



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

Case Progression and Court Improvement Data Report for 2010



District 8 Team 3

Custer, Garfield, Greeley, Howard,
Loup, Sherman, and Valley Counties

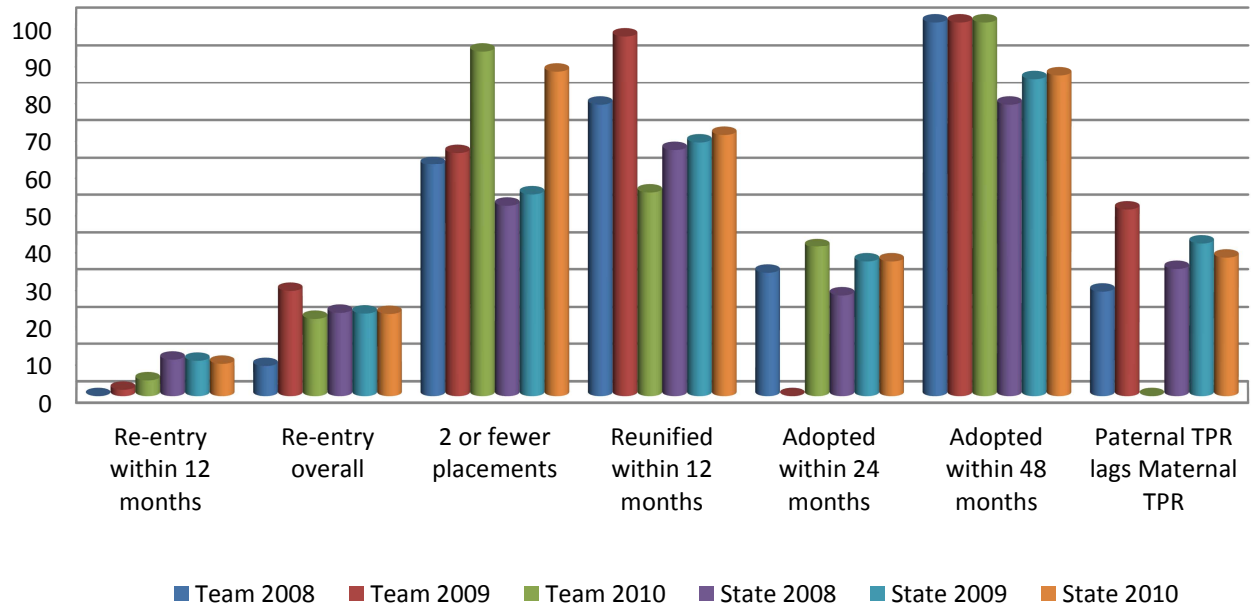


Information provided in this document is designed to help your team improve case progression, as this is one area the courts can control. Timeliness of hearings has a significant impact on time to case closure, which means that courts can make a difference in the lives of children in the system. Data 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.

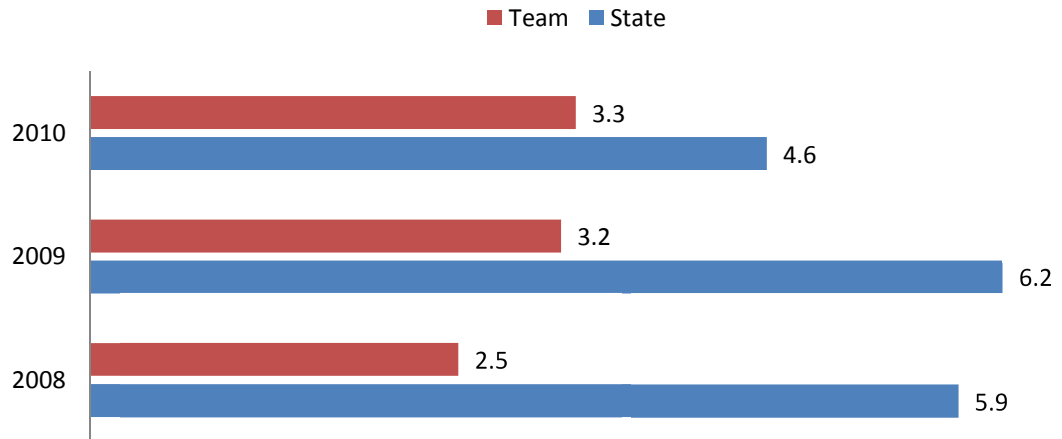
| | 2008 | Team 2009 | 2010 | 2008 | State 2009 | 2010 | National 2009 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|------------------|
| Poverty rate* | 20.9% | 20.0% | n/a | 13.7% | 15.3% | n/a | 20% |
| Median length of stay | 16 months | 20 months | 21 months | 13 months | 12 months | 14 months | 14 months |
| Median months to reunification | 8 months | 7 months | 15 months | 7 months | 7 months | 11 months | n/a |
| Median months to adoption | 26 months | 32 months | 34 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.

