



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

# Case Progression and Court Improvement Data Report for 2010



THROUGH THE EYES  
OF THE  
CHILD INITIATIVE

## District 1:

Gage, Jefferson, Johnson,  
Nemaha, Pawnee, Richardson,  
Saline, and Thayer Counties

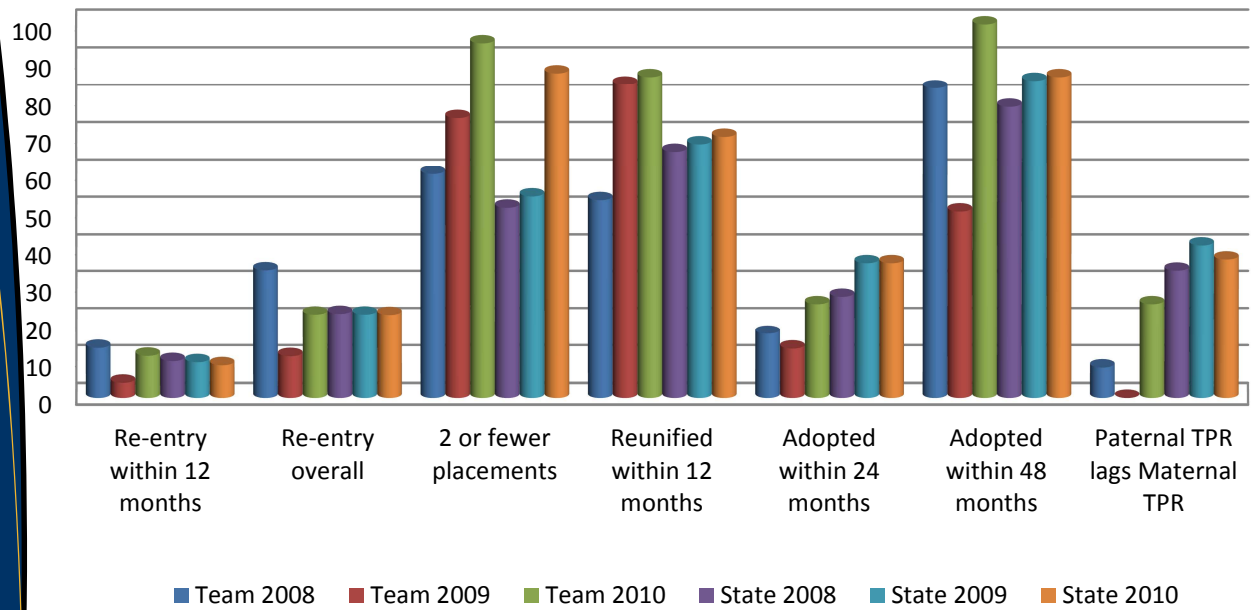


Information provided in this document is designed to help your team improve case progression, as this is one area the courts can control. Timeliness of hearings has a significant impact on time to case closure, which means that courts can make a difference in the lives of children in the system. Data on pages 1 and 2 come from Fostering Court Improvement ([fosteringcourtimprovement.org/ne](http://fosteringcourtimprovement.org/ne)) and data on pages 3-8 were collected through JUSTICE to track case progression timelines for all abuse/neglect cases that closed in 2008, 2009, and 2010.

