



**Oregon Department
of Human Services**

CHILD WELFARE

Vision for Transformation 2022 Update



Contents

Message from Child Welfare Director	1
Executive Summary.....	3
2022 Milestones	6
Transforming Child Welfare:	
Strategic Planning Process and Priorities.....	10
Overview of 2022 accomplishments for each guiding principle	13
Moving forward in 2023:	
Lessons learned	30
Links to Additional Resources;	
In Closing;	
Thank You	32

Message from Child Welfare Director

The progress we are making to better serve families, children, and young adults in Oregon reinforces how fortunate I feel to be part of the Child Welfare Division of the Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS). I am energized by working alongside our staff and colleagues throughout ODHS, as well as, the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities, community partners, resource families, and many others dedicated to redefining the role Child Welfare plays in our communities. We were one of the first few states in the nation to have an approved Family First Prevention Services Plan that redefines the role of child welfare services with family preservation. We are committed to actualizing this plan and our Vision for Transformation, in collaboration with ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs. I wholeheartedly believe we will continue to see improvements in our outcomes if we remain committed to prioritizing prevention through family preservation, equity, workforce development and continuous quality improvement.



This report highlights the progress we made together from January through December 2022. I am particularly proud of the advancements we made in six areas:

- **Family preservation**, including the introduction of three demonstration sites to innovate and learn about how we can better use this approach in all areas of our work;
- **Youth Transitions**, with the implementation of new and improved services to support young adults transitioning into adulthood following the COVID-19 pandemic. This work included collaborations for Independent Living Program (ILP) service provision, assessment and improvement feedback loops;
- Recruitment efforts to increase the diversity of resource parents, and support programs to retain them, to ensure children receive culturally appropriate support, particularly youth who identify as LGBTQIA2S+;

- Implementation of **Continuous Quality Improvement** initiatives including launching quarterly implementation sites statewide; and
- A continued focus on preventing **temporary lodging**.

I am also inspired by the stories I hear every day about how we are working together to engage communities, stand up against racism and work tirelessly to safely keep children in their communities. I look forward to working together as we continue to make progress in:

- Enhancing the safety and security of Oregon's children and youth without an over-reliance on the separation of families.
- Honoring Tribal sovereignty, deepening our engagement with the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities, and living out the spirit and intent of the Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act (ORICWA) in everything we do.
- Using data and testimonials from communities and our workforce to understand who is most affected by practices in the child welfare system and developing and testing strategies to improve outcomes.
- Leading with equity and centering the voices of staff and people who have experienced identity-based traumas and system barriers to good outcomes.
- Advocating for and investing in our diverse staff and leaders to ensure they have what they need to feel confident, valued and competent.
- Developing a road map for the Vision for Transformation that every leader and partner can see themselves in and that clearly articulates our strategic direction for the future, and
- Working with our provider network and system partners to ensure families get what they need to prevent foster care and, when family separation and foster care are necessary, to quickly bring families back together.

By continuing to work together, we can realize the Vision for Transformation to help Oregon families thrive and celebrate the progress we are making. It is my honor to walk with all of you on that journey.

Warm regards,



Aprille Flint-Gerner

Director, Child Welfare Division

Oregon Department of Human Services

Executive Summary

Collaboration makes it possible to move with urgency toward becoming an anti-racist, family-centered, trauma-responsive continuum of support for families **when they need it, where they need it, who they need it from, and how they want it delivered.**

Child Welfare's Parent Advisory Council, which is made up of parents whose families have lived experience with the child welfare system, is an example of collaboration that makes a crucial difference. Council members meet regularly with Child Welfare leadership to advise them on policy and practice as well as share their perspectives.

Many of our programs benefited from this and other collaborations across our systems, services and communities in 2022. As a result, Child Welfare continued to take significant steps forward to actualize each of the three guiding principles in the Vision for Transformation.

Guiding Principle 1: Supporting families and promoting prevention

- Child Welfare launched family preservation demonstration sites in three geographically diverse districts: Multnomah (Alberta branch office), Douglas and Klamath counties. These **sites serve as models for family preservation, keeping children safely at home** by connecting families to services, resources and supports to prevent additional maltreatment. **The number of children and young adults in foster care continued to decrease** in 2022 — from 7,000 children in early 2020 to less than 5,000 by late 2022.
- Funding was secured to support **culturally specific services and fill gaps for families**, such as home visiting services and substance use disorder and mental health treatment.
- The **Youth Transitions Program was enhanced** to better serve young adults transitioning from foster care into adulthood.
- Data collection practices — initiated in 2021 to identify problems causing children to be at risk of disrupted placements — helped support efforts to **prevent temporary lodging** in 2022.

- ODHS Self-Sufficiency Programs and Child Welfare co-managed more cases. This collaboration helped keep **children and young adults in their homes** and decreased the length of Child Welfare involvement with families.

Guiding Principle 2: Enhancing our staff and infrastructure

- The youth, staff and community partner Racial Equity and Social Justice Review (RESJ) Committee finalized the **Child Welfare Racial Equity and Social Justice Tool**. The tool is centered on ensuring equity and removing bias from ODHS practices.
- Resource family mentoring and support groups launched to help parents **support children and young adults who identify as nonbinary**.
- Resource Family Champions, dedicated to recruiting and retaining resource families, developed and launched **recruitment action plans to build targeted campaigns in local communities**. Recruitment activities throughout the state also focused on attracting LGBTQIA2S+ affirming families as well as diverse families representing the unique needs of each district.
- An **upgraded Caseload Dashboard** was introduced to help program leaders determine more standardized caseloads based on metrics for assignments and work.
- **The new Resource and Adoptive Family Training (RAFT) launched statewide**. RAFT is designed to meet the needs of prospective resource parents, relative resource parents and pre-adoptive parents.
- Child Welfare **expanded critical incident stress management (CISM) support sessions** and worked closely with the ODHS Trauma Aware team to support all ODHS programs and staff experiencing stress or trauma in 2022.

Guiding Principle 3: Enhancing the structure of our system by using data with continuous quality improvement

- The **Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) program was launched** in four districts with community involvement as its cornerstone. It integrated CQI throughout Child Welfare to improve services to children and families by using data to understand areas for improvement. CQI also integrates federal measurements into its data framework for consistency with CFSR reviews.
- **Committee members review the CQI action plans and provide considerations to the plans**. Most of its members have lived experience with the child welfare system.

