



**CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES**  
**George J. Kennedy, Deputy Executive Director**  
**Division of Child Welfare Services**  
**Lloyd D. Malone, M.P.A., Director**  
1575 Sherman Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Denver, Colorado 80203-1714  
Phone 303.866.5932 Fax 303.866.5563  
[www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare](http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare)

John Hickenlooper  
Governor  
Reggie Bicha  
Executive Director

Colorado Department of Human Services  
Division of Child Welfare

# 2010 Annual Evaluation Report

Prepared by:

C. Ki'i Kimhan Powell, Ph.D.  
Research and Evaluation Manager  
Division of Child Welfare

Along with

Caitlin Smith, M.S.W.  
Greg Smith, B.A.  
Bill Madura, Ph.D.  
Sean McCaw, B.A., B.S.  
Kimber Johnson, B.A.  
Research, Evaluation, and Data Team  
Division of Child Welfare

## A Message from the Child Welfare Division Director

Hello Everyone,

It is my pleasure to introduce the Division of Child Welfare's (DCW) Services State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010 Annual Evaluation Report. This report describes the activities of DCW in SFY2010 along with our efforts to improve Colorado's Child Welfare system.

Over the past year, DCW has worked hard to implement system reform identified as being critical to the Safety, Permanency and Well-being of Colorado's children and families as outlined in eight audits/studies of Colorado's child welfare system over the past four years. With over 139 recommendations made to the Department, the DCW has been busy with increasing staff capabilities to meet the demands of these reform efforts. At the writing of this report 84% of those recommendations were complete.

The culmination of these efforts is being realized through both the Colorado Practice Initiative (CPI) and the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). CPI began in SFY2009 in conjunction with the Mountain Plains Child Welfare Implementation Center. This system reform effort aims to improve the consistency and accountability of practice across the State through the collaboration of all child welfare stakeholders. Colorado is also excited to begin its CFSR PIP in SFY2011. This past year Colorado has worked with the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to develop its plan to increase its compliance with ACF's national standards. Colorado is excited to have both of these opportunities to improve its practice.

Given the amount of work DCW staff has undertaken, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the hardworking staff at the Colorado Division of Child Welfare. It is through their effort that many of these needed changes are occurring. In addition, I would like to thank the County Departments of Human Services and their staff in their tireless efforts to ensure the safety of children.

I would also like to thank the Department's Executive Management Team, Governor Ritter and the legislature for their support in SFY10. It is through their support as well as the suggested reform efforts that Colorado continues to improve its practice.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge Karen Beye, previous Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services and George Kennedy, Deputy Executive Director of the Office of Children, Youth, and Families for their direction over the past year. I also want to welcome our new Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Human Services, Reggie Bicha.

I look forward to another year of continued progress.



Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lloyd Malone".

Lloyd Malone

Director, Division of Child Welfare Services

## **Executive Summary**

---

This year's evaluation aims to describe the DCW population, services provided to youth and families, outcomes for those youths, and budgetary information for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010 (July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010). In addition, included is a description of our upcoming efforts in SFY2011.

### **DCW Referrals and Assessments Grow, Involvements Steady**

In SFY2010, Colorado received 76,628 referrals, continuing a trend of growth over the past four years. Referrals opened to investigations or assessments demonstrated a similar pattern. Open involvements (i.e., cases), on the other hand, have remained stable indicating a decrease in the percent of assessments resulting in an open case over the past four years.

### **Valuing Least Restrictive Environment**

Consistent with DCW's value of keeping children in the least restrictive setting, utilization trends demonstrate a decline in the use of Out-of-Home (OOH) placement as a whole. When examining the specific OOH placements, Foster Care placements have declined by 19% over the past four years, whereas Kinship Placements have increased by 26%. In addition, Residential Care placements demonstrated a decline of 16% over the past four years.

### **Child Outcomes**

Colorado strives to meet or exceed the federal national standard on the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) composite measures. Over the past four years, Colorado has increased its compliance from six to nine out of fifteen CFSR measures.

### **Federal Initiatives**

Both Caseworker Contact and the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) are two Federal Initiatives underway in Colorado. Much work has been conducted to inform county workers on the required practices, as well as modifications in Trails to be able to document caseworker practices related to these initiatives. Data quality and practice outcomes will be monitored in SFY2011.

### **Using the Data**

Given the increasing demands to better understand the effect of practice as well as an effort to increase accountability several modifications were made to Trails, Colorado's automated case management system, this past year. The North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-Revised (NCFAS-R) is currently required at case open and case closure for all Child Protection cases. In addition, caseworkers are now required to designate Core services outcomes prior to closing a service. An examination of these data will be conducted in the SFY2011 Annual Evaluation Report.

# Table of Contents

---

Introduction .....	5
DCW Population.....	6
Referral and Assessment.....	6
Open Involvements .....	6
Out-of-Home Involvements .....	8
Services .....	9
Statewide Service Initiatives.....	9
Children’s Habilitation Residential Program (CHRP) .....	9
Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP).....	9
Collaborative Management Program (CMP)-HB1451 .....	9
Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) .....	9
Heart Gallery .....	9
Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) .....	10
Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF) .....	10
Youth Empowerment Services .....	10
County Administered Services.....	10
Core Services .....	10
Out-of-Home (OOH) Placement .....	11
Outcomes.....	14
Children .....	14
Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) .....	14
Adoption.....	14
Practice .....	14
Caseworker contacts .....	14
National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) .....	16
Foster Care Program Review Team .....	16
System .....	16
Complaints.....	16
Institutional Abuse Review Team (IART) .....	16
Child Fatalities .....	17
Future Monitoring of Outcome Information .....	17
Budget.....	18
Appropriations .....	18
Costs .....	19
Reparations .....	19
The Future.....	20
Colorado Disparities Resource Center (CDRC) .....	20
Colorado Practice Initiative (CPI).....	20
Family Assessment Response (FAR) .....	21
Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) .....	21

# Introduction

---

The Division of Child Welfare Services (DCWS) is part of the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS) Office of Children, Youth, and Families (CYF). The mission of the Division of Child Welfare is to provide leadership, innovation, oversight, and resources to enhance the effective delivery of child welfare services statewide.

This mission is guided through the principles of:

- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Respect
- Professionalism
- Cultural Competence

This evaluation aims to describe the DCW population, services provided to youth and families, outcomes for those youths, and budgetary information for State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010, along with a description of our upcoming efforts in SFY2011.

