

Improving the Lives of Children in Long-Term Foster Care:

The Role of Texas' Courts & Legal System



Executive Summary

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TEXAS APPLESEED

Submitted to the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission
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Texas Appleseed Mission

Texas Appleseed's mission is to promote justice for all Texans by using the volunteer skills of lawyers and other professionals to find practical solutions to broad-based problems facing the most vulnerable—including the State's foster children.

For a copy of the full report, visit the Texas Appleseed website at www.texasappleseed.net.

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Policy Development Team

Texas Appleseed is particularly indebted to its Policy Development Team of leading experts in Texas foster care, who shared their insights and extensive expertise and who spent countless hours reviewing our findings and vetting the policy recommendations contained in this report.

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Methodology

With a team of the state's leading foster care experts and major pro bono support led by Fulbright & Jaworski L.L.P. with McGinnis, Lochridge & Kilgore, L.L.P., Texas Appleseed conducted detailed qualitative and quantitative data analysis of all children in long-term foster care in Texas during one fiscal year. Texas Appleseed relied on the expert analytical assistance of RPC Consulting and undertook this study with the full cooperation of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services.

DFPS provided Appleseed with raw data for 2005 to 2008 on all children in long-term foster care (also known as Permanent Managing Conservatorship or PMC). RPC Consulting and Texas Appleseed analyzed the data to examine a wide variety of issues affecting PMC children. The Texas Appleseed report focuses on children in foster care in FY 2008, the most recent year a full data set was available when the study began.

To “get behind the numbers,” Texas Appleseed and its pro bono partners also completed a thorough, cross-sectional qualitative analysis of PMC experiences in 15 selected jurisdictions by conducting approximately 150 interviews with a variety of stakeholders in Bexar, Dallas, El Paso, Harris, Tarrant, Taylor and Travis counties, as well as the following specialized Child Protection Courts: Brazos River Valley, Centex, Central Texas, Northern Panhandle, Northeast Texas, Permian Basin, Rio Grande Valley and Southeast Texas.

Casey Family Programs, a national leader in foster care initiatives, undertook an extensive review of best practices found nationwide for legal and court strategies that have been successful in achieving genuine and timely permanence for foster children. Visit Texas Appleseed's website, www.texasappleseed.net, to access the full foster care report, including *Promising Court Practices* produced by Casey Family Programs to help Texas explore the ways in which our court system can reduce the time children and youth spend in foster care.

Improving the Lives of Children in Long-Term Foster Care:

The Role of Texas' Courts & Legal System

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than 26,000 children in Texas, the State is acting as their parent.¹ More than half have been in the system for more than a year and have become long-term wards of the State.² These are the children in long-term foster care, or Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC).

In 2009 alone, the State removed more than 12,000 abused or neglected children from their homes.³ Once a child has been removed, the State has a year, with a possible six-month extension, to resolve the case either by reuniting the family, placing the child permanently with a relative, or adoption before the Department of Family and Protective Services assumes PMC of the child. If none of these options is achieved, the child enters PMC.⁴ In August 2009, 13,517 children were “permanently” in the State’s care.⁵ However, this is not “true permanence” in the sense of the child’s having a single safe and stable family for the duration of his or her childhood and adolescence. As the findings we summarize below demonstrate, true permanence must be the goal for all of our children in foster care.

The number of children in long-term foster care is likely to grow. Though the number of children removed from their families had been decreasing over the last three years,⁶ today the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS or Department) is seeing an increase in removals. This increase is driven by the economic crisis, coupled with the State’s population growth.

1 2009 DFPS Data Book, *supra* note 2, at 53.

2 *Id.* at 63.

3 *Id.* at 49.

4 *See* TEX. FAM. CODE § 263.401. Within 12-18 months’ time from the point that the Department is named the temporary conservator, the court must determine whether it will dismiss the case brought by the Department or place the child in permanent care of the Department. *See id.*

5 2009 DFPS Data Book, *supra* note 2, at 53.

6 *Id.*

THE IMPACT ON CHILDREN

By all accounts, too many children get “stuck” in the foster care system—spending over three years in long-term foster care without a permanent home.⁷

A full 10 percent of these youth never find a family; instead, they turn 18 and “age out” of foster care.⁸ Studies show that young people who “age out” of long-term foster care are more likely to become homeless and addicted to drugs or alcohol and have mental and physical disabilities. They drop out of school in record numbers and live below the poverty line. They are often perpetrators—as well as victims—of crimes. Many become teen parents, only to have their own children removed by Child Protective Services (CPS) and put in foster care.⁹ It is not surprising that Casey Family Programs, a national leader in child welfare issues, has concluded that teens in foster care (ages 15-19) are among the “most disconnected youth” in America.¹⁰

As one judge put it, “These are the children that even God has forgotten.”

WHAT THE STATE CAN DO

These children are our future and cannot be forgotten. Texas recognizes that the State is a poor parent and that far too many children are in long-term foster care. DFPS, the Texas Legislature, and the federal government’s Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) have all cited the need for improvement. Many studies, reports and recommendations focus on how DFPS, and its CPS division, should be improved and changed.

The Department and CPS are only part of the equation. The judicial system also plays a critical role in these children’s lives. As Texas Supreme Court Justice Harriett O’Neill (retired) noted, the courts are the “gatekeepers for families in crisis.”¹¹ Every child has an active court case before a judge; most also have an attorney. The courts regularly oversee these children’s cases and are required to hold hearings at least every six months. Although they must meet minimum statutory requirements, Texas courts have broad discretion in how they manage these cases and how extensively they oversee them. The decisions made at these court hearings affect the children in the system each day they remain in foster care. Few reports before this one have examined the effectiveness of the legal system in managing these cases or have considered the ways in which it can help improve the life outcomes of children in long-term foster care.

When the State initially files a petition to remove a child from his or her home, the Family Code requires a number of safeguards and resources to protect the child’s rights and well-being. Before the State becomes the “Temporary Managing Conservator” of

7 *Id.* at 61.

8 *Id.*

9 Richard Wertheimer, *Youth Who “Age Out” of Foster Care: Troubled Lives, Troubling Prospects*, Washington DC: Child Trends, at 3, 5 (2002).

10 Richard Wertheimer & Astrid Atienza, *Vulnerable Youth: Recent Trends* (Working Paper). Washington, DC: Child Trends, at 3 (2006). The three other categories were: (1) youth involved in the juvenile justice system; (2) teens who have children of their own; and (3) youth who never finished high school. *Id.*

11 Texas Supreme Court Advisory, Statement by Justice Harriet O’Neill (2007), available at <http://www.supreme.courts.state.tx.us/children.asp>.

the child, a court must hold a hearing and issue a written order.¹² The child is appointed an Attorney Ad Litem and a Guardian Ad Litem. Indigent parents are entitled to their own appointed attorney if the State is seeking to terminate their parental rights. Many children will have a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) who works with them. There is intense, regular oversight of the child’s case.

However, if the child is not reunited with a parent or placed with a relative within a year to 18 months after the date of removal, the court enters an order appointing DFPS as “Permanent Managing Conservator,” and the level of scrutiny paid to individual cases significantly decreases—regardless of whether parental rights to the child were terminated at that point. Though the State’s responsibility for the child’s life and well-being does not change—and arguably increases—the attention paid to the child’s cases diminishes drastically. There is often a sense that the “clock stops ticking” when the child enters Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC).

