



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

# Case Progression and Court Improvement Data Report for 2010



## District 2 Team Cass: Cass County

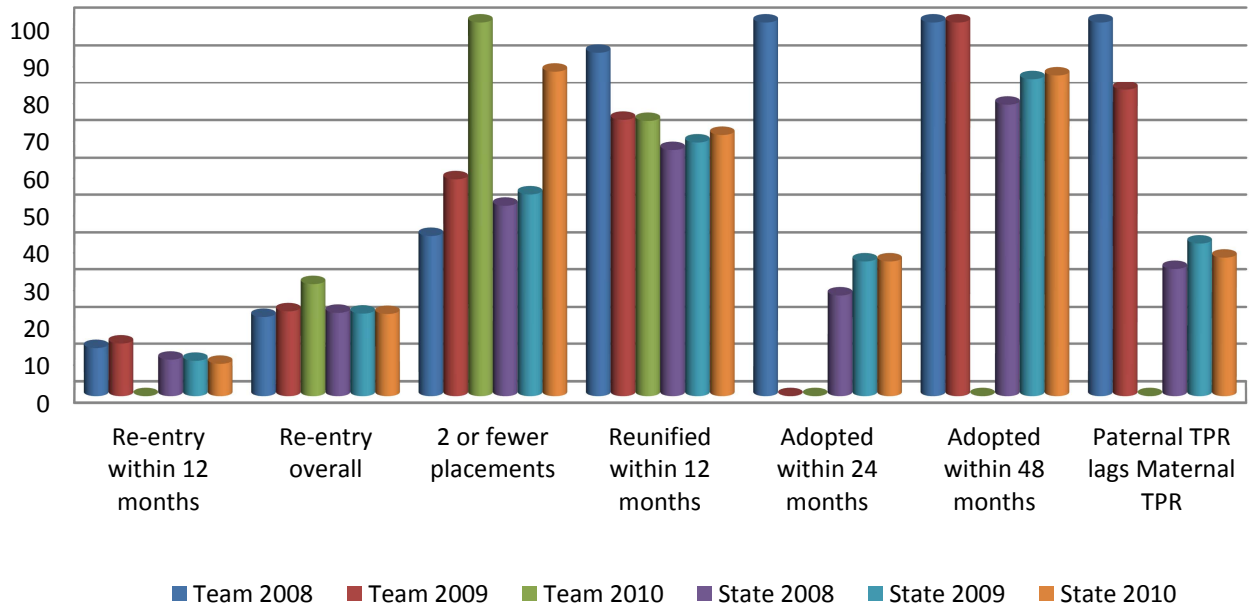


Information provided in this document is designed to help your team improve case progression, as this is one area the courts can control. Timeliness of hearings has a significant impact on time to case closure, which means that courts can make a difference in the lives of children in the system. Data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

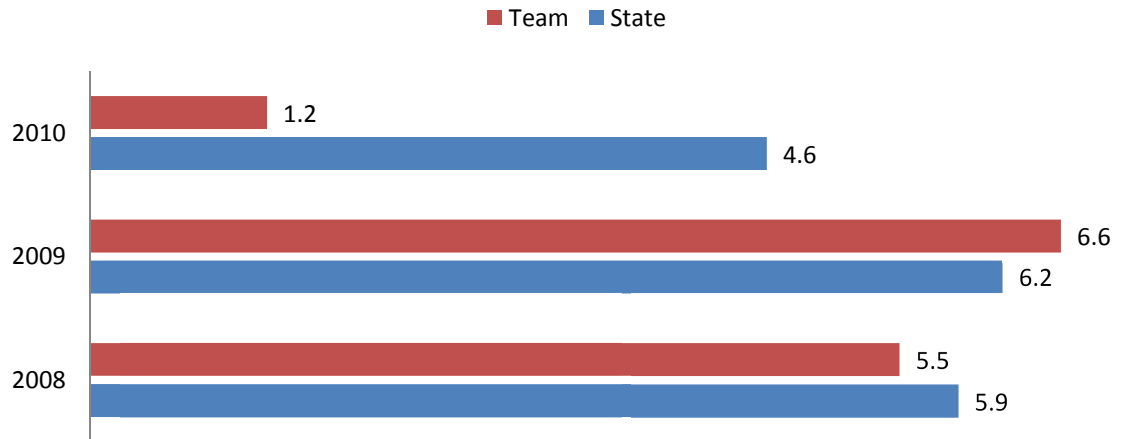
	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010	National 2009
<b>Poverty rate*</b>	13.2%	9.9%	n/a	13.7%	15.3%	n/a	20%
<b>Median length of stay</b>	5 months	8 months	10 months	13 months	12 months	14 months	14 months
<b>Median months to reunification</b>	4 months	5 months	10 months	7 months	7 months	11 months	n/a
<b>Median months to adoption</b>	26 months	32 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.