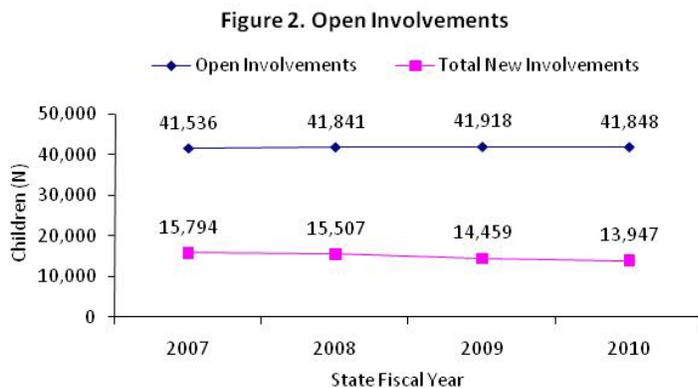
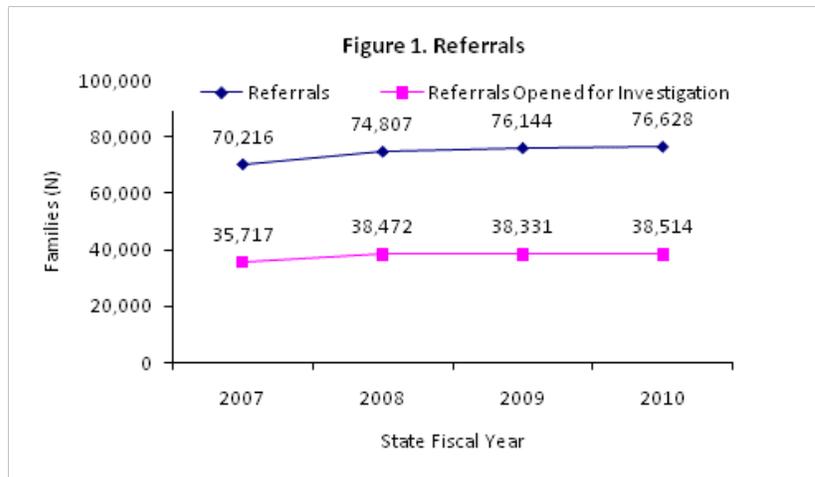


# DCW Population

## Referral and Assessment

In State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2010 (June 2009-July 2010) Colorado received 76,628 referrals (see Figure 1). A referral can be made to a county for several reasons (a) a report of possible abuse or neglect, (b) a report that a child is beyond the control of their parent, (c) a report that a child is a danger to self or others, and/or (d) a report that an adopted child needs services. It is important to note that referrals represent a family count and not the potential

number of children referred. Of those referrals, 38,514 (50.26%) were opened for investigation also known as an assessment. These investigations represented 65,947 children. Both referrals and those opened for investigation demonstrated a pattern of growth over the past four years, similar to the growth of the Colorado population ages 0-17. The referral rate of 60 per 1,000 youths has been maintained over the past three years.



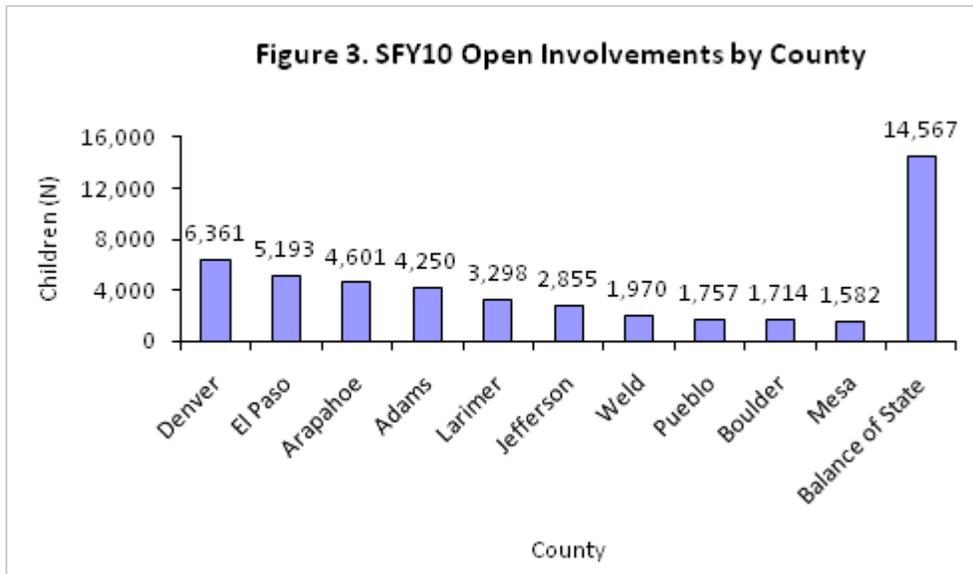
## Open Involvements

An investigation can result in an open involvement (i.e., case) for ongoing services. In SFY2010, Colorado had 41,848 children in open involvements (see Figure 2). Of those 13,794 were new involvements (i.e., a case opened within that year regardless of previous involvement in the system). Over the past four years, open involvements have remained at a steady level, whereas new involvements have decreased in relation to overall population. This suggests that

cases are staying open longer. This occurrence could relate to economic factors, higher caseloads with fewer staff due to budget cuts, and the increase in serving youth in-home versus out-of-home.

## By County

When examining open involvements across the ten largest counties, Denver County reported the largest number of open involvements in SFY2010, followed by El Paso and Arapahoe County (see Figure 3). The combined additional 54 counties had a total of 14,567 open involvements.

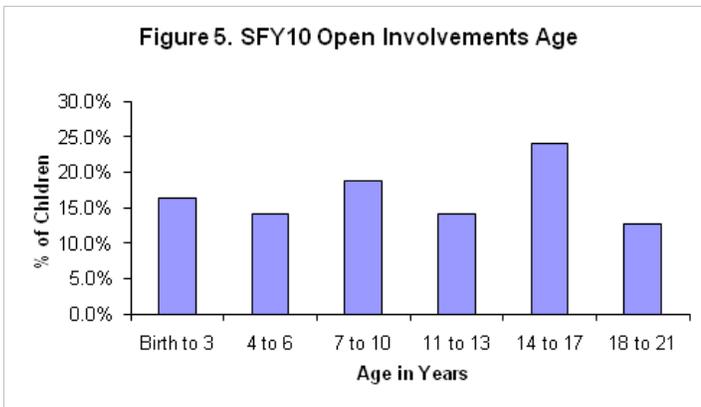
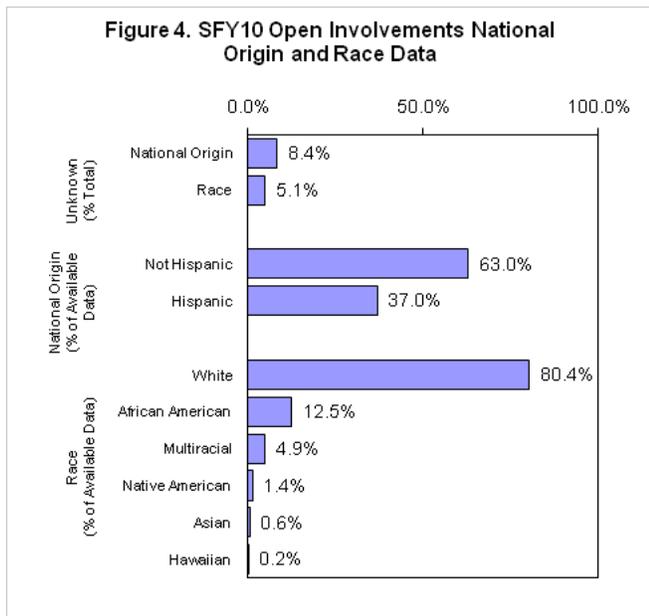


