitative measures, with performance of 82 percent for the Exit Standard for services to families and children,¹² and performance of 87 percent for the Exit Standard related to case planning.¹³ These results reflect important improvements in CFSA's practice.

¹² In CY2019, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on ratings for all sub-parts of the *Implementing Supports and Services* indicator. During previous monitoring periods, the Monitor used two indicators to determine performance: *Pathway to Case Closure* and *Implementing Supports and Services*.

¹³ In CY2019, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on ratings for all sub-parts of the *Planning Interventions* indicator. During previous monitoring periods, the Monitor used two indicators to determine performance: *Pathway to Case Closure* and *Planning Interventions*.

Achievement of these quality measures is the result of substantial efforts involving workforce, training, supervision, policy development, and accountability, all focused on improving the quality and outcomes of social worker practice with children and families. Specifically, a review of the data and associated case narratives, which are completed for each QSR, reveal positive changes including increased use of clinical skills by social workers around engaging parents and offering mental health and family supports for children and parents. CFSA refers to this practice as “social workers as interventionists.” Often, when there were gaps or delays in parents and children receiving therapeutic services from the Department of Behavioral Health, reviewers observed that the social worker was able to step-in and provide important support to stabilize the family and support them in achieving their case plan goals. Additionally, the Monitor noted the impact of leadership providing clear guidance and supervisory expectations for social workers in planning with families across domains including safety, well-being, and education. The data also reflect the impact of CFSA’s QSR unit working more closely with the private agencies, in addition to CFSA staff, to assess case practice, identify barriers to performance, and implement continuous quality improvement strategies.

Health and Dental Care

There are two ESP measures pertaining to health and dental care for children in foster care: timely receipt of dental care; and timely distribution of Medicaid numbers and cards. During the current monitoring period, CFSA met the required level of performance for comprehensive dental exams for children entering foster care, and partially met the required level of performance for distribution of Medicaid cards and numbers to caregivers of children in foster care. CFSA has been able to consistently ensure that caregivers have a child’s Medicaid number within five days of the child entering their home, but due to a management lapse during this period, distribution of the child’s Medicaid card to their caregiver within 45 days of their placement was less consistent. As of December 2019, in 86 percent of applicable cases, the caregiver received the child’s Medicaid card within 45 days of placement, just below the required level of 90 percent. Despite inconsistencies in performance on the distribution of a child’s Medicaid card, QSR data for the period reflect that 94 percent of children in out-of-home placement were rated acceptable on both health indicators: *Health Status* and *Receipt of Health Care Services*. These data reflect that children’s health care needs are being met.

Infrastructure

There are five ESP measures that pertain to the CFSA’s capacity to operate a well-functioning child welfare agency: caseloads for social workers; timely approval for licensing new foster parents; and three measures related to training for new workers, new supervisors, and foster parents. During the current monitoring period, CFSA continued to maintain the caseload levels required for ongoing social workers, and workers conducting home studies. CFSA also continued to ensure that new workers completed the required number of pre-service training hours. Importantly, CFSA improved performance on the three measures that were previously only

partially maintained: pre-service training for new supervisors; timely approval for licensing new foster parents; and in-service training for foster parents.

III. SUMMARY TABLE OF *Lashawn A. v. Bowser* EXIT AND SUSTAINABILITY PLAN PERFORMANCE

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved				
Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
1. <i>Investigations</i> : Investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect shall be initiated or documented good faith efforts shall be made to initiate investigations within 48 hours after receipt of a report to the hotline of child maltreatment. (ESP citation II.1.)	95% of all investigations will be initiated within 48 hours or there will be documented good faith efforts to initiate investigations whenever the alleged victim child(ren) cannot be immediately located.	Monthly range of 82 – 89%	June 2019 performance – 87% December 2019 performance – 88% ¹⁵	No
2. <i>Investigations</i> : Investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect shall be completed within 30 days after receipt of a report to the hotline of child maltreatment and the final report of	90% of investigations will be completed and a final report of findings shall be entered in FACES within 35 days.	Monthly range of 78 – 91%	Monthly range of 73 – 91% ^{16, 17, 18}	No

¹⁴ “Yes” indicates that, in the Monitor’s judgment based on presently available information, CFSA’s performance satisfies the Exit Standard requirement. “Partially” is used when CFSA has come very close but has not fully met an Exit Standard requirement or in instances where Exit Standards have more than 1 part and CFSA has fulfilled some but not all parts of the Exit Standard requirement. “No” indicates that, in the Monitor’s judgment, CFSA’s performance is below the designated Exit Standard requirement.

¹⁵ CFSA provided monthly performance data for each month this period. The Monitor validated good faith effort data for June and December 2019, thus only performance for those months are included.

¹⁶ Monthly performance on timely closure of investigations are as follows: April 2019, 82%; May 2019, 79%; June 2019, 79%; July 2019, 73%; August 2019, 79%; September 2019, 88%; October 2019, 91%; November 2019, 84%; December 2019, 82%.

¹⁷ The backlog (investigations open longer than 35 days) was reported each month: April 2019, 41; May 2019, 59; June 2019, 54; July 2019, 29; August 2019, 30; September 2019, 16; October 2019, 32; November 2019, 42, December 2019, 52.

¹⁸ CFSA reports that approximately 50% of investigations closed beyond 35 days had been internally approved for an extension by a supervisor. The reasons for approval may include: delay in receipt of critical information, a new investigation was received and accepted while the current investigation was ongoing, uncooperative or unable to contact client, law enforcement involvement, out of jurisdiction, etc. CFSA reports if these extensions were accounted for within the data, compliance would range from 84 to 94% this period.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>findings for each investigation shall be completed within 5 days of the completion of the investigation.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.2.)</p>				
<p>3. <i>Acceptable Investigations</i>: CFSA shall routinely conduct investigations of alleged child abuse and neglect.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.3.)</p>	<p>80% of investigations will be of acceptable quality as measured by a qualitative review and verified by the Monitor.</p>	<p>73% of investigations closed in November 2018 were of acceptable quality.</p>	<p>84% of investigations closed in January 2020 were of acceptable quality.</p>	<p>Yes</p>
<p>4. <i>Services to Families and Children to Promote Safety, Permanency, and Well-being</i>: Appropriate services, including all services identified in a child or family’s safety plan or case plan, shall be offered and children/families shall be assisted to use services to support child and safety, permanence and well-being.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.4.)</p>	<p>80% of cases in the QSR sample will have an acceptable rating on the Supports and Services Indicator.</p>	<p>CY2018 performance: 76% rated acceptable.¹⁹</p>	<p>CY2019 performance: 82% rated acceptable.²⁰</p>	<p>Yes</p>

¹⁹ Methodology for measuring performance on this indicator changed from CY2018 to CY2019, as is outlined in the ESP. Using the new methodology to measure performance for CY2018, 76% of cases were rated acceptable on all-subparts of the *Implementing Supports and Services* indicator.

²⁰ In CY2019, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on ratings for all sub-parts of the *Supports and Services* indicator.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>5. <i>Assessing Safety During Worker Visitation to Families with In-Home Services</i>: Workers are responsible for assessing and documenting the safety (e.g., health, educational and environmental factors and the initial safety concerns that brought this family to the attention of the Agency) of each child.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.5.)</p>	<p>80% of the out-of-home sample will have an acceptable rating on two QSR indicators: Child Safety²¹ the QSR Planning Interventions: Safety/Protection.²²</p>	<p>--²³</p>	<p>CY2019 performance: 87% rated acceptable.²⁴</p>	<p>Yes</p>

²¹ The *Safety* indicator is a Child and Family Status Indicator within the QSR protocol. Safety will be considered “acceptable” when all sub-parts: home, school, community, and other are considered to be acceptable.

²² The *Planning Intervention* sub-part Safety and Protection indicator is a Practice Performance Indicator within the QSR protocol.

²³ Methodology for measuring performance on this indicator changed from the last monitoring period to the current monitoring period, as is outlined in the ESP. Prior performance data are not comparable to the current period, thus are not included in this Table.

²⁴ The ESP outlines a new methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard. Acceptable performance is now measured based on performance on two QSR indicators, all sub-parts of *Safety* (status) and *Planning Interventions* sub-part Safety and Protection (practice indicator). Of the 54 in-home cases reviewed through the QSR in CY2019, 87% were rated acceptable on both QSR indicators.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>6. <u>Assessing Safety During Worker Visitation to Children in Out-of-Home Care</u>: Workers are responsible for assessing and documenting the safety (e.g., health, educational and environmental factors and the initial safety concerns that brought this child to the attention of the Agency) of each child.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.6.)</p>	<p>80% of the out-of-home sample will have an acceptable rating on two QSR indicators: Child Safety²⁵ the QSR Planning Interventions: Safety/Protection.²⁶</p>	<p>--²⁷</p>	<p>CY2019 performance: 91% rated acceptable.²⁸</p>	<p>Yes</p>

²⁵ The *Safety* indicator is a Child and Family Status Indicator within the QSR protocol. Safety will be considered “acceptable” when all sub-parts: home, school, community, and other are considered to be acceptable.

²⁶ The *Planning Intervention* sub-part Safety and Protection indicator is a Practice Performance Indicator within the QSR protocol.

²⁷ Methodology for measuring performance on this indicator changed from the last monitoring period to the current monitoring period, as is outlined in the ESP. Prior performance data are not comparable to the current period, thus are not included in this Table.

²⁸ The ESP outlines a new methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard. Acceptable performance is now measured based on performance on two QSR indicators, all sub-parts of *Safety* (status) and *Planning Interventions* sub-part Safety and Protection (practice indicator). Of the 79 out-of-home cases reviewed through the QSR in CY2019, 91% were rated acceptable on both QSR indicators.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>7. <u>Visitation for Children Experiencing a New Placement or a Placement Change:</u></p> <p>a. A CFSA social worker or private agency social worker with case management responsibility shall make at least two visits to each child during the first four weeks of a new placement or a placement change.</p> <p>b. A CFSA social worker, private agency social worker, family support worker or nurse care manager shall make two additional visits to each child during the first four weeks of a new placement or a placement change.</p> <p>c. At least one of the above visits during the first four weeks of a new placement or a placement change shall be in the child’s home.</p> <p>d. At least one of the visits during the first four weeks of a new placement or a placement change shall include a conversation between the social worker and the resource parent to assess assistance needed by the resource parent from the agency.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.7.)</p>	<p>90% of children newly placed in foster care or experiencing a placement change will have four visits in the first four weeks of a new placement or placement change as described above.</p>	<p>a.-c. Monthly range of 82 – 94% of applicable children had the required number of visits following a new placement or placement change.</p> <p>d. In July 2018, 63% of children had documentation indicating that agency staff had a conversation with the resource parent to assess their needs in caring for the child.</p>	<p>a.-c. Monthly range of 78 – 93% of applicable children had the required number of visits following a new placement or placement change.²⁹</p> <p>d. In December 2019, 61% of children had documentation indicating that agency staff had a conversation with the resource parent to assess their needs in caring for the child.</p>	<p>Partially³⁰</p>

²⁹ Monthly performance for visits to children experiencing a new placement or placement change are as follows: April 2019, 85%; May 2019, 87%; June 2019, 87%; July 2019, 78%; August 2019, 90%; September 2019, 91%; October 2019, 93%; November 2019, 92%; December 2019, 90%.

³⁰ CFSA met the required level of performance during 5 of 9-months this period.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>8. <u>Placement of Children in Most Family-Like Setting</u>: No child shall remain in an emergency, short-term or shelter facility or foster home for more than 30 days.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.8.)</p>	<p>No child shall remain in an emergency, short-term or shelter facility or foster home for more than 30 days.³¹</p>	<p>Between July 2018 – March 2019, nine children were placed in an emergency, short-term or shelter facility or foster home for more than 30 days.</p>	<p>Between April and December 2019, three children were placed in an emergency, short-term or shelter facility or foster home for more than 30 days.³²</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>9. <u>Visits between Parents and Workers</u>:</p> <p>a. For children with a permanency goal of reunification, in accordance with the case plan, the CFSA social worker or private agency social worker with case-management responsibility shall visit with the parent(s) at least one time per month in the first three months post-placement.</p> <p>b. A CFSA social worker, nurse care manager or family support worker shall make a second visit during each month for the first three months post-placement.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.9.)</p>	<p>80% of parents will have twice monthly visitation with workers in the first three months post-placement as defined above.</p>	<p>Monthly range 67 – 90%</p>	<p>Monthly range of 50 – 76%³³</p>	<p>No</p>

³¹ The ESP provides that based upon individual review, the Monitor’s assessment will exclude, on a case-by-case basis, children placed in an emergency, short-term or shelter facility or foster home for more than 30 days where moving them would not be in their best interest.

³² For 1 child, CFSA staff made a clinical decision to maintain the child in the emergency setting beyond 30 days pending the outcome of a PRTF decision and process.

³³ Monthly performance for visits between parents and workers are as follows: April 2019, 66%; May 2019, 63%; June 2019, 70%; July 2019, 67%; August 2019, 70%; September 2019, 50%; October 2019, 73%; November 2019, 76%; December 2019, 68%.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>10. <i>Visits Between Parents and Children:</i> here shall be weekly visits between parents and children with a goal of reunification unless clinically inappropriate and approved by the Family Court. In cases in which visitation does not occur, the Agency shall demonstrate and there shall be documentation in the case record that visitation was not in the child’s best interest, is clinically inappropriate or did not occur despite efforts by the Agency to facilitate it.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.10.)</p>	<p>85% of children with the goal of reunification will have weekly visitation with the parent with whom reunification is sought.</p>	<p>Monthly range 83 – 88%</p>	<p>April 2019 performance: 78%</p> <p>October 2019 performance: 74%³⁴</p>	<p>No</p>

³⁴ CFSA provided quarterly performance data for each month this period. The Monitor validated missed visit effort data for April and October 2019, thus only performance for those months are included.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>11. <u>Reduction of Multiple Placements for Children in Care:</u> (ESP citation II.11.)</p>	<p>a. Of all children served in foster care during the previous 12 months who were in care at least 8 days and less than 12 months, 83% shall have had two or fewer placements.</p>	<p>Between November 2018 and March 2019, monthly range of 81 – 83%</p>	<p>Between April and December 2019, monthly range of 77 – 80%³⁵</p>	<p>Partially (met for two of three cohorts of children)</p>
	<p>b. Of all children served in foster case during the previous 12 months who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, 60% shall have had two or fewer placements.</p>	<p>Between November 2018 and March 2019, monthly range of 64 – 70%</p>	<p>Between April and December 2019, monthly range of 65 – 72%</p>	
	<p>c. Of all children served in foster care during the previous 12 months who were in care for at least 24 months, 75% shall have two or fewer placements in that 12-month period.</p>	<p>Between November 2018 and March 2019, monthly range of 73 – 75%</p>	<p>Between April and December 2019, monthly range of 74 – 79%³⁶</p>	

³⁵ Monthly performance for children in care at least 8 days and less than 12 months with 2 or fewer placements are as follows: April 2019, 80%; May 2019, 80%; June 2019, 79%; July 2019, 78%; August 2019, 77%; September 2019, 77%; October 2019, 78%; November 2019, 77%; December 2019, 79%.

³⁶ Monthly performance for children in care at least 24 months with 2 or fewer placements are as follows: April 2019, 75%; May 2019, 77%; June 2019, 78%; July 2019, 78%; August 2019, 79%; September 2019, 79%; October 2019, 74%; November 2019, 75%; December 2019, 76%.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>12. <i>Timely Approval of Foster/Adoptive Parents</i>: CFSA shall have in place a process for recruiting, studying and approving families, including relative caregivers, interested in becoming foster or adoptive parents that results in the necessary training, home studies and decisions on approval being completed within 150 days of beginning training.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.12.)</p>	<p>70% of homes licensed beginning April 1, 2019, will have been approved, and interested parties will have been notified within 150 days.</p>	<p>62% of foster homes licensed between July 2018 – February 2019 received their license within 150 days.</p>	<p>87% of foster homes licensed between April – December 2019 received their license within 150 days.³⁷</p>	<p>Yes</p>

³⁷ For 29 of the 86 homes considered compliant during the current monitoring period, licensure took longer than 150 days due to circumstances that were beyond the District’s control.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>13. <i>Timely Adoption</i>: Timely permanency through reunification adoption or legal guardianship (ESP citation II.13.)</p>	<p>a. Of all children who entered foster care for the first time in FY2018 and who remain in foster care for 8 days or longer, 45% will achieve permanency (reunification, kinship guardianship, adoption or non-relative guardianship) by September 30, 2019.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2018, 46% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2019, 38% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	<p>Partially (met for one of three cohorts of children)</p>
	<p>b. Of all children who are in foster care for more than 12 but less than 25 months on September 30, 2018, 45% will be discharged from foster care to permanency (reunification, kinship guardianship, adoption or non- relative guardianship) by September 30, 2019.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2018, 34% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2019, 46% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	
	<p>c. Of all children who are in foster care for 25 months or longer on September 30, 2018, 40% will be discharged through reunification, adoption, legal guardianship prior to their 21st birthday or by September 30, 2019, whichever is earlier.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2018, 29% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	<p>As of September 30, 2019, 31% of children in this cohort achieved timely permanency.</p>	

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>14. <i>Case Planning Process:</i></p> <p>a. CFSA, with the family, shall develop timely, comprehensive and appropriate case plans in compliance with District law requirements and permanency timeframes, which reflect family and children’s needs, are updated as family circumstances or needs change, and CFSA shall deliver services reflected in the current case plan.</p> <p>b. Every reasonable effort shall be made to locate family members and to develop case plans in partnership with youth and families, the families’ informal support networks, and other formal resources working with or needed by the youth and/or family</p> <p>c. Case plans shall identify specific services, supports and timetables of providing services needed by children and families to achieve identified goals.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.14.)</p>	<p>80% of cases will achieve an acceptable rating on the Quality Service Reviews (QSR) Planning Intervention Indicator.</p>	<p>CY2018 performance: 80% of cases rated acceptable.³⁸</p>	<p>CY2019 performance: 87% rated acceptable.³⁹</p>	<p>Yes</p>

³⁸ Methodology for measuring performance on this indicator changed from CY2018 to CY2019 as is outlined in the ESP. Using the new methodology to measure performance for CY2018, 80% of cases were rated acceptable overall on the *Planning Interventions* indicator.

³⁹ In CY2019, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on ratings for all sub-parts of the *Planning Interventions* indicator.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>15. <u>Community-Based Service Referrals for Low & Moderate Risk Families:</u> (ESP citation II.15.)</p>	<p>90% of families who have been the subject of a report of abuse and/or neglect, whose circumstances are deemed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse and neglect and who are in need of and agree to additional supports shall be referred to an appropriate Collaborative or community agency for follow-up.</p>	<p>59% of families in February 2019 with a closed CPS investigation or FA with low or moderate risk level who were in need of and agreed to services were referred to services.</p>	<p>55% of families in September 2019 with a closed CPS investigation with low or moderate risk level who were in need of and agreed to services were referred to services.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>16. <u>Assessments for Children Experiencing a Placement Disruption:</u> CFSA shall ensure that children in its custody whose placements are disrupted are provided with a comprehensive and appropriate assessment and follow-up action plans to determine their service and re-placement needs no later than within 30 days of re-placement. A comprehensive assessment is a review, including as applicable the child, his/her family, kin, current and former caregiver and the GAL, to assess the child’s current medical, social, behavioral, educational and dental needs to determine the additional</p>	<p>90% of children experiencing a placement disruption will have a comprehensive assessment as described above and an action plan to promote stability developed.</p>	<p>Unable to determine</p>	<p>Unable to determine⁴⁰</p>	<p>No</p>

⁴⁰ Late last year, in an effort to ensure that the assessments required for this measure are conducted in a meaningful way, CFSA updated its related Business Process. The new process and forms were distributed to staff, and CFSA anticipated collecting updated performance data beginning in December 2019. However, the data CFSA provided to the Monitor for this period was incomplete, and does not allow for assessing compliance toward this Exit Standard, primarily due to lack of information to determine if all necessary team members were invited to participate in the meeting and planning.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
evaluations/services/supports that are required to prevent future placement disruptions. (ESP citation II.16.)				
17. <i>Health and Dental Care</i> : Children in foster care shall receive a full medical and dental evaluation within 30 days of placement. (ESP citation II.17.)	25% of children shall receive a full dental evaluation within 30 days of placement. 50% of children shall receive a full dental evaluation within 60 days of placement. 85% of children shall receive a full dental evaluation within 90 days of placement.	Within 30 days: monthly range of 46 – 64% with full dental evaluation Within 60 days: monthly range of 71 – 82% with full dental evaluation Within 90 days: monthly range of 73 – 84% with full dental evaluation	Within 30 days: monthly range of 46 – 69% with full dental evaluation Within 60 days: monthly range of 63 – 82% with full dental evaluation Within 90 days: monthly range of 67 – 94% with full dental evaluation ⁴¹	Yes ⁴²

⁴¹ Monthly performance for receipt of a dental evaluation for 90 days are as follow: April 2019, 80%; May 2019, 87%; June 2019, 92%; July 2019, 87%; August 2019, 82%; September 2019, 94%; October 2019, 88%; November 2019, 68%; December 2019, 67%.

⁴² CFSA met the required level of performance for the sub-parts requiring dental evaluations within 30 and 60 days during every month of the period and met the sub-part requiring dental evaluations within 90 days during 6 of 9-months during the period. The Monitor considers this this Exit Standard to be Achieved.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>18. <i>Health and Dental Care</i>: CFSA shall ensure the prompt completion and submission of appropriate health insurance paperwork, and shall keep records of, e.g., Medicaid application dates, HMO severance dates, and enrollment dates. CFSA shall provide caregivers with documentation of Medicaid coverage within 5 days of every placement and Medicaid cards within 45 days of placement.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.18.)</p>	<p>90% of children’s caregivers shall be provided with documentation of Medicaid coverage within five days of placement and Medicaid cards within 45 days of placement.</p>	<p>Monthly range of 95 – 100% of foster parents received the Medicaid number within five days of the child’s placement</p> <p>Monthly range of 79 – 100% of foster parents received the Medicaid card within 45 days of the child’s placement.</p>	<p>Monthly range of 91 – 97% of foster parents received the Medicaid number within five days of the child’s placement</p> <p>Monthly range of 64 – 94% of foster parents received the Medicaid card within 45 days of the child’s placement.⁴³</p>	<p>Partially⁴⁴</p>

⁴³ CFSA is only able to provide data for July through December 2019. Monthly performance for distribution of Medicaid cards are as follow: July 2019, 94%; August 2019, 71%; September 2019, 87%; October 2019, 64%; November 2019, 80%; December 2019, 86%.

