

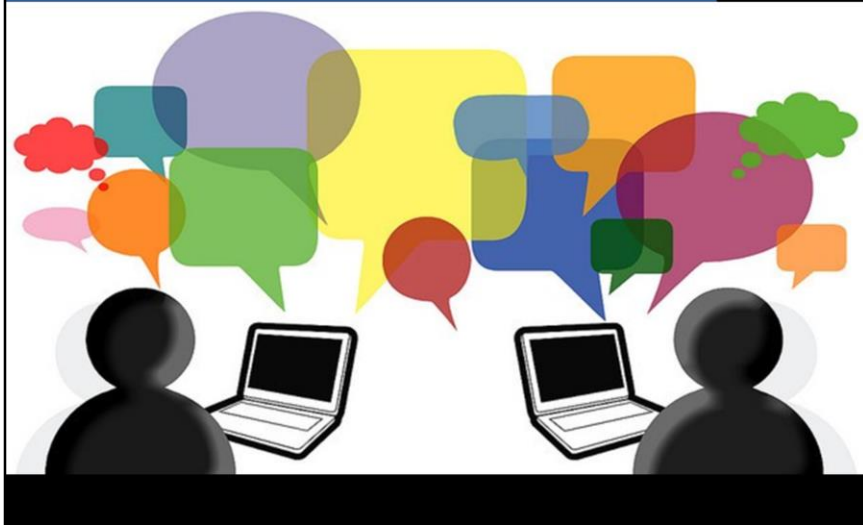


Virginia Department of Social Services

people helping people

Roundtable with Virginia's Tribes

September 29, 2021



Present:

Brenda Sampe, VDSS

Doris Austin, Eastern Chickahominy Indian Tribe

Lindsey Johnson, Chickahominy Tribe

Susann Brown, Chickahominy Tribe

Yvonne Epps-Giddings, Nottoway Tribe

Em Parente, VDSS

Jewel Wynn, VDSS

Morgan Dean, Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe

Wilma Hicks, Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe

Chief Stephen Adkins, Chickahominy Indian Tribe

Mia Eubanks, Chickahominy Indian Tribe

Kimberly Huhn-Murphy, ACF

AGENDA

- Welcome/Introductions
- Kempe Conference Reminder
- ICWA Training Workgroup
- November's DFS Newsletter Content
- Kin First Culture and Data
- Questions, Updates, Ideas to Share
- Next Roundtable
- Plus/Delta

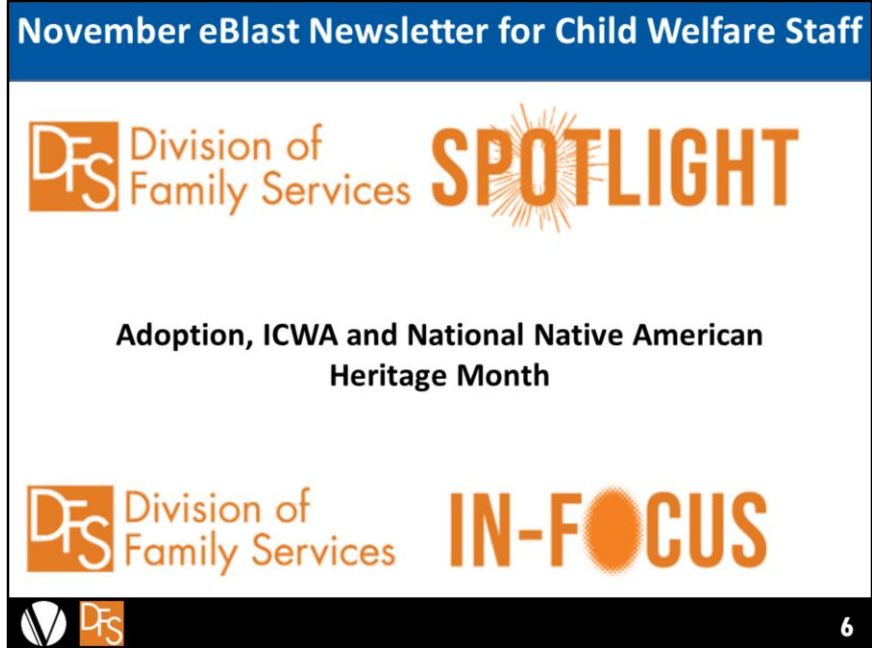




Brenda reminded tribes that this was last week to register with VDSS if would like to attend – please email Brenda (b.sampe@dss.virginia.gov) stat if you'd like to attend. Yvonne asked if she could join a team like she did last year.



