



Virginia Department of Social Services

people helping people

Roundtable with Virginia's Tribes

June 30, 2021



Present:

Allyson Gray, Pamunkey Tribe

Penny Wynn, Chickahominy Eastern Division

Morgan Dean, Upper Mattaponi

Reggie Tupponce, Jr, Upper Mattaponi

Lindsey Johnson, Chickahominy

Chief Stephen Adkins, Chickahominy

Yvonne Epps-Giddings, Nottoway

Kimberly Huhn-Murphy, Child Welfare Program Specialist, Children's Bureau

Em Parente, Acting Director, Division of Family Services

Jewel Wynn, Tribal Liaison

Barbara Lacina, Director, DCSE

Julia Rubarth, Resource Family/Family Engagement Policy Specialist

Claire Kimberly, Permanency Data Analyst,

Brenda Sampe, Project Manager

Eric Reynolds, Director, Office of the Children's Ombudsman

Barbara Lacina

Julia Rubarth

Claire Kimberly

Eric Reynolds – let him introduce his new role

AGENDA



- Welcome/Introductions
- DCSE Information, Barbara Lacina, Director, VDSS DCSE
- Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 – Older Youth
- NICWA Conference Highlights
- Recruitment of Resource Homes for Native American/Indian Children in Foster Care
- Division of Family Services Priorities: Kin-First Culture, Youth Aging Out of Care and Substance Use Disorder (SUD)
- Questions, Updates, Ideas to Share
- Next Roundtable
- Plus/Delta

Division of Child Support Enforcement



DIVISION OF CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT



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Barbara went over the connection between DCSE and Family Services; DCSE was a mechanism for cost recovery as child support follows the child. National conversation regarding when it is appropriate to pursue recovery aspect when child enters foster care. Some of DCSE's services are mandated, i.e. for TANF recipients; however there are no limitation or restrictions from being a part of DCSE's program if you want/need those services. DCSE can assist in establishing paternity when there's not legal parentage noted. Federally recognized tribes have the ability to run their own child support enforcement program, there is federal funding available. Contact Barbara for more information.

Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021: Supports for Older Youth

Are you between the ages of 18-27 and previously a teen in foster care?

If so, you may be eligible for COVID-19 financial relief.

Visit **FosterMyFuture.com**

Scan this QR code for more information!

Visit COVID.Virginia.gov/app to download the COVID-19 Virginia Resources mobile app for streamlined access to critical and actionable resources from 2-1-1 Virginia, CommonHelp, and other state and federal agencies.

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Brenda asked for assistance to get the word out to young persons who were in foster care at age 14 and older and are not yet age 27. The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 provided additional funds to states to support older youth. We may be able to provide a one-time cash payment to these youth, please have them go to www.fostermymfuture.com for details.

NICWA Conference 2021



- Highlights
- Insights
- Inspiration



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Brenda indicated that she spent much of her time on workshops about ICWA information such as issuing proper notice to tribes to understanding active efforts. Noted the Brackeen v Haaland case and defending ICWA – decision tree was provided during the conference to determine how the Brackeen vs Haaland might impact cases in our state – happy to share it anyone. Yvonne went into more detail about Brackeen v Haaland re: the constitutionality of ICWA, is it a racially-based regulation? Yvonne indicated the NICWA conference focused on family preservation and how we need to have a holistic approach versus shame/trauma; policing vs consulting and focusing on the family’s strengths (the immediate and extended family should be included). When we look at the history of how Native people were treated, we understand trauma better; we need to examine the laws we currently have in place that do not support and help tribes that were developed in a time when culture was being erased. Eric indicated that he is reviewing the 325 page long Brackeen v Haaland decision; some of ICWA is being upheld and some ruled unconstitutional; currently impacts 5th Circuit Court which includes Louisiana, Texas and Mississippi. It could be appealed to the Supreme Court and they could take it up; look at precedence of past decisions that ICWA would prevail; understand that it’s about sovereignty and not race. Kimberly noted that the BIA may require states to have increased monitoring. Right now, in our CFSP/APSR we outline our collaboration

requirements as it applies to our federal funding and historically haven't gotten into monitoring; we may need to do this with some portions of ICWA. Eric notes that there are Court Improvement Program (CIP) projects underway to include updating court forms to facilitate best practices in ICWA cases from the court perspective. Chief Adkins notes that we need to be aggressive and not passive when it comes to applying ICWA. Em notes that with some turnover agencies experience, it is harder to stay current with ICWA since we don't often have ICWA eligible cases. Institutional knowledge is important. Brenda brought up a project in the fall where she will be seeking volunteers from our federally recognized tribes to be part of a time-limited workgroup in addition to LDSS partners to create an eLearning webinar (i.e. training) for front-line staff and supervisors. The eLearning will be about ICWA. Chief Adkins said his tribe would like to be part and to reach out to him; he also has a contact with BIA who would likely be interested in participating.

