

2015 OUT OF HOME PLACEMENT REPORT

Executive Summary

Out-of-home placements are a complex component of any child welfare or juvenile delinquency system. The ultimate goal is to safely reunite the child or youth with their family under improved conditions, or, to provide the child or youth with an alternative stable and nurturing permanent family.

In 2015, Olmsted County experienced a 50 percent increase in child protection placements but a fairly static, if not slight decrease, in non-child protection placements; i.e. placements of teens due to serious behavioral issues or serious delinquencies. It is important to note that child protection placements have increased dramatically across the state due to the tragic incidents that prompted complex changes in child protective services. Over the past two years, Olmsted County has had less of an increase than most other counties.



Non-protection placements remain a challenge as the number of beds in residential and group care facilities continues to shrink. Counties are faced with the question of what to do with 9 to 17 year olds that are acting out violently, engaging in extreme self-harm behaviors, and/or continue to commit crimes against persons and property, etc. Olmsted County has exceptionally experienced and talented staff in their Youth Behavioral Health and Juvenile Corrections units that work together to create plans to keep youth in the community whenever possible.

2015 Challenges



Non-Relative Foster Care



Licensing



Kinship Care

The Governor's Child Protection Task Force had a significant impact to child protective services. The high profile work of the Governor's Task Force and subsequent media attention helped educate the public about mistreatment and neglect of children, resulting in an increase in reporting of suspected abuse and neglect. The increased number of reports and subsequent increased number in placements led to challenges and the need to ensure the availability of adequate resources.



2015 Child Protection Task Force

Minnesota Child Protective Services and out-of-home placements have changed dramatically since September 2014. In 2013, the Minneapolis Star Tribune published a front-page story on the tragic death of a child in a southwestern Minnesota county. Reporter Brandon Stahl reported that “Eric was a four-year old from rural Minnesota who was killed by his stepmother despite 15 calls to child protection.” Shortly thereafter the Star Tribune lead editorial calling for major child-welfare reforms. Subsequently, Governor Mark Dayton issued an Executive Order appointing a Task Force on Child Protection.

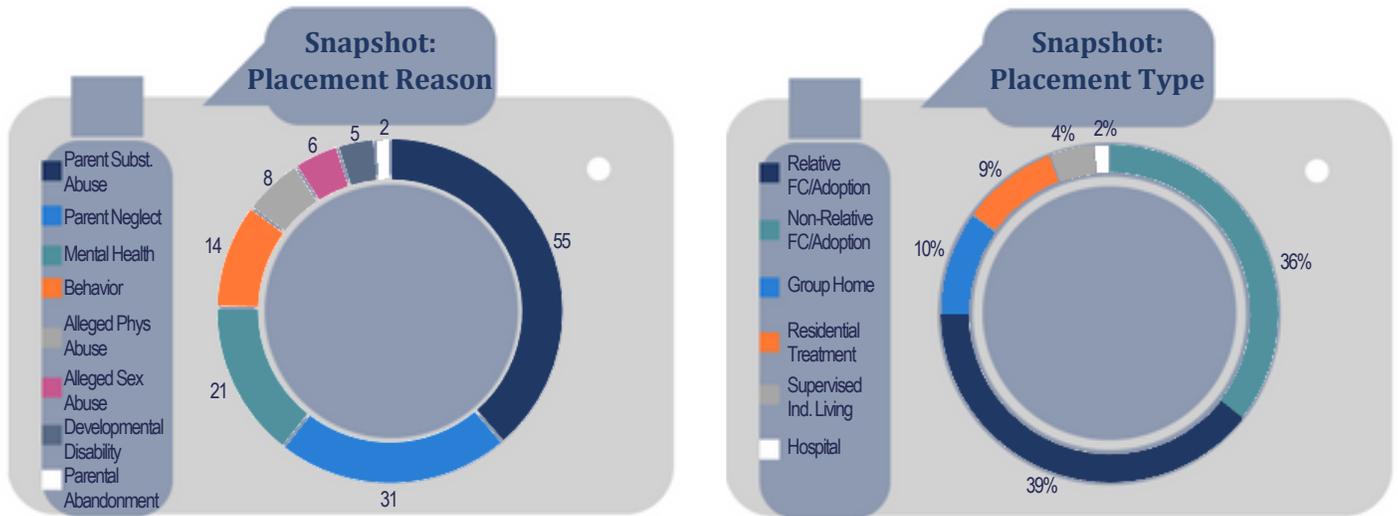
50% increase in Child Protection placements in the first six months of 2015