Brenda provided update that looking to start time-limited workgroup later October to create an ICWA eLearning training for child welfare staff to provide the main points of ICWA they need to remember, point them to resources and guidance, etc. BIA rep is going to join, Chickahominy’s attorney will join, two local department staff will join who have ICWA experience with out of state federally recognized tribes, Monacan Indian Nation would like to contribute. Yvonne asked if she could contribute even if not a member of a federally recognized tribe and Brenda noted that her insight on collaboration between government agencies and tribes would be helpful – Brenda will include her on meeting notices. Brenda reiterated that eLearning will be more impactful to have our tribes’ voices incorporated in some way in this training. Chief Adkins mentioned that training is important because having to operate “trial by fire” with this being so new to Virginia. Concern about Texas and the Brackeen case and the assault on ICWA occurring there by the dominate culture. More information about that case and the impact to ICWA can be found here:
<https://www.nicwa.org/fifth-circuit-court-of-appeals-issues-en-banc-decision-in-brackeen-v-haaland/>



Brenda gave an overview of a statewide newsletter send to all child welfare staff twice a month highlighting various topics throughout the year. For November, Adoption and ICWA and National Native American Heritage Month will be highlighted. The first newsletter that comes out around the 1st of the month focuses on national information, general policy information, and data. The second newsletter comes out around the 15th of the month and that's where we focus more on individual agencies and provide lived expertise stories/insight. Brenda asked group if there was information about their tribes they would like to contribute. Two items that were mentioned: The Regional Anti Trafficking Conference planning committee for conference occurring in February 2022 – both Susann with Chickahominy and Candace with Chickahominy Eastern Division are part of this work. Susann also mentioned that her tribe and the local school system are partnering on a Indian Education grant and have a Parent Indian Education Committee with various members. Brenda will reach out after meeting for more information on these projects to include in the newsletter. If anyone else has information to share, around ICWA and/or their tribes, please let Brenda know asap as need to get things ready early for the November release.

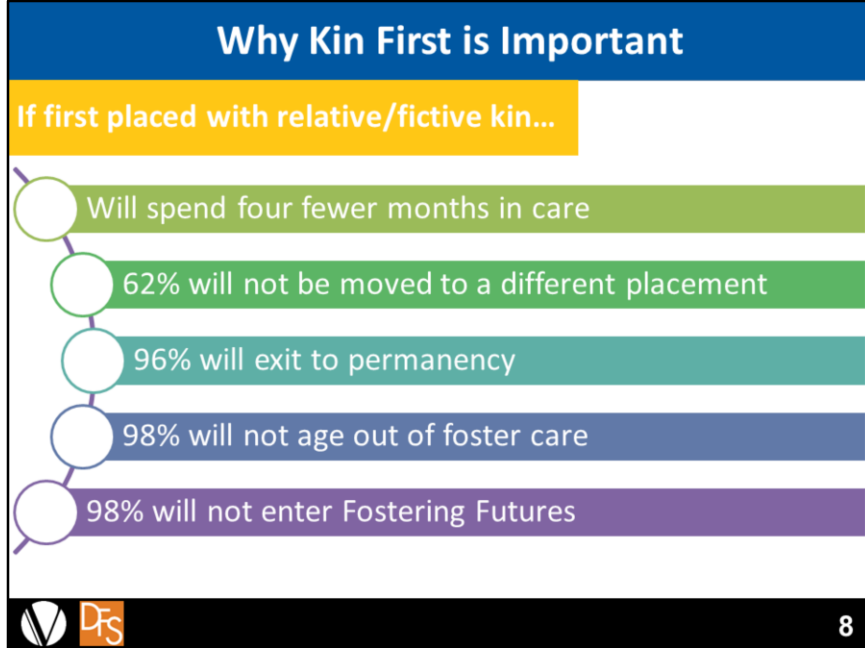
Kin First Culture

- Approaches work as a learner and recognizes families as the experts
- Invests in discovery, which leads to engagement
- Maintains strong connections to families
- Includes families in decision-making
- Creates opportunities for families to rely on one another as natural supports



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Brenda shared that DFS has shared this slide in different forms a previous meetings and we are updating it to include more relevant practices. We are reinforcing the kin first message and believe that we must approach our work as learners because the families are the experts. By investing in discovery work, it gives the family the opportunity to expand their natural support system and empower families to work together to keep children safe. Finding family is not a “one and done” practice – we have to continue to find family not only as placement options but as supports/connections for our children who are in foster care – this is discovery work.