**National Origin and Race**

National origin and race data for the 41,848 youth in open involvements are similar to that in years past. The majority of children were not of Hispanic origin (see Figure 4). Reports on race indicated that most children were Caucasian (80.4%) followed by African American (12.5%) and Multiracial (4.9%).

**Age and Gender**

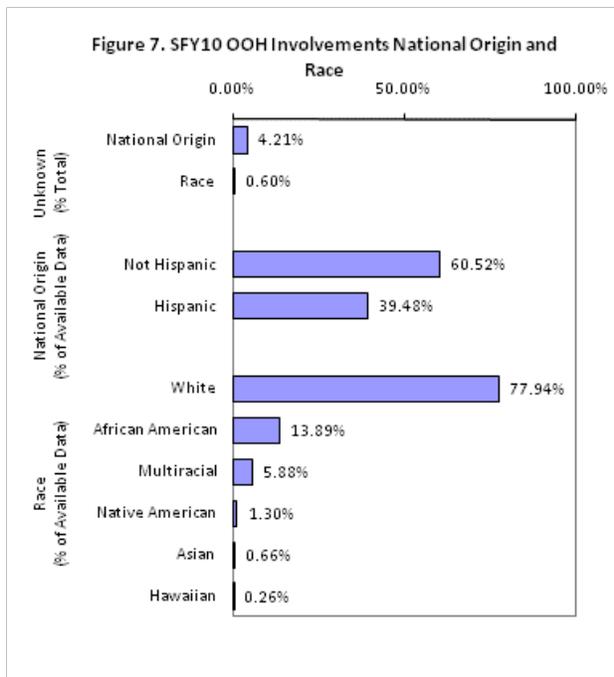
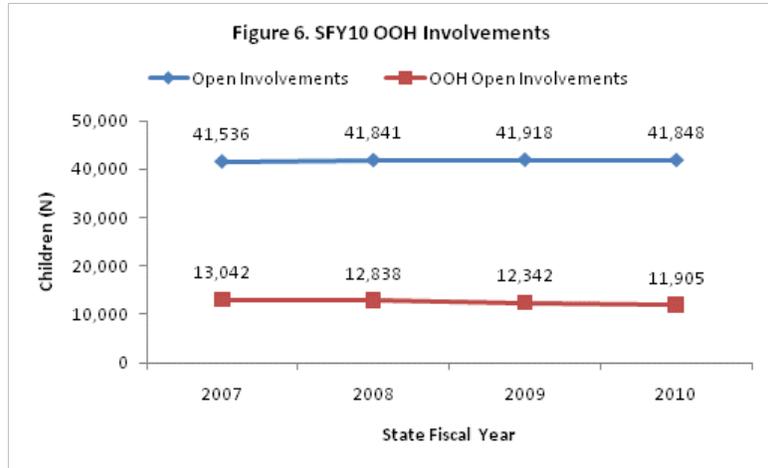
The age distribution indicated a quarter of the children (24.1%) in open involvements were ages 14 to 17, followed by ages 7 to 10 (18.8%) and ages Birth to 3 (16.4%); see Figure 5). Twelve percent of youth in open involvements were ages 18 years and older. This is an increase from 8% in 2008 when



DCW coverage was expanded to serve Medicaid-only young adults ages 18 through 21. An examination revealed the majority of the 18 and older population (57%) were involved in “Other” program area cases (e.g., Medicaid entitlements). The gender distribution is 53.4% male children compared to 46.6% female children.

### Out-of-Home Involvements

Over the past four years OOH involvements have decreased by 9%. In SFY2010, of the 41,848 children in open involvements, 11,905 were placed in an OOH setting (see Figure 6).

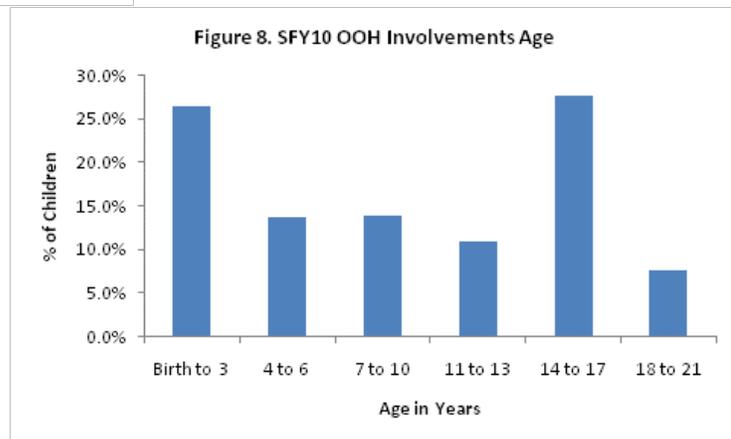


### National Origin and Race

Demographic information on this subset of children (see Figure 7) indicated a higher percentage of Hispanic origin children as compared to the overall involvements (see Figure 4). In addition, racial data indicated a higher percentage of African American and Multiracial children, and a lower percentage of Caucasian youth.

### Age and Gender

Interestingly, the age distribution of the OOH involvement population demonstrated a different pattern than that of the overall involvements (see Figure 8) with a peak in the teen and infant years. A quarter of the children (27.6%) were ages 14 to 17 and another quarter (26.4%) were ages Birth to 3. The gender distribution remained relatively similar with 53.8% of male children compared to 46.2% of female children.



## Services

---

### Statewide Service Initiatives

#### **Children's Habilitation Residential Program (CHRP)**

CHRP aims to provide habilitative services to children and youth ages 0-20 that have a developmental disability. The CHRP waiver was rewritten and renewed on July 1, 2009. The number of CHRP participants increased by 11% from 7/1/09 to 6/30/10. Total program expenditures were \$6,840,476.

