Assessment

Findings and Recommendations

January 6, 2020

Baltimore City

Department of Social Services

THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Center for Systems Innovation

Dr. Walters invited Casey's Center for Systems Innovation (CSI) to conduct a full assessment of BCDSS outcomes

Assessment question:

Based on BCDSS's strengths and challenges, what strategic direction should the Department take?

- How are children, youth, young adults and families involved with BCDSS doing? Are they better off as a result of this involvement?

- What are the drivers of positive and negative outcomes for BCDSS?

- What are the recommended strategies and priorities to improve outcomes?

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Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative

Initiative's Population Result (call-to-action):

All young people 14 to 26 who have spent a day in foster care after their 14th birthday have the relationships, resources and opportunities to ensure well-being and success.
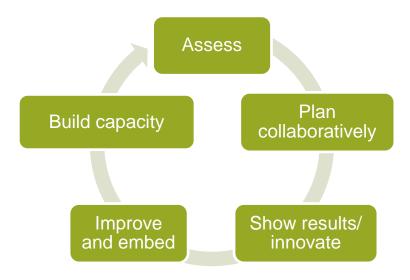
The Initiative's work is focused on making measurable impact in four indicator areas →

Permanency

Housing Stability

Education Success & Economic Security

Expectant & Parenting Youth

Best Practice Principles

Youth Engagement	Equity & Inclusion	Data & Self-Evaluation	Community Partnerships	Policy & Advocacy

Child Welfare Strategy Group

Intensive consulting with public agencies to implement innovative, equitable solutions

Assess

Plan collaboratively

Show results/ innovate

Improve and embed

Build capacity

Key Outcomes

Safety	Permanency	Well-being	Equity
Young people are safe from maltreatment, with a focus on prevention	Young people have lifelong families, connections with kin and siblings and live in families	Families and young people have the relationships and opportunities needed to thrive, and a voice in decision-making about their lives	Young people of all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, abilities and sexual identities experience positive results

CSI leveraged both quantitative and qualitative methods to assess Baltimore City's child welfare system

Data Analysis	• In-depth analysis of Baltimore City: AFCARS data, Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care data, CHESSIE data, Human Resources data
Policy & Document Review	• Maryland Placement Policy: SSA 10-11 • FIMs: SSA 10-08 • APPLA: SSA-CW 16-10 • Kinship Navigator Services: SSA-CW 15-2 • Child Fatality/Critical Incident Policy: SSA 10-05 • Guardianship Assistance Program SSA-CW 15-3 • Local Supervisory Review Process SSA 09-17 • Family Services Planning SSA-CW 18-11 • Voluntary Placements, circular Letter 04-0 (2003) • APPLA form • Lawsuit filings • LJ Consent Decree • LJ Reports (57, 58, 59, 60 & 61) • MD Performance Improvement Plan
Focus Groups (45 individuals)	• CPS Workers • CPS Supervisors • New Workers • Permanency Workers • Permanency Supervisors • Ready by 21 Workers • Youth Advisory Board
Individual and Group Interviews (31 Individuals)	• Senior Leadership Team (child welfare related areas) • Child Welfare Program Managers • Legal: Judge In Charge Juvenile Docket, CASA, Plaintiff's Attorney, IVAs, • Other Stakeholders: Birth Parents, Advocates for Children, Citizen's Review Board, Child Fatality Review, Family League, Fostering Change Network, Foster Parent Resource Organization, Kennedy Krieger, Union Representative
Staff Feedback	• Reviewed HR Exit Interview Responses (143 respondents, of which 51 were former Child Welfare Division staff) • Reviewed staff engagement survey conducted by BCDSS (688 respondents, of which 262 were Child Welfare Division staff)

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STRENGTHS

BCDSS staff and stakeholders shared many observations about strengths and hopes for the future

Quotes from interviews:

"Randi being here is a plus for the agency. No director wants to take a deep dive, the way Randi has begun to do. I am confident in Randi's ability to make changes. Our staff is dedicated."

"The timing is ripe. I am very optimistic with Department leadership. Inviting Casey in is a big step."

"I believe we have a lot of committed people. People, when given the tools that they need, are so responsive. It helps when we give them the why. There is a vison and we are moving, and we are going to get some momentum. I realize it is going to be hard."

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Child Welfare Program Managers recognize the factors causing performance issues and have concrete ideas about improvements

If you had $500,000 for the agency to spend how would you use it?

Culture/Morale

- "Workers are clear that they are exposed to trauma and yet agency culture doesn't allow people to adequately take care of themselves. Morale is low, so other managers and I have tried implementing pizza parties, but I think it takes a lot more to really have an impact."

