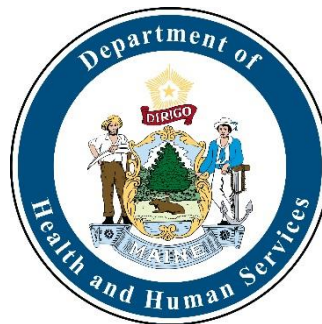


# Office of Child and Family Services Update

Health and Human Services Committee

June 8, 2022

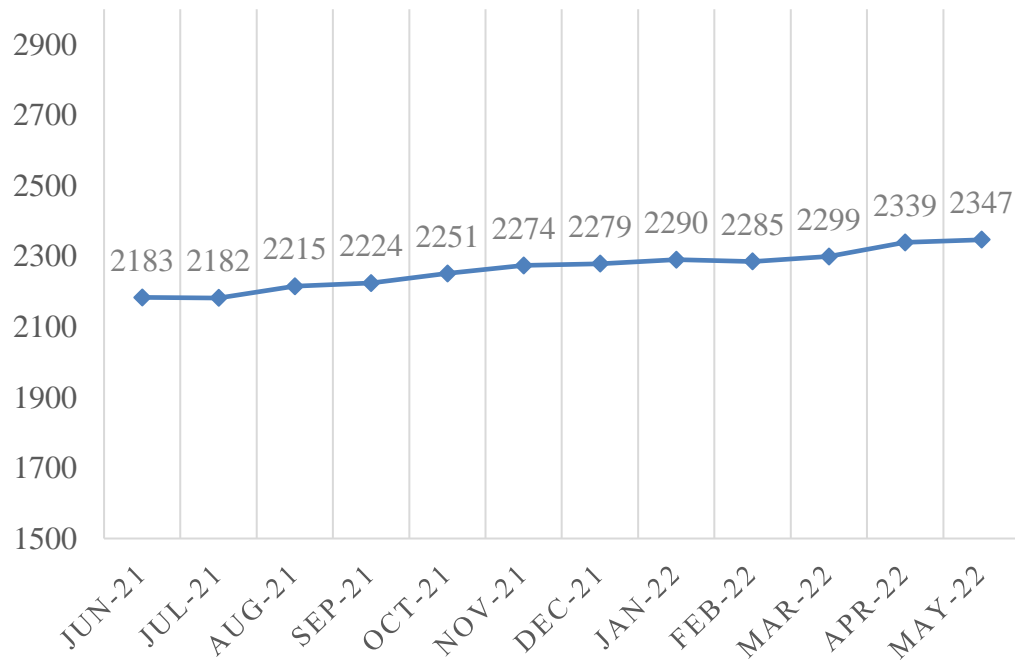
Dr. Todd A. Landry, Director



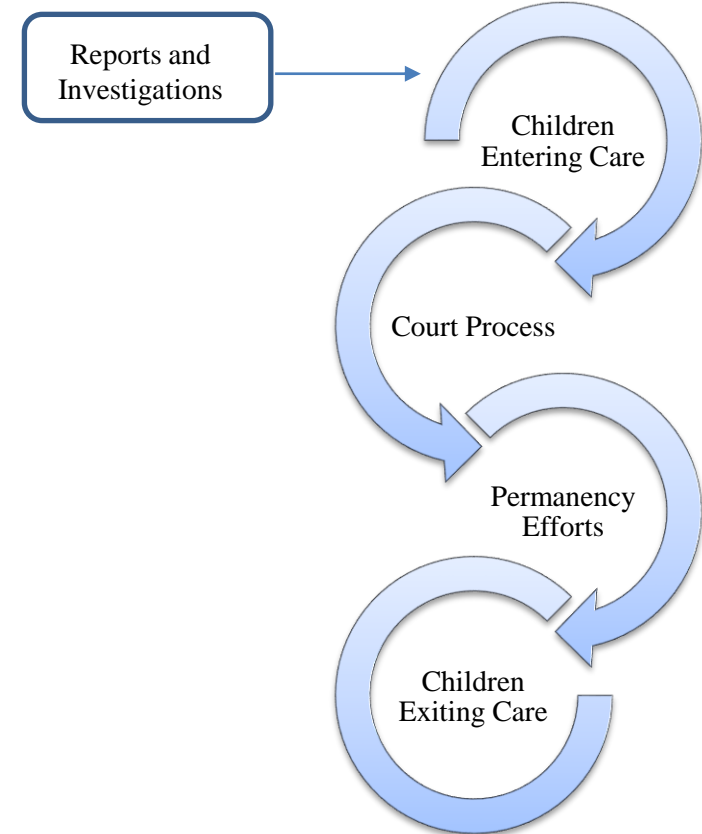
# Agenda

- Introduction and Background
- Collaborative Safety Recommendations
  - Integrating Safety Science
- Staff Development and Support
- Additional Questions/Topics from the Committee & Partners
  - Family First Implementation
  - Quality Assurance
  - Safety and Prevention
  - Structured Decision Making (SDM) Tool
  - Substance Use and Child Welfare
  - Permanency
  - Child Placement
- Questions and Discussion

