

# Nurturing Kentucky's Children



Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board

2023 Annual Report







# CFCRB volunteers advocate for Kentucky's children

*Laurance B. VanMeter  
Chief Justice of the Commonwealth*

This year's Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) annual report fittingly centers on the theme of nurturing Kentucky's children.

The CFCRB is a pivotal component of the Kentucky Court of Justice's Department of Family & Juvenile Services. The program's mission is clear: to ensure the safe, permanent and timely placement of Kentucky's children in out-of-home care. Volunteers play an essential role in achieving this mission.

The group of more than 700 volunteers works tirelessly to conduct thorough reviews of children in out-of-home care. They evaluate each child's unique situation, identify challenges and provide crucial insights that guide decision-making processes to improve outcomes for these vulnerable children.

Through the interested party review process now used in most of our counties, volunteers meet directly with those

involved in the child's life to make plans and follow progress toward home permanency for the child.

Since 2018, CFCRBs have had the additional important responsibility of holding regional community forums on improving foster care and adoption in Kentucky. This report contains the latest on what community members, stakeholders and service providers have shared at these town hall meetings.

I encourage you to read the report for an in-depth look at what these dedicated volunteers accomplished in fiscal year 2023 on behalf of Kentucky's children. We are proud to report that the average length of stay for children in care decreased, and we observed positive trends in reunification and placement with relatives. Additionally, the program's emphasis on racial diversity within the volunteer base is making strides toward addressing the overrepresentation of children of color in foster care.

The CFCRB program embodies our dedication to the well-being of Kentucky's children and stands as a testament to our ongoing commitment to improving the foster care system.

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# Progress report on Kentucky children in foster care

Fiscal Year 2023: July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

*Steven Farr  
State Chair  
Citizen Foster Care Review Board*

I am pleased to present the FY 2023 Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) Annual Report. This report provides a detailed look at the children served by the CFCRB program and the activities of the review boards.

The Citizen Foster Care Review Board program administers the state's review of children in out-of-home care as required by law and provides a direct service to judges by presenting findings and recommendations to the court on every child reviewed by the local boards. The intent is to improve services for children in foster care, as well as to work to attain permanency for these children in a timely manner.

The CFCRB's interactive review process, interested party reviews (IPRs), offers volunteers a comprehensive insight into the progress made toward permanency for children in out-of-home care. To improve the quality and outcomes of the interested party reviews, the CFCRB program introduced a person-centered communication approach known as motivational interviewing (MI) into the review process. The

use of MI during IPRs creates a welcoming space for dialogue among the parties of the child's case, thereby providing better insight into the barriers facing the children reviewed by the local boards.

Twice annually, the CFCRB hosts regional public community forums to discuss issues involving child welfare. The information gathered at these events is used to identify areas for improvement in the child welfare system. The CFCRB State Board then submits recommended changes to the Kentucky Supreme Court, governor and legislature. The fall FY 2023 forums focused on the instrumental role relative and fictive kin placements play in reducing the trauma of out-of-home placement as well as reinforcing children's cultural identities. The spring FY 2023 forums emphasized the impact of mental health challenges on Kentucky's families and children.

I am humbled and honored to serve as State Chair of the CFCRB and applaud the CFCRB volunteers diligently advocating to provide a voice for Kentucky's children in the foster care system. Their dedication to and compassion for the commonwealth's most vulnerable population is an inspiration.

## Snapshot of Kentucky's foster care system

**CFCRB Reviews.** In FY 2023, 725 CFCRB volunteers conducted 4,264 paper reviews and 15,878 interested party reviews for a total of 20,142 reviews of 11,905 children. In FY 2022, there were 755 volunteers who conducted 21,376 reviews of 12,947 children.

**Length of Stay.** The average length of stay for children in care was 24.6 months, a notable decrease from the 26.7 months reported in FY 2022.

**Reunification.** Of the children reviewed by the CFCRB, 39% were released through reunification to parents or primary caregivers in FY 2023. Another 23% were released through placement with relatives. These numbers are slightly higher than FY 2022.

**Exiting Care.** In FY 2023, 11% of youth aged out of care, which is a slight improvement over FY 2022 which had 12% of youth aging out of care.

**Ages of Children Served.** Of the children reviewed by the CFCRB, those aged 5 and younger remain the largest age group at 32%, with ages 11 to 15 at 24%, and ages 16 to 20 at 23%.

**Number of Placements.** Children experienced an average of 3.52 placements per commitment. This figure is higher than the federal expectation of no more than two

placements until a child achieves permanency. However, Kentucky's children fare better than children nationally who experienced on average 4.48 moves per commitment.

**Finalized Adoption.** In FY 2023, 25% of children achieved adoption, a decrease from the 27% reported in FY 2022. Children with a finalized adoption spent 36.9 months in care, which was a decrease from 38.5 months reported in FY 2022.

**Interested Party Reviews.** In FY 2023, CFCRB volunteers conducted 15,878 IPRs on 9,759 children.

**CFCRB Meetings.** In FY 2023, 89% of boards use IPR as the standard for reviewing all cases, which is an increase from 86% in FY 2022. The use of IPRs has steadily increased from 59% in 2015.

**Barriers to Permanency.** In FY 2023, the CFCRB reported that the top four barriers to permanency were substance use disorder, chronic mental health issues, systemic delays and domestic violence.

**Local solutions identified to address barriers.** In FY 2023, CFCRB boards reported that the top four identified solutions to address barriers as mental health treatment, substance use disorder treatment, trauma-centered treatment and housing/support.

# 2023 recommendations for legislative & policy reform

The Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board is required by Kentucky Revised Statute 620.320(5) to evaluate and make annual recommendations to the Supreme Court of Kentucky, the governor, and the Legislative Research Commission regarding the laws, practices, policies, and procedures that affect permanence for children in out-of-home placement. The CFCRB State Board approved the following legislative recommendations for 2023:

## **CFCRB Board Membership**

Amend KRS 620.190(2)(e) regarding membership on local boards to allow non-Department for Community Based Services (DCBS) employees of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS) to serve on local boards. Suggested language would read as follows: “Employees of the Department for Community Based Services shall be prohibited from serving on the local citizen foster care review board.” The original wording was in place before the merger of the Cabinet for Health Services and the Cabinet for Families and Children, and it prohibits participation by potential volunteers from CHFS departments that are not directly involved with dependency, abuse, and neglect cases.

## **Statewide Expansion of Family Court**

The Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Boards (CFCRB) has historically regarded the statewide expansion of Family Court as a high priority due to improved outcomes for families and children who have access to expanded services provided by Family Court. To further this cause, the CFCRB would support a future judicial redistricting plan that increases the presence of Family Court, with the ultimate goal of expanding Family Court to every county in the commonwealth.

## **Statewide Expansion/ Improvement of Broadband Services**

The Kentucky CFCRB recommends the statewide expansion and improvement of the KentuckyWired Project’s broadband services delivery to allow affordable access to internet services for all of the commonwealth’s children and families to enable successful participation in online services, including child welfare, educational, and medical platforms, in order to provide for service delivery, not only during states of emergency, but also to bring equity in service delivery to all Kentucky families.

## **Child-serving Agencies to Gather Data and Address Disproportionality and Disparity for Youth and Families**

Support legislative and policy efforts that require child-serving agencies to gather data and address disproportionality and disparity through annual strategic plans and reduction goals. These plans should include:

- Reviewing and updating criteria that identifies youth

risk factors that may lead to negative activities such as gang recruitment and involvement.

- Creating and promoting strength-based, asset building services and trainings to assist families and youth affected by these behaviors.
- Collecting and sharing data related to these activities.

## **Juneteenth as a State Holiday**

Support Juneteenth as a state holiday. Juneteenth is the commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States. Juneteenth represents an opportunity to respect other cultures, embody inclusion and belonging for all persons. Black children are over-represented in foster care in Kentucky; yet Black foster parents are under-represented in child welfare. Kentucky joining the ranks of the other twenty-eight states that honor Juneteenth as a state holiday, would provide an opportunity for all children and their caregivers to honor the culture and achievements of African Americans, making Juneteenth a day to stand together to pursue the vision where everyone can thrive and flourish.

## **Increase Fees for Court Appointed Counsel**

Support increase in fees for court-appointed counsel for children and parents in family law cases. Court-appointed counsel performs a vital function by providing high-quality legal representation to children and families in court on child welfare matters, thereby ensuring procedural fairness, equity, and access to justice for all families and children.

## **FAIR Team Referrals for Youth Ages 12 and Under**

Support court designated workers having the ability to refer children ages 12 and younger to the Family Accountability, Intervention, and Response (FAIR) teams to be connected with services, instead of these youth being sent through the juvenile justice system. For children ages 12 and younger, more than two-thirds of complaints are for status offenses – like missing school or running away – and misdemeanors, which can be more effectively addressed within the community instead of the courts. Research shows that young black children are more likely to be perceived by adults as being older than their white peers, which may contribute to there being more complaints filed against them.

When young children have a case handled out of formal court, that can impact how future cases are handled. By referring these children to the FAIR teams, their specific needs can be addressed while ensuring they take responsibility for their actions, with the over-arching goal of keeping these children from entering the juvenile justice system. This is especially important for children in foster care who are already struggling with the trauma they have suffered that brought them into out-of-home care.

# CFCRB hosts regional community forums: Tell us what you think

## *Public weighs in on foster care system at regional forums*

The Kentucky General Assembly passed House Bill 1 in 2018 to reform Kentucky's foster care system by removing barriers to children being placed in permanent homes.

HB 1 amended KRS 620.270 to require the Citizen Foster Care Review Board to participate in regional community forums at least twice a year and present the findings to the Supreme Court, governor, and legislature. These forums allow the public to discuss their concerns and identify barriers to the safety, well-being, and timely permanency of children in care.

The following summary of findings from Fall 2022 and Summer 2023 CFCRB Regional Community Forums is based on the public's concerns. Recommendations have been categorized by party, stakeholder group, or topic. The FY 2022 forums were conducted virtually, leading to increased participation by community partners.

*Note: These comments do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Kentucky Court of Justice elected officials and employees.*



### CFCRB Mission

To ensure safe, permanent and timely placement of Kentucky's children in out-of-home care.



### CFCRB Vision

*With respect to children in care:*

To ensure adequate and necessary services are provided to families and children with the utmost importance given to safety, well-being and permanency.

*With respect to the judges we serve:*

To provide timely, accurate and sufficiently detailed information about children in care so as to promote knowledgeable permanency decisions.

*With respect to the CFCRB volunteers:*

To promote awareness and understanding regarding children's issues through educational opportunities at local, regional and state levels.

*With respect to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services:*

To provide meaningful, respectful feedback regarding paths to permanency.

# FALL 2022 REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORUMS: ISSUES & CONCERNS

The Fall 2022 forums focused on the important role relative and fictive kin caregivers play for children in foster care.

## Benefits of Relative / Fictive Kin Placements

- Relative/fictive kin placements can facilitate more frequent contact between children and their parents.
- Relative/fictive kin placements keep children out of an already overtaxed foster care system.
- Placing children with relatives/fictive kin reduces the traumatic impact on children who are removed from their parent's homes by allowing them to remain in familiar surroundings.
- Placing children in relative/fictive kin homes could keep children from leaving communities, and schools, and keep them closer to family. Such placements can prevent children from having to go to strangers in a foster home.
- The expanded definition of fictive kin provides more placement options for newborns by including people who have a relationship with the parents and siblings, not just the child.