- "Use funds to renovate the building so it doesn't feel like a dungeon, which would help with staff morale."

- "We need more support for staff like peer support groups because vicarious trauma is real, and the work can be really tough. Mentorship and peer support happens mostly informally right now.."

Leadership

"We need training in how to be leaders. Most of us enter the field to help people, not to be leaders. When they are promoted, many supervisors are still too aligned with the workers instead of the role of accountability."

Source: CSI Interviews with Program Manager Interviews (edit for length)

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Child Welfare Program Managers recognize the factors causing performance issues and have concrete ideas about improvements

If you had $500,000 for the agency to spend how would you use it?

Workforce Training & Retention

- "First, I would use it on the workforce to help us retain the staff coming through the door. I would spend money on the training for new staff."

- "I would also invest in training like how to talk to people, problem solving, and other key skills that we take for granted. Basic training is important. I would also spend money celebrating staff!"

Prevention

- "Re-training our teams to work on strengthening families and restricting foster care/out of home."

Services/Placement

- "I would spend it on creative options for placements and services. We overuse one-to-one services, instead of something more creative and specific to that young person."

- "Placement moves can be traumatizing, and the process is not set up for the child's success. We shouldn't have a cookie cutter approach to all the different kids coming through the front door. We need to offer services and placements to kids based on their needs."

Source: CSI Interviews with Program Manager Interviews (edited for length)

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OUTCOMES

We analyzed data for performance on key outcomes at major points of interaction with BCDSS

Safety & Entry

into care

- Entries
- Child fatalities

Experience

within care

- Family and youth connection and engagement
- Family-based placements
- Placement stability

Exit
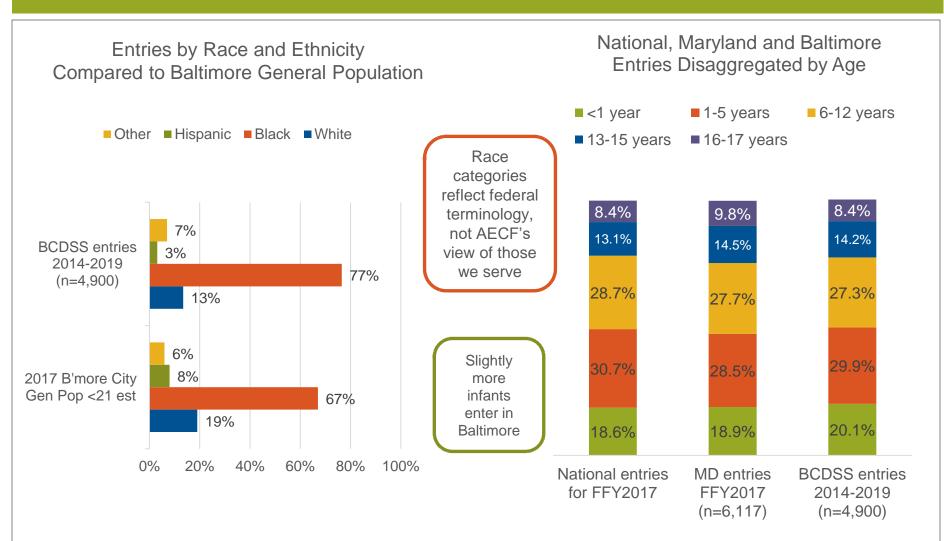
from care

- Exits to permanency and non-permanency
- Reentries
- Disparity in outcomes
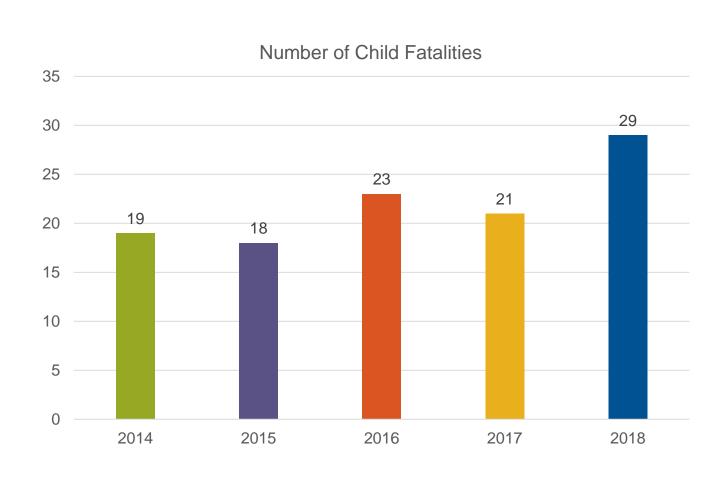
Outcomes: the status, experiences or well-being of children and youth served by child welfare