#### **Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP)**

The purpose of the Chafee Program is to help youth, who are likely to emancipate from foster care or adoption assistance, to achieve adult self-sufficiency. Chafee Program providers offer a wide array of services including assistance to make life long connections; support for secondary and post-secondary education; positive youth development and leadership; and, employment skills to eligible youth. The Chafee Program hosts the annual 3-day College Connect Experience and the annual Celebration of Educational Excellence. This year, Chafee Program providers were allocated \$1,808,053 to serve 42 counties and the YES! Academy Transitional Living Program serving urban, rural and Native American youth.

#### **Collaborative Management Program (CMP)-HB1451**

The CMP was established through House Bill 1451 in 2004 with the aim to integrate services for multi-system families and children to reduce duplication and eliminate fragmentation; increase quality, appropriateness, and effectiveness of services provided; encourage cost sharing among service providers; and result in better outcomes and cost reduction for services provided to children and families. The CMP also aims to promote a family-centered approach.

Counties participating in CMP reported a number of positive outcomes this past year (e.g., reduction in residential out-of-home placement and commitments to DYC, improved school attendance and reduction in truancies, increased child and family involvement in case planning). In the next year, the CMP will focus on increasing information sharing across parties along with increasing mechanisms for outcome and cost measurement. For more information please see the website at: <http://clientportal.omni.org/0-9/1451cmp/Pages/Welcome1451.aspx>.

#### **Education and Training Vouchers (ETV)**

The ETV program provides up to \$5,000 per year for college or vocational expenses for students that were in foster care or adoption assistance on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and applied for ETV prior to age 21. ETV assists eligible students to complete a post-secondary education for the purpose of achieving adult self-sufficiency. One hundred and eighty-six youth received an ETV in SFY2010.

#### **Heart Gallery**

The Heart Gallery is one of Colorado's permanency services utilized in attempting to match older children with adoptive families. In June 2009, 20 photographers donated their time and services to photograph 102 children and youth. Since that time 46 of those youth (45%) were transitioned into permanent homes.

This year, from June through October 2010, 27 professional photographers donated their time and talent to photograph 108 children and youth in out-of-home care across the State. These efforts

culminated in the 2010 Heart Gallery Opening on November 1, 2010 at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, with 275 persons in attendance. Pictures of youth featured in this report were still awaiting adoption at the time this report was published.

### **Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)**

For SFY2010, there were 947 Native American children or youth in child welfare involvements.

### **Promoting Safe and Stable Families (PSSF)**

PSSF aims to prevent the unnecessary separation of children from their families, improve the quality of care and services to children and their families, and ensure permanency for children by reuniting them with their parents, by adoption or by another permanent living arrangement. Colorado's PSSF Program provides funding to thirty-three program sites, which includes forty-one counties and one Tribe which aims to help County Departments of Human Services and the Tribe to engage local communities to find innovative, collaborative ways to deliver services that promote Safety, Permanency and Well-being for families. Local PSSF projects utilize the strengths within their neighborhood, city, county, and/or region, to address the needs of families and children.

In SFY2009, 17,417 families received a service that was funded at least in part from PSSF funding. At present, information is being collected on the number of families served through the PSSF program in SFY2010.

### **Youth Empowerment Services**

DCW strives to empower youth served through both the YES! Academy and the Youth Leadership Team (YLT). The YES! Academy aims to stabilize Chafee eligible homeless youth by providing housing and other basic necessities (e.g., bedding, clothing, food etc). In addition, youth complete an assessment for independent living skills (i.e., Ansel Casey Life Skills) and are then provided a Life Skills Plan. In SFY2010, the YES! Academy served 34 youths. Those youths were aided in education (19 received a GED or high school diploma with 13 going on to college) and daily living skills (34 received skill training on budgeting, housing and career planning). In addition, youth received counseling services along with assistance in service planning.

The YLT is a product of the YES! Academy. The YLT aims to empower youth through providing a voice. This voice is designed to improve policy, programming and create best practice in foster care. YLT members lend their voice on committees, youth panels and sometimes legislation or state board hearings. Fifteen youth participated in YLT in SFY2010.

## **County Administered Services**

### **Core Services**

The primary goal of the Core Services program is to keep children and families together, whenever appropriate and possible, by serving children who are at risk for out-of-home placement. A total of 15,226 children (unduplicated count) were identified in the Trails data system as having received at least one Core Service during SFY2010 with 46,197 Core Service authorizations (duplicated count).

The Core Service program also aims to maintain children in the least restrictive environment. Of those children who began Core Services while at home, 92% remained home. In addition, for those children

who began Core Services while out-of-home, 62% moved to a less restrictive placement prior to discharge.

The Core Services program strives to maintain safety for children. Ninety-seven percent of families participating in Core had no founded abuse reports during the time they received Core services. In addition, in the 12 months after Core Services participation, 97.5% had no founded report of child abuse. For the full evaluation report conducted by TriWest Group see the Core Services Commission Report at: <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/childwelfare>.

### **Out-of-Home (OOH) Placement**

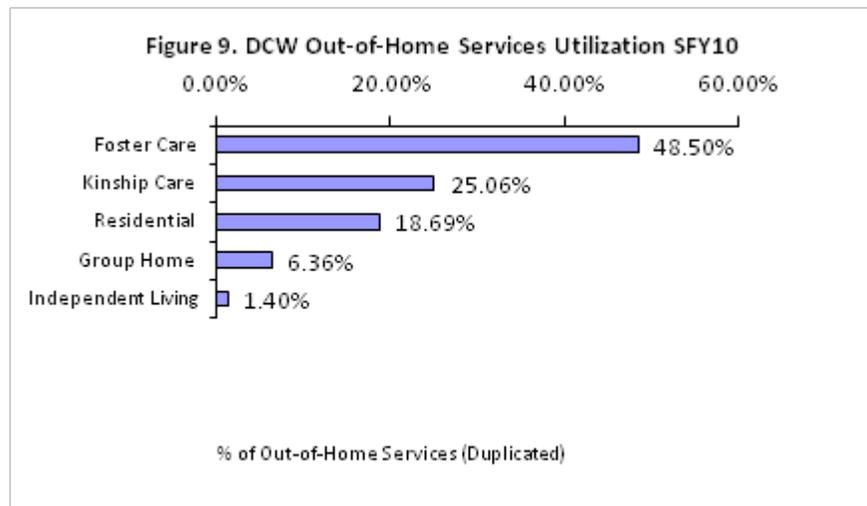
While Colorado’s goal is to keep families intact and to place children in the least restrictive setting, children are removed from their homes if safety concerns exist within the home that cannot be mediated and/or if an appropriate caretaker is not available.