# Children in State Custody 2021 - 2022



## What Drives the Number of Children In State Custody?

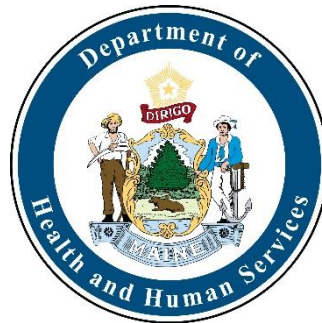


# Federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR)

## *New England metrics and performance*


<b>Conformity with Child &amp; Family Outcomes</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>CT</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>NH</b>	<b>RI</b>	<b>VT</b>
Safety 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Safety 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes wherever possible and appropriate.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Permanency 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Permanency 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Well-being 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	No	No	No	No	No	No
Well-being 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	YES	No	No	No	No	No
Well-being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	No	No	No	No	No	No
<b>Conformity with Systemic Factors</b>	<b>ME</b>	<b>CT</b>	<b>MA</b>	<b>NH</b>	<b>RI</b>	<b>VT</b>
Statewide information system	YES	No	YES	No	YES	YES
Case review system	No	No	No	No	No	No
Quality assurance system	YES	YES	No	YES	No	No
Staff and provider training	No	No	No	No	No	No
Service array and resource development	No	No	No	No	No	No
Agency responsiveness to the community	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention	YES	No	No	No	No	No

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations & Safety Science Implementation



# Collaborative Safety Review and Analysis

## *7 Recommendations to OCFS:*

- 
- 1. Work with a coalition of providers to support effective coordination with child welfare staff (e.g., supporting families, court and Family Team Meeting participation, sharing information, etc.) and address any identified barriers.
  - 2. Establish joint protocol agreements between Law Enforcement, Hospitals and Child Welfare staff when there is suspected abuse or neglect to support communication and coordination.
  - 3. Explore ways to support consistent practices, including role clarity and ongoing support for Family Team Meetings.
  - 4. Explore ways to support engagement between parents and the child welfare system, such as parent partner/parent mentor programs.
  - 5. Continue to examine national best practices regarding standby and after-hours practices.
  - 6. Examine national best practices for assessment timeframes and ensure that whatever timeframe is selected, it is compatible with the expected workload.
  - 7. Conduct an analysis of current work tasks required in an assessment and remove any unnecessary and/or redundant tasks.

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

## *Supporting effective provider & community partner engagement*

### *Collaborate with providers to support effective coordination on child welfare matters*

- Convened a stakeholder group with behavioral health professionals
- On March 6, 2022, OCFS [issued guidance](#) to behavioral health providers regarding working together to ensure open communication, support, and positive outcomes for children and families. Guidance includes common misperceptions related to confidentiality, expectations of providers, and what providers can expect from OCFS

### *Establish protocol agreements between law enforcement, hospitals, and child welfare*

- Established a stakeholder group including hospital representatives, law enforcement, OCFS staff, and legal experts to review statutory and other barriers to information sharing and effective partnerships
- Developing resources and training opportunities for staff
- Considering possible statutory changes to further enable information sharing

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

*Supporting effective provider & community partner engagement*

## Work with the Maine Judicial Branch

OCFS participates in quarterly meetings of the Justice for Children Taskforce

OCFS hosts quarterly meetings with the Maine Judicial Branch, Office of the Attorney General, and Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to review federal/state goals of the OCFS Program Improvement Plan and the Maine Judicial Branch Court Improvement Project to improve the child welfare system for children and families

OCFS participates in the Court Improvement Project continuing education subcommittee which organizes the Annual Child Welfare Conference hosted by the Maine Judicial Branch and other trainings for Judges, Attorneys, GALs, and CASAs

The Maine Judicial Branch's Guardian ad Litem/CASA Coordinator recently attended a feedback session on the new Katahdin system



# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

*Improve consistency in family team meeting practice & update policy*

## Updated Policy Issued in November of 2021

- Provides clear and consistent practice expectations for staff
- Policy was revised in collaboration with USM-Muskie under the Cooperative Agreement and includes the input of the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel (MCWAP), including the Child Welfare Ombudsman
- Policy update aligned with the recommendation of the Casey Family Programs and Collaborative Safety report from October of 2021
- Child welfare staff statewide have been trained on facilitation and conflict management, as well as the practice expectations outlined in the revised policy

## Training Webinar for Community Providers in Development

- This webinar will provide information on the FTM process and expectations for providers who participate in these meetings as part of their work to serve children and parents involved in the child welfare system