Equitable outcomes: *all* children and youth experience positive outcomes regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, ability and sexual identity

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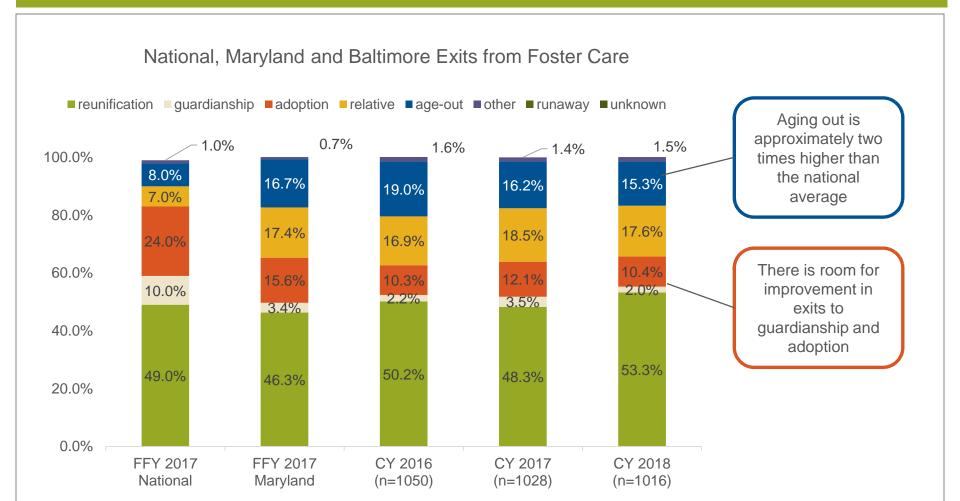
Black children and youth disproportionately enter foster care in Baltimore City

Entries by Race and Ethnicity Compared to Baltimore General Population

■ Other ■ Hispanic ■ Black ■ White

BCDSS entries 2014-2019 (n=4,900)
- 7%
- 3%
- 77%
- 13%

2017 B'more City Gen Pop <21 est
- 6%
- 8%
- 67%
- 19%

0% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

National, Maryland and Baltimore Entries Disaggregated by Age

■ <1 year ■ 1-5 years ■ 6-12 years
■ 13-15 years ■ 16-17 years

Race categories reflect federal terminology, not AECF's view of those we serve

Slightly more infants enter in Baltimore

	National entries for FFY2017	MD entries FFY2017 (n=6,117)	BCDSS entries 2014-2019 (n=4,900)
16-17 years	8.4%	9.8%	8.4%
13-15 years	13.1%	14.5%	14.2%
6-12 years	28.7%	27.7%	27.3%
1-5 years	30.7%	28.5%	29.9%
<1 year	18.6%	18.9%	20.1%

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, 2014-2019; AFCARS Public Use Files FFY2017; US Census Data FFY2017

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Any child fatality is disturbing and requires individual and systemic review and action to prevent further tragedies

Number of Child Fatalities

Source: BCDSS Fatality Review Matrix

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Baltimore City has made some progress with reunification, but aging-out remains significantly higher than the national average

National, Maryland and Baltimore Exits from Foster Care

Legend: ■ reunification ■ guardianship ■ adoption ■ relative ■ age-out ■ other ■ runaway ■ unknown

Category	FFY 2017 National	FFY 2017 Maryland	CY 2016 (n=1050)	CY 2017 (n=1028)	CY 2018 (n=1016)
(top label)	1.0%	0.7%	1.6%	1.4%	1.5%
age-out	8.0%	16.7%	19.0%	16.2%	15.3%
relative	7.0%	17.4%	16.9%	18.5%	17.6%
adoption	24.0%	15.6%	10.3%	12.1%	10.4%
guardianship	10.0%	3.4%	2.2%	3.5%	2.0%
reunification	49.0%	46.3%	50.2%	48.3%	53.3%

Aging out is approximately two times higher than the national average

There is room for improvement in exits to guardianship and adoption

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, 2014-2019

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Permanency plans for children, youth and young adults currently in care point towards producing similar outcomes as previous years

Exits from Foster Care

- 1.4%
- 15.3%
- 17.6%
- 10.4%
- 2.0%
- 53.3%

Legend:
- Other
- Age-out
- Living w/relative
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Reunification

CY 2018
(n=1,016)

Permanency Goals

- Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA)
- APPLA - Child Requires Long Term Care
- Placement with a relative for adoption or custody and guardianship
- Adoption by a non-relative
- Guardianship by a non-relative
- Reunification with the parent or legal guardian

- 16.6%
- 0.5%
- 7.8%
- 8.4%
- 4.7%
- 62.0%

Milestone Report
Oct 2019
(n=4,298)