- The Permanency, Certification and Child Protective Services Programs **used data to continuously strengthen services to children and families** by conducting quality assurance (QA) reviews every six months in every district across the state. Local office staff are directly involved in these reviews, which increases their interest and understanding of quality assurance tools. It also promotes transparency and action planning of areas needing refinement.
- Throughout 2022, Child Welfare **focused on improving engagement with parents to better understand and meet their needs**. Many local offices chose quantity and quality of face-to-face contact with parents as their lead measure for their CQI cycle.
- The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline used strategies that **improved customer service**, using continuous quality improvement measurements and techniques. This resulted in shorter wait times for people calling and fewer people hanging up while waiting for the hotline to answer.

In addition to these highlights, we made progress each month of 2022.



2022 Milestones

January

- ✓ Child Welfare completed Safe Systems Mapping to improve contacts with families during open Child Protective Services (CPS) assessments.
- ✓ The Child Safety Program began using data from communication and management strategies to improve timely family assessments and supervision content.

February

- ✓ KEEP - which supports and educates resource parents and partners with the Native American Youth and Family Center - delivered a culturally adapted curriculum for resource families providing care for children with Native heritage. This curriculum followed the 2020 statewide virtual listening tours with Tribal communities.
- ✓ The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) began using new strategies to improve response time to calls and the rate of call hang-ups.

March

- ✓ Building on 2021 planning, Family Preservation launched three demonstration sites aimed at serving more families in-home and in their communities while managing their safety, in partnership with Self-Sufficiency Programs, Tribes and families.
- ✓ Treatment Services began a feedback process to learn from young adults what they need when receiving services in child-caring agency settings.

April

- ✓ For families experiencing Child Protective Services (CPS) assessments, nurse referrals for children younger than one year old were added to improve oversight for safety and well-being.

- ✓ The CQI program delivered a spotlight presentation at the National Child Welfare League of America Conference in Washington, DC, to share its process of building a CQI program. The improvement program centers the community, and the voice of people with lived experience.

May

- ✓ The Equity, Training and Workforce Development Team launched the Resource and Adoptive Family Training (RAFT) curriculum for prospective resource parents, relative resource parents, and pre-adoptive parents. The training was adapted from the National Training and Development Curriculum (NTDC). NTDC is a national curriculum written by those with living experience and was piloted (virtually) from fall 2020 through summer 2022.

June

- ✓ A CPS Supervisor Toolkit, developed to help CPS supervisors manage their workload, was introduced.
- ✓ After identifying the lead data measures for the CQI data framework in 2021, the CQI team met with design program managers, the ODHS Office of Reporting, Research, Analytics and Implementation, and ODHS Tribal Affairs to explore measures to track progress specific to each program. These measures were included in the data framework and these data points being tracked for improvement.
- ✓ A diverse cohort of 17 licensed mental health clinicians graduated from the Training for Adoption Competency.
- ✓ The Resource Family Champion team recruited LGBTQIA2S+-affirming families during Pride month.

July

- ✓ The CQI program launched improvement strategies using data to make services to children and families more equitable.
- ✓ Child Welfare and the ODHS Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS) jointly developed a resource to serve children with dual or pending dual eligibility for services through the two programs.
- ✓ Child Welfare and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) contracted for psychiatric residential treatment services through a 10-bed expansion with Looking Glass Family Services in Eugene.

August

- ✓ A structured decision making (SDM) tool modified response time definitions. Early data released about the impacts of this tool shows a decrease in 24-hour response times.

September

- ✓ ODHS staff observed Orange Shirt Day, a time for truth and reconciliation on the impacts of the Indian boarding school system.
- ✓ Several districts expanded their collaborations with Tribal communities to recruit resource families and build culturally responsive relationships.
- ✓ Child safety plans were shared with local office staff. The plans provide guidance on entering assessment activities, including face-to-face contacts, interviews and observation of the home environment. Plans also provided structured time for case managers to complete documentation of the prior day including prioritizing entering assessment activities and information into OR-Kids.
- ✓ Treatment Services Program began negotiations with Looking Glass to expand an intensive services contract in 2023. Adding these services helps prevent temporary lodging.

October

- ✓ Oregon Legislature was given the first report on collaborative work to implement ORICWA. The report details 2021 work to incorporate state and national ICWA principles throughout ODHS policies, as well as the passage of state legislation to enhance ORICWA.
- ✓ The first virtual statewide collaborative LGBTQIA2S+ resource and youth in foster care provider recruitment event was launched with more than 30 participants.
- ✓ OR-KIDS Go, a mobile phone app allowing caseworkers to immediately enter documentation during CPS assessment and case planning, launched.
- ✓ Families around the state received safety prevention kits.

November

- ✓ Safety Program leadership began collaborating with the Office of Training, Investigations and Safety (OTIS) to strategize ways that OTIS' child protective services workers can support Child Welfare's CPS workers. OTIS investigates third-party reports of abuse and is familiar with CPS rules and business processes.

- ✓ A new customer service approach, led by 16 Resource Family Champions hired in 2021, was created to enhance resource parent retention and recruitment practices statewide.
- ✓ Providers were trained for the new Certified Respite Program to give relief to resource parents.
- ✓ Following two years of building a framework of equity planning, training and tools, the new Child Welfare Racial Equity and Social Justice Tool was completed and launched.

December

- ✓ A gap analysis of statewide placement trends was shared to help recruit resource homes that match the needs of Child Welfare-supported families.
- ✓ An upgraded version of the Caseload Dashboard was introduced.
- ✓ The U.S. Senate confirmed Child Welfare Director Rebecca Jones-Gaston as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner on Children, Youth, and Families. Aprille Flint-Gerner was named as Oregon's Child Welfare interim director.



Transforming Child Welfare: Strategic Planning Process and Priorities

The process for developing the Child Welfare Vision for Transformation began in full in January 2020, when agency staff reexamined and reaffirmed an understanding of the ODHS vision and mission statements, which are:

- **Vision:** Safety, health, and independence for all Oregonians.
- **Mission:** To help Oregonians in their own communities achieve well-being and independence through opportunities that protect, empower, respect choice, and preserve dignity.

Senior staff then began a series of discussions with Tribes, community members, families and children with prior system experience, resource and birth parents, service providers, policymakers, judges, and staff members at all levels. Based on these conversations and meetings, a draft Vision for Transformation was created.

A Vision for Transformation

The resulting Vision for Transformation is founded on building an ODHS Child Welfare Division that supports the individual needs of families and best serves Oregon's children and young people.

A listening tour identified areas of focus including the need for collaboration among diverse partners, establishment of guiding principles, and a central focus on racial equity and diversity.