⁴⁴ CFSA experienced a staffing turnover and was unable to provide data for April, May, and June 2019. Of the 6-months that CFSA is able to provide data, CFSA met the required level of performance for the sub-part requiring distribution of Medicaid numbers every month, and met the requirement for distribution of Medicaid cards during 1 month.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>19. <u>Caseloads</u>:</p> <p>a. The caseload of each worker⁴⁵ conducting investigations of reports of abuse and/or neglect shall not exceed the MFO standard, which is 1:12 investigations.</p> <p>b. The caseload of each worker providing services to children and families in which the child or children in the family are living in their home shall not exceed 1:15 families.</p> <p>c. The caseload of each worker providing services to children in placement, including children in Emergency Care and children in any other form of CFSA physical custody, shall not exceed 1:15 children for children in foster care.</p> <p>d. The caseload of each worker having responsibility for conducting home studies shall not exceed 30 cases.</p> <p>e. There shall be no cases unassigned to a social worker for more than five business days, in which case, the supervisor shall provide coverage but not for more than five business days.</p>	<p>90% of investigators and social workers will have caseloads that meet the above caseload requirements. No individual investigator shall have a caseload greater than 15 cases. No individual social worker shall have a caseload greater than 18 cases. No individual worker conducting home studies shall have a caseload greater than 35 cases.</p>	<p>a. Monthly range of 63 – 100% of CPS workers met the caseload requirement. Up to two workers exceeded 15 referrals at any time during the month.</p> <p>b. & c. Monthly range of 98 – 100% of ongoing workers met the caseload requirements each month. No social worker had a caseload of more than 18.</p> <p>d. 100% of workers conducting home studies met required performance of no greater than 30 cases.</p> <p>e. Monthly range of 11 – 45 cases (1 – 3%</p>	<p>a. Monthly range of 73 – 100% of CPS workers met the caseload requirement. Up to six workers exceeded 15 referrals at any time during the month.⁴⁶</p> <p>b. & c. Monthly range of 97 – 100% of ongoing workers met the caseload requirements each month. No social worker had a caseload of more than 18.</p> <p>d. 100% of workers conducting home studies met required performance of no greater than 30 cases.</p> <p>e. Monthly range of 6 – 34 cases (1 – 3% of</p>	<p>Yes</p>

⁴⁵ All requirements apply to both CFSA workers and private agency workers. All CFSA contracts with private agencies providing foster care services shall include performance expectations for visits with children in foster care in compliance with MFO visits requirements.

⁴⁶ Monthly performance data for caseloads of CPS workers are as follows: April 2019, 73%; May 2019 94%; June 2019, 97%; July 2019, 100%; August 2019, 96%; September 2019, 100%; October 2019, 100%; November 2019, 100%; December 2019, 99%.

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
f. The above standards (a-e) will continue to be monitored as long as this decree is in effect. (ESP citation II.19.)		of total open cases) were unassigned to a social worker for more than five business days.	total open cases) were unassigned to a social worker for more than five business days.	
20. <i>Training for New Social Workers:</i> New direct service staff shall receive the required 80 hours of pre-service training through a combination of classroom, web-based and/or on-the-job training. (ESP citation II.20a.)	90% of newly hired CFSA and private agency direct service staff shall receive 80 hours of pre-service training.	97%	96%	Yes
21. <i>Training for New Supervisors:</i> New supervisors shall complete a minimum of 40 hours of pre-service training on supervision of child welfare workers within eight months of assuming supervisory responsibility. (ESP citation II.20b.)	90% of newly hired CFSA and private agency direct service staff shall receive 80 hours of pre-service training.	82%	100%	Yes
22. <i>Training for Foster Parents:</i> CFSA and contract agency foster parents shall receive 30 hours of in-service training every two years. (ESP citation II.21.)	95% of foster parents whose licenses are renewed shall receive 30 hours of in-service training.	88%	99%	Yes

Table 1: Outcomes to be Achieved

Exit and Sustainability Plan Requirement	Exit Standard	July 2018 – March 2019 Performance	April – December 2019 Performance	Exit Standard Achieved ¹⁴
<p>23. <i>Placement of Children in Most Family Like Setting</i>: No child shall stay overnight in the CFSA Intake Center or office building.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.22.)</p>	<p>Ongoing Compliance</p>	<p>Between July 2018 – March 2019, there were 17 overnight stays by children at CFSA.</p>	<p>Between April and December 2019, there were 62 overnight stays at CFSA, experienced by 33 unique children.</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>24. <i>Timely Adoption</i>: Within 95 days of a child’s permanency goal becoming adoption, CFSA shall convene a permanency planning team to develop a child-specific recruitment plan which may include contracting with a private adoption agency for those children without an adoptive resource.</p> <p>(ESP citation II.23.)</p>	<p>For 90% of children whose permanency goal becomes adoption, CFSA shall convene a permanency planning team to develop a child-specific recruitment plan which may include contracting with a private adoption agency for those children without an adoptive resource.</p>	<p>97%</p>	<p>94%</p>	<p>Yes</p>

IV. SELF-REGULATION AND PUBLIC POLICY REPORTING COMMITMENTS: POLICY

Table 2: Policy Development

ESP Requirement (ESP citation III.I.)		CFSA will continue to create and update policies to reflect changes in practice. ⁴⁷
Policy	Date Finalized	Summary
1. In-Home Services	May 30, 2019	<p>CFSA provides in-home services to families following a CPS investigation if it is determined that such services are necessary to ensure child safety and promote child and family well-being. Through in-home services, CFSA provides case management and oversight and facilitates and connects families to community-based services to increase family functioning and resilience.</p> <p>This policy and its accompanying documents titled, “In Home Levels of Care Practice Guidance”, and “Case Transfer Process from CPS to In-Home Services”, include the criteria for opening an in-home services case, the process for case transfer from CPS to In-Home staff, assessments, case planning, and level of care determinations. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website.⁴⁸</p>
2. Safety Planning	May 29, 2019	<p>CFSA utilizes formal, signed safety plans to address immediate safety threats to a child(ren) in order to allow the child(ren) to remain safe with their family (or other designated caregiver) without necessitating a court ordered removal from the home. The plans are time limited and require consistent re-evaluation among the participants in the plan to ensure the child’s ongoing safety.</p>

⁴⁷ By December 31, 2019, CFSA will finalize the following new or updates policies: In-Home Services, Safety Planning, Investigations, Hotline, Engaging Incarcerated Parents, Child Fatality Review, Placement and Matching, and Permanency (ESP citation III.I).

⁴⁸ CFSA’s In-Home Services policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Policy_In-Home_Services_FINAL.pdf

		The policy and its accompanying documents titled, “Safety Plan Tool” and “Danger and Safety Assessment Entry Service Practice and FACES.NET Tip Sheet”, outline the circumstances warranting a safety plan; the content required to be included in the safety plan; the process for safety plan monitoring, review, and resolution; and information on when kinship diversion from foster care is appropriate. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website. ⁴⁹
3. Investigations	April 24, 2020	CFSA investigates accepted Hotline reports of alleged child maltreatment to assess the allegations, child safety, and well-being. The Investigation Policy describes timelines and phases of the investigation; investigative tasks of contacting and interviewing all individuals related to the investigation, including collateral and core contacts; and completing formal and informal assessments prior to investigation closure. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website. ⁵⁰ The accompanying Investigations Procedural Operations Manual will be finalized and posted on CFSA’s website by June 12, 2020.
4. Hotline	April 24, 2020	CFSA is required to staff and operate a 24-hour hotline to receive reports of suspected child abuse and neglect from the District of Columbia community. The agency is required to publish policies governing the efficient operation and primary functions of the hotline, including how to: receive and document reports; determine what will be accepted for investigation; priority to respond to accepted reports; assign accepted reports; and refer reports that are not accepted but require information and referral to other an appropriate agency or community resource. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website. ⁵¹ The accompanying Hotline Procedural Operations Manual will be finalized and posted on CFSA’s website by June 12, 2020.

⁴⁹ CFSA’s Safety Planning policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Policy_Safety_Plans_FINAL.pdf

⁵⁰ CFSA’s Investigation policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Investigations_Policy_04-24-2020_FINAL.pdf

⁵¹ CFSA’s Hotline policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Hotline_Policy_04-24-2020_FINAL.pdf

<p>5. Family Team Meetings</p>	<p>October 10, 2019</p>	<p>CFSA utilizes Family Team Meetings (FTMs) to provide a structured planning and decision-making forum that promotes family engagement with agency staff to make planned and appropriate decisions for children’s safety, permanency, and well-being. The FTM is family-driven and utilizes a trained facilitator. CFSA has identified key points within a case in which a FTM must occur, including if a child is at-risk of entering foster care (“At-Risk FTM”), when a child has been removed from their home and enters foster care (“Removal FTM”), prior to recommending a permanency goal change to the Family Court (“Permanency FTM”), and prior to case closure if requested by a member of the team.</p> <p>The policy, and its accompanying business process, include the general requirements for FTMs, meeting participants, roles and responsibilities, privacy, meeting structure and content, decision-making, and evaluation and monitoring. The policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website.⁵²</p>
<p>6. Engaging Incarcerated Parents</p>	<p>September 17, 2019</p>	<p>This policy addresses CFSA’s practice requirements when a parent of a child in foster care is incarcerated or are under another form of correctional supervision. If a parent’s parental rights have not been terminated, they have a right to visit with their child(ren), to maintain contact by other authorized means, and to be involved in case planning.</p> <p>The policy, and its accompanying business process and tip sheets, include the process for locating incarcerated parents, how to make contact with correctional authorities, expectations for engagement practice with incarcerated parents, and requirements for assessment and case planning with incarcerated parents. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website.⁵³</p>

⁵² CFSA’s Family Team Meetings policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_FTM_Policy_2019_Final.pdf

⁵³ CFSA’s Engaging Incarcerated Parents policy can be found here: https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Engaging_Incarcerated_Parents_%28Final%29.pdf

7. Child Fatality Review	January 6, 2020	<p>This policy pertains to CFSA’s Internal Child Fatality Review Committee, and outlines the process CFSA uses to understand the reasons behind deaths of children who have intersected with the child welfare agency (the child or family has been known to CFSA within five years prior to the child’s death). Following a comprehensive review, the Committee makes recommendations for system improvements through changes/additions to agency practice, service delivery, policy and procedure, and training needs.</p> <p>This policy sets out the criteria for determining which fatalities will be reviewed by the Committee, membership of the Committee, required tasks for both the Child Fatality Unit staff and Committee members, and strategies for accountability and practice improvement. The policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website.⁵⁴</p>
8. Placement and Matching	May 19, 2020	<p>When a child’s safety and/or well-being require removal from their home, CFSA seeks to place children with their family and siblings, and in the least restrictive, most family-like setting appropriate to meet their needs. Placement determinations should be based on a clinical assessment of a child’s needs utilizing assessment tools, and alignment of these attributes with an appropriate placement resource.</p> <p>This policy describes CFSA’s placement philosophy and continuum, the placement planning process, efforts to maintain placement stability and manage placement instability, and how to collect and reconcile data. This policy can be accessed on CFSA’s website.⁵⁵</p>

⁵⁴ CFSA’s Child Fatality Review policy can be found here:

https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Program_Child_Fatality_Review%20Policy_%28Final_2020%29.pdf

⁵⁵ CFSA’s Placement and Matching policy can be found here:

https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Placement_and_Matching_Policy_FINAL%20%281%29.pdf

<p>9. Permanency Practice</p>	<p>May 19, 2020</p>	<p>Permanency encompasses maintaining children safely in their own homes, and when children are in foster care, the focus is on achieving permanency through reunification, adoption, or guardianship. Permanency supports and services vary based on how a child enters care, and what is required to achieve permanency.</p> <p>This policy, and its accompanying business process and tip sheets, describes the processes for achieving permanency, and permanency practice requirements through each stage of a child welfare case. This policy can be accessed on CFSA's website.⁵⁶</p>
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⁵⁶ CFSA's Permanency Practice policy can be found here:

https://cfsa.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/cfsa/publication/attachments/Permanency_Practice_Policy_FINAL%20%282%29_0.pdf

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Progress Report for the Period April – December 2019

V. DISCUSSION OF PERFORMANCE

A. CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES INVESTIGATIONS

CPS social workers are often the first responders to allegations of child abuse and/or neglect and are responsible for assessing the safety of children and families. Through assessing child safety, engaging families and collaterals, and determining if allegations can be substantiated, CPS social workers make clinical decisions to ensure that children and families are safe and receive the services they need to promote overall well-being. In this section of the report, the Monitor examines CFSA's performance in responding to allegations of child abuse and/or neglect through its practices within child protective services (CPS) investigations.

As part of an investigation, the ESP and CFSA policy require workers to:

- initiate an investigation immediately or within 48 hours of the referral to the Hotline⁵⁷ or document good faith efforts to initiate the investigation when the alleged victim child(ren) cannot be immediately located (ESP citation II.1.);
- complete the investigation and enter the final report of findings into FACES.NET within 35 days of the referral to the Hotline (ESP citation II.2.);
- conduct investigations of acceptable quality (ESP citation II.3.); and
- refer families whose circumstances are deemed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse and who are in need of and agree to additional supports to an appropriate Collaborative or community agency for follow-up (ESP citation II.15.).

During the current period, CFSA for the first time reached the performance outcome for acceptable quality of investigations. CFSA also continued to meet caseload standards for CPS workers during the majority of months assessed. Performance on the remaining three standards – timely initiation of investigations, timely closure of investigations, and referrals to community-based services – remained below required levels.

1. Timely Initiation

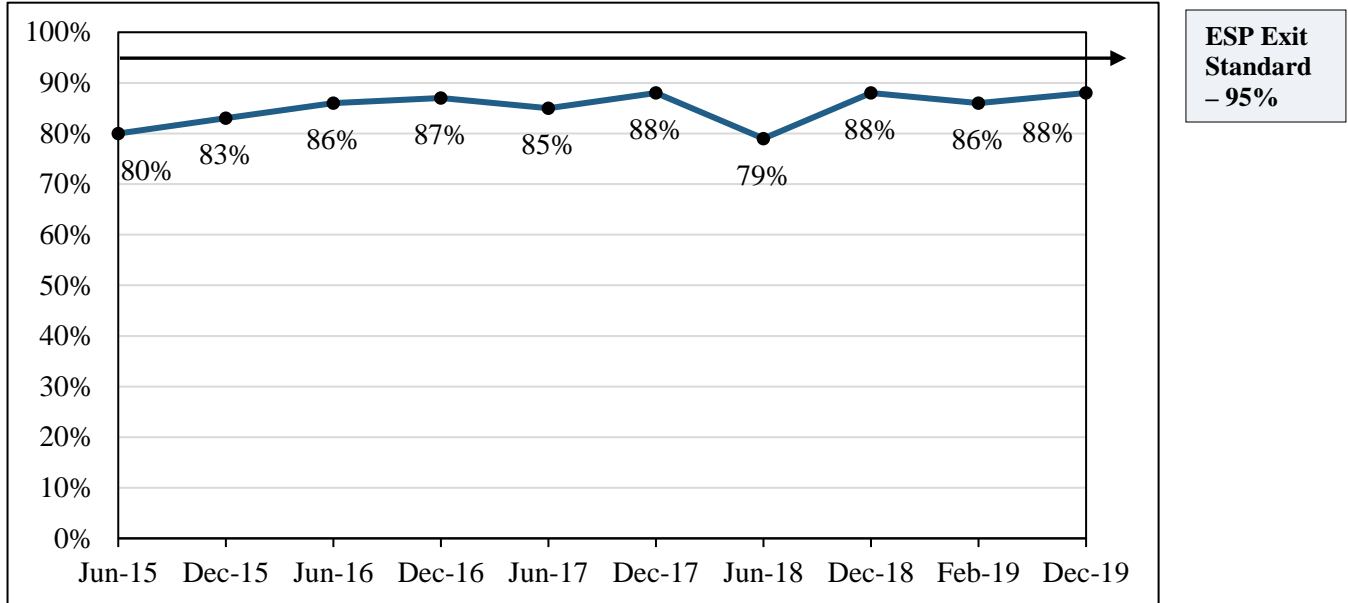
The ESP requires 95 percent of all CPS investigations be initiated within 48 hours or that there are documented good faith efforts⁵⁸ to locate and assess the alleged victim child(ren) within

⁵⁷ DC law requires that an investigation be initiated as soon as possible and at least within 24 hours of receipt of the report (DC Code Section 4-1301.04).

⁵⁸ Documented good faith efforts to see alleged victim children within the first 48 hours shall satisfy this requirement if they include: (1) visiting the child's home at different times of the day; (2) visiting the child's school and/or day care in an attempt to locate the child if known; (3) contacting the reporter, if known, to elicit additional information about the child's location; (4) reviewing the CFSA information system and other information systems (e.g. ACEDS, STARS) for additional information about the child and family; and (5) contacting the police for all allegations that a child(ren)'s safety or health is in immediate danger.

timeframes to assure their safety (ESP citation II.1.). Figure 1 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since June 2015.

**Figure 1: Timely Initiation of Investigations
June 2015 – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report INT052 and secondary review of administrative data to validate completion of good faith efforts.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Initiation of an investigation includes seeing all alleged victim children and talking with them outside the presence of their caretaker, or making all applicable good faith efforts to locate and interview them within the 48 hour timeframe.⁵⁹ The Monitor reviewed CFSA’s findings from its secondary review of FACES.NET data for the months of June and December 2019⁶⁰ to validate data on investigations where the alleged victim child(ren) had not been seen in 48 hours to determine if good faith efforts to locate and interview the child(ren) had been made.

For the two months assessed this period, performance for timely initiation was 87 percent (June 2019), and 88 percent (December 2019). Specifically, in December 2019, 479 investigations were applicable to this measure.⁶¹ All alleged victim children were seen within 48 hours in 331 (69%) investigations, and good faith efforts were made in an additional 91 (19%) investigations⁶², for a

⁵⁹ For younger and non-verbal children, observation is acceptable.

⁶⁰ Data were also provided for September 2019; these data were not validated by the Monitor, thus are not included in this report.

⁶¹ Six investigations were removed from the universe of applicable investigations as each was closed before 48 hours had elapsed and the alleged child victim was not seen.

⁶² In a number of investigations in which contact was not made with all alleged victim children within 48 hours, CFSA contends that good faith efforts were made, and these investigations are compliant within the standard. The Monitor closely reviewed documentation for each of these investigations, and disagrees with this conclusion. The Monitor’s interpretation and application of good faith efforts requires not solely that the activity was completed (i.e., social worker goes to the child’s home), but that the

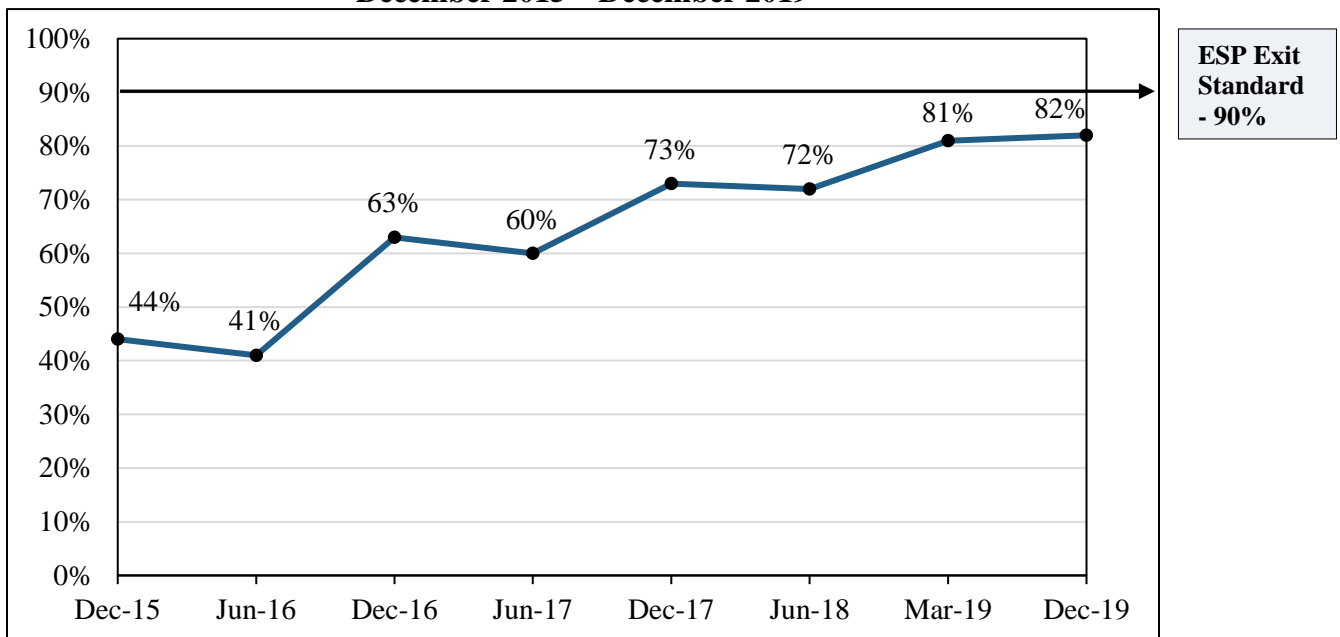
total of 88 percent of investigations initiated timely. Current performance does not meet the required level of 95 percent.

To identify barriers to achieving this Exit Standard, Monitor and CFSA staff closely reviewed investigations closed in December 2019 in which contact was not made with the alleged victim children within 48 hours. Several practice and systemic issues were identified through this process – including timely access to information databases and follow up on information obtained during attempts to locate the child – and CFSA is planning on developing next steps to improve performance on this measure.

2. Timely Completion of Investigations

The ESP requires 90 percent of investigations will be completed and a final report of findings shall be entered in FACES.NET within 35 days (ESP citation II.2.). Figure 2 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since December 2015.

**Figure 2: Timely Completion of Investigations
December 2015 – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report INV004

information gathered during these activities is appropriately and timely followed up on in an effort to make contact with and assess the alleged victim children within the 48 hour requirement. For example, if during a home visit, a social worker is informed that the child is not home at that time, but will be home later that day (with a specific time noted) within the 48 hour timeframe, efforts should have been made to return within the provided timeframe so the alleged victim children can be timely assessed.