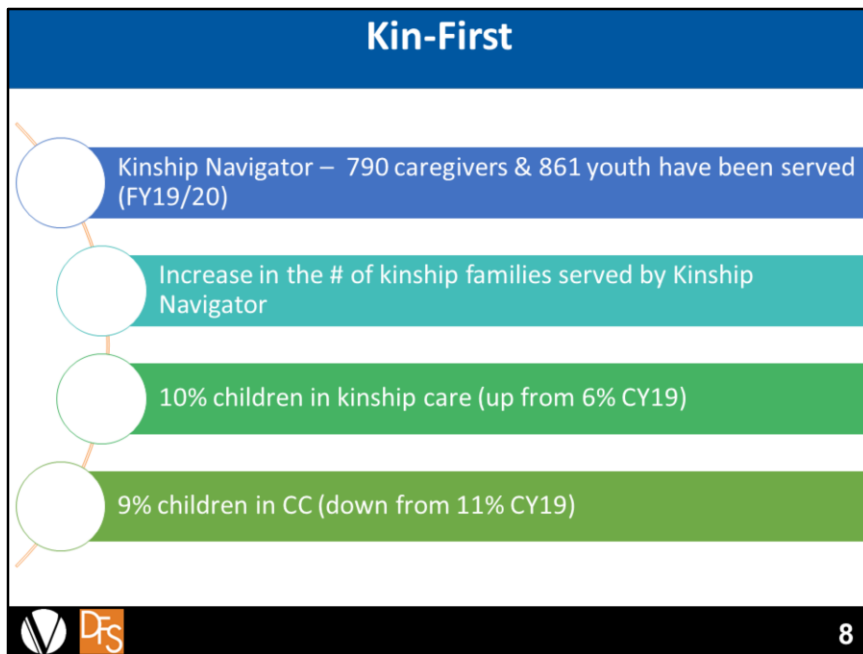
Resource Family Recruitment

- Ideas and strategies to recruit
- Sharing information with your tribes – what medium?
- Kinship approval process



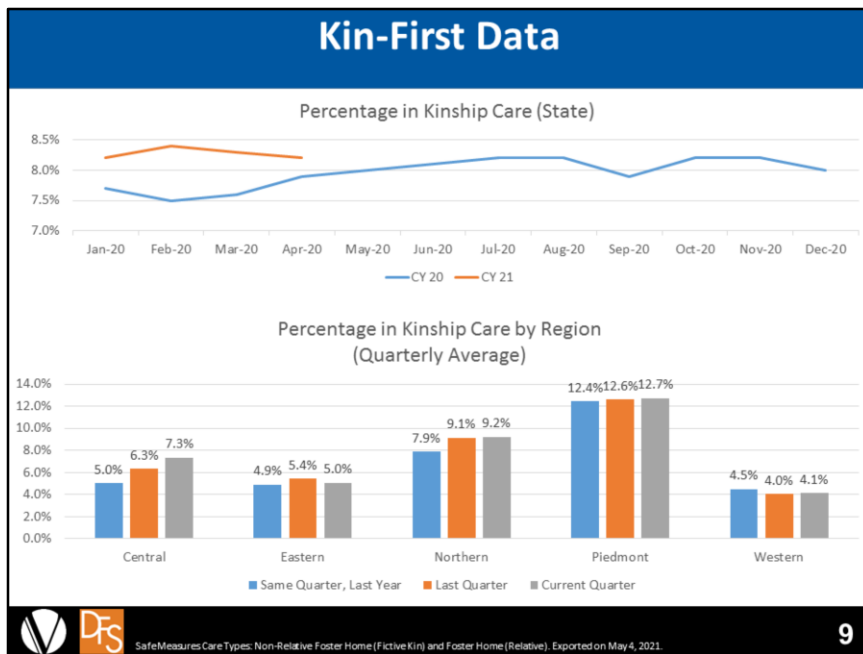
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Brenda asked for input on how to get a pool of families when a child enters foster care and cannot be immediately placed with kin or with their own tribe. Yvonne mentioned she did go through the process and indicates that the process is invasive in that they do ask a lot of personal questions which are necessary to properly vet families. She indicated that having that personal touch in addition to flyers, etc would be helpful such as hosting an organized event/gathering. Nottoway wants to be supportive of other Native people. Lindsey said that hearing from another foster parent and their experience would be helpful, possibly virtually if not in person due to the pandemic. Reggie indicated that he would be willing to share materials to include a checklist/requirements in a digital format through outreach, social media (i.e. Facebook) and other communication. Lindsey indicated the same; they have an email blast and monthly newsletter where information can be shared. Chief Adkins also willing to share with his tribe. Re: kinship foster care placements: Julia described how guidance was recently updated to allow for waivers so that children who enter foster care can be placed with relatives and fictive kin immediately after safety checks are completed.