The three guiding principles that emerged are:

- Supporting families and promoting prevention;
- Enhancing staff and infrastructure; and
- Improving the structure of our system by using data with continuous quality improvement.

Values and beliefs

Oregon's Vision for Transformation is built upon a series of beliefs and values:

- We believe that children and young adults do best when they grow up in their family.
- We value fairness, equity, inclusion, accessibility, diversity and transparency.
- We value the voices, experiences, cultures, intellect and uniqueness of the children and families we serve.
- We value building authentic relationships and accountability to communities of color and other marginalized groups by elevating their voices and engaging with individuals, families and communities.
- We believe that providing earlier, less intrusive support for parents and families means that more children can remain safe and healthy at home and in school.
- We believe that families and communities working together in a more proactive, holistic way will allow ODHS, and its partners, to allocate resources where they have the greatest impact.
- We believe that when families and communities are strong, fewer children experience abuse and neglect.

These beliefs and values are being put into practice, resulting in families and communities working more closely in more proactive, holistic ways. In addition, Child Welfare and its partners are committed to allocating resources to better meet the unique, individual needs of children, young adults, parents and families.

These changes have opened the way to more opportunities for innovation, creative solutions and new programs that improve the overall well-being for children and youth. They have resulted in a steady decline in the number of Oregon children in foster care.

This progress report provides an overview and examples of the positive outcomes achieved during 2022. Positive outcomes range from reducing the need for costly foster care and unnecessary residential placements to bringing back to Oregon children and youth placed in out-of-state residential treatment facilities.

Achieving racial equity: a non-negotiable outcome

The work needed to achieve racial equity and reduce the over-representation of Native American and Black children in foster care is complex. Historical structural racism in systems has caused higher percentages of children of color to be removed from their parents and families. In addition, too few children of color were returned to live with their birth parents or relatives (including grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, and extended family members) and too many have aged out of foster care without enough opportunities and supportive resources to succeed later in life.

Part of the Vision for Transformation implementation and the ODHS call to achieve racial equity includes developing a series of new rules and practice changes to reduce over-surveillance, recognize that communities served must hold power, and that it is essential to address bias in decision-making.

An Equity Tool in development since 2021 and launched in 2022, is being widely and successfully used by staff. It continues to provide support in decision-making about unintended consequences of policies, procedures and system changes. It also raises the voice of those most affected by decision-making.

In addition, the Equity Tool helps inform updates to policies that show a biased and disproportionate effect on people of color and other traditionally marginalized or underserved communities.

Leanne Walsh, contracted community partner and parent mentor with Next Step Mentoring in Lincoln County; member of the Parent Advisory Council

“Our voices and perspectives are heard, valued and utilized. Child Welfare leadership wants to know what is going well and what is not going well. The Parent Advisory Council has collaborated with Child Welfare on several projects and workgroups in efforts to align with the Vision for Transformation. I have witnessed progress and transformation happening in the child welfare system over the past few years. Child Welfare is learning to honor the family as a whole, allowing them to have a voice in the decisions that are being made for them and making efforts to really understand a family’s situation. Caseworkers are increasing family time with the children and the bio-parent, increasing face-to-face contacts with the family and encouraging relationships between the bio-parents and the resource parents. All of these efforts lead to better engagement from the parents. When parents are engaging better, the outcomes are better. Reunification can happen sooner and reduce trauma for both children and adults.”

Overview of 2022 accomplishments for each guiding principle

Guiding Principle 1: Supporting families and promoting prevention

Through trauma-informed, family and community-centered and culturally responsive services focused on engagement, equity, safety, well-being and prevention.

Family preservation

Family preservation puts the Vision for Transformation into action by focusing on and prioritizing serving families in their homes and communities. Self-Sufficiency Programs and Child Welfare are partnering in this approach along with community agencies, families and Tribes. The approach strives to prevent the need for a Child Welfare intervention by meeting families' needs. By working together, Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency staff strengthened collaborations already in place by trying new interventions to help families. The goal is to provide parents with resources to meet their needs and allow their children to remain safely at home with them. Progress made includes:

- Co-management between Child Welfare and Self-Sufficiency led to increased face-to-face contact with families, concrete economic support, an increased number of family engagement meetings, peer mentoring and community collaboration.
- Family Preservation Community Partner Forums brought more than 90 statewide community-based organizations, statewide agencies and individuals together in the demonstration sites to strengthen and build trust by listening to communities discuss their strengths, needs and barriers to keeping families together. This helped move prevention and preservation forward across the state and begin to repair ODHS' relationship with communities of color.
- Child Welfare began exploring new ways to use the family preservation approach in three demonstration sites: Multnomah (Alberta Branch, one of five Child Welfare branches), Douglas and Klamath counties. The work done at these sites focuses on supporting leadership, staff and community to prioritize serving children at home while managing their safety, rather than in

foster care. Demonstration sites are part of Oregon’s Family First Prevention Services Plan, which in 2021 was one of the first nationally to be approved by the U.S. Children’s Bureau.