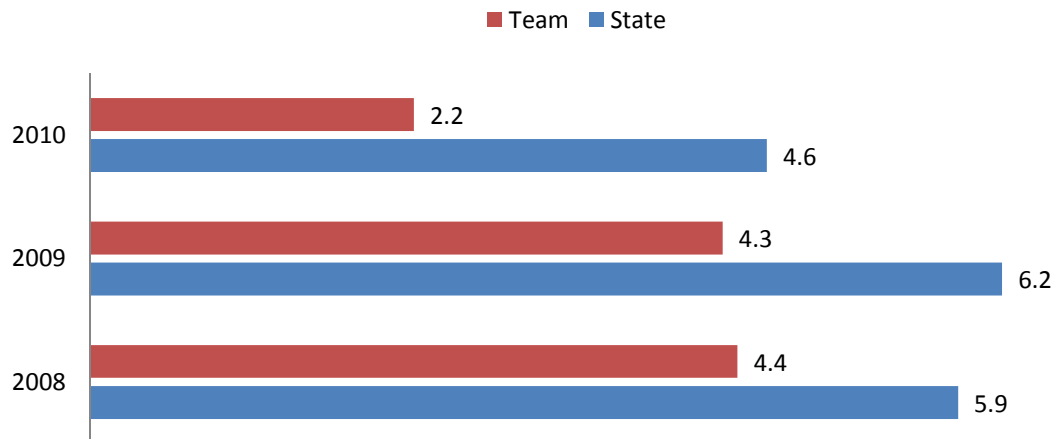
	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010	National 2009
<b>Poverty rate*</b>	15.1%	15.9%	n/a	13.7%	15.3%	n/a	20%
<b>Median length of stay</b>	9 months	5 months	10 months	13 months	12 months	14 months	14 months
<b>Median months to reunification</b>	6 months	4 months	7 months	7 months	7 months	11 months	n/a
<b>Median months to adoption</b>	31 months	32 months	28 months	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.

