



University of
Nebraska-
Lincoln
Center on
Children,
Families,
and the Law

Case Progression and Court Improvement Data Report for 2010



District 11 Team 3: Furnas, Hitchcock, and Red Willow Counties

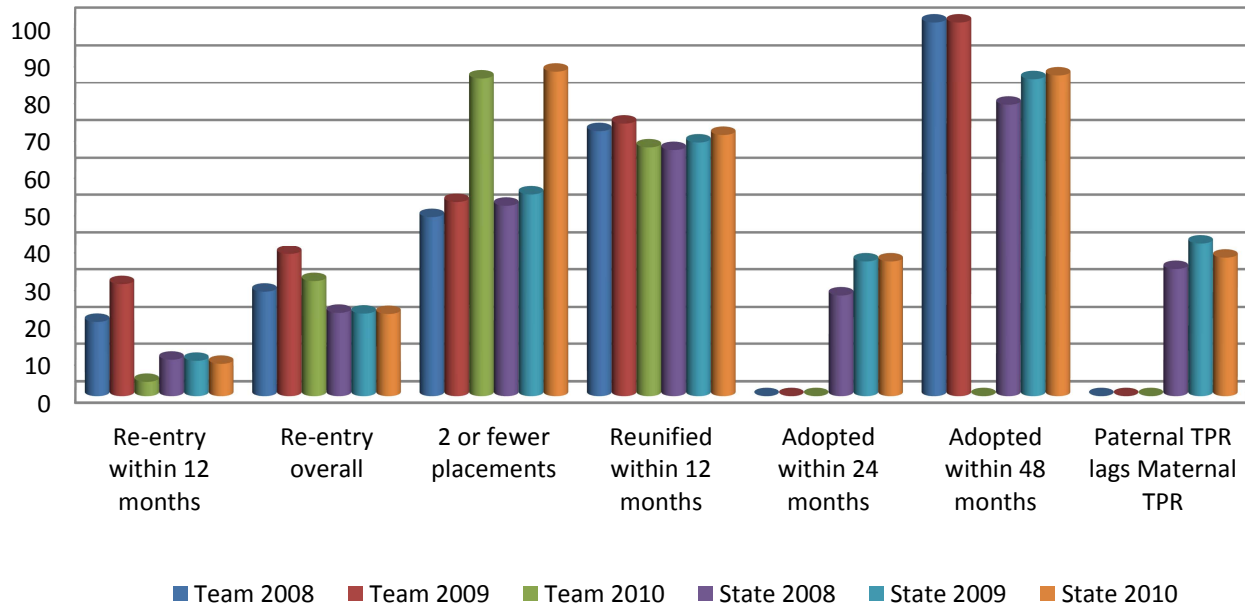


Information provided in this document is designed to help your team improve case progression, as this is one area the courts can control. Timeliness of hearings has a significant impact on time to case closure, which means that courts can make a difference in the lives of children in the system. Data on pages 1 and 2 come from Fostering Court Improvement (fosteringcourtimprovement.org/ne) and data on page 3 were collected through JUSTICE to track case progression timelines for all abuse/neglect cases that closed in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

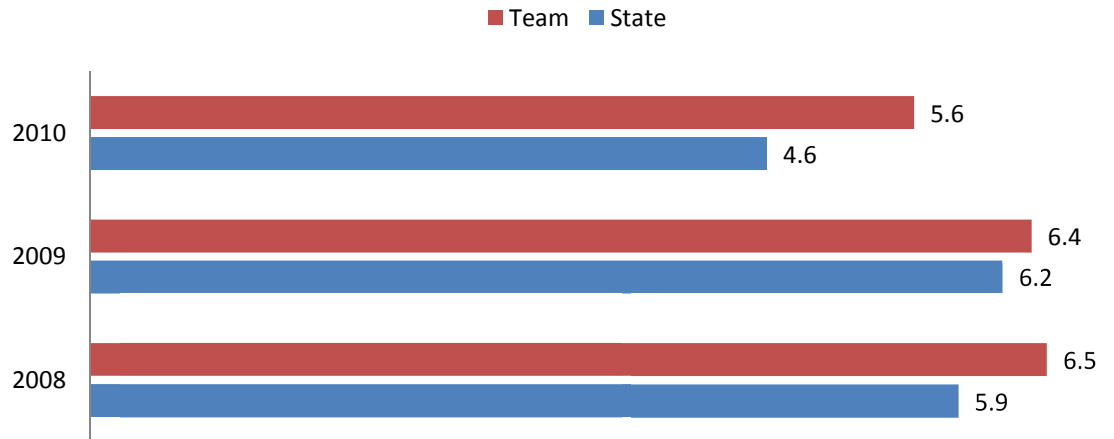
	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010	National 2009
Poverty rate*	19%	19%	n/a	13.7%	15.3%	n/a	20%
Median length of stay	12 months	22 months	13 months	13 months	12 months	14 months	14 months
Median months to reunification	10 months	9 months	11 months	7 months	7 months	11 months	n/a
Median months to adoption	37 months	46 months	n/a	34 months	29 months	29 months	n/a

* Poverty data comes from the U.S. Census Bureau. For the Fostering Court Improvement measures, 2010 refers to data from April 2010 through March 2011.