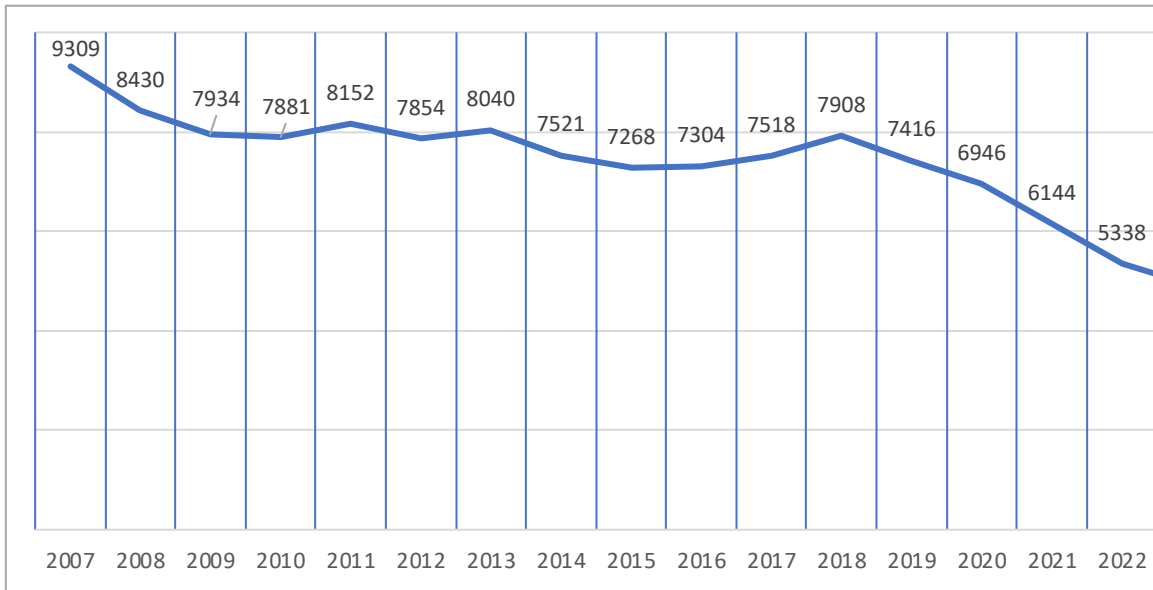
- The family preservation demonstration sites also built innovative programs with multiple community providers to support families.
 - In Douglas County, Teams for Families was developed. It brings community providers together weekly to immediately support families staying together and out of foster care as well as getting children home from foster care faster. Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare-involved families both benefit from this support.
 - The family preservation demonstration site in Klamath County has been increasing the numbers of children and young adults safely being served by ODHS while living at home.
 - In District 2 offices in Multnomah County, staff received training in Culturally Responsive Clinical Supervision in a six-month series by Dr. Eleanor Kashiwabara. Training has included the concept of clinical supervision for the prior three years; clinical supervision creates intentional spaces to receive feedback, consultation and direction to achieve shared outcomes and it develops trauma informed space to be reflective, constructive and intentional.
- Outside of the demonstration sites, local offices across the state made progress in supporting the family preservation approach. For example, District 16 in Washington County created a joint “in-home” unit to specifically support both Self-Sufficiency’s Family Coaches and Child Welfare staff as they work to prevent children from entering foster care. The District also developed positions specifically to support the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to foster better relationships with Tribal Nations and Alaskan Native communities.

This work contributed to a reduction in the number of children in foster care.

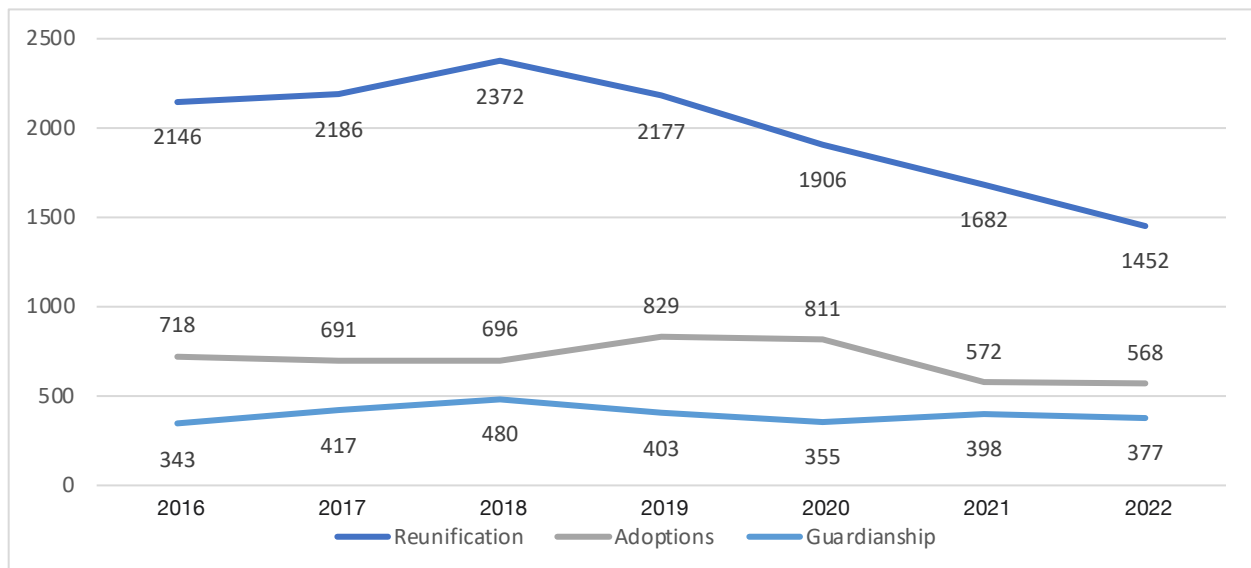
Greg Chandler, Self-Sufficiency Programs manager, and Geneia Maupin, Child Welfare program manager, District 11, Klamath Falls

“We are better able to serve families when we collaborate. If there is no safety threat, but the family needs help, a family coach connects to find out if they need resources. We intervene before Child Welfare is involved. In cases where Child Welfare is involved, staff uses the family preservation approach to work with the family to try to keep them together while helping them deal with the safety threat.”

Number of children and young adults experiencing foster care



Reunifications, adoptions and guardianships from 2016 to 2022



Foster care

Child Welfare made progress by building tools for resource parents, children and families. This made it easier to connect relatives and children in care as well as to provide individualized services for children.

- The number of children in foster care continued to decline as Oregon focuses on prevention through family preservation and other initiatives. At the beginning of 2020, more than 7,000 children were in foster care and, by the end of 2022, that number had declined to less than 5,000.
- An on-call support pilot, called Resource Support Network (RSN), for resource parents, began in Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Lane, Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties. The pilot provides support and services for resource parents, relative caregivers and parents. The services focus on children's individualized needs.
- The Statewide Relative Search Workgroup met monthly and continued to improve and develop tools and processes that support the connection between children in foster care and their families.
- Following are highlights of the workgroup's 2022 efforts:
 - Created a monthly collaborative group chat to support the search for relatives statewide when a Child Welfare intervention is required.
 - Published the Relative Connection website to help those who learn they have a family member or members in foster care by providing general information.
 - Drafted a statewide business process for local offices to ensure a comprehensive relative search occurs within one week of foster care entry.
 - Developed Levels of Search criteria for local offices to give initial resources for children with the highest needs and establish appropriate goals for every child.
 - Improved statewide access to the most frequently used search engine, Accurant. There is now a flat monthly fee instead of paying per search, which allows every relative search specialist across the state to have full access.
 - Acquired a statewide [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) account for search specialists to search obituaries and public record databases to expand relative searches.