## Barriers

- Relative/fictive kin placements often face financial barriers to bringing children into their homes.
- Some families who accept placement are not receiving financial aid, medical assistance, and childcare assistance.
- Relative/fictive kin placement of children not involved with DCBS, but who need financial assistance, do not always know what resources are available.
- Some of the available supports that help families are very localized and not well known.
- Relatives who are asked to take children are given a limited amount of time to decide. Many do not receive financial assistance. The children come with the clothes on their backs, and relatives will need to purchase clothing, bedding, furniture, and other supplies. There is a limited amount of initial funds that can be drawn for each child.
- There is some confusion as to benefits/assistance available to fictive kin placements in relation to direct custody and placement where DCBS has custody.
- Fictive kin are not necessarily eligible for KTAP.
- Relative and fictive kin are only eligible for some assistance through DCBS if they were involved with the case from the beginning.
- There is an increase in the number of families seeking foster parent certification. This can make the approval process take longer. There are more applications coming from fictive kin in the Two Rivers region than families wanting to be foster parents. This is challenging because fictive kin open child-specific homes and do not take other children. While helping place some children it

does not help grow the foster parent numbers for all children in care. The Lakes Region is seeing the same trend.

- Limited access to childcare can be a barrier for relative/fictive kin placement.
- It is difficult to locate services such as behavior analysis, occupational therapy, and speech therapy in rural communities.
- There is a lack of in-home service providers available for families in need.
- There is a lack of training focused on helping relatives/fictive kin who are raising teenagers.
- Relative/fictive kin caregivers are not always prepared to meet the additional needs of children placed in their homes.
- Children placed with relative/fictive kin may have mental health or behavioral issues brought on by trauma. Not all relative/fictive kin placements have the same training and support needed to meet the child's mental health needs as licensed foster parents.
- The insufficient number of in-home services providers is an ongoing issue for relative/fictive kin placements.
- Relatives/fictive kin are not always aware when a child enters care. This can cause them not to come forward as a possible placement.
- One of the barriers for relative/fictive kin caregivers is the financial aspect of trying to provide for multiple children they love that need help.
- The approval process can be lengthy for relative/fictive kin, especially for those who live out of state and must go through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC) process. The ICPC process can be lengthy and varies from state to state and the family needs to complete licensure based on the particular state's policies. The ICPC establishes the process governing the placement of children in homes outside of Kentucky. This can be a difficult process as each state has its own requirement for children placed in out-of-home care. The process can be very confusing and can keep children from going into care but there are many challenges. There are many factors involved from who will monitor placement to how things are communicated.
- DCBS reached out to other states about entering an ICPC border agreement, which might allow for a more streamlined placement process. The majority of the responses from other states was negative. The bordering states want the fully vetted process instead of the expedited process provided by a border agreement.

## Local Solutions

- Relative/fictive kin placements have the option to become foster parents and receive the same financial assistance as other foster parents. While completing

- certification, relative/fictive kin receive a reduced per diem, access to a case worker, training resource centers, clothing letters, and daycare assistance.
- ICPC (Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children) provides DCBS with the process for placing children with relative/fictive kin in other states.
  - Relative/fictive kin can seek child support after the child has been in their home for one year through the child support office if they are not receiving other benefits.
  - Proposed changes to KTAP could increase benefits. If passed these changes could take effect as soon as January. <https://kyyouth.org/child-care-assistance-program-faq-for-kentucky-families/>
  - There have been recent changes in Child Care Assistance Program regarding eligibility; previously denied applicants should reapply.
  - Numerous parts of the state have local resources providing tangible items for children in relative/fictive kin homes, such as clothing, hygiene items and other essentials. Some examples are Joy Closet in Christian County, Nona's Closet serving in and around Barren County, Borrowed Hearts in the Owensboro area, Fostering Love in Bowling Green, and Moses Basket in Paducah and surrounding areas.
  - The University of Kentucky, College of Social work, has resources for kinship care and education.
  - Open Arms is a Hardin County Grandparent/kinship care support group that meets weekly.
  - The KY Partnership for Families and Children, Family Peer Support, in northeastern Kentucky has used virtual platforms to expand services across the state.
  - Be the Village is a program that can provide foster parent/kin with a care package (shoes, car seats, beds, etc). This program also provides meal support, training, and foster parent retreats. <https://www.bethevillageky.com/>
  - Family Resource and Youth Services Centers (FRYSC) work in the schools assist with clothing and other essentials. FRYSC's also work with relative/fictive kin placements to help connect them to resources. Other organizations in the community are doing the same thing to help identify respite and other supports to help their youth.
  - Local Health Departments can assist with car seats and Pack-N-Plays.
  - KY Family Leadership Academy (KFLA) can assist with skills to use in dealing with court and schools.
  - KY Kins is a program partnered with the University of Kentucky that has Peer Support Specialists who are kinship caregivers. DCBS refers families who may need assistance. They have weekly virtual or phone meetings to walk through what it is to be a kinship care provider. There are virtual support groups available that also include monthly training. The virtual support groups are available across the state; however, the peer-to-peer program is not yet available statewide. <https://socialwork.uky.edu/centers-labs/kentucky-kinship->

[resource-center/ky-kins-peer-support/](https://socialwork.uky.edu/centers-labs/kentucky-kinship-resource-center/ky-kins-peer-support/)

- Medical expenses for the children can be covered through KY Medicaid.
- DCBS offers resources to help meet cultural needs, an example of which is caring for African American hair.
- DCBS is open to partnerships to improve how they meet the needs of children in out-of-home care.
- DCBS is always looking to improve how they are meeting the needs of families. They are also working on creating a more robust area of service and continuing to grow services through Aetna. It is recommended that any relative/fictive kin placement needing services should reach out to the Aetna case manager for assistance.
- Kinship KY offers support and group meetings for relative placements and grandparents as parents conferences. <https://kinshipky.org/>

### Needed Resources

- The GAP (Guardian Assistance Program) is a program that DCBS is working to implement. It could be used for cases where children will not be able to return home and relatives would prefer not to pursue TPR/Adoption. Legal guardianship would be obtained, and the family would receive a monthly subsidy. Currently, this program is not operational, but DCBS is working on legislation to implement this program.
- Peer support services across the state could be beneficial to relative/fictive kin placements.
- Drug and alcohol treatment and mental health services are needed for children in permanent relative custody.
- Services are needed that specialize in treating children's specific needs, such as fetal alcohol syndrome and the autism spectrum.

### Open Discussion

- Relative/fictive kin do not always understand the timelines and processes associated with the children in out-of-home care in regard to permanency.
- Foster parents face some difficulty helping teens get ID cards and driver's licenses. Increased communication about resources for families fostering teens could alleviate some confusion and improve outcomes for these youth.
- KPFC just recently partnered with the Department of Juvenile Justice to offer services to youth in the northeast region.
- Communication and transparency between DCBS and caregivers is not always what it should be. Sharing knowledge is important to ensure the best outcomes for children.
- Staff shortages within the Cabinet unfortunately have had a negative impact on the families served.
- Insurance coverage for children's mental health treatment is not always sufficient to meet the child's needs causing an additional financial burden for relative/fictive kin caregivers.
- There is a lack of providers who can accommodate a



- family's work and school schedules with the services offered.
- Murray State University funds a program that has a support group on Facebook that foster and adoptive parents are welcome to join. This group focuses on the support, recruitment, and retention of adoptive and foster parents.
- Relative placements do not always get the family history and background on relative children placed in their

- care. Some families are not close enough to already have background information.
- Kentucky Youth Advocates has created a Birth Parent Advisory Council to increase parent engagement with prevention efforts.
- Most support groups for relative/fictive kin are geared toward grandparents caring for grandchildren. It can be difficult for fictive kin and other relatives to find support groups that match their situation.

## SUMMER 2023 REGIONAL COMMUNITY FORUMS: ISSUES & CONCERNS

The Summer 2023 forums focused on the impact of mental health challenges for Kentucky's families and children, especially children in foster care.

### Mental Health Care Challenges

- Families and children across the state are struggling with unmet mental health needs.
- Lengthy assessment processes delay the provision of mental health care and treatment.
- Some health insurance covers only basic therapy services, and not the specific mental health services the child needs.
- There is a lack of specialized mental health practitioners and a lack of minority mental health practitioners.
- Providers do not offer flexible hours for children and families to access services, causing parents to miss work and children to miss school.
- Some school districts will count a child truant if they are taken out of school to attend mental health appointments.
- The limited availability of providers in rural areas leads to people having to travel to a county outside their own to get mental health treatment. This can increase the cost of mental health treatment.
- Rural counties have significant waiting lists for services where they are available.
- Transportation is one of the main barriers to accessing mental health services. During the pandemic, mental health services were available virtually, but, when agencies re-opened, they went back to in-person mental health services, and transportation once again became a barrier.
- Not enough beds for inpatient services when needed.
- Many therapists are no longer accepting insurance and are only accepting self-pay.
- Providers are struggling to find therapists to hire.
- There is a high number of autistic children who need Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) therapy, and there are not enough therapists who are trained in that area.
- It is difficult to find Spanish-speaking therapists. There is a need for therapists who speak languages other than English.
- Limited availability of services causes extensive waiting lists, and court-ordered services may not be attainable.
- Treatment facilities are experiencing staffing issues causing long wait lists for services.
- Concerns with continuity of care arise due to placement changes. There is a gap in treatment when changing providers. There is a 3-week timeframe that children are not getting services. They need those services immediately after moving placements.
- There is still a stigma regarding mental health.
- Children are entering care because of a lack of services available within their community.
- There are limited mental health supports that recognize a child's identity, culture, and lived experience.
- The placement crisis is affecting the quality of mental health services, especially for children who struggle with identity.
- Limited-service providers in rural areas make it very difficult for children with identity or cultural needs to get those needs addressed.
- There is a difficulty in placing transgender children, which is compounded by having to move children out of their community.
- For youth who identify as transgender and have mental health needs, it is hard to find appropriate and intensive services.
- Alternative treatment options are needed to address mental health issues, other than medication because not all mental health needs can be met with medication.
- Stigma surrounding mental health can prevent people from seeking treatment.
- The use of vague and generic assessments prevents providers from tailoring treatment to the child's specific needs.
- Some rural area DCBS offices allow providers from outside the area to use an office in their building to provide services to members of the community. This has cut down on the backlog for mental health services.
- The DCBS staff are facing mental health challenges in their work with levels of trauma that have not been dealt with before.

- Limited support for children who are placed in smaller communities when they are from larger areas.
- Youth in nontraditional placements may lose therapy services and have to start over in a new placement.

### **Local Solutions**

- There is a need for transportation services and/or travel reimbursements for those accessing mental health services.
- Providers should offer both telehealth and in-person services and provide hours of operation that are more convenient for those being served.
- Improve reimbursement rates for practitioners regarding insurance agencies paying for mental health services.
- Ensure service providers are culturally sensitive.
- Providers and community partners need to offer opportunities for discussions to provide information and answer questions with the goal of demonstrating that taking care of an individual's mental health is a strong healthy response and not a weakness.
- Provide behavioral health services in schools in rural areas.
- Aetna helps with working in the home and managing all services.
- Community mental health services should be based on need not the size of the community.
- Long-term solutions to limited-service providers could be a government-sponsored scholarship program to bring in more licensed providers with the provision that scholarship recipients work for certain programs/agencies for a specified length of time.
- Universities to offer licensing assistance to bring in more mental health providers of color and from the LGBTQ community.
- Provide vouchers for mental health care.
- Expedite crisis referrals.
- Providing mobile "one-stop shop" for mental health services in the community.
- Encourage more walk-in providers for counseling services.
- Safe Space Screeners for children in OOHC can expedite a referral to mental health services.
- Unbundle private childcare agency services to better meet the needs of the children being served.
- Therapeutic foster placement can utilize services quicker-even though there continues to be staffing barriers. Possibly include in the PCC contract for the assessments and services to start or continue quicker.
- Need more providers in the Medicaid system.
- Targeted recruitment of minority populations for the therapeutic fields so there will be a cultural understanding between the providers and the children being served. Youth need someone who looks like them and/or understands what they are going through for the youth to have trust and rapport.