The Task Force was assembled with professionals and elected officials from across the state. When the Task Force completed their work they submitted 93 recommendations. The majority of recommendations have already been implemented with the remainder requiring legislative attention in 2016. Screening guidelines have been enhanced to provide more clarity and direction to each county agency and Tribe.

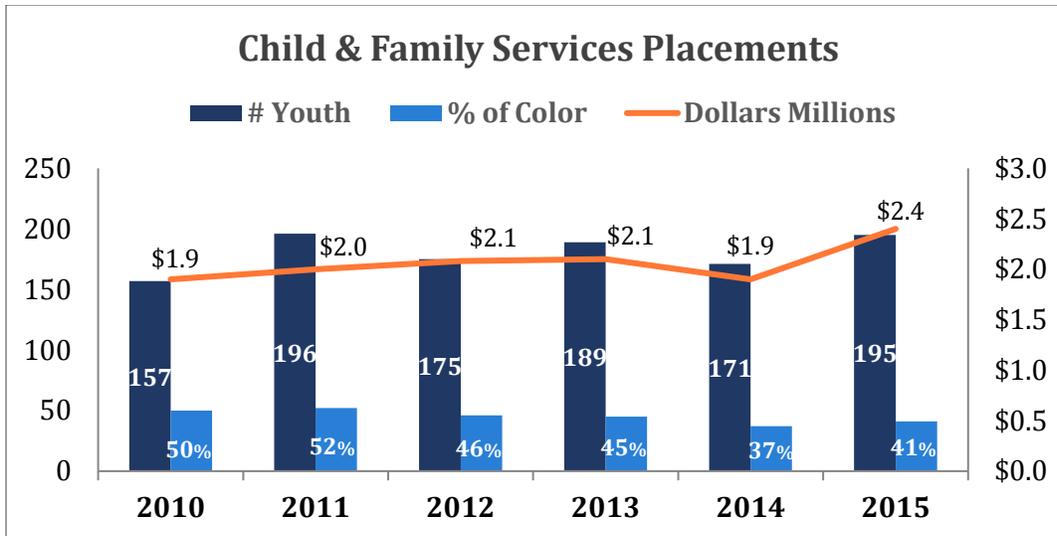
Numerous newspaper articles, along with the highly public work of the Child Protection Task Force, have raised the public’s awareness of the need to report any suspected abuse or neglect of children. In Olmsted, the number of reports have dramatically increased since early 2015. Most notable, and continually increasing, are reports of young parents with serious drug and alcohol use which impairs their ability to safely care for and nurture their children.