Garrett Jones, the Family Engagement and Resource Family Program Manager, created this slide which really focused on the outcomes that we always say we want to improve. This just highlights why we are so focused on kin first and placing a child who comes into care with a relative/fictive kin.

Kinship Awareness Month



Kinship Care Month

09/01/2021

WHEREAS, more than 190,000 children in Virginia reside in a home where a relative is the head of the household and more than 67,000 children are being raised by a relative with no parent present; and

WHEREAS, kinship caregiving is found in all socioeconomic, education, ethnic, and racial backgrounds, providing many opportunities as well as unique challenges; and

WHEREAS, every child in Virginia deserves the opportunity to grow and learn in a supportive, loving, safe home environment while retaining a sense of family, cultural heritage, and community ties; and

WHEREAS, individuals and families caring for a relative's children make numerous personal and financial sacrifices to support children in need; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth is committed to reconnecting and strengthening families; and

WHEREAS, kinship families have prevented children from entering the foster care system and allowed children to leave the foster care system and return to their families; and

WHEREAS, Kinship Care Month reflects the core values of family, community, and the welfare of children shared by all citizens of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, through the partnerships among foster, adoptive, and kinship parents, local Department of Social Services staff, and public and private child-serving organizations, efforts are made to ensure that children are safe and their voices are heard as we work for the success of every child; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is committed to working together to celebrate the strengths and address the challenges by supporting kinship families who are raising a relative's or close family friend's child on their own or with local Department of Social Services support; and

WHEREAS, kinship families continue to need services like support groups, resources, trainings on issues important to kinship families, assistance with finding and accessing needed services, and information about permanency options;

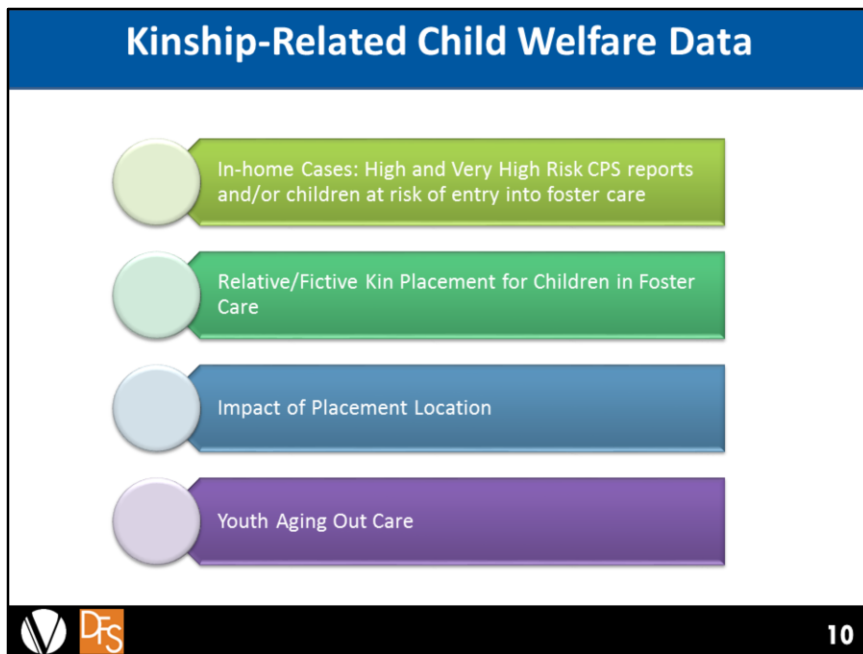
NOW THEREFORE, I, Ralph S. Northam, do hereby recognize September 2021 as **KINSHIP CARE MONTH** in our **COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.



September is National Kinship Awareness Month and this the Governor's proclamation to acknowledge why we highlight kinship caregivers. You can read full proclamation here:

[https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/proclamations/proclamation/kinship-care-](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/proclamations/proclamation/kinship-care-month.html#:~:text=NOW%2C%20THEREFORE%2C%20I%2C%20Ralph,attention%20of%20all%20our%20citizens.)

[month.html#:~:text=NOW%2C%20THEREFORE%2C%20I%2C%20Ralph,attention%20of%20all%20our%20citizens.](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/newsroom/proclamations/proclamation/kinship-care-month.html#:~:text=NOW%2C%20THEREFORE%2C%20I%2C%20Ralph,attention%20of%20all%20our%20citizens.)