- The use of a non-traditional approach with the youth to address their needs such as IMPACT programs, and empowerment workshops. Mental health providers and schools working together for the best interest of the children.
- Improve the quality of mental health assessments to aid in tailoring treatment to meet the specific needs of the client.
- There is a need for investment in the mental health sector to address unmet treatment or counseling needs in the community.
- Foster youth need stability in the home and placement to feel comfortable in discussing mental health issues and concerns.
- Some rural area DCBS offices allow providers from outside the area to use an office in their building to provide services to members of the community. This has cut down on the backlog for mental health services. Replicate this model throughout the state.

### **Open Discussion**

#### **Children**

- African American children are aging out of the child welfare system at a higher rate than other races.
- Foster children have less chance of having a "trusted person" in their lives when they experience frequent moves. They need to have more supportive people in their lives who will listen to them.
- Youth need consistency, which is difficult to achieve when they have moved frequently. Stability in placement is needed.
- Teen-age males seem to be the most difficult to place in foster care.
- There is a need for more case management services for children aging out of the foster care system.
- Children in the foster care system change therapists every time they have a placement change. With telehealth, there should be some way that these children can maintain their relationship with the therapist they know and are comfortable with. This would benefit the child.

#### **Parents**

- Parents who do not provide information on relatives to DCBS can hinder placing children with family.
- Stable housing is often a barrier for biological parents.
- In some communities, parents do not have access to services to help them get on track and recover their relationships with their child.
- Parents that are incarcerated are not able to work on their case plan goals due to the lack of access to services.
- Some parents have not received visits with their children due to there not being enough social workers to cover the need for supervised visits. There are some outside services, including nonprofit agencies and churches, that can help address this issue by providing supervised visits for families.

- There is a stigma that biological parents with children in foster care are bad; some just need support services or resources to help get them back on their feet.
- It would be helpful to include biological parents in invitations to community events their child attends, to allow for increased bonding when there is not a need for supervised visitation.

### Relative Caregivers

- There are concerns that extended families are not being contacted by the Cabinet at the time of removal.
- There are not enough resources to help grandparents raise grandchildren.
- The Kentucky Kinship Information, Navigation, and Supports (KY KINS) network offers resources for relative and fictive kin providers. KY KINS can also assist kinship caregivers with applying for assistance programs. KY KINS is housed in the Kentucky Kinship Resource Center at the University of Kentucky, in collaboration with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

### Foster Parents

- Foster parents have asked for therapists for themselves and their families. They would like DCBS to be able to refer/recommend providers.
- There is a need for foster parents of different ethnic groups in rural areas. Recruitment is needed in this area across the state.
- Data shows disproportionate numbers of African American children in foster care compared to the number of foster parents of the African American race.
- In light of inflation, especially food costs, the DCBS foster parents per diem is low. Additionally, some children cause damage to foster parent's homes due to aggressive and destructive behaviors.

### Child Welfare Agency

- There are concerns that DCBS's ongoing staffing issue is negatively affecting the case progress and outcomes for children and families; this includes concerns that not all policies are being followed due to staffing issues.
- There are additional concerns that Child Protective Services is not following through with assisting families in emergency situations.
- DCBS community response refers families to all local food banks in the area.
- DCBS will pilot Alternative Response in the Two Rivers and Northeastern DCBS regions in Fall 2023. This will allow social workers to provide concrete services for families. DCBS is moving away from a punitive response geared toward removals and moving toward prevention services to make families safer. These are evidence-based practices that are already being utilized in other states.
- The Cabinet is reviewing the possibility of implementing parent mentor programs.

### Courts

- There is an issue in some counties where children are placed in DCBS custody due to beyond-control behaviors before DCBS has a chance to provide services. This is occurring with petitions filed by parents.
- In some counties, GALs are proactive and work with the Cabinet to assure the needs of the child are being met and to advocate for the child. In other counties, GALs are stretched thin and there is a lack of participation/advocacy.
- Absent fathers create a barrier to permanency, more court support is needed on this issue. Establishing paternity when multiple fathers are identified takes a long time. When a father is finally identified, the child has been in care for months.
- The high number of families on judges' dockets is causing court delays. Family court expansion is needed.

### Overall System Comments and Concerns

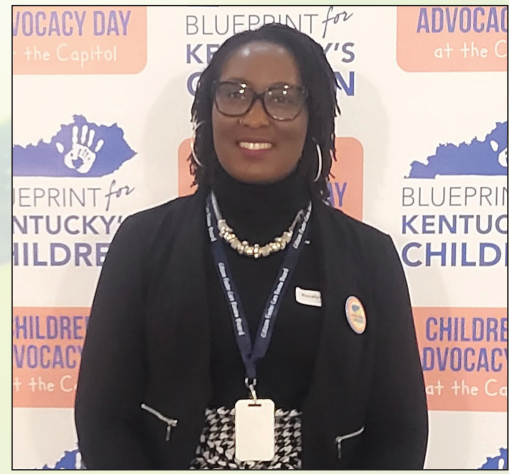
- Community action councils provide services to families and would like a more direct partnership with serving families.
- Aetna helps provide face-to-face services in the home and provides consistency.
- There is a placement crisis in the state, with children having to sleep in the DCBS offices or hotels. This is detrimental to the children's well-being and the DCBS staff's mental health. There is a need for more foster homes, more agencies, more beds, and more DCBS workers.
- DCBS staff are experiencing a lot of trauma, and this impacts what staff can do and learn. What they are facing makes it difficult to retain information and provide good services to their whole caseload. This impacts case work across the board.
- Schools could help students who are in care to integrate into the community setting.
- It would be nice to see more positive stories in the media about the foster care system.
- Services need to be provided to families before it gets to the point where the children must be removed.
- Non-traditional resources should be discussed with community partners.



## CFCRB volunteers met with legislators during Children's Advocacy Week

Several CFCRB volunteers met virtually with legislators during the Children's Advocacy Week held Feb. 6 - 10, 2023. The event continued an annual tradition that began in 2004 to allow advocates across the state to join forces on behalf of the safety, health, education and economic well-being of children and families. An in-person rally was held on Feb. 8, 2023.

The CFCRB was one of the Blueprint Partners of this event. The Blueprint for Kentucky's Children is a coalition of non-profit, public and private organizations that stands on three pillars: thriving communities launch strong families, strong families launch successful kids and successful kids launch a prosperous future for Kentucky.



*CFCRB State Vice Chair Rosalyn Patton-Pelt attended the 2023 Children's Advocacy Week event.*



# CFCRB overview by the numbers

## Out-of-home care demographics

### What gender are children in out-of-home care?

The gender of children in out-of-home care is almost evenly split, with 52% male and 48% female.

### What are the ages of children in foster care?

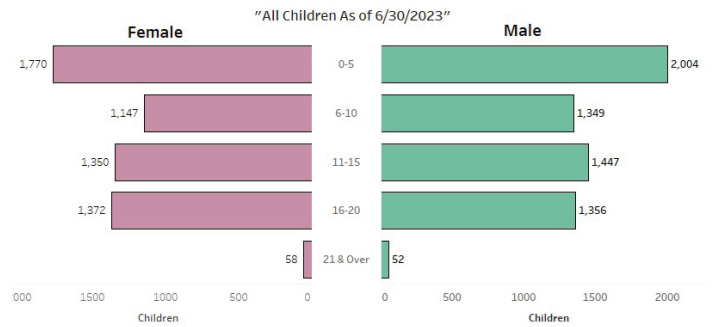
In FY 2023, the youngest child reviewed by CFCRB volunteers was one month old and the oldest was 22 years old (due to extended commitment). The average age remained constant at 10 years. Of the children reviewed by the CFCRB, those age 5 and younger remain the largest age group at 32%, with ages 11 to 15 at 24% and ages 16 to 20 at 23%. The age analysis is based on children who were in out-of-home care on June 30, 2023, and includes children who were released from the custody of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services anytime during the fiscal year.

### What race are children in foster care?

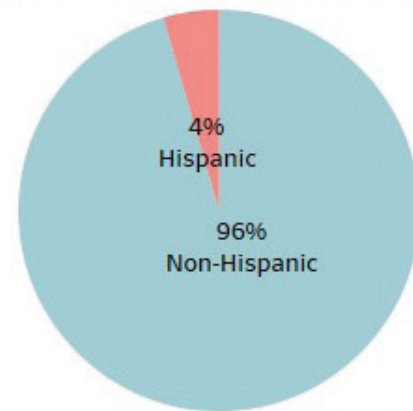
Of the children in foster care, 71% are Caucasian, 10% are African American, 15% are Multiracial, 3% are unable to be determined, and less than 1% are other. The other races include American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. In addition, 4% of the children in foster care have Hispanic ethnicity.

Black youth represent only 8.6% of Kentucky's population but 10% of children in foster care, demonstrating the overrepresentation of children of color in foster care. Our goal is to address disproportionality in the child welfare

## Children in Foster Care by Age and Gender



## Children in Foster Care by Ethnicity



system by focusing on changes in policy and practice at specific contact points.

*In March 2018, the CATS system updated its race codes to allow the selection of multiple race types. This update was not retroactive.*

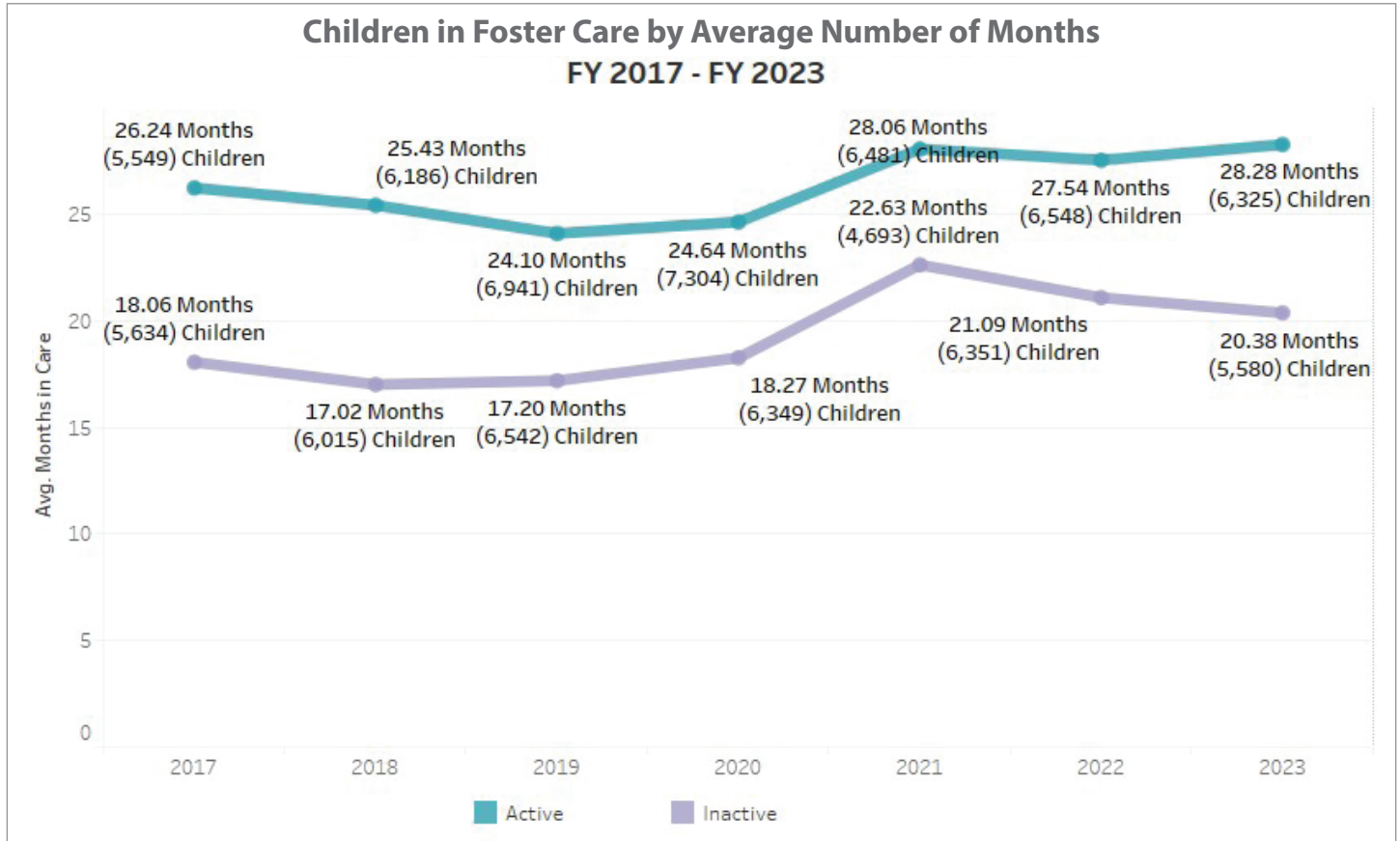
## Active Children in Foster Care as of June 30, 2023 by Race and Age