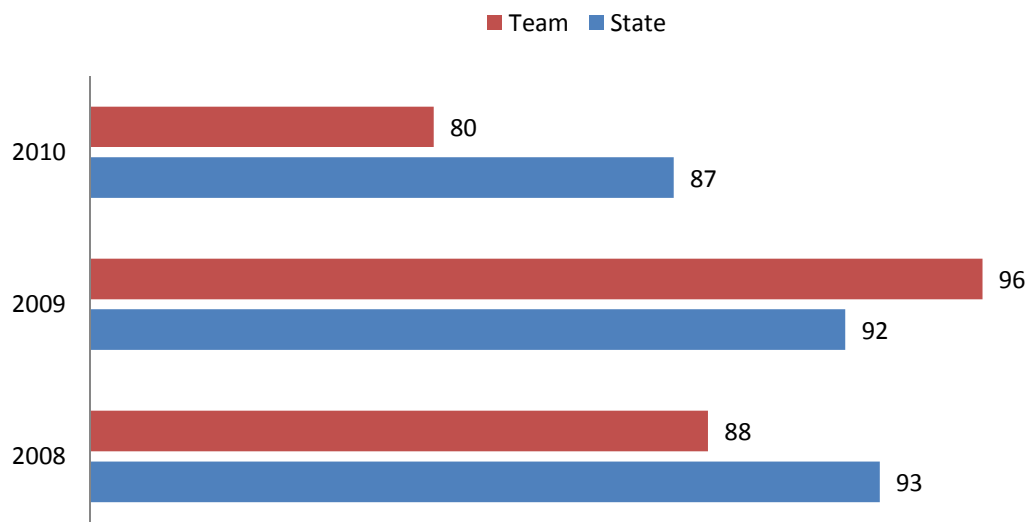
## Percentages for 2008, 2009, and 2010



## Rates of Removal per 10k Children



## Percent of Children over 12 in Group Home



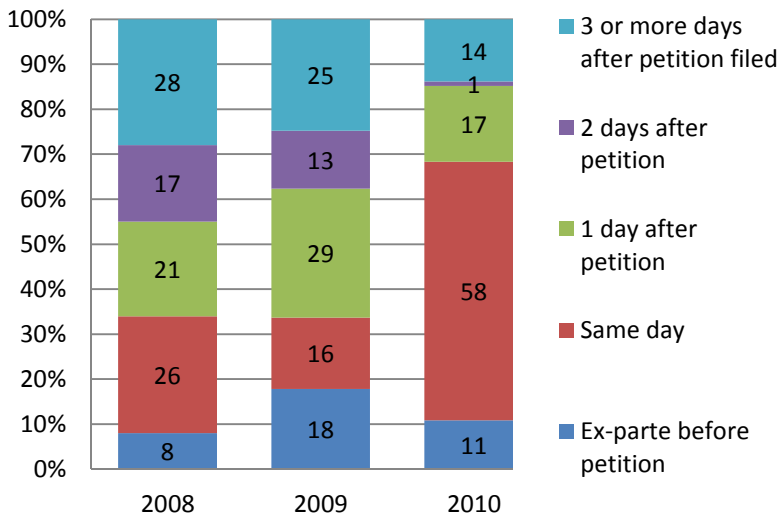
In District 1, there were 59 abuse and neglect cases that closed between January 1 and December 31, 2008. In 2009, 43 such cases closed. In 2010, 28 abuse and neglect cases closed. The below analyses are based on that data.

*Medians represent the center-point for cases in your team. Half of your cases had time that was shorter than the median, and half of cases had time longer than the median. N/a means "not applicable" because the sample size was too small for analyses to be conducted.*

## Timeline progression: All ages

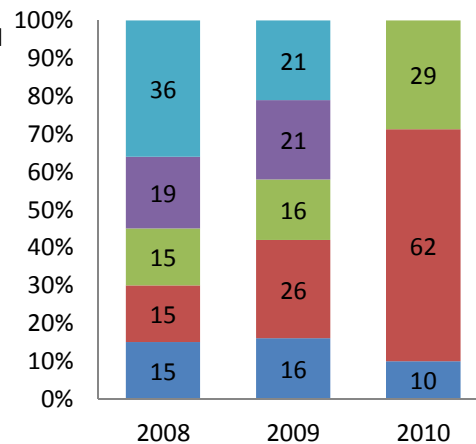
### Nebraska Petition to ex-parte

2008 Median = 1 day  
2009 Median = 1 day  
2010 Median = 0 days



### District 1

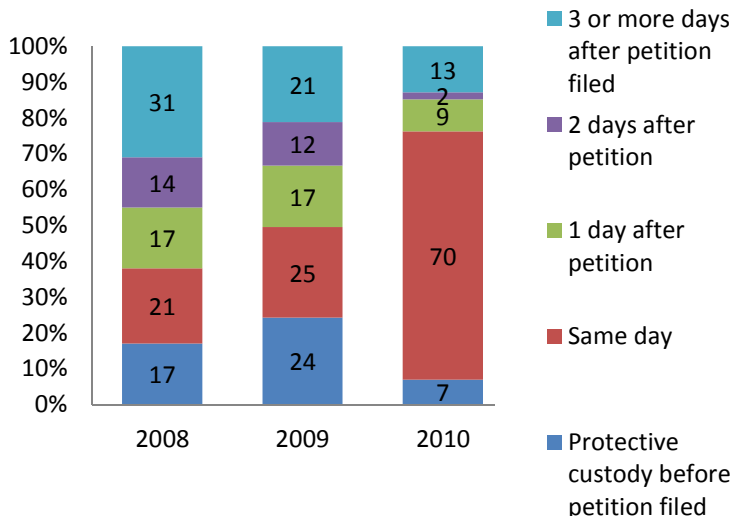
2008 Median = 2 days  
2009 Median = 1 days  
2010 Median = 0 days