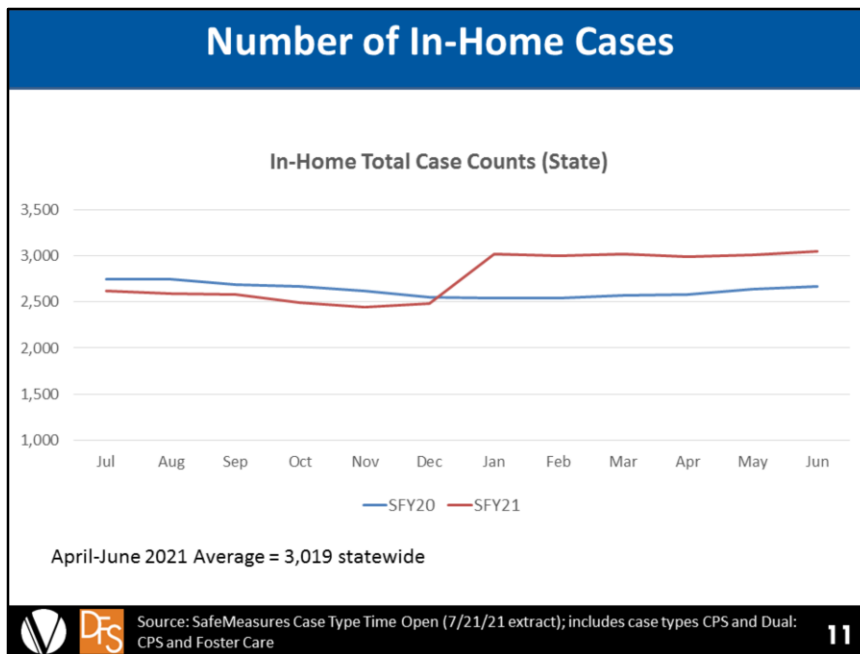


The next slides take a deeper dive into data we've collected, particularly around kinship. For those unfamiliar with terminology, at DFS, an "in-home case" is a case that is opened from a high or very high risk valid CPS report and/or the children are at high risk of entry into foster care. "High or very high risk" is assessed during the valid CPS report through a research-based assessment tool. Yvonne asked if they could see the assessment tool because oftentimes, assessment are based on a general population and not taking into account cultural attributes. Em said that all guidance and the tools are on the VDSS public website.

For ALL of the guidance manuals in Family Services, go here:

<https://www.dss.virginia.gov/about/manuals.cgi>

For the SDM Risk Assessment tool to determine risk level (i.e. high or very high risk), go here: https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/dfs/cps/intro_page/forms/032-02-0801-01-eng.pdf



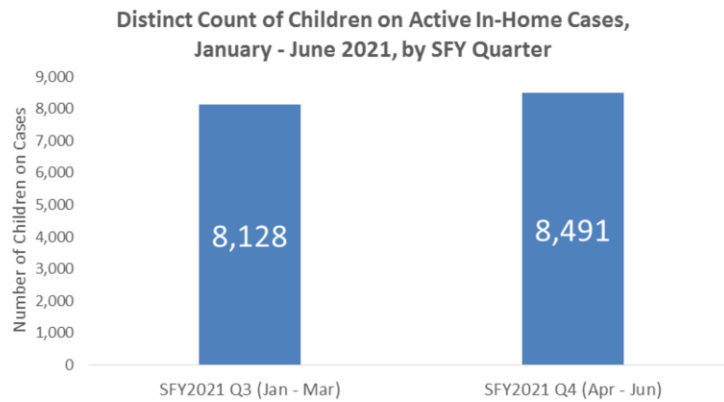
Before we went into the kinship specific data for in-home cases, we thought it was important to share the overall in-home data since this is something we have not looked at as a group. The monthly average of In-Home cases between April and June was 3,019 statewide. This was similar to January through March’s average, but an increase of 15% compared to the same period last year.

An important thing to note about opening an in-home case: LDSS should open a case when there is a high/very high risk on the structured decision making tools. At this time, we know we really want to improve on the percentage of cases that are opened.

Em noted one example of why a high or very high risk case may NOT be opened is when a parent is incarcerated and another parent is able to keep the child safe for the long term.

As a reminder, children involved in an in-home case are NOT in DSS custody/not in FC; they are working with the local department to strengthen their family through increasing protective factors and reducing safety concerns – addressing the root cause of why there is risk for abuse/neglect. In some of these in-home case, there may be a significant safety concern and so the family and DSS may decide to have children live with a relative/kin caregiver.