# Time in out-of-home care

## What is the average length of stay for children in out-of-home care?

Active children – children who were still in care at the end of FY 2023 – experienced an average length of stay of 28.3 months. Inactive children – children released at any time during the fiscal year – experienced an average length of stay of 20.4 months. The overall average length of stay for FY 2023 was 24.6 months, which is a notable decrease from the average length of stay of 26.7 months in FY 2022.

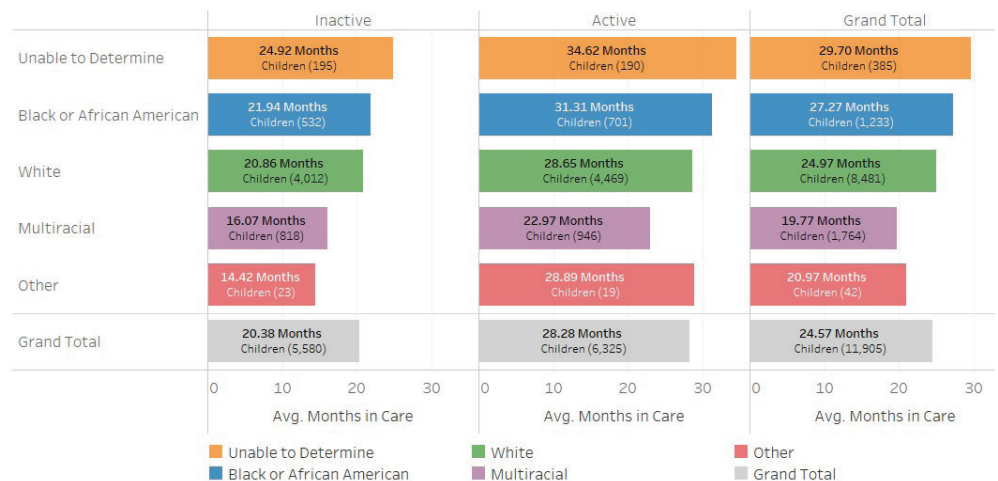


On average Black children spend 27.3 months in care, which is 9% longer than the 24.9 months White children experience. Children aged 16 - 20 continue to remain in care longer than younger children and are experiencing an average of 35.1 months in care compared with 17.9 months in care for children age 5 and younger.

It should be noted that in calculating the average length of stay, children who were in care less than 24 hours are counted as “zero” for the length of time in care. These are children who may have been in the process of being removed from the home when a suitable relative assumed custody of the child. When taking into account these zeros, it may actually skew the average to the lower end of the spectrum.

*Note: Statistics captured in this chart represent all children whose cases were reviewed between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023.*

## Foster Care Children by Race FY 2023 Average Months in Care



# Exiting out-of-home care

## Why are children released from out-of-home care?

In FY 2023, 4,878 children were released from out-of-home care. Of the children released, 39% were reunified with parents or primary guardians, and 24% were placed with relatives or fictive kin. This is consistent with FY 2022. Twenty-five percent of black children were placed with relatives or fictive kin compared to 23% of white children. Consequently, a higher number of black children remain displaced from their families and communities.

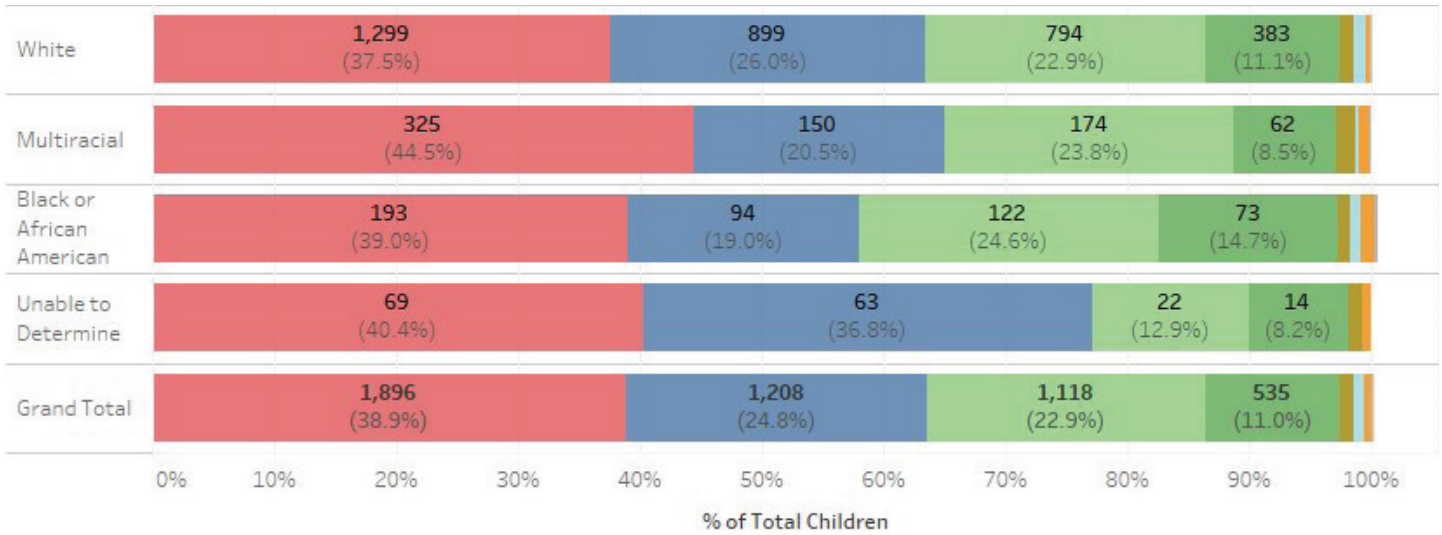
Children aging out of care accounts for 11% of the releases however, 15% of black children aged out of care. This



is significant as children aging out of care do not obtain permanency.

This chart shows the race of youth exiting foster care in FY 2023 broken down by release type.

**Children in Foster Care By Race & Release Type**  
FY 2023



\*Other Race not included (see table below)



	Reunification - Parent / Primary Caregiver	Adoption	Placed with relatives	Aged Out	Successor Guardian	Fictive Kin	Transfer to Another Agency	Death	Kinship Care Placement	Grand Total
White	1,299	899	794	383	38	35	11	5	1	3,460
Multiracial	325	150	174	62	11	2	6	1		731
Black or African American	193	94	122	73	5	4	6	1		495
Unable to Determine	69	63	22	14	2		1			171
Other	10	2	6	3						21
Grand Total	1,896	1,208	1,118	535	56	41	24	7	1	4,878

## Permanency through adoption

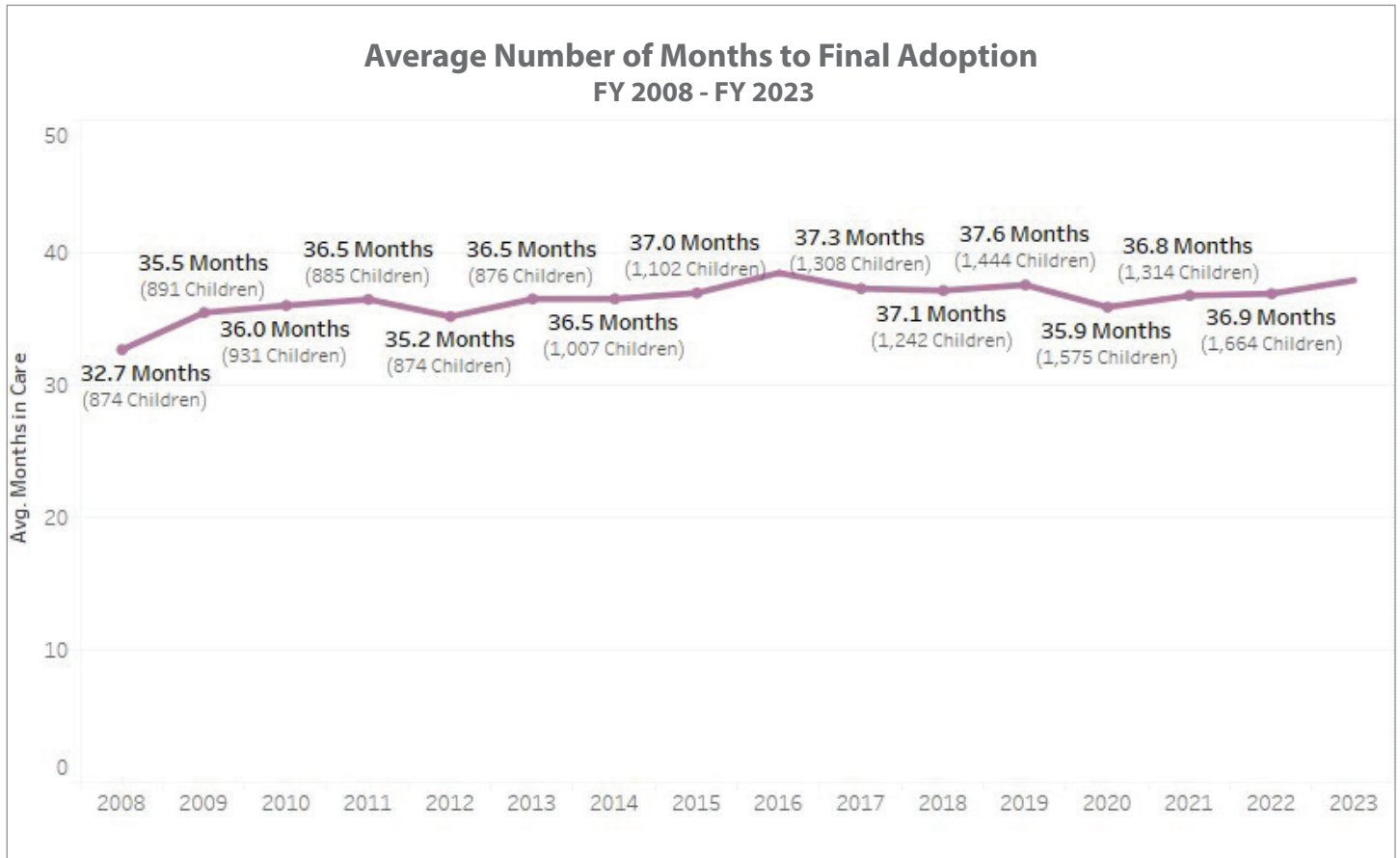
### What percentage of children in out-of-home care were adopted?