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

*Support engagement with parents and the child welfare system*

## Expansion of Cooperative Agreement

- Budget included funding to hire two parents with lived experience in the child welfare system
- Assisting with policy development, staff training, and implementation of an evidence-based parent mentor program

## Listening Sessions

- OCFS partnered with the Maine Child Welfare Advisory Panel's Family Engagement sub-committee to conduct listening sessions with fathers who have been involved in the child welfare system

## Pathways to Partnership

- Leadership staff joined with parent partners to participate in the New England Association of Child Welfare Commissioners and Directors Pathways to Partnership efforts
- Focus on understanding the "front door" experience for families

## Youth Leadership Efforts

- Maine's efforts to engage youth currently and formerly in care have been recognized both regionally and nationally
- OCFS' support of this work continues, and is being used as a model for efforts to engage parents

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

## *Improving caseworker support & practice*

### *Examine best practices for standby and after-hours coverage*

- Governor's budget proposal included 16 caseworker positions and three supervisor positions to create a unit of staff dedicated specifically to providing after hours and standby coverage
- Positions become effective July 1, 2022, and OCFS has worked with HR to develop the structure for this new unit
- Continue to meet with national experts and staff on additional changes

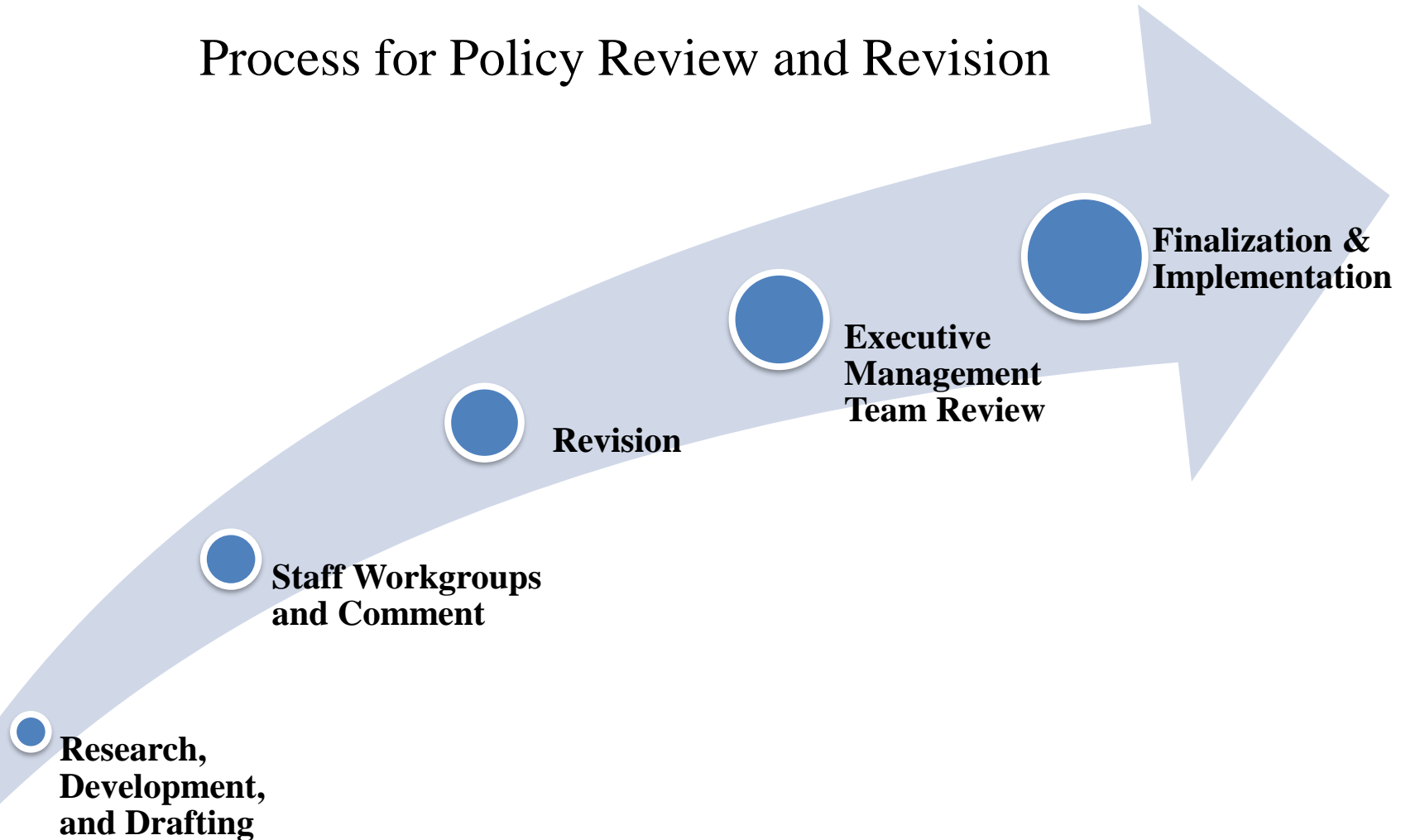
### *Examine assessment practices (timeframes and work tasks)*