## Petition Filing to Protective Custody

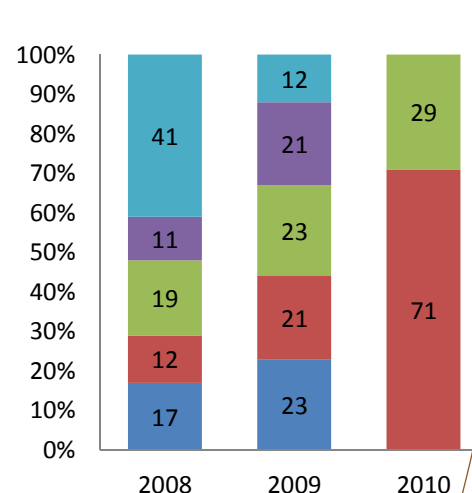
### Nebraska

2008 Median = 1 day  
2009 Median = 1 day  
2010 Median = 0 days



### District 1

2008 Median = 2 days  
2009 Median = 1 day  
2010 Median = 0 days



*\* Note:  
All data  
presented  
uses initial  
petition date  
to court closure  
date and may  
not match HHS  
reports*

## Petition to First Appearance

### Best practice recommendations

**Petition to Protective Custody – petition prior to or same day**

71% of 2010 District 1 cases had filed the petition the same day as protective custody order

**Petition to adjudication – 60 days**

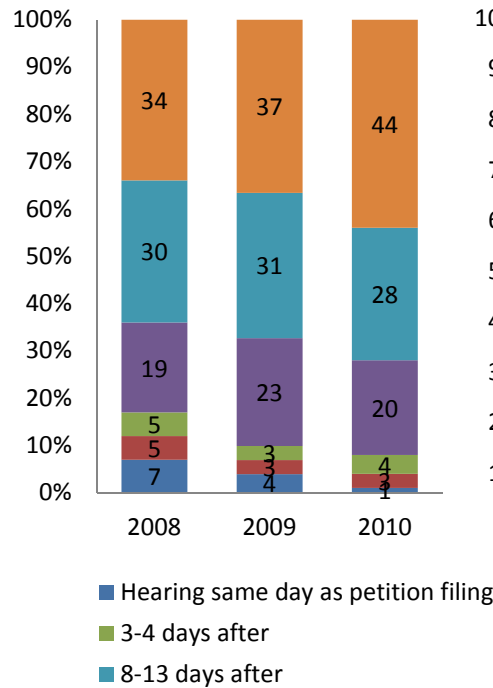
29% of 2010 District 1 cases held the adjudication within 60 days of petition filing

