The Nebraska
Foster Care Review Office
Quarterly Report

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

Issued September 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 timely and appropriate permanency for the child, whether through a 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

The Foster Care Review Office (FCRO) provides each 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 defined by statute, as well as to recommend needed changes. This Report is divided into the following sections:

- **Section I** of this Report concentrates on all children in out-of-home care from **10/5/2015 thru 07/05/2016** due to their involvement with either the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) or the Office of Probation Administration - Juvenile Division (Probation).
- **Section I-A** gives an overview of children in out-of-home care involved with the child welfare system.
- **Section I-B** gives an overview of children in out-of-home care that are involved with juvenile justice and have no child welfare involvement.
- **Section II** gives an overview of state ward children in trial home visit placements.
- **Section III** 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 identified the following facts and trends:

1. For all children in out-of-home care, **79.1%** are involved in the Child Welfare system and **20.9%** in the Juvenile Justice population (page 7). These percentages do vary greatly across the State with Lancaster County having the largest percentage of Juvenile Justice population and Douglas/Sarpy County have the lowest percentage of Juvenile Justice population. (page 8).

2. With regard to children in the **child welfare system**, the total number of DHHS state wards in out-of-home care continues to **increase, but there are substantial variations by DHHS Service Area** (page 10).

- During four out of the past six quarters, there have been more entries than exits from out-of-home care (page 12).

- Most of the children are in the least restrictive, most home-like type of settings. There continues to be a significant increase in the number of children that are placed in a relative/kinship placement (page 14).

- There has been some progress in reducing the number of placements changes for state wards (page 15).

- The average length of stay for children exiting out-of-home is 474 days, which is over 15 months. This number has varied greatly between October 2015 and July 2016 (page 17).

3. With regard to youth in the **juvenile justice system**, there has been a **decrease** in the number in out-of-home care (page 18).

- Many, 60.5**%,** are from the separate juvenile courts of Douglas, Lancaster, & Sarpy Counties (page 18).

- There are nearly twice as many males as females involved with juvenile justice who are placed out-of-home (page 19).

4. There are currently **595 children placed on a trial home visit** (placement home under supervision following an out-of-home placement). This is the FCRO's first year being able to track and review those cases, so an analysis of the trends will be available in future years (page 20).

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

5. With regard to **out-of-state placements** by either DHHS or Probation, there has been a **substantial decrease** (30.6% for Probation and 36.0% for child welfare) in the utilization of out-of-state placements beginning from October 2015 to April 2016 (page 21ff).

- A substantial number of the youth (68.3%) are in out of state facilities in bordering states. This is a substantial increase from October 2015 (page 21 & 24).

- Vast majority (96.3%) are teenagers. Boys make up 80.5% of the population while girls are 19.5% (page 22)

- Over half, 52.4%. are in treatment facilities. 47.6% are in placements that do not have a treatment component. (page 22)

Based on the research, the FCRO makes the following recommendations to the Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice Systems.

1. Examine in more detail why in the child welfare system there are more entries into out-of-home care than exits. Specifically analyze the reasons that children are being placed into out-of-home care and how this impacts time in 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 including evidence-based intensive family preservation and family support. Not only can these help prevent removals, they can also offer supports upon reunification with parents/guardian.

3. The entire system – child welfare and juvenile justice – needs to develop quality professional foster care that equips foster parents to serve children with specific needs as an alternative to group home placements and to better serve the needs of children and youth. Children DO grow best in families.

4. Develop supports and training for relative placements. These placements need the type of supports/training that other foster parents receive on the workings of the foster care system and the types of behaviors that abused and neglected children and/or children with law violations can exhibit. In addition, many relatives have requested training on dealing with the intra-familial issues present in relative care that are not present in non-family situations.

5. 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 thorough analysis of the youth's needs that are being placed out of state and an analysis of the resources currently available in this State in order to develop the needed resources to maintain these youth in Nebraska close to their families.