Placement Trends

Where and Why Children are Placed



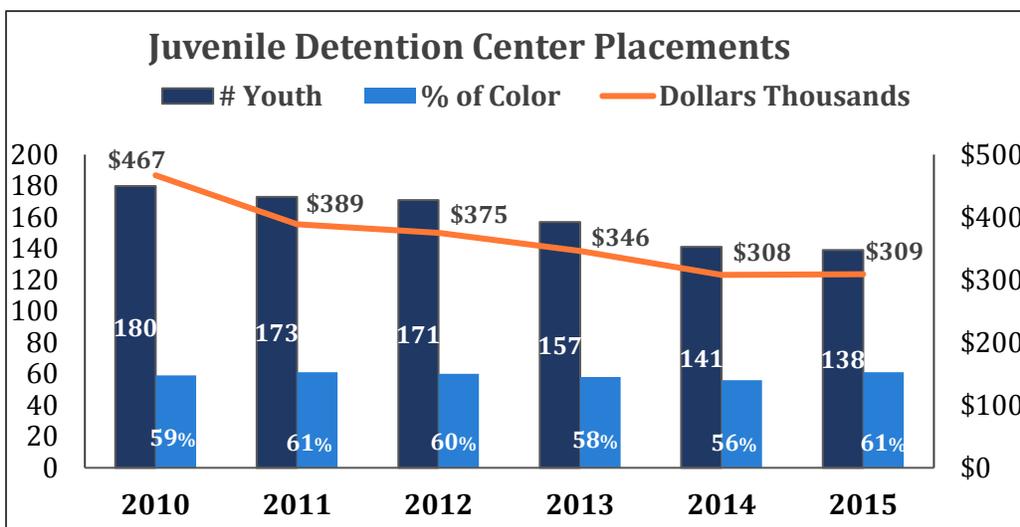
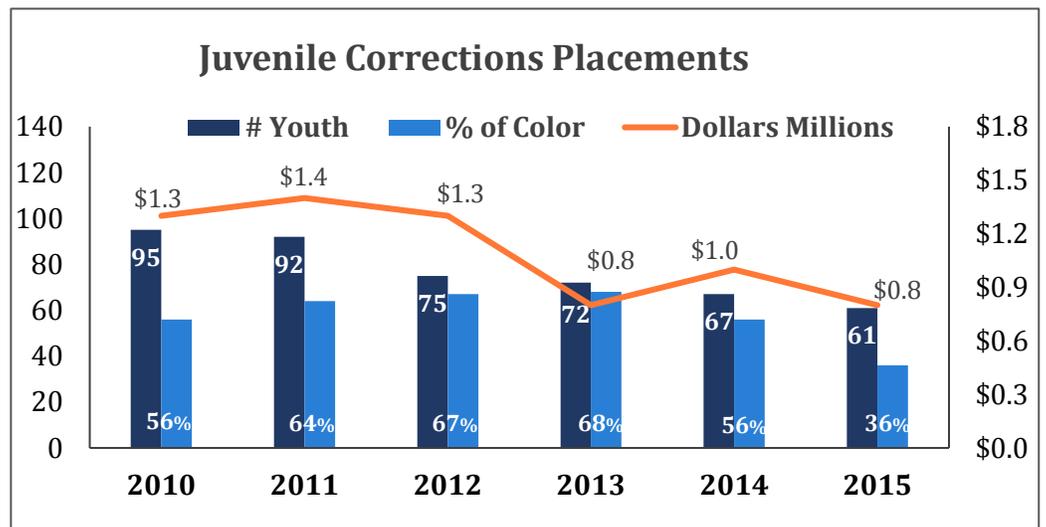
Snapshot on 8/4/2016



For the average family involved in the child welfare system, it is more than 3.5 times as expensive to keep the family's children in foster care, as it is to provide housing assistance and other stabilizing supports to keep the family together.

Recent research has proven that home-based counseling, treatment, and supervision strategies for juveniles produce equal or better outcomes at a fraction of the cost.

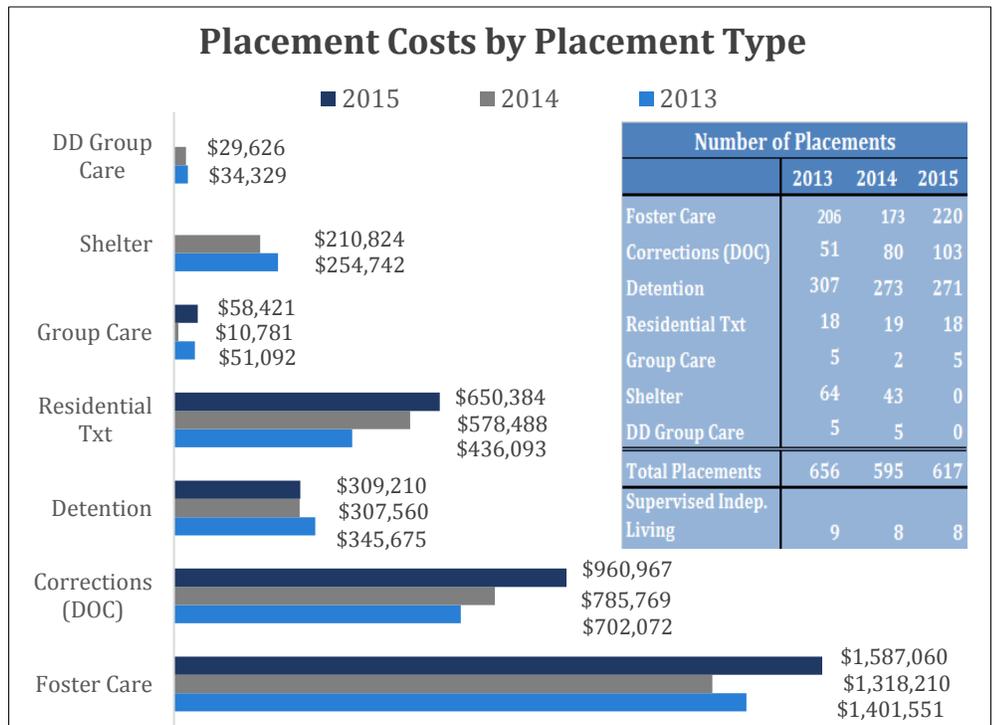
<http://www.aecf.org/work/juvenile-justice/reducing-youth-incarceration/>