Young adults transitioning into adulthood

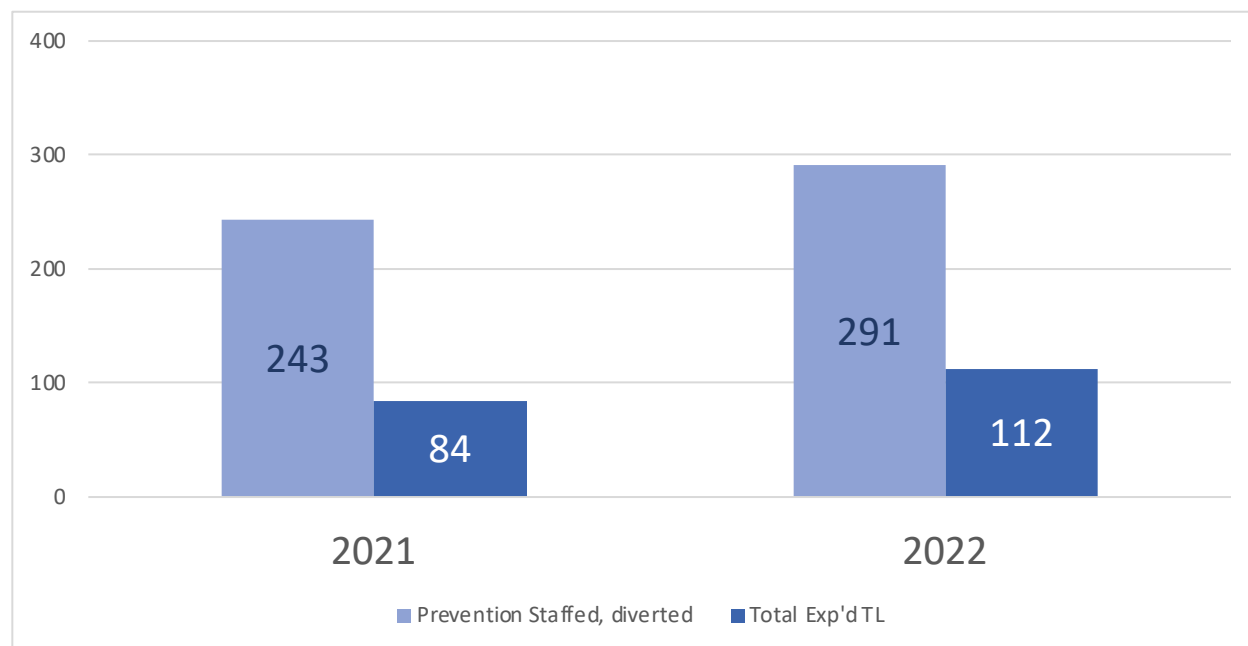
- The Youth Transitions Program (YTP) increased its offerings to create a bridge for youth between foster care and adulthood. YTP collaborated with Foster Club and Portland State University to train people with lived experience to be peer navigators; provided outreach and financial support to young people eligible for the Independent Living Program (ILP), and piloted new service improvements for ILP skill-building programs. The Independent Living Program is a major YTP service that helps build confidence through structured case management and financial and educational goal setting. It is one of the services available that provides a bridge to independence for youth who have experienced foster care, building confidence through structured case management and financial and educational goal setting.
- Per the National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) Data Summary Report, ODHS provided independent living services to 2,199 young people during the Federal Fiscal Year 2022. Demographic data indicates that most young people received services while in foster care (81.2 percent). Individuals identifying as female (58.8 percent) continue to access services more than those identifying as male (41.2 percent). Slightly more than a third (35.31 percent) of young people accessed one service, and nearly half (46.1 percent) accessed five or more services.
- Services funded under the John H. Chafee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition to Adulthood are administered by the Child Welfare Foster Care and Youth Transitions Program. Using these funds and those the Oregon Legislature provided, the Youth Transitions Team began a number of new or improved services to support young adults as they continue to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, as part of Youth Transitions collaboration with Foster Club it enabled leaders working as peer navigators to provide outreach and financial support to young adults who have experienced Child Welfare but do not currently receive ILP services.
 - The program permanently created \$500 educational incentives for youth to finish their GEDs or graduate from high school. In 2022, 136 young people used this incentive.

Temporary lodging

- Data collection combined with professional discretion practices helped identify children at risk of disrupted placements and temporary lodging. A team of staff and partners involved with children and their families collaborated to access community and mental health services. Awareness of the main drivers of temporary lodging through data and staff's early recognition of the factors that places children and young adults at a higher risk of temporary lodging, have helped teams with proactive collaboration and timely resource identification and access. Through the current collaborative teaming model, of the children and young adults at risk of temporary lodging in 2022, 72 percent did not experience temporary lodging.
- Child-specific prevention efforts occurred daily through proactive support and service solutions to preserve placements, and in crises to brainstorm ways to prevent children from entering temporary lodging.
- The Child Welfare resource management director and team collaborated with professionals from state, county and community agencies, who are involved with a child and family, to develop solutions to address barriers to accessing appropriate services and placements.
- Child Welfare supported children and families by working with ODDS, Community Developmental Disability Programs, OHA and community mental health providers to access the appropriate community services, high levels of mental health treatment, or other appropriate services for those children and young adults denied access due to their elevated needs and the safety concerns their behaviors pose to others.
- Cross-systems collaboration improved to address service barriers for children and families who experience crisis.
- Increased access to funding for services and supports helped prevent temporary lodging.



Unique youth staffed during 2021 and 2022



Child Safety

Making sure children are safe and families have the resources they need to support safety is central to Child Welfare's work. Child Welfare is collaborating with partners across Oregon to transform the Child Welfare system. The Child Safety program's goal is to safely keep more children at home and in their communities, provide support early to prevent the need for Child Welfare intervention, and reduce stress and trauma.

- Staff attended training and developed a plan to address addiction recovery. Addiction is a major factor in Child Welfare cases. Addressing it before children are removed from their homes is key.
- The Child Fatality Prevention & Review Program (CFPRP) collaborated with several state programs, nonprofit organizations and other entities to increase child safety throughout the state. Examples of projects include promoting safe sleep for infants and purchasing and providing safety kits that prevent injury and death.
- To address prenatal substance use, Child Welfare and OHA collaborated to implement the Plan of Care Pilot within the Nurture Oregon demonstration project. Nurture Oregon integrates maternity services, substance-use disorder treatment and social service coordination. The pilot's first year focused on educating sites and providers about the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) and plans of care, facilitating

introductions and dialogue between sites and local Child Welfare professionals, and aligning participant values, goals and processes. The pilot will provide culturally sensitive trauma-informed approaches to services.

- Seventy families dealing with prenatal substance abuse were connected to community supports and resources to meet their needs through projects supported by CAPTA funding.
- Local offices in District 2 in Multnomah County made several improvements including developing a Safety and Sustainability Plan in collaboration with the Child Welfare Safety Team and Child Welfare Fatality Prevention and Review Program. It also created clinical supervision templates for Child Welfare's program areas to enhance workforce support through strengthened supervision.