**Adjudication to disposition – 30 days**

40% of 2010 District 1 cases held the disposition within 30 days of adjudication

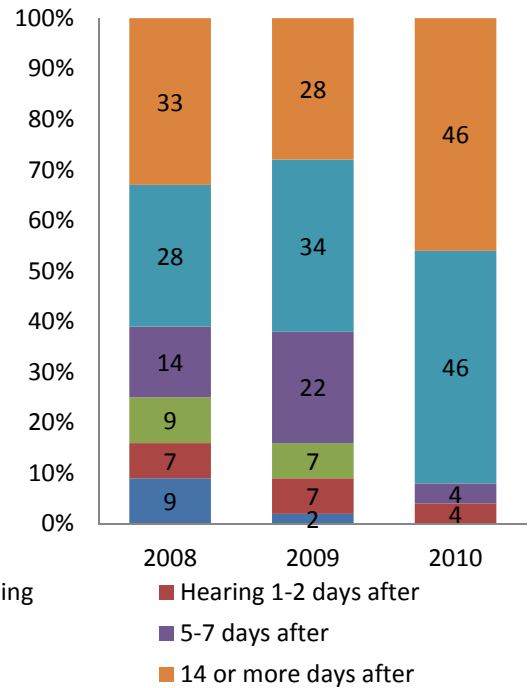
### Nebraska

2008 Median = 9 days  
2009 Median = 10 days  
2010 Median = 12 days



### District 1

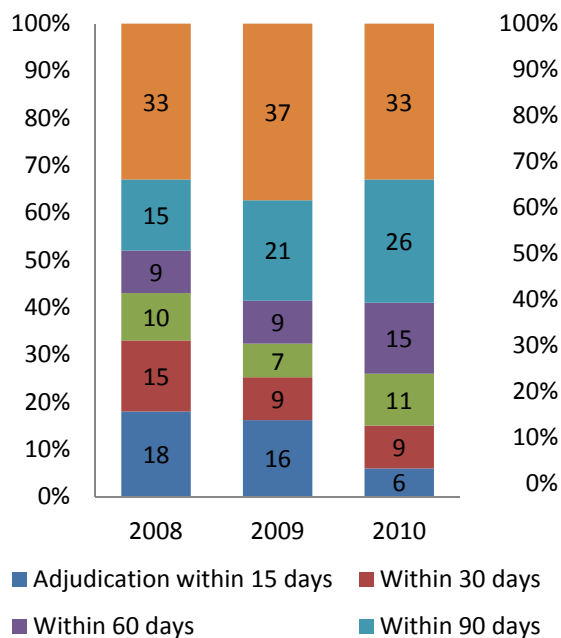
2008 Median = 10 days  
2009 Median = 9 days  
2010 Median = 13 days