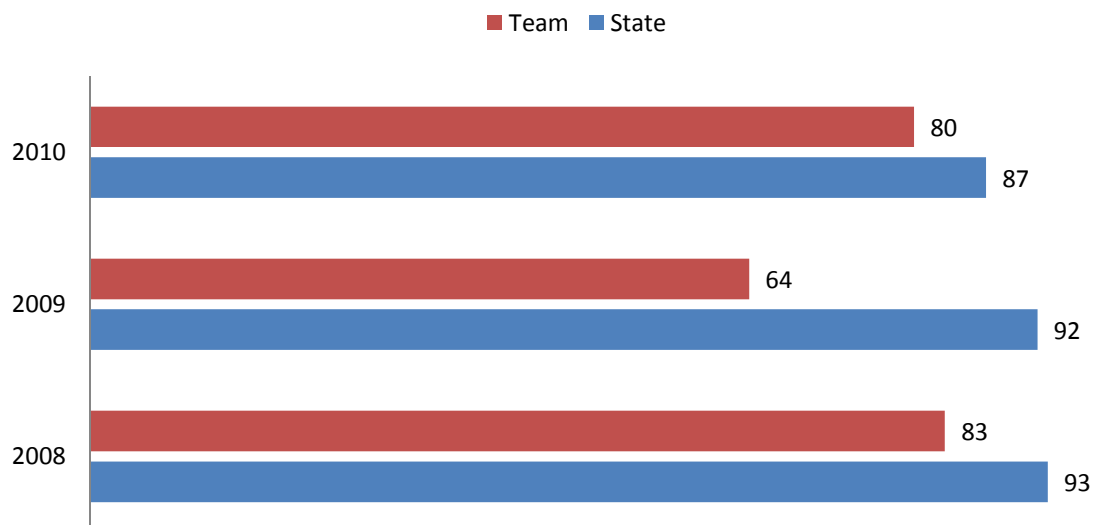
## Percentages for 2008, 2009, and 2010



## Rates of Removal per 10k Children



## Percent of Children over 12 in Group Home



In Cass County, there were 21 abuse and neglect cases that closed between January 1 and December 31, 2008. In 2009, 28 such cases closed. In 2010, 10 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.*

	2008	Team 2009	2010	2008	State 2009	2010
<b>Petition to Ex Parte</b>	4 days	3 days	0 days	1 day	1 day	0 days
<b>Petition to Protective Custody</b>	3 days	1 day	0 days	1 day	1 day	0 days
<b>Petition to First Appearance</b>	5 days	7 days	5 days	9 days	10 days	12 days
<b>Petition to Adjudication</b>	84 days	66 days	77 days	57 days	72 days	73 days
<b>Adjudication To Disposition</b>	56 days	84 days	42 days	56 days	49 days	50 days
<b>Petition to Case Closure</b>	9 months	15 months	10 months	23 months	18 months	19 months
<b>Case Outcome</b>	80% reunify	50% reunify	90% reunify	63% reunify	60% reunify	57% reunify

## Trends

The low number of cases that closed in 2010 makes it difficult to accurately analyze any trends. The length of stay in foster care and the time to case closure are both shorter than the rest of the state. In 2010, there is also a lower rate of removal in Cass County than the rest of the state.





## 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.