



# The Nebraska Foster Care Review Office Quarterly Report

Submitted pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-1303 (4)



Issued June 1, 2016

# FCRO BACKGROUND

## **Mission**

*The FCRO's mission is to provide oversight of the child welfare and juvenile justice systems by tracking and reviewing children in out-of-home care, reporting on aggregate outcomes, and advocating on individual and systemic levels to ensure that children's best interests and safety needs are met.*

## **Vision**

*Every child involved in the child welfare or juvenile justice systems becomes resilient, safe, healthy, and economically secure.*

## **Purpose for the FCRO Tracking System**

*The FCRO is mandated to maintain an independent tracking system of all children in out-of-home placement in the State. The tracking system is used to provide information about the number of children entering and leaving care as well as data about children's needs and trends in foster care, including data collected as part of the review process, and for internal processes.*

## **Purpose of FCRO Reviews**

*The FCRO was established as an independent agency to review the case plans of children in foster care. The purpose of the reviews is to assure that appropriate goals have been set for the child, that realistic time limits have been set for the accomplishment of these goals, that efforts are being made by all parties to achieve these goals, that appropriate services are being delivered to the child and/or his or her family, and that long-range planning has been done to ensure a timely and appropriate permanency for the child, whether through return to a home where the conditions have changed, adoption, guardianship, or another plan.*

*The FCRO's role under the Foster Care Review Act is to: 1) independently track children in out-of-home care, 2) review those children's cases, 3) collect and analyze data related to the children, 4) identify conditions and outcomes for Nebraska's children in out-of-home care, 5) make recommendations to the child welfare and juvenile justice systems on needed corrective actions, and 6) inform policy makers and the public on issues related to out-of-home care. The FCRO is an independent state agency, not affiliated with the DHHS, the Courts, the Office of Probation, or any other entity.*

*Data quoted within this report are from the FCRO's independent tracking system and completed case file reviews unless otherwise noted (e.g., Census data or data from collaborative studies). Neb. Rev. Statute §43-1303 requires DHHS (whether by direct staff or contractors), courts, the Office of Probation, and child-placing agencies to report to the FCRO any child's out-of-home placement, as well as changes in the child's status (e.g., placement changes and worker changes). By comparing information from multiple sources the FCRO is able to identify discrepancies. When case files of children are reviewed, previously received information is verified, updated, and additional information is gathered. Prior to individual case review reports being issued, additional quality control steps are taken.*

*Please feel free to contact us if there is a specific topic on which you would like more information, or check our website for past annual and quarterly reports and other topics of interest. The FCRO has other statistics available in addition to those found in this quarterly report located at:*

<http://fcro.nebraska.gov/AnnualReports.html>

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4-5
I. ALL CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE	6-10
A. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE	11-16
B. JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE	17-18
1. PROBATION YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE	19-20
2. YRTC (DHHS/OJS) YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE	21-22
II. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS IN CONGREGATE CARE	23-28

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) provides this Quarterly Report to inform the Nebraska Legislature, child welfare system stakeholders, other policy makers, and the public on identified conditions and outcomes for Nebraska's children in out-of-home [foster] care, as well as to recommend needed changes.

First section of this Quarterly Report concentrates on all children in out-of-home care from **09/14/2015 thru 04/04/2016** due to their involvement with either the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the Office of Probation Administration - Juvenile Division (Probation). Second section of this Quarterly Report concentrates on children/youth that are placed in out-of-state congregate care placements either through DHHS or Probation. [1]

Through analysis of data, FCRO found the following facts and trends:

1. For all children in out-of-home care, **78%** of the children are involved in the Child Welfare system and **22%** of the youth are involved in the Juvenile Justice population. (page 7) These percentages do vary greatly across the State. Further analysis of children/youth in out-of-home care can be found by court type and area of the State on pages 9 & 10.
2. With regard to children in the child welfare system, the number of DHHS state wards in out-of-home care has **increased** at the rate of **6.6%**. (page 7).
  - a. There is increase in the number of children in all of the DHHS Service Areas except for the Southeast Service area. (page 11). These increases vary from **10% to 24%**.
  - b. Roughly **65%** of the DHHS state wards come from the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas. (page 11).
  - c. Three out of the past five quarters, there have been more entries than exits from out-of-home care. (page 13).
  - d. There has been some progress in reducing the number of placements for state wards. (page 15).
  - e. The average length of stay for children exiting out-of-home continues to remain between 15-16 months. (page 16).
3. With regard to youth in the juvenile justice system, there has been a **2.6% decrease** in out-of-home care for Probation youth, while there has been a **14.9% increase** in the YRTC (DHHS/OJS) population. (page 8).
  - a. Roughly **58%** of the out-of-home Probation youth are from Districts 3 & 4. (Douglas & Lancaster County). (page 19).
  - b. There are nearly twice as many males as females placed out-of-home. (page 18).
  - c. Approximately **45%** of the YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth are from the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas. (Page 21) When comparing two specific points in time, the population has increased by **15%** from 10/05/2015 to 04/04/2016. (page 8).

---

[1] The analysis of data within this Quarterly Report does not include data regarding DHHS wards in a Trial Home Visit. Also, for the purposes of this Quarterly Report dually adjudicated youth are classified/counted as DHHS children and not under Probation.

4. With regard to out-of-state placements by either DHHS or Probation, there has been a **27.5% decrease** in the utilization of out-of-state placements beginning from October 2015 to April 2016. (page 23)
  - a. There has been a higher utilization of out-of-state placements in border States from **66% to 75%**. (page 24).
  - b. Child Welfare children placed out-of-state are slightly younger than the Juvenile Justice youth. (page 25).
  - c. Males being placed out-of-state have seen a **31% decrease** and youth of 17 years of age have seen a **52% decrease**. (page 25).
  - d. Out-of-state treatment placements have seen a **25% decrease** while non-treatment placements have seen a **31% decrease**. (page 27)
  - e. Child welfare children placed in congregate out-of-state placements, **70%** were in treatment facilities and **30%** were placed in non-treatment facilities. Probation youth placed in congregate out-of-state placements, **51%** were placed in treatment facilities while **48%** were placed in non-treatment facilities (the majority were in group homes) (page 27)

**Therefore, the FCRO makes the following recommendations to the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems.**

1. Examine in more detail why there are more entries into out-of-home care than exits within the child welfare system specifically analyzing the reasons that children are being placed into out-of-home care. By better defining the reasons for removal, an array of services and prevention strategies can be developed to prevent removals, heal if a removal is necessary and sustain a positive reunification.
2. Develop and implement evidence-based in-home services. FCRO commends Probation in its development of effective evidence-based services for the juvenile justice population and stresses that these efforts need to continue. FCRO recommends that DHHS develop and implement evidence-based in-home services for the child welfare population including evidence-based intensive family preservation and family support.
3. Continue the work of the Out-of-State Placement Collaborative Committee. While it is clear that DHHS and Probation have increased efforts in monitoring out-of-state congregate care placements, the system as a whole still needs to promote coordination across all levels of government and establish a process for identifying and considering in-state resources prior to making an out-of-state placement. The Committee's work should include:
  - a. A thorough analysis of the children/youth that are placed out-of-state to determine needs of the children/youth and reasons for the out-of-state placement;
  - b. A thorough analysis of the specific parameters used by current in-state placement agencies to determine what further types of resources are needed within the State;
  - c. The creation of recommendations that are needed to strengthen Nebraska's infrastructure of treatment and non-treatment placements and community services;

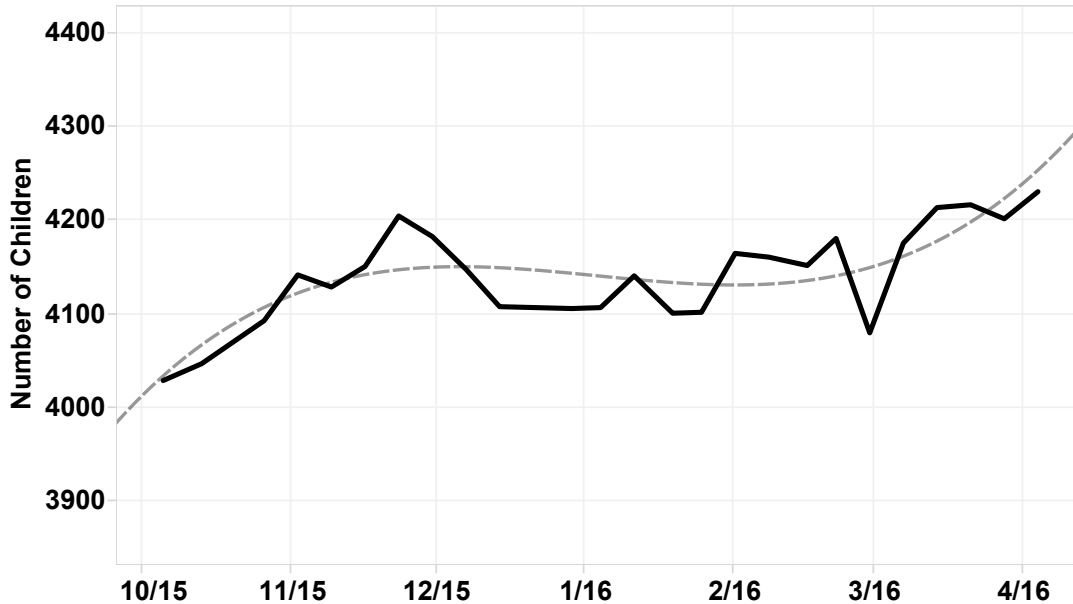
For additional information feel free to contact us at the address below.

*Kim B. Hawekotte, J.D., Director*  
Foster Care Review Office  
521 S. 14th, Suite 401  
Lincoln NE 68508  
402.471.4420  
Email: [fcro.contact@nebraska.gov](mailto:fcro.contact@nebraska.gov)  
Website: [www.fcro.nebraska.gov](http://www.fcro.nebraska.gov)

# I. ALL CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

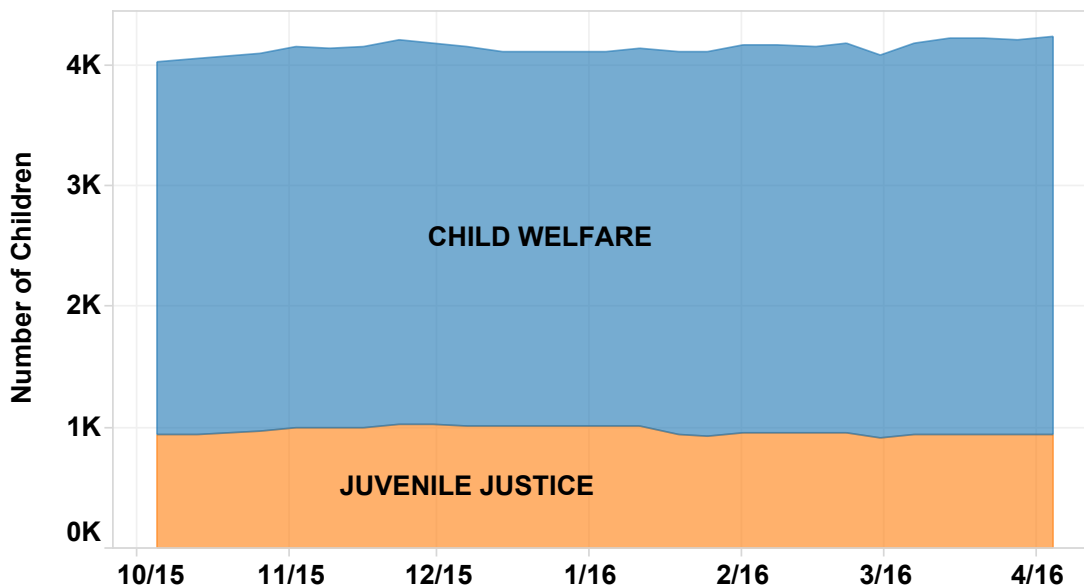
To begin, **Figure 1** shows the number of children in out-of-home care throughout the **entire** state across all agencies. Figure 1 includes DHHS children, Probation youth, and YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth. The figures throughout this report are snapshot of the agency information throughout multiple points in time. For consistency purposes, generally only six months of data are produced. During that time frame the FCRO had access to all three populations. A youth involved with both systems is categorized with the DHHS figures, future analysis will include an in-depth examination of dually adjudicated youth.

**FIGURE 1. ALL OUT-OF-HOME CARE**



Within the total population there are two major categories - child welfare and juvenile justice. The area chart (**Figure 2**) shows numbers of children from each population type. This data is compiled by combining weekly snapshots over the time period, and aggregating data to better illustrate volume. The Juvenile Justice Population type is a combined view that includes YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth along with Probation youth. A youth associated to both populations is categorized with the Child Welfare figures.