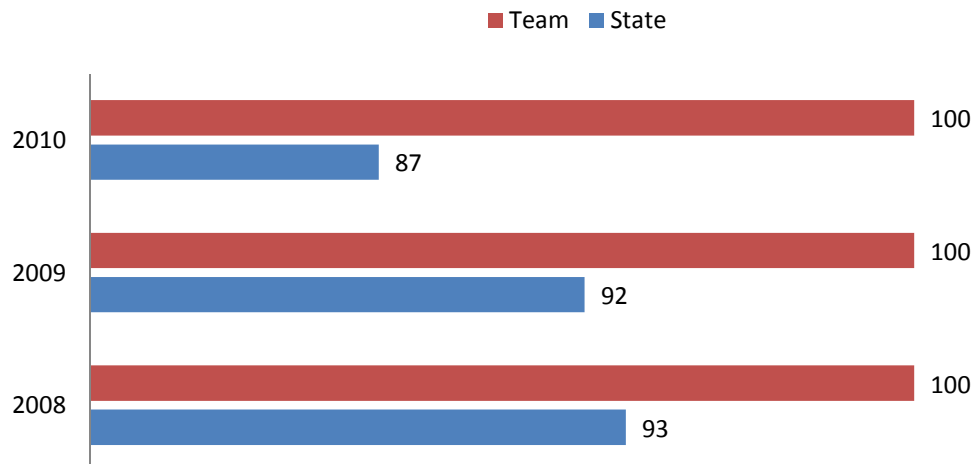
Percentages for 2008, 2009, and 2010



Rates of Removal per 10k Children



Percent of Children over 12 in Group Home Placements



In District 11 Team 3, there were 24 abuse and neglect cases that closed between January 1 and December 31, 2008. In 2009, 19 abuse and neglect cases closed. In 2010, 8 abuse and neglect cases closed. The following summary is based on that data.

Medians represent the center-point for cases in your team. Half of your cases had time that was shorter than the medians, and half of cases had time longer than the median. N/r means values were "not reported."

	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010
Petition to Ex Parte	0 days	-1 day	n/r	1 day	1 day	0 days
Petition to Protective Custody	0 days	1 day	0 days	1 day	1 day	0 days
Petition to First Appearance	12 days	6 days	4 days	9 days	10 days	12 days
Petition to Adjudication	24 days	55 days	37 days	57 days	72 days	73 days
Adjudication To Disposition	49 days	48 days	0 days	56 days	49 days	50 days
Petition to Case Closure	18 months	13 months	22 months	23 months	18 months	19 months
Case Outcome	79% reunify	100% reunify	63% reunify	63% reunify	60% reunify	57% reunify

Trends

The small number of cases closing in 2010 makes it difficult to accurately interpret any trends. It appears that court case progression is timely and that median length of stay in foster care is comparable to the state. One concern is that overall re-entry rates appear to be high. The team may want to explore whether cases are closed prematurely or whether rehabilitative services for parents effectively address the problems contributing to the maltreatment.





Improving Outcomes for Youth in Care

Zero to Three

Infants and toddlers make up approximately one-third of children in foster care in Nebraska. This early stage of the child's life is crucial to his/her development. Therefore, the court system must do everything it can to ensure timely and safe permanency for them. Additionally, the courts need to assure that the health, mental health, and educational (school readiness) needs of these young children are met.

Your team might work on one or all of the following:

- Reducing time to permanency for infants and toddlers
- Ensuring that parenting time recommendations are followed
- Increasing the use of high quality and stable child care
- Ensuring CAPTA Part C evaluations are occurring and young children are getting services they need
- Ensuring that infants and toddlers with mental health needs get evidence based interventions

Older Youth

Almost 40% of Nebraska youth in out-of-home placement are between 16 and 19 years old. Exiting foster care through "aging out" without a permanent family relationship is associated with a variety of serious negative outcomes including lack of a high school degree, unemployment, and homelessness.

The federal Fostering Connections Act and recent Nebraska legislation require a detailed written independent living transition plan for all youth age 16 and over. This plan is to be prepared by DHHS in conjunction with the youth and is to be reviewed at each review or permanency hearing by the court.

Your team might review the new state law and develop a plan to make the transition planning and review process meaningful and effective in preparing older youth for the challenges of adulthood.