- OCFS has convened a workgroup of staff, university, and national partners to research best practices related to investigation timeframes and analyze the activities required during an investigation
- The workgroup recently finalized recommendations for consideration by management and OCFS leadership is considering those recommendations along with efforts outlined above to implement a dedicated after hours/standby unit within OCFS

# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

*Review and update policy to improve practice*

## Process for Policy Review and Revision



# Collaborative Safety Recommendations

*Review and update policy to improve practice*

## Revision COMPLETED

- Safe Haven
- Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children
- Staff Safety and Critical Safety Cases
- Safety Planning
- Immunization
- Family Team Meetings
- Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children
- Collaboration
- Placement with DHHS Employees
- Substance Exposed Infants

## Pending Finalization

- Youth Transition
- Permanency
- Adoption

## Under EMT Review

- Entry into Care
- Family Standards for Foster and Adoptive Care
- Background Checks
- Adoption

## Pending Review/Revision

- Intake
- Psychotropic Medication
- Disclosure
- LGBTQ+

## Workgroups and Staff Comment

- Domestic Violence
- Supervision
- Indian Child Welfare (ICW)
- Child Protective Investigation

# Safety Science Implementation

## *Integrating Safety Science into our work*

OCFS has hired two full-time and one part-time Safety Science Analysts



Staff have worked closely with Collaborative Safety to develop Maine's system for case reviews and provide training to stakeholders



Monthly reviews of child fatalities and serious injuries have commenced

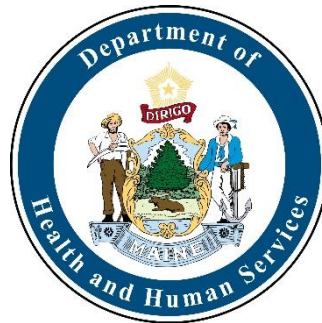


The multi-disciplinary team (MDT) has begun to meet, MDT includes the Child Welfare Ombudsman and Dr. Amanda Brownell (Child Abuse Pediatrician), as well as OCFS staff



MDT has conducted the first of several in-depth reviews of cases selected for further analysis

# Staff Development and Support



# Staff Development and Support

## *Hiring and Vacancies*

### Additional Support Staff

- Budget included five Secretary Associate Legal positions to provide staff with assistance related to court proceedings, including legal paperwork
- These positions are currently posted and OCFS is in the process of hiring on these lines to begin work when funding becomes effective (7/1/2022)

### New Positions

- The final five caseworker positions to complete work previously handled by Alternative Response are currently posted with a goal of hiring as close as possible to the 7/1/2022 effective date
- The Regional Associate Director position focused on policy and training is currently posted with the goal of hiring for 7/1/2022
- Significant work has been completed to build the structure necessary for the new CES/after hours caseworker and supervisor positions. Positions are in the process of posting internally and externally with the goal of hiring as close as possible to the 7/1/2022 effective date

### Efforts to Fill Vacancies

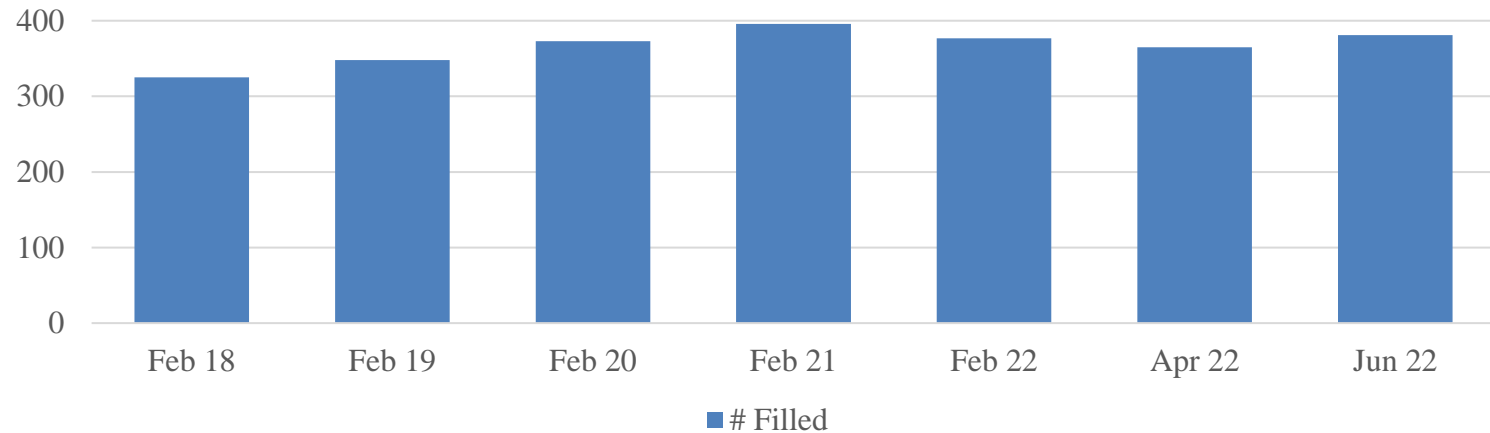
- Targeted recruitment efforts in specific areas of the state
- Pulse media recruitment contract (radio and social media ads)
- Promoting Public Service Loan Forgiveness opportunities for staff
- Workforce Wellness – clinical supports, Living Resources
- Supporting flexible work options for staff, (e.g., Voluntary Employee Incentive Program (VEIP))