Texas Applesseed, under the direction of the Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families, has thoroughly researched how the courts and the legal system can better help children in PMC.

The Commission’s request for this study recognized the flaws in the existing system:

These children in long-term foster care often receive less intervention from the courts than children in Temporary Managing Conservatorship at a time when more supervision is needed. It is common practice for courts to dismiss both the attorney ad litem and CASA once DFPS takes permanent legal custody of a child. At the same time, court oversight lessens as the Texas Family Code requires courts to hold hearings less frequently after Permanent Managing Conservatorship is granted.

*Despite shrinking oversight, however, courts are still responsible for outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being for all children on their dockets. As courts are arbiters of what happens to children in foster care, Texas needs to use best practices in its legal system to improve the outcomes of these youth.*¹³

*Study: To examine how long-term life outcomes for PMC children growing up in foster care can be improved, this study will identify common problems of PMC children, the needs of these children, services available to them, and barriers to successful outcomes for PMC children. It will also identify best practices within the legal system and how using those best practices may improve these outcomes.*¹⁴

The commissioning of this study underscores the commitment of the State’s highest court to finding ways to improve the lives of Texas children in long-term foster care.

12 TEX. FAM. CODE. § 262.201.

13 *Charge to Applesseed Subcommittee of the Basic Projects Committee*, Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families.

14 *Id.*

MAJOR FINDINGS

From our extensive interviews, it appears that almost every court jurisdiction believes it is doing a “good” or “very good” job of monitoring foster care cases in general. The vast majority of stakeholders are concerned for and committed to the children they serve. In most jurisdictions, the stakeholders have respect for one another, the judges who oversee foster care cases, and the well-intended, if overworked, Child Protective Services staff.

There also is widespread acknowledgement that the entire foster care system is under-resourced. In many areas, DFPS and its caseworkers, as well as judges and Attorneys Ad Litem, are overworked, underpaid, or both. In 2009, CPS caseworkers were routinely handling around 30 cases, even though the national standards call for between 15 and 17 cases per caseworker.¹⁵ In the larger urban jurisdictions, caseworkers are commonly assigned 40-plus cases at a time, and the “cases” often involve multiple children from the same family. Judges have seen the number of CPS cases on their dockets grow, and many judges only have 10 to 15 minutes to review one PMC case before moving on to the next one. CASA can only represent about half of the children who need their services, and when children enter PMC, CASA is able to represent an even smaller percentage of those children. Attorneys often are paid little to meet with their clients; in at least one jurisdiction, the rate is \$20 an hour.

A few jurisdictions in Texas are serving their children in PMC well. Most are not. And resources alone, while desperately needed and clearly deserved, cannot fix this broken system. Our research documented a system plagued with problems. In the majority of jurisdictions there is:

- a lack of urgency to find permanent homes for these children,
- a lack of accountability and preparedness for these children’s well-being,
- a lack of clear roles for the legal participants,
- a sense that the children themselves do not need to be heard or that their presence in the courtroom would be harmful to them,
- a void in the courtroom of individuals who really know the child, and
- a lack of communication and coordination among the stakeholders, and in some cases, a systemic discord between two or more of them.

Moreover, there is a sense among those outside the foster care system that these cases are “bottom of the barrel,” given that they are often assigned to inexperienced prosecutors and newly licensed attorneys (appointed as Attorneys Ad Litem) and to associate judges who lack the ability to garner the resources they need. Unfortunately, in far too many jurisdictions, these cases are not a high priority.

15 2009 DFPS Data Book, *supra* note 2, at 32; *Recommended Caseload Standards*, Child Welfare League of America, available at <http://www.cwla.org/newsevents/news030304cwlacase-load.htm> (last visited June 21, 2010).

Among these issues, the lack of urgency to achieve true permanency for the child is the most pressing problem. Too often absent from the court process is the impetus to act expeditiously to fulfill a foster child's dream to be in a family, or just to be in a safe permanent home. The entire tenor of the case changes once children enter PMC. It is as if "the clock stops ticking" and "the pressure is off," since the child is no longer in "temporary" custody of the State. Because the most pressing legal issue—whether a child will be returned home—has been determined, there is a sense that the child has achieved some "permanency." Even the name of the child's status implies stability; the child is now in "Permanent Managing Conservatorship." Nothing is farther from reality.

This lack of immediacy is compounded by many judges' perceptions of their role in these cases. Most see themselves as arbiters of disputed issues, rather than in a quasi-fiduciary role to protect the best interests of the child. Texas law recognizes these children are wards of the State, and as such, affords the court broad discretion to take action to ensure the children's well-being. However, many courts do not appear to exercise these strong oversight powers. As a result, the six-month hearings are often empty of any meaningful conversation about the needs of the child.

Far too many judges reported that the CPS caseworkers, prosecutors and Attorneys Ad Litem were unprepared for PMC hearings, failed to send their reports timely, and typically had done nothing on the case until a few days before the six-month PMC placement review hearing. As a result, unless there was an urgent issue to be addressed, the stakeholders simply "get through the hearing," and then nothing is done for another six months until right before the next hearing. The result is that months and even years go by in a PMC case without any real progress on finding the child a safe and permanent home. Six months is a very long time in the life of a child.

Additionally, there is no one person or group of people who takes responsibility and is held accountable for how the child is faring. Ideally, the child's caseworker would truly know and have responsibility for the child's well-being, as well as his health and safety. The reality is that CPS' crushing workload and the high level of burnout and turnover makes it impossible for the caseworkers to fulfill that role. They work hard to make sure the child is in a safe "placement" and try to get the child adopted, but few caseworkers have time to really know these children. If a child has a CASA, the CASA usually is the only person who truly knows the child and knows how the child is really doing. However, most children in PMC do not have CASA volunteers. As a result, the critical needs of a child often fall through the cracks in the system. If a child is not doing well in her foster home, whose responsibility is it to help her? If she is falling behind at school, what does she need to do to catch up? Is she receiving sufficient services, like counseling and special education? Are the providers appropriate and adequate? These are the kinds of issues that courts should be monitoring constantly in PMC cases. If these fundamental needs are not being met, the court's job is to induce the stakeholders to address them and impose consequences for failure to do so.

Progress is further hampered by a lack of clear roles for those who are involved in the court process during the PMC phase. When a child is first removed from his or her home, the case usually follows the traditional adversarial process. Attorneys represent all parties. Cases go to trial. Judges act as arbiters of disputed issues. The law sets out very strict timetables under which the issues of removal and permanent placement must be resolved. However, as noted, the role of the court and the legal system significantly

changes when a child enters PMC. PMC cases require more collaboration and multi-disciplined approaches to assure the child's well-being and best interests are considered. These cases also call for more communication and coordination between all the parties than is required in other types of cases. The adversarial process does not appear to serve a real function in the PMC phase. The majority of Texas courts, however, continue to operate under the traditional adversarial framework. If the judge is not presented with a dispute to resolve between the parties, he or she does not see a reason to probe deeper into the case. The same holds true for the prosecutors and Attorneys Ad Litem. As a result, hearings are literally conducted where the only question asked is whether anything has changed. These cases are not the typical conflict cases most lawyers and judges see; they demand a different type of advocacy. In most jurisdictions, the parties do not fully recognize and adapt to these differences.