**FIGURE 2. OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY POPULATION TYPE AREA CHART**



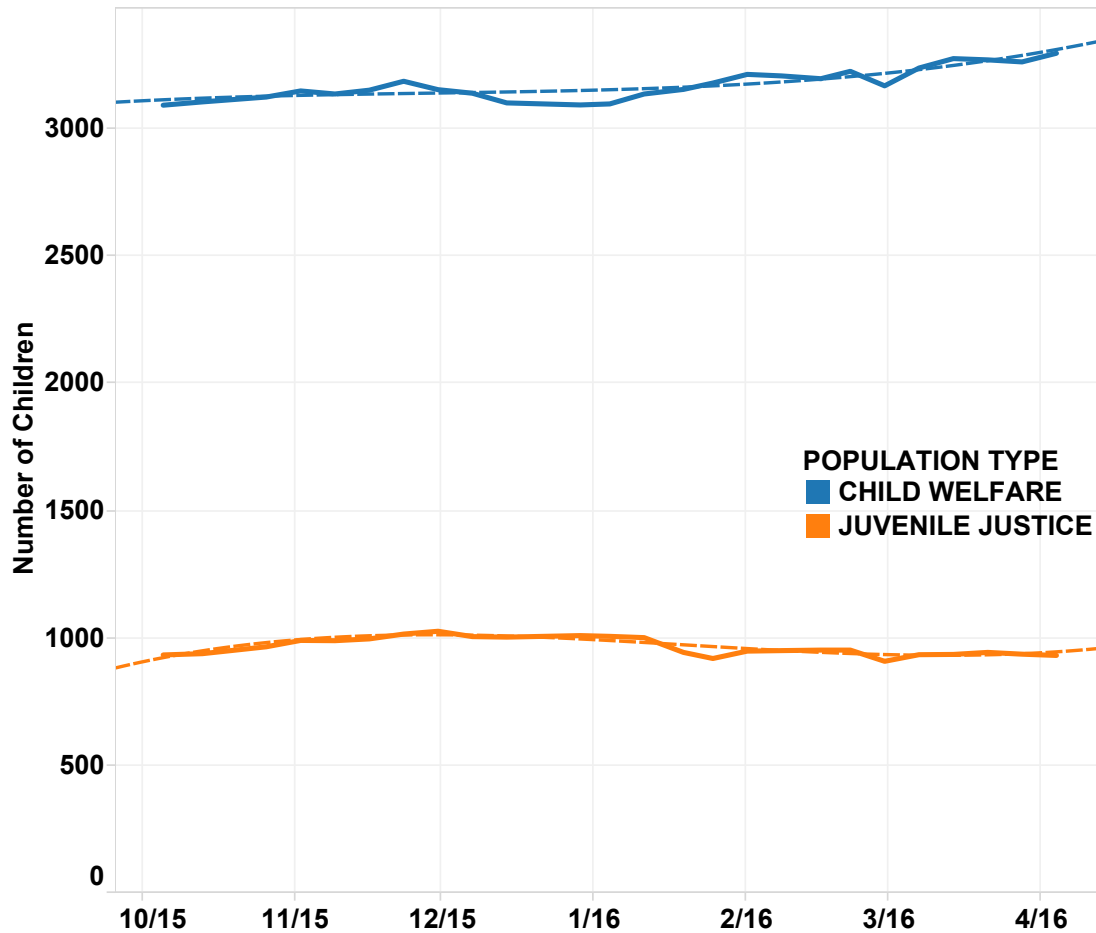
Beginning in October 2015, 76.8% of the out-of-home population was associated with the Child Welfare system, by April 2016 that figure increased to 77.9% -- primarily due to the increase in the Child Welfare out-of-home population. (Figure 3)

Figure 4 indicates a 6.6% increase in out-of-home placements in the child welfare system during this time period, but no change in the Juvenile Justice population. The Juvenile Justice population includes Probation and YRTC (DHHS/OJS) youth.

**FIGURE 3. OUT-OF-HOME CARE POPULATION TYPE TABLE**

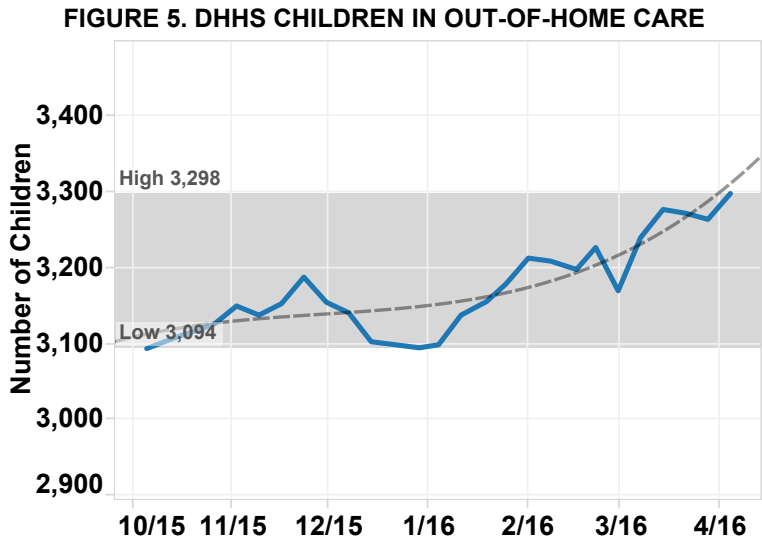
		10/2015	04/2016
<b>CHILD WELFARE</b>	#	3,094	3,298
	%	76.8%	77.9%
<b>JUVENILE JUSTICE</b>	#	935	933
	%	23.2%	22.1%
<b>Total</b>	#	4,029	4,231
	%	100.0%	100.0%

**FIGURE 4. OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY POPULATION TYPE**

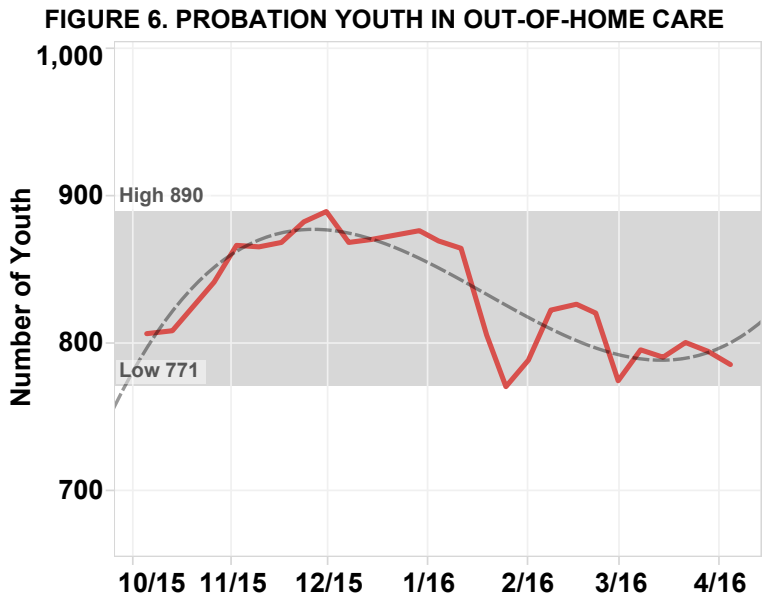


When examining the out-of-home population as a whole there has been a **5.0 % increase** from October of 2015 to April of 2016.

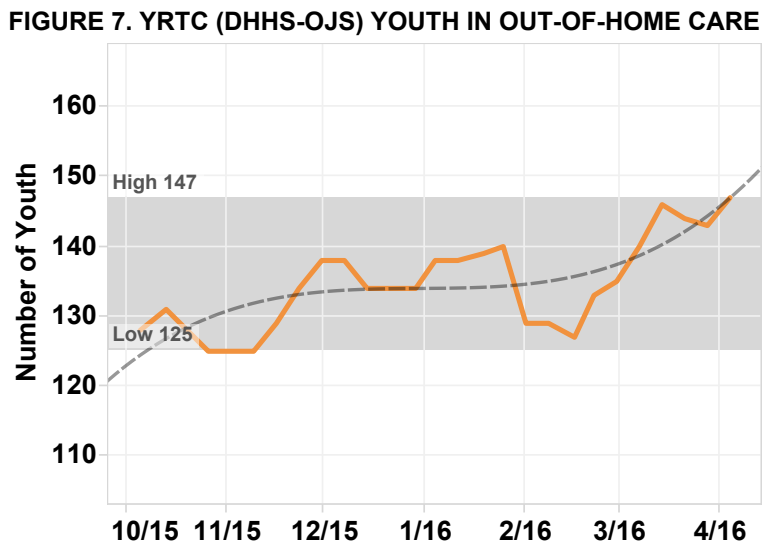
**Figure 5** shows the number of DHHS children in out-of-home care at multiple points in time, which has seen significant growth in the past six months. There has been a **6.6% increase** in DHSS children during this time period.



**Figure 6** outlines the number of Probation youth during the same time period, during this time there has been a **decrease** in the amount of Probation youth in out-of-home care by **2.6%**.



**Figure 7** outlines the number of YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth in out-of-home care. This population has seen a **14.9% increase** during this time period.





Figures 8-11 include data for all children out of home by court type. The four line graphs show trends by population type for the three separate juvenile courts, along with a combined view for the non-separate juvenile courts. These figures and line graphs will continue to mature as time goes on, as it is the intention to better understand the seasonality of population fluctuations.

Figure 8 indicates the non-separate courts have **increased** Child Welfare counts by **12.5%**, and Juvenile Justice counts by **1.3%**.

FIGURE 8. NON-SEPARATE COURTS

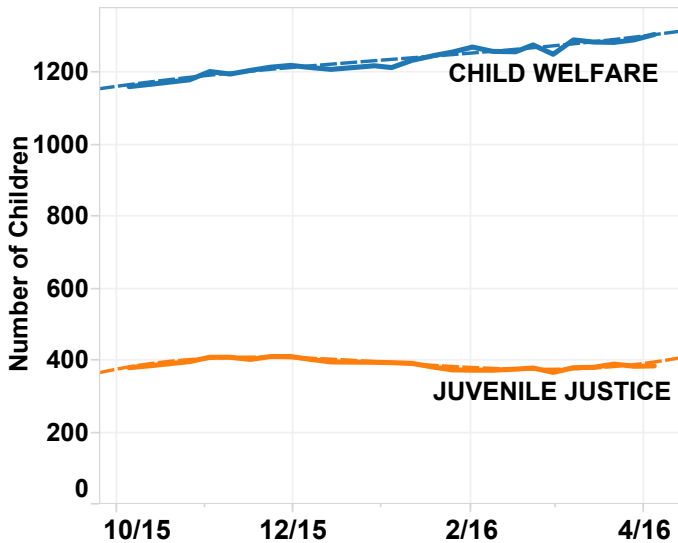


Figure 10 indicates Lancaster County has **decreased** Child Welfare counts by **14.3%**, and increased Juvenile Justice counts by **3.4%**.

FIGURE 10. LANCASTER COUNTY

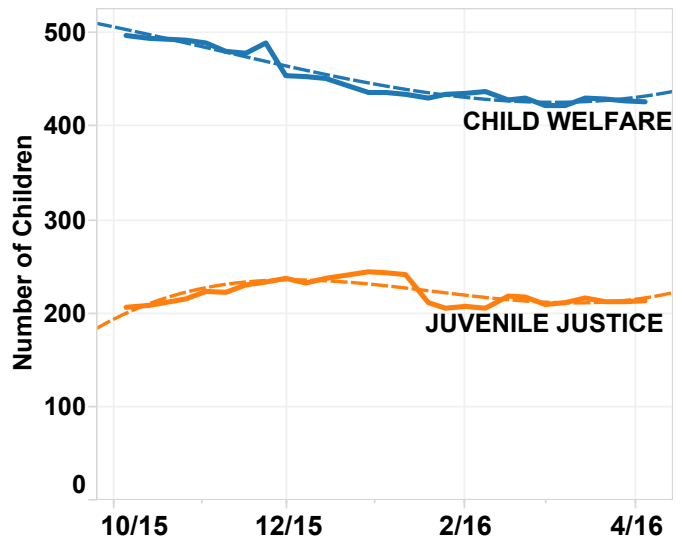


Figure 9 indicates Douglas County has **increased** Child Welfare counts by **9.9%** and increased Juvenile Justice counts by **2.7%**.