# Staff Development and Support

## *Hiring and Vacancies*

OCFS Child Welfare Filled Positions Over Time



Point in Time	Feb 2018	Feb 2019	Feb 2020	Feb 2021	Feb 2022	April 2022	June 2022	Change 2018-2022
Total Positions	351	361	391	407	425	425	425	+74/ +21%
# Filled	325	348	373	396	377	365	381	+56/ +17%
# Vacancies	26	13	18	11	48	60	44	
% Vacancies	7.4%	3.6%	4.6%	2.7%	11.3%	14.1%	10.4%	

# Staff Development and Support *Training*

## Foundations Training for Caseworkers

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Cohort of new caseworkers trained under the updated training curriculum graduated on May 19, 2022
- **Evaluation:** OCFS solicits feedback from caseworkers during and after training and is working to incorporate that feedback where appropriate to continually improve the program. In addition to evaluating the full Foundations training curriculum, participants are also asked to rate individual training presentations.

## Field Instruction Program

- Cohort of 12 student interns through the University of Maine System, assigned to district office mentors
- Interns receive the new caseworker Foundations training in weekly sessions, provided by USM-Muskie throughout the academic year.

# Staff Development and Support

## *Katahdin Implementation*

Implemented 1/18/22 with all MACWIS data converted to new system



Work of the Organizational Change Management Team are ongoing

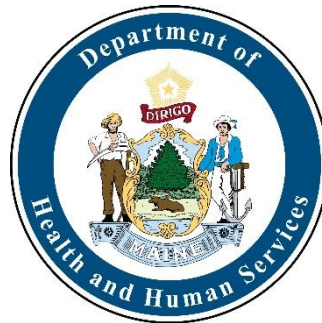
Identification of areas where efficiency could be improved; the team is working on system updates based on prioritized needs by child welfare staff

Two new components added in April/May

- Resource Parent Portal – For currently licensed resource parents and those interested in applying to become a resource parent to complete forms and upload required documentation
- Mandated Reporter Portal – Option for reporting alleged abuse and/or neglect by certain categories of mandated reporters who are permitted to under statute to make electronic reports (medical and hospital personnel, school personnel, and law enforcement)

OCFS and the Office of the Attorney General recently convened a focus group of parents' attorneys, Guardian ad Litem, and CASAs to provide a demonstration of the system and elicit their feedback on how discovery could be improved

# Additional Questions and Topics From the Committee & Partners



# Family First Prevention Services

## *Update on Implementation*

### Parents As Teachers

- A soft launch of the expansion of Parents As Teachers has started
- Three of the five expansion sites have started to take referrals
- Workforce issues have caused challenges with the two remaining expansion sites
- OCFS is working with the Maine Children's Trust and MaineCDC to launch the expansion statewide with funding allocated by the legislature

### Homebuilders

- Contract has been signed
- OCFS is conducting weekly meetings with the provider to plan for implementation when the contract is finalized and signed
- Provider has identified office sites and has begun the hiring process by conducting interviews for manager positions
- OCFS is preparing for an immediate amendment to the contract (once encumbered) to add the additional funding allocated in the budget (\$1 million)

### Evaluation

- Public Consulting Group (PCG) is the evaluation contractor for Family First services
- PCG hosted a meeting with Family First providers to begin mapping their Evaluation Plan for Prevention Services which is due to OCFS as a deliverable of the contract
- This will be an ongoing evaluation with reports approximately every six months

# Family First Prevention Services

## *Stakeholder and Staff Engagement*

### Provider Engagement

- In April OCFS hosted a webinar for providers on the topic of Child Safety and Supporting Families, providers were able to learn about how the child welfare system operates and their role as mandated reporters and keeping children in Maine safe
- Implementation Stakeholder Workgroup Meets regularly for stakeholders to receive updates on Family First implementation and provide feedback to OCFS
- The Behavioral Health and Support Services Workforce Stakeholder workgroup meets regularly to discuss workforce issues impacting service delivery and implementation