Brenda indicated that one of DFS’s focus areas is around kin-first work. Some highlights of the past year include an increase in the # of folks served through our kinship navigator programs, which is a resource for both informal and formal kinship caregivers. We are working on a kinship website will be developed to improve access to information and resources for our kinship families and also connect them to kinship navigators when necessary.

DFS has also seen a 4% increase in children who are placed with kinship foster parents both relative and fictive kin while we’ve seen a 2% decrease in the number of children in foster care who are placed in congregate care.



Here, we are seeing the percentage of children who have been placed with kin or relatives. The top chart shows a large increase in March 2020 for children being placed with kin/relative over the previous year, with a slight decrease in both September 2020 and December 2020. In 2021, we have been consistently above our average in 2020 as a state.

The bottom chart compares our quarterly averages of children placed with kin/relatives by region.

Kin-First and Supporting Youth Aging Out

Emancipation is defined as youth who turn 18 while in Foster Care.

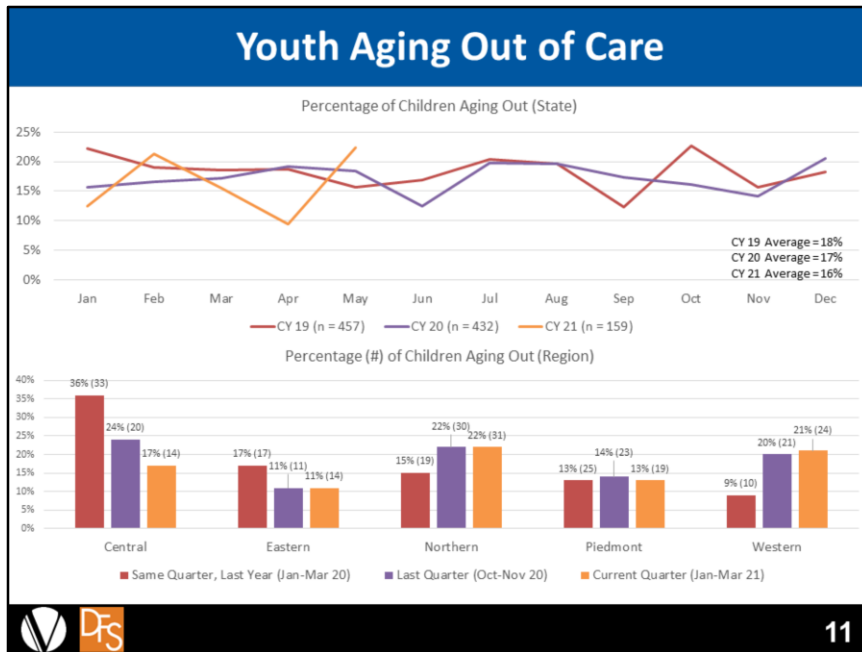
On average, 826 days in care (2.3 years)

Less than a quarter of these youth had a TPR finalized (24.3%)