Treatment Services

This program administers contracts with child-caring agencies to provide behavior rehabilitation services, community shelter-based contracts and skills training. It also administers mentoring service-based contracts to support children and young adults with specialized needs.

Projects included:

- Facilitated placements for 462 children and young adults across 344 contracted beds in child-caring agencies (CCAs).
- Audits of each Child Welfare-contracted child-caring agency every two years to ensure children and young adults with specialized needs receive the services and supports they need.
- Launched a service pilot to help children and young adults with complex needs remain in their biological or resource home settings. Child-Specific Caregiver Supports provide intensive, individualized support to the caregivers of children with complex needs who otherwise may be at risk for placement in higher levels of care, such as residential treatment. Caseworkers and supervisors report that these supports have helped placement stability.
- A request for applications was issued and remains active to solicit an expanded array of qualified residential treatment programs for a small number of children and young adults in care. This solicitation aims to provide treatment for commercially sexually exploited children and children with heightened physically aggressive behavior, as well as sex abuse-specific and co-occurring substance use disorder treatment.

- Child Welfare Treatment Services program worked with OHA and the Oregon Youth Authority to commission and complete the Children’s Continuum Rate Study. The study identified necessary rates and payment structure changes for contracted providers across the children’s service array. The study identified ways to reimburse for actual costs incurred and ensure enhanced stability and availability of services.

Oregon Child Abuse Hotline

The Oregon Child Abuse Hotline (ORCAH) screens all reports of child abuse for Oregon. As the front door to Child Welfare and child protective services, ORCAH screens calls and cross-reported law enforcement reports.

- ORCAH aims to answer calls promptly; data shows that most callers who hang up did so when on hold for more than four minutes. By December 2022, ORCAH maintained response times of less than four minutes more than 90 percent of the time.
- The call abandonment rate is the percentage of callers who hang up before speaking to an ORCAH screener. In early 2022, ORCAH improved abandonment rates to below 7 percent.
- ORCAH hired, onboarded and trained 49 new staff.

For more information on 2022 accomplishments see the ORCAH Annual Report.

Adoption and Guardianship

Child Welfare contracts with innovative nonprofits that weave community and therapeutic support into affordable housing and assist with communication between adoptive families and families of origin.

- A contract relationship continued in 2022 with Bridge Meadows, which supports adoptive and guardianship families through a multi-generational housing community. Bridge Meadows uses the power of community to help children heal from the trauma of foster care. This program includes high-quality and affordable housing, therapeutic programs, and intergenerational community support. Older adults who live in the community serve as mentors, friends and caregivers to the children and each other, forming a safety net of care and interdependence.
- Mediation contracts provided resources to develop ongoing contact plans between adoptive/guardian families and families-of-origin for their contacts after a Child Welfare case is closed. Child Welfare also used these funds to pay for mediator training.

Resource parents

- Child Welfare’s recruitment team partnered with other organizations to recruit resource parents including Basic Rights Oregon and Unicorn Solutions. These partnerships create opportunities for widespread promotion to attract resource parents.
- KEEP, a program for resource families and relatives providing care for children, partnered with the Oregon Kinship Navigator program to deliver KEEP for Kin. KEEP for Kin’s goal is to increase family stability and ultimately prevent entrance into care. Resource parents in all 36 counties have enrolled in KEEP. KEEP for Kin is based on an evidence model for caregivers. Child Welfare is looking for opportunities to expand this program within Self-Sufficiency Programs and Child Welfare.
- The Certification Team analyzed and updated guidance and rules for how Child Welfare certifies families to support efforts to recruit resource families who are likely to respect, accept and support the race, ethnicity and culture of children, as well as their sexual orientation and gender identity expression. The group analyzed how guidance is reflected in certification and in their home study. The team included this information in the procedure manual and included additional sample questions for certifiers to consider when assessing the capacity of families who want to serve families in foster care around those issues.
- The RSN pilot continued in Multnomah and Washington counties. RSN is a specialized, time-limited (60–90

Alex Salas, continuum of care coordinator, Response and Support Network

“A resource family was ready to disrupt the placement due to the youth’s continuous biting behaviors and other related trauma response. The Response and Support Network responded right away. RSN was able to provide sensory tools including a biting neckless for the youth; uniquely the resource parent peer (RSN responder) had experienced this situation in their personal life as a resource parent. An RSN parent mentor provided the resource parents with trainings to understand the behaviors and [provide] tools to support the youth. A skills trainer worked with the youth to help express their emotions and words. He was in a resource home separate from his other two siblings because his needs were too much on top of his other siblings’ needs for the grandma to manage. Due to the work RSN was able provide, the youth reunited with his grandma and his other siblings.”

days) approach to provide 24/7 flexible, seamless clinical and non-clinical services to ensure ongoing, long-term support, including teams that provide resource parents with non-clinical supports at any time. It also encompasses a collaboration with CareOregon that offers immediate cross-system response and referral. RSN builds upon Child Welfare's commitment to partner with other agencies to strengthen the safety and response network for Oregon communities. RSN is the first of its kind partnership with a coordinated care organization, CareOregon, to deliver the highest tier wholistic non-clinical and clinical services in Oregon. The CareOregon partnership allows the service to be flexible, resilient, community and family-focused. All supports are offered in-home and in-community while focusing on seamless connection to ongoing, long-term services.

Guiding Principle 2: Enhancing staff and Child Welfare infrastructure

Through a diverse, supported, respected and engaged workforce that reflects and embraces the community we serve.

Equity

Child Welfare's efforts to center equity at all levels include creating and using culturally specific training and curriculum and developing processes to improve equity in decision-making and policy.

- Youth with lived experience, staff from every position and community partners make up the Racial Equity and Social Justice Review (RESJ) Committee. The group finalized the Child Welfare Racial Equity and Social Justice Tool, in development since 2021 and launched in 2022. The tool helps remove bias and center equity in ODHS policies, rules, procedures and plans; it examines how communities of color and those most harmed by social inequities would be affected by proposed Child Welfare actions.
- Race & Equity Team decision process: The Child Welfare Race and Equity Team (CWRELT) implemented a weighted decision-making process that provides equitable decision making. Staff is learning to use this decision model to share power with communities most affected by the child welfare system.
- Staff created sensory rooms in several districts to lower the stimuli in Child Welfare offices for children who need help regulating their impulses. These updated visitation rooms have positive sensory stimulation for a calmer and more comforting effect for children and parents who have autism, ADHD or other intellectual or developmental disabilities.