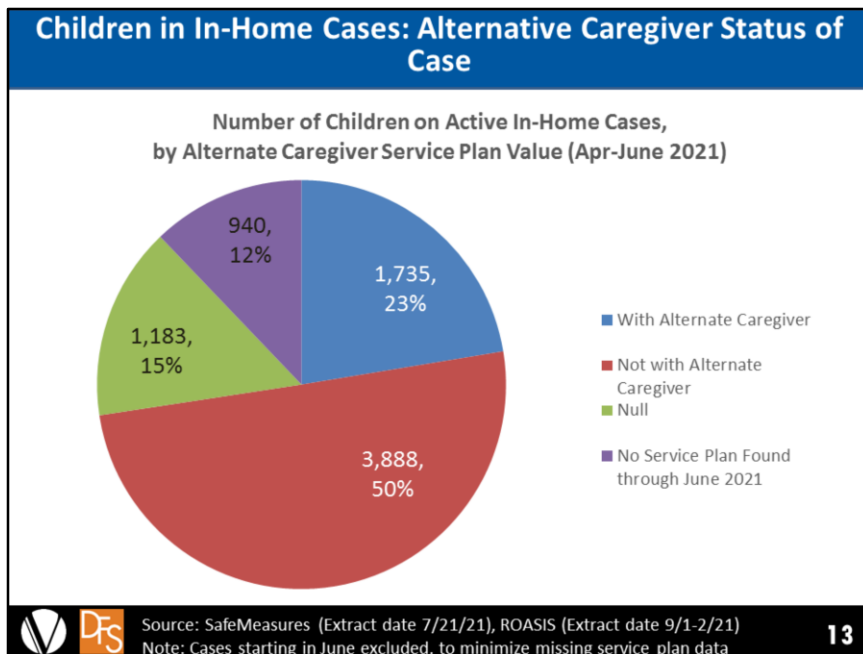
Number of Children Involved in an In-Home Case



Source: SafeMeasures (Extract date 7/21/21), ROASIS (Extract date 9/1-2/21)

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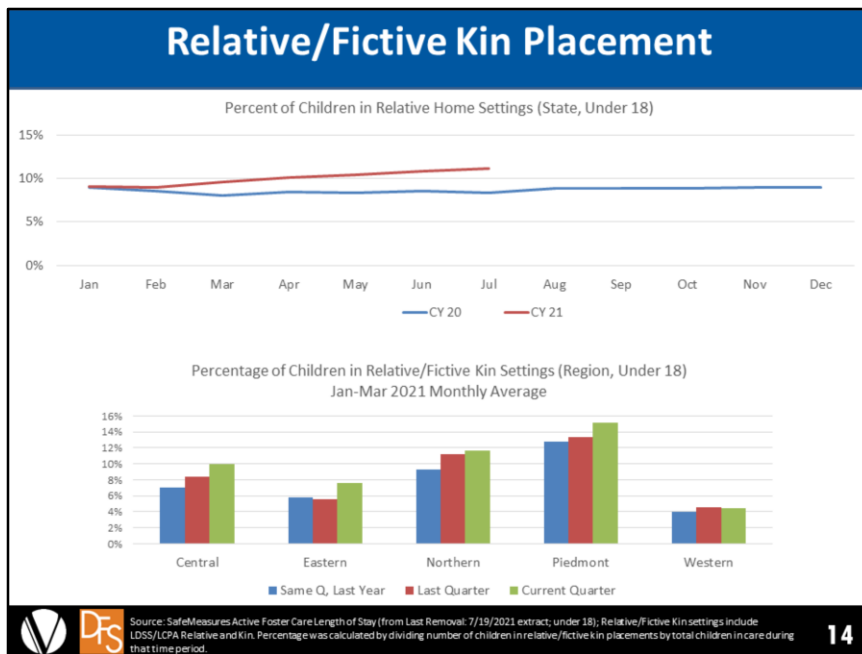
Here we have the number of children involved in an in-home case = 8,491 between April and June 2021.



Now we are going to look at kinship specific data in in-home. In guidance, an alternate caregiver could be a relative or fictive kin. We see that in 23% of in-home cases, the child(ren) are with a relative or fictive kin in lieu of foster care. Oftentimes, DSS and the family are working together to have the child(ren) return to the parents/home of origin. Sometimes a decision is made that the relative or fictive kin will take custody of the child for a more permanent arrangement.