### OCFS Staff Engagement

- In June OCFS will conduct training for OCFS child welfare staff on the services and supports available in their communities. This training was first conducted in 2021 and received very positive feedback from staff. The training provides staff with information on resources for families
- Staff education and training on Family First implementation continues with monthly updates, Staff Toolkit updates, and presentations

# Safety and Prevention

## *Response to Domestic Violence in Child Welfare*

### **Policy Update**

- OCFS' work with USM-Muskie under the Cooperative Agreement includes reviewing and revising all child welfare policies.
- A workgroup to update policies related to domestic violence has been convened and includes staff from the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence and the Domestic Violence Resource Centers
- Specific emphasis is on partnering with non-offending parents to provide safety for children and ensure they are not held accountable for the actions of the offending individual
- Efforts will include researching best practices and evidence-based treatment and consultation efforts

### **Data**

- OCFS is partnering with the Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence to develop capacity to track and report outcomes in investigations and cases involving domestic violence by December 31, 2024

### **DV-CPS Liaison Program**

- OCFS continues to provide funding to support DV-CPS Liaison positions embedded in district offices throughout the state to provide resources and support related to domestic violence for staff and families

# Quality Assurance

## Building on Existing Quality Assurance System

- OCFS has implemented additional Quality Improvement activities as part of an extension of the Program Improvement Plan that was granted to states due to the COVID pandemic.
- This includes a review of an additional random sample of case through the Child and Family Services Review process or conducted by the Child Welfare Program Specialists.
- The reviews are focused on the completion of key child welfare practices, such as:
  - Family Team Meetings
  - Development of Rehabilitation and Reunification Plans
  - Monthly Caseworker Contacts with children and parents/caregivers
- Feedback is provided to the caseworker, supervisor, and leadership and a plan for any follow-up activities is developed and tracked to completion.



# Structured Decision Making

## *at Critical Decision Points*

Should this referral be investigated?



Screening and Response Time Assessment

Can the child safely remain in the home?



Safety Assessment

Should a case be opened?



Risk Assessment

What interventions could address child and family needs?



Case Plan Tool

Can the child safely return home?



Reunification Assessment

Can this case be closed?



Risk Reassessment

# Structured Decision Making

*Evidence- and research-based system utilized internationally*

## SDM and Quality Assurance

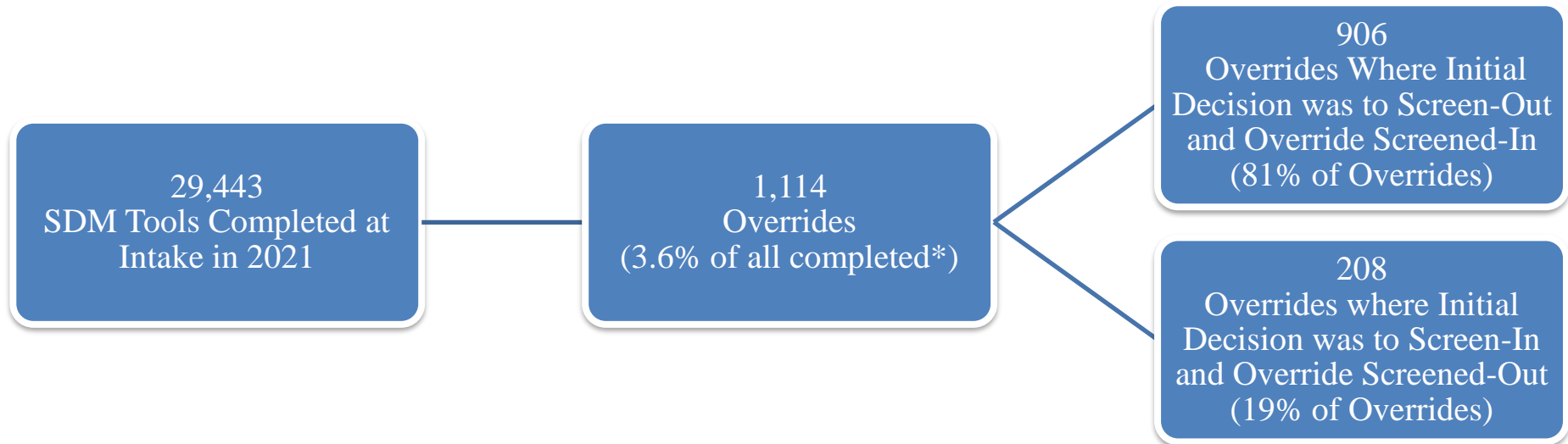
- The development of the SDM tools includes a rigorous inter-rater reliability testing and validation process prior to implementation of the tools.
- Quality Assurance staff and supervisors were trained by Evident Change to conduct reviews related to the fidelity of the tools on an ongoing basis.