Crossover partnerships are in existence between Juvenile Corrections and the Child and Family Services unit to reduce the placement of youth in Juvenile Detention.

<http://www.aecf.org/work/juvenile-justice/reducing-youth-incarceration/>

Age and Gender of Youth Placements



Just over 400,000 American children live in foster care, and some 55,000 reside in group homes, residential treatment facilities, psychiatric institutions and emergency shelters.

This type of placement—called “congregate care”—may be beneficial for children who require short-term supervision and structure because their behavior may be dangerous.

Research indicates that children, especially those ages 12 and under, should be placed in the least restrictive, most family-like settings possible. It is critical that infants and young children should be allowed to develop healthy, secure attachments with adults who are consistently available. Youth who live in institutional settings are at greater risk of developing physical, emotional and behavioral problems that can lead to school failure, teen pregnancy, homelessness, unemployment and incarceration and are then less likely to find a permanent home than those who live in family foster care.

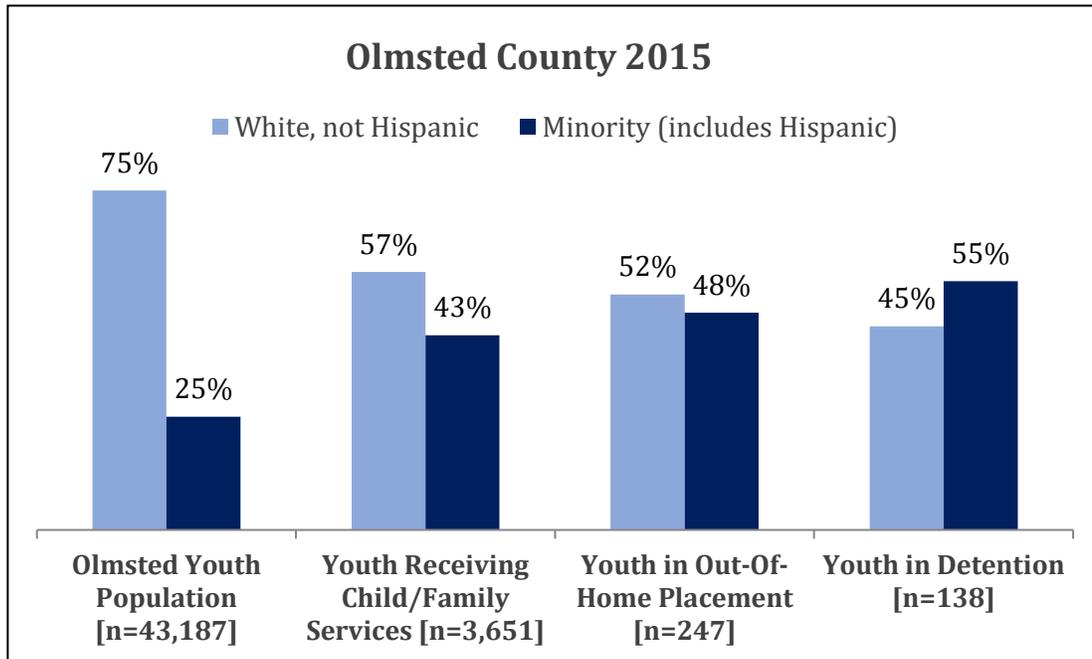
<http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/congregate-care-and-group-home-state-legislative-enactments.aspx>

According to data in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), parental substance abuse is frequently reported as a reason for removal, particularly in combination with neglect (Correia, 2013).