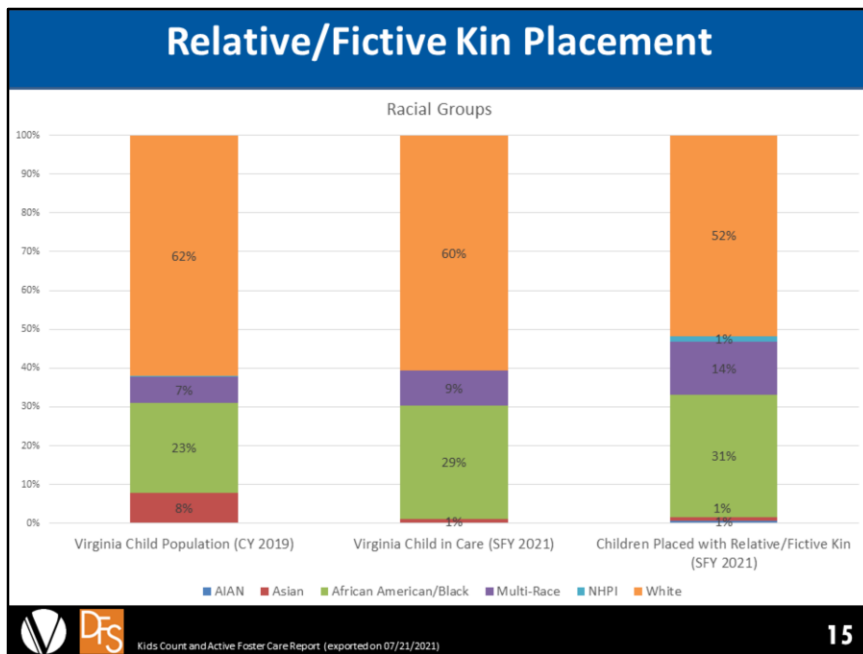
Kim noted the 12% of missing service plans and how VDSS would address this. Em discussed that we are developing some targeted assistance for LDSS to ensure accurate completion and documentation of service plans and why we shared this slide at the Child Welfare Advisory Committee (CWAC) last week since there are so many local departments on that committee.

Null means that a service plan was found for the cases of these children, but the alternate caregiver box was not selected. Yvonne mentioned we should consider changing the titles on the chart b/c it is confusing when it says “not with alternate caregiver” and null.



Here we are looking at the placement of children in foster care in relative/fictive kin homes. This is an update from our previous meeting to show the good work that is occurring in VA. On the top, you are seeing the line graph for the state. We have been increasing since January of 2021 for those under 18 in relative/fictive kin homes.

Below you will see a bar chart comparing regions by quarters. Overall, Piedmont has the highest percentage of children in relative/fictive kin homes.

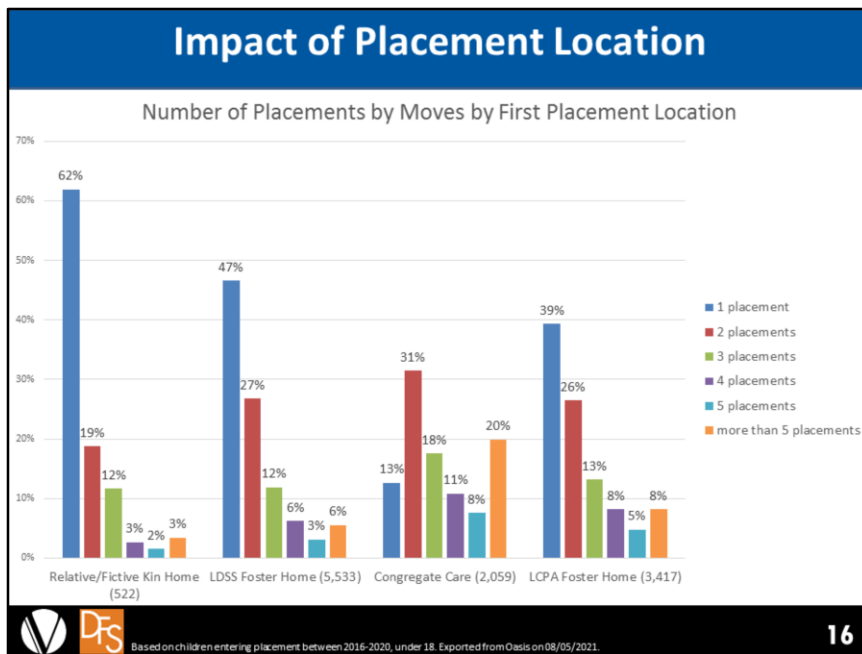


Here we are looking at the racial breakdown of different groups. On the far left, you see the racial breakdown of children in the state of Virginia. The next bar chart provides information about children who entered care. The chart on the far right represents the racial groups for children placed with relative/fictive kin.