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Progress Report for the Period April – December 2019

June 8, 2020

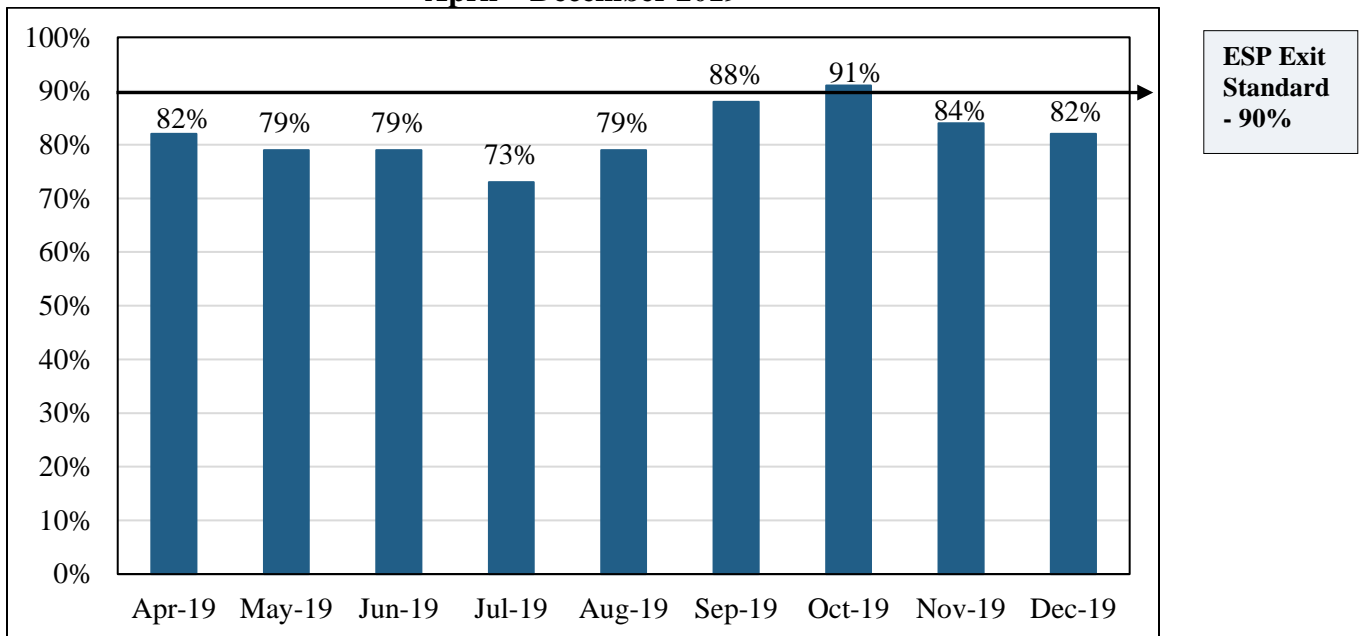
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Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

CFSA is required to complete 90 percent of investigations within 35 days of receipt of an accepted report by the Hotline. Performance this monitoring period ranged between 79 and 91 percent of investigations completed timely each month (see Figure 3). Specifically, in December 2019, there were 479 non-institutional abuse investigations completed; 392 (82%) were completed and had findings entered in FACES.NET within 35 days after receipt of the report.

Current performance met the required level during one month (October 2019) this period. The number of investigations not completed within the required timeframe (the investigation backlog) rose this monitoring period as compared to the prior period, with a monthly range of 16 to 52 investigations in backlog.⁶³

**Figure 3: Timely Completion of Investigations
April – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report INV004

CFSA has identified that the standard, as included in the ESP, does not allow for extensions beyond 35 days if the worker and supervisor determine that more time is needed to safely complete and close an investigation. CPS leaders have been reinforcing the importance of investigation quality with workers, and have been trying to counter a former compliance culture where workers would close investigations just to meet the timeliness standard, sometimes at the expense of the thoroughness of the work. CFSA has identified, and is now collecting data to support, what they believe to be legitimate reasons to extend beyond 35 days to ensure safety and thoroughly complete

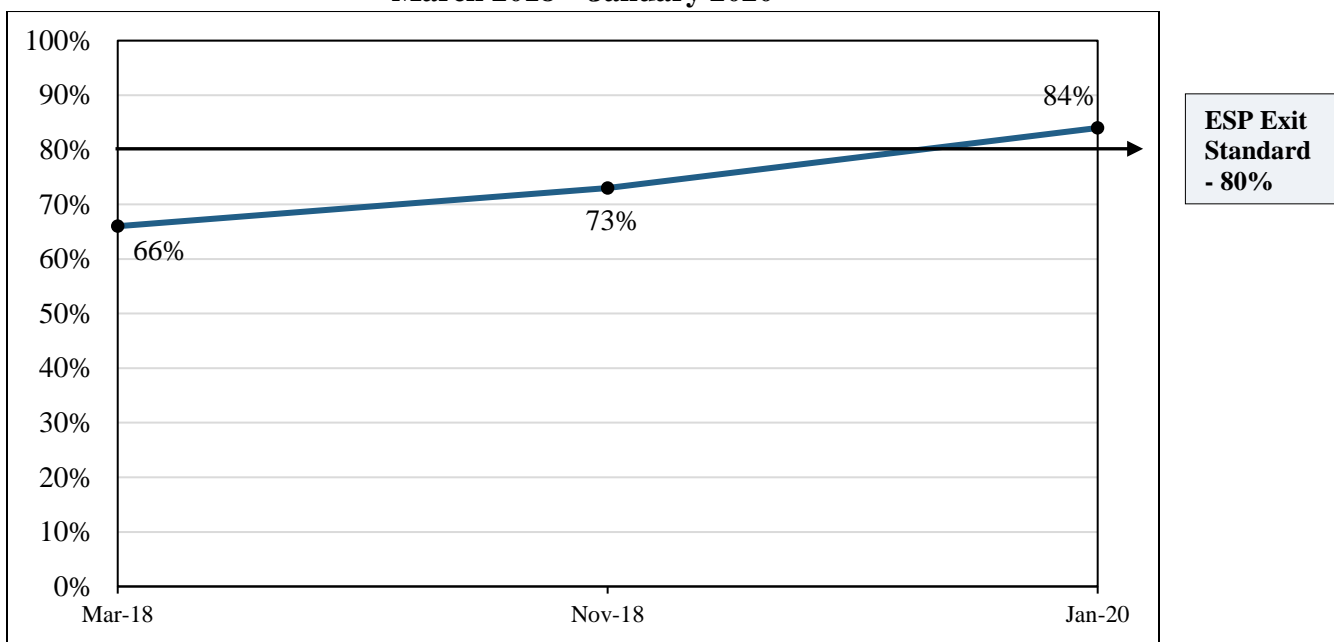
⁶³ During this monitoring period, CFSA reports the following backlog of investigations each month not completed within 35 days: April, 41; May, 59; June, 54; July, 29; August, 30; September, 16; October, 32; November, 42; December, 52.

and investigation. Reasons that they believe justify extensions include delays in receipt of critical information, uncooperative client, law enforcement delays, the family residing outside of the District, referral reassignment, and child fatality. CFSA reports that if April through December 2019 performance data included as compliant those investigations with appropriate extensions, monthly performance would range from 84 to 94 percent, and meet the standard most months. The Monitor has not validated these data.

3. Acceptable Investigations

The ESP requires 80 percent of investigations will be of acceptable quality as measured by a qualitative review and verified by the Monitor⁶⁴ (ESP citation II.3.). Figure 4 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure over the last two years and the steady improvements that have been made.

**Figure 4: Closed Investigations of Acceptable Quality
March 2018 – January 2020**



Source: Joint review by CFSA and Monitor staff representing a sample with a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error with 95% confidence in its results.

⁶⁴ Evidence of acceptable investigations includes: (a) use of CFSA’s screening tool in prioritizing response times for initiating investigations; (b) interviews with and information obtained from the 5 core contacts – the victim child(ren), the maltreater, the reporting source (when known), medical resources, and educational resources (for school-aged children); (c) interviews with collateral contacts that are likely to provide information about the child’s safety and well-being; (d) interviews with all children in the household outside the presence of the caretaker, parents, or caregivers, or documentation, by the social worker, of good-faith efforts to see the child and that the social worker has been unable to locate the child; (e) medical and mental health evaluations of the children or parents when the social worker determines that such evaluations are needed to complete the investigation, except where a parent refuses to consent to such evaluations; (f) use of risk assessment protocol in making decisions resulting from an investigation; and (g) initiation of services during the investigation to prevent unnecessary removal of children from their homes.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

To assess the quality of investigative practice, the Monitor and CFSA jointly conducted a review of a statistically significant sample of CPS investigations closed in January 2020. A total of 196 investigations were reviewed, representing a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error with 95 percent confidence in its results. In assessing for the quality of investigations, the review focused on the following: interviews with core witnesses, including the alleged child(ren) victims, non-victim child(ren) who live in the home, alleged maltreater, and reporter; interviews with collateral witnesses who may have information relevant to the allegations, including, for example, law enforcement, other adults in the home, relatives, or neighbors; collection of information regarding the child(ren)'s health and educational status; assessment of safety and risk; and identification of, and linkage to, services to prevent removal of children from their home.

Overall, of the 196 investigations reviewed, 164 (84%) investigations were assessed as demonstrating acceptable quality. Of the 32 investigations determined not to be of acceptable quality, the most frequent reasons for this determination included: one or more key collateral contact was not interviewed (23 investigations), or insufficient information obtained during interviews with core contacts (20 investigations).⁶⁵

This is the first time CFSA has met the required level of performance for this measure. This is an important accomplishment that reflects the work that CFSA staff have done to improve CPS staffing, training, and supervision of practice. Monitor staff who participated in this review found documentation reflected improved practice in interviewing skills, and expansion in the number of collateral contacts investigators are interviewing in order to thoroughly assess the allegations and child(ren)'s safety.

4. Community Based Service Referrals for Low and Moderate Risk Families

The ESP requires 90 percent of families who have been the subject of a report of child abuse and/or neglect, whose circumstances are deemed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse and neglect and who are in need of and agree to additional supports shall be referred to an appropriate Collaborative or community agency for follow-up. Low and moderate risk cases for which CFSA decides to open an ongoing CFSA case are excluded from this requirement (ESP citation II.15.).

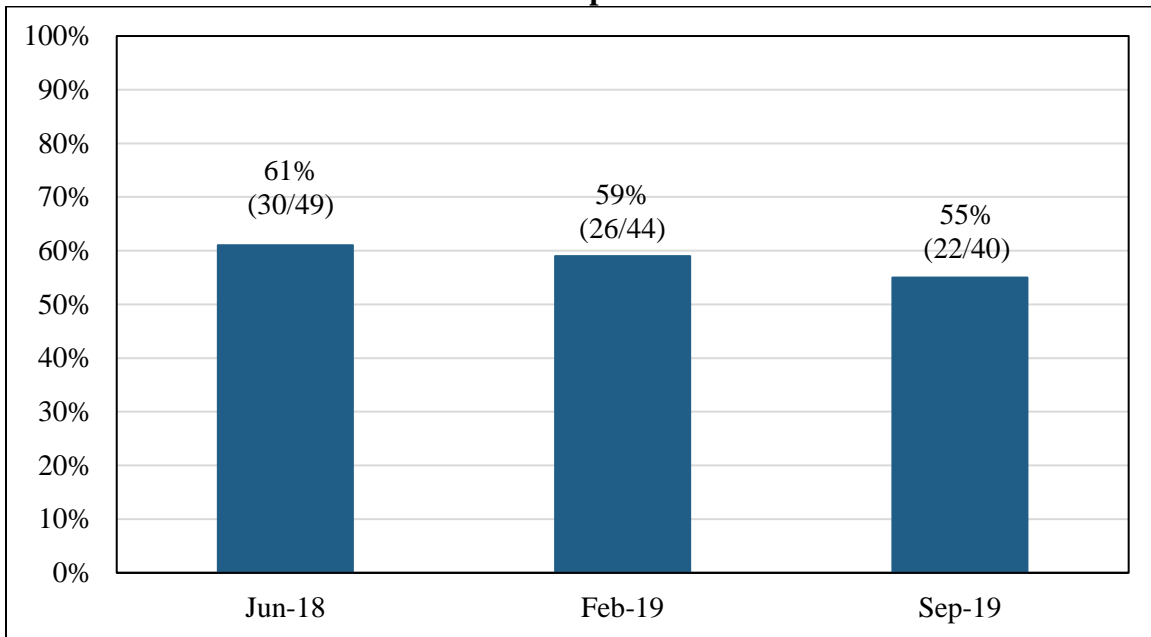
⁶⁵ Reviewers can provide more than 1 reason for an unacceptable determination.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

The Monitor and CFSA jointly reviewed cases of a statistically significant sample of families with a closed CPS investigation in September 2019, whose circumstances were assessed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse or neglect. A total of 90 referrals were reviewed, representing a sample with a ± 5 percent margin of error with 95 percent confidence in its results.

This Exit Standard requires that when a family’s circumstances are assessed to place a child in their care at low or moderate risk of abuse or neglect, and service needs are identified and the family agrees to services, the CPS investigator should refer the family to community-based services. Of the 90 families reviewed, the requirement did not apply to 50 families for one of the following reasons: no service needs were identified for the family; the family was already receiving services; or service needs were identified, but the family declined services. Of the remaining 40 families, 22 (55%) families were linked by CFSA staff to services. Performance during the current monitoring period is slightly below performance during the prior period (see Figure 5), and does not meet the Exit Standard target.

**Figure 5: Service Linkage for Families with a Closed CPS Investigation
June 2018 – September 2019**



Source: FACES.NET data provided by CFSA with reconciliation from data report on referrals to Collaboratives; joint review by CFSA and Monitor staff representing a sample with a $\pm 5\%$ margin of error with 95% confidence in its results.

Of the 18 families that were not linked to services, for six families, either the social worker identified a need and the family agreed to a referral but the referral was not made, or the family requested services but was not connected to a service provider by the worker. For the remaining

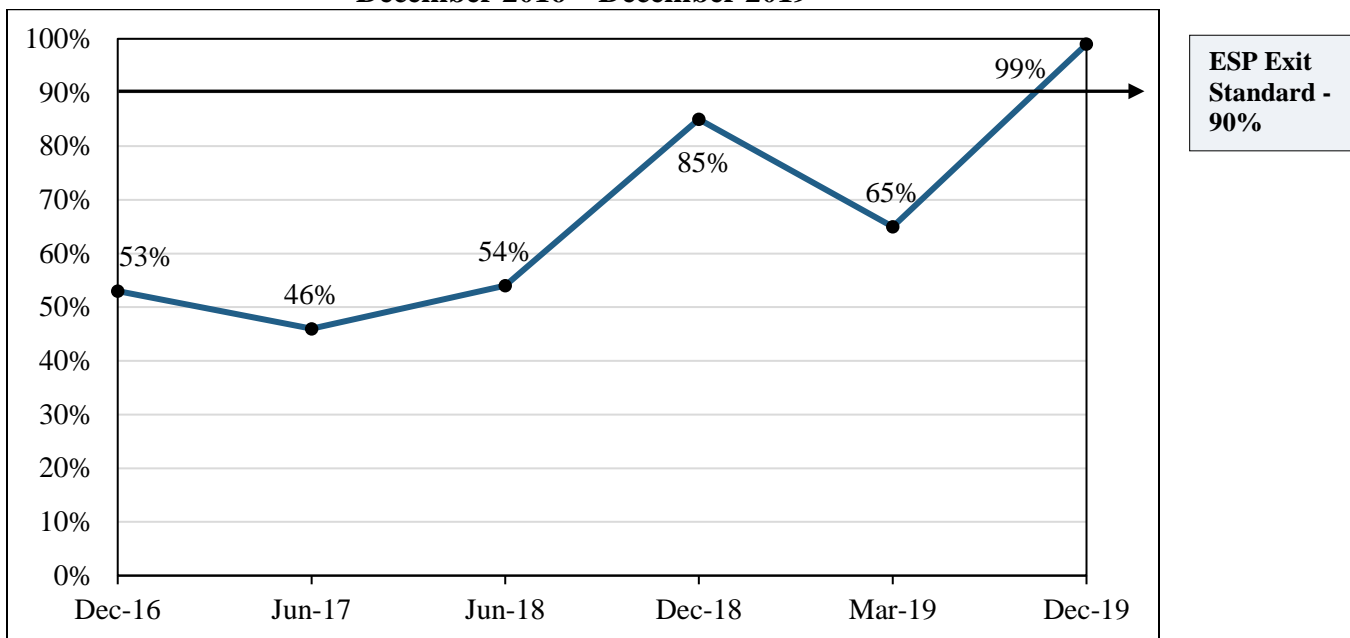
12 families, case documentation did not specifically reflect that the social worker identified a need, however, based upon the documentation, the reviewer identified a need for the family and the family was not linked.

Since the review, CFSA has made improvements to the process it utilizes to track referrals for community-based services, primarily as a component of its Title IV-E Family First prevention plan and the District’s Families First DC initiative. In October 2019, CFSA’s Community Partnerships Administration launched a new web-based portal that allows CFSA staff to complete referrals for case management by one of the Collaboratives and services provision from one of the prevention service providers. The web-based portal also allows for case managers at the Collaboratives to provide information to CFSA about family engagement in services post-referral. CFSA reports that data from the portal for FY2020 Q1 reflect that the new process has increased its capacity to track referrals, and to resolve both systemic and case-specific issues as they arise.

5. Child Protective Services Caseloads

The ESP requires that 90 percent of caseworkers conducting investigations of child abuse and/or neglect maintain caseloads of no more than 12 investigations (ESP citation II.19.). Performance for this monitoring period increased significantly from the last monitoring period and over the many years during which these data have been tracked (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Percentage of CPS Workers Who Met Exit Standard Requirement for Caseloads
December 2016 – December 2019**

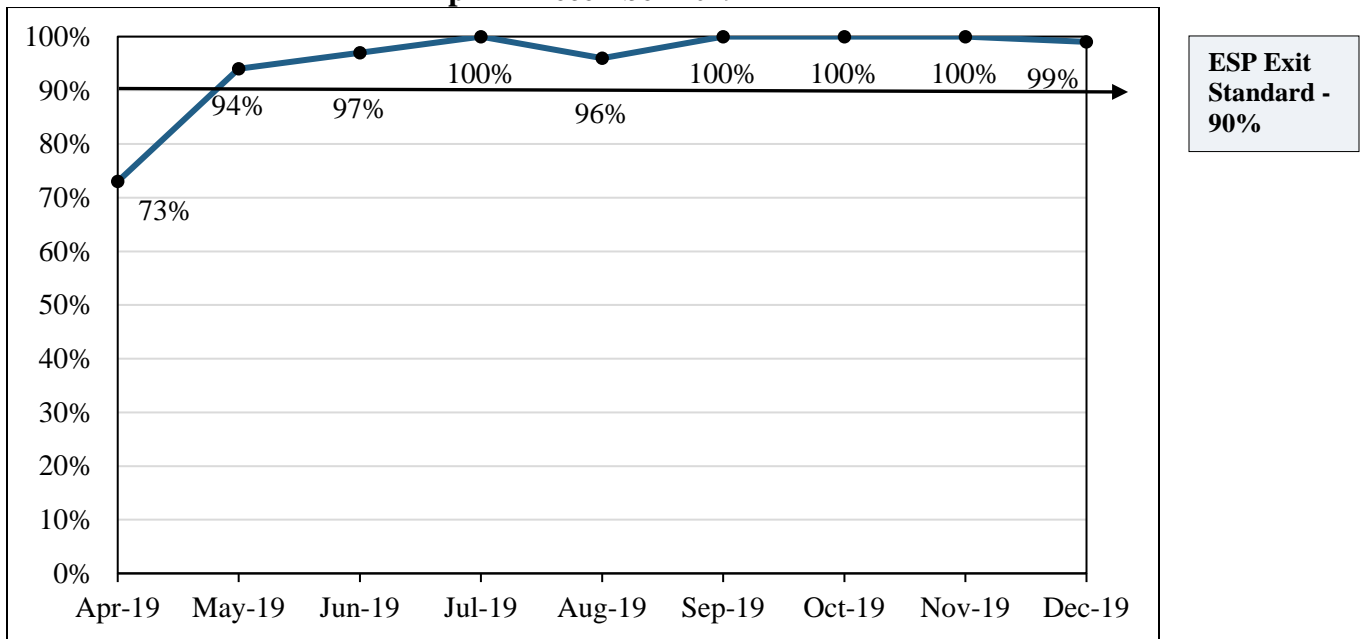


Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report INV145

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Caseloads for CPS social workers met the level required by the ESP during eight of the nine months assessed, with performance ranging monthly from 73 to 100 percent of workers in compliance (Figure 7 below). April was the only month in which performance dipped below the standard; in April 2019, 15 caseworkers carried between 12 and 14 cases, and six workers were responsible for managing 15 referrals. Since April, the percentage of workers meeting the caseload standard was exceeded each month. At no point during the monitoring period was a worker responsible for more than 18 cases.

Figure 7: Percentage of CPS Workers Who Met Exit Standard Requirements for Caseloads April – December 2019



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report INV145

B. PLACEMENT, PERMANENCY, AND WELL-BEING

CFSA is obligated to support the safety, permanency, and well-being of every child in foster care. This includes ensuring that children are safe in their placements, children are in appropriate placements that are able to meet their needs, and that services are in place to promote their well-being and timely permanency. To support these goals, social workers visit children regularly in their placements, ensure that children visit regularly with their parents when working toward reunification, and engage in case planning activities with the parents, the child, and the foster family, where applicable, to support successful permanency and overall well-being. For children

who are served through an open in-home case, CFSA is also required to ensure child safety and well-being through worker visits and safety monitoring activities.