Sources: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, 2014-2019; Monthly OOH Milestone Report, October 2019

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The majority of children and youth in BCDSS foster care are placed in family settings

BCDSS Initial Placements

■ Foster   ■ Kin   ■ Group   ■ Other

79%

Children and youth initially placed in family settings (2018)

Year	Foster	Kin	Group	Other
2018 (n=1048)	51.0%	26.4%	15.0%	7.5%
2017 (n=1082)	50.5%	30.6%	13.9%	5.1%
2016 (n=951)	48.3%	29.3%	15.6%	6.8%
2015 (n=821)	49.0%	38.7%	8.8%	3.5%
2014 (n=826)	48.3%	36.1%	9.8%	5.8%

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, CY2014-CY2018

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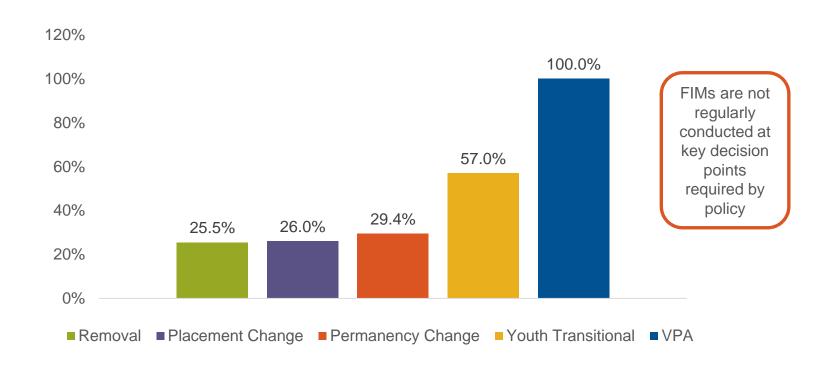
Although 36% of all BCDSS placements are with kin today, the majority of those relatives are not licensed

BCDSS Kinship Placements
October 2019

Restricted Kinship Care
(licensed)
n=247

37.3%

62.3%

Formal Kinship Care
(unlicensed)
n=406

Total n= 653
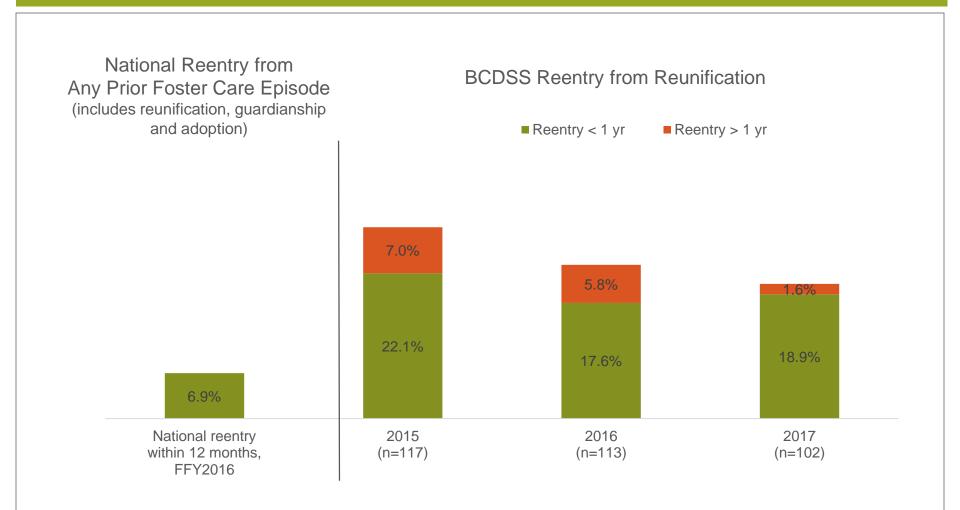
Source: Monthly OOH Milestone Report, October 2019