Of the children released from care in FY 2023, 25% achieved permanency through adoption, a slight decrease from the 27% in FY 2023. Nationwide, children released from care by

adoption has declined since reaching a high in 2019.

Data reflected children who exited care because of a finalized adoption spent 36.9 months in care prior to adoption.

The chart illustrates the average number of months to finalize adoption for children in foster care from FY 2008 to 2023.

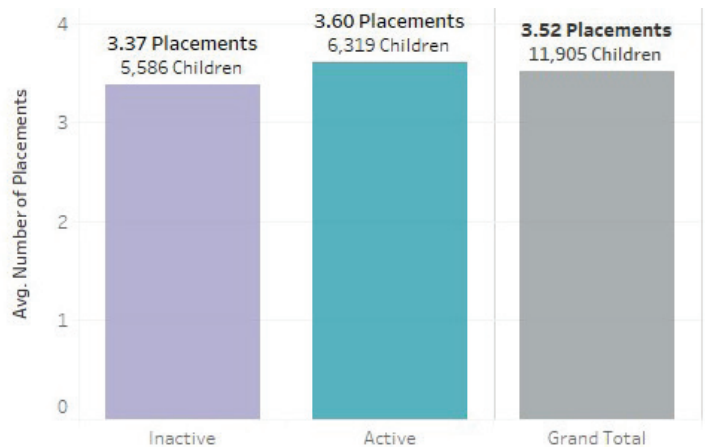


## Placement stability

### What do fewer out-of-home placements mean for children in foster care?

Fewer placements create stability and lessen the trauma for children in care. Kentucky’s children experienced an average of 3.52 placements per commitment during FY 2023 compared to the national average of 4.48. In FY 2023 a total of 97 children experienced more than three moves in a 6-month time frame. This is notably less than the 153 children who experienced more than 3 moves in 6-months in FY 2022.

### Average Placements FY 2023







## Voice of lived experience

*Carla Stamper  
Family Peer Support Specialist  
with Kentucky Partnership for  
Families and Children  
Parent Leader/Lived Experience  
voice serving on KY SEAT*

In my first career, I was a registered nurse. I wanted to make a difference by helping others. While working as a nurse, I began a relationship that eventually became toxic. In my 30s and never experiencing domestic violence before, I didn't cope well. I struggled silently, trying to keep my family together. I even eventually began drinking. As my home life deteriorated more, I began to self-medicate to numb the pain and escape my reality.

My life quickly spiraled out of control as I tried to hold it together. I was ashamed to ask for help. I was still denying the situation to myself, not wanting to be that girl. I was a strong woman, good mother and passionate nurse. I was the rock of my family. I helped fix others. I hadn't been here before, being the one needing fixing. I thought if I could fix him, it would fix us, and my life would be normal again. However, it would turn out that I would lose my kids and eventually myself in the mess my life had become. I soon gained alcohol-related charges, lost my driver's license, had my first experience with DCBS involvement, and my nursing license was suspended. My relationship continued to spiral, the abuse worsened, and eventually, I lost myself too. I had no time to process each loss because these all occurred over a span of three months. This is my journey.

Thirty-five months. That is how long I was separated from my kids. Our family was extremely fragile, we were crumbling and we needed help! This was the first referral made to DCBS regarding my kids. I had no criminal history and no past child welfare experience. When I first met with the DCBS case workers, I was compliant by sharing information that allowed them to contact my friends and family members to gather their thoughts about my children's safety. A family plan was made, but without my input, I found it very difficult for me to complete. It felt as though my mistakes, my weaknesses and my shortcomings were the only things being identified, and that no one looked at my strengths. I felt judged, written off and completely torn down.

It took three years for me to meet all the requirements before I could try to regain custody of my kids. The requirements were maintaining steady employment for six months, obtaining secure housing and achieving sobriety. Through the process, I endured many challenges. As part of the plan to achieve sobriety, I would receive a call, at random, and

have one hour to get a drug/alcohol screening completed. I did not have transportation, so I found it difficult to find a ride, have gas money for that ride, make the twenty-mile drive to the location and be there on time to prevent any penalties. After finally meeting all the identified goals on my plan, I found a para-legal who helped me file a petition to get my kids back only to later learn that I had to have an attorney represent me. I now had to face the challenge of hiring an attorney when I only made \$12 per hour. I felt like my dream of having my family back together was once again out of reach, but I was able to stay strong and keep pushing.

During my 3rd attempt at IOP, I was introduced to peer support. Having that person to not judge me, not doubt me, encourage me, cheer for me, and help celebrate the smallest wins was instrumental to my success. She believed in me until I could believe in myself again. Even though she did hold me accountable, she was my game changer. She not only helped me find hope but find my way back to myself and eventually my kids.

My suggestions for those of you working with families like mine:

- Focus on parent and family strengths. (What is going well for this family?)
- Include the parent and family on the creation of the plan. If it is my plan, then I am more likely to follow it.
- Be transparent with the parent and family regarding the various processes/hoops. What are the tasks I must do and how do I do them?
- Ask the parent and family what they need to meet the goals on the plan. Identify my challenges.
- Make sure the families are knowledgeable of the process and resources available. We need to be informed on services and court process.
- Acknowledge the progress, no matter how small, that the parents have made. (Change is HARD work.)
- Share hope and possibilities with the families you serve.
- Remember that parents can get healthier, families can get stronger, and they can have a happy, productive future!

The good news is that I did get my kids back! I found a career in providing family peer support services that allowed me to help other families that are walking a similar journey as mine. Once again, I am making a difference for others.

# Profile of CFCRB volunteers

## Who are the CFCRB Volunteers?

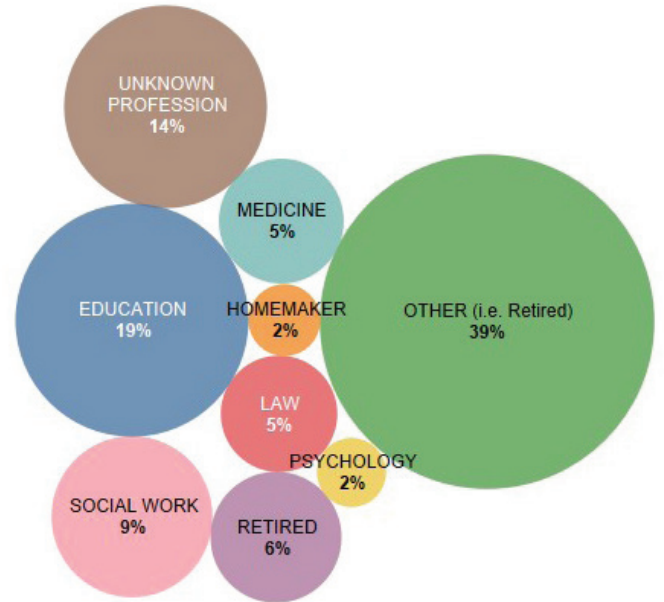
CFCRB volunteers come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, but all share a genuine concern for children and their welfare.

Of the 725 volunteers, 87% are female, and 40% have backgrounds in education, medicine, law, social work, and psychology. They range in age from 21 to 91, with an average age of 56. The average length of service is six years, which demonstrates their commitment to the children they serve.

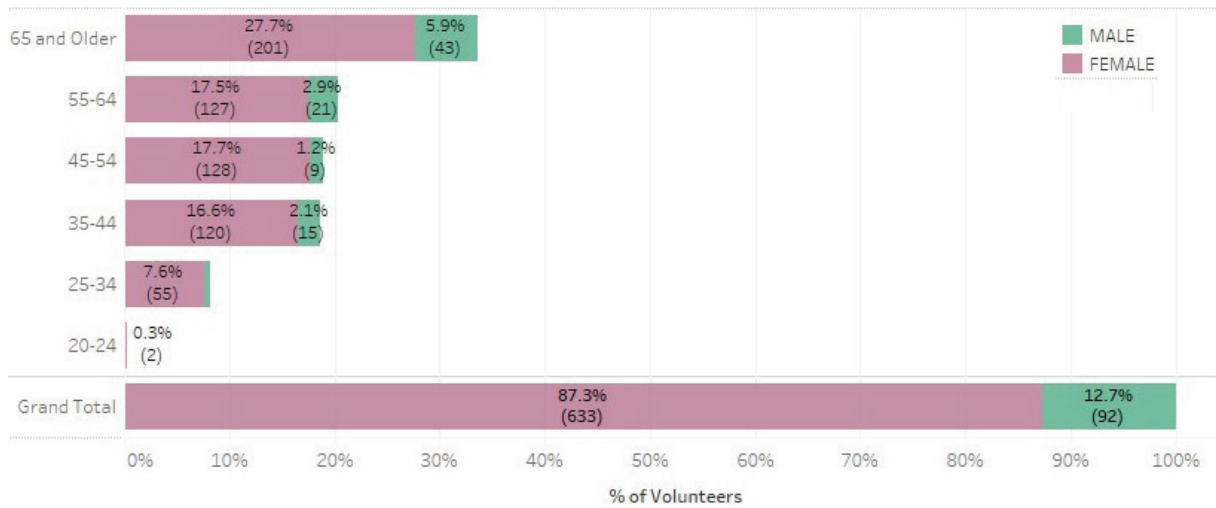
Of the volunteers, 91% are Caucasian, 7% are African American, and 2% are considered other.

The CFCRB strives to increase the diversity of our volunteer base through the efforts of its Diversity Committee and active recruitment in underrepresented populations.

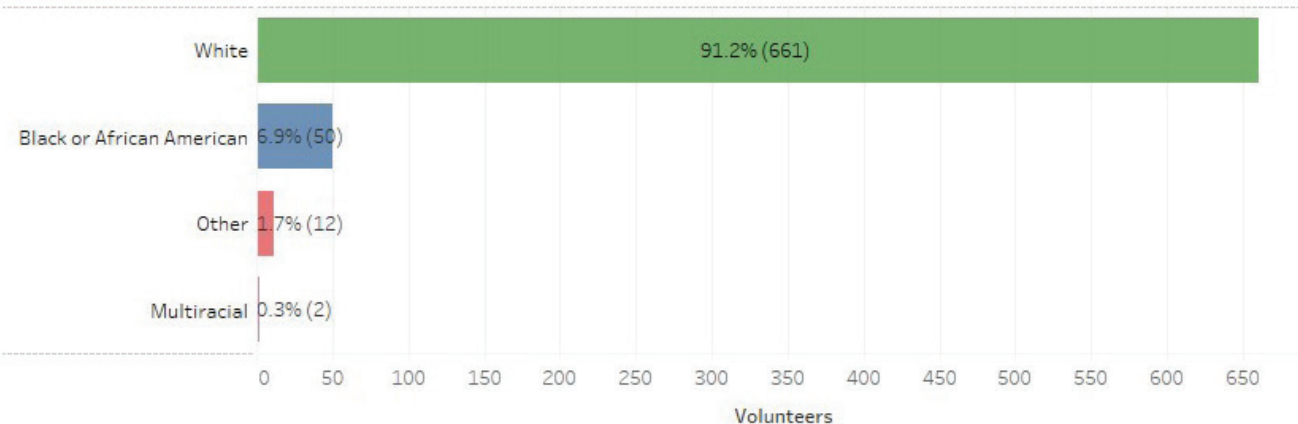
## Volunteers by Profession



## Volunteers by Age Group & Gender



## Volunteers by Race





## Working together, CFCRB volunteers do much good

*Ashley Clark, Executive Officer  
Family and Juvenile Services  
Administrative Office of the Courts*

When I first began my career with the Administrative Office of the Courts, I served as the Citizen Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) chair of my local interested party review board. Now that I serve as the Executive Officer for the Department of Family and Juvenile Services, I am honored and inspired by the resiliency and commitment of the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board members. The CFCRB maintains its focus on the safety and well-being of the commonwealth’s children in out-of-home care, keeping the best interest of these children as its top priority.