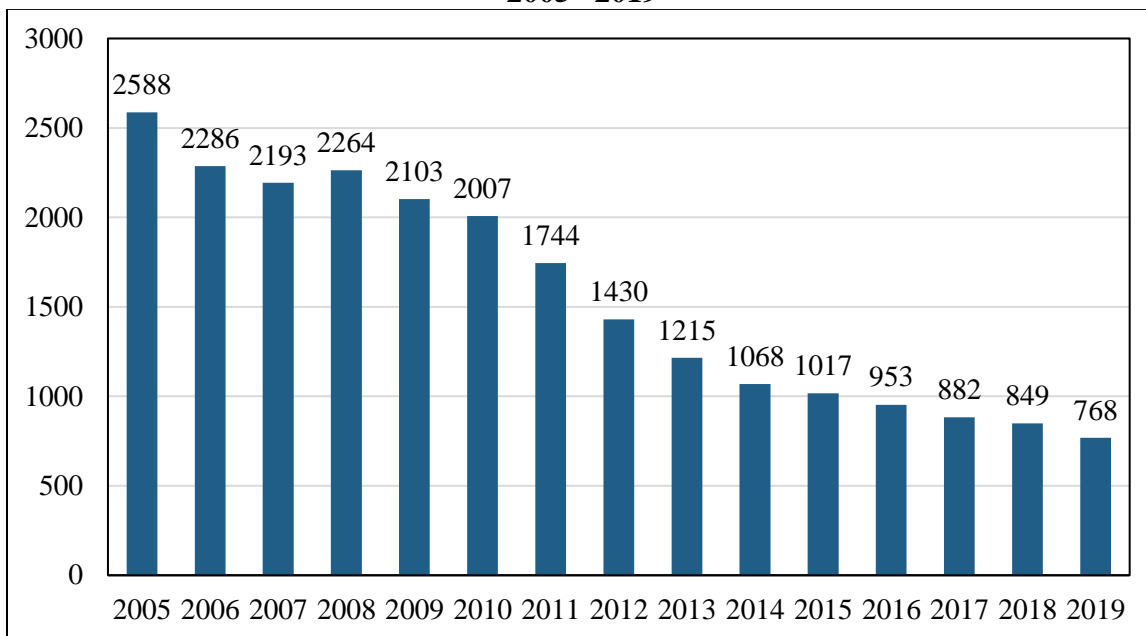
As discussed below, CFSA’s efforts to maintain high numbers of children in family-based settings remain a strength in their policies and practice. However, the data also show continued challenges with maintaining children in stable, long-term, and appropriate placements, and supporting placement stability. Most concerning is the number of children that continue to stay overnight at the CFSA office building while placements are being identified.

1. Placement

Data Trends of Children in Out-of-Home Placement and Served through In-Home Services

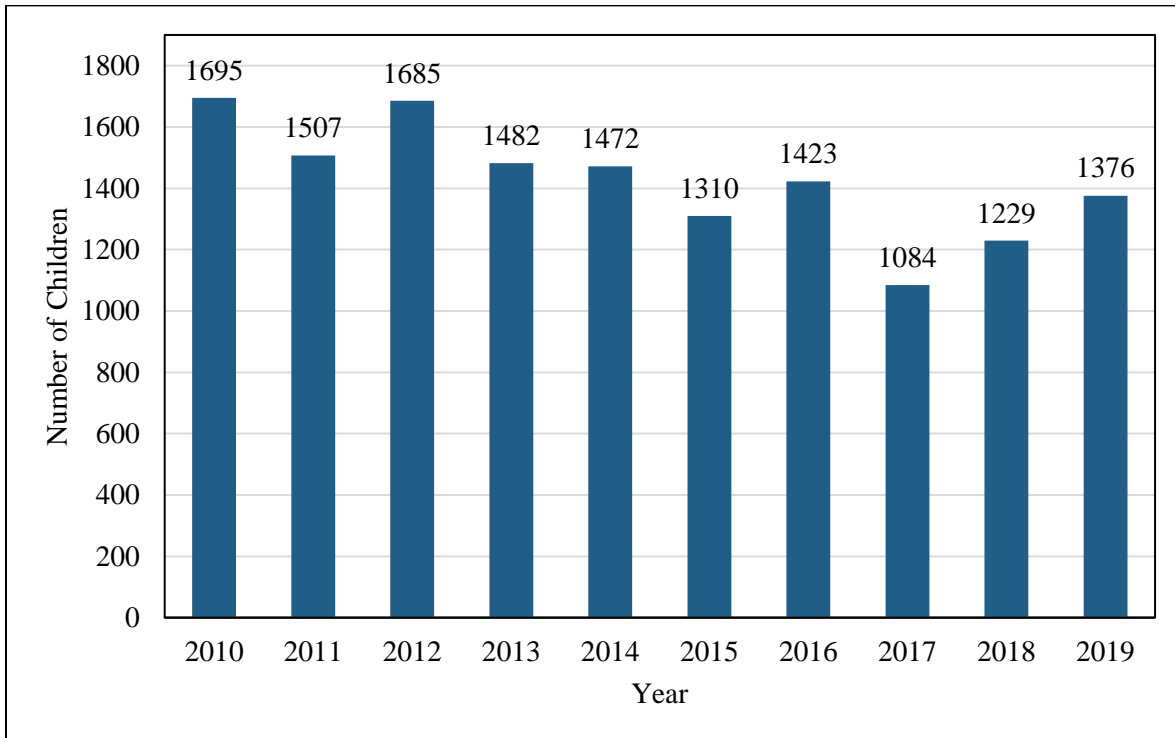
Since December 31, 2018, the number of District of Columbia children in foster care has continued to decline, and the number of children served in their homes has increased (see Figure 8). On December 31, 2019, the District had 768 children in foster care, and 1,376 children were being served by CFSA through in-home child protection cases (see Figure 9). These data reflect the consistent efforts and emphasis that the District has placed on its work to prevent family separation and placement into foster care.

**Figure 8: Number of Children in Out-of-Home Placements
on Last Day of Year
2005 –2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report PLC156

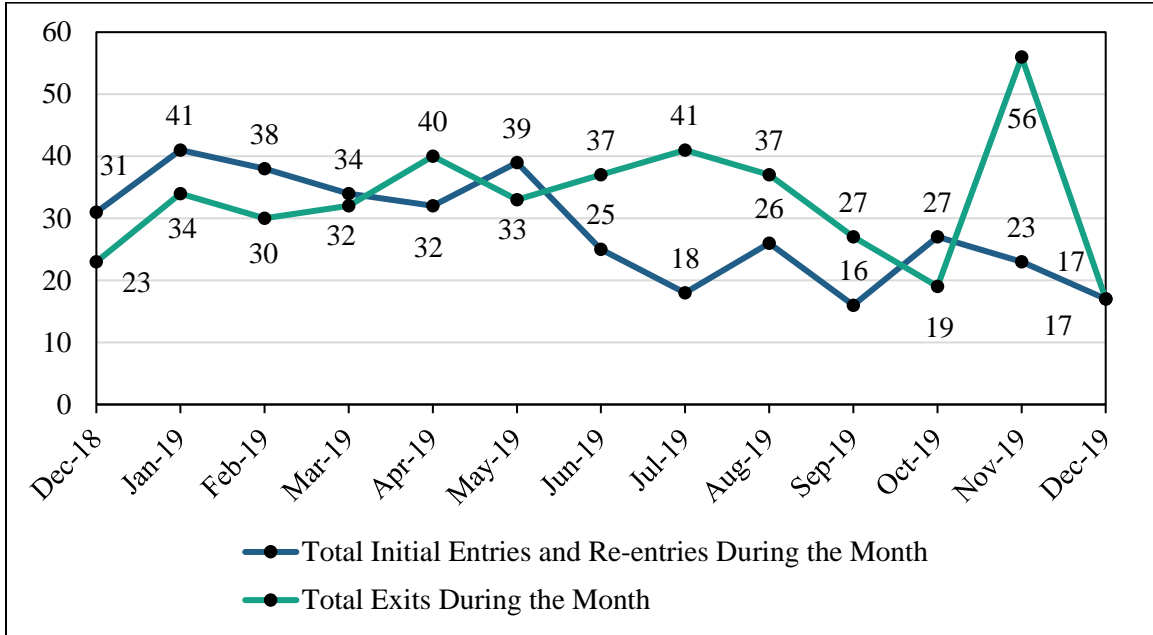
Figure 9: Number of Children Serviced through In-Home Child Protection Cases on Last Day of Year 2010 – 2019



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT232

Figure 10 shows the number of children entering (initial and re-entry) and exiting foster care each month over the last 12 months. During most months since June 2019, the number of children exiting care has exceeded the number of children entering care. This is most dramatically true in November 2019 – National Adoption Month – when the number of exits were over double the number of entries into care.

**Figure 10: Entries and Exit into Foster Care by Month
December 2018 – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report PLC155 as of December 2019

Demographics of Children in Out-of-Home Care

Table 3 below shows basic demographic information on the children in out-of-home placement as of December 31, 2019. Of the 768 children in foster care, the majority are identified as African American (92%)⁶⁶. Consistent with national data trends, the two largest groups of children are between the age of birth to five and 15 to 21 years old. Specifically, as of December 31, 2019, 35 percent of children in care are between the ages of 15 and 21, and 28 percent are ages five or younger.

⁶⁶ This percentage may be higher, as no race data were recorded for 4% of children in FACES.NET.

**Table 3: Demographics of Children in Out of Home Placement
as of December 31, 2019
N = 768**

Gender	Number	Percent*
Male	379	49%
Female	389	51%
Total	768	100%
Race	Number	Percent
Black or African American	704	92%
White	20	3%
Asian	5	1%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	<1%
Unable to Determine/Unknown	3	<1%
No Race Data Reported	33	4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	2	<1%
Total	768	100%
Ethnicity	Number	Percent
Hispanic	119	16%
Non-Hispanic	604	79%
Unable to Determine	4	1%
Unknown	41	5%
Total	768	100%
Age	Number	Percent
Birth to 1 year	69	9%
2-5 years	146	19%
6-8 years	103	13%
9-11 years	95	12%
12-14 years	89	12%
15-17 years	129	17%
18-21 years	137	18%
Total	768	100%

Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report PLC156

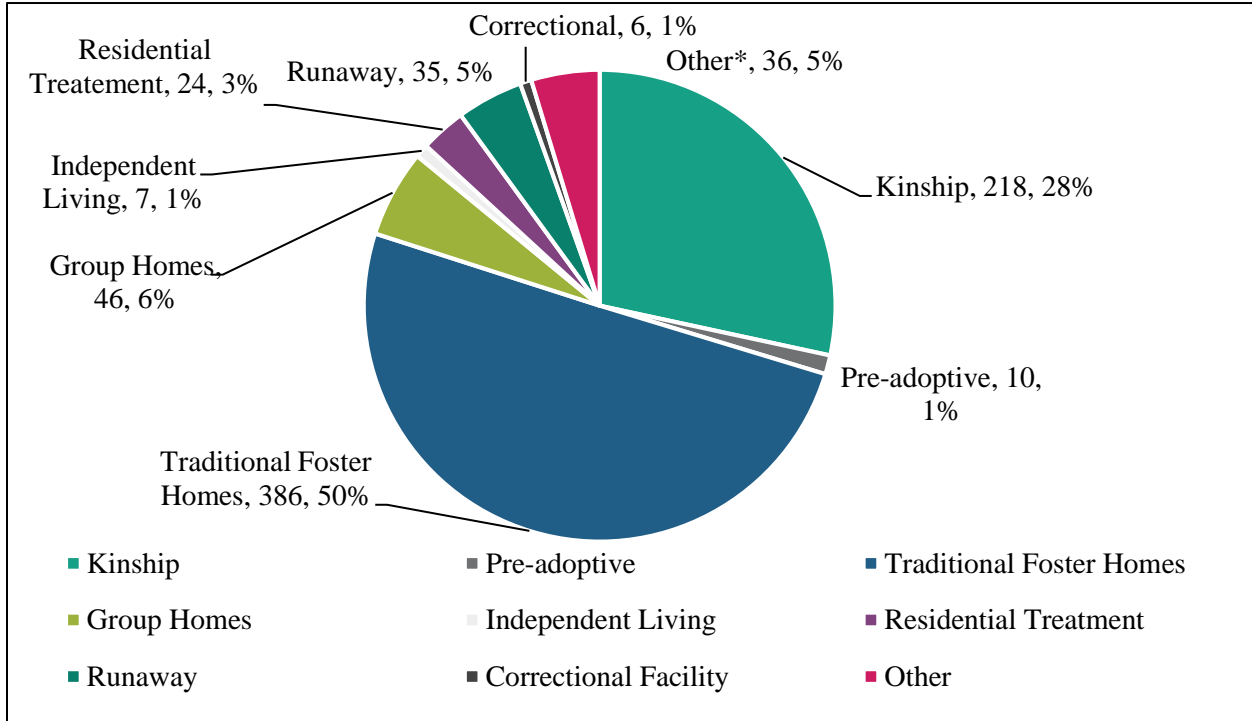
*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Placement of Children in Most Family-Like Setting

As shown in Figure 11 below, of the 768 children in out-of-home care on December 31, 2019, 604 (79%) children were placed in family-based settings, including 218 (28%) children in kinship homes. Ten percent of children were placed in group settings, including six percent in group

homes, one percent in independent living homes or facilities, and three percent in residential treatment.

Figure 11: Placement Type for Children in Out-of-Home Care as of December 31, 2019
N =768



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT232 and CMT389

*Other includes college/vocational, hospital, not in legal placement, juvenile foster care (non-paid), and diagnostic and emergency care

There are four ESP Exit Standards that specifically address the appropriate placement of children in foster care, and stability of those placements. These are:

- Children shall not remain in an Emergency, Short-Term or Shelter Facility or Foster Home for more than 30 Days (ESP citation II.8.)
- No Child shall stay Overnight in the CFSA Office Building (ESP citation II.22.)
- Reduction of Multiple Placements for Children in Care (ESP citation II.11.)
- Assessments for Children Experiencing a Placement Disruption (ESP citation II.16.)

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Placement in Emergency, Short-term, or Shelter Facilities

The ESP requires that no child remain in an emergency, short-term foster home or shelter facility for more than 30 days (ESP citation II.8).⁶⁷ Between April and December 2019, three children were placed in an emergency or short-term placement for more than 30 days. For one of these children, CFSA staff made a clinical decision to maintain the child in the emergency setting beyond 30 days pending the outcome of a Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facility (PRTF) decision and process. For the remaining two children, one was moved from the short-term facility on the 31st day, and the second child remained in the short-term facility for 44 days, and was then placed in a temporary foster home placement which also exceeded 30 days. Required performance toward this Exit Standard was not achieved this period.

Overnight Stays at CFSA Office Building

The second Exit Standard related to placement requires that no child stay overnight in the CFSA office building (ESP citation II.22.). Between April and December 2019, there were 62 overnight stays in the CFSA office building, experienced by 33 unique children.⁶⁸ Table 4 below shows the number of overnight stays each month.

**Table 4: Number of Overnight Stays at CFSA Office Building
April – December 2019**

Month	Number of Stays
April 2019	9
May 2019	12
June 2019	6
July 2019	4
August 2019	2
September 2019	5
October 2019	17
November 2019	5
December 2019	2
Total	62

Source: CFSA notification to Monitor

⁶⁷ Based on individual review, the Monitor’s assessment will exclude, on a case-by-case basis, children placed in an emergency, short-term, or shelter facility, or foster home for more than 30 days where moving them would not be in their best interests.

⁶⁸ Nine children experienced more than 1 overnight stay at the CFSA office building during this period, including 1 child who experienced 16 overnights stays from September to November 2019.

The 33 children who experienced overnight stays from April through December 2019 ranged in age from eight to 18 years old, with over half (55%) between the ages of eight and 13 years old (Table 5).

Table 5: Age of Children who Experienced Overnight Stays at CFSA Office Building April – December 2019

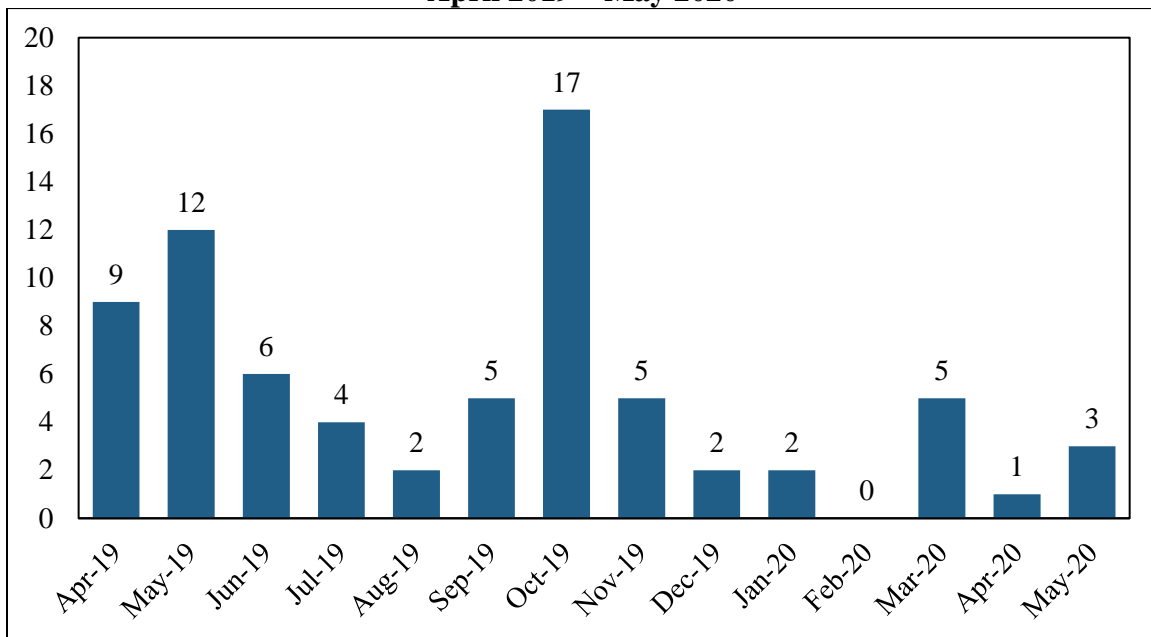
Age	Number of Children
8 – 10	7
11 – 13	11
14 – 16	9
17 – 18	6
Total	33

Data Source: CFSA notification to Monitor

Data reflect a large increase over the prior period; between July 2018 and March 2019, there were 17 overnight stays⁶⁹. Required performance toward this Exit Standard was not achieved this period.

Despite monthly spikes seen this period, when reviewing the most current data available, the trend line is declining as reflected in Figure 12 below.

Figure 12: Number of Overnight Stays at CFSA Office Building April 2019 – May 2020



⁶⁹ Two children experienced more than 1 overnight stay at the CFSA office building during this period. In July 2018, 1 child had numerous overnight stays, thus the total number of stays referenced may underrepresent the actual amount.

Data source: CFSA notification to Monitor

Placement Stability

The Exit Standard on placement stability has three sub-parts with different required performance levels based on the length of time children are in care, due to the different placement trajectories and reasonable expectations for children who have been in care for shorter versus longer periods of time (ESP citation II.11.). The overall goal is to minimize placement moves for all children to the greatest extent possible, recognizing the substantial evidence that demonstrates how children's well-being is harmed by multiple foster care placements.

The first sub-part of the Exit Standard requires that 83 percent of children placed in foster care during the previous 12 months who were in care at least eight days and less than 12 months have two or fewer placements. Between April and December 2019, CFSA's performance ranged monthly from 77 to 80 percent,⁷⁰ a slight decline from the prior period and below the required level each month (Figure 13).

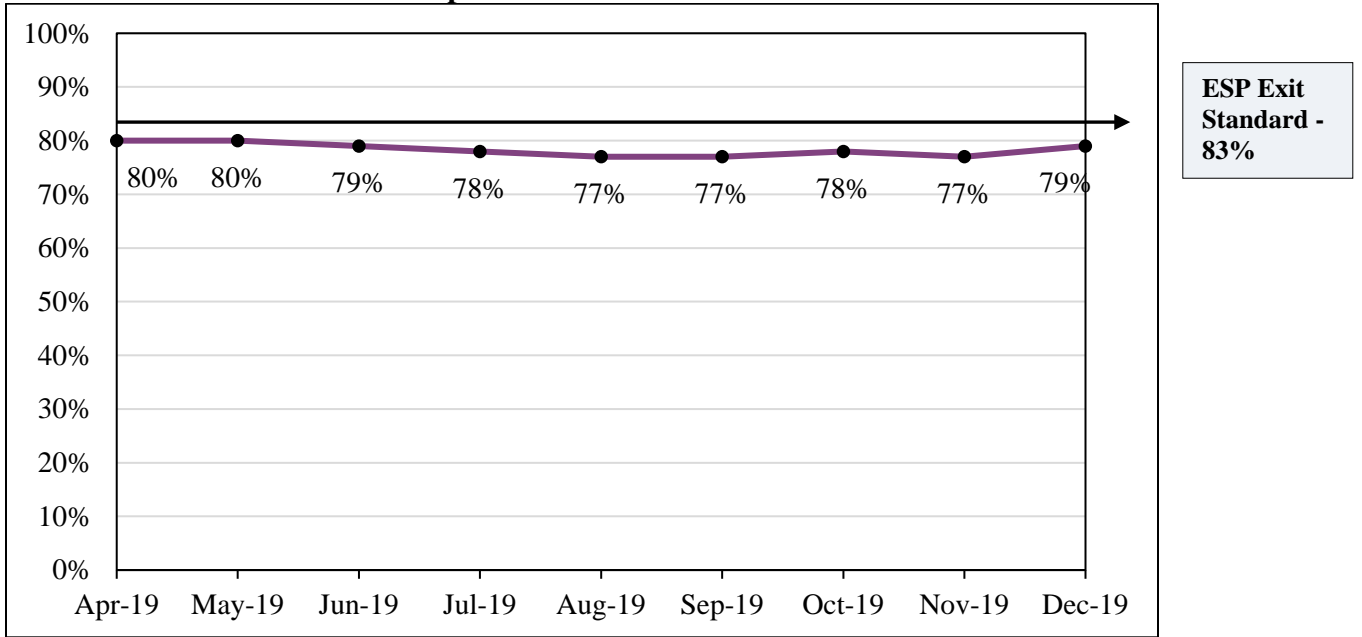
The second sub-part of the Exit Standard requires that 60 percent of children placed in foster care during the previous 12 months who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months have two or fewer placements. Between April and December 2019, monthly performance for this sub-part ranged from 65 to 72 percent, meeting the level required by the ESP every month.

The third sub-part focuses on children in care 24 months or longer, and is purposefully focused on the child's placement experiences in the past 12 months, since many of these children have histories with multiple placements. The data used for this sub-part reflect whether these children have achieved stability in the most recent 12-month period, and the Exit Standard requires that 75 percent have two or fewer placements in that 12-month period. Between April and December 2019, performance ranged from 74 to 79 percent.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Monthly performance for children in care at least 8 days and less than 12 months with 2 or fewer placements are as follows: April 2019, 80%; May 2019, 80%; June 2019, 79%; July 2019, 78%; August 2019, 77%; September 2019, 77%; October 2019, 78%; November 2019, 77%; December 2019, 79%.