FIGURE 9. DOUGLAS COUNTY

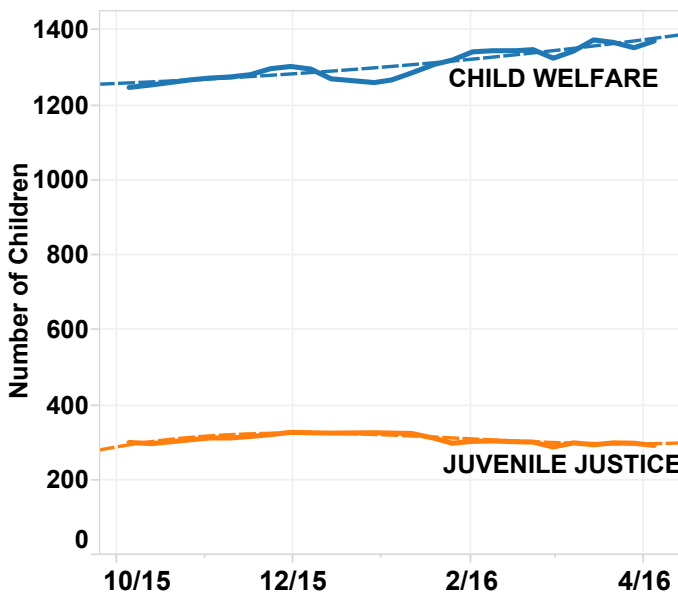
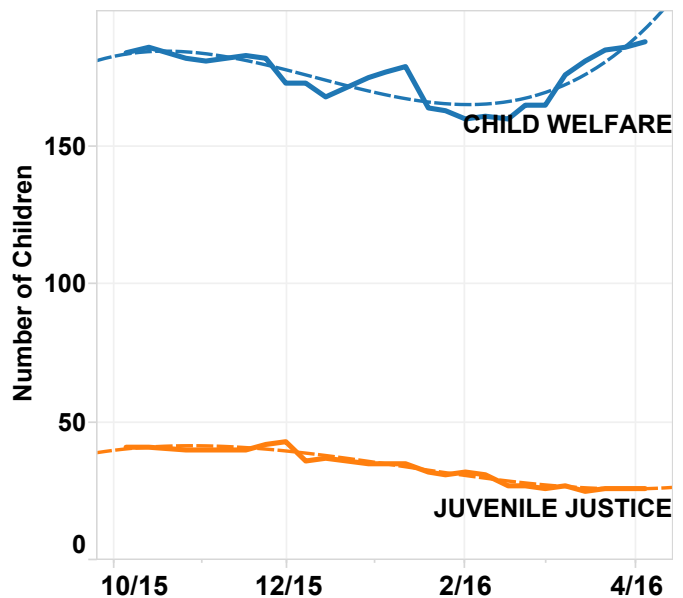


Figure 11 indicates Sarpy County has increased Child Welfare counts by **2.2%**, and **decreased** Juvenile Justice counts by **36.6%**.

FIGURE 11. SARPY COUNTY



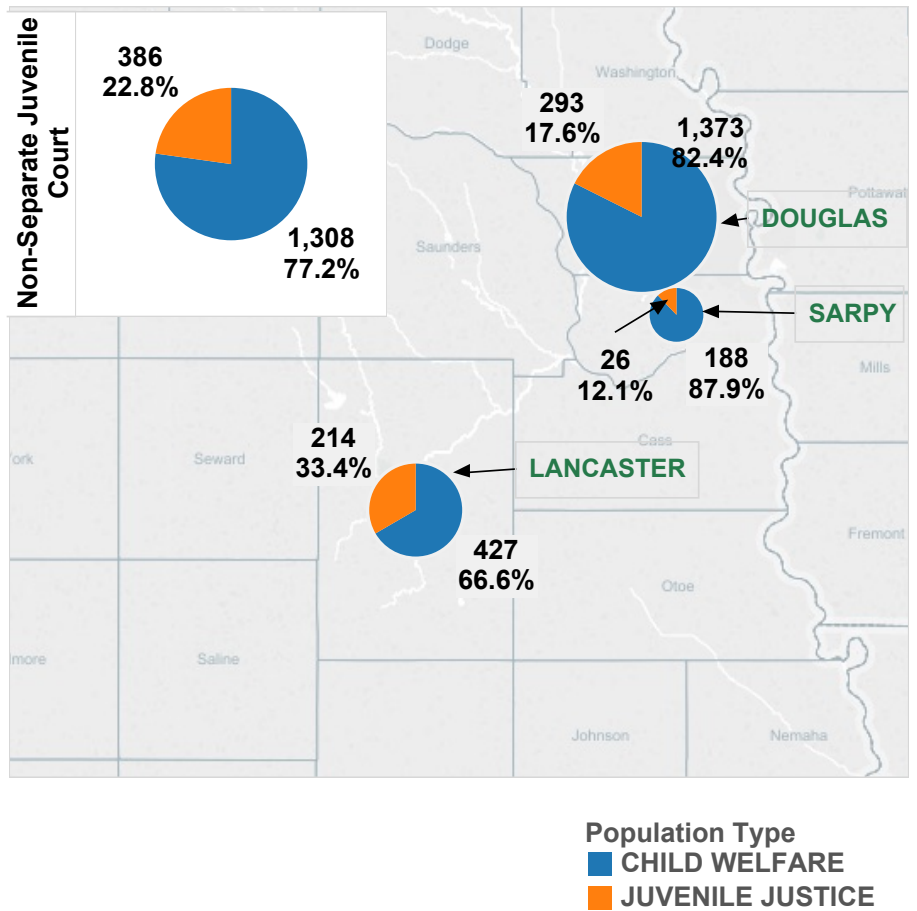
To better understand the proportionality of the populations **Figure 12** includes pie charts visually indicating the population type for each court jurisdiction on 04/04/2016. Figure 3 on page 7 indicates that the state-wide ratio between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice is roughly 78/22 on 04/04/2016.

As you can see there are certain jurisdictions that have different proportionality when compared to the overall state figures. It must be noted that these two population types are independent of each other, a higher or lower proportionality does not necessarily mean there is an imbalance between the two, and one population type might be higher proportionately due to efforts made to decrease the opposite population.

The Non-Separate Juvenile Court proportionality is quite close to the state-wide ratio. Douglas (17.6%) and Sarpy (12.1%) County have a lower proportion of Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care, while Lancaster County has a higher proportion. (33.4%)

This visualization is made available to gain perspective on the totality of children and youth in out-of-home care.

**FIGURE 12. OUT-OF-HOME BY POPULATION TYPE AND COURT TYPE**



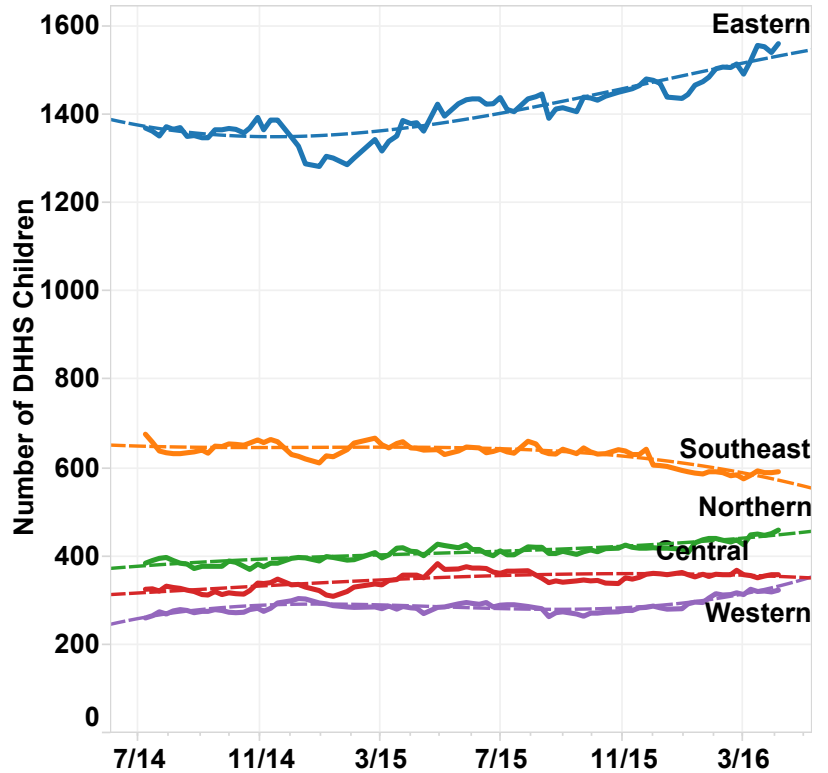
## A. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

This section specifically focuses on number of DHHS children in out-of-home care. This section is populated using a dataset going back to July of 2014. **Figure 13** shows numbers of children from each DHHS Service Area. This data is compiled by combining weekly snapshots over the time period, and aggregating data to better illustrate volume. Roughly 65% of the DHHS children come from the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas. The chart also allows the viewer to better understand the volume of cases, and the size of each service area. Below are the changes from July of 2014 to April of 2016:

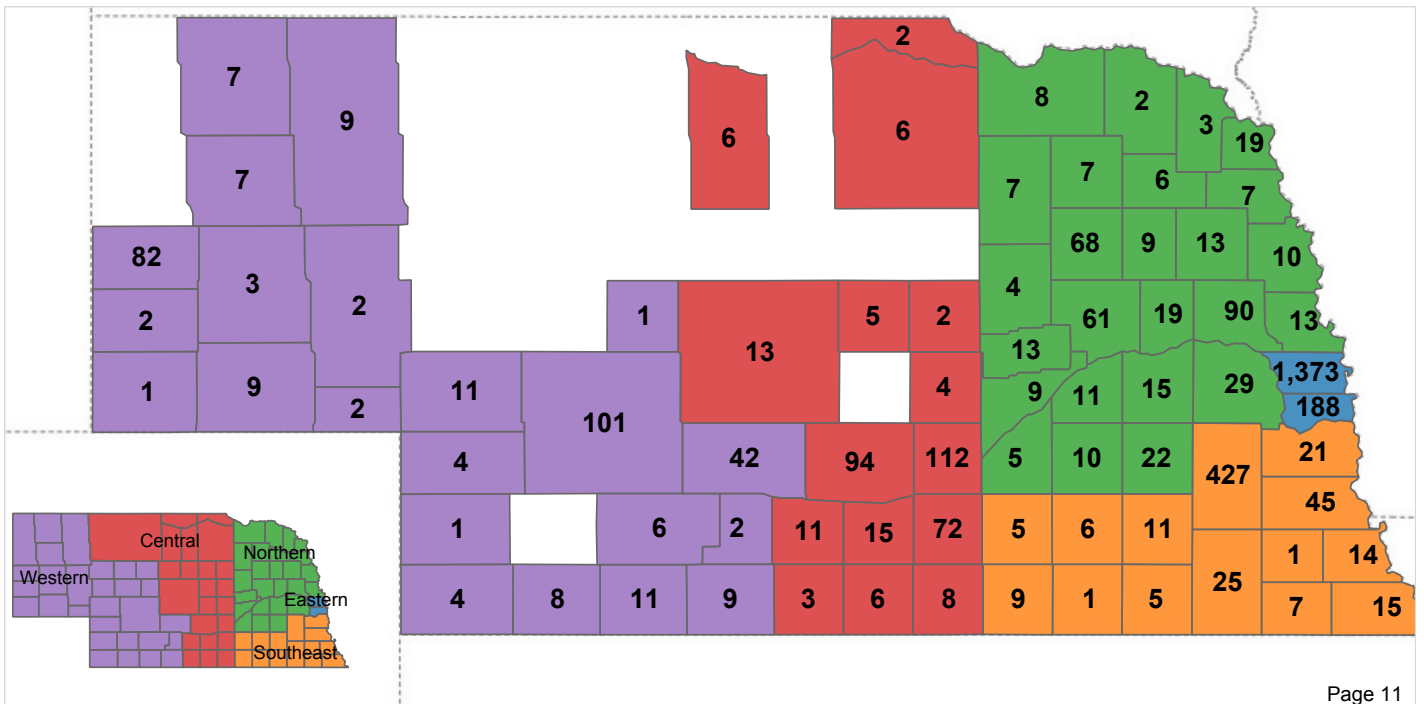
Eastern Service Area **increased** by 13.9%  
 Southeast Service Area **decreased** by 12.6%  
 Northern Service Area **increased** by 19.5%  
 Central Service Area **increased** by 10.1%  
 Western Service Area **increased** by 24.1%

Below (**Figure 14**) is a colored map outlining the DHHS Service Areas. Each county is also filled with the number of children that were in out-of-home care on 04/04/2016. An additional legend is included at the bottom left, as not every county had children in out-of-home care at that point in time.

**FIGURE 13. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY SERVICE AREA**



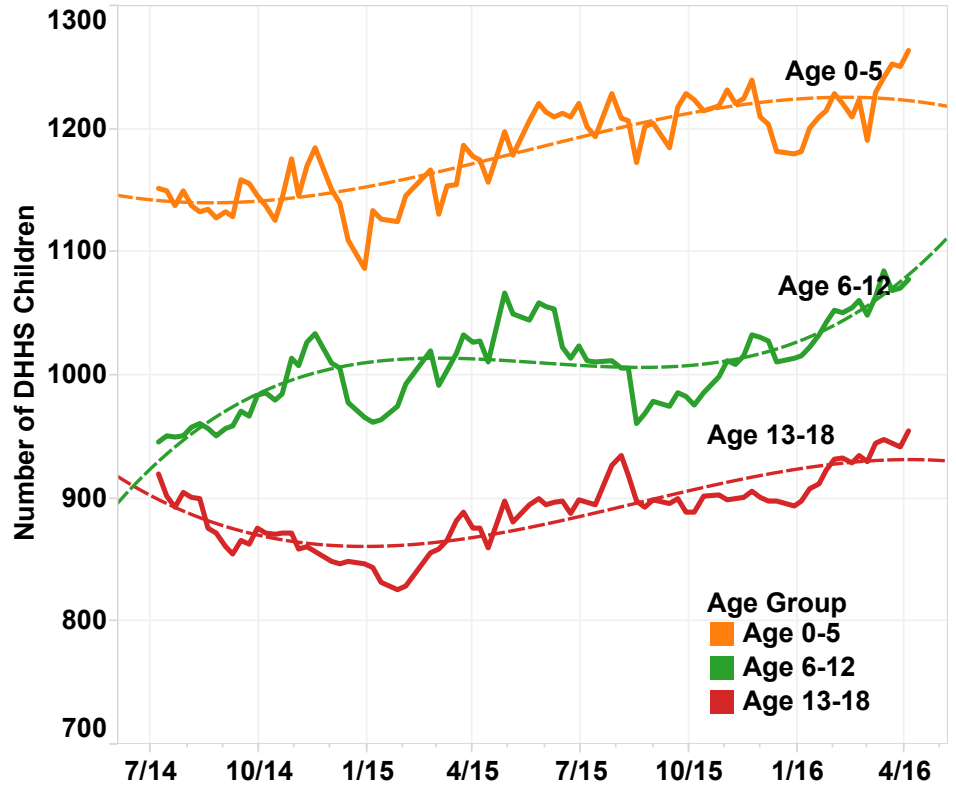
**FIGURE 14. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY COUNTY (04/04/2016)**



This section includes some basic demographics. **Figure 15** illustrates the DHHS children in out-of-home care by age group. In July of 2014 the 13-18 & 6-12 age groups had similar representation in the data -- although by April of 2016 the gap between them has widened significantly.