We can see that White children were less represented as being placed with relative/fictive kin. Multi racial and African American/Black were more represented for those placed with relative/fictive kin.

You can see that American Indian/Alaskan Native children in foster care with relative/fictive kin it is at 1% of total kids with relative/fictive kin and that is just slightly higher than their overall representation in foster care.

Kim noted that this kinship data is not as reflective of national trends with respect to racial disparity/disproportionality.



The decisions that are made when placing children in foster care are critical in providing stability that is critical to the ability of children to heal from the trauma related not only to abuse and neglect but the trauma of separation from their families.

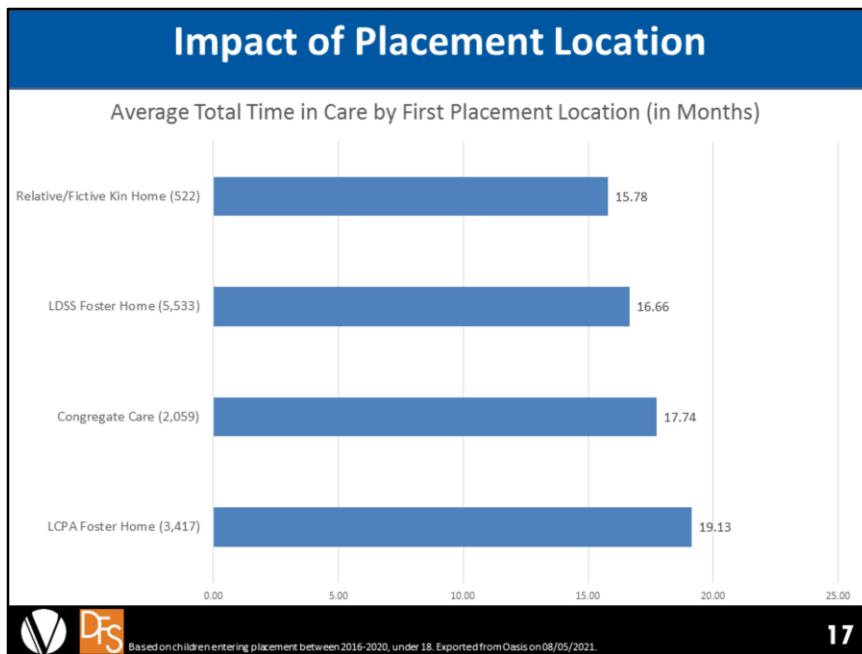
Here we are seeing how many times a child was moved based on their first placement location. Each location—or cluster of bars—includes all children that were first placed in that location so, for example, the cluster of bars on the far left for relative/fictive kin home includes all 522 children that were first placed in that location. We can see that 62% (or 324 children) remained in their original location. This is shown by looking at the light blue bar above “relative/fictive kin home” that represents only being in one placement.

Reviewing the blue bars for all placements (i.e., being in one placement), we see that children first placed with relative/fictive kin were more likely to remain in that placement at 62%, followed by children first placed in LDSS foster homes at 47% and LCPA foster homes at 39%.

Children that had been in five or more placements—looking at the orange bars—

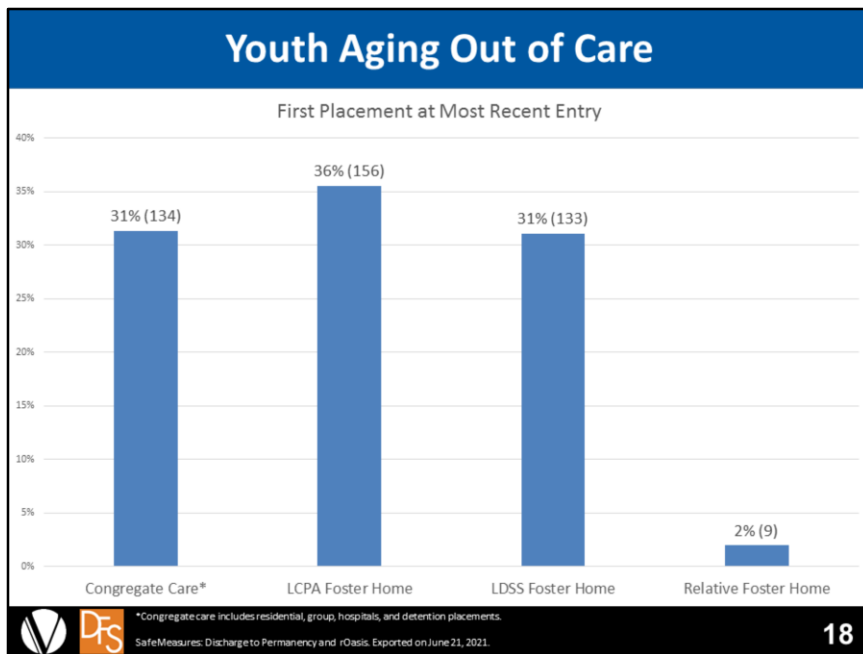
were more likely to be first placed in a congregate care setting.