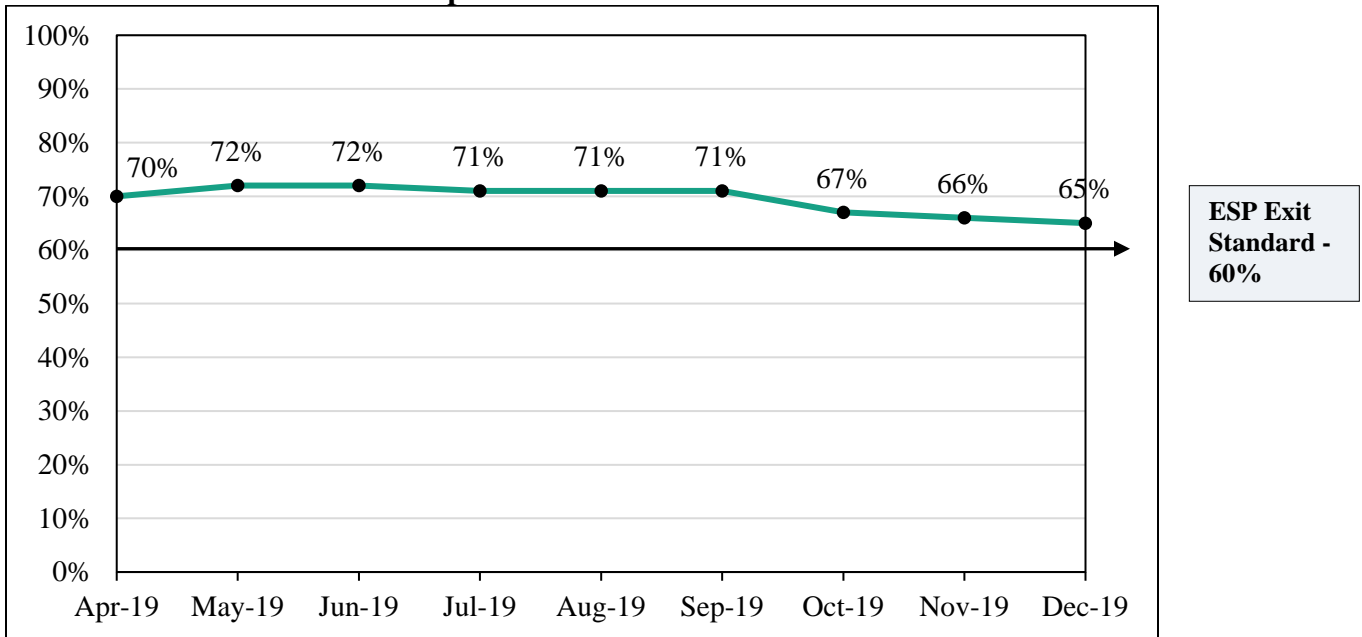
⁷¹ Monthly performance for children in care at least 24 months with 2 or fewer placements are as follows: April 2019, 75%; May 2019, 77%; June 2019, 78%; July 2019, 78%; August 2019, 79%; September 2019, 79%; October 2019, 74%; November 2019, 75%; December 2019, 76%.

**Figure 13: Placement Stability: Percentage of Children in Care between 8 Days and 12 Months with Two or Fewer Placements
April – December 2019**



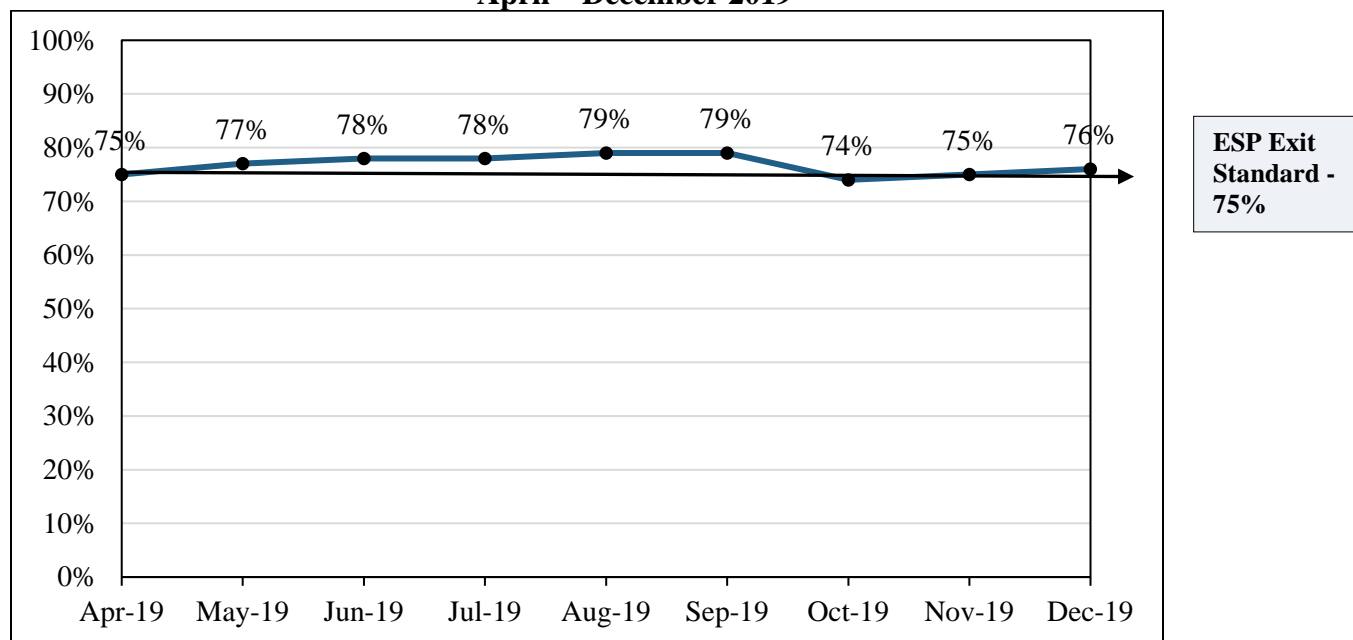
Source: FACES.NET report PLC234

**Figure 14: Placement Stability: Percentage of Children in Care between 12 and 24 Months with Two or Fewer Placements
April – December 2019**



Source: FACES.NET report PLC234

**Figure 15: Placement Stability: Percentage of Children in Care for 24 Months or Longer with Two or Fewer Placements
April – December 2019**



Source: FACES.NET report PLC234

CFSA’s performance for one sub-part of this Exit Standard was below the required level during each month in the monitoring period. The Monitor considers this Exit Standard to be partially achieved.

CFSA conducted a focused analysis of this group of children as of January 1, 2020, to better understand their status; to identify why placement instability persists for children recently entering care; and to identify possible interventions. They report that of the 59 children in the first cohort who experienced three or more placements, although the number of moves is not desirable, for 60 percent of those children, the most recent placement changes reflected either movement toward permanency or the child’s assessed need for a higher levels of care⁷². For the remaining children with three or more placements, CFSA reports their placement efforts were unsuccessful, and in the Monitor’s view, probably reflect the need they have had, and have been working on, to expand their placement array so they can more consistently make the first placement the best placement. CFSA shared that as a result of their analysis, they have instituted the following strategies: holding daily huddles within the Placement Administration and with Permanency Social Worker teams; providing additional services to foster homes, including Mobile Stabilization Services; contracting

⁷² Specifically, CFSA reports 13 children were placed with kin; 8 children were in absence or correctional institutions; 5 children were placed in a residential setting; 4 children were closed to positive permanency and no longer in care on January 1, 2020; 1 child is in a pre-adoptive home; and 1 child is developmentally disabled.

with more targeted and skilled providers, including adding intensive foster care beds in Maryland; increasing resource parent support; and intensifying recruitment efforts for resource parents.

Assessments for Children Experiencing a Placement Disruption

In an effort to increase the stability of children’s placements, the ESP requires CFSA to ensure that children in its custody who experience a placement disruption are provided with a comprehensive and appropriate assessment to determine their service and re-placement needs with a follow-up action plan developed no later than within 30 days of the child’s re-placement. This assessment is a collaborative review that includes, as applicable, the child, their family, kin, current and former caregivers, and Guardian Ad Litem (GAL), and the Exit Standard target is 90 percent (ESP citation II.16.).

Late last year, in an effort to ensure that the assessments required for this measure are conducted in a meaningful way, CFSA updated its related Business Process. The new process and forms – detailing when assessment meetings are required, who should be invited to participate, what should be discussed, and how the assessment should be documented – were distributed to staff, and CFSA anticipated collecting updated performance data beginning in December 2019. However, the data CFSA provided to the Monitor for this period were incomplete, and do not allow for assessing compliance toward this Exit Standard, primarily due to a lack of information needed to determine if all necessary team members were invited to participate in the meeting and planning.

The information provided does reflect that placement disruptions continue to be an issue, ranging monthly from 27 to 58 disruptions each month.^{73,74}

Placement Array Commitments

In an effort to improve and expand the number and types of placements available to children in foster care, CFSA agreed in the ESP to five specific commitments. As shown in Table 6 below, CFSA met its commitments to license additional *stabilization and assessment respite*⁷⁵ foster homes, and to contract for 36 new *intensive foster care*⁷⁶ placements. Following the issuance of a

⁷³ Placement disruptions reported each month by CFSA are as follows: August 2019, 32; September 2019, 33; October 2019, 47; November 2019, 27; December 2019, 48; January 2020, 58.

⁷⁴ Total number of placement disruptions each month is not a unique count of children; some children experienced more than 1 placement disruption during a month, as well as across multiple months.

⁷⁵ SOAR resource parents receive an additional 20 hours of specialized training annually. These resource parents provide parenting and support to address children’s unique needs including undiagnosed/untreated mental health issues, frequent runaway, utilizing illegal and illicit substances, victims of sexual abuse or Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC), chronically exhibiting emotional and behavioral dysregulation, and children diagnosed with autism. The resource parents also accept children who self-identify as LGBTQ. Placement capacity allows for 1 to 2 children between the ages of 6 to 20 for up to 60 days.

⁷⁶ Intensive foster care placements are family-based settings for children experiencing placement instability due to one of the following: multiple incidents of physical or verbal aggression, lack of following household rules, destruction of property, or pending criminal charges; placement instability prior to entering care (frequent moves among relatives, repeated placement in juvenile, congregate, or residential settings); and over 2 foster care placement disruptions.

Request for Proposal (RFP), CFSA contracted with a provider in Maryland that had the capacity to provide and support placements with more intensive clinical and supportive services for 36 children assessed with higher needs and their caregivers. CFSA also contracted for 12 new placements in congregate facilities for specialized populations, including children with autism spectrum disorder, and children with significant therapeutic and behavioral needs.

CFSA did not meet the commitment to recruit and license additional foster homes, while also retaining currently licensed homes, for a net increase of at least 25 foster home placements. Between April 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020, CFSA reports adding 36 traditional foster home placements and 110 kinship foster home placements (total of 146 placements) to its foster home capacity. Additionally, private agencies added 50 traditional foster home placements and 13 kinship foster home placements (total of 63 placements). However, the net increase goal was not met. When accounting for the number of foster placements that closed during the same time period, the change in capacity is -97 (from 1,078 as of March 31, 2019, to 981 as of January 31, 2020). The closure reason for slightly over half (55%) of the homes that closed during this time frame was children in the home achieving permanency with the foster or kinship parent. The primary reason for closure of kinship homes this period was also that permanency had been achieved (66 of 92, or 72%).

CFSA reports the changes in foster home placement capacity occurred at the same time that the size of the foster care population also declined. As of March 31, 2019, 866 children were in foster care, and as of January 31, 2020, the foster care population included 757 children.

Table 6 below lists each of the placement commitments and status as of January 2020.

**Table 6: Placement Array Commitments
(ESP citation IV.)**

ESP Requirement	Status as of January 2020
1. Recruit and license Stabilization Observation Assessment Respite (SOAR) Foster Parents for a total of four bed that will be available for placement by December 10, 2019.	<i>Met.</i> As of December 9, 2019, CFSA had licensed two SOAR homes, for a total capacity of four children and youth.
2. Issue Request for Proposal (RFP) and contract for Intensive Foster Care beds by December 31, 2019 for 36 children. Placements will be available by January 31, 2019.	<i>Met.</i> CFSA entered into a contract with Children’s Choice, a MD based provider, on December 19, 2019. CFSA reports that these contracted foster care homes can serve up to 36 children, and the provider supports them with specialized training, intensive services and supports.

3. Secure six Congregate Care beds for children with Autism spectrum disorder. Placements will be available by December 10, 2019.	<i>Met.</i> As of October 1, 2019, all six placements were available for children with Autism spectrum disorder.
4. Secure six Behavioral/Therapeutic Congregate Care beds for children. Placements will be available by December 10, 2019.	<i>Met.</i> As of October 1, 2019, all six placements were available for children with specialized behavioral needs.
5. Recruit and license 50 new family foster beds with necessary supportive services with a net increase of at least 25 family foster beds. Placements will be available by January 31, 2019.	<i>Partially met.</i> Between April 1, 2019 and January 31, 2020, CFSA reports adding 36 traditional foster home placements and 110 kinship foster home placements (total of 146 placements) to its foster home capacity. Additionally, private agencies added 50 traditional foster home placements and 13 kinship foster home placements (total of 63 placements). However, the net increase goal was not met. When accounting for the number of foster placements that closed during the same time period, the change in capacity is -97 (from 1,078 as of March 31, 2019, to 981 as of January 31, 2020).

2. Visits between Children and Social Workers; Between Social Workers and Parents; and Between Children and their Parents

Social worker visits with children in out-of-home placement, and with their families, promote placement stability and increase the likelihood that successful reunification will occur. These visits also are opportunities for engagement with children and their caregivers and enable social workers to assess safety, progress on case plans, and link children and families to needed services, as appropriate. It is important for workers to visit children more frequently when they are newly placed in foster care or have experienced a placement change to ensure they are adjusting well, that their safety and well-being are attended to, and to determine unmet concerns or needs of the child or the placement provider.

This section includes discussion of current performance data for the following ESP requirements:

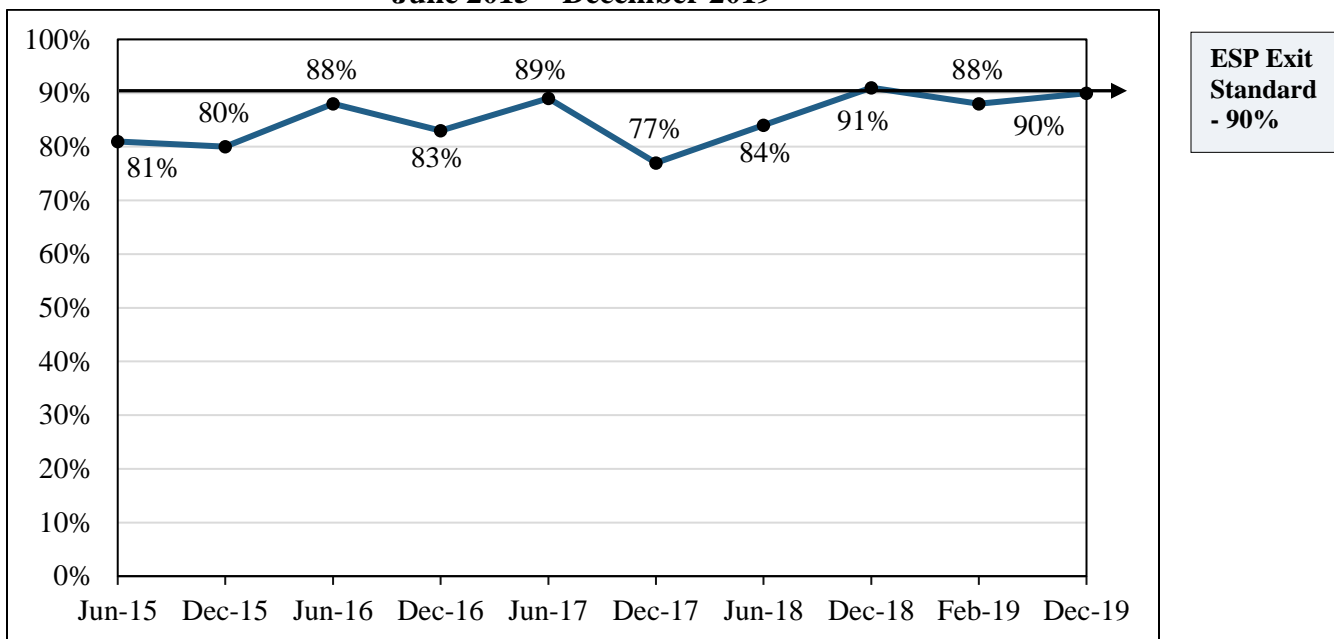
- Social Worker Visits for Children Experiencing a New Placement or a Placement Change (ESP citation II.7.)
- Visits between Parents and Social Workers (ESP citation II.9.)
- Family Time: Visits between Parents and Children (ESP citation II.10.)

CFSA partially met required performance for social worker visits to children newly placed or experiencing a change in placement. Importantly, in the last five months of the monitoring period, CFSA met or exceeded the required level of 90 percent. CFSA did not meet the required level of performance for the two remaining measures which assess visits between parents and workers, and visits between parents and their children.

Social Worker Visits – Children Experiencing a New Placement or a Placement Change

The ESP requires 90 percent of children newly placed in foster care or experiencing a placement change to have four visits in the first four weeks of a new placement or placement change (ESP citation II.7.a-d.). Figure 16 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since June 2015.

**Figure 16: Required Number of Worker Visits to Children in New Placements
June 2015 – December 2019**

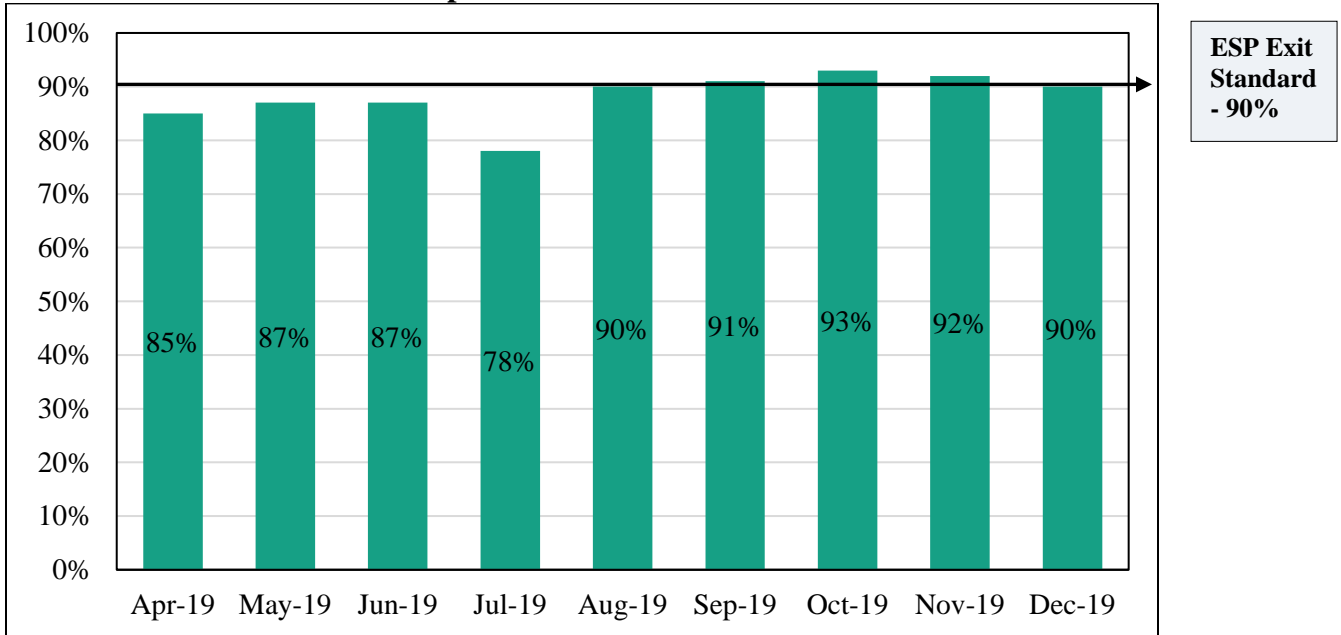


Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT014

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Between April and December 2019, monthly performance ranged from 78 to 93 percent of children who were newly placed or experienced a placement change had the required number of visits by a worker (see Figure 17). Specifically, during December 2019, there were 61 individual child placements applicable to this measure, and 55 (90%) children had the required number of weekly visits by a CFSA social worker, private agency social worker, family support worker, or nurse care manager, with at least one visit occurring in the child’s home. CFSA met the required level of performance during five of the nine months assessed.

**Figure 17: Required Number of Worker Visits to Children in New Placements or Experiencing a Placement Change
April – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT014

The Exit Standard also requires that at least one of the visits during the first four weeks of a new placement or a placement change include a conversation between agency staff and the resource parent to determine what, if any, assistance is needed from the agency. CFSA collected performance data through a case record review for December 2019, and reports that 61 percent of children reviewed who experienced a new placement or placement change during the month had documentation supporting that a conversation between agency staff and the resource parent took place.

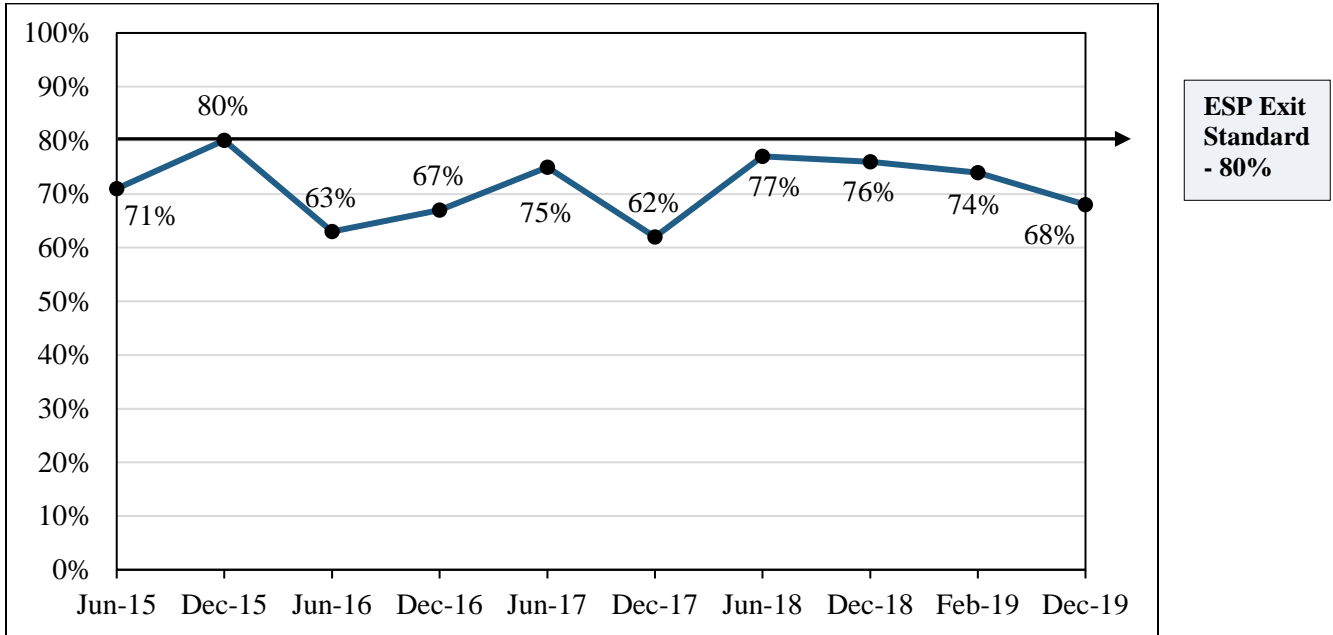
The Monitor considers this Exit Standard to be partially achieved.