Even though the Texas Family Code requires the child to attend each review hearing, in most courthouses in Texas, the children are not encouraged or even invited to participate. Rarely do they have an opportunity to speak freely with the judge. As a result, the court does not learn first hand from the child, and the child—the most important person in the process—is not heard. More importantly, the child feels completely shut out of the judicial process. We heard reports that many PMC children feel that a nameless, faceless judicial machine is deciding the course of their lives, and often they never receive a report of what happened in the hearing—presumably because there is not much to tell. To say that these children feel powerless is an understatement.

Those closest to the child, and who know the child best, are often not heard. Foster families, relatives, child placement agencies and others who are required to receive notice of the hearings do not regularly receive those notices and so rarely attend the court hearings. Consequently, their valuable insights are not available to the court. We also learned of circumstances where stakeholders did not communicate important information to one another because of a lack of trust or disagreement over what was in the best interests of the child.

All of these factors combine to create a system that is failing our children in far too many jurisdictions across the state. It does not have to remain this way.

STRENGTHS OF THE SYSTEM

Despite the significant challenges Texas' foster care system faces in reshaping its court and legal process for children in PMC, Texas is fortunate to have a strong statutory framework and two key best practices that will facilitate the needed changes.

The Texas statute governing the court process for children in PMC is robust.¹⁶ It requires many of the practices identified by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ), Casey Family Programs, the American Bar Association, and others as critical components of PMC oversight. The statute requires regular reviews of a comprehensive list of issues every six months. Children are required to be present in court, unless specifically excused. Volunteer advocates, Attorneys Ad Litem, foster families, and

16 See TEX. FAM. CODE § 263.501. *et seq.*

others are allowed to be present and entitled to be heard at the hearings. A solid legal framework is already in place for children in PMC.

Both the NCJFCJ and Casey Family Programs highlight strong judicial leadership as one of the most important practices needed to bring about systemic changes in court practices. Texas has such leadership. The Supreme Court of Texas Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families, through its court improvement project work, has shown the will and the ability to help improve judicial oversight of child welfare cases. And at the local level, there are many dedicated judges, including a considerable number who specialize in CPS cases, who will be supportive of change to better the life outcomes of these children.

Casey Family Programs and the NCJFCJ also note that interdisciplinary teams, consisting of the judiciary, the state's child welfare department, CASA and other stakeholders, are essential to bring about systemic reform.¹⁷ Again, Texas has this interdisciplinary working relationship. Through the Commission, high level judges, the DFPS Commissioner, Associate Commissioner for CPS, court administration leadership, state leaders from CASA, children's rights organizations, and many other stakeholder groups are working collaboratively to improve Texas' foster care system.

With strong judicial leadership and active, engaged collaboration between all the stakeholder groups, Texas has the key elements to see dramatic improvements to the court and legal system for PMC.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

To develop a strong, practical set of policy recommendations, Texas Appleseed invited some of the state's leading legal experts in foster care to meet, vet, and collectively develop the policy recommendations found in this report. These experts included district and associate judges, state agency heads, foundation leaders and advocacy organization leaders. This group studied the *Promising Court Practices* identified by Casey Family Programs¹⁸ and the quantitative and qualitative data collected by Texas Appleseed, and they brought to the discussions their own depth of experience in foster care. Together, this group spent countless hours discussing appropriate recommendations.

The findings in this report are those of Texas Appleseed alone, derived from our field research, interviews and data analysis. The policy recommendations presented here are the collaboration of some of the finest legal thinkers on foster care in Texas. (See *Acknowledgements* for a listing of the members of the Policy Development Team.) The following recommendations are aimed at requiring and encouraging more attention, substance and meaning to the hearings and processes necessary to improve the current circumstances and ultimate life outcomes of Texas children in foster care and to transition them safely and permanently out of state custody. One recommendation includes a new pilot project, a few require changes in the Texas Family Code, and others will require more resources. While increased resources are necessary for some changes, most of the recommendations are in the form of best practices to help the stakeholders in

17 See also <http://pewfostercare.org/docs/index.php?DocID=47>.

18 See Appendix, *Promising Court Practices: Strategies to Achieve Timely Permanency*, Casey Family Programs (2009).

court jurisdictions gain a better understanding of their critical roles and adhere more closely to existing state laws to protect the rights of vulnerable foster children.

BENCHMARK PERMANENCY HEARING PILOT

Overview

Nearly 70% of children who enter PMC leave foster care within two years. But the majority of children who stay in foster care for more than two years will “age out,” and leave at 18 with no permanent home and, in most cases, no real support network.

Every child who enters PMC has a “permanency plan,” setting out a goal intended to ensure that the child has a safe, permanent home when exiting care. The permanency plan is supposed to be realistic and achievable and assumes all parties and persons involved in the case will work together to reach the plan’s stated goal. Once the plan is prepared and agreed to, the Texas Family Code requires a review once every six months by a judge to see if it continues to be achievable or if there are other, better options for the child to find a permanent home.

We agree that a principal focus of the PMC hearing is to achieve true permanence. To keep the focus on finding a truly permanent home for children in PMC, the intensity of court oversight and the structure used must be changed significantly to ensure that permanency is achieved more effectively and efficiently. The framework of the proposed change requires that the submitted permanency plan be carefully reviewed and modified—not just rubber-stamped—when the child enters PMC. It would also require the court to conduct a full, complete review of the child’s case and permanency plan if he or she reaches a two-year anniversary in PMC, and the permanency outcome identified in the child’s plan has not been achieved.

Texas Appleseed recommends that the Commission design, implement, and evaluate a pilot program to determine if the changes in the scope, frequency, and nature of the hearings described below will result in more children achieving true permanency or, if that is not possible, a more successful experience as they age out of care. The Commission will need to determine the number of courts in the pilot based on available resources. We recommend eight courts (four test and four control courts) to become a part of a two-year pilot project. These courts should be selected to provide geographic and demographic representation of Texas. The test courts will implement the new hearing structure, and their results and outcomes will be observed, measured, reviewed and compared with those of the control courts.

Pilot Goals and Objectives:

1. To ensure that finding a true permanent home for the child is the focus of the PMC stage.
2. To develop a timeline for placement review hearings that will seek to ensure all stakeholders are deeply involved and working toward permanency for the child constantly and consistently throughout the child’s duration in foster care.

3. To utilize review criteria already established for placement review hearings to ensure that all stakeholders are accountable for their respective parts in moving the child through the processes required to establish permanency for the child in an efficient and effective manner.
4. To place more emphasis on the permanency plan established when a child first enters PMC so that the plan is realistic and achievable and not just used as a default.
5. To monitor closely the permanency plan and to pursue change in the permanency plan when it becomes evident that the previously established plan is not viable.
6. To clarify the roles of the stakeholders in the PMC stage of foster care and to change the perceptions of the process, goals and requirements for meeting those goals.