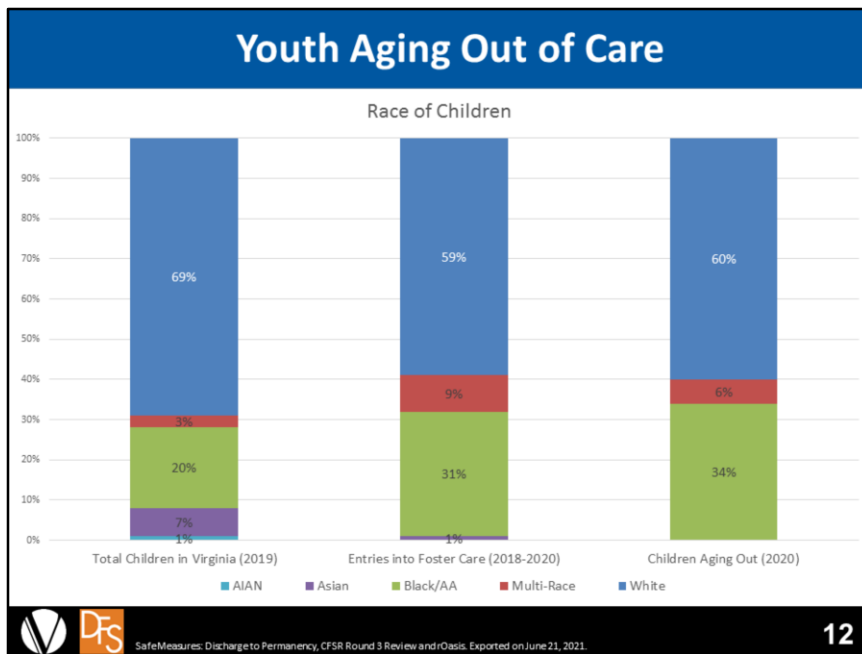
Only 10.9% had ever been placed with a relative or kin prior to emancipation.



The next area of focus is the population of youth aging out of care. When we say “aging” out or emancipation, we are talking about youth who turned 18 years of age while in FC. This is not achieving permanency and national data tells at that youth who age out have higher rates of homelessness, substance use, unemployment and incarceration. In Virginia, these youth spend 826 days in care. Less than a quarter of youth had a termination of parental rights finalized (TPR). And only 10.9% had ever been placed with a relative or kin prior to emancipation.



The top line chart shows the percentage of children who have aged out of care. This calculation is based on the amount of children who have aged out of care versus those who have exited for another reason. The bottom bar chart gives our quarterly averages for children aging out of care. The total number of children are included in parenthesis for each quarter.



On the left side, you are seeing the racial identity of our children in Virginia based on the most recent Census Data report (2019). The middle chart looks at the racial identity of our children that entered foster care between 2018 and 2020. On the far right, you are seeing the racial breakdown of 432 children, that aged out of care during calendar year 2020. In 2020, we did not have any identified AIAN youth who aged out of care.

Kin-First Culture and Substance Use Disorder

- Families are the experts on themselves
- Driving and included in decision-making
- Opportunity to rely on one another for support



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Our kin-first work highlights engagement with families and letting families be the experts on themselves. However, we know that challenges exist as staff balance encouraging parents, and being an ally to parents but also having the charge of child protection and safety. This paradox is frequently encountered with cases involving substance use disorder (SUD) and parents who are moving through recovery.