In addition to the CFCRB’s steady focus on the best interest of Kentucky’s children in foster care, the CFCRB adapts to our ever-changing world and the ensuing challenges faced by children across the commonwealth. From facilitating regional community forums to focusing on inclusion and diversity in the ranks of the CFCRB. All while working toward creating a welcoming, safe space for shared dialogue during its reviews, the CFCRB volunteers are poised to address barriers impacting children in out-of-home care.

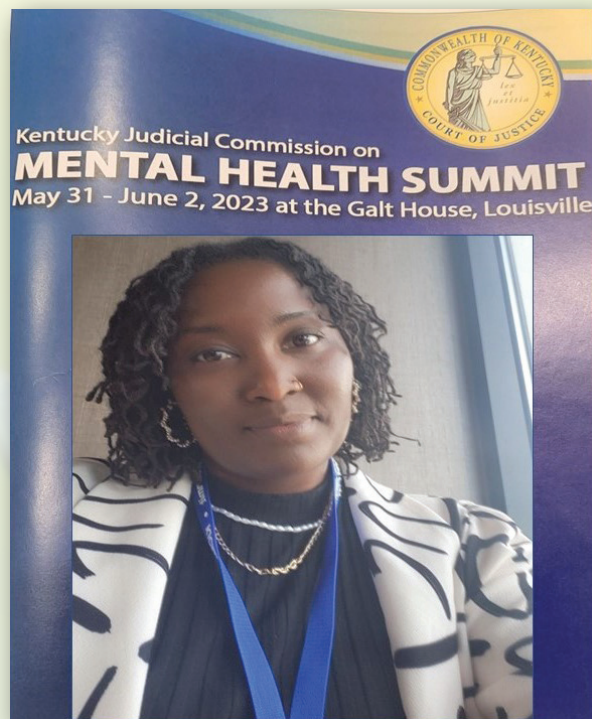
I appreciate the hard work and dedication shown by our volunteers and staff. I am grateful for the CFCRB members advocating throughout the state to ensure Kentucky’s children in out-of-home care have a voice. I look forward to our continued collaboration as we strive to improve outcomes for children and families.

**“The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members, a heart of grace, and a soul generated by love.”**

**— Coretta Scott King**

## CFCRB volunteers participated in the Mental Health Summit

A group of CFCRB volunteers participated in the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health Summit held May 31 – June 2, 2023. In 2022, the Kentucky Supreme Court established the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health (KJCMH). The KJCMH is charged with exploring, recommending and implementing transformational changes to improve system-wide responses to justice-involved individuals experiencing mental illness, substance use and/or intellectual and developmental disabilities. The KJCMH recognizes that improving the lives of justice-involved Kentuckians requires complex, interdisciplinary collaboration, education and solutions. To that end, the KJCMH hosted the Mental Health Summit to gather vested court partners to explore more effective responses to the needs of justice-involved individuals experiencing mental illness, substance use, and intellectual and/or developmental disabilities. The Summit provided an opportunity to discuss, develop and implement a comprehensive continuum of responses for Kentucky courts and their communities.



*CFCRB State Vice Chair Rosalyn Patton-Pelt*

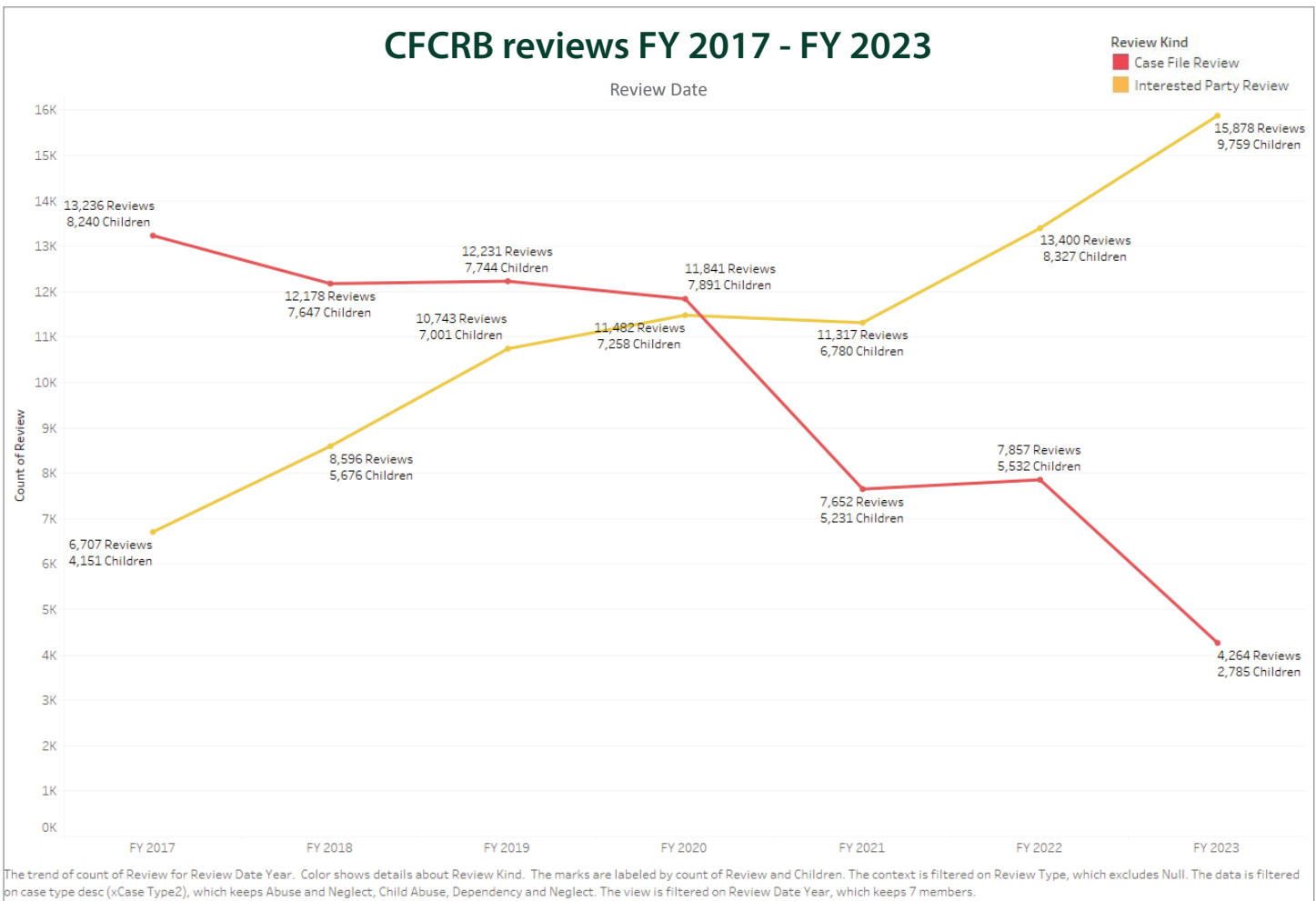
# More children benefit from an interested party review

The Interested Party Review (IPR) is an interactive review process that involves Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteers, parents, care providers, service providers, Department for Community Based Services personnel, Court Appointed Special Advocate volunteers and attorneys for children and parents.

IPRs focus on case plans for the parents and their child, and the progress being made to secure permanency for the child. After completing the mandatory review, the Family Services program coordinator compiles a comprehensive report of findings and recommendations and submits it to the judge responsible for the case.

In FY 2023, CFCRB volunteers conducted 15,992 intensive reviews for 9,835 children. In FY 2022, the CFCRB conducted 13,479 IPRs.

The use of IPR as the standard for reviewing cases has grown exponentially since its implementation in 2007. In its first year, only 16% of the CFCRB boards used IPR, compared with 89% in FY 2023. That means that 148 boards representing 118 counties now use IPR.



## CFCRB reviews FY 2023

Is Active?	Case File Review		Interested Party Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
Active	2,470	1,521	9,135	5,201	11,605	6,319
Inactive	1,794	1,264	6,743	4,558	8,537	5,586
Grand Total	4,264	2,785	15,878	9,759	20,142	11,905

## CFCRB reviews by county/local board FY 2023

Review Board Name	Case File Review		Interested Party Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
ADAIR	3	3	29	15	32	18
ALLEN			125	74	125	74
ANDERSON	53	30			53	30
BALLARD/CARLISLE			108	64	108	64
BARREN	141	83	1	1	142	84
BARREN IPR	17	17	171	101	188	114
BATH/MENIFEE IPR	31	31	98	70	129	76
BELL IPR	19	19	29	25	48	32
BOONE/GALLATIN	219	129			219	129
BOONE/GALLATIN IPR			164	108	164	108
BOURBON IPR	62	35	4	4	66	39
BOYD B			1	1	1	1
BOYD IPR	29	26	248	177	277	182
BOYLE IPR	4	4	140	86	144	89
BREATHITT			134	79	134	79
BRECKINRIDGE			132	82	132	82
BULLITT			141	85	141	85
BULLITT B			132	92	132	92
BUTLER			204	124	204	124
CALDWELL/LYON			64	42	64	42
CALLOWAY			210	123	210	123
CAMPBELL 1	128	70			128	70
CAMPBELL 2	193	102	1	1	194	102
CAMPBELL 4 IPR	1	1	144	82	145	83
CARROLL	124	70	1	1	125	70
CARTER IPR	1	1	135	83	136	83
CASEY	3	3	32	17	35	20
CHRISTIAN			235	140	235	140
CHRISTIAN B IPR			210	125	210	125
CLARK	102	65	8	8	110	73
CLARK IPR	5	5	223	128	228	131
CLAY IPR	2	2	140	92	142	94
CLINTON IPR	14	11	37	26	51	33
CRITTENDEN			81	47	81	47
DAVISS A			159	97	159	97
DAVISS B			181	111	181	111
DAVISS C			197	122	197	122
EDMONSON			56	35	56	35
ELLIOTT/MORGAN IPR	2	2	95	73	97	74
ESTILL IPR			95	59	95	59
FAYETTE 1 IPR	2	2	157	95	159	95
FAYETTE 2 IPR			81	51	81	51
FAYETTE 4 IPR	1	1	88	47	89	48
FAYETTE A IPR			59	41	59	41
FAYETTE B IPR	1	1	59	44	60	45
FAYETTE C	1	1	55	36	56	37
FAYETTE D			90	60	90	60
FAYETTE E IPR			58	38	58	38
FAYETTE F IPR	3	3	82	51	85	51
FAYETTE G IPR			88	56	88	56
FAYETTE H	76	68	1	1	77	69
FAYETTE I IPR			126	72	126	72
FAYETTE I PAPER BOARD	2	2			2	2
FAYETTE J IPR	1	1	72	51	73	52
FLEMING/ROBERTSON	29	29	42	39	71	48
FLOYD IPR	29	25	242	155	271	159
FRANKLIN	276	159			276	159