Pilot Description:

The test courts participating in the Pilot Program should follow the recommendations below. The hearing process set out below is designed to assure that the permanency plan is achieved and the child finds a permanent home or, if that is not possible, is prepared and supported for a successful transition to independent, adult living.

Timeline and Requirements:

Beginning with the final order naming DFPS the Permanent Managing Conservator of the child, the following schedule governs the PMC process:

45 DAYS/SCHEDULING ORDER HEARING

- At the hearing, the judge must issue a scheduling order that includes the 90-day permanency implementation assessment hearing, subsequent assessment reviews every four months, and notes the two-year benchmark for the case.
- Amendments to the scheduling order shall be made if good cause is shown.

90 DAYS/PERMANENCY IMPLEMENTATION HEARING

- Identify and establish a means to resolve any outstanding legal issues that may prevent the child from achieving the goals of the permanency plan, including but not limited to, revisiting whether to terminate parental rights and address pending juvenile citations, appeals, emancipation, educational and health concerns, and immigration status.

- In accordance with the current provisions of the Texas Family Code, review the established permanency plan to ensure that it continues to be appropriate and achievable.
- Establish each stakeholder’s specific duties and tasks with regard to the child’s permanency that must be completed prior to the next permanency hearing.
- Require the Department to prepare a different permanency plan if the existing one is no longer appropriate or achievable.
- Establish a time by which a new plan must be submitted.
- Determine whether the child’s current placement is safe and appropriate for meeting the child’s needs, including consideration of in-state and out-of-state placement options.
- Confirm the child is living in the least restrictive environment consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child—especially when children are placed in institutional care.
- Determine whether services that are needed to meet the child’s special needs or circumstances are being provided to the child.

AS OFTEN AS NECESSARY, BUT AT LEAST EVERY FOUR MONTHS FROM THE PERMANENCY IMPLEMENTATION HEARING/**PERMANENCY PROGRESS HEARINGS**.¹⁹ *These hearings would follow, generally, the current requirements for Placement Review Hearings with the following required features:*

- The Department and other stakeholders must prepare detailed statement(s) describing all efforts they have made on the child’s behalf in moving towards permanency since the last hearing and since the child has been in PMC.
- Judge must issue an order determining whether:
 - All persons or parties required to be given notice are present at the hearing;
 - The CPS worker and other stakeholders have accomplished their required tasks identified at the previous hearing or the permanency implementation hearing, and if not, establish the reason the task was not completed and what progress has been made;
 - The Department or authorized agency has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan that is in effect for the child;

19 Note name change from “Placement Review Hearing” to “Permanency Progress Hearings.”

- The child’s current placement is necessary, safe, and appropriate for meeting the child’s needs, including considerations of in-state and out-of-state placement options;
- The child believes that the placement is meeting her needs and that she is receiving the services and support she needs;
- The foster parent or caregiver confirms that the placement is able to meet the child’s needs and that the child is receiving appropriate and necessary services and support;
- Efforts have been made to ensure the child is living in the least restrictive environment consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child, especially if the child is placed in institutional care;
- The services that are needed to assist a youth who is at least 15 years of age in making the transition from substitute care to independent living are available in the community and that the youth has been made aware of them;
- Other services that are needed to meet the child’s special needs or circumstances, as identified in the permanency plan or during the course of the Progress Review Hearings, are being provided to the child, and if not, the reason why; and
- If the child is committed to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) or released under supervision of the TYC, the child’s needs for treatment, rehabilitation, and education are being met, and the TYC caseworker’s treatment plan is in the court’s file.

AT THE END OF TWO YEARS IN PMC/BENCHMARK REVIEW HEARING

- All stakeholders must prepare for the court a report detailing every step each has taken to obtain permanency in accordance with the child’s permanency plan.
- The judge shall issue an order similar to the one entered at the conclusion of a Permanency Progress Hearing and, in addition, the order shall include a determination establishing whether:
 - The child’s permanency plan continues to be appropriate, is designed to meet the present needs of the child, and is being implemented as required, in which case the order shall include a date by which the permanency plan will be achieved; OR
 - The child’s permanency plan is no longer viable, in which case the Department, with input from the other stakeholders, must develop another per-

manency plan that ensures the child will have a permanent and safe home and includes a timeframe for achieving the plan. The court's order shall include any terms, conditions, or timeframes that the court deems necessary or appropriate to achieve a timely and viable plan, including a deadline for the Department to submit the new permanency plan.

FROM THIS POINT, THERE SHALL BE A PERMANENCY PROGRESS HEARING EVERY FOUR MONTHS, AND EVERY THIRD PERMANENCY PROGRESS HEARING SHALL BE REPLACED BY A **BENCHMARK HEARING**.

- At the Benchmark Hearing that is on or within three months of the foster youth's 15th birthday, the court shall hold a **Transitional Planning Benchmark Hearing**, at which time the youth, stakeholders, and the court shall additionally consider and evaluate the plan for transition to independent adult living. The youth and all stakeholders must prepare a report for the court identifying alternative plans for transitioning into adulthood, unless it is virtually certain that the youth will be exiting the foster care system via reunification, adoption, or PMC to a relative or close family friend (frequently referred to in this process as "fictive kin") before his or her 18th birthday.
- The youth must state whether he or she intends to return to his or her biological home upon emancipation, and if that is the case, the youth and the stakeholders should identify what actions have been or will be taken to contact the biological family and prepare for that eventuality.
- DFPS' report must contain a transition plan for the child that identifies services and specific tasks that are needed to assist the child in making a transition from substitute care to adult living and describe the services that are being provided through the Transitional Living Services Program.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL JURISDICTIONS

Placement Review Hearing

1. Judges must recognize their critical role in the PMC process.

The duty and responsibility of the court is to protect the best interests of the child, require adherence to the law, and hold individual stakeholders accountable. In PMC cases, judges have a responsibility to play an active oversight role in reviewing and enforcing the appropriate delivery of services for children, including services that support the child's education; mental, emotional, and physical needs; involvement in the legal process; and transition to adulthood.

The primary consideration of the court should always be the best interests of the child, and the judge should consider revising or overturning agency decisions concerning services, case plans, and child placement when the court determines those decisions are not in the child's best interest. This oversight role requires that the judge be more than an arbiter who merely decides issues upon the basis of what may

be presented. Instead, the judge is the ultimate authority who must ask searching questions and insist on all necessary information to make an informed decision about the best interests of the child—even when the stakeholders have not brought forward sufficient information to the court or taken appropriate action with respect to the case.

As one judge explained, a judge should model dignity and respect, expressing compassion and encouragement for the children and youth in these cases. When necessary, the judge must demand accountability and even impose sanctions to insist on completion of a proposed plan or disposition. Judges may make appropriate use of any and all judicial power and authority to advance and protect the best interests of the child.

2. The judicial leadership within each jurisdiction must ensure, to the extent possible, that there is one judge assigned to a youth throughout the youth’s entire duration in PMC.

Court jurisdiction is usually the one stability in a child’s case. CPS workers change, and children are moved from location to location and county to county as various placements fluctuate and levels of care change. A judge who consistently hears the legal case may often be the one constant in a foster child’s life. Stable judicial oversight can also ensure continuity and consistency from the other stakeholders involved in the case.