## Petition to Adjudication

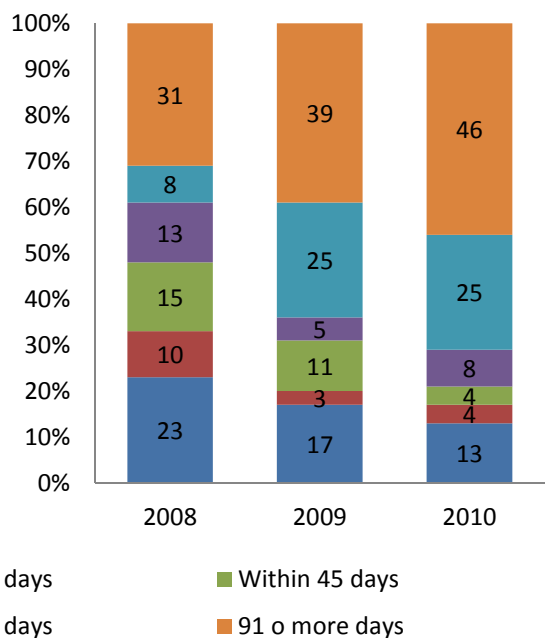
### Nebraska

2008 Median = 57 days  
2009 Median = 72 days  
2010 Median = 73 days



### District 1

2008 Median = 54 days  
2009 Median = 73 days  
2010 Median = 89 days



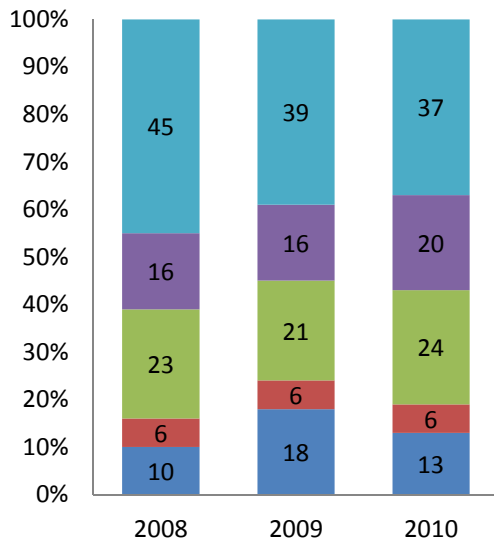
## Adjudication to Disposition

### Nebraska

2008 Median = 56 days

2009 Median = 49 days

2010 Median = 50 days



■ Disposition within 15 days

■ Within 30 days

■ Within 45 days

■ Within 60 days

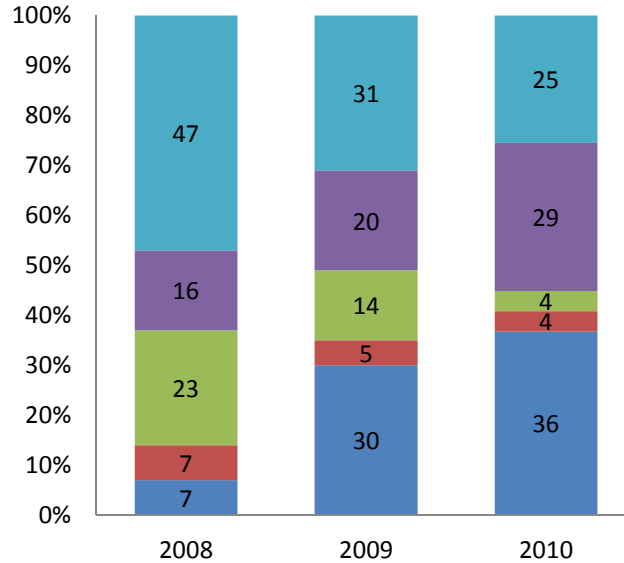
■ 61 or more days

### District 1

2008 Median = 62 days

2009 Median = 46 days

2010 Median = 49 days



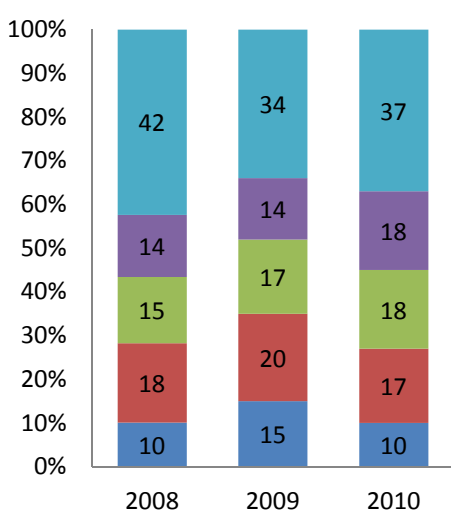
## Petition to Case Closure

### Nebraska

2008 Median = 23 months

2009 Median = 18 months

2010 Median = 19 months



■ Within 6 months

■ Within 12 months

■ Within 18 months

■ Within 24 months

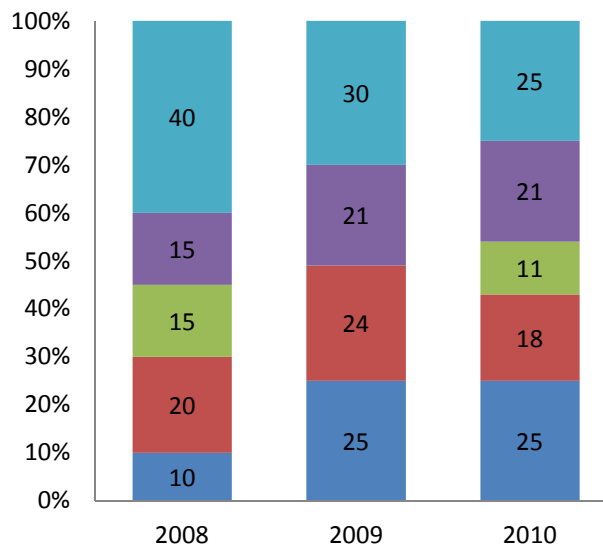
■ 25 or more months

### District 1

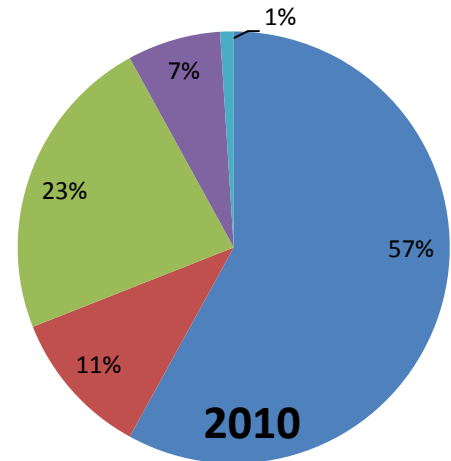
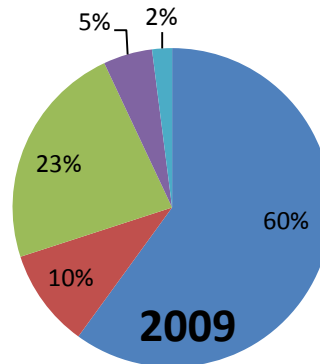
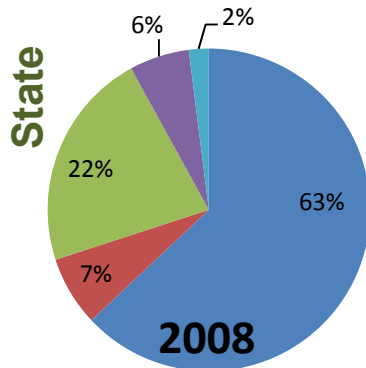
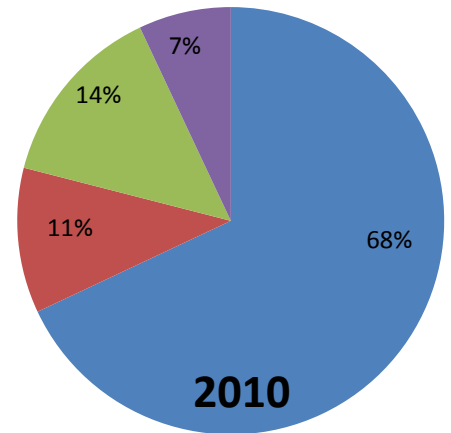
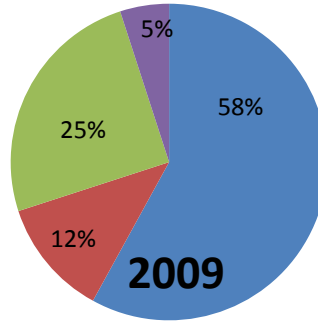
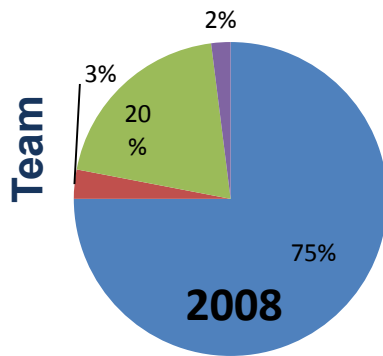
2008 Median = 20 months

2009 Median = 19 months

2010 Median = 15 months



## Type of Discharge



■ Reunification

■ Guardianship

■ Adoption

■ Independent Living

■ Other

## Trends



This team has had recent increases in time in foster care and time to reunification but the time frames are still well below state averages. Time to case closure has decreased since last year. There have been increases in re-entry into foster care for both the short-term (within 12 months) and overall re-entry. The team may want to explore whether cases are closed prematurely or whether rehabilitative services for parents are effectively addressing the problems contributing to the maltreatment.



## Case Progression for Zero to Three

Median Times	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010
<b>Early Stages</b>						
Petition to Ex-parte	1 day	1 day	0 days	1 day	1 day	0 days
Petition to Protective Custody	1 day	1 day	0 days	1 day	0 days	0 days
Petition to First Appearance	11 days	8 days	13 days	9 days	10 days	13 days
Petition to Adjudication	63 days	85 days	82 days	62 days	70 days	70 days
<b>Permanency Stages</b>						
Adjudication to Disposition	62 days	62 days	39 days	58 days	49 days	50 days
Petition to Case Closure	25 months	15 months	23 months	21 months	19 months	20 months
<b>TPR Stages</b>						
Petition to TPR	28 months	18 months	20 months	23 months	19 months	21 months
TPR to Adoption	8 months	8 months	7 months	9 months	7 months	8 months

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



## Improving Outcomes for Adolescents

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.