Visits between Parents and Workers

The ESP requires 80 percent of parents to have twice monthly visits with social workers in the first three months post-placement (ESP citation II.9.).⁷⁷ The Figure below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since June 2015.

⁷⁷ This Exit Standard is also satisfied in cases where it is documented that the parent(s) is(are) unavailable or refuses to cooperate with the Agency.

**Figure 18: Households with Twice Monthly Visits between Workers and Parents with Goal of Reunification
June 2015 – December 2019**

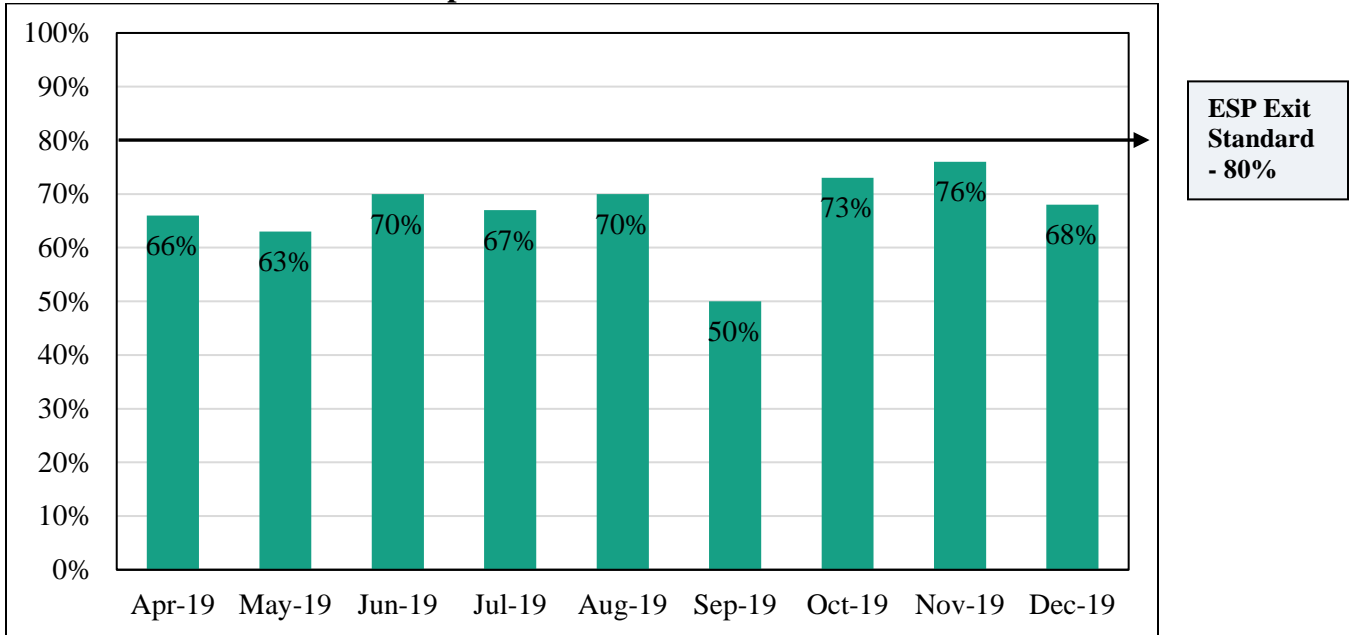


Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT267 and findings from CFSA internal audit with Monitor validation of missed visits efforts during select months

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Assessing performance for this measure requires validation of those cases in which required visits did not occur, however, the social worker made necessary efforts in an attempt to complete visits. Between April and December 2019, monthly performance ranged from 63 to 76 percent, a decrease from the prior monitoring period (performance for the July 2018 to March 2019 period ranged from 67 to 90%). Specifically, in December 2019, there were 41 families of children with a goal of reunification applicable to this measure, and parents in 28 (68%) families received two social worker visits each month or there was documentation in the record that the parent was unavailable or refused to cooperate despite agency efforts. The Monitor considered this Exit Standard to be unmet.

**Figure 19: Households with Twice Monthly Visits between Workers and Parents with Goal of Reunification
April – December 2019**



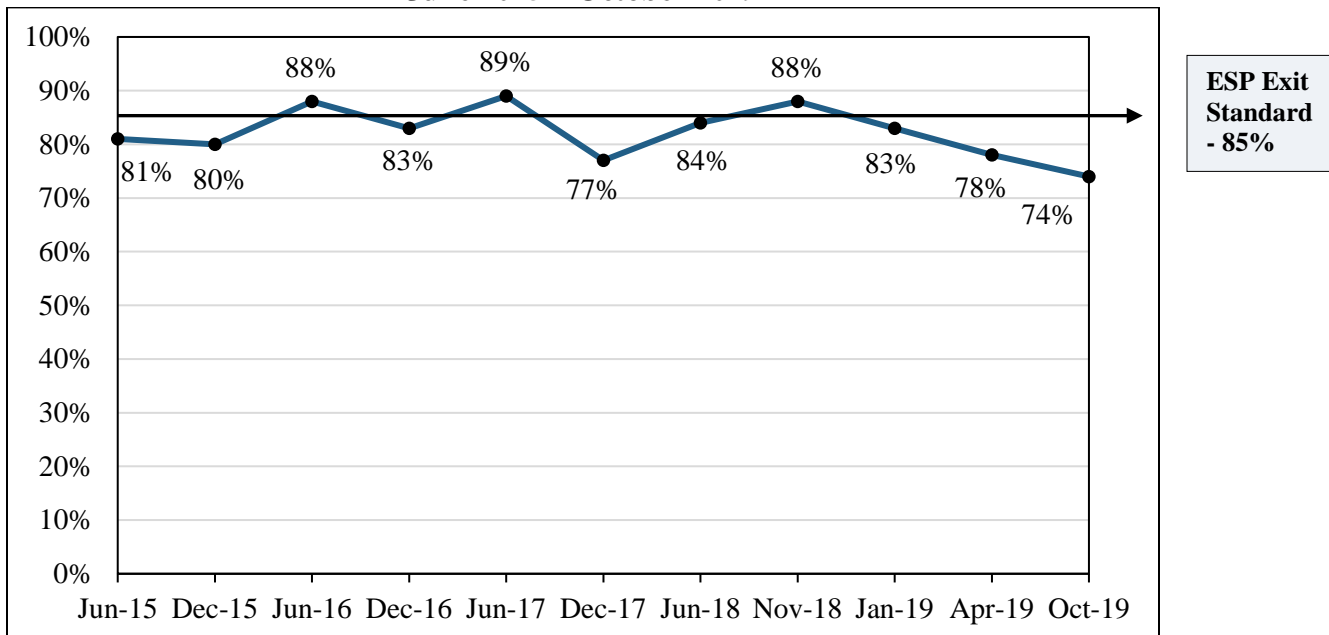
Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT267 and findings from internal audit with Monitor validation of missed visits efforts

Family Time: Visits between Parents and Children

The ESP requires 85 percent of children with the goal of reunification to have weekly visits with the parent with whom reunification is sought (ESP citation II.10.).⁷⁸ Figure 20 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since June 2015.

⁷⁸ This Exit Standard is also satisfied in cases where it is documented that a visit is not in the child’s best interest, is clinically inappropriate, or did not occur despite efforts by the agency to facilitate it.

**Figure 20: Children with Goal of Reunification who Visit Weekly with the Parent with whom Reunification is Sought
June 2015 – October 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT012 and findings from internal audit with Monitor validation of missed visits efforts

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Assessing performance for this measure requires validation of those cases in which required visits did not occur, however, the social worker made necessary efforts in an attempt to facilitate visits. This validation was completed for performance in April 2019 and October 2019 and was assessed as 78 percent in April 2019, and 74 percent in October 2019. Specifically, in October 2019, 356 children were applicable to this measure, and 265 (74%) had weekly visits with the parent with whom reunification is sought or there was documentation in the record that visits did not occur because the visit was not in the child’s best interest, was clinically inappropriate, or did not occur despite efforts made by the Agency. CFSA’s performance did not meet the required level of performance of 85 percent.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ To better understand CFSA’s performance on completion of visits between parents and their children, CFSA reviewed cases of children who did not have any visits with their parents during the months of April and October 2019 (66 children). As of December 31, 2019, for those children without visits in April 2019, 12 children (18%) exited to positive permanency, and for slightly less than half (48%), the child’s permanency goal for had changed – 36% to adoption, and 12% to guardianship. CFSA reports similar findings in analysis of cases without parent/child visits in October 2019.

3. Assessing Child Safety During Worker Visits with Children and Families

Workers are responsible for assessing and documenting the safety of each child at every visit. The ESP has two Exit Standards related to assessing children's safety:

- Assessing Safety During Worker Visits to Families with In-Home Services (ESP citation II.5.)
- Assessing Safety During Worker Visits to Children in Out-of-Home Care (ESP citation II.6.)⁸⁰

Importantly, during this period, CFSA newly met the required level of performance for both of these measures. The methodology used to assess performance on safety assessments in the ESP differs from what was used in previous monitoring periods, which assessed documentation through a case record review.

The revised methodology assesses performance for this measure through the Quality Service Review (QSR) assessment of safety. The Monitor believes that this change in methodology provides a more accurate reflection of performance. In CY2019, CFSA reviewed 133 cases through the QSR process. Of these cases, 79 involved children in out-of-home care, and 54 involved children who were living with their family. Additionally, children in 102 cases were managed by CFSA, 28 cases were managed by NCCF, one case was managed by Latin American Youth Center (LAYC), and two cases were case managed by Lutheran Social Services (LSS)⁸¹. Through the QSR methodology, reviewers assessed key elements of case practice in each case reviewed, including engagement with families, ongoing assessments of family members and caregivers, and teaming with professional and informal supports including mental health providers, schools, foster parents, and family members. These core elements of practice are essential to the development of the case plan, the implementation of appropriate supports to ensure child safety, and to reaching the identified permanency and well-being goals for the child and family.

For the two Exit Standards discussed in this section, performance is assessed using ratings for two QSR indicators – the *Safety* indicator, and the sub-part of the *Planning Interventions* indicator focused on assessing planning for the child's safety and protection. Figures 21 and 22 below include the parameters QSR reviewers consider in rating performance, as well as descriptions of minimally acceptable performance and unacceptable performance as described in the QSR protocol.

⁸⁰ Each Exit Standard requires that 80% of the associated sample (either children in out-of-home placement or children receiving in-home services) will be rated acceptable on 2 QSR indicators: *Child Safety* and *Planning Interventions* sub-part Safety and Protection.

⁸¹ The 2 cases reviewed that were case managed by LSS involved youth who were in the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor program.
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**Figure 21: QSR Safety Indicator:
Parameters to Consider and Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance⁸²**

Safety

- *Indicator Focus:* Freedom from harm is a state of child well-being that exists in the balance of interactions between any known risks of harm and necessary protections put into place by parents and/or out-of-home caregivers, teachers, and others with immediate responsibility for the child. The capacity and reliability of caregivers in recognizing risks of harm and protecting the child from those risks, using effective protection strategies, is considered in this indicator.
- *Parameters Reviewers Consider:* the degree to which child is free of abuse, neglect, intimidation, and exploitation by others in their place of residence, and other daily settings. The parents and caregivers provide the attention, actions, and supports necessary to protect the child from known risks of harm in the home and community.
- *Indicator sub-parts:*
 - Home
 - School
 - Community
 - Other
- *Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance:*

Minimally Acceptable Safety means a minimally adequate to fair situation of being free from imminent risk of abuse or neglect for the child. The child has a minimally safe living arrangement with the present parents/caregivers. Any protective strategies used are at least minimally adequate in reducing risks of harm. The child is at least minimally free from serious risks in other daily settings, including at school and in the community. At home and/or in other settings, the child may have very limited exposure to intimidation. A minimally adequate pattern of safety has been evident for 30 days or longer.

Unacceptable Safety is when there is somewhat inadequate protection of the child from abuse or neglect or there are substantial, continuing, or worsening risks of harm for the child. Any protective strategies used may be somewhat limited, inconsistent, or ineffective in reducing risks of harm. The child may be exposed to elevated risks of harm in their home or other daily settings, possibly at school and in the community. At home and/or in other settings the child may be exposed to intimidation and harm.

⁸² *Quality Service Review Protocol for a Child and Family: Reusable Protocol for Examination of Child Welfare and Mental Health Services for a Child and Family*, Shared Practice Protocol. Human Services and Outcomes, January 2015. p. 66-69.

**Figure 22: QSR *Planning Interventions* Indicator:
Parameters to Consider and Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance^{83,84}**

Planning Interventions

- *Indicator Focus:* the planning interventions are a set of strategies and actions, based on assessed needs, which result in changes for the child, youth and family. Intervention planning is an ongoing process throughout the life of the case and the interventions should be consistent with the long-term view for the child, youth and family.
- *Parameters Reviewers Consider:* to what degree meaningful, measurable and achievable life outcomes (e.g. safety, permanency, well-being, family functioning in fulfilling life roles, transition and life adjustment, and education) for the child and family are supported by well-reasoned, agreed-upon goals, intervention strategies and actions for attainment.
- *Indicator sub-parts:*
 - Safety and Protection
 - Permanency
 - Well-Being
 - Daily Functioning and Life Role Fulfillment
 - Transition and Life Adjustment
 - Early Learning and Education
 - Other Planned Outcomes and Interventions
- *Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance:*

Minimally Acceptable Planning means a minimally reasoned, periodic planning process is used to match intervention strategies to stated goals that are somewhat consistent with the long-term view. Choices are at least minimally supported by the child and family and by a slim team consensus. The strategies selected reflect a minimally adequate to fair assessment and are loosely linked to the planned goals and outcomes to meet the needs of the child and family and to help them be successful in daily living after exiting the service system. Plans include a minimally described set of steps to which key participants are somewhat committed. Strategies and actions across providers and funding sources are somewhat aligned and minimally integrated.

Unacceptable Planning is evident from a somewhat or substantially inadequately reasoned, occasional planning process. Intervention strategies may not have clear goals and may be somewhat inconsistent with the long-term view. Choices may be marginally supported by the child and family. A vague or shifting consensus may exist around some goals and strategies. Interventions described may reflect an authorized services category rather than a clear strategy for change. The intervention may be related to an inferred area of need by my lack clear goals or strategies. Plans may include some general activities for which some participants are authorized to provide services. Planning across providers and funding sources is somewhat misaligned or inconsistently integrated.

⁸³ *Quality Service Review Protocol for a Child and Family: Reusable Protocol for Examination of Child Welfare and Mental Health Services for a Child and Family*, Shared Practice Protocol. Human Services and Outcomes, January 2015. p. 66-69.

⁸⁴ This indicator has multiple sub-parts. For purposes of assessing performance on this Exit Standard, cases are considered acceptable when *Safety and Protection* is rated as acceptable.

Performance for the period January 1 through December 31, 2019:

Assessing Safety during Worker Visits with to Families with In-Home Services

During CY2019, 54 QSRs were conducted for children receiving in-home services. Overall, 87 percent (47 of 54) of the cases reviewed were rated acceptable on both the *Safety* status indicator and the sub-part Safety and Protection of the *Planning Interventions* indicator. Ratings for each individual indicator varied, with performance on *Safety* rated acceptable in 87 percent (47 of 54) of cases, and sub-part Safety and Protection of the *Planning Interventions* rated acceptable in 94 percent (51 of 54). This Exit Standard was achieved.

Assessing Safety during Worker Visits to Children in Out-of-Home Care

During CY2019, 79 QSRs were conducted for children in out-of-home care. Overall, 91 percent (72 of 79) of the cases reviewed were rated acceptable on both the *Safety* status indicator and the sub-part Safety and Protection of the *Planning Interventions* indicator. Ratings for each individual indicator were similar, with performance on *Safety* rated acceptable in 94 percent (74 of 79) of cases, and the sub-part Safety and Protection of the *Planning Interventions* rated acceptable in 97 percent (77 of 79). There was slight variation in the overall ratings for children in foster care and case managed by CFSA (90%; 43 of 48), as compared to children in foster care and case managed by one of the private agencies (94%; 29 of 31). This Exit Standard was achieved.

4. Services to Families and Children

Services to families and children to promote safety, permanency, and well-being are central to CFSA's work. The *Implementing Supports and Services* indicator from the QSR protocol (see Figure 20) is used to measure CFSA's performance on the Exit Standard pertaining to appropriate service provision to families and children to promote these goals (ESP citation II.4.).⁸⁵ Figure 23 below includes the parameters QSR reviewers consider in rating performance, as well as descriptions of minimally acceptable performance and unacceptable performance as described in the QSR protocol.

⁸⁵ In CY2019, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on ratings for all sub-parts of the *Implementing Supports and Services* indicator. During previous monitoring periods, the Monitor used 2 indicators to assess performance: *Pathway to Case Closure* and *Implementing Supports and Services*.

**Figure 23: QSR *Implementing Supports and Services* Indicator:
Parameters to Consider and Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance^{86,87}**

Implementing Supports and Services Indicator

- *Parameters Reviewers Consider:* Degree to which: (1) strategies, formal and informal supports, and services planned for the child, parent or caregiver, and family are available and provided on a timely and adequate basis. (2) The combination of supports and services fit the child and family situation so as to maximize potential results and benefits while minimizing conflicting strategies and inconveniences. (3) Delivery of planned interventions is sufficient and effective to help the child and family make adequate progress toward attaining the life outcomes and maintaining those outcomes beyond case closure.
- *Description of Acceptable/Unacceptable Performance:*

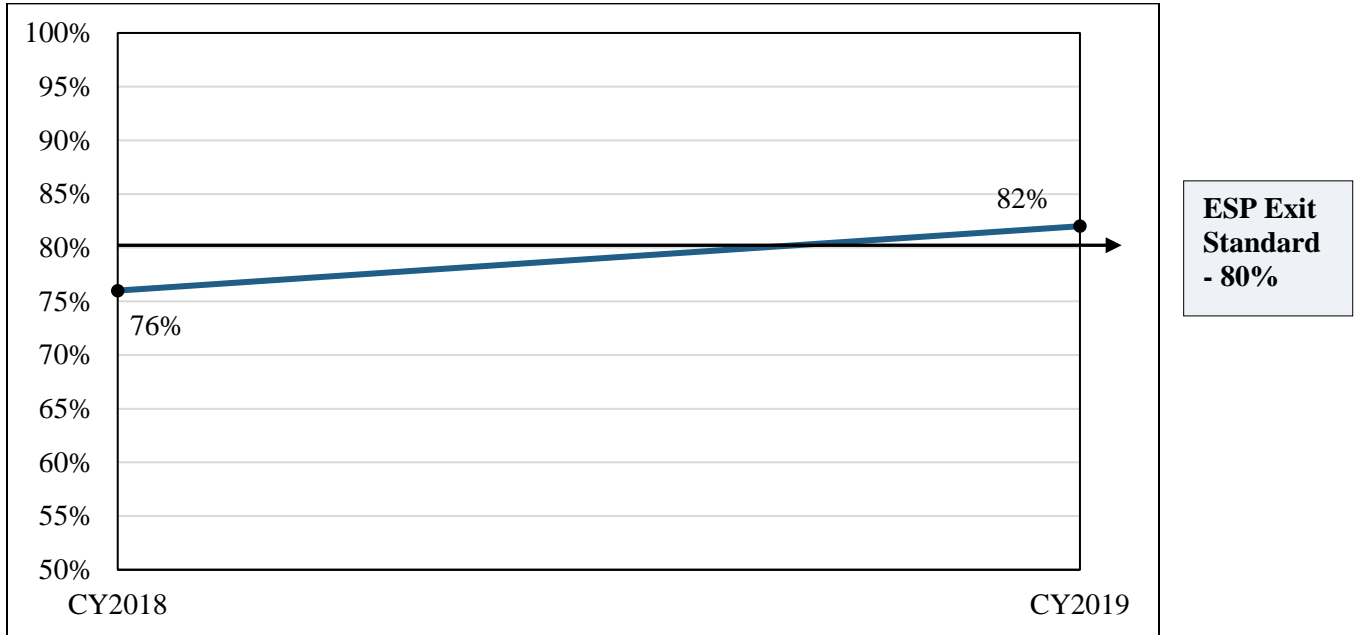
Minimally Acceptable Implementation means that a fair array of supports and services somewhat matches the intervention strategies identified in the case plan and is minimally to fairly helping the child and family meet near-term needs and make progress toward planned outcomes. A minimally adequate to fair set of supports and services is usually available, used and seen as somewhat satisfactory by the family. The array provides few options, limiting professional judgment and family choice in the selection of providers. The team is considering taking steps to mobilize additional resources to give the family choice and/or provide resources to meet the particular family needs but has not yet taken any steps.

Unacceptable Implementation means that supports and services identified in the case plan are at least somewhat limited or may not be readily accessible or available to the family. A limited set of supports and services may be inconsistently available and used but may be seen as partially unsatisfactory by the family. The service/support array provides few options, substantially limiting use of professional judgment and family choice in the selection of providers. The team has not yet considered taking steps to mobilize additional resources to give the family greater choice and/or provide resources to meet particular family needs.

⁸⁶ *Quality Service Review Protocol for a Child and Family: Reusable Protocol for Examination of Child Welfare and Mental Health Services for a Child and Family*, Shared Practice Protocol. Human Services and Outcomes, January 2015, p. 70-71.