Several of the stakeholders interviewed expressed the view that there should be one judge from the time that the child enters TMC until she achieves permanency so that the judge has a comprehensive understanding of the child’s case; others believe a new judge at the beginning of the PMC process provides all stakeholders with the sense of a fresh start and a renewal of efforts to find the child a stable, permanent home. After careful consideration of both approaches, we conclude that the judicial split between TMC and PMC should be left up to the leadership of each jurisdiction; however, each jurisdiction should remain consistent in how it uses its judges in the foster care system. This means that the leadership within each jurisdiction must make a conscious, informed decision on how judges’ dockets will be allocated regarding TMC and PMC cases to guarantee that a child remains with the same judge at least from the point that she enters the PMC phase of the legal case.

3. Children and youth must be in court.

Section 263.501(f) of the Texas Family Code requires youth attendance in court at all Placement Review Hearings. Casey Family Programs has identified youth participation as a best practice. There is an exception to the rule, allowing judges to *specifically* excuse the child’s attendance. This exception should be used only rarely in extreme cases where it would harm the child to be in court. The judge may speak to the child in chambers or in open court, as deemed appropriate.

Having the child in court serves both the judge and the child. It allows the judge to actually see the child and ensure she is not being harmed by her current placement. The judge may also gain valuable information from the child about her placement,

her plans, and other information that could lead to better outcomes. It also allows the child to express her opinion on what should happen in her life. Additionally, it empowers a child to feel and know that she is taking part in planning her life. Moreover, it gives the child a sense of control and stability and makes the process seem real. Lastly, it also allows her to know and understand that people care about her and are working to provide her with a permanent home.

4. Placement Review Hearings should take place as often as necessary, but at a minimum should occur every four months.

Currently, § 263.501 of the Texas Family Code requires placement review hearings to occur every six months. Although six months pass rapidly for an adult, it is a significant portion of a child or youth's life. The infrequency of these hearings dulls any sense of urgency for the parties involved in the PMC process, at a time when youth in care may need the most attention. When hearings are held six months apart, stakeholders tend to put off completing steps that secure the child's permanency until shortly before the next six-month placement hearing. To ensure each stakeholder is pushing forward in the next steps to get the child to permanency, placement review hearings should be held as often as necessary, but at least as frequently as every four months.

Casey Family Programs and other national organizations have recognized every four months as the maximum time a court should wait to have a hearing concerning the progress of a child's permanency plan. This time period helps the case move forward and keeps a close focus on finding permanency for the child.

5. In every PMC case there should be an advocate for the youth. The advocate can be a CASA volunteer who is appointed as the Guardian Ad Litem (GAL) or as a volunteer advocate, or another Guardian Ad Litem.

A Guardian Ad Litem's role is to ensure that the child's best interests are served, and although lawyers are needed at times in the PMC process, lawyers are not social workers. Much of the PMC process, even the parts of the process that occur in the courtroom, requires more of a social work focus. In some cases, a Guardian Ad Litem who is more focused on the social work aspect of the PMC process may be more crucial than an Attorney Ad Litem (AAL). **[Requires a statutory change]**

6. When children do not already have an Attorney Ad Litem, one must be appointed or retained when adversarial legal issues arise or there is a conflict among stakeholders.

That is where the skills of an attorney are best applied in the PMC process.

7. Every child should have a volunteer Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

CASA volunteers have been lauded across the state for their active, involved, knowledgeable participation in the lives of their foster children. They generally provide the courts with the most current, well-informed assessment of the child and her needs. CASA volunteers receive required training that enables them to serve the child's best interests. This training more closely resembles that of a social worker, which enables a CASA volunteer to serve the child's best interest efficiently and ef-

fectively. As such, in the PMC process, a CASA volunteer should be appointed for every child.

8. Regardless of whether a CASA volunteer is appointed as the Guardian Ad Litem, the CASA must be allowed to present his or her report to the court and have the ability to request a hearing.

As noted, the most consistently positive stakeholder involved in the foster care system and in the child's life is typically the CASA volunteer. In many cases, a CASA volunteer has the most comprehensive report on the child to present to the court. In fact, in many cases, it is the CASA's report that is the basis of the caseworker or Attorney Ad Litem's report.

Unbeknownst to many, CASAs, whether serving as the Guardian Ad Litem or "volunteer advocate," have the ability to *request* a hearing by submitting a letter to the court that has been approved by a CASA supervisor *and* copied to all parties in the case in accordance with § 263.501 of the Texas Family Code. Additionally, CASA has the ability to request the court to appoint an AAL for the child.

The CASA must be encouraged by the judge to present his findings to the court and to request hearings. Judges must consider the CASA's reports and respect the CASA's requests for hearings.

9. Notice of placement review hearings must be provided in accordance with §263.501 of the Texas Family Code and as required by Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 21.

It is common across the State to find that important stakeholders, such as the child's foster parents, relatives, or child placement agency, were not in court though their participation is encouraged by statute for placement review hearings. The overwhelming reason given for the stakeholders' absence from the courtroom is that the stakeholder never received notice of the hearing. Section 263.501(d) of the Texas Family Code requires that DFPS, foster parents, pre-adoptive parents, relatives providing care, directors of group homes or institutions, each parent of the child, each possessory conservator or guardian, an AAL, volunteer advocates (usually CASAs), and any other person or agency named by the court as having an interest in the child's welfare must be notified 10 days prior to the placement review hearing. In many jurisdictions, notification of all pertinent parties is not happening.

Notice must be provided in accordance with Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 21, almost exclusively by DFPS or the attorneys representing the agency in the child's case, so that all pertinent stakeholders can appear in court and gain a more comprehensive view of the child's well-being in order to determine whether permanency, as identified in the permanency plan, is realistic and achievable. Solutions to the failure to provide and receive notice should be examined by the Commission and DFPS.

10. Judges must issue a written order with fact-specific findings for each of the determinations required by § 263.503.

Many PMC hearings are viewed as less important than most other civil hearings in Texas courts. Typically, hearings are conducted in 10-15 minutes, children are not in court, the child's well-being is not considered, and progression toward achieving the child's permanency plan goes undocumented. The Texas Family Code sets out issues that should be discussed and resolved at each hearing, but it is evident from the length and depth of hearings as they stand now that these factors are not being gathered or determined by the judge. By requiring that a specific judicial order is issued, a vital court record of the hearing will be created. Additionally, it will serve as a common reference point for every stakeholder, informing each of the status of a child's case and will help each individual involved understand what steps he or she must take before the next hearing.

Required Findings:²⁰

1. Whether "the child's current placement is necessary, safe, and appropriate for meeting the child's needs, including with respect to a child placed outside of the State, whether the placement continues to be appropriate and in the best interest of the child," and the reasons why are documented in the Department's court report.
2. Whether "efforts have been made to ensure placement of the child in the least restrictive environment consistent with the best interests and special needs of the child, if the child is placed in institutional care," and those efforts are documented in the Department's court report.
3. Whether "the services that are needed to assist a child who is at least 15 years of age in making the transition from substitute care to independent living are available in the community" and are stated in the Department's court report.
4. Whether "other plans or services are needed to meet the child's special needs or circumstances" and are stated in the Department's court report.
5. Whether "the Department or authorized agency has exercised due diligence in attempting to place the child for adoption if parental rights to the child have been terminated and the child is eligible for adoption," and evidence of that due diligence has been documented in the Department's court report.
6. Whether "for a child for whom the Department has been named managing conservator in a final order that does not include termination of parental rights, a permanent placement, including appointing a relative as permanent managing conservator or returning the child to a parent, is appropriate for the child," and the reasons why those options are not appropriate are documented in the Department's court report.