Substance Use Disorder Recovery Framework

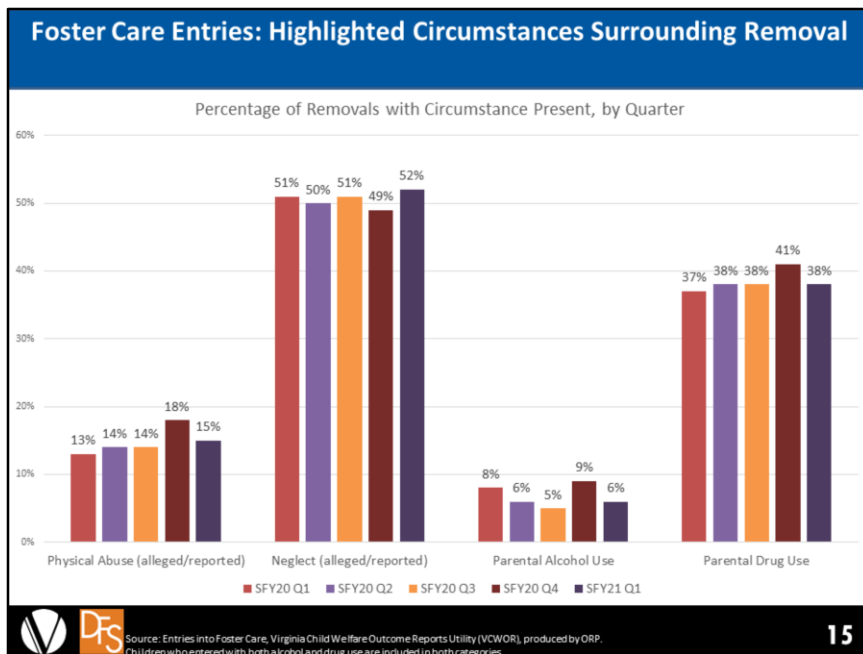
VDSS SUD Framework



Source: Stephen Wade, SUD Recovery Ally Presentation, 5/11/21

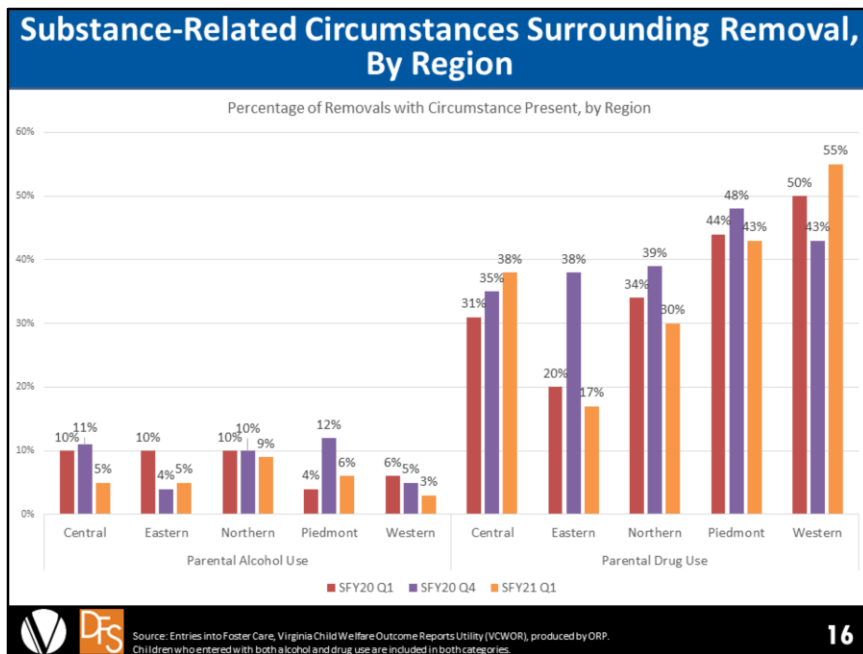
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Stephen Wade is the Health Equity Project Manager with the Office of Community and Volunteer Services at VDSS. He recently presented on the SUD Ally work he and this team are heading up at VDSS. Our focus on SUD is important due to its impact on the families we serve and we want to do better serving families impacted by SUD.



This slide shows the percentage of removals with circumstance present by quarter. On the bars on the left, this represents the % of foster care entries where physical abuse was alleged/reported. We see that in state fiscal year 20 quarter 4 which is April 2020 to June 2020 had the highest percentage.

Neglect was at it's highest at 52% for state fiscal year 21 in the first quarter, that's July 2020 to September 2020. For parental alcohol use, we saw it's highest % in state fiscal year 20 quarter 4 and then for parental drug use, the farthest right hand side of this slide, we saw it's highest rate at state fiscal year quarter 4, which again is April 2020 to June 2020 right at the peak of the pandemic.



This slide is showing substance-related circumstances surrounding removal by region. On average about 38% of removals had parental substance use documented and around 7% of removals had parental alcohol use documented. Kimberly asked if DFS knew why there seem to be lower percentages in the Eastern region for parental drug use. This is something we would have to dig deeper on.

Questions, Comments, Ideas and Updates!



Brenda let group know that we hope to send another team of staff and our tribal partners to the Kempe Conference, October 4-7, please let Brenda know if your and/or a member of your tribe is interested in joining a team of DFS staff.

Next Meeting

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We will look at dates in later September for our next Roundtable meeting.





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