⁸⁷ This indicator is considered to be acceptable when all of the sub-parts – for the child, birth mother, birth father, and substitute caregiver – are rated acceptable. When a birth parent or substitute caregiver is not involved in the case and is not rated in the review, that sub-part is not considered in determining the overall rating for the indicator.

**Figure 24: QSR Acceptable Performance on Services to Families and Children to Promote Safety, Permanency, and Well-being
CY2018 – CY2019**



Source: QSR Data, CY2018 – CY2019

Performance for the period January 1 through December 31, 2019:

During CY2019, CFSA’s performance exceeded the required level of performance (80%) for the first time with 82 percent (109 of 133) of cases reviewed rated acceptable. This represents an improvement from CY2018, when 76 percent of the cases reviewed were rated acceptable on the *Implementing Supports and Services* indicator. This Exit Standard was achieved.

The increase in overall performance can be attributed to a notable improvement in practice with in-home families. Specifically, in CY2018, 69 percent of cases reviewed were rated acceptable, and in CY2019, this increased to 93 percent of cases reviewed rated acceptable. This is likely a result of the emphasis on quality practice when working with in-home families (see Table 7). Based on a review of the data and the written case narratives completed by reviewers for each QSR, the Monitor observed positive changes in social worker practice including increased use of clinical skills to serve as mental health supports for children and parents. CFSA refers to this practice as “social workers as interventionists.” Often, when there were gaps or delays in parents and children receiving therapeutic services from the Department of Behavioral Health, the social worker was able to step-in and provide important support to stabilize the family and guide them in achieving their case plan goals.

While there was an increase in overall performance this year, there was a decrease in the percentage of CFSA and private agency cases rated acceptable when the child was in foster care. Specifically, for cases managed by CFSA where the child was in foster care, there was a decrease in performance from CY2018 of four percent, and for cases managed by one of the private agencies, there was a decrease of nine percent. A review of QSR data and case narratives identified challenges in the service array – particularly mental health services, including non-traditional options – for parents and children. Additionally, there were identified challenges in teaming across CFSA and the private agencies.

**Table 7: Performance on Services to Children and Families to Promote Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being Across Administration
CY2018 – CY2019**

	CFSA In-Home	CFSA Out-of-Home	Private Agencies	All
<i>Implementing Supports and Services (CY2018)</i>	69% (N=54)	81% (N=48)	80% (N=35)	76% (N=138)
<i>Implementing Supports and Services (CY2019)</i>	93% (N=54)	77% (N=48)	71% (N=31)	82% (N=133)

Source: QSR Data, CY2018 – CY2019

CFSA has continued to identify in its annual Resource Development Plan (RDP) gaps in the District’s service array for mental health, substance use, and domestic violence services. The QSR case narratives noted a strong, positive impact on case practice when PEER workers⁸⁸ or behavioral health specialists⁸⁹ were involved. Increasing the capacity for PEER workers and behavioral health specialists may be an option to consider as the District works to expand its overall service capacity.

5. Case Planning Process

Timely and effective case planning at the beginning and throughout a child and family’s child welfare involvement depends upon engagement with the family, and teaming with formal and informal supports. CFSA policy requires that every effort be made to locate family members and develop case plans in partnership with children and families, formal service providers working with a family, and informal support networks as identified by the child and family. Case plans should identify specific services, supports, and timetables for providing services needed to achieve identified goals, including permanency outcomes.

⁸⁸ The PEER unit at CFSA is comprised of 5 PEER workers, all of whom are parents with previous experience with the child welfare system.

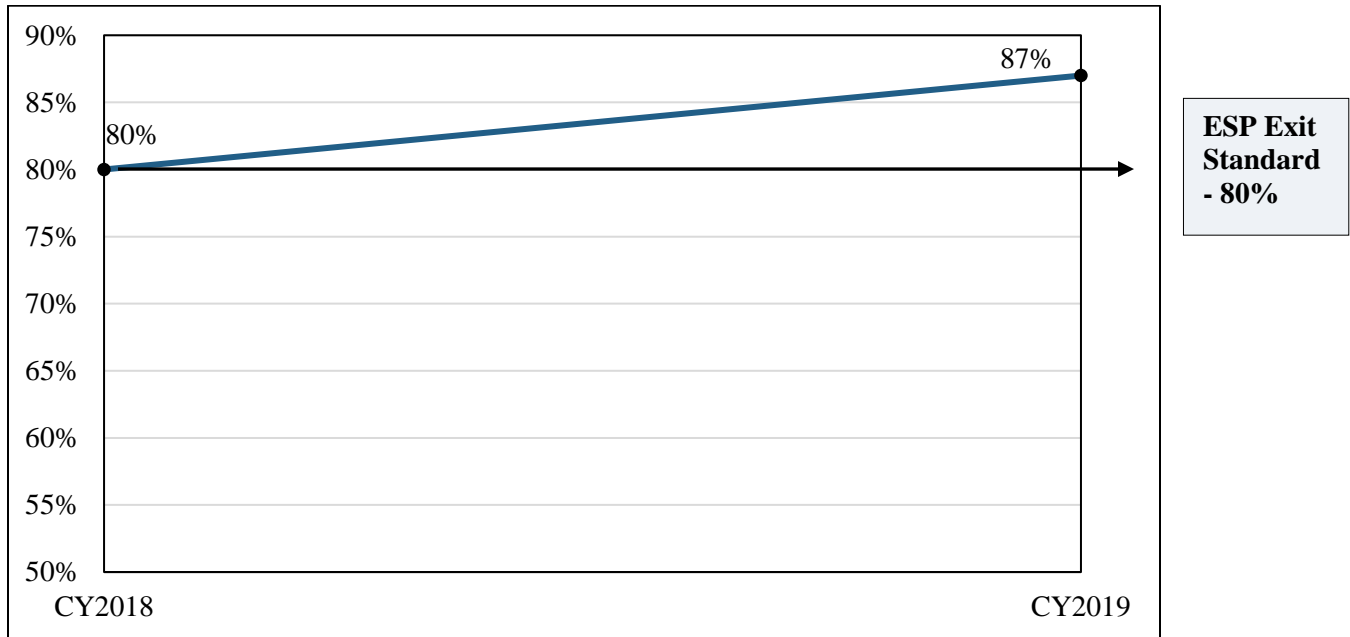
⁸⁹ NCCF employs behavioral health specialists who work directly with children in care. These workers provide important support to children in their homes, schools, and community.

As required by the ESP, the *Planning Interventions* indicator from the QSR protocol is used to measure CFSA’s performance on the Exit Standard pertaining to appropriateness and quality of case planning.⁹⁰ The *Planning Interventions* indicator is described above in Figure 22 including a summary of the parameters reviewers consider in rating performance, as well as descriptions of minimally acceptable performance and unacceptable performance as contained within the QSR protocol.

Performance for January 1 through December 31, 2019:

Of the 133 cases reviewed using the QSR methodology in CY2019, 87 percent (116 of 133) were rated as acceptable on overall *Planning Interventions*, an increase from CY2018 when performance was 80 percent (see Figure 25). This Exit Standard was achieved.

**Figure 25: QSR Acceptable Performance on Case Planning Process
CY2018 – CY2019**



Source: QSR Data, CY2018 – 2019

Similar to performance on Services to Families and Children to Promote Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being (ESP citation II.4) – discussed earlier in this section – there was an overall increase in performance in cases where children and families were receiving in-home services (increase of

⁹⁰ In CY2019, pursuant to the ESP, the methodology for measuring performance on this Exit Standard was changed. Acceptable performance is now based on the *Planning Implementation* indicator. The sub-part, Safety and Protection, must be rated acceptable, and the majority of other sub-parts must be rated acceptable in order for the overall rating for this indicator to be considered acceptable. During previous monitoring periods, the Monitor used 2 indicators to determine performance: *Pathway to Case Closure* and *Planning Implementation*.

13% from CY2018), and in cases that were managed by private agencies (increase of 15% from CY2018; see Table 8).

**Table 8: Performance on Case Planning Across Administrations
CY2018 – CY2019**

	CFSA In-Home	CFSA Out-of-Home	Private Agencies	All
<i>Planning Interventions (CY2018)</i>	78% (N=54)	90% (N=48)	69% (N=35)	80% (N=138)
<i>Planning Interventions (CY2019)</i>	91% (N=54)	85% (N=48)	84% (N=31)	87% (N=133)

Source: QSR Data, CY2018 – CY2019

In analyzing the data and case narratives for QSRs completed in CY2019, the Monitor noted the positive impact of clear guidance and expectations for social workers in planning with families across domains including safety, well-being, and education. The data also reflect the impact of CFSA’s QSR unit working more closely with the private agencies to identify barriers to performance and implement continuous quality improvement strategies. Moving forward, CFSA and the private agencies should focus their attention on improving planning for transitions, which will be strengthened through a continued emphasis on teaming and engagement.

6. Timely Permanency and Adoption

The ESP has two Exit Standards that measure both the processes and outcomes related to permanency for children. These are:

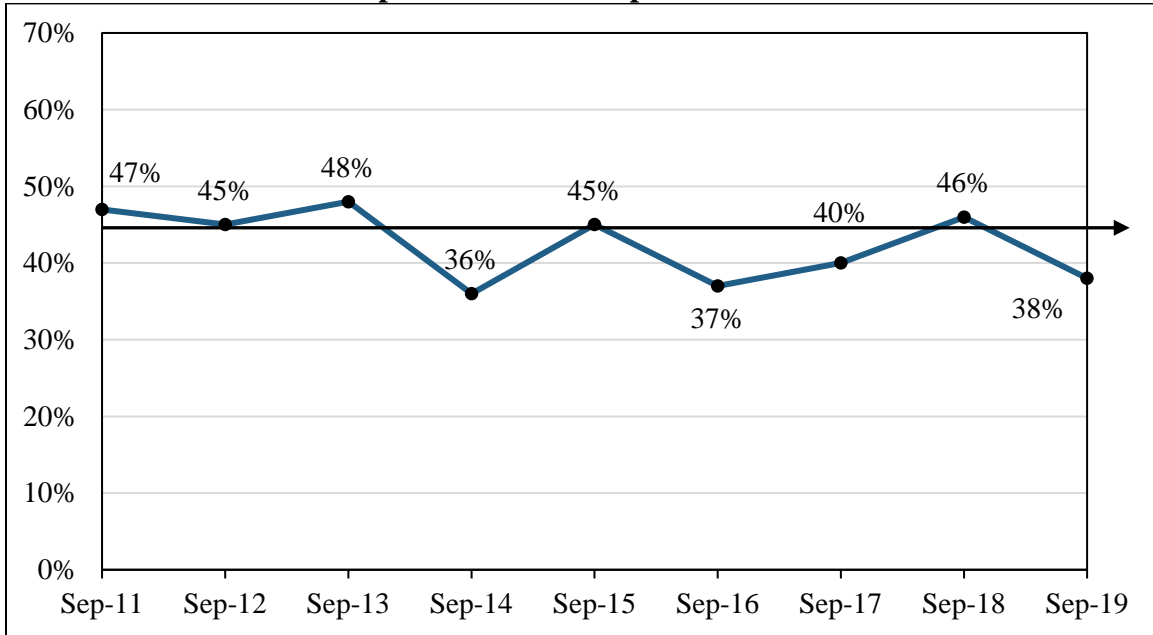
- Timely development of a child-specific recruitment plan for child with a goal change of adoption (ESP citation II.23.)
- Timely exit to permanency for children in out-of-home placements (ESP citation II.13.)

Timely Permanency

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

The ESP requires timely exits for children to a permanent family through adoption, guardianship, or reunification. The Exit Standard has three performance sub-parts that must each be met before compliance can be reached for the entire Exit Standard. For each sub-part, different compliance percentages apply for distinct cohorts of children based on their length of stay in foster care. Performance on this Exit Standard is measured with annual fiscal year data and is reported most recently as of September 30, 2019. Figures 26, 27, and 28 below reflect CFSA’s performance on this measure since September 2011.

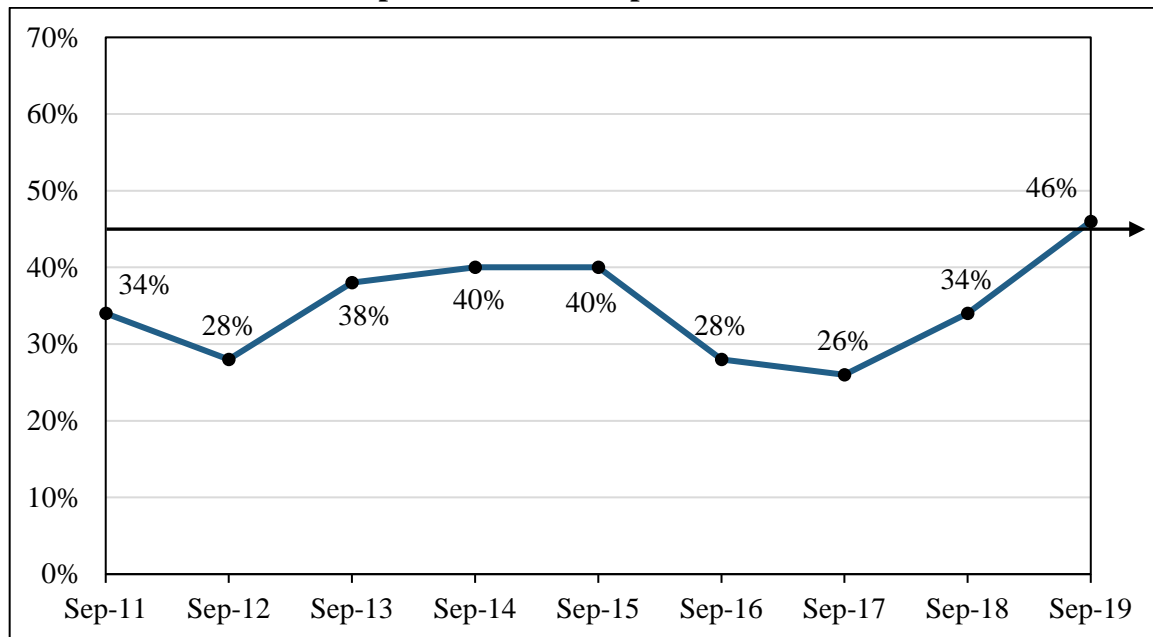
**Figure 26: Permanency for Children in Care
between 8 Days and Less than 12 Months
September 2011 – September 2019**



**ESP Exit
Standard
- 45%**

Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT384

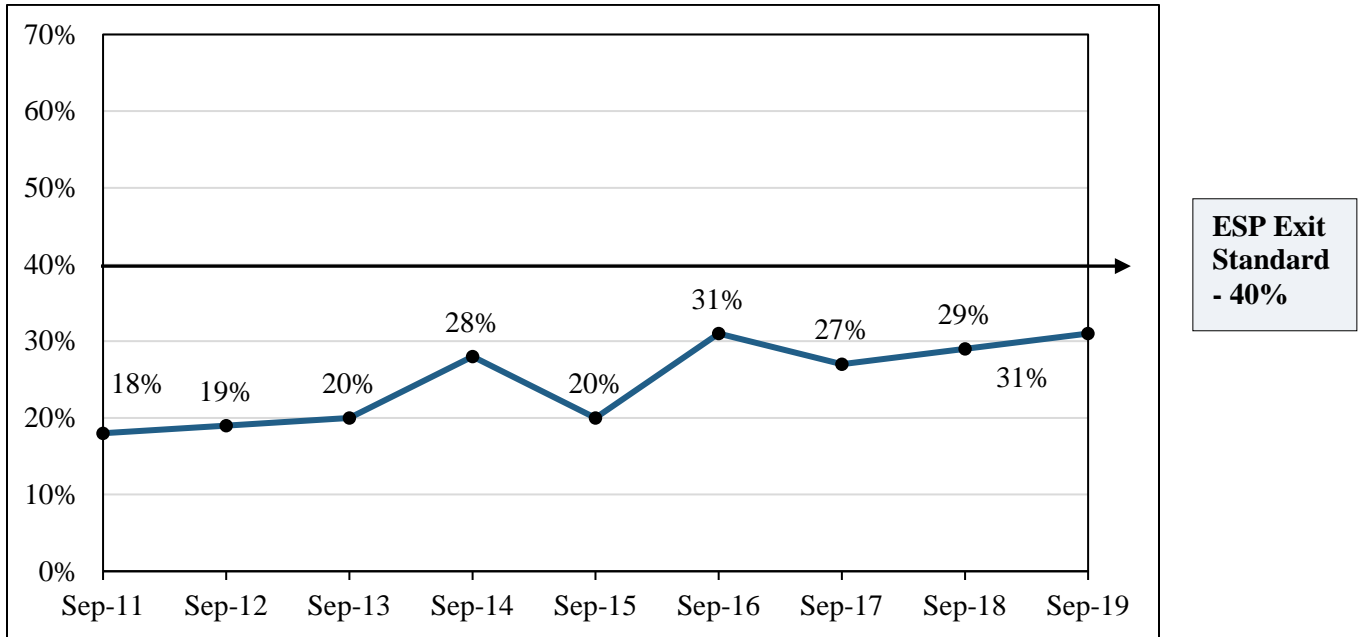
**Figure 27: Permanency for Children in Care
More than 12 and Less than 25 Months
September 2011 – September 2019**



**ESP Exit
Standard
- 45%**

Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT385

**Figure 28: Permanency for Children in Care
for 25 Months or Longer
September 2011 – September 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report CMT385

Permanency for Children in Care between 8 days and less than 12 months

Of the 253 children who entered foster care in FY2018 and remained in foster care for eight days or more, 95 (38%) children exited to positive permanency by September 30, 2019 (see Figure 26 and Table 9). Performance on this sub-part of the Exit Standard declined since FY2017 performance (46%), and did not meet the required level of performance.

Permanency for Children in Care more than 12 and less than 25 months

Of the 173 children who were in care more than 12 months and less than 25 months on September 30, 2018, 80 (46%) children achieved positive permanency by September 30, 2019 (see Figure 27 and Table 8). Performance is improved significantly from FY2017 (34%), and this is the first time that performance for this Exit Standard has met the required level of performance.

Permanency for Children in Care for 25 months or longer

For the 365 children who had been in care 25 or more months on September 30, 2018, 112 (31%) children achieved permanency by September 30, 2019 (see Figure 28 and Table 9). While this performance represents a narrow improvement over last year, performance for this sub-part remains substantially below the performance level required by the Exit Standard (40%).

**Table 9: Children Exiting to Permanency by Cohort
as of September 30, 2019**

Length of time in out-of-home care during FY2018	Total number of children in cohort	Exit to Reunification	Exit to Guardianship – Kin	Exit to Guardianship – NonKin	Exit to Adoption	Total Exits to Permanency by September 30, 2019	ESP Target
8 days – 12 months	253	90 (35%)	2 (1%)	1 (<1%)	2 (1%)	95 (38%)	45%
12 – 24 months	173	35 (20%)	5 (3%)	3 (2%)	37 (19%)	80 (46%)	45%
25 months or more	365	31 (8%)	15 (4%)	11 (3%)	55 (15%)	112 (31%)	40%

Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET reports CMT384 and CMT385

*Percentages may not equal 100% due to rounding.

As one of the three sub-parts to this Exit Standard was met, the Monitor considers this outcome to be partially achieved.

Child Specific Recruitment Plans

The ESP requires that for 90 percent of children whose permanency goal becomes adoption, a child-specific recruitment plan be developed within 95 days of the goal change (ESP citation II.23.). This recruitment plan may include contracting with private agencies to identify a resource for children who may be without an adoptive resource. The development of a child-specific recruitment plan is not required for children who already have a Letter of Intent or petition to adopt filed before 95 days from the goal change. CFSA continues to meet this Exit Standard.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

A total of 98 total children this monitoring period had their permanency goal changed to adoption. Sixty-seven of the 98 children had a Letter of Intent completed or petition to adopt filed before 95 days from goal change, and thus were no longer in need of a recruitment plan. Of the remaining 31 children, 29 (94%) had a planning meeting to develop a child-specific recruitment plan within 95 days of their goal change. This Exit Standard was achieved.

C. HEALTH AND DENTAL CARE

CFSA and its private agency partners are responsible for ensuring that children in care have their health and dental needs met, including regular, comprehensive evaluations. These screenings and assessments are important to identify health conditions that require prompt medical attention, chronic medical needs, and developmental or behavioral health concerns that are then shared with the child's foster parent or caregiver, social worker, and other service providers, such that a treatment plan can be developed. To ensure proper and regular treatment, foster parents must have access to the Medicaid information for children in their care.

The ESP has two Exit Standards related to health care, including:

- Children in foster care receive appropriate and routine dental services (ESP citation II.16.)
- Foster parents receive the Medicaid number and card for children in their care (ESP citation II.17.)⁹¹

Although children continue to score well on the health status indicators of the QSR, CFSA has inconsistently met the performance levels required by the ESP on these two Exit Standards. During the current monitoring period, CFSA met the required level of performance for comprehensive dental exams for children entering foster care, and partially met the required level of performance for distribution of Medicaid cards and numbers to caregivers of children in foster care.

Full Dental Evaluation

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

The ESP requirement for comprehensive dental exams for children entering foster care has three sub-parts: receipt of an exam within 30 days of placement; receipt of an exam within 60 days of placement; and receipt of an exam within 90 days of placement. During the current monitoring period, a monthly range of 46 to 69 percent of children received a full dental evaluation within 30 days of placement (exceeding the required level of 25%), and within 60 days of placement, a monthly range of 63 to 82 percent of children had a full dental evaluation (exceeding the required level of 50%). CFSA improved performance on the final sub-part of this Exit Standard that requires 85 percent of children have dental evaluations within 90 days of placement, with performance

⁹¹ The ESP requires that 90% of children's caregivers are provided with documentation of Medicaid coverage within 5 days of placement and Medicaid cards within 45 days of placement.