To avoid poor outcomes, it is important for the state to have age-appropriate interventions available to meet children's needs regardless of the child's age.

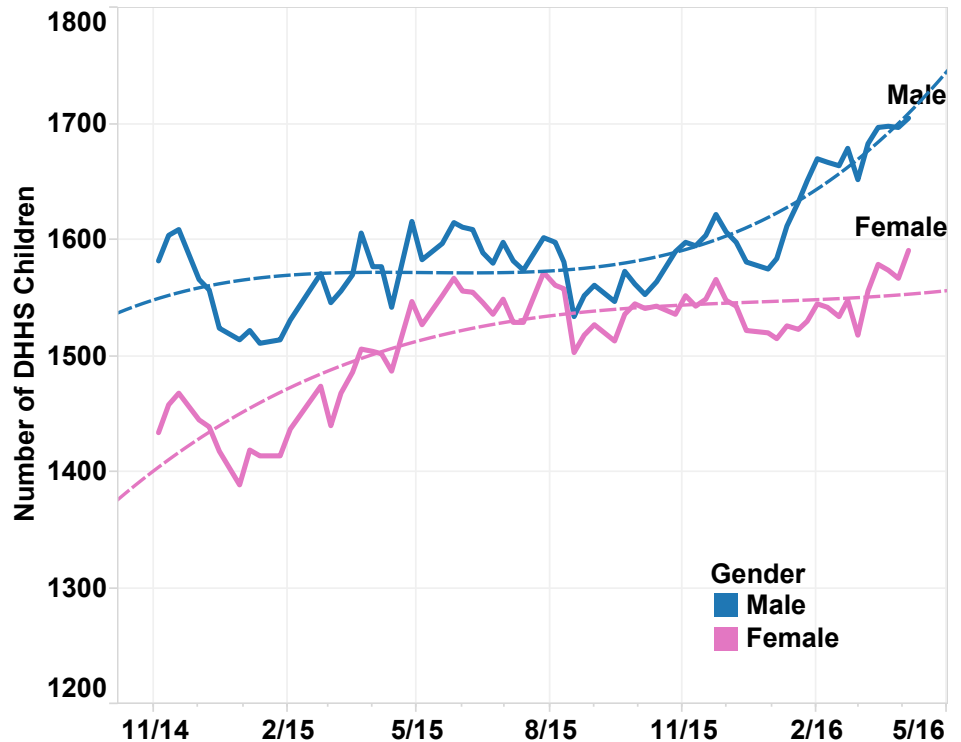
**FIGURE 15. DHHS CHILDREN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY AGE GROUP**



**Figure 16** shows gender breakdowns DHHS children in out-of-home care. In general boys make up about 51% of children in out-of-home care, girls are 49%. Gender ratios have remained relatively constant for many years, but does see some minor fluctuations. As you can see, there are seasonal differences in the number of children in care regardless of gender.

There is not a significant difference in the gender ratio of children in out-of-home care when compared to U.S. Census Data for all Nebraska children in each age group.

**FIGURE 16. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY GENDER**



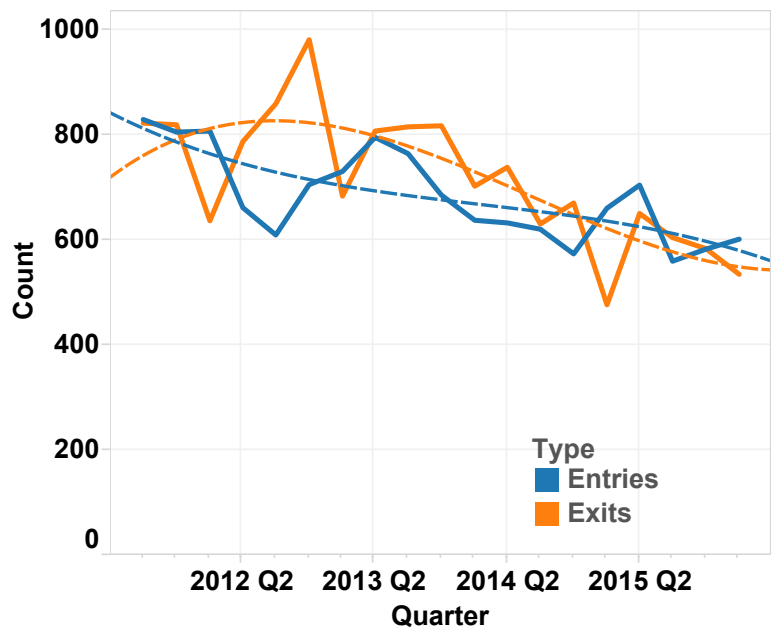
This page examines the relationship between DHHS children in out-of-home care exiting the system and those entering the system.

**Figure 17** plots the entries into out-of-home care and the exits from out-of-home care. When examining the entries and exits for each quarter we see the number of DHHS children exiting out-of-home care is beginning to not maintain pace with the entries.

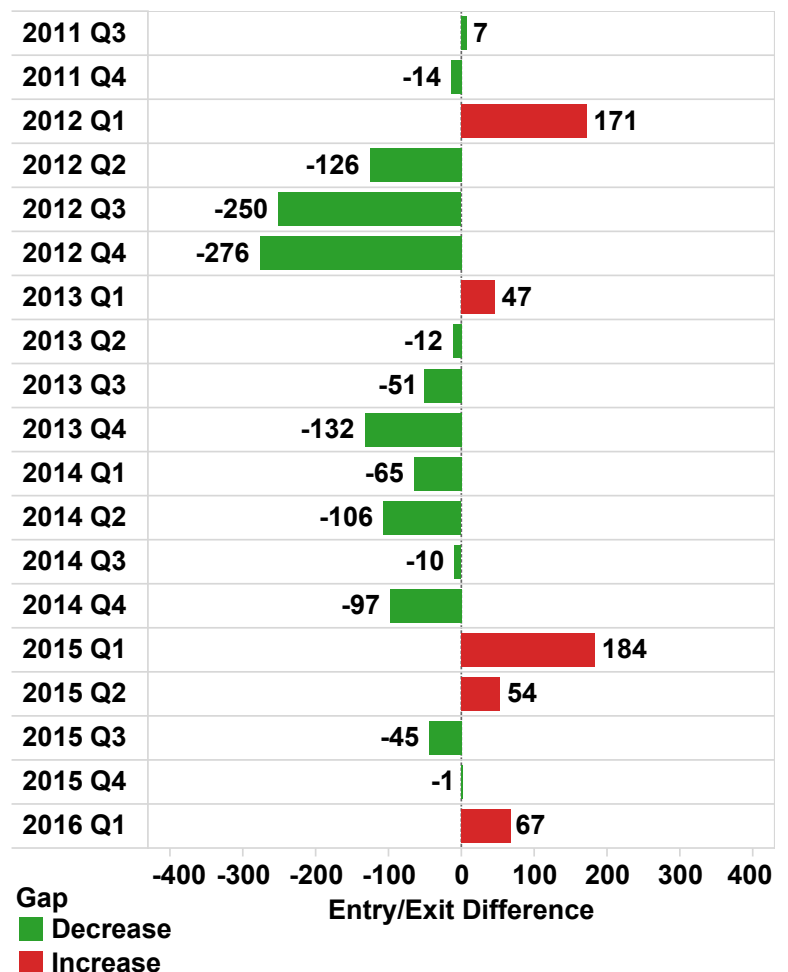
One should also consider the dynamics of the children involved in this entry/exit scenario. There were approximately 360 youth that exited DHHS in FY 2013 and 2014 as they gradually transferred to the Office of Probation after a legal change regarding which agency was charged with handling the majority of cases involving status offenders and delinquents. Transfers from DHHS to Probation were completed prior to FY 2015.

**Figure 18** illustrates the same data, but simply showing the gap between exits and entries -- with decreases being green, and increases being red. For three out of the past five quarters there has been more entries than exits.

**FIGURE 17. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE EXIT/ENTRY COMPARISON**



**FIGURE 18. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE EXIT/ENTRY QUARTERLY GAP COMPARISON**



**Figure 19** helps one better understand the relationship even more. The table consists of five years of aggregated exit to entry data, thus each is a five year average. Hills and valleys within the data seem less of an issue when the data is examined this way.

When examining the data it is quite easy to say we should expect an increase in the amount of DHHS children in Q1 each year. History indicates during Q1 we have a decrease or relatively lower amount of DHHS children exiting the system and an increase or relatively higher amount entering. The opposite can be said about Q4. One should expect such seasonal fluctuations, as many DHHS children leave out-of-home care just prior to the December holidays, or when the school year is over.

**FIGURE 19. EXIT/ENTRY AGGREGATED COMPARISON TABLE**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
<b>EXIT</b>	642	755	747	775
<b>ENTRY</b>	735	703	677	671

## PLACEMENT CHANGES

The line-graph to the top-right (**Figure 20**) shows that progress has been made in reducing the number of placements. In June of 2014, **14.6%** of the DHHS children in out-of-home had experienced 4 or More Placements during their first time in care. When examining the data in April of 2014 that number had decreased to **12.7%** -- a two percent decrease.

Most experts find that children will experience serious trauma from four or more placement moves. [1] Many of these children led transient lifestyles prior to removal from the home, and may have difficulties in forming relationships. Frequent caregiver changes can add to their trauma, especially for very young children who are more dependent on adults for their physical and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, **Figure 21** examines the placement cohort by the age of the child. It is clear that as the age goes up the '4 or More Placement' cohort grows also.

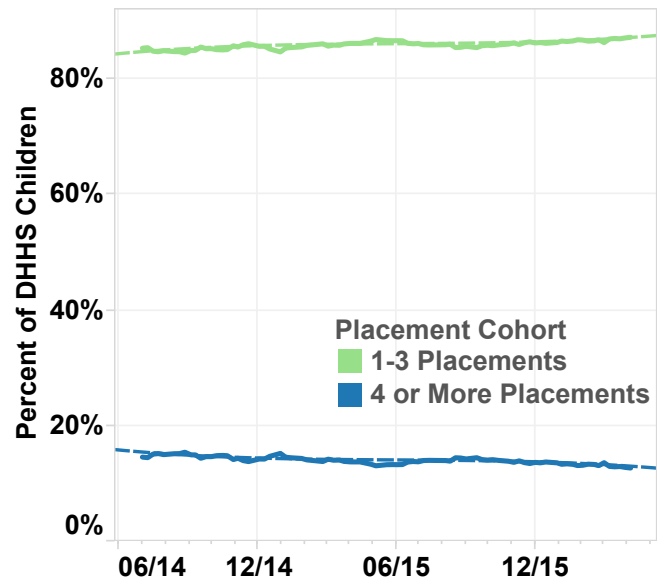
Children are often moved between placements (i.e., foster homes, group homes, special facilities) while in out-of-home care. Placement counts within this information do not include temporary respite care or a placement back to the parental home. Moves might be a positive thing in the case of a child who needed a high level of care when he/she first entered care and is now progressing toward less restrictive, more family like care.