The following describes the five out-of-home service settings (broadly defined) from the least restrictive to the most restrictive setting. **Kinship Care** is placement with either biological or psychological kin in which the county does not retain custody of the child (i.e., not including Certified Kinship Care). **Independent Living** is placement in foster care where a youth lives independently in the community under the supervision of the county department. **Foster Care** is placement with a non-kinship family or kinship family in which the county retains custody of the child; including Certified Kinship Care. **Group Home** placement consists of homes, which house multiple youths; the county also retains custody. Finally, **Residential Child Care Facilities (RCCF)** are licensed facilities that provide 24-hour residential care. RCCF’s can also provide treatment and/or specialized services.

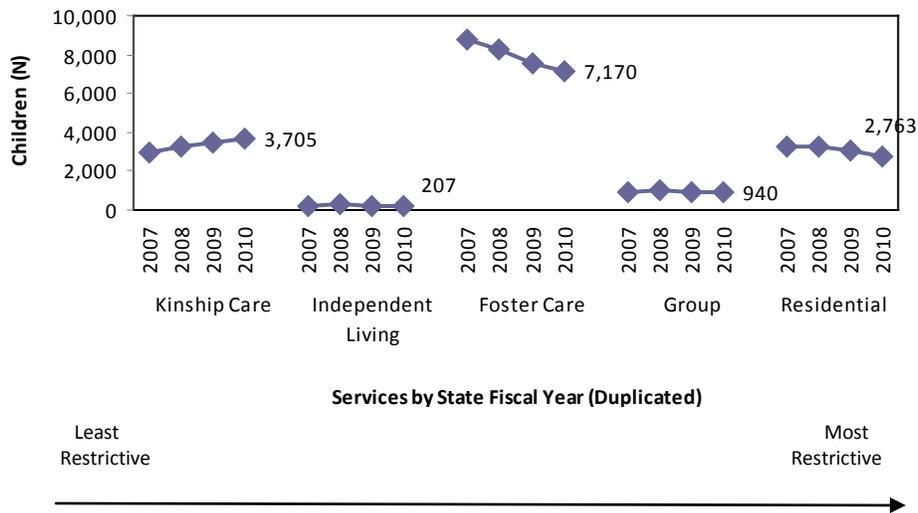
### **Service Utilization**

In SFY2010, Colorado had 11,905 OOH involvements. After excluding DYC placements, Detention Care, Hospital Care, and Psychiatric Care, 11,772 involvements remained. The majority of OOH involvements were in a Foster Care setting (48.50%) followed by Kinship Care (25.06%) and Residential Care (18.69%; see Figure 9).

When examining the utilization of these services over the past four years, trends demonstrate a steady growth of Kinship Care (26%) and a decline of Foster Care (19%) and Residential Care placement (16%). Independent Living and Group Care placement have remained relatively stable (see Figure 10).



**Figure 10. DCW SFY07-10 Out-of-Home Service Utilization**

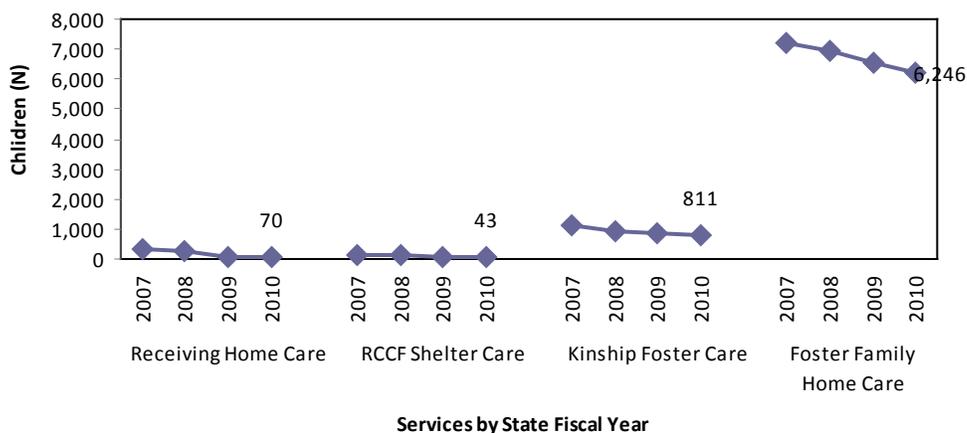


**Within Category Examinations**

While Kinship and Independent Living numbers consist of one placement setting, the latter three categories were aggregated across narrower service types.

**Foster Care.** In SFY2010, all four Foster Care sub-categories decreased in utilization (see Figure 11). **Foster Family Home Care**, which is placement with a non-kinship family in which the county retains custody of the child, decreased by 13%. **Kinship Foster Care**, which is placement with a kinship family in which the county retains custody of the child, decreased by 29%. Both **Receiving Home Care** and **Residential Child Care Facilities Shelter Care** act as temporary or emergency placements of children. Each decreased in utilization by 80% and 68%, respectively.

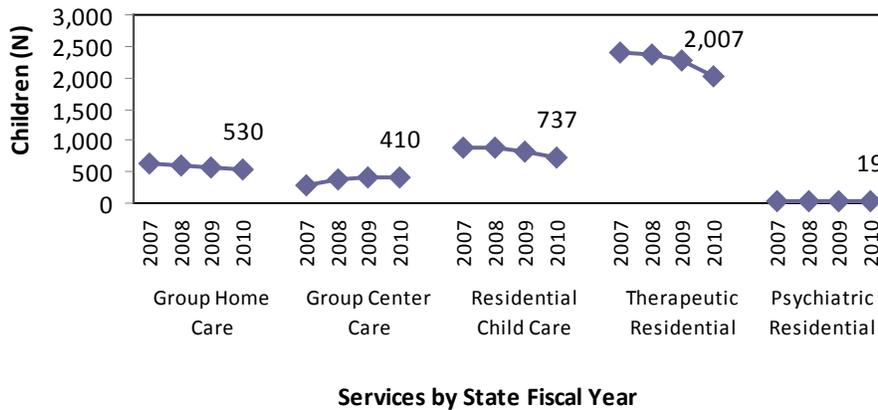
**Figure 11. SFY07-10 Foster Care Service Utilization Trends**



**Group Home.** While overall the utilization of Group Home placement has remained relatively stable, when examining by sub-category, utilization trends reveal a decrease (17%) in **Group Home Care** (i.e., Group Home with non-rotating caregivers in a home-like setting) and an increase (42%) in **Group Center Care** (i.e., Group Home with rotating caregivers in a non-home-like setting; see Figure 12).