## How Often Does OCFS Evaluate SDM Questions?

- Decisions related to the evaluation of the SDM Tools, and questions are made in collaboration with the tool developer, Evident Change. OCFS has a contract with Evident Change for ongoing support and technical assistance.
- In 2021, updates were made to the Child Protection Intake Screening Tool, which was the first tool implemented in 2017. These changes were based on feedback from staff in that program.

# Structured Decision Making

## *Data from OCFS*

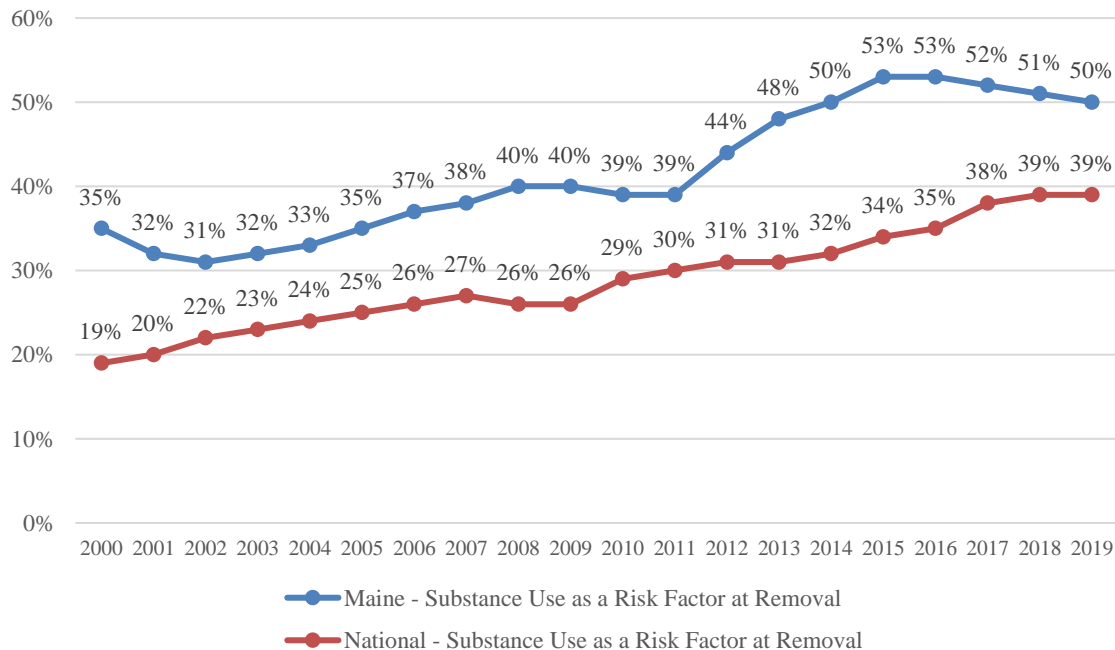


\*Evident Change (developer of the tool) indicates that a rate of up to 10% of tools with an override can be expected, which exceeds OCFS' current rate of overrides at 3.6%

# Substance Use and Child Welfare

In May 2022, OCFS implemented a new mandatory training for child welfare staff entitled, “Working with Families with Substance Use Disorders”. The training covers the impact of substance use and related disorders on families and provides child welfare staff with resources and information on interventions and strategies they can use with these families.

Rate of Substance Use as a Risk Factor at Removal



# Permanency

The Federal government sets certain benchmark goals for all states regarding time to permanency.

- Over the past five years Maine has made steady progress on the first Federal benchmark (permanency within 12 months of removal). Maine is not yet meeting the federal goal, but notable FFY 2021 represents the highest achievement for Maine in the last 5 years.
- The second Federal benchmark (permanency within the second year a child is in state custody) is likely being impacted by the number of cases that involve substance use and the time it takes to ensure a parent has successfully engaged in treatment demonstrated sustained recovery

Federal Measures	Federal Goal	FFY 2017	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2021
<b>Permanency in 12 Months of Removal</b> Of all children who enter foster care in a target 12-mo period, percent discharged to permanency within 12 months of entering foster care.	40.5%	26.5%	29.0%	30.9%	26.7%	32.5%
<b>Permanency in 12 Months for Children in Foster Care 12 to 23 Months</b> Of all children in foster care on the first day of a 12-mo period who had been in foster care between 12 and 23 months, percent discharged from foster care to permanency within 12 months of the first day of the 12-mo period.	43.6%	64.4%	61.6%	50.7%	40.5%	40.6%

# Child Placement



Nationally around 35% of children in state custody are placed with relatives

OCFS has a statutory obligation to place with family members whenever possible

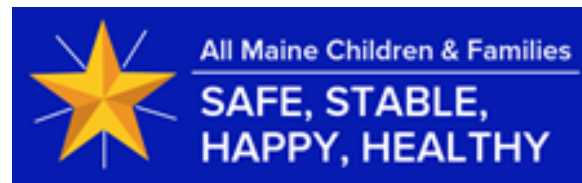
Data indicate Maine is exceeding the national average with 43% of children in care placed with relatives