- New guides on how to serve people experiencing disabilities were created throughout the year to continue training staff about how the Americans with Disability Act applies to people receiving child welfare services.
- The new Resource and Adoptive Family Training (RAFT) launched statewide. The curriculum — designed for prospective resource parents, relative resource parents and pre-adoptive parents — replaced one used for more than 15 years.

There are 40 RAFT groups of new resource families. The curriculum has been translated into Spanish for bilingual training staff to support bilingual delivery in 2023.

- Child Welfare enhanced its collaboration with the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities in several districts to build and sustain culturally responsive and reciprocal relationships. New collaborations include a tri-county committee (Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington) of Oregon Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) certifiers, Champions, ICWA ODHS Child Welfare managers, Tribal representatives and Tribal Child Welfare staff.
- The Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities began working with the University of Iowa School of Public Health Native Center for Behavioral Health National American Indian and Alaska Native Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (NAIAN MHTCC) to develop culturally specific motivational interviewing (MI) implementation plans for each Tribe. Child Welfare staff connected each of the Tribes to the NAIAN MHTCC, scheduled the trainings and managed logistics.
- Resource Family Retention Recruitment Champions, referred to as Champions, updated recruitment action plans to support families who reflect the diverse characteristics of children and young adults in foster care. Child Welfare tracks demographics and disproportionality in the foster

Shawn Sullivan, a social service assistant in the Roseburg office

Shawn wanted to provide children a safe, calm and relaxing environment for family time. His request led to the first sensory room in a district office.

“We had a family where the kids would run from the room every time they had a visit [with their parents]. We initially thought they were running from the room because of the parents. I suggested it could be something about the room – maybe the lighting. We tried a different room, and the kids were OK. I share a lot of similarities with the children that come through our office – and a lot of trauma as a kid.”

care population to inform recruitment needs. The Champions participated in recruitment activities to support LGBTQIA2S+ affirming families and families that represent the district-specific cultural and ethnic needs. For example, Champions attended local Pride gatherings and strengthened relationships with LGBTQIA2S+ and cultural organizations through attending and recruiting at community events.

- Resource families received on-demand videos and podcasts with content specific to serving children who have experienced foster care.
- As mentioned in Guiding Principle One, funding was secured to support culturally specific services and fill gaps for families, such as home visiting services and substance use disorder and mental health treatment.

Training

Child Welfare partnered with local and national organizations for staff trainings focused on safety, suicide prevention, leadership and coaching.

- Child Welfare partnered with the Consortium for Children to provide three SAFE home study refresher trainings. Oregon's Foster Care Program continued hosting quarterly video conferencing training with the Consortium to address various topics related to the SAFE home study process of assessing families to be certified as resource families or for adoption.
- The Equity, Training and Workforce Development Team, in collaboration with program and delivery staff, planned and conducted a triannual Leaders Institute focusing on staff retention at all levels. More than 1,400 people attended with an average of 476 coaching and training specialists, office managers, supervisors and consultants at each.
- Child Welfare augmented some of 2021 trainings to help prevent death by suicide. Training and Child Abuse Hotline staff created a video to increase awareness of suicide's effects. The training also covered some risk factors associated with families who may be dealing with the dynamics of suicide. The goal is to help ORCAH screeners evaluate and make screening decisions for child abuse reports that include some information about suicide.
- Child Welfare partnered with Alia and national technical assistance to provide:
 - Ongoing development of the Child Welfare safety model for program consultants and statewide staff. The focus was on five statewide trainings for all Child Welfare staff and a group of program managers, permanency supervisors, Child Protective Services supervisors and safety consultants.

- Some of the highlighted topics in the safety model are preparing staff to approach their work differently with a focus on keeping families together rather than separating children from their families and improving staff resilience.
- An implementation team is working across Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare to improve coaching to support training and workforce development. The team includes members for both programs and the Children’s Bureau Capacity Building Centers was the technical advisor. Child Welfare assessed coaching models already in place in the state as well as what coaching models exist in the country. The team’s goal was to crosswalk those and select and adapt a model for Oregon.
- In Multnomah County, the District Office collaborated with Autism Society of Oregon in building out and presenting a staff training.

Workforce/Infrastructure

Workforce and infrastructure efforts addressed challenges related to turnover and burnout, creating solutions and new approaches for a healthy and sustainable workplace with diversity and equity at the center.

- Workforce sustainability in child-caring agency settings is a significant need. To meet the need Child Welfare contracted with Effective System Innovations to assess how COVID-19 affected Oregon’s child well-being services. The study explored the effects on operations and services to children served by ODHS, particularly within child-caring agencies (including behavioral health and Behavior Rehabilitation Services and Oregon Developmental Disabilities Services group home settings).
- Child Welfare designed a respite program that will launch in January 2023. This program expands respite services from resource parents to families serving their own children within their own home. As a result, the program will not only offer respite to resource parents but to parents who are parenting, thus encouraging family preservation.
- Child Welfare partnered with The Contingent and other community organizations to recruit diverse populations, Tribal communities and LGBTQIA2S+ affirming resource families.

- Child Fatality Prevention and Review Team’s work included the following:
 - Increased psychiatric treatment level of care, with the Oregon Health Authority, via the Looking Glass Regional Crisis Center. This psychiatric residential treatment facility provides prioritized access for children in Child Welfare care through a direct contract.
- Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) support sessions and training, which began in 2021, continued. The team worked closely with the ODHS Trauma Aware team to provide support for all ODHS staff experiencing stress or trauma. A total of 284 staff participated in 45 CISM support sessions. The Equity and Well-being Team continues facilitating weekly workforce well-being conversations to encourage mutual support for staff.
- In District 3, which includes Yamhill, Polk and Marion counties, local offices held listening sessions with staff and leadership to learn more about what keeps staff coming back to work and how the work environment could be improved. In addition, the staff created opportunities for Self-Sufficiency and Child Welfare teams in shared branches to build relationships and increase collaboration by utilizing shared training, monthly branch all-staff meetings and engagement activities such as barbecues and team building exercises.

Guiding Principle 3: Enhancing the structure of the Child Welfare system by using data with continuous quality improvement

Through a diverse, supported, respected and engaged workforce that reflects and embraces the community we serve.

Tracking performance with data provides continuous feedback that illuminates progress made toward the Vision for Transformation and areas in need of improvement.