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There is room for improvement in connection and engagement for families, children and youth while they are involved with BCDSS
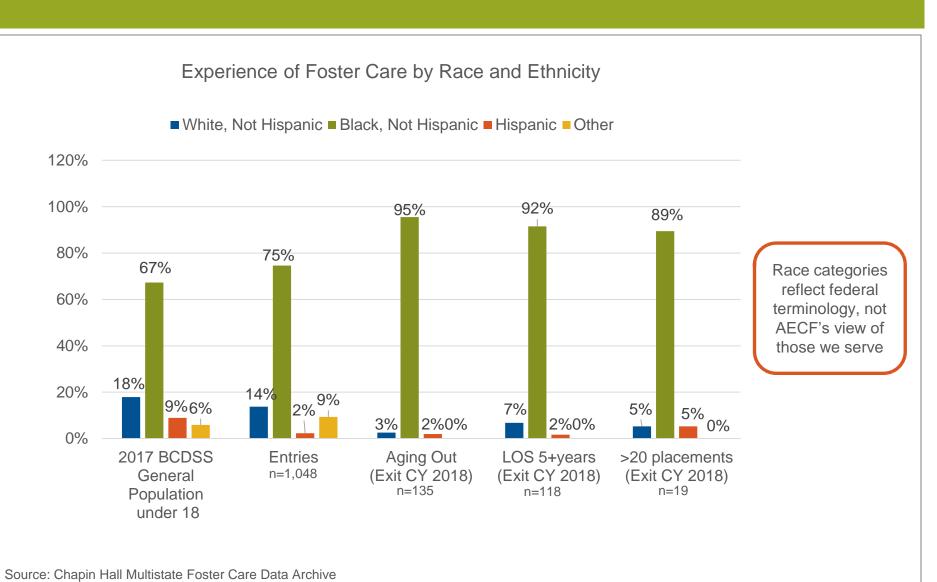
Sample Data from Report on BCDSS Family Involvement Meetings
(from University of MD School of Social Work and MD DHS)

FIMs are not regularly conducted at key decision points required by policy

Legend: ■ Removal ■ Placement Change ■ Permanency Change ■ Youth Transitional ■ VPA

Bar values: Removal 25.5%, Placement Change 26.0%, Permanency Change 29.4%, Youth Transitional 57.0%, VPA 100.0%

Source: Baltimore City Family Involvement Meeting Report, July 2019, University of MD School of Social Work and MD DHS

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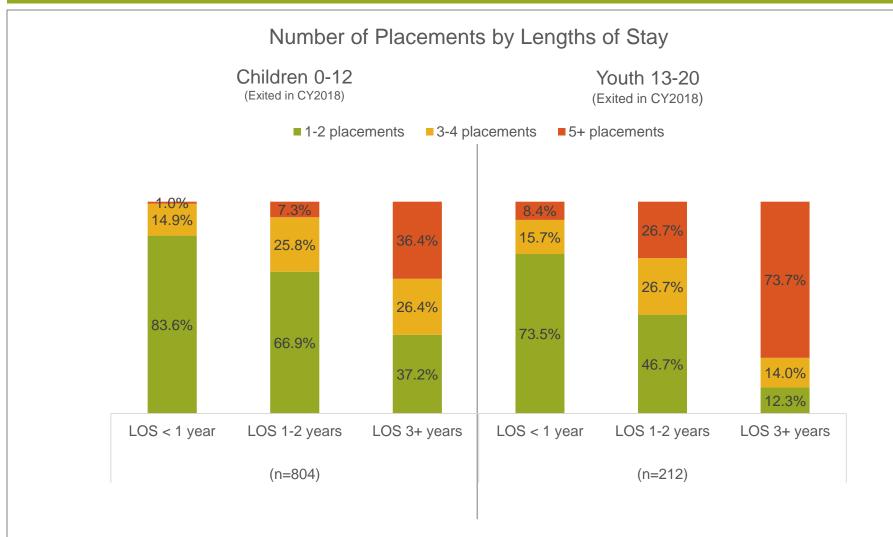
Reentry from reunification is significantly higher for BCDSS than the rest of the nation

National Reentry from
Any Prior Foster Care Episode
(includes reunification, guardianship and adoption)

BCDSS Reentry from Reunification

■ Reentry < 1 yr   ■ Reentry > 1 yr

National reentry within 12 months, FFY2016: 6.9%

2015 (n=117): Reentry < 1 yr 22.1%, Reentry > 1 yr 7.0%

2016 (n=113): Reentry < 1 yr 17.6%, Reentry > 1 yr 5.8%

2017 (n=102): Reentry < 1 yr 18.9%, Reentry > 1 yr 1.6%

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, 2013-2019; Child Welfare Outcomes 2016 Report to Congress