**Residential Child Care Facilities (RCCF).** RCCFs utilization has also declined as a whole over the past four years. When examining sub-categories, **Therapeutic Residential Child Care** has shown a decline in utilization (16%; see Figure 12). **Residential Child Care**, which is a residential facility in which no therapeutic services are provided, also decreased in utilization (17%). **Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities** (i.e., a residential facility which provides intensive psychiatric treatment) demonstrated the sharpest utilization decline at 42% from 33 to 19 youth over the four years.

**Figure 12. SFY07-10 Group Home and Residential Child Care Facilities Service Utilization Trends**



# Outcomes

---

## Children

### Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

#### Safety

Each year Colorado submits the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). NCANDS data is pulled in January for the previous Federal Fiscal Year (FFY; October 2009-September 2010). Information from this submission is used to determine the Safety Composite measures for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). Data from 2007 through 2010 demonstrates a consistent pattern, with Colorado exceeding the national standard on the Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment measure and holding close to, but not meeting, the standard for the Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care for 12 months (see Figure 13).

#### Permanency

Each year Colorado submits the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data to the Administration for Children and Families (ACF). The AFCARS data is pulled twice a year and is based off the federal fiscal year (October 2009-September 2010). Children are included in the AFCARS population if they experience a removal from home (i.e., Out-of-home placement). Each year the AFCARS files are combined with previous AFCARS submissions to derive the Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) Permanency composite measures. Over the past four years, Colorado has increased the number of measures it has met or exceeded the national standard from six to nine (see Figure 13). Colorado continues to strive to meet or exceed the national standard on all 15 Permanency measures.

#### Well-Being

The Administrative Review Division (ARD) conducts reviews of all Out-of-Home (OOH) involvements lasting more than six-months on a rotating six-month period. A number of the CFSR well-being measures are captured in the ARD OOH review instrument. To review the instrument and review county specific data, please visit the ARD website at <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/ard/index.htm>.

### Adoption

Across the state, 1,033 adoptions were finalized in FY10. In addition, 10,989 subsidies were paid for adopted children in FY10.

## Practice

### Caseworker Contacts

In FFY2010, seven Colorado county departments of human services received \$98,287 in funding for caseworker contacts. The intent of this funding was to increase caseworker contacts, improve the quality of those contacts, and enhance the timeliness of data entry into the SACWIS system through the implementation of various technologies. The Caseworker Contact report for FFY2010 shows that 73.86% of caseworkers made timely monthly client visits each month while the child was in out-of-home care, a decrease of 1% from last year (FFY09 74.02%). Per ACF's instructions, all States are expected to reach the 90% compliance rate by October 2011 (for which data collection began in October 2010). While individual monthly counts show compliance rates of caseworker contacts as high as 100%, this remains an issue that needs continued monitoring and emphasis. DCW continues to actively address this effort through technical assistance to the county departments regarding the use of reports in the Trails

Figure 13. Child Family Services Review Composite Measures

Composite	Federal Standard	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Safety</b>					
Absence of Recurrence of Maltreatment	>=94.6%	95.3	94.9	95.8	95.7
Absence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care for 12 months	>=99.68	99.41	99.46	99.60	99.46
<b>Permanency</b>					
C1-1 Percent of children who exits to reunification is <=12 months	>= 75.2 %	76.4	77.7	79.5	78.1
C1-2 Exits to reunification, median stay in months	<=5.4 months	5.7	5.8	5.4	5.4
C1-3 Percent of entry cohort reunification is <=12 months	>= 48.4%	56.5	55.0	51.7	56.7
C1-4 Percent of children who re-entries to foster care in <=12 months	<= 9.9%	15.2	17.3	17.7	13.4
C2-1 Percent of children who exits to adoption in <=24 months	>= 36.6%	57.2	56.0	59.4	50.6
C2-2 Exits to adoption, median length of stay in months	<= 27.3 months	21.9	22.4	21.5	23.7
C2-3 Percent of Children in care 17 + months adopted by end of the year	>= 20.7%	19.5	19.2	21.3	23.3
C2-4 Percent of children in care 17 + months achieving legal freedom with in 6 Months	>= 10.9%	3.2	2.3	4.1	2.3
C2-5 Percent of children legally free adopted in <=12 months	>= 53.7%	57.7	58.3	52.0	62.6
C3-1 Percent of children exits to permanency prior to 18th birthday for children in care for 24 + Months	>= 29.1%	20.7	19.9	20.3	25
C3-2 Percent of children exits to permanency for children with TPR	>= 98.0%	97	95.1	97.2	97.2
C3-3 Percent of Children emancipated who were in FC for 3 Years +	<=37.5%	32.4	30.2	27	25.3
C4-1 Percent of children who had two or fewer placement settings for children in care for <=12 Months	>= 86.0%	85.9	87.5	86.4	88.1
C4-2 Percent of children who had two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 12 - 24 Months	>= 65.4%	63.4	64.8	66.7	60.1
C4-3 Percent of children who had two or fewer placement settings for children in care for 24 + Months	>= 41.8%	35.7	35.8	35.1	37.1

Note. Yellow Shading indicates not in compliance with National Standard.

system and monthly monitoring of county practice through Trails reports along with other strategies that may help increase caseworker contact accountability and data entry.

### **National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD)**

On October 1, 2010, Colorado began collecting and reporting the federally required NYTD information for all foster children and youth receiving independent living services turning age 17 from October 1, 2010 through September 30, 2011. This cohort will act as a baseline for a national examination of the self-sufficiency status of foster youth as they transition into adulthood. Follow-up surveys will be conducted with these same youth at age 19 and again at age 21. In three years (SFY2013-14), a second cohort will be examined.

States are held to a 90-100% error-free rate depending on the specific data element (e.g., Race, Gender). Information is gathered through both Trails data and an additional survey component in Trails. To aid counties in the monitoring of survey completion, several reports were created in Trails to monitor when a youth is turning 17 and when a survey for that youth is to be completed. Colorado will submit its first round of data in May of 2011. In FFY2011, information regarding Colorado's data compliance will be available.

### **Foster Care Program Review Team**

The goal of this DCW State unit is to assess and evaluate child welfare program practices and outcomes within county departments and at the state level. The team conducted 27 on-site foster care program reviews of county departments of human services and provided over 108 days of on-site program monitoring, technical assistance and training with county departments in SFY2010. The on-site review process is comprehensive and includes reviewing foster parent files, youth's files, and conducting interviews with caseworkers, administrators, directors, and foster parents.