National average of children in custody who are placed in congregate care hovers around 10% (with several states exceeding 15%)

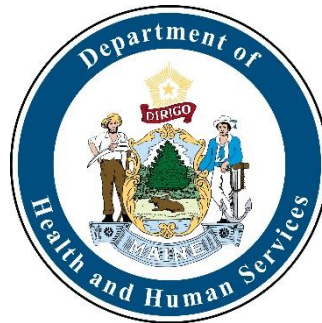
In Maine only 2% of youth in custody are placed in congregate care facilities and none of these are group homes (which are still in use in many states), in Maine these are all Children's Residential Care Facilities (CRCFs)

# Questions?

Todd A. Landry, Ed.D.  
Director  
Office of Child and Family Services



# Additional Resources





# STATE AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS FOR PREVENTION (SAPP)

State Agencies partnering to support healthy and safe families and children across Maine.

SAPP is a partnership of state agencies working to increase access, availability and knowledge of prevention services for families in Maine. This inventory captures some of the services these agencies support and/or implement.

	Primary Prevention Services provided before any symptom or problem exists.	Secondary Prevention Interventions when risk or problem behaviors surface.	Tertiary Prevention Services provided after a problem has been identified.
	LOW RISK	AT RISK	HIGH RISK
<b>Office of Child and Family Services</b>	Child Abuse Prevention Councils Child Care Subsidy Program Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation Improving Youth Outcome Grants	Child Abuse Prevention Councils Targeted Case Management Youth Leadership Advisory Team Parent Coaching	Family First Prevention Services Children's Behavioral Health Services Supportive Visitation & Crisis Services Dom. Violence/Sexual Assault Services
<b>Office of Behavioral Health</b>	Behavioral Health Teen Text Line	Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Screening Case Management Services Supportive Housing Seals Fit Program	SUD and Mental Health Treatment SUD and Mental Health Recovery Overdose Prevention Crisis Services
<b>Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention</b>	Substance Use/Tobacco/Suicide Prevention Maternal Child Health (MCH) Care Coord. Home Visitors/Public Health Nursing/WIC Newborn Screening	Prime for Life/Student Intervention Reintegration/Restorative practices School Based Health Centers Harm Reduction/Syringe NE/HIV/HEPC	Pediatric Mental Health Access Services Home Visitors/Public Health Nursing Child w/Spec. Healthcare Needs Support
<b>Office of MaineCare Services</b>	Developmental Screening Bright Futures Assessments Primary Care Services Immunization	Behavioral Health Screening Behavioral & Opioid Health Homes Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Test Targeted Case Management	Behavioral Health Treatment Behavioral & Opioid Health Homes Targeted Case Management Early Periodic Screening Diagnostic Test
<b>Office for Family Independence</b>	Education and Training Opportunities Whole Family Approach Services Program Specific Support Services	Case management/workshops Whole Family Approach Services Respite childcare/ASPIRE	Whole Family Approach Services Respite childcare/ASPIRE Intensive Case Management
<b>Department of Education</b>	Social Emotional Learning Family Engagement Headstart Programs Trauma Informed Work	Restorative Practice Headstart Programs Child Development Services Adult Education (literacy, etc.)	Restorative Practice Headstart Programs Child Development Services Maine School Safety Program
<b>Department of Labor</b>	Adult Education Career Centers Vocational Rehabilitation	Competitive Skills Scholarships Apprenticeship Programs Youth and Veterans Services	Progressive Employment Model Services Orientation & Mobility Instruction Unemployment Compensation
<b>Department of Corrections</b>	Regional Collaboratives Emergency short-term housing	Restorative Justice Alternative Housing Youth Advocacy Programs Alternative Services	Restorative Justice Alternative Housing Home Based Alternative Services Youth Re-entry Programming

# Family First Prevention Services Act

## *AccessMaine*



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Search AccessMaine

SEARCH

Basic  
Needs

Behavioral  
Health

Health  
Resources

Family  
Support

Diverse Population  
Resources

Safety and  
Legal Resources



A path to resources and supports for families in Maine.

## About Access Maine

Access Maine is an online resource guide with information to connect people living in Maine to public programs, services, and other resources that are available to provide support they need to be safe, happy, healthy, and successful.

To begin searching for programs, click on a category or type in the search feature above.

The Family Services Resource Guide ([www.AccessMaine.org](http://www.AccessMaine.org))

went live on April 12<sup>th</sup>

The guide was developed to help OCFS staff and members of the public locate services and supports for families in Maine and was meant to be complimentary to 211 Maine's community services directory.

OCFS hosted a webinar entitled "Locating Services and Supports for Families in Maine". Nearly 200 people attended.