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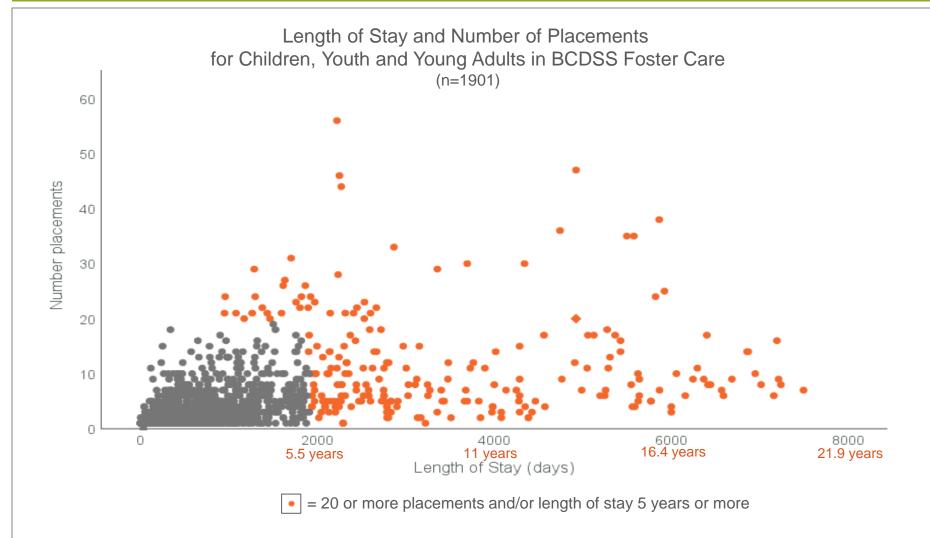# Black youth experience disparate outcomes for entering foster care, aging out, long stays and high placement instability

Experience of Foster Care by Race and Ethnicity

Legend: White, Not Hispanic · Black, Not Hispanic · Hispanic · Other

Race categories reflect federal terminology, not AECF's view of those we serve

Category	White, Not Hispanic	Black, Not Hispanic	Hispanic	Other
2017 BCDSS General Population under 18	18%	67%	9%	6%
Entries n=1,048	14%	75%	2%	9%
Aging Out (Exit CY 2018) n=135	3%	95%	2%	0%
LOS 5+years (Exit CY 2018) n=118	7%	92%	2%	0%
>20 placements (Exit CY 2018) n=19	5%	89%	5%	0%

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive

Increased placement changes correlate to lengths of stay, and older youth experience significant placement instability

Number of Placements by Lengths of Stay

Children 0-12
(Exited in CY2018)

Youth 13-20
(Exited in CY2018)

■ 1-2 placements   ■ 3-4 placements   ■ 5+ placements

Children 0-12

LOS < 1 year	LOS 1-2 years	LOS 3+ years
1.0%	7.3%	36.4%
14.9%	25.8%	26.4%
83.6%	66.9%	37.2%

(n=804)

Youth 13-20

LOS < 1 year	LOS 1-2 years	LOS 3+ years
8.4%	26.7%	73.7%
15.7%	26.7%	14.0%
73.5%	46.7%	12.3%

(n=212)

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, CY2018 exiters

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Numerous youth are experiencing frequent placement disruptions and extremely long lengths of stay

Length of Stay and Number of Placements
for Children, Youth and Young Adults in BCDSS Foster Care
(n=1901)

= 20 or more placements and/or length of stay 5 years or more

Source: Chapin Hall Multistate Foster Care Data Archive, 2014-2019; AFCARS Public Use Files FFY2017

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FACTORS AND DRIVERS

Many factors are contributing to negative outcomes for children, youth, young adults and families involved with BCDSS

WORKFORCE

WORKFORCE

- Retention
- Training

OUTCOME FOCUS

- Positive safety, permanency and well-being benchmarks
- Supervision

OUTCOME FOCUS

CLIMATE AND CULTURE

CLIMATE & CULTURE

- Collaborative Leadership
- Morale

VALUES, PRINCIPLES, AND PRACTICE MODEL

VALUES, PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE MODEL

- Family, child youth and young adult engagement
- Youth Advisory Board

STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS
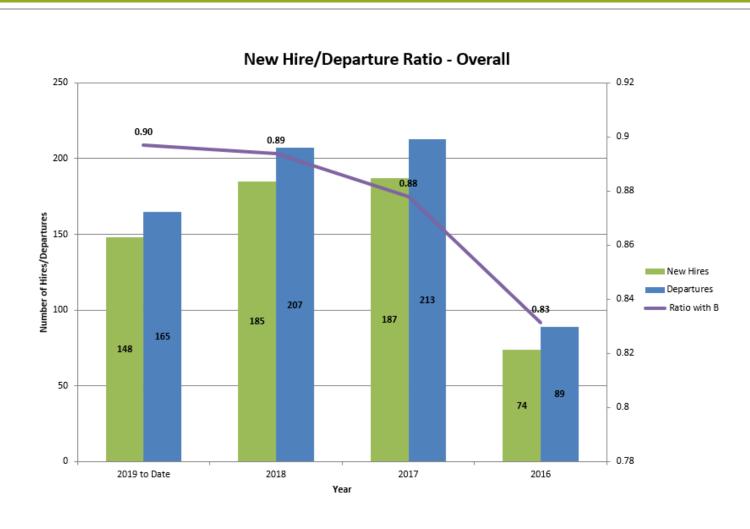
STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS

- Placement and service array
- Relationships with court and advocates

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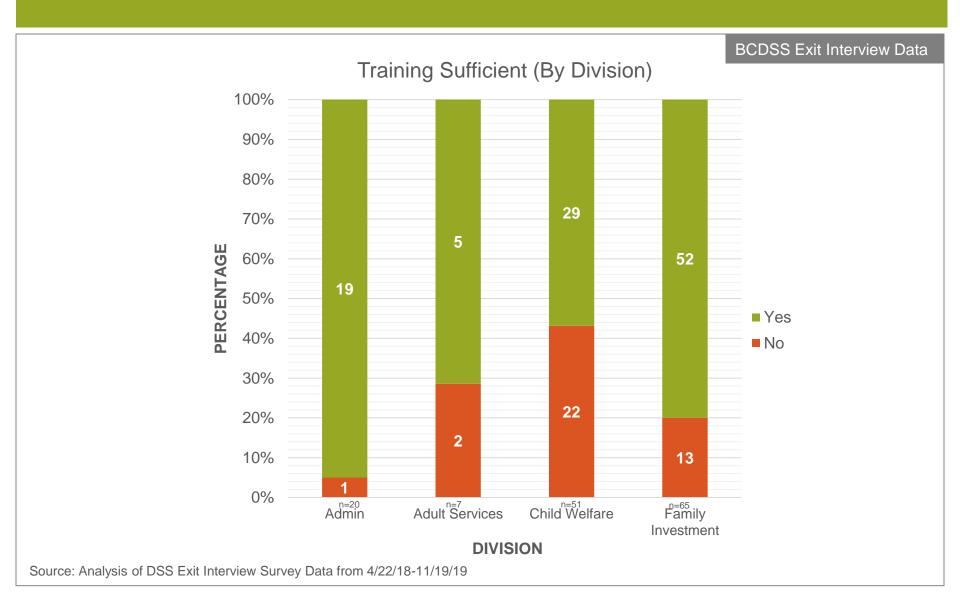
WORKFORCE

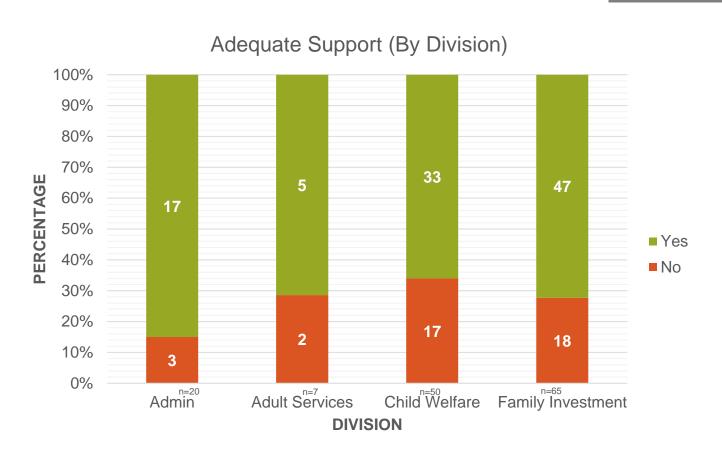# According to HR data, BCDSS has a net loss of staff

New Hire/Departure Ratio - Overall

Source: BCDSS Org Personnel Data, August 2019, for all DSS staff

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Was the training you received sufficient to enable you to meet our performance expectations?

BCDSS Exit Interview Data

Training Sufficient (By Division)

Legend:
- Yes (green)
- No (orange)

Data labels by division:
- Admin (n=20): Yes 19, No 1
- Adult Services (n=7): Yes 5, No 2
- Child Welfare (n=51): Yes 29, No 22
- Family Investment (n=65): Yes 52, No 13

Y-axis: PERCENTAGE (0% to 100%)
X-axis: DIVISION

Source: Analysis of DSS Exit Interview Survey Data from 4/22/18-11/19/19

Did you receive adequate support to do your job?

Adequate Support (By Division)

Source: Analysis of DSS Exit Interview Survey Data from 4/22/18-11/19/19
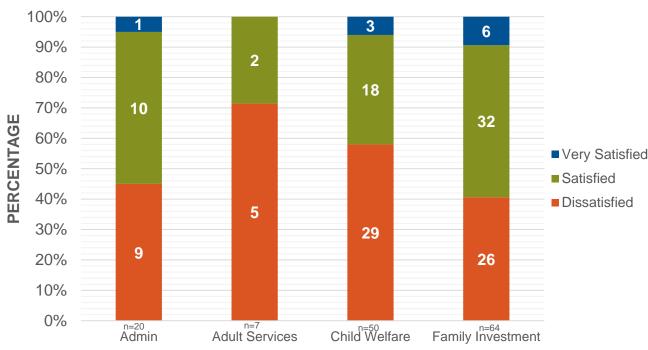
How do you feel about the way our company is run?