²⁰ All required findings are from § 263.503 of the Texas Family Code except the findings listed in *italics*.

7. Whether “for a child whose permanency goal is another planned, permanent living arrangement, the [D]epartment has:”

a. “documented a compelling reason why adoption, permanent managing conservatorship with a relative or other suitable individual, or returning the child to a parent is not in the child’s best interest;” and

b. “identified a family or other caring adult who has made a permanent commitment to the child.”

8. Whether “the Department or authorized agency has made reasonable efforts to finalize the permanency plan that is in effect for the child,” and what those reasonable efforts are.

9. *That the child attended the placement hearing and if not in attendance, why.*

10. *Whether there is a legal issue that requires an AAL, if one is not already appointed.*

11. Docket schedules must be composed efficiently so that children and stakeholders can attend.

It is not uncommon for a large number of placement review hearings to be scheduled for a certain day, without great specificity as to the time of each hearing. Many individuals involved in these hearings could sit in court for hours, or all day, waiting for their hearing. Caregivers and other stakeholders must miss a full day of work, children must miss school, travel plans are not able to be estimated, and CPS workers cannot be out visiting other children whom they also serve due to these docket inefficiencies.

To address docketing schedule issues, judges should consider scheduling placement review hearings in a way that allows stakeholders to receive approximately a two-hour window in which their respective case will most likely be heard. For instance, judges could schedule their hearings so that easier cases occur earlier in the day, leaving the difficult and more complex cases for the afternoon. Or judges might set aside a specific day and time to hold only placement review hearings. Courts should also consider holding hearings late in the day or perhaps into the evening so that the youth can attend and not miss school or important extracurricular activities.

Doing so will ensure better planning on the part of all stakeholders, will make for more effective and efficient hearings, and will help ensure all pertinent individuals are available and in court.

12. “Placement Review Hearings” should be called “Permanency Progress Hearings” to change stakeholder mindset.

Words are powerful. It is important for stakeholders to remember that the goal of a placement review hearing is to get the child to permanency in a safe, healthy en-

vironment that fosters the child’s well-being and continues well after the child has reached majority age. **[Requires a statutory change]**

JUDICIAL TOOLS

13. Judicial training is essential.

Foster care cases are significantly different than many other types of cases. These cases are often complex, involve sensitive subjects, and require nuanced decision making and fact finding. But what truly makes these cases unique is the fact that a child’s stability and her present and future relationships in life hang in the balance. With all that resides in their hands, judges must partake of all education and knowledge they can when it comes to these cases.

Thankfully, Texas judges have a wide variety of training programs available to them through several trusted organizations including but not limited to the NCJFCJ, the Texas Center for the Judiciary, the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA), and other entities. It is essential that judges take advantage of these programs and training opportunities whenever possible, no matter how experienced the judge.

We recommend several specific types of judicial training, including using non-traditional training formats such as video instruction, covering such topics as:

- Best practices in holding PMC hearings
- Implicit Bias and Undoing Racism education classes
- Trauma-based care, including an understanding of how children respond to trauma and/or neglect, to better understand the conduct and reactions of the children before them, as well as how judicial officers should communicate with children who have been through trauma or neglect
- Disabilities and children with disabilities, including training on appointing medical or other specialists and ordering other available resources for special needs children
- Knowledge of federal and state programs available to certain children and youth to better assist them in receiving services that are needed and available, including a discussion of the pros and cons of each program or resource
- Intersection of juvenile justice and foster care
- Transitional planning to independent adult living
- Continuing education on legislative updates, new federal mandates, appellate decisions, policies and procedures of the Department, automation, and procedural changes required by new statutes and/or rules

Additionally, we would recommend increasing the number of judicial training hours required for child abuse and neglect judges. There is a wide variety of training currently available, but many judges do not take advantage of the vital information provided through these conferences and trainings.

14. Judges need to use Benchbooks or Bench Cards as soon as they become available in this area of law.

The use of benchbooks can provide key information and resources to assist judges in conducting placement review hearings. They can provide questions to ask at the hearings, checklists of issues to be considered, and important information about the cases and the process.

The Permanent Judicial Commission for Children, Youth and Families is developing a benchbook for foster care cases, which should be available by the end of 2010. Once available, all judges who hear PMC cases should make use of this new and important resource.

15. Quantitative data should be used to help judges gauge their improvement in getting children into permanent and safe homes as quickly as possible.

Most stakeholders who were interviewed thought they were doing a fairly good job getting children out of the foster care system. However, despite the best of intentions, when one looks at the data, a significantly different story is told. It is important for stakeholders, especially judges who have the oversight power, to be able to review the data for their jurisdiction and to compare the data to other areas of the state so they can gauge whether their jurisdiction is operating as efficiently and effectively as possible for the children whom they are meant to provide for and protect. The Commission also provides technical assistance to judges who are interested in understanding how permanency data affects the youth and children on their docket and can help identify system inadequacies that are contributing to longer stays in care.

OTHER ISSUES

16. Judges should not be bound to accept a mediated settlement agreement if the agreement is not in the best interest of the child.

Mediated settlement agreements are intended to provide a mechanism to involve all decision-makers and other interested parties to help the child achieve a stable life and environment in the most efficient and effective manner possible.

There has been a question as to whether judges have the authority to reject a mediated settlement agreement when they determine that it is not in the best interests of the child. Judges must reject these types of agreements if the agreement is not going to serve the best interest of the child. These agreements should however only be rejected or accepted in their entirety; judicial authority should not be granted to afford a “line item veto” for the court to revise the settlement terms. **[Requires a statutory clarification]**

17. As a youth approaches aging out of foster care, stakeholders should prepare for the possibility that the youth will return to his or her biological parent(s) or other family members when he or she leaves care. Stakeholders should work with the child—and if appropriate, the child’s biological parents—to ensure that the process of reuniting with family is done as safely and successfully as possible.

Many of the stakeholders that Texas Appleseed interviewed indicated that youth often want to find their parents and return “home” when they age out. For too long, the foster care system has ignored this reality to the disadvantage of the youth leaving care. Stakeholders should candidly discuss this possibility with youth as they approach majority to determine whether reunification is a priority for the youth. If it is, stakeholders should assist the youth in making contact with the biological parents and might consider arranging meeting(s) between the foster child and biological family members and providing counseling services to both. Section 263.503(b) of the Texas Family Code allows parents to be given six months of services to help a child transition home. This resource will not only give the foster child some support through this process, but it may also provide stakeholders with the opportunity to steer the youth toward more appropriate plans if reunification appears to be a poor choice.

18. Judges and stakeholders should encourage youth to extend foster care beyond age 18 to provide a youth who ages out with additional support when necessary.