National research has confirmed that the risk of placement disruption increases with a child's age and time placed out-of-home. Children with behavioral problems were the least likely to achieve placement stability. [2]

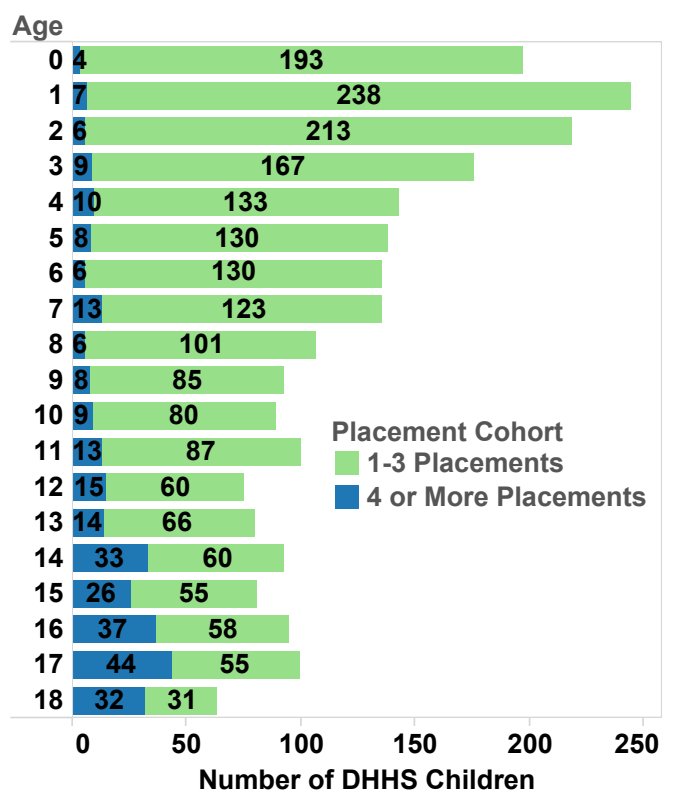
Evidence shows that **placement instability** is associated with attachment disorders, poor educational outcomes, mental health and behavior problems, poor preparation for independent living as children become older, and negative adult outcomes. Many such children lose contact with their siblings and relatives, leaving them without a natural support system once they are no longer in the care of the child welfare system. [3]

In some instances, the cumulative additional turmoil of changing who they live with can be temporarily or permanently harmful for children by adding to their trauma. [4] Thus, the number of placements for children that are in out-of-home care is relevant.

**FIGURE 20. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY PLACEMENT COHORT (FIRST TIME IN-CARE)**



**FIGURE 21. AGE OF DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY PLACEMENT COHORT ON 04/04/2016 (FIRST TIME IN CARE)**



[1] Hartnett, Falconnier, Leathers & Tests, 1999; Webster, Barth & Needell, 2000 were among the first to report this.

[2] Sources include: Holtan, Amy, et al, Placement Disruption in Long-term Kinship and Non-kinship Foster Care, Children and Youth Services Review 2013, and Fisher, Philip, et al, Foster Placement Disruptions Associated with Problem Behavior, Oregon Social Learning Center and University of Oregon, 2011.

[3] Supporting Reunification and Preventing Reentry Into Out-of-Home Care, Child Welfare Information Gateway, a service of the Children's Bureau, February 2012.

[4] Fisher, Philip, et al, Foster Placement Disruptions Associated with Problem Behavior, Oregon Social Learning Center and University of Oregon, 2011.



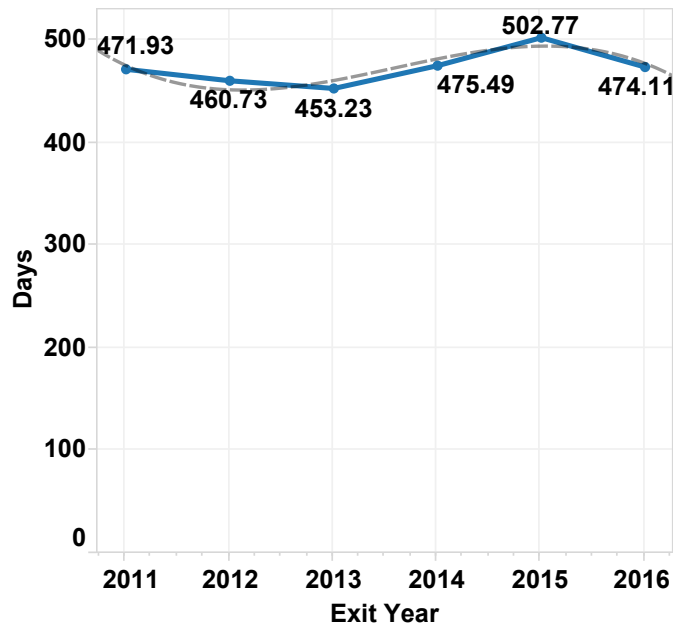
**AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY**

The following data visualizations illustrate the length of time in out-of-home care for the DHHS children that **exited out-of-home care** for the past five years and one quarter.

**Figure 22** outlines the annual average length of stay. Please note that 2016 only includes the first quarter of the year. As you can see there was a decrease from 2011 to 2013, followed by an increase in 2014 and 2015. It is important to recognize that the 2012, 2013 and part of 2014 numbers were impacted by the comingling of DHHS-OJS youth with DHHS children from the Child Welfare system. DHHS-OJS youth typically had shorter out-of-home care stays than Wards.

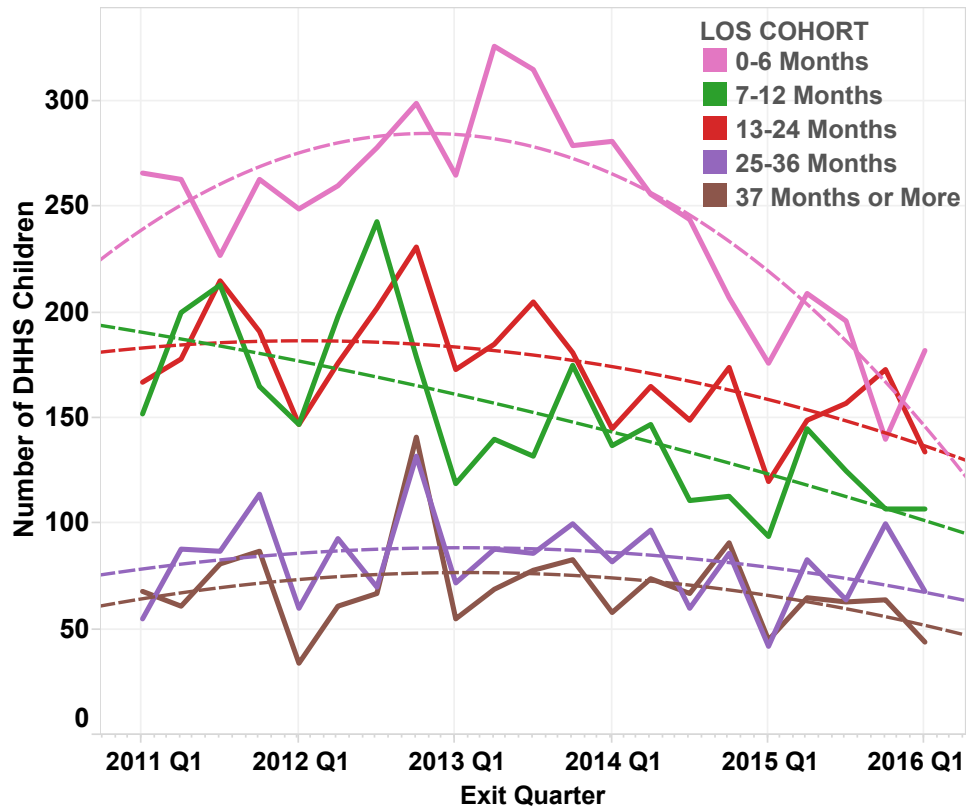
The FCRO will continue to monitor and report on numbers of children in out-of-home care. We will also be working collaboratively with partners to address the issue of children not always achieving timely permanency and the resultant stressors on the child welfare system. We need to research whether in each group we have the same types of cases with the same reasons for entry. If so, increases in length of time in out-of-home care must be due to something yet to be determined.

**FIGURE 22. EXITING DHHS CHILDREN AVERAGE LENGTH OF STAY IN DAYS**



**Figure 23** shows that regardless of length of stay cohort, there are certain times when more children tend to exit care. This reflects attempts to return children prior to winter holidays, adoption day, and the end of the school year. Such predictable fluctuations need to be taken into consideration when analyzing trends. The combined OJS youth with DHHS Wards, can be seen making an impact on the 0-6 Month length-of-stay cohort (Pink) -- as those youth involved in the DHHS/OJS have exited or transitioned to the Office of Probation.

**FIGURE 23. LENGTH OF STAY COHORT FOR DHHS CHILDREN EXITING OUT-OF-HOME CARE**





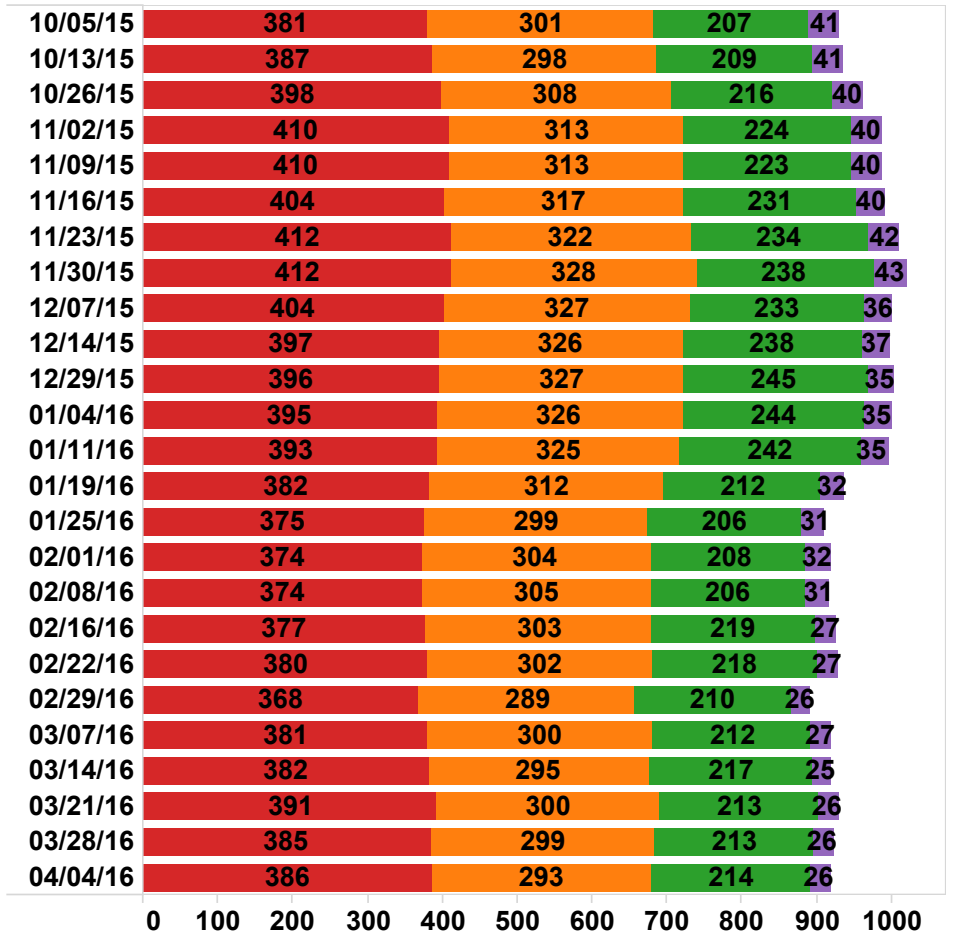
# B. JUVENILE JUSTICE POPULATION IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

The Juvenile Justice population includes Probation and YRTC youth.

**Figure 24** shows numbers of youth from each separate and non-separate courts combined. Again, this data is compiled by combining weekly snapshots over the time period.

Below (**Figure 25**) is a map coloring the separate and non-separate courts. Each county is also filled with the number of children that were in out-of-home care on 04/04/2016 for the counties.