54% of children placed in out of home care in Olmsted County was due to parental substance abuse

SSIS Continuous Placement Report, 1/1/2015-12/31/2015, including placements that started before or during the date range and remained open for at least one day in the date range. CPS placements only.

Comparison of White/ Minority Youth



Research indicates that racial disparities exist at the system-level and child-level outcomes for youth of color in the child welfare system. These children of color are more likely to be placed in out-of-home care, less likely to be reunited with families, more likely to experience group care, less likely to find a permanent family and more likely to have poor educational, social, and behavioral outcomes.

<http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>

Minnesota youth of color are over-represented in out-of-home care.

Black and multi-race next highest followed by Hispanic.

RACIAL/ETHNIC CATEGORY	POPULATION ESTIMATES ¹	NUMBER OF CHILDREN EXPERIENCING CARE ²	RATE PER 100 IN POP.
White	997,743	6,191	0.62
Black or African American	112,509	2,348	2.09
American Indian and Alaska Native	25,025	2,617	10.46
Asian / Pacific Islander	79,074	261	0.33
Two or More Races	70,036	2,049	2.93
Total	1,284,387	13,612	1.06
Hispanic	111,175	1,292	1.16

1. <https://www.census.gov/popest/data/state/asrh/2015/index.html>, 2. Counts experiencing care come from the 2015 Out-of-Home Care Report

54%

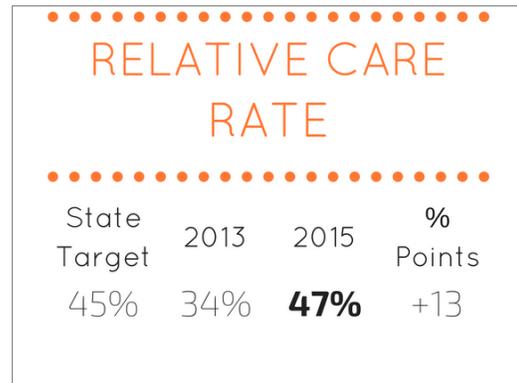
of child protection placements are with relatives. Research shows that children placed in kinship care experience: decreased internalizing and externalizing behavior problems, increased adaptive behaviors, decreased odds of experiencing mental illness, increased likelihood of reporting positive emotional health, increased placement stability, decreased likelihood of experiencing abuse or maltreatment while in care, decreased risk of re-entry into the child welfare system, and increased likelihood for relatives to assume guardianship.

Balanced Scorecard Performance

Olmsted County continues to demonstrate strong execution of the majority of our performance measures. Due to significant and intentional effort over the last year, our performance has improved in multiple areas.

Rate of Relative Care

Federal guidelines regulate that at least 45% of children/youth placed in foster care be placed in family foster care with relatives. Child & Family Services surpassed the target and achieved 47%, for year-end 2015.



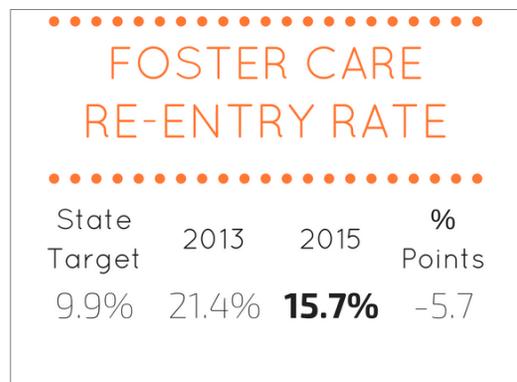
Every Child Every Month

Federal guidelines required that 95% of children/youth receive a monthly visit by a social worker or probation offer. CFS has consistently achieved this rate or greater over the last three years.