Effective October 1, 2010, youth may now remain in extended foster care until their 21st birthday provided they are completing a secondary education, attending college or a vocational program, working at least 80 hours per month, attending a job training program, or are unable to participate in any of these activities due to a documented medical condition. Youth continuing to complete a high school diploma or GED may stay in extended foster care until their 22nd birthday. This extended care option requires court oversight, judicial approval of the youth’s permanency plan, and placement review hearings at least once every 12 months.

A SNAPSHOT IN TIME: FOSTER CARE IN TEXAS

Except where otherwise footnoted, the statistics provided below are drawn from the 2009 Annual Report and Data Book published by the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services and reflect foster care data for only one day—August 31, 2009, the last day in the State of Texas' FY 2009 budget year.²¹ Texas Applesseed's findings and recommendations, however, are based on an analysis of data for a larger population of children in foster care over the course of one fiscal year (FY 2008). The charts and graphs in this report reflect FY 2008 data except where otherwise specifically noted.

6,510,210 children / Texas' population (birth to age 17)

26,360 children / Number of children in the managing conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)*

12,843 children (49%) / Number in Temporary Managing Conservatorship (TMC)

13,517 children (51%) / Number in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC)

*This is more children than the number enrolled in Austin Independent School District's 10 high schools for the 2009-2010 school year.²² This number is also roughly equal to the entire population of Uvalde or Shelby County.²³

Race/Ethnicity and foster care: African American children in Texas are 2 to 3 times more likely to be removed from home and placed in foster care.²⁴

14,497 children / Number of children exiting the State's (DFPS) legal responsibility in FY 2009

33.5% Adopted, after spending an average of 29.8 months in TMC and/or PMC;

30.5% Reunited with one or both parents, after spending an average of 14.6 months in TMC and/or PMC;

22.2% Placed permanently with a relative, after spending an average of 14.2 months in TMC and/or PMC; and

10% Aged out of foster care at 18, after spending an average of 63.3 months in TMC and/or PMC.²⁵

42.1 months²⁶ = Average amount of time that children in Permanent Managing Conservatorship spend in foster care before leaving the State's care

21 Annual Report and Data Book 2009, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, at 53 [hereinafter 2009 DFPS Data Book].

22 *Student Enrollment Reports*, Texas Education Agency (data for Region 13, Travis County, Austin ISD, All Campuses, 2009-10), available at <http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/adhocrpt/adste.html> (last visited July 22, 2010).

23 *Tex. County Population Estimates*, Tex. State Library and Archives Comm'n (2007), available at <http://www.tsl.state.tx.us/ref/abouttx/popcnty42007.html> (last visited Sept. 8, 2010).

24 Robert B. Hill, *An Analysis of Racial/Ethnic Disproportionality and Disparity at the National, State, and County Levels*, Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in Child Welfare, at 1, 23 (2007).

25 2009 DFPS Data Book, *supra* note 2, at 62.

26 *Id.* at 61.

A SNAPSHOT: CHALLENGES FACING FORMER FOSTER YOUTH

To better understand the challenges that former foster youth face as adults, the Chapin Hall research center at the University of Chicago conducted one of the largest longitudinal studies of youth aging out of foster care and transitioning to adulthood in the past decade. The following statistics are from the Chapin Hall Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth: Outcomes at Ages 23 and 24 (2010). This report is the fourth in a series reflecting follow-up interviews conducted over time with the same cohort initially interviewed as foster youth at age 17 or 18. These findings document the many challenges former foster youth face as adults. To access this study, see: <http://www.chapinhall.org/research/report/midwest-evaluation-adult-functioning-former-foster-youth>.

EDUCATION

- 24.4%** Lack a high school diploma or GED
- 5.7%** Completed higher education
- 25.6%** Completed one year of college, but no degree

EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME

- 48%** Employed
- 56.4%** Of those employed, percentage who worked 40 hours or more
- 44.3%** Of those employed, percentage who earned \$10 or more per hour
- 55.8%** Of those employed, percentage earning less than \$10,000 per year

HEALTH

- 25%** Multiple diagnosis of substance abuse, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or depression
- 12.5%** Health condition or disability limiting daily activities
- 43%** No medical insurance
- 56%** No dental insurance
- 11.8%** Receiving medication for emotional problems

CRIME

- 81.2%** Males/arrested
- 57.2%** Females/arrested
- 58.8%** Males/convicted
- 28.2%** Females/convicted

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

- 66%** Lived in three or more places
- 30%** Lived in five or more places
- 24%** Homeless at least once (of those, 50% percentage homeless more than once)

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Receiving Food Stamps in past 12 months:

- 26.8%** Males
- 67.7%** Females

Receiving Rental Assistance/Public Housing in past 12 months:

- 3.4%** Males
- 12.2%** Females

- 58.2%** Females receiving WIC in past 12 months

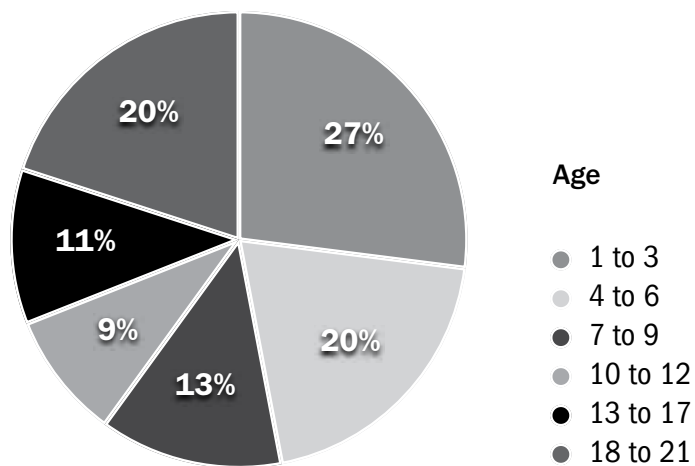
PREGNANCY

- 77%** Females pregnant at least once
- 65.6%** Females pregnant since leaving foster care
- 21.1%** Females pregnant three or more times since leaving foster care

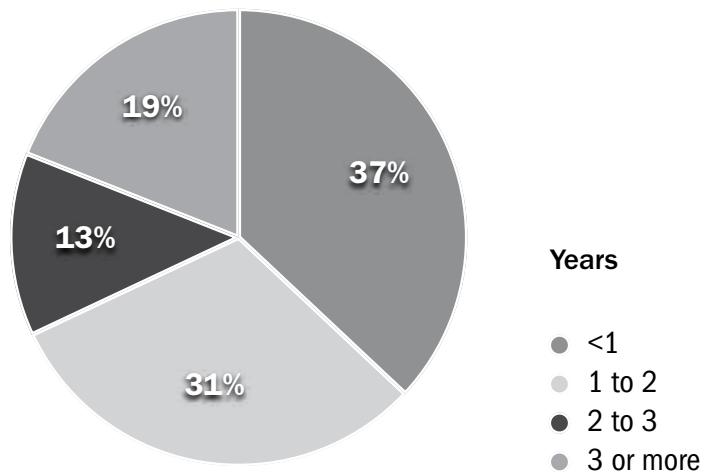
HIGHLIGHTS: FOSTER CARE BY THE NUMBERS

Some 21,000 children were in Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) in Texas for all or part of FY 2008. Before their transfer to PMC, these children had already spent up to 18 months in foster care (Temporary Managing Conservatorship). As data shows, the younger a child is at the time he or she enters PMC, the greater likelihood the child has of being adopted. The majority of children entering foster care at an older age remain in PMC for longer periods of time before aging out of foster care.