## CFCRB reviews by county/local board FY 2023

Review Board Name	Case File Review		Interested Party Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
FRANKLIN IPR	15	15	101	66	116	77
FULTON/HICKMAN			81	50	81	50
GARRARD IPR	3	3	86	46	89	49
GRANT	108	62			108	62
GRAVES			145	88	145	88
GRAVES B			20	11	20	11
GRAYSON			215	133	215	133
GREEN			7	4	7	4
GREENUP/LEWIS IPR	35	35	130	102	165	114
HANCOCK			71	44	71	44
HARDIN A			196	125	196	125
HARDIN B			226	147	226	147
HARDIN C			230	142	230	142
HARDIN D			192	121	192	121
HARLAN IPR			70	34	70	34
HARRISON/NICHOLAS IPR	22	21	171	103	193	108
HART	6	6	93	56	99	57
HENDERSON			108	67	108	67
HENRY IPR	8	7	32	18	40	25
HOPKINS	1	1	110	70	111	70
JACKSON IPR	1	1	81	50	82	50
JEFFERSON 1	203	124			203	124
JEFFERSON 1/3 IPR	1	1	2	2	3	3
JEFFERSON 2	196	120			196	120
JEFFERSON 3	198	126			198	126
JEFFERSON 4	176	107			176	107
JEFFERSON 5	1	1	101	65	102	66
JEFFERSON 5A			87	54	87	54
JEFFERSON 6	202	123			202	123
JEFFERSON 7			82	52	82	52
JEFFERSON 7A	2	2	65	37	67	38
JEFFERSON 8			70	45	70	45
JEFFERSON 8A			61	38	61	38
JEFFERSON 9	164	96			164	96
JEFFERSON 10	126	77	1	1	127	77
JEFFERSON 10 IPR			79	51	79	51
JESSAMINE IPR	2	2	186	109	188	110
JOHNSON IPR	1	1	94	60	95	60
KENTON 1 IPR			159	92	159	92
KENTON 2 IPR	2	2	143	90	145	92
KENTON 3-Campbell	110	62	1	1	111	63
KENTON 4 IPR			135	81	135	81
KENTON 5 IPR	1	1	137	91	138	92
KENTON 6	267	151	1	1	268	151
KENTON 7 IPR			130	82	130	82
KENTON 7-Campbell	2	2			2	2
KENTON 8 IPR			139	85	139	85
KENTON STATUS IPR			84	44	84	44
KNOTT/PERRY IPR	7	7	54	36	61	38
KNOX			1	1	1	1
KNOX IPR			145	88	145	88
LARUE			36	24	36	24
LAUREL 2	12	12	83	75	95	86
LAUREL IPR			308	219	308	219
LAWRENCE IPR			87	54	87	54
LEE/OWSLEY IPR	8	8	56	36	64	36
LESLIE	3	3	30	20	33	20

## CFCRB reviews by county/local board FY 2023

Review Board Name	Case File Review		Interested Party Review		Grand Total	
	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children	Reviews	Children
LETCHER			44	23	44	23
LINCOLN IPR			117	69	117	69
LIVINGSTON			38	24	38	24
LOGAN			106	69	106	69
MADISON A IPR	8	5	264	165	272	170
MADISON B	62	61	82	78	144	95
MADISON C	128	88	2	2	130	90
MAGOFFIN IPR	6	6	56	31	62	33
MARION/WASHINGTON IPR	3	3	55	33	58	36
MARSHALL			82	55	82	55
Marshall B			102	66	102	66
MARTIN IPR	2	2	51	41	53	41
MASON/BRACKEN IPR	58	58	87	80	145	98
MCCRACKEN A IPR			166	99	166	99
MCCRACKEN B			137	86	137	86
MCCREARY	3	3	110	63	113	63
MCLEAN			32	22	32	22
MEADE			218	127	218	127
MERCER IPR			81	54	81	54
METCALFE	15	15	48	23	63	37
MONROE/CUMBERLAND	10	10	57	30	67	37
MONTGOMERY IPR	30	29	191	135	221	145
MUHLENBERG			171	102	171	102
NELSON			79	46	79	46
OHIO	1	1	266	178	267	178
OLDHAM IPR	4	4	57	33	61	37
OWEN	5	5	34	24	39	26
PENDLETON IPR	34	22	48	32	82	48
PERRY	13	13	6	6	19	19
Perry 2			92	60	92	60
PIKE IPR A	23	23	277	179	300	183
PIKE IPR B			8	8	8	8
POWELL IPR	60	54	78	65	138	76
PULASKI IPR	37	32	205	128	242	152
ROCKCASTLE IPR			58	45	58	45
ROWAN A IPR			79	53	79	53
ROWAN B IPR	9	9	59	39	68	39
RUSSELL	12	11	115	65	127	73
SCOTT	91	58			91	58
SCOTT IPR	11	11	63	46	74	54
SHELBY	118	67			118	67
SHELBY IPR	17	17	58	49	75	59
SIMPSON			63	38	63	38
SPENCER IPR	4	4	30	19	34	22
TAYLOR	3	3	52	31	55	33
TODD			89	51	89	51
TRIGG			37.0	23	37.0	23
TRIMBLE IPR	10.0	10	38.0	26	48.0	34
UNION			88.0	51	88.0	51
WARREN A IPR			128.0	72	128.0	72
WARREN B			128.0	72	128.0	72
WARREN C IPR			124.0	73	124.0	73
WARREN D IPR			151.0	86	151.0	86
WARREN E IPR			119.0	78	119.0	78
WARREN G IPR			143.0	82	143.0	82
WAYNE	6.0	6	66.0	38	72.0	43
WEBSTER			33.0	20	33.0	20
WHITLEY IPR			243.0	151	243.0	151
WOLFE	5.0	5	44.0	29	49.0	31
WOODFORD	19.0	18	36.0	27	55.0	32

# Celebrating positive outcomes for children



It truly takes a village to help a child grow and thrive. This section highlights the success, however big or small, of children and families who have experienced positive impacts despite their involvement in the child welfare system. We appreciate the CFCRB volunteers and staff, judges, and Cabinet for Health and Family Services staff for creating the village that makes this good news possible.

## Success Stories

### Fayette County IPR Board

The Fayette B volunteers reviewed a sibling group who were placed in out-of-home care in 2015. Unfortunately, these children could not be safely returned to the birth family. Their parental rights were terminated in early 2018, and the parents filed a series of appeals. Once all the appeals were resolved, the children had to be moved from the foster home they had been in since 2015 due to personal issues in the home. In July 2023, the siblings were reunited with their original foster father and adoption was finalized.

### Madison County IPR

The Madison B board reviews two siblings who have decided to recommit at age 18. The older sibling is a sophomore and plays basketball for the college basketball team. He also participated in a mission trip to Brazil. The younger sibling graduated high school in May 2023 and plans to attend college and pursue obtaining a real estate license. The siblings are also receiving support from their foster and biological families.



### Meade County IPR

The Meade County board reviews a sibling group that consists of eight children ranging from toddlers to teenagers who entered care after having been raised in the woods. The children had never attended school or been seen by a doctor. Most of the children were unable to write their names. All the children were removed and placed in two foster homes that are on the same property. The foster parents lived in one home with half the children. Their adult daughter who had a house on the same property, took the other half of the children into her home, so they were all able to remain together. Even though they are split up between two households, they reside on the same property and can see their siblings whenever they want. The oldest two children have turned 18 and recommitted to the Cabinet and remain in the homes with their siblings and want to be adopted as adults. The adoption of the younger children was extremely close to being completed when the foster father died unexpectedly in January 2023. The children felt like they lost their father and, the foster mother was beside herself with grief over losing her husband, but she and her daughter both remain committed to these children and intend to move forward with the adoption. They are now in the final stages and the adoptions should be completed before the end of the

year. All the children have just excelled in this foster placement. When they first came into care, they didn't speak much, but as the case has progressed, especially with the older siblings, we have been able to witness firsthand them all coming out a little more and being able to advocate for themselves. It has truly been a remarkable transformation from the children we first met.

### Nelson County IPR

The Nelson County board reviewed a case with six siblings, three girls and three boys, who entered care in late 2017. The children were placed together in the same foster home. It was determined the children could not safely return home. One of the fathers appealed the termination of parental rights. The appellate court affirmed the termination. The children were adopted in August 2023.

### Pulaski County IPR

The Pulaski County Board reviewed a youth who was in care for over three years due to chronic mental health issues that required additional assistance his family was unable to provide. As the years went by, this youth received excellent care in his Supports for Community Living (SCL) placement; as his 21st birthday approached, the family struggled to file for guardianship. His case manager at the facility helped ensure that he could remain in the facility after he aged out of care. The SCL waiver allows him to be cared for by familiar, caring staff in the very same placement. His family always participated in IPR reviews concerning his case and they have provided emotional and physical support throughout his time in care. All the correct parties are in attendance to participate.



# Advocates



## Recognizing the dedication of longtime CFCRB volunteers

The Citizen Foster Care Review Board owes its success to the 725 volunteers who advocate for Kentucky's children. We pay tribute to several of these longtime child welfare champions.



**ANGELA KIGER, Kenton 2 IPR Board  
23 Years of Service**

I became a member of the CFCRB Kenton 2 board at the request of a dear friend and mentor, Betty J. Howell, over 20 years ago. Since that time, I have served on four boards: currently serving on a Kenton County IPR Board. Although many changes have occurred over the 20-plus years I have served, two stand out.

First is the many children and families affected by drug use. The case numbers and length of stay in foster care have increased drastically, which in turn has affected case numbers.

Second is the change in how the FCRB system is managed. Twenty years ago, conferences were held every two years joining board members from across the state for educational and social gatherings. These biennial meetings allowed members to meet peers and share information and best practices. But I think the most striking change has been the use of IPR Boards. These meetings allow the board members to have a more complete picture of each case. I have enjoyed serving the children of the commonwealth and hope to continue for many years to come.



**DONNA BUSIC, Pike IPR A, B, Perry 2, Leslie, Lee/Owsley IPR, Floyd IPR, Knott/Perry IPR, & Estill IPR  
19 Years of Service**

I have been a volunteer for the Citizen Foster Care Review Board for nineteen years. I started as a member of only one board and now I am on eight boards. I love working with the other volunteers, the supervisors and others involved with the foster care system in the state.

I taught in the Perry County public school system for 31 years. I have seen many children pass through the school that were in the foster care system. Some of the children had great foster parents who loved and cared for them, and there were other children whose foster parents used the system as a source of income rather than a way to help children

who need the love and care the system provides. That is why I became a volunteer. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of the children in foster care. I wanted to make sure that each child had the opportunity to get involved in the programs and services that are available for them to become a functioning member of society. I encourage anyone who wants to make a difference in a child's life to become a volunteer.



**JESSICA BOLLINGER, Fayette A IPR  
19 Years of Service**

In 2004, a friend told me about Citizen Foster Care Review, I had never heard about it. Kids matter to me. I began on the Fayette D case file review board. Nineteen years later, I am still showing up. These kids need us to show up for them. The Citizen Foster Care Review Board follows kids in the foster care system. We read through the reports and summaries in their case files. We are a stopgap to make sure that they do not fall through the cracks. We make sure all their needs are being met, physically, mentally and emotionally. We make sure they are safe. We encourage the track to permanency for them where they will be valued, loved and feel safe at home. That is why I do it. I also love the workers and the other volunteers. I have made new friends. I encourage everyone to volunteer these two or three hours per month! It is worth it for the children and for yourself!



**SHERILL D. SANDERS, Fayette 4 IPR  
30 Years of Service**

I consider it an honor to be a volunteer on the Citizen Foster Care Review Board. I heard about CFCRB through a friend who knew how I felt about children. After going through the training, I was excited to get started. It is a phenomenal feeling to think perhaps I make a difference in how a child might be cared for and their educational, physical, mental, medical and social needs are met.

# A heart for children



**Giving a voice to our youngest citizens takes compassion and concern for the welfare of others. CFCRB volunteers explain their devotion to this cause.**



## **Brenda Rice, Chair Franklin County Review Boards**

I came across an ad in our local paper about the Citizen Foster Care Review Board. I was intrigued and inspired, so I convinced a friend to fill out the application and volunteer with me.

It's been several years now. I continue to volunteer with Citizen Foster Care Review because I believe every child deserves a safe and supportive environment to grow in. I believe our volunteers are making a positive impact on children's lives through advocacy and support, and this brings me a sense of fulfillment.