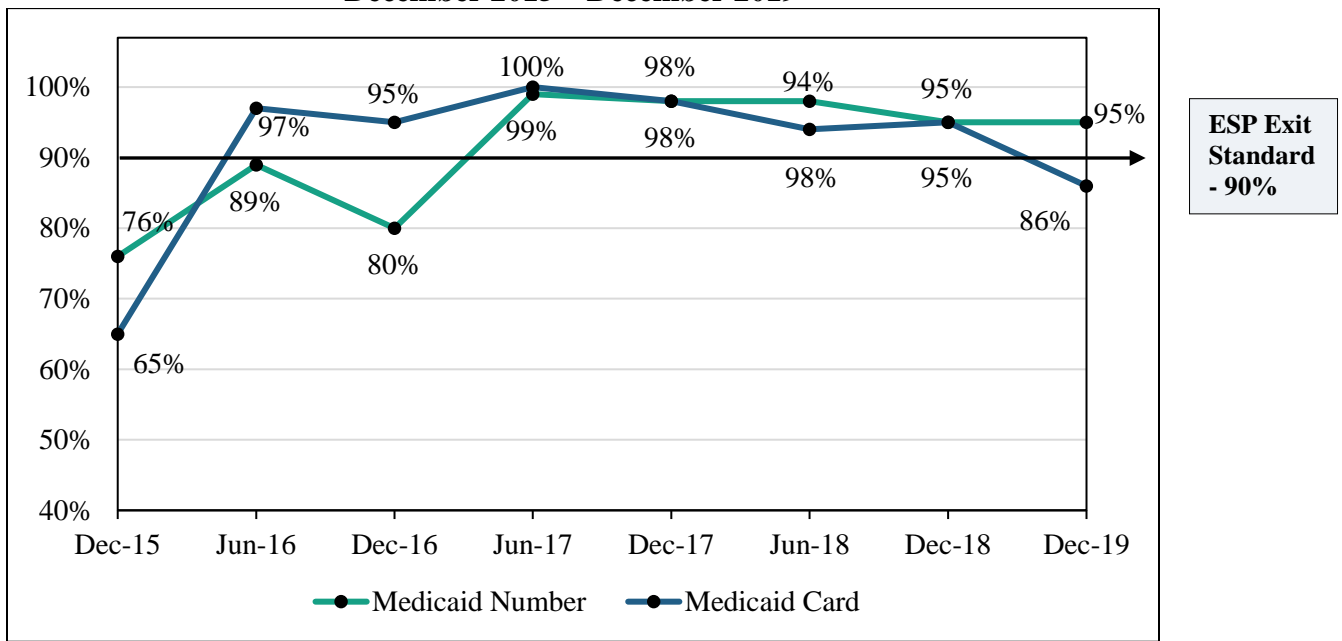
ranging monthly from 67 to 94 percent and meeting the required level of performance during six of the nine months under review.⁹² The Monitor considers this Exit Standard to be achieved.

Medicaid Coverage

Through the District’s Medicaid State Plan, all children are eligible for Medicaid immediately upon entering foster care, including those who do not have legal status or had private health insurance prior to entering care. During the current monitoring period, CFSA continued to manually track the distribution of Medicaid numbers and cards to caregivers when a child is initially placed in foster care and distribution of Medicaid numbers to foster parents when a child experiences a placement change. The Monitor is only able to assess performance on this Exit Standard for six of the nine months of the monitoring period because, due to a change in personnel, there was a lapse in tracking these data between April and June 2019. CFSA resolved this issue and implemented a new process moving forward to ensure a change in personnel would not disrupt the Agency’s ability to accurately track these data.

Figure 29 below shows CFSA’s performance on this measure since December 2015.

**Figure 29: Distribution of Medicaid Number and Medicaid Card to Foster Parents
December 2015 – December 2019⁹³**



Source: CFSA Manual Data

⁹² Monthly performance for receipt of a dental evaluation for 90 days are as follow: April 2019, 80%; May 2019, 87%; June 2019, 92%; July 2019, 87%; August 2019, 82%; September 2019, 94%; October 2019, 88%; November 2019, 68%; December 2019, 67%.

⁹³ The Monitor is unable to report data for Medicaid Card distribution for December 2017.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Between July and December 2019, CFSA's performance on the distribution of Medicaid numbers to caregivers within five days of a child's placed ranged monthly from 91 to 97 percent, and performance on distribution of Medicaid cards to caregivers within 45 days of a child's placement ranged monthly from 64 to 94 percent.⁹⁴ This Exit Standard was partially achieved.

D. INFRASTRUCTURE

1. Ongoing Caseloads

Maintaining caseloads for in-home, permanency, CPS, and home study workers in accordance with caseload standards is a fundamental pre-requisite to good practice and outcomes. For the past several years, with the exception of CPS staff, all⁹⁵ other case-carrying staff have had manageable caseloads within the required limits. The discussion below includes caseload compliance for in-home, permanency, and home study workers. CPS investigator caseloads are discussed earlier in the report.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Caseloads for permanency and in-home social workers continued to meet the level required by the ESP (90%), with performance ranging monthly from 97 to 100 percent of workers in compliance. In April, May, June, August, and November 2019, only one worker was responsible for more than 15 cases each month. At no point during the monitoring period was a worker responsible for more than 18 cases.

The number of in-home and permanency cases unassigned for more than five days ranged each month from a high of 34 cases in May 2019 to a low of six cases in December 2019 (1 to 3% of total open permanency and in-home cases), similar to performance during the previous monitoring period when the number of unassigned cases was about 1 to 3 percent of total permanency and in-home cases.

Monthly performance data for workers conducting homes studies remained the same from the prior monitoring period, with 100 percent of workers this period carrying fewer than 30 cases each.

The caseload Exit Standard was achieved.

⁹⁴ Monthly performance for distribution of Medicaid cards are as follow: July 2019, 94%; August 2019, 71%; September 2019, 87%; October 2019, 64%; November 2019, 80%; December 2019, 86%.

⁹⁵ During the fall of 2017 and January and February of 2018, CFSA performance for caseloads for workers conducting home studies fell below the required level to an increase in requests and staff being out on extended leave.

2. Staff Training

Training is a core function in any child welfare agency and a primary mechanism to ensure that social workers, supervisors, and managers have the competencies necessary to carry out their jobs effectively. There are two Exit Standards pertaining to staff training:

- Pre-service training for direct social workers (ESP citation II.20a.)
- Pre-service training for supervisors (ESP citation II.20b.).

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

The ESP requires that 90 percent of newly hired CFSA and private agency case-carrying staff receive 80 hours of pre-service training prior to being assigned cases. During the current monitoring period, all but two caseworkers met the required number of pre-service training hours (96%; 44 out of 46). This Exit Standard was achieved.

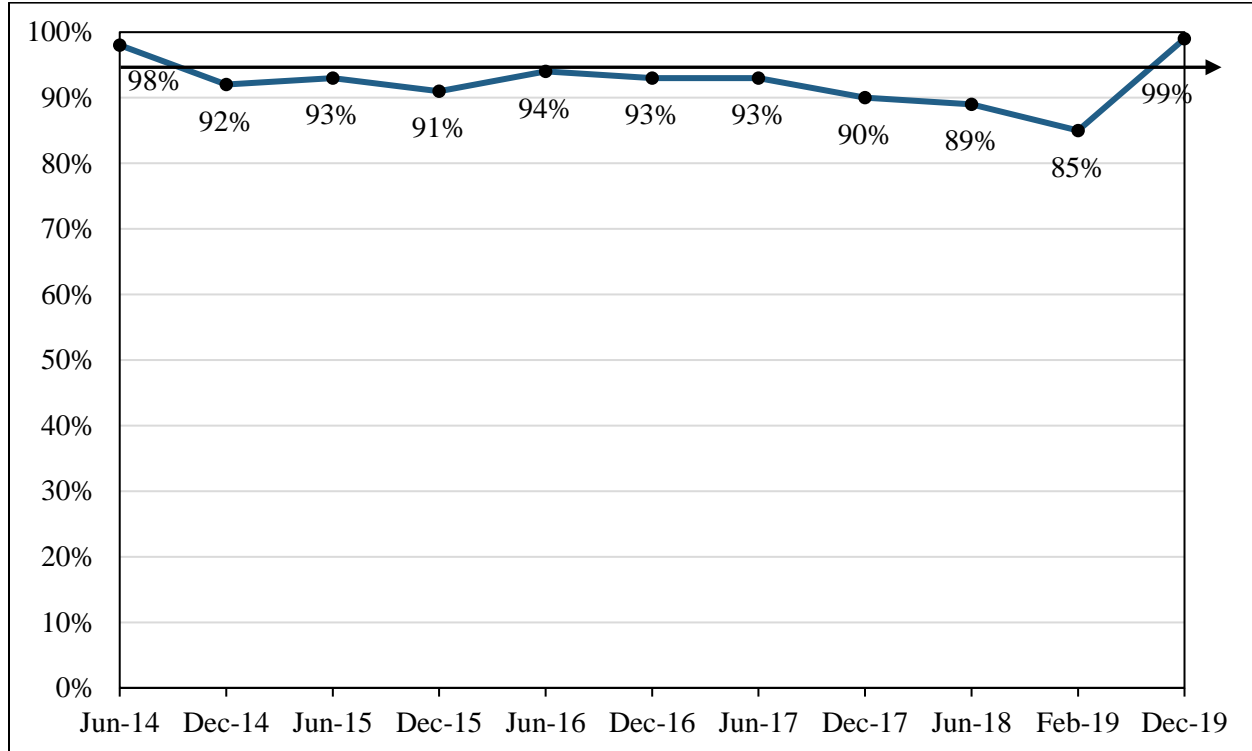
Ninety percent of newly hired or promoted CFSA and private agency supervisors are required by the ESP to complete 40 hours of pre-service training on supervision within eight months of assuming supervisory responsibility. Between April and December 2019, there were seven supervisors to whom this Exit Standard was applicable; all (100%) of these supervisors completed pre-service training within eight months of assuming supervisory responsibility, meeting the required level of 80 percent. This Exit Standard was also achieved.

3. Training for Foster and Adoptive Parents

Foster parents are critical partners in any child welfare system. On a daily basis, they are responsible for meeting the needs and supporting the well-being of children in their care. Ensuring foster parents engage in ongoing training on best practices, child and adolescent development, and the needs of children and youth who have often experienced trauma is key to their ability to provide substitute care that promotes the safety, health, and well-being of the children in their care. The ESP requires that 95 percent of foster parents receive 15 hours of in-service training annually (ESP citation II.21.).⁹⁶ This requirement is monitored through the relicensure process, which occurs annually or biannually depending upon a foster parent's license. Figure 30 below shows CFSA's performance on this measure since June 2014.

⁹⁶ CFSA and private agencies license foster parents for either 1 or 2 years. Foster parents are required to complete 15 hours of in-service training for each year of their license.

**Figure 30: Foster/Adoptive Parents with Required In-Service Training Hours
June 2014 – December 2019**



ESP Exit Standard - 95%

Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report TRN009
Data represent performance for each 6-month monitoring period (January – June and July – December); February 2019 represents data for July 2018 – February 2019; December 2019 represents data for April 2019 – December 2019.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Between April and December 2019, CFSA met the required level of performance with 257 (99%) of 259 foster parents completing the required in-service training hours prior to relicensure.⁹⁷ The Monitor considers this Exit Standard to be maintained.

As shown in Figure 30, ensuring foster parents receive the required number of in-service training hours prior to relicensure has been an area of challenge for CFSA and its private partners over the past five years. To improve accountability and ensure foster parents complete in-service training timely, CFSA implemented new processes that include the assigned Relicensing Worker reviewing the Individual Training Record with the resource parent during each quarterly visit and sharing this information with the assigned Resource Support Worker. Additionally, CFSA created a new report to identify foster parents who have completed fewer than 60 percent of the required training

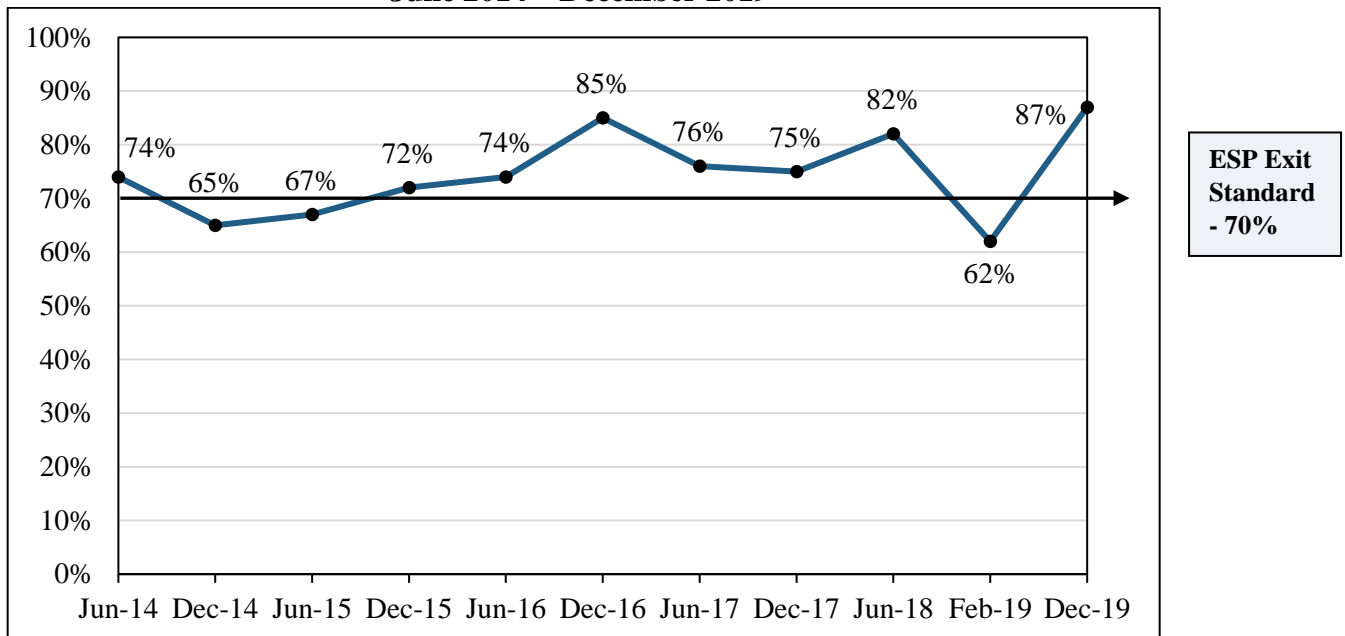
⁹⁷ Kinship foster parents who receive a temporary, provisional license are not included in this calculation until they receive their full license. Foster parents who are licensed by another jurisdiction outside of the District or Maryland for the purpose of completing an ICPC placement are also excluded from these calculations.

hours and are within 90 days of relicensure. This report is used by staff to ensure strategies are put in place for these foster parents to complete training.

4. Timely Approval

CFSA and its partner agencies, LAYC and LSS, are responsible for licensing and monitoring foster homes in the District of Columbia, and NCCF is responsible for licensing homes in Maryland. This Exit Standard requires that 70 percent of homes licensed will have been approved within 150 days of the foster parent beginning training (ESP citation II.12.). The Figure below shows performance on this measure since June 2014.

**Figure 31: Approval of Foster Parents within 150 Days of Beginning Training
June 2014 – December 2019**



Source: CFSA Administrative Data, FACES.NET report PRD202

Data represent performance for each 6-month monitoring period (January – June and July – December); February 2019 represents data for July 2018 – February 2019; December 2019 represents data for April 2019 – December 2019.

Performance for the period April 1 through December 31, 2019:

Between April and December 2019, CFSA and NCCF newly licensed 99 foster homes; 86 (87%) of these homes were licensed with the required number of pre-service training hours and within the 150-day timeframe.⁹⁸ This represents a considerable improvement in performance from the previous monitoring period. This Exit Standard was achieved.

⁹⁸ Of the 86 homes that are considered compliant during the current monitoring period, 29 homes whose licensure took longer than 150 days are considered compliant due to circumstances that were beyond the District’s control.

CFSA implemented several strategies during the previous and current monitoring periods to improve performance, including prioritizing the submission of out-of-state clearance requests so that this occurs within the first 15 days of pre-service training, increasing expectations for licensing workers to follow-up timely with prospective foster parents on outstanding documents, and creating a centralized tracking form to monitor the process for all foster parents. These strategies have had a positive impact on performance for this Exit Standard.

5. Continuous Quality Improvement

Quality Assurance

Sufficient capacity and strong commitment to continuous quality improvement (CQI) processes are a necessary part of any agency's infrastructure to assess practice and make changes when and where needed. These processes are also essential to creating a system that is accountable to children and families, foster parents, staff, and the community. During the current monitoring period, CFSA continued to engage in CQI processes, including collaborating with the Monitor to utilize a case review instrument to assess performance on: 1) referrals to community-based services for families who had a low or moderate risk rating at the time their investigation was closed and, and 2) the quality of CPS investigations closed in January 2020. CFSA also continues to engage in QSRs and, on April 24, 2020, published their Annual Quality Service Review Report: Calendar Year 2019.⁹⁹ The report includes demographic information of the children and youth reviewed, overall findings, and findings by key indicators, strengths in practice, and areas in need of improvement. Moving forward, CFSA has committed to continuing this important CQI process for two years after exit from court oversight.

CFSA also has engaged in extensive CQI activities related to prevention services through their Title IV-E prevention plan (Family First) and the District-wide initiative, Families First DC. These activities include convening a cross-system and community partner workgroup to review data related to what is working well in connecting families to prevention services and where there are gaps. Based on these conversations, the District has identified a need to increase capacity for certain services – including the Effective Black Parenting Program – and is engaged in strategies to enhance family engagement.

In January 2020, CFSA hosted the first Public Town Hall¹⁰⁰ for members of the community. The goals of this meeting were for CFSA to share important updates and provide an opportunity to hear

⁹⁹ CFSA's Annual Quality Service Review Report: Calendar Year 2019 can be accessed here: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/publication/qsr-2019-annual-report>

¹⁰⁰ Notes from this Public Town Hall can be accessed here: <https://cfsa.dc.gov/page/cfsa-public-town-hall-archive>

feedback from community members. Updates provided by CFSA included information about the ongoing prevention activities through Family First and Families First DC, and CFSA practice and policy. CFSA sought feedback from the community on key questions related to safety, housing, and mobile crisis stabilization services. Members of the community also had the opportunity to ask questions, many of which were related to behavioral health services from core service agencies and supports for resource parents to care for and stabilize youth in their home. CFSA reports they are intended to host additional Public Town Halls moving forward.

Public Reporting

CFSA is required by the ESP to engage in public reporting in support of accountability to children, families, and the community. Specifically, CFSA is required to publish the Needs Assessment and Resource Development Plan annually and have them available on their website within 30 days of their finalization. During the current monitoring period, CFSA worked to finalize the 2019 Needs Assessment and 2021 Resource Development Plan. These documents were finalized and posted the website on March 6, 2020.¹⁰¹

Additionally, during the current monitoring period CFSA launched a public-facing data dashboard.¹⁰² Available on this dashboard are data related to key performance indicators and outcome measures including the total population of children and families served through foster care and in-home services; the demographics of children in foster care; outcomes of investigations; and exits to permanency. Prior to launching this website, these data were not readily available to the public and this change is an example of increased transparency and accountability in CFSA's practice.

6. Budget

Over the past few years, CFSA has had the necessary financial resources to support the safety, permanency, and well-being of children in foster care as well as support the needs of children and families served in the community. While CFSA's total budget has decreased, CFSA has reported that the decreases in their budget over the past few years has been directly related to the decrease in CFSA's foster care population.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, CFSA was in good budget position due to strong fiscal health in the District, receiving approval on their Title IV-E prevention plan, which allows the District to draw down additional federal dollars for specific prevention services for candidates for foster care, and new federal dollars allocated through the Family First Transition Act (discussed below). As

¹⁰¹ The FY2021 Needs Assessment can be accessed here: <https://cfsadashboard.dc.gov/publication/needs-assessment-fy-2021>

¹⁰² The Data Dashboard can be accessed here: <https://cfsadashboard.dc.gov/>

the District works to respond to the needs of residents during this pandemic, a lot remains unknown about the full financial impact on the District's budget moving forward. While the District has a "rainy day" fund, and, despite receiving limited federal financial support in response to the pandemic, public agencies across the District are experiencing a cut to their budgets.

The Mayor's proposed FY2021 budget for CFSA is \$219,488,910, which is stable compared to CFSA's approved FY2020 budget.¹⁰³ The majority of CFSA's budget is comprised of local dollars (\$152.8 million; a decrease of \$8.5 million from FY2020) and federal dollars (\$64.0 million, an increase of \$6.8 million from FY2020). In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the District will also receive some additional federal funding that can be used to support children and families involved with child welfare. Specifically, the federal government has allocated additional federal Title IV-B dollars to child welfare agencies through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.¹⁰⁴ Importantly, the District is not required to provide any local-matching dollars to receive these federal dollars.

There are a lot of uncertainties about the impact of the current pandemic on the District's revenue and spending projections. It will be important to closely monitor and review the impact on CFSA's budget and the budgets of other human service agencies over the next year. Currently, there are fewer calls coming into the hotline, and some predict that caseloads could rise significantly when children return to school. This increase could have implications for the number and range of resources needed to ensure child safety and well-being.

Community-Based Prevention Services

As outlined in the ESP, CFSA is required to commit to providing sufficient financial support for community-based services. Despite financial cuts in local dollars due to the impact of COVID-19, CFSA is well-positioned to capitalize on federal financing that was made available to all states through the Family First Transition Act. The Family First Transition Act, which was passed as part of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, provides financing support and flexibility to jurisdictions as they prepare to implement the Family First Prevention Services Act. Specifically, the District is eligible for two grants through the Family First Transition Act – transition grant dollars (\$593,681) and funding certainty grants, which are only available to jurisdictions that previously operated a demonstration project through a Title IV-E Waiver. The Administration for Children and Families has not yet indicated when these dollars will be made available to jurisdictions, however, it is anticipated that transition grant dollars will be available in the next few months and funding certainty grants will be available by January 2021.

¹⁰³ The FY2021 budget represents a \$780 thousand decrease (approximately -.4%) from CFSA's approved FY2020 budget. The Monitor considers this to be a stable budget.

¹⁰⁴ The federal Administration for Children and Families has not yet announced jurisdiction-specific allocations.

IV. APPENDIX

APPENDIX *Glossary of Acronyms*

ACEDS: Automated Client Eligibility Determination System
CFSA: Child and Family Services Agency
CPS: Child Protective Services
CQI: Continuous Quality Improvement
CSSP: Center for the Study of Social Policy
CY: Calendar Year
ESP: Exit and Sustainability Plan
FA: Family Assessment
FACES.NET: CFSA's automated child welfare information system
FTM: Family Team Meeting
FY: Fiscal Year
GAL: Guardian ad Litem
HMO: Health Maintenance Organization
ICPC: Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children
IEP: Implementation and Exit Plan
LAYC: Latin American Youth Center
LSS: Lutheran Social Services
MFO: Modified Final Order
NCCF: National Center for Children and Families
PEER: Parent Engagement, Education and Resource
QSR: Quality Service Review
RDP: Resource Development Plan
SACWIS: Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System
STARS: Student Tracking and Reporting System