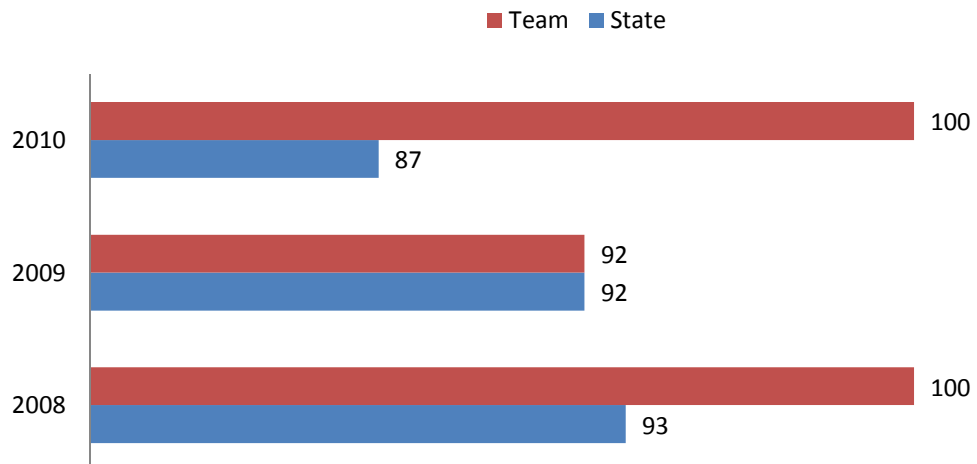
Percentages for 2008, 2009, and 2010



Rates of Removal per 10k Children



Percent of Children over 12 in Group Home Placements



For District 8 Team 3, there were 37 abuse and neglect cases that closed between January 1 and December 31, 2008. In 2009, 7 abuse and neglect cases closed. In 2010, 13 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 that values were "not reported." N/a means "not applicable" because the sample size was too small for analyses to be conducted.

| | 2008 | Team 2009 | 2010 | 2008 | State 2009 | 2010 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
| Petition to Ex Parte | n/r | n/r | -1 day | 1 day | 1 day | 0 days |
| Petition to Protective Custody | 1 day | 1 day | 0 days | 1 day | 1 day | 0 days |
| Petition to First Appearance | 27 days | 42 days | 17 days | 9 days | 10 days | 12 days |
| Petition to Adjudication | 97 days | 91 days | 58 days | 57 days | 72 days | 73 days |
| Adjudication To Disposition | 35 days | n/a | 161 days | 56 days | 49 days | 50 days |
| Petition to Case Closure | 14 months | 37 months | 23 months | 23 months | 18 months | 19 months |
| Case Outcome | 59% reunify | 43% ind. living | 39% adoption & guard. | 63% reunify | 60% reunify | 57% reunify |

Trends

There are too few cases in these counties to provide accurate trend information. Note that in 2010, adoption and guardianship are the most prevalent types of case outcome.

One potential area of concern is that the time between adjudication and disposition was over five months in 2010. If rehabilitative services to parents were not provided until dispositional hearings then the long delay to disposition could adversely impact the possibility of safe and timely reunifications.





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.