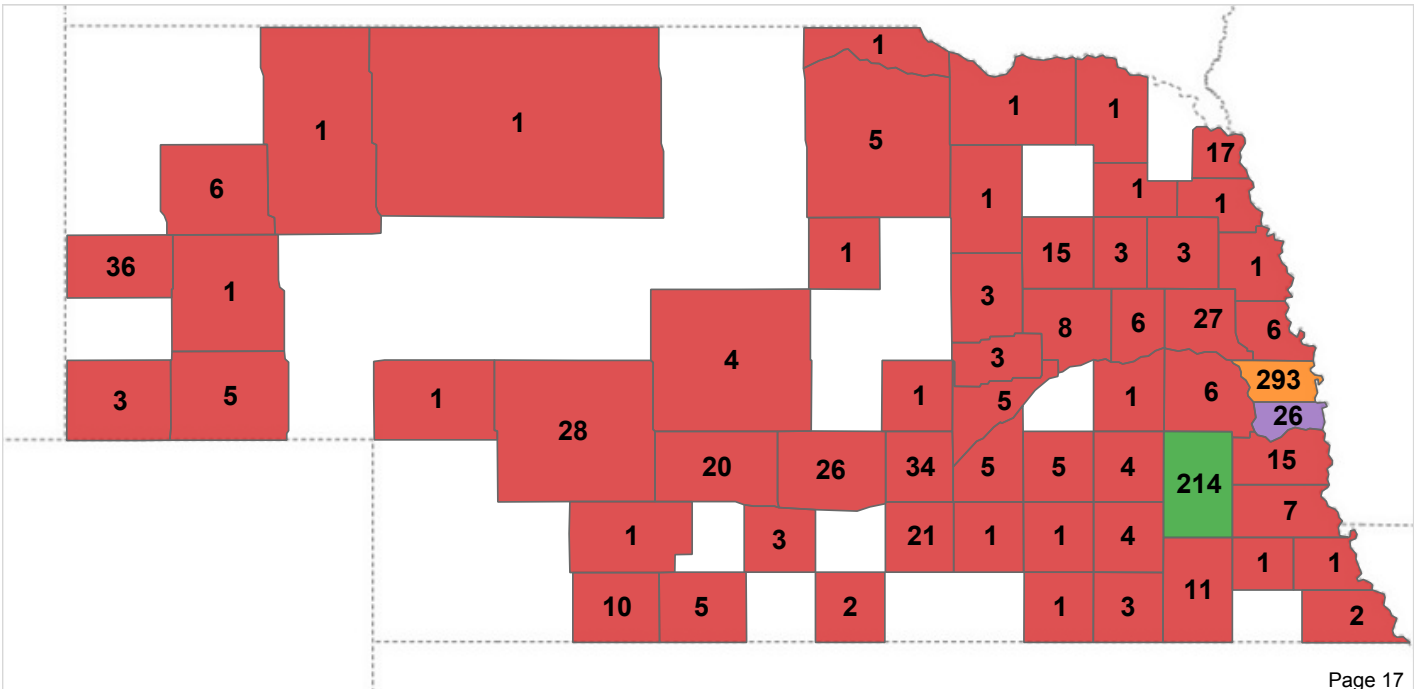
**FIGURE 24. JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY SEPARATE & NON-SEPARATE COURTS**



**Court Grouping**

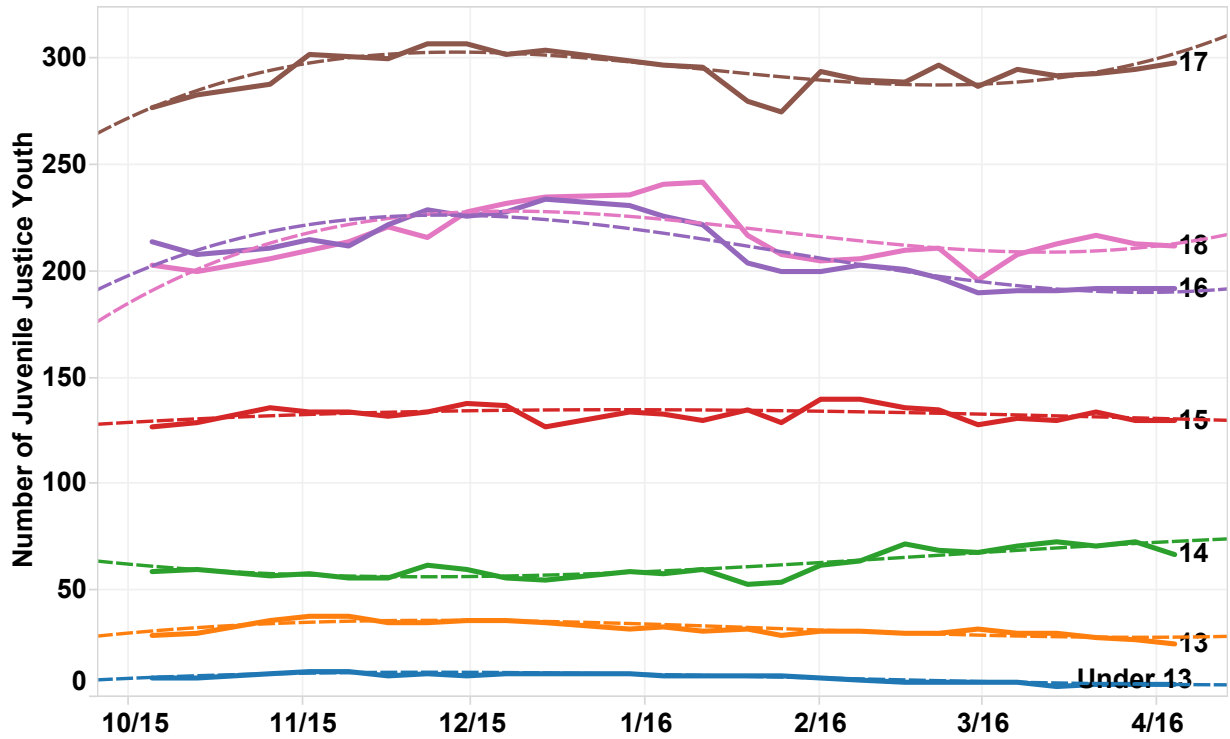
- Sarpy
- Lancaster
- Douglas
- Non-Separate Juvenile Court

**FIGURE 25. JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY SEPARATE & NON-SEPARATE COURTS**



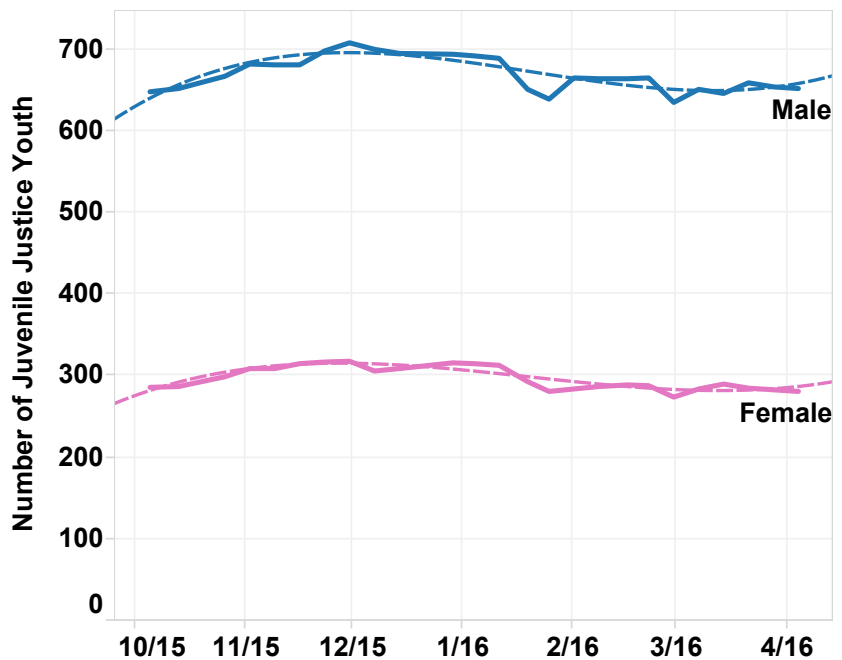
**Figure 26** shows Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care by age. While the overall number of Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care has stayed relatively constant during this time period there are differences based on age. Almost all age groups have slightly increased, then decreased, before increasing slightly during this six month time period.

**FIGURE 26. JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY AGE**



**FIGURE 27. JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY GENDER**

**Figure 27** shows gender breakdowns for Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care. The male Juvenile Justice youth make up twice as much of the population. These gender ratios have remained relatively constant for this time period.



# 1. PROBATION YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

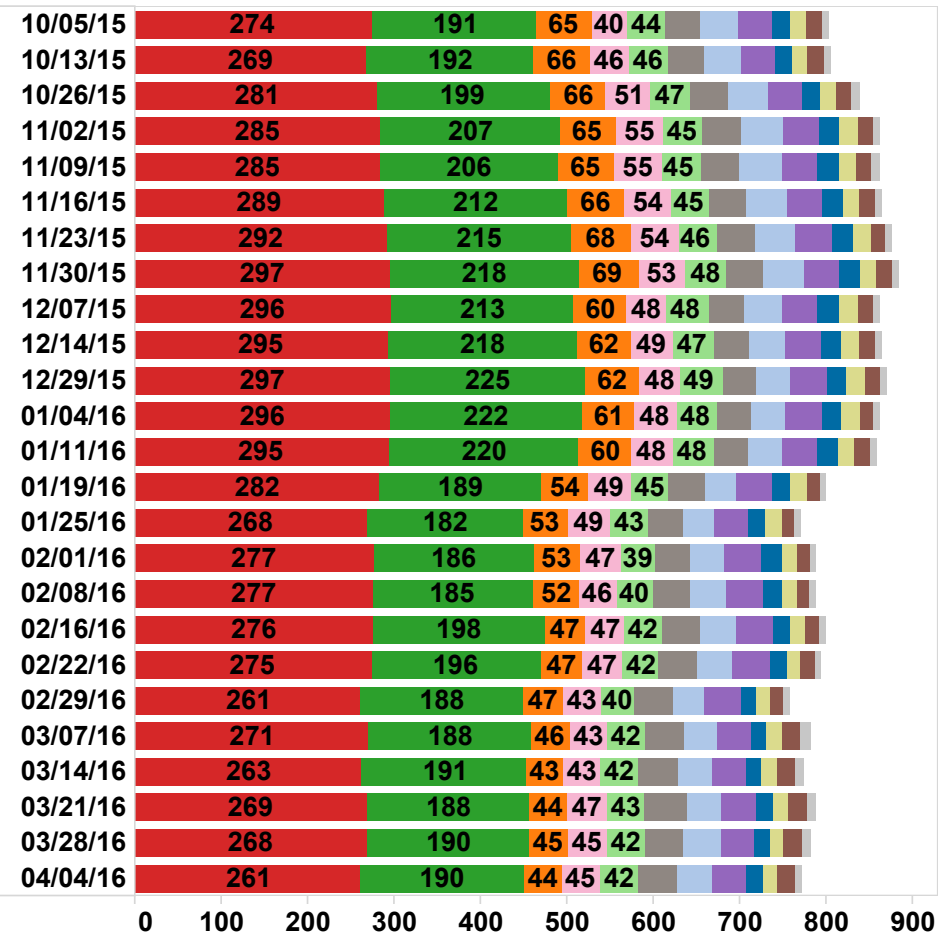
This data relates to the Juvenile Justice population that are placed out-of-home through the Office of Probation.

**Figure 28** shows numbers of youth from each Probation District in out-of-home care. This data is compiled by combining weekly snapshots over the time period.

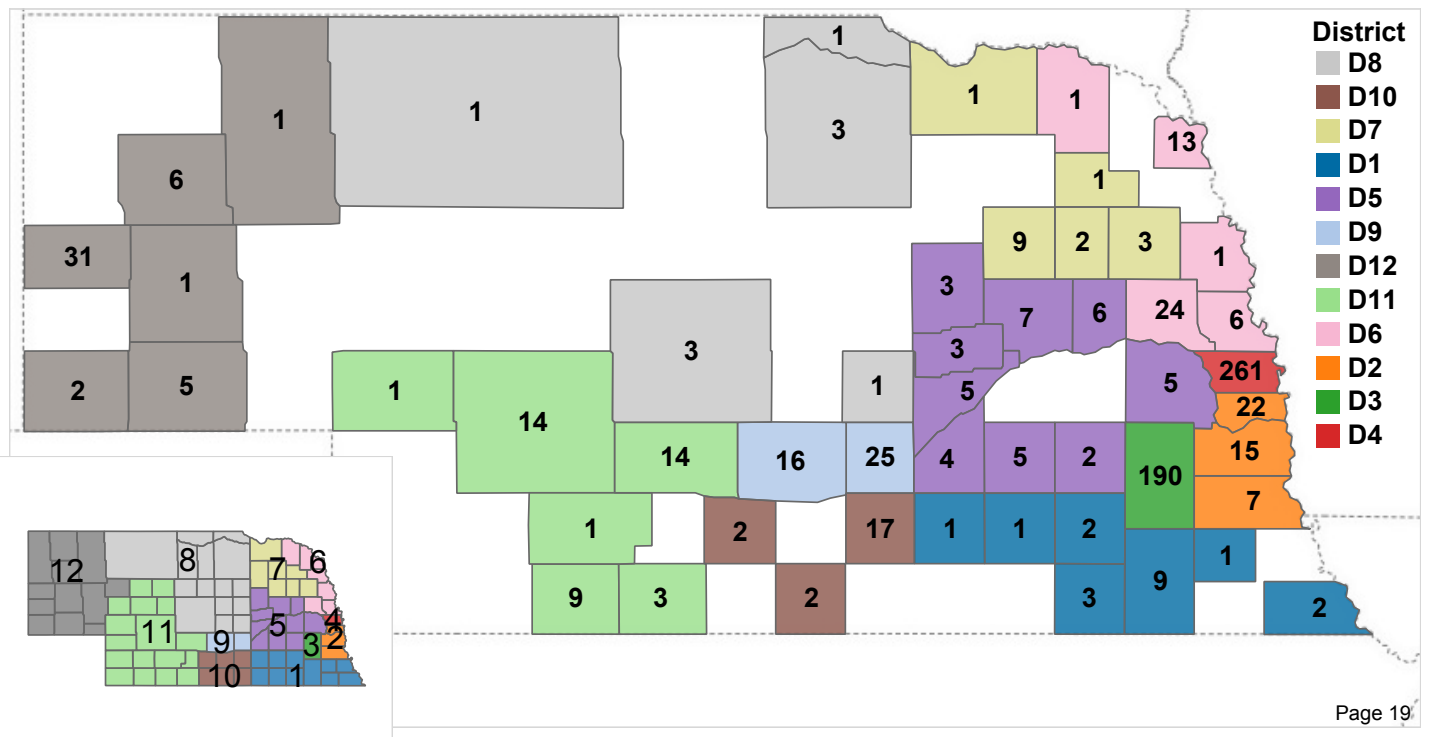
Roughly 58% of the Probation youth come from the Districts 3 & 4. There has been a small increase from thru October and November for the top three districts, then beginning in December to February a small decrease.