## **System**

### **Complaints**

All complaints received by DCW are processed, recorded and responded to within two-business days. Counties then have 20 business days to respond to the complainant. In SFY2010, Child Welfare received 1,518 total contacts for review. This is a 49% increase from the previous year. Of those contacts, 167 were complaints, which required additional follow-up. This is a 20% increase from the previous year. The three most common areas of all complaints include; concerns about how a county department investigated allegations of child abuse and/or neglect, a county department's handling of a dependency and neglect case, and issues surrounding kinship care.

### **Institutional Abuse Review Team (IART)**

IART aims to ensure the safety of children through reviews of reports of abuse or neglect of children while in OOH care. The number of reports of abuse while in OOH care increased from 693 in SFY2009 to 795 in SFY2010. It is speculated that the increase is due to increased accuracy of reporting and coding by counties along with Trails data quality checks by IART staff. Of those 795 reports of abuse and neglect in OOH care, 92 were substantiated. To ensure the safety of children while in care, DCW staff provides technical assistance and training to counties at the county's request regarding Stage I investigations.

## **Child Fatalities**

Regrettably, and with sympathy for families, 27 children died in Colorado in FFY2010 as a result of abuse or neglect.

The Colorado Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Division is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the state's child maltreatment fatalities when the family has had prior county department of human/social services involvement within the past five years and the fatality was confirmed to be the result of child abuse and/or neglect. Any fatality of a child in the custody of the county department may also be reviewed. The Division also has the discretion to review any fatality and may do so when the findings of abuse and neglect are inconclusive or unfounded, yet there are questionable circumstances regarding the death. The purpose of the review is to examine existing practices and policies to ensure the safety of all children.

There are circumstances in which the Division may not review a fatality. These include, but are not limited, to the following: a) the prior involvement was limited to child welfare services that were not a result of child abuse/neglect, such as parental conflict with an adolescent, b) the prior involvement was limited to services when the parent was a teenager or younger and not yet parenting his or her own children, and c) the prior involvement was not with this child but with a sibling and a different constellation of family members. These are scenarios where the prior services had no bearing on current alleged person responsible for the abuse/neglect.

When the Division uncovers policy violations in the course of the review process, Performance Improvement Plans are negotiated with the county department on any findings that have yet not been addressed by the county. The review process also identifies any common trends and possible areas for preventative work.

In CY2010, fifteen fatalities met criteria for the State Department of Human Services review. As of this writing, the State Child Fatality Review Team has reviewed six of the fifteen child deaths that met state criteria for review. Of those six, two were not founded for fatal child abuse/neglect. Policy violation findings have been made in four of the reviews and all performance improvement plans have been completed. Seven of the remaining nine were founded for fatal child abuse/neglect and two were still pending county investigation at the time of this report. The State review of the remaining nine is pending documentation from the county departments.

## **Future Monitoring of Outcome Information**

As Colorado strives for continued accountability, several modifications have been made to the SACWIS system (i.e., Trails) to better monitor outcomes. In the March 2009 build of Trails (21.11) caseworkers became able to monitor the outcome of Core services using a pick list (e.g., Not Successful, Partially Successful, and Successful) to be completed when end-dating a Core service in Trails. In addition, in the June 2010 build of Trails (21.14), the North Carolina Family Assessment Scale-Revised (NCFAS-R) became a requirement for Child Protection cases (i.e., Child Abuse and Neglect) at case open and case closure. In the 2011 annual report Colorado anticipates being able to examine and report on both the NCFAS-R and Core Services outcome information.

# Budget

## Appropriations

For SFY2010, \$425,470,722 was appropriated in Long Bill SB 09 259 for the Division of Child Welfare, of which \$420,452,810 remained after budget amendments (see Figure 14). The amended total represents a .15% increase from the previous year’s appropriation. Approximately 97% of the funds were allocated to the County Departments for the Administration of Child Welfare Programs. The Child Welfare Services Block line item represented the largest source of funding (84%) for the Division of Child Welfare.

Figure 14. Long Bill Total

Category	Funds
Child Welfare Services Block	\$353,575,261
Family and Children’s Program (Core)	\$45,689,850
Training	\$5,862,581
Promoting Safe and Stable Families Program	\$4,461,376
Administration	\$3,557,876
Collaborative Management Incentives	\$3,555,500
Functional Family Therapy (cut due to budget crisis)	\$3,281,941
Independent Living Programs	\$2,826,582
Excess Title IV-E-Distribution for related County Administrative Functions (Not earned)	\$1,735,971
Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Grant	\$386,067
Foster and Adoptive Parent Recruitment, Training, and Support	\$337,717
Child Welfare Action Committee (HB 08-1404)	\$200,000
Total	\$425,470,722
Adjusted Total (Total minus the items in red)	\$420,452,810

When examining the distribution of the Child Welfare Services Block by counties, 82% went to the ten large counties with Denver receiving the largest portion (see Figure 15). There was a difference of \$21,277,666 dollars appropriated in the Long Bill from the allocations to the counties. This difference represents holdouts (i.e., foster parent insurance payment, Tribal placement), mitigation for the Balance of State counties (e.g., funding to assist counties in budget fluctuations), and budget supplementals.

Figure 15. SFY2009-10 Block Grant Funds

County	Allocated Monies	Percent of Allocated Monies
Denver County	\$62,465,686	18.80%
El Paso County	\$39,384,888	11.85%
Adams County	\$32,231,707	9.70%
Arapahoe County	\$31,804,514	9.57%
Jefferson County	\$28,111,441	8.40%
Pueblo County	\$18,226,187	5.49%
Weld County	\$17,456,098	5.25%
Larimer County	\$15,862,752	4.77%
Boulder County	\$15,025,976	4.52%
Mesa County	\$11,449,562	3.45%
Balance of State	\$60,278,784	18.14%
Total	\$332,297,595	100%