Placement Re-Entry

Federal guidelines require that 9.9% (or less) of children/youth that have been discharged to reunification return to placement within a year. In 2015, Olmsted had a re-entry rate of 15.7%



Spotlight



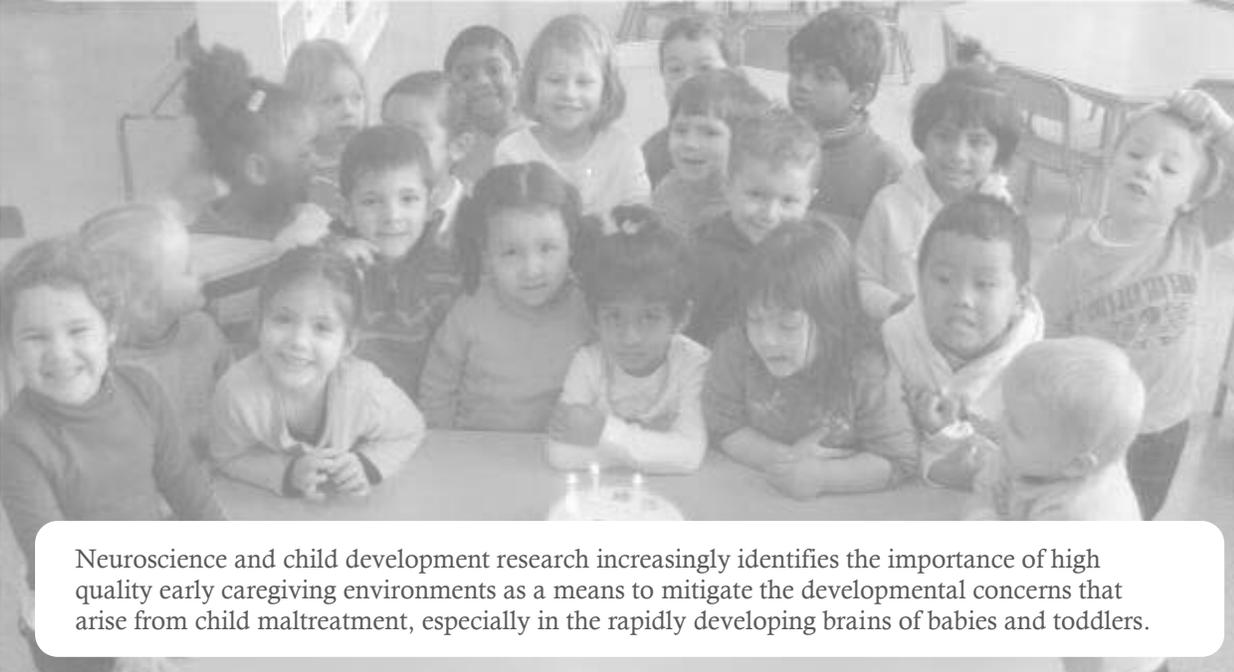
What We Know

Northstar Care for Children started January 1, 2015. Financial support was standardized between (1) foster care, (2) kinship transfer of custody and (3) adoption assistance.

Northstar Care for Children does not adequately support the costs of child care for infants, toddlers and preschoolers who are moving into permanency from the child welfare system.

What We Are Doing

Olmsted County has allocated county funds to close the gap between actual child care costs. One only needs to read the numerous news reports on the crisis in child foster care across the state of Minnesota, which is partially due to the negative fiscal impacts of Northstar Care, to understand this problem. Foster parents who have ceased providing care have cited their desire to continue, but given that foster care rates have not increased with inflation and the “cap” on child care costs, which average \$600 to \$1000 per month, they just cannot afford to continue. Olmsted County’s commitment to provide 100 percent support of child care costs has enabled CFS to maintain foster parents while ensuring a small but steady flow of new providers seeking to do foster care.



Neuroscience and child development research increasingly identifies the importance of high quality early caregiving environments as a means to mitigate the developmental concerns that arise from child maltreatment, especially in the rapidly developing brains of babies and toddlers.

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