BCDSS Exit Interview Data

Satisfaction with How Company is Run
(By Division)

Legend:
- ■ Very Satisfied
- ■ Satisfied
- ■ Dissatisfied

Y-axis: PERCENTAGE (0% to 100%)
X-axis: DIVISION

Admin (n=20): Dissatisfied 9, Satisfied 10, Very Satisfied 1
Adult Services (n=7): Dissatisfied 5, Satisfied 2
Child Welfare (n=50): Dissatisfied 29, Satisfied 18, Very Satisfied 3
Family Investment (n=64): Dissatisfied 26, Satisfied 32, Very Satisfied 6

Source: Analysis of DSS Exit Interview Survey Data from 4/22/18-11/19/19

How would you evaluate the quality of the supervision you received?

BCDSS Exit Interview Data

Satisfaction with Supervision (By Division)

Source: Analysis of DSS Exit Interview Survey Data from 4/22/18-11/19/19

Top Three Reasons for Leaving DSS*

BCDSS Exit Interview Data

1. **Structure and Organizational Issues (13 of 41 responses),** including leadership, communication, case management roles, schedules, unit, case flow and placement structures/process

   - *"Frequent turnover in the position that supervises me, lack of accountability in other departments for work that is transferred to me and my staff, employee disregard for policies and sometimes safety & observed employee lack of empathy for clients"*

   - *"Stress, disorganization, drama & unrealistic expectations"*

2. **Mobility (11 of 41 interview responses)** including professional development, promotion and relocation

   - *"Looking for change in what I did on a daily basis"*

   - *"Opportunity for growth"*

3. **Burnout (9 of 41 responses)** including paperwork, workload, work/life balance and secondary trauma

   - *"Caseloads are steadily growing, the work is overwhelming, and damaging to my own physical and mental health"*

   - *"The safety issues of some of the places I had to go (to) see clients and the hours I might have to go (to) see them. The new requirements of the paperwork load with SBC."*
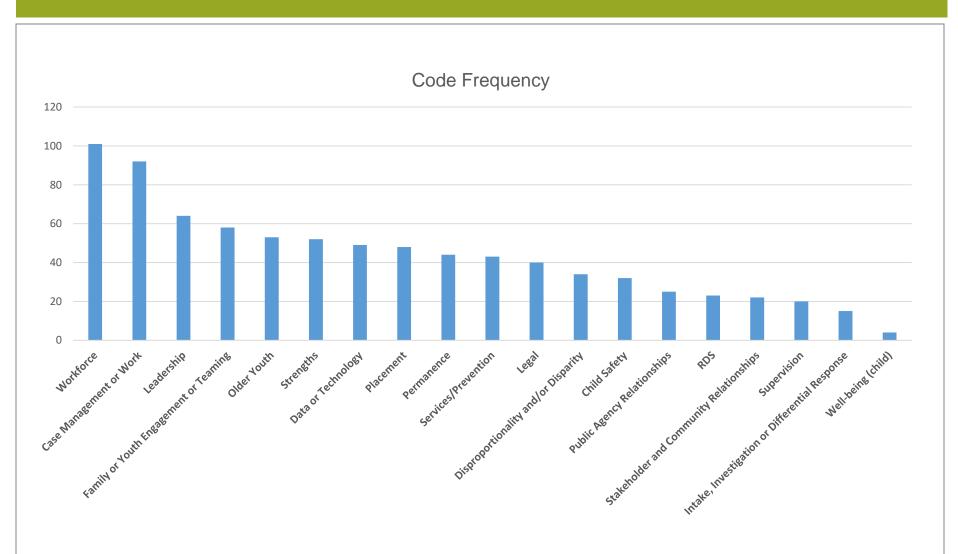
* As reported in 41 of the 51 exit interviews with Child Welfare Division staff where respondent answered the question "What motivated you to begin looking for another job?"

Source: Analysis of DSS Exit Interview Survey Data from 4/22/18-11/19/19

APPENDIX

These were the most frequent topics counted in our qualitative analysis of interviews and focus groups

Rank	Topic
1	Workforce
2	Case Management or Work
3	Leadership
4	Family or Youth Engagement or Teaming
5	Older Youth
6	Strengths
7	Data or Technology
8	Placement
9	Permanence
10	Services/Prevention

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All interviews and focus groups were coded by topic

Code Frequency

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THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

Developing solutions to build a brighter future for children, families and communities

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