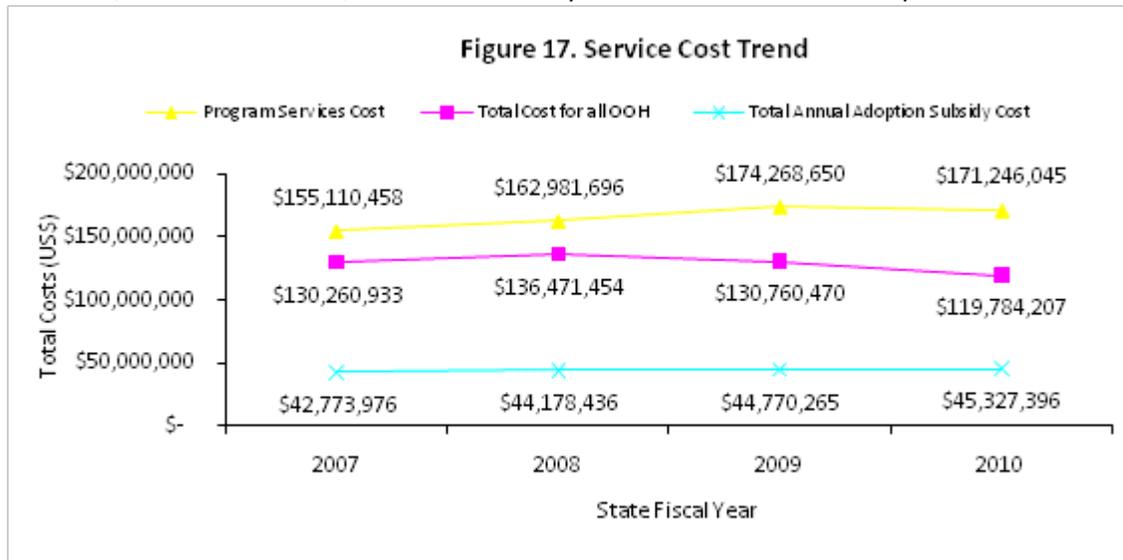
Funding for the Child Welfare Service Block, the Family and Children’s Program, and the Chafee program were appropriated from several sources, with the General Fund representing 50.95% of that (see Figure 16). Title IV-E revenue represented the second largest source at 19.6%.

Figure 16. SFY 2009-10 Child Welfare Budget Overview

Program	Budget
Total General Fund	\$204,861,342
Title IV-E	\$79,140,577
County (Local) Share	\$63,132,962
Title XX	\$22,690,313
Title XIX (Medicaid)	\$18,746,950
TANF Transfer to Title XX	\$9,500,000
Title IV-B	\$4,019,549
Total	\$402,091,693

### Costs

An examination of the service cost trends from SFY2007 to SFY2010 indicates a 10.4% increase in program service costs along with an increase of 5.97% for adoption subsidies (see Figure 17). Services costs for OOH, on the other hand, have decreased by 8.04% over the same time period.



### Reparations

In SFY2010, \$3,932,107 was collected in parental fees to offset the cost of out-of-home placement.

# The Future

---

## **Colorado Disparities Resource Center (CDRC)**

The DCW, in partnership with the American Humane Association, launched the Colorado Disparities Resource Center (CDRC) in May 2009 to address longstanding issues of disparities in child welfare based on race and ethnicity. The project uses sophisticated data analysis as a fundamental method to inform, inspire, and develop tools and strategies needed to mitigate disparate outcomes for children and families of color. In October 2010, the CDRC developed reporting mechanisms for counties to examine the race of children at key decision points (e.g. referrals, assessments, case open, and removals) throughout Colorado's child welfare process. In addition, the CDRC is currently working to develop reporting mechanisms to examine the race and ethnicity of children at the service level in Colorado.

Collaboration is a cornerstone to the work of the CDRC. Therefore, the project hosts regional meetings and forums throughout Colorado to engage child welfare professionals, service providers, community partners, mandated reporters, families, and youth in taking action to identify and address complex causes of child welfare inequities, both at the state and county levels. Partnership is crucial to the realization of developing lasting, systemic change, which will reduce disparate outcomes and enhance service equity for all. During the upcoming year the CDRC website will complete its public facing with de-identified data at both state and county levels to increase awareness and accountability within the State. Please see the website at <https://www.aha-cprc.com/disparities/countySplit/Colorado/>.

## **Colorado Practice Initiative (CPI)**

In October 2009, Colorado's Practice Initiative began as an effort to develop a clear, consistent and cohesive approach to practice and service delivery. This effort consists of five phases. The first phase of the Initiative, which ended in May 2010, focused on providing an overview and introduction, and developing infrastructure for the project. The second phase began in June 2010. This phase involved the design of the practice model framework. A representative group of stakeholders from across the state were convened to develop a practice model framework over five full-day meetings. State Division of Child Welfare staff took the framework out to the larger community to garner feedback from caseworkers and additional stakeholders. Results from an online survey, gathered from these participants, were shared with the group of stakeholders and utilized in development of Colorado's Base Practice Model.

With the base practice model developed, the third phase began in November of 2010. This phase included developing selection criteria for participating counties in the practice model. In addition, all counties were sent an invitation to apply to participate in the first round of Implementation. Applications were received by November 30, 2010. Implementation with Phase I selected counties will begin in February 2011.

In addition to working directly with the select counties, Colorado has developed several workgroups to carry on the objectives of Colorado's Practice Initiative. These include the Communications Workgroup, the Research and Evaluation Workgroup, and the Performance Management Workgroup. These efforts are coordinated through the Project Operations and Implementation Team. For more information, please see the website at <http://cpiportal.omni.org>.

### **Family Assessment Response (FAR)**

The Colorado Consortium on Differential Response began their four-year research implementation pilot project on February 1, 2010. This project will examine the effects of a differential response practice model on outcomes for children and families in five Colorado counties. In the family assessment response (FAR) pathway, workers will conduct a comprehensive assessment of family needs and strengths, however, there will not be a maltreatment determination. Workers will use a menu of family engagement strategies in the delivery of services and ongoing assessment of safety and risk. These menu elements include safety-focused family partnerships such as solution-focused therapeutic methods and various forms of family-involved decision-making processes. The grant budget provides a limited amount of family support money to provide flexible funding options in FAR cases. Other services to families will be provided out of current appropriations. Families can decline services without consequence unless there are implications for child safety. If it is discovered in an assessment that the level of risk to a child meets the threshold for investigation, the case can be reassigned to the investigation pathway.

This effort is enhanced by rigorous process and outcome evaluations conducted by the Social Work Research Center at Colorado State University and Westat, Inc., a premier research and evaluation specialist institution. The evaluation will conclude in the year 2013. This project provides an opportunity to move forward with recommendations from the Governor's Child Welfare Action Committee addressing the value of developing and implementing a differential response model to better meet the needs of Colorado children and families.

### **Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**

Colorado's Child and Family Services on-site Review (CFSR), conducted March 16-20, 2009, resulted in findings of strength and areas needing improvement in Safety, Permanency and Well-being. Colorado's 2009 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) continues to be developed with the guidance of the Administration for Children and Families reflecting months of work by the counties on work plans, permanency and well-being outcomes, along with goal and action step development by the Permanency and Child Protection Task Groups, under the auspices of the PAC (Policy Advisory Committee) and the Child Welfare Sub-PAC. It is anticipated that in early 2011, Colorado will have an agreed upon PIP and begin the real work of improving the performance of Colorado's child welfare services.