## **Denise Cole, Simpson IPR, Warren E IPR, and Chair Warren G**

I volunteered several years ago for the foster care review board along with CASA until my work obligation required that I resign. When another volunteer told me IPRs had become

virtual, I knew this was my opportunity to volunteer again. Now I serve on three boards in Warren and Simpson counties. As a young child I was adopted and find volunteering is a way for me to give back. I am always focused on what is in the best interest of the child and work to ensure families are given every opportunity to reunite when possible. I appreciate the diversity in all the board volunteers I work with and their ability to look at each case without bias and prejudice towards others. I appreciate the judges who oversee the cases and feel they are reading the board's findings and recommendations.



## **Lacey Back Lane, Chair Bath/Menifee**

I joined the CFCRB after learning about the opportunity from a member of the board who was a retired educator. As a special education service provider, I know the importance of having a good team working together for what

is in the best interest of a child. Joining the Bath/Menifee board seemed like the perfect opportunity to join a team of like-minded peers who have a passion for serving the youth in our community with a desire to see all kids grow, learn and succeed. I have enjoyed my time on the CFCRB, and I am proud to play a small role in supporting the youth in our community to make sure they feel safe, supported and most importantly cared for and loved.



## **Lacreasha Brown, Daviess A**

There was no one reason I decided to volunteer, but the current issues that are troubling our youth in this area were top of my list. I moved away from Owensboro for five years and came

back in total disbelief of the violence that continues to wreck our city. Every child deserves to grow, learn and just be a kid. It starts at home and they say, "Home is where the heart is!" So why not start there? And if a few hours of my time can have a positive influence on any child and family, I'm down for the cause. Volunteering for the families has helped me way more than I could ever help them.



## **Kennedy Hannah, Franklin County IPR and Henry IPR**

I volunteer because I have a passion to help and serve others. I come from a family of educators who instilled into me at an early age the importance of giving back to my community and others. Volunteering strengthens your

community, enhances professional experiences, saves resources, encourages civic responsibility, and promotes personal growth and self-esteem. Most importantly, volunteering brings people together. My reason for giving my time to the Citizen Foster Care Review Board stems from my experience with child development and family relations. I am a firm believer that children deserve safe and stable environments. Volunteering with the Citizen Foster Care Review Board helps ensure that permanence for at-risk children remains the central objective of the courts and the state-level cabinet. This program means everything to me, and I know that I play a part in the care and well-being of many youths.



## **Kenneth Hurt, McCracken B**

I volunteer because it gives me a great feeling of satisfaction, knowing that I am helping children be successful, and go on with a fulfilling life.

I volunteer to assist the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, Western Kentucky,

McCracken County, and the judges who make decisions about placing children in safe and permanent homes. I enjoy working with my Foster Care Review Board team to assist the children of Kentucky who are wards of the state. I enjoy utilizing my life experiences to assist in reviewing each child's case to see how the child is progressing in their foster home and school while ensuring the child's needs are being met, and the foster parents are abiding by the rules and regulations set up by the cabinet. We also assess how the child is interacting with the biological parents, and if the child can return home or if adoption is the right goal for the child.

## In memoriam



Sadly, members of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board passed away during this fiscal year. We honor and pay tribute to their memory and their dedication to the children they tirelessly advocated for throughout their services to the CFCRB. The voice they provided for the commonwealth's children in out-of-home care lives on through the CFCRB's continued commitment to children in foster care.

Joetta Stewart	Todd IPR	2 years of services
Joan Kleine	Clark, Estill, Garrard, Jessamine, Lincoln, Madison, Mercer, Pike and Powell IPR Boards	10 years of service
Charlene Greer	Daviess A IPR	16 years of service
Vera Lambert	Carter IPR	11 years of service

## Training programs help volunteers stay current

Through training programs offered by the Administrative Office of the Courts, volunteers received 2,672.75 hours of initial training and continued education. Training continues to be held virtually through Zoom and Microsoft Teams. These trainings include:

- CFCRB regional trainings
- Initial training
- Chair/Vice Chair trainings
- Technical trainings include Secure Documents, Forms, Conducting IPRs, Microsoft Teams, Zoom
- Legal training for dependency, neglect, and abuse cases
- Virtual trainings focused on children's issues and approved by local chairs

The CFCRB program volunteers attended a two-part regional training series in April and May of 2023 which provided the six hours of required annual continuing education training. The focus of the regional training was motivational interviewing a person-centered approach to communication to utilize in conducting interested party reviews.

In April, the volunteers learned the foundation of motivational interviewing. In May, the volunteers had the opportunity to practice these techniques in breakout rooms in each regional training with scenarios and mock reviews. Approximately 200 volunteers were trained in April and May. As we have learned from other CFCRB programs, motivational interviewing is a technique that improves the quality and outcomes of CFCRB interested party reviews, as it is a strength-based approach that values the knowledge of the parties present for the IPRs.

Let's give a big thanks to the trainers who provided the April and May CFCRB trainings: Regional Supervisor Toni Stubbs, Program Coordinators Leigh Ann Kerr, Mark Pratt, and Linnea Viniard. They did an outstanding job preparing and presenting these trainings.



# CFCRB Executive Committee

The CFCRB Executive Committee oversees the operation of the State Citizen Foster Care Review Board established in KRS 620.310 (1) and (2). The State Board consists of all local review board chairs and provides for a state CFCRB chair and vice chair.

**Steven Farr, Chair**  
steven.farr@uspiritus.org

**Rosalyn Patton-Pelt, Vice Chair**  
rozppelt@gmail.com

**Marti Dickerson, Secretary/Treasurer**  
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**Mika Tyler, Public Relations Committee Chair**  
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**Viola Miller, Training & Development Committee Chair**  
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**Kennedy Hannah, Diversity Committee Chair**  
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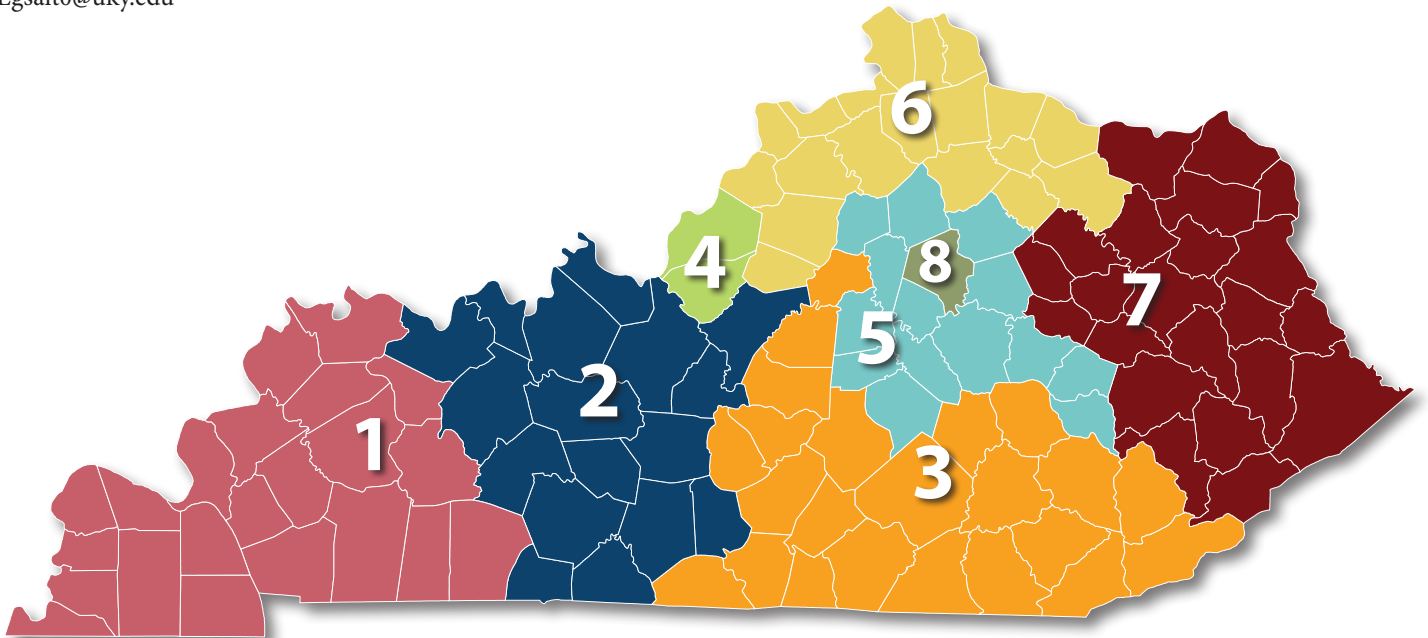
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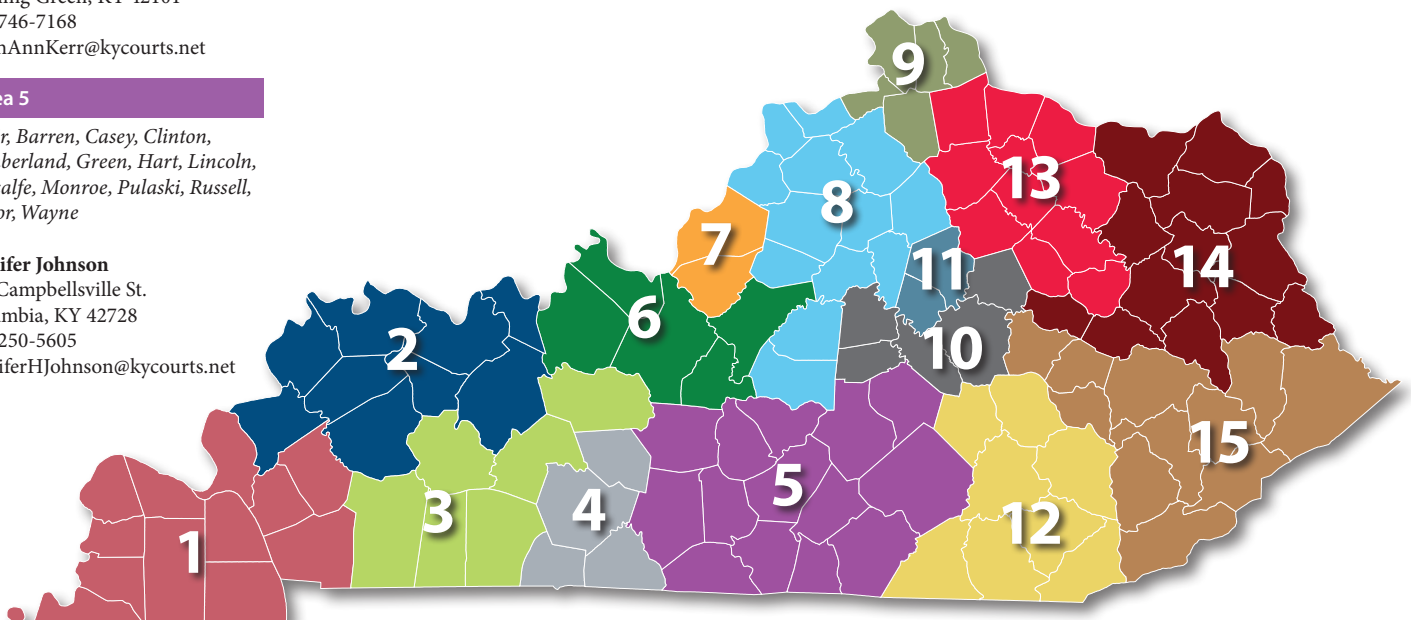
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Rachel Bingham, Director of Statewide Programs  
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*Administrative Office of the Courts*





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P-215, Printed With State Funds, January 2024