- CQI began its cycle implementation in Districts 1, 2, 3, 6, 12, and 14, which includes Clatsop, Columbia, Douglas, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Marion, Marrow, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Umatilla and Yamhill counties. During the CQI cycle, community, Tribal, ODHS, legal representatives and people with lived experience with Child Welfare collaborated to learn how children and families in those areas experience the Child Welfare system. They decided what measures to focus on throughout the CQI cycle. Tracking the number of face-to-face interactions in Districts 6 and 12 measured the number and quality of engagements that took place between Child Welfare staff and parents; these interactions were up 7 percent (District 6) and 17 percent (District 12) as of December 2022.

- The Child Welfare Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Committee launched. Approximately 80 percent of members are from outside the Child Welfare agency; many have lived experience. This statewide committee meets monthly and reviews all of the CQI action plans from the Child Welfare CQI sites. It also hears from the state’s family preservation demonstration sites about their successes and challenges related to CQI.
- The CQI team expanded from a manager and two analysts at the beginning of the year with five additional staff joining the team during the year for a total of eight members. A newly created Tribal Relations CQI position will continue strengthening relationships with the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities and will expand Child Welfare’s capacity around generating data, learning and continuous quality improvement. Hiring will begin in January of 2023.
- CQI created a statewide data report to support the lead measures in child welfare casework. These reports are community-specific and highlight the successes and opportunities for improvement. The reports are shared with the community, providers, Tribes, resource families, persons with lived child welfare experience, and the child welfare workforce.
- The Child Welfare Race and Equity Team (CWRELT) began using a weighted decision-making process. This process models more equitable decision making as staff learn to share power with communities most affected by the Child Welfare system.
- Child Welfare tracked foster care population demographics and disproportionality to inform recruitment needs. District action plans focus on targeted recruitment for affirming families with lived or professional experience

Jennifer Kenny, Resource Parent, ODHS staff member and Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Committee member

“I’ve been a resource parent for six years, which is what led me to want to work with ODHS. I wanted to help change policies and programs that affect kids in foster care. When I heard about the Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory Committee, I thought that would be a good fit for me as a data person and a resource parent. Vision for Transformation is the guiding voice. It prompts us to think creatively about data and how to apply it to changes in Child Welfare. The committee includes diverse voices – we are all working toward practical actions with measurable results.”

caring for LGBTQIA2S+ children and young people, families that reflect the diversity of children and young people in foster care, and families for teens with complex behavioral and mental health needs.

- An updated Caseload Management Dashboard makes it possible to visualize the number of cases (caseload), measured by each case-carrying caseworker. It is a visual extension of the Oregon Standards Caseload Ratio document published in 2021. More metrics were added to allow program leaders to make determinations on assignments and work towards more standardized caseloads.



Moving forward in 2023: Lessons learned

- Co-case management between Self-Sufficiency Programs and Child Welfare staff results in a multitude of benefits for the families being served, including increased face-to-face contact with people served, increase concrete economic supports, increased number of family team meetings, fostering peer mentoring and community collaboration, and reduction of the time to put supports in place for families. With these benefits, more children and young people can remain safely in their homes, decreasing the length of Child Welfare involvement.
- Data from Klamath County, an initial Family Preservation demonstration site, showed a growing body of research supporting that by offering concrete economic supports, in equal measure with in-home services, supports families by making it possible for them to stay safely together while working on change.
- Overcoming and understanding biases is critical. Most families who currently benefit from family preservation efforts are white. Given that, there must be intentional conversations and immediate actions to further support strategies focused on serving families of color in their homes. It also highlights the necessity of understanding systemic biases, policies, practices and structural inequities in the Child Welfare system as well as the community. Inequities must be addressed as they affect decision-making about the children who remain in their homes or being placed in foster care.
- Child Welfare is examining what “in-home criteria” was not met that resulted in children being placed in foster care in the three family preservation demonstration sites. Data from the sites is being analyzed by race to prioritize strategies that will address barriers faced by families of color.
- The most prevalent family stressor that families served in-home experience across the three sites is substance use disorder (SUD). After SUD, the stressor affecting families varies by site. In Douglas County, the source of stress is a heavy childcare responsibility. In the Alberta office in Multnomah

County, the primary driver for services is domestic violence and financial distress. This data helps inform where districts and communities can focus their prevention and preservation efforts.

2023 plans

- Continue to focus on family preservation as a way of being – a new system and culture centered around equity. Expand to five more family preservation demonstration sites.
- Launch a respite program to support resource families. This program will provide the training requirements to become a certified respite provider. The Certified Respite Program will expand to in-home respite services for families of origin who are being served by Child Welfare.
- Expand continuous quality improvement program sites across the state. The expansion will include all districts starting in the summer of 2023.
- Continue district family preservation plans.
- Deliver bilingual Resource and Adoptive Family Training (RAFT). Resource parent and adoptive family RAFT training will expand to include a Spanish cohort.
- Increase the number of relief nurseries by 48 percent statewide, serving a total of 840 families.
- Expand on-demand videos and podcasts for resource families. Offering to resource families micro-learning videos and podcasts of current practice trends and tools, will allow the flexibility to tap into the resources virtually.
- Provide staff training, other activities and initiatives centering on preservation.
- Invest in rates for providers and resource parents. Through the legislative long session, in partnership with organizations, providers and Child Welfare, to work towards increased rates. Create better models for prevention. Prevent Child Abuse Oregon and the Child Abuse Prevention Collaborative are central to this effort and are developing a comprehensive child abuse prevention plan informed by those with lived experience.
- Expand partnerships and develop deeper collaborations with Self-Sufficiency Programs, prevention partners, equity groups and others.
- Continue to support transparency in Child Welfare’s work. By providing easier-to-understand reports and access to data to help explain Child Welfare’s practices.

Links to additional resources

Child Welfare Division Vision for Transformation

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/child-welfare-transformation/Pages/default.aspx>

Child Welfare Federal Performance Measures Dashboard

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/data/pages/cw-dashboard-fpm.aspx?>

Oregon Family First Act - Title IV-E Prevention Plan

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/family-preservation/Pages/default.aspx>

Child Welfare Governor's Monthly Progress Report

<https://www.oregon.gov/odhs/child-welfare-transformation/Pages/progress-reports.aspx>

In closing, a thank you

We in the Child Welfare Division want to thank and acknowledge everyone who joins in supporting the individual needs of families as the best way to serve children and young people in Oregon. This includes our community partners, the Nine Tribes of Oregon and Tribal communities, persons who have experienced foster care, advocates, resource parents, adoptive parents, kin and kith, attorneys and legislators. Most importantly, we want to recognize and honor the parents and children in care. It is their voices that guide us.

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