Below (**Figure 29**) is a map coloring the Probation Districts. Each county is also filled with the number of youth that were in out-of-home care on 04/04/2016 for the counties. An additional legend is included at the bottom left, as not every county had youth in out-of-home care at this point in time.

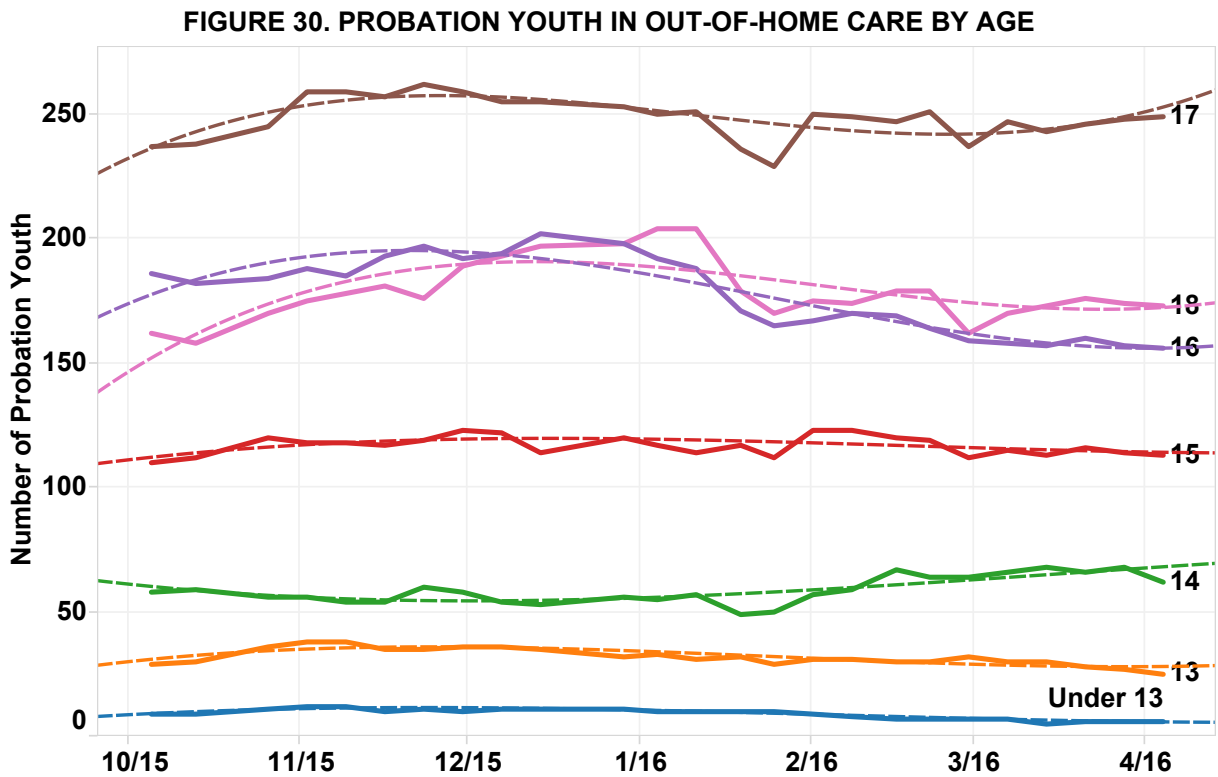
**FIGURE 28. PROBATION YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY DISTRICT**



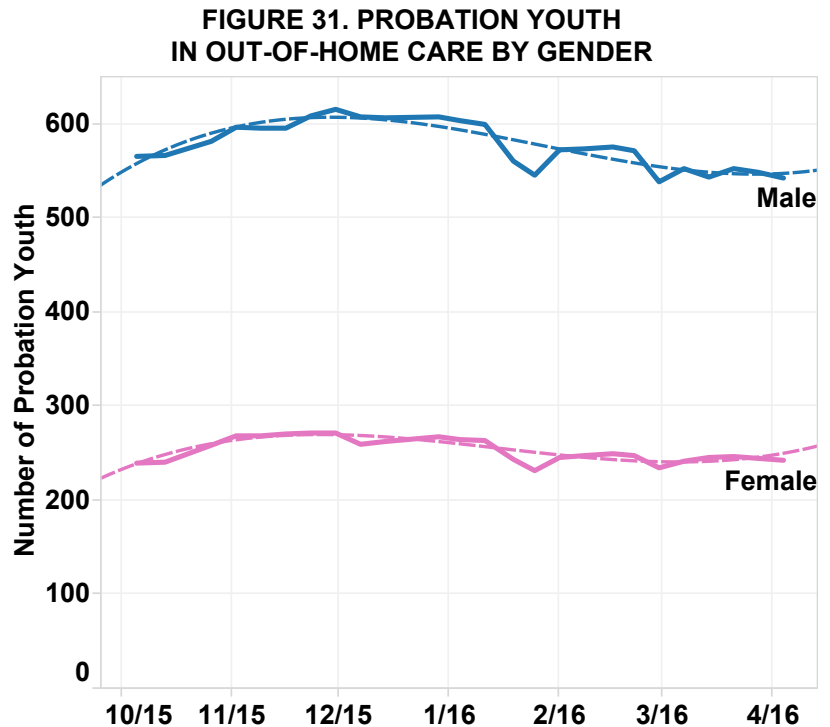
**FIGURE 29. PROBATION YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY DISTRICT**



**Figure 30** shows Probation youth by age. While the overall number of Probation youth in out-of-home care has decreased slightly during this time period there are differences based on age. Almost all age groups slightly increased, then decreased during this six month time period.



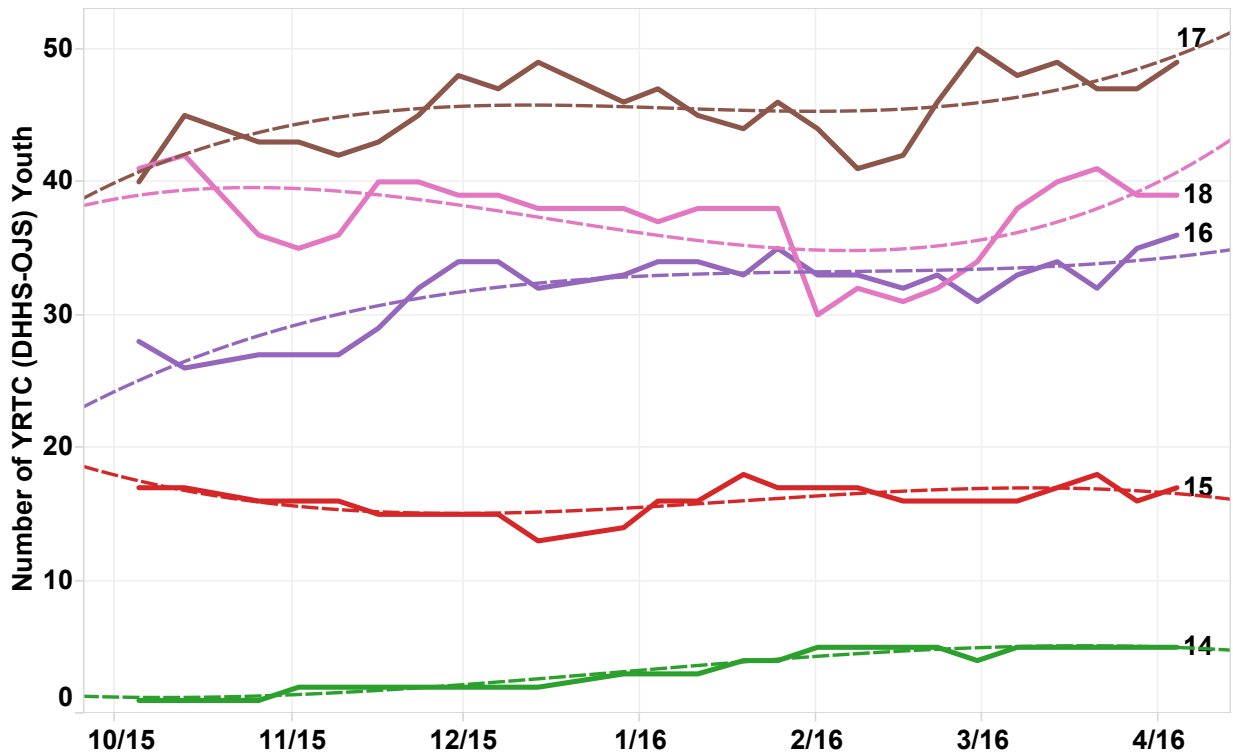
**Figure 31** shows gender breakdowns for Probation youth in out-of-home care. Unlike the Child Welfare even ratio, male Probation youth make up twice as much of the population. These gender ratios have remained relatively constant for this time period.





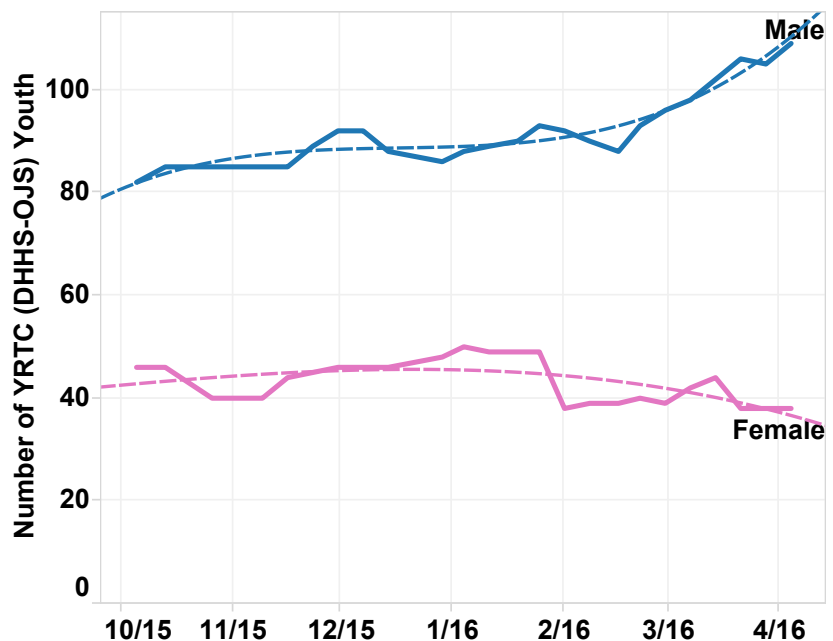
**Figure 34** shows DHHS-OJS youth by age. The overall number of DHHS-OJS youth in out-of-home care has increased during this time period. Almost all age groups have seen an increase, 16 & 17 years of age make up a large portion of the increase. Please use caution when interpreting these results, as the number of YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth is relatively small, with numerous fluctuations during this time period.

**FIGURE 34. YRTC (DHHS-OJS) YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY AGE**



**FIGURE 35. YRTC (DHHS-OJS) YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY GENDER**

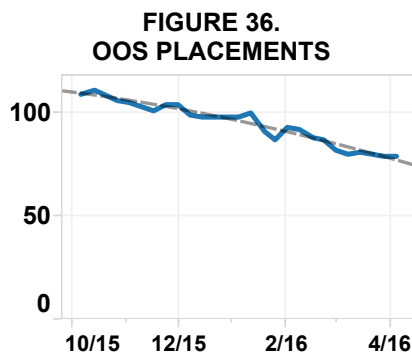
**Figure 35** shows gender breakdowns YRTC (DHHS-OJS) Youth in out-of-home care. Like the Probation youth, the DHHS-OJS male population is higher than the female population, but during this six month period has increased to almost three times the amount of females.



## II. PLACEMENTS IN CONGREGATE CARE OUT-OF-STATE

There are a broad array of services available to children and families in the State of Nebraska. Despite this some children have complex needs that we are not able to address within our communities, which require them to be served outside their homes, and possibly outside of their state. In this section we examine children placed out-of-state in various types of group facilities, also known as congregate care. We are not including children placed with relatives or other foster homes in other states.

The FCRO made initial steps to create and administer an Out-of-State Placement Workgroup, which consists of all the appropriate agency representatives. The goal of the workgroup is to better understand this population, and push for more effective coordination for available community-based and residential services within the State of Nebraska.