Yvonne asked if there was data around the primary reasons for the higher # of placements/moves for performance management piece? Em noted that kids are moved oftentimes because they are in settings that cannot meet their needs and then placement is disrupted. We are focused on getting our kids in the right placement up front. Kimberly noted that data reviews occur on a smaller # of cases through OMS – looking at permanency outcome, Item 4 – “Is the child in foster care in a **stable placement** and were any changes in the child’s placement in the best interests of the child and consistent with achieving the child’s permanency goal(s)?”



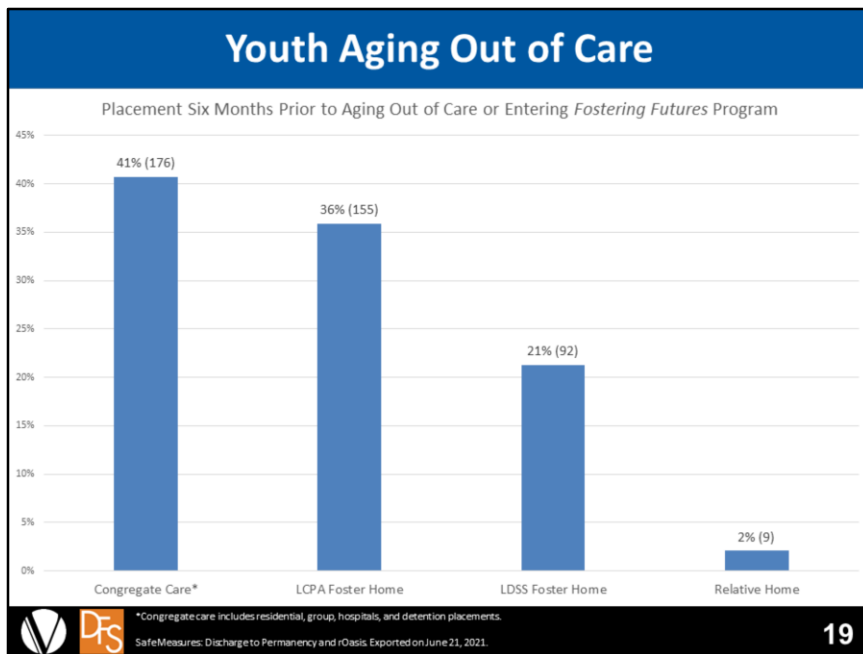
Looking at the average amount of time in care based on where the child was first placed. If a child was first placed in Licensed Child Placing Agency foster home, they were in care the longest at 19.13 months (on average) followed by children first placed in congregate care settings (17.74 months). Being placed first in a relative/fictive kin home would result in the child spending the least amount of total time in care at 15.78 months.

Kim noted she would have thought that Congregate Care and LCPA would be the other way around based on previous data shared.



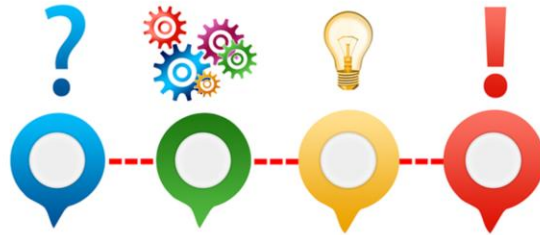
Here we are looking at where our children were first placed that aged out of care during 2020.

Based on these 377 children, 36% were first placed in a LCPA foster home, while 31% were placed in congregate care and LDSS foster homes. Only 2% were first placed in a relative foster home placement.



Here we are looking at where our children were prior to aging out of care or entering our *Fostering Futures* program. Based on our 432 children that aged out of care in 2020, a majority were in congregate care placements six months prior to aging out of care or entering *Fostering Futures*. 36% were in LCPA foster home, followed by 21% in a LDSS foster home. Only 2% were in a relative foster home placement.


Questions, Comments, Ideas and Updates!





Brenda asked if we could earlier in the month of December vs end of the month – no opposition to this suggestion.

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Plus:

Kimberly: data, data analysis and discussion

Lindsey: development of ICWA training, data, conference reminder

Delta:

None noted





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