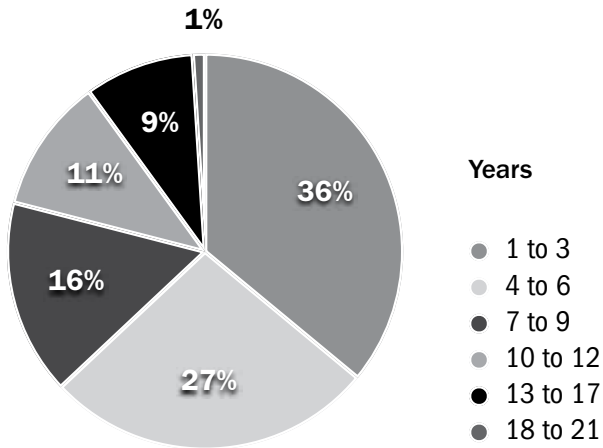
PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN EXITING PMC IN FY 2008,
BY AGE AT END OF YEAR



PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN EXITING PMC IN FY 2008,
BY LENGTH OF TIME TO EXIT

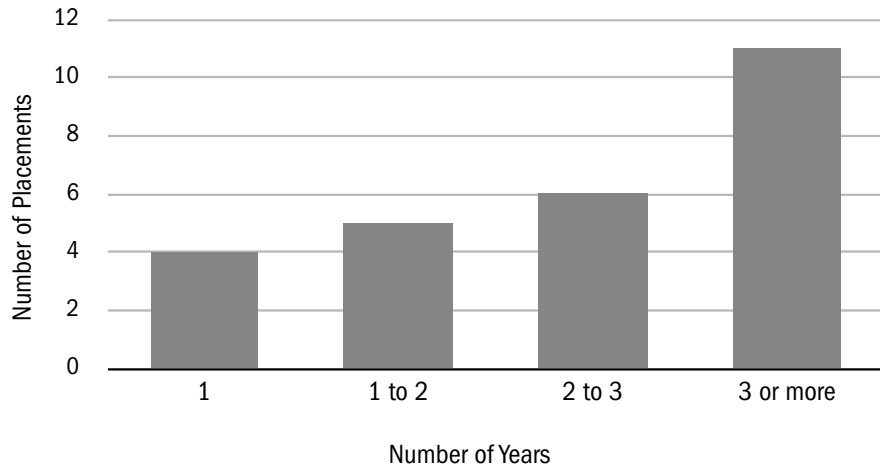


PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN EXITING PMC THROUGH ADOPTION IN FY 2008,
BY AGE AT ADOPTION

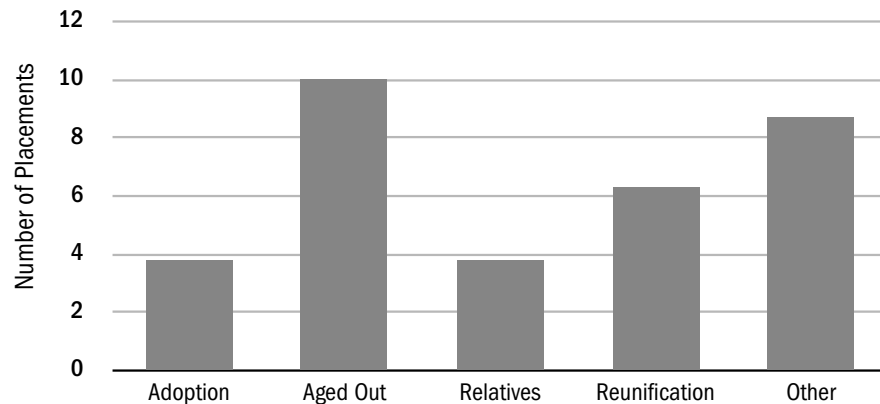


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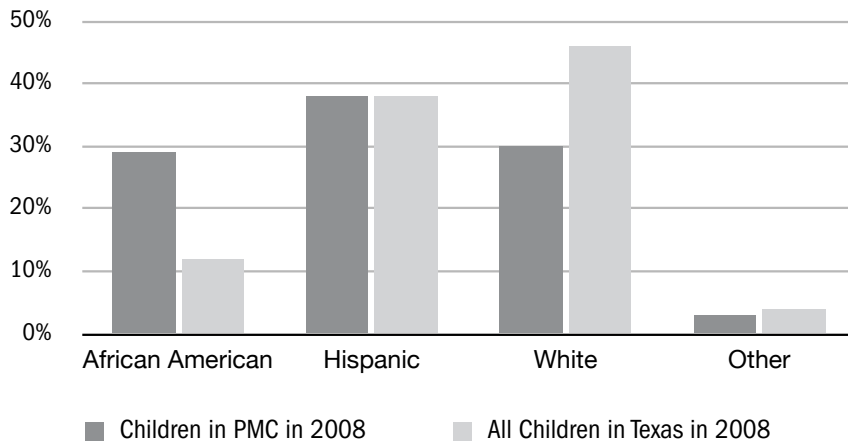
AVERAGE NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN EXITING PMC
IN FY 2008, BY LENGTH OF TIME IN PMC



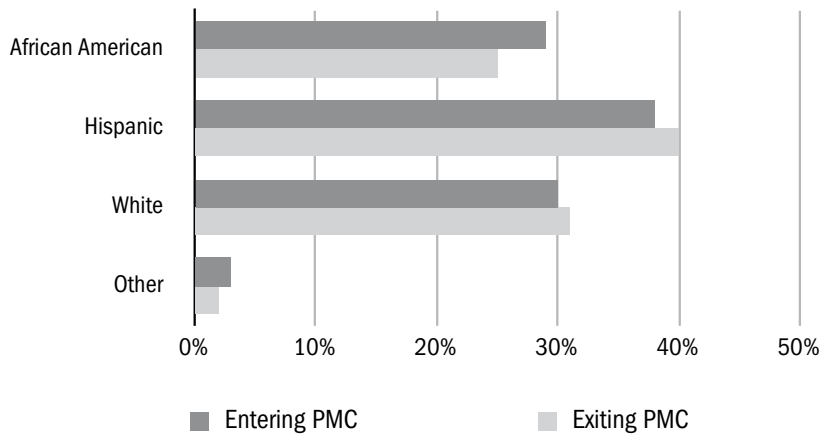
AVERAGE NUMBER OF FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN
EXITING PMC IN FY 2008, BY EXIT TYPE



ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN PMC IN FY 2008, COMPARED TO ETHNICITY OF TEXAS' TOTAL CHILD POPULATION



PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN ENTERING AND EXITING PMC IN FY 2008, BY ETHNICITY



To access the full report and additional data, visit the Texas Appleseed website at www.texasappleseed.net.



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