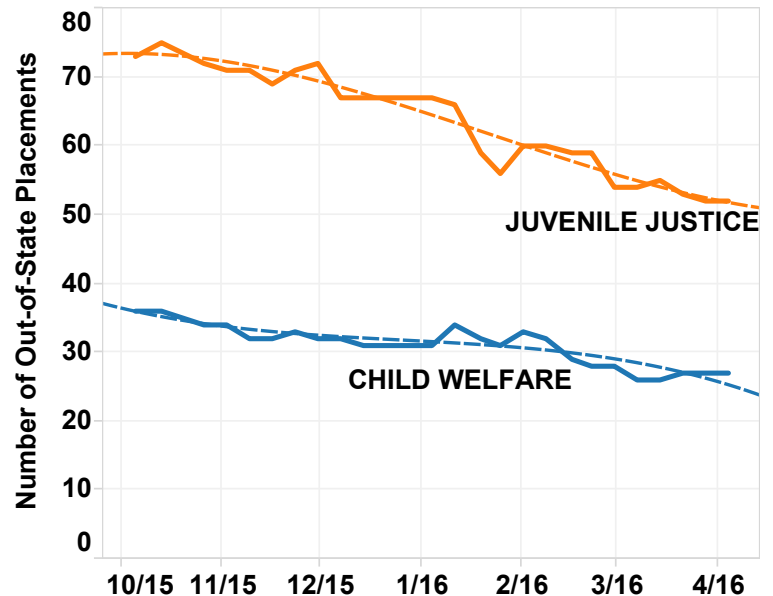


Since October there has been significant decline in the utilization of out-of-state congregate placements system-wide, a **27.5% decrease**. (Figure 36)

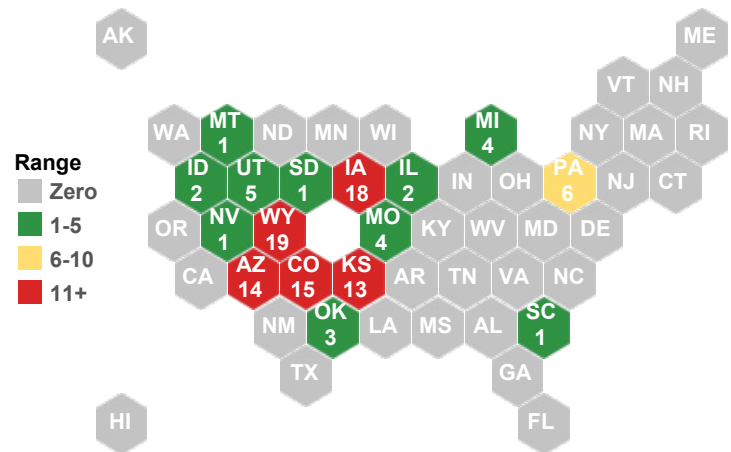
A large majority of the decline can be associated to the decrease in OOS placements within the Juvenile Justice population, see **Figure 37** -- a **decrease of 28.8%**. The Child Welfare population has seen a **decrease of 25.0%**.

Much discussion occurs regarding the state that the children are being placed in. **Figures 38 & 39**, illustrate the states that children were placed in on the beginning date of this analysis 10/05/2015 & again on 04/05/2016 for comparison purposes.

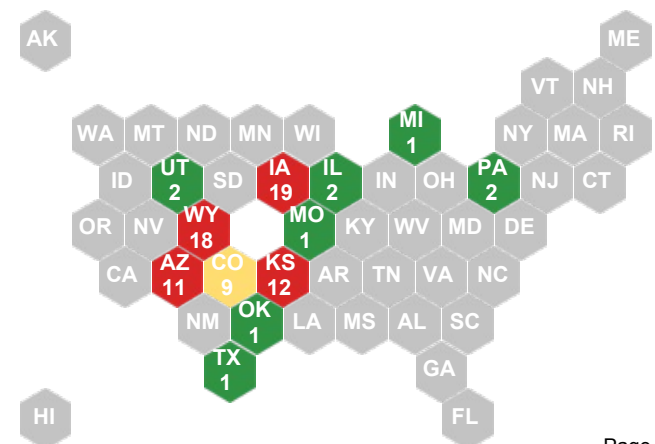
**FIGURE 37. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS BY AGENCY TYPE**



**FIGURE 38. OOS PLACEMENTS BY STATE 10/05/2015 JUVENILE JUSTICE & CHILD WELFARE COMBINED**



**FIGURE 39. OOS PLACEMENTS BY STATE 04/05/2016 JUVENILE JUSTICE & CHILD WELFARE COMBINED**



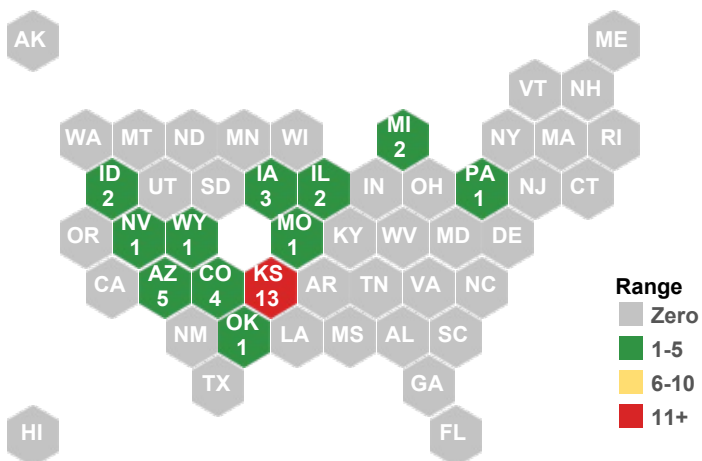


**Figures 40 & 41** show the trends broken out by whether the child in out of state placement came from child welfare or juvenile justice. In each population there may be some practical reasons for placing in border states, particularly if the children are no farther from the home community than they would be if placed elsewhere in Nebraska.

Comparing **Figures 40a & 40b**, and **Figures 41a & 41b**, we find that for each system as fewer children are placed out of state, border states are housing a larger percentage. During this period the percentage in a border state rose from 61 to 74% for child welfare, 66 to 75% for juvenile justice, and 64 to 74% overall.

The trend is positive, but some larger questions remain for the Out-of-State Placement Collaborative Workgroup to consider.

**FIGURE 40a. CHILD WELFARE OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS ON 10/05/2015 BY STATE**





Figures 42 & 43 outline the gender and age of the out-of-state population. The figures also include the differences, and the percent change between October 5th 2015 to April 4th 2016.

Between these two dates, one can see that the amount of males in out-of-state placements has decreased by 30.7%.

Almost all of the age cohorts decreased, but the largest decrease can be seen with those that are 17 years old, which decreased by 51.7%.

FIGURE 42. GENDER FOR ALL OUT-OF-STATE POPULATION

Gender	10/05/2015	04/04/2016		
	#	#	Difference	Percent Change
Female	21	18	-3	-14.3%
Male	88	61	-27	-30.7%
<b>Total</b>	109	79	-30	-27.5%

FIGURE 43. AGE FOR ALL OUT-OF-STATE POPULATION

	10/05/2015	04/04/2016		
	#	#	Difference	Percent Change
10	4	1	-3	-75.0%
11	2	2	0	0.0%
12	3	2	-1	-33.3%
13	6	5	-1	-16.7%
14	11	9	-2	-18.2%
15	17	17	0	0.0%
16	19	14	-5	-26.3%
17	29	14	-15	-51.7%
18	18	15	-3	-16.7%
<b>Total</b>	109	79	-30	-27.5%

Figure 44 & 45 outline the average age for each of these populations, by gender and the placement agency. The Juvenile Justice youth placed out of the state are a slightly older population than the Child Welfare children. The population as a whole averages to 16 years of age.

FIGURE 44. CHILD WELFARE OUT-OF-STATE GENDER & AVERAGE AGE

		10/5/15		4/4/16	
		#	Avg. Age	#	Avg. Age
<b>CHILD WELFARE</b>	Female	14	14.5	10	15.8
	Male	22	15.6	17	15.5
<b>Total</b>		36	15.2	27	15.6

FIGURE 45. JUVENILE JUSTICE OUT-OF-STATE GENDER & AVERAGE AGE

		10/5/15		4/4/16	
		#	Avg. Age	#	Avg. Age
<b>JUVENILE JUSTICE</b>	Female	7	16.3	8	15.3
	Male	66	16.6	44	16.4
<b>Total</b>		73	16.5	52	16.2



**Figure 48** examines the placement type for the out-of-state population. To better examine the issue the placement types have been grouped into treatment and non-treatment. Figure 31 shows that during this time period the Child Welfare population utilizes a higher proportion of treatment placements than the Probation population. **The Child Welfare population utilizes out-of-state resources for treatment placements 69.9% of the time, while the Juvenile Justice populations utilizes the treatment placements a little over half of the time (51.7%)**

When examining the out-of-state placement figures one must consider how out-of-state placement is utilized from a proximity to resources and a youth behavior standpoint. There is some logic that can be understood when a youth from the western edge of Nebraska is placed in across the border in Wyoming, the alternate would be a youth from any county in Nebraska being placed in a state such as Arizona.

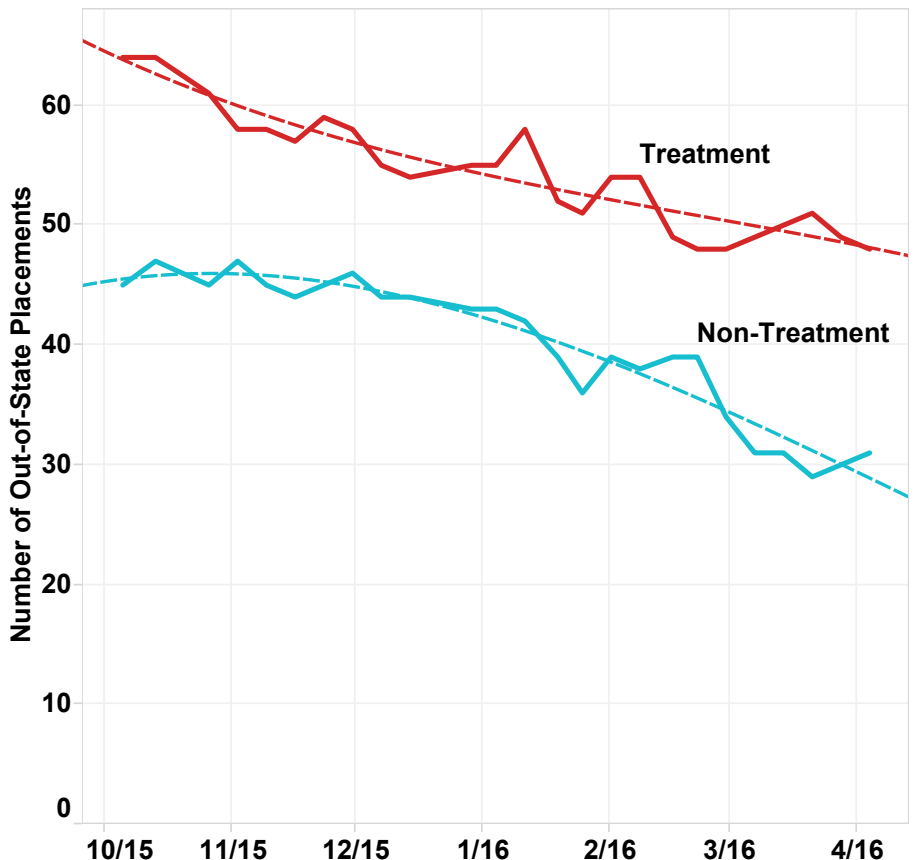
**Figure 49** indicates the decreasing trend of utilizing both treatment and non-treatment out-of-state placements. **Out-of-state treatment placements has seen a 25.0% decrease, while non-treatment has seen a decrease of 31.1%.**

Again the question needs to be raised as why Nebraska resources are not being used for these children, especially youth not receiving treatment. Continued focus needs to occur on this issue.

**FIGURE 48. ALL OUT-OF-STATE BY PLACEMENT TYPE (Aggregated Percent)**

		CHILD WELFARE	JUVENILE JUSTICE	Total
Treatment	Acute Inpatient Hospital	1.9%	1.3%	1.5%
	Therapeutic Foster Care		0.9%	0.6%
	Tx or Therapeutic Group Home	1.9%	12.0%	8.7%
	Psych. Residential Tx. Facility	55.8%	37.2%	43.3%
	Institute for Mental Disease	10.2%	0.4%	3.6%
	<b>Total</b>	69.9%	51.7%	57.7%
Non-Treatment	Shelter	0.8%		0.3%
	Group Home	28.0%	43.5%	38.4%
	Detention	1.3%	4.8%	3.7%
	<b>Total</b>	30.1%	48.3%	42.3%
<b>Total</b>		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**FIGURE 49. ALL OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENT BY PLACEMENT TYPE**



**Figure 50** examines the out-of-state population resources consumption by plotting the treatment (**RED PLUS**) and non-treatment (**BLUE SQUARE**) instances by age for each population type.

The visual decrease is easily noticeable when one compares the top scatter plots to the bottom scatter plots. In addition one can easily see that the Child Welfare population utilizes out-of-state placement for a wider age range (10-18) than the Juvenile Justice population. (13-18).

Further review also indicates that the Juvenile Justice non-treatment 17 year old population decreases when comparing the two dates.

**FIGURE 50. OUT-OF-STATE AGE BY TREATMENT & NON-TREATMENT DESIGNATION COMPARISON**