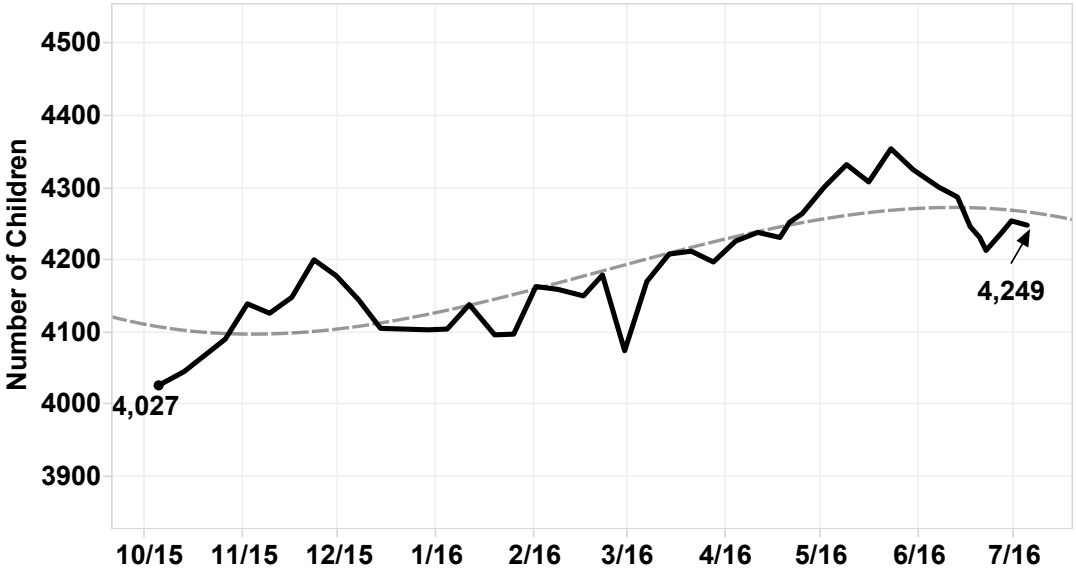
For additional information feel free to contact us at the address below.

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
Website: www.fcro.nebraska.gov

I. ALL CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

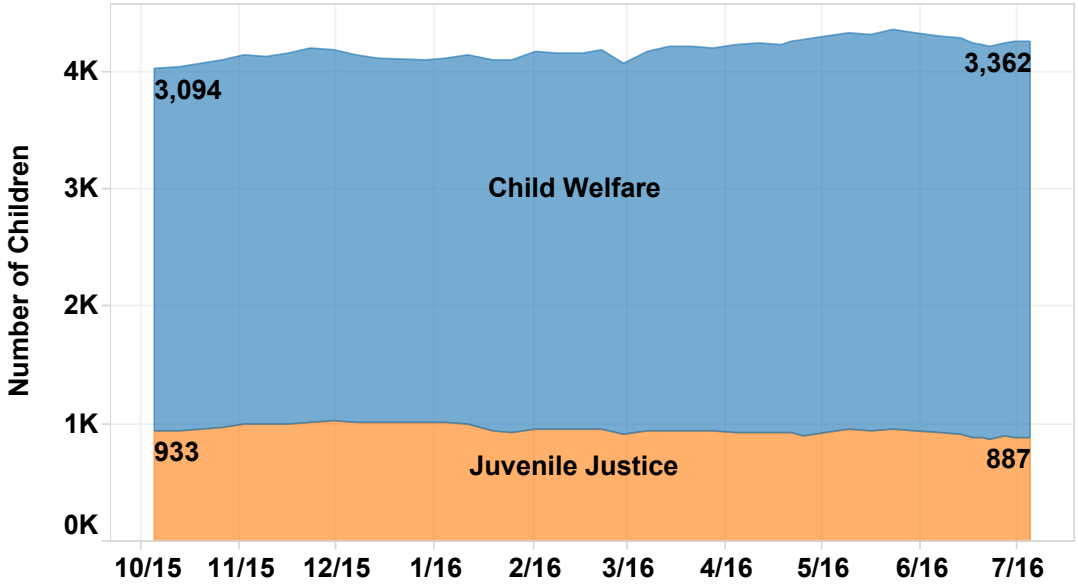
To begin, **Figure 1** shows the number of children in out-of-home care throughout the **entire** state across all agencies. Figure 1 includes DHHS children, Probation youth, and YRTC (DHHS-OJS) youth. **The figures throughout this report are snapshot of the agency information throughout multiple points in time, begining Oct 5, 2015, and ending July 5, 2016.** During the time frame shown below the FCRO had access to all three populations, and the number of children in out-of-home care increased. 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. Those in child welfare placements increased while those in juvenile justice decreased.

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 July 2016 that figure increased to 79.1% -- primarily due to an increase in the Child Welfare out-of-home population. (**Figure 3)** With regard to juvenilejustice population, there was a corresponding decrease.

Considering percentage change within a category as opposed to proportionality, the chart above indicates the increase/decrease from October 2015 to July 2016 for each population. **Figure 4 indicates a 8.7% increase in out-of-home placements in the child welfare system during this time period, and a 4.9% decrease in the Juvenile Justice population** and gives totals for periods between. The Juvenile Justice population includes Probation and YRTC (DHHS/OJS) youth.

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

		10/2015	07/2016
CHILD WELFARE	**#**	**3,094**	**3,362**
	%	**76.8%**	**79.1%**
JUVENILE JUSTICE	**#**	**933**	**887**
	%	**23.2%**	**20.9%**
Total	**#**	4,027	4,249
	%	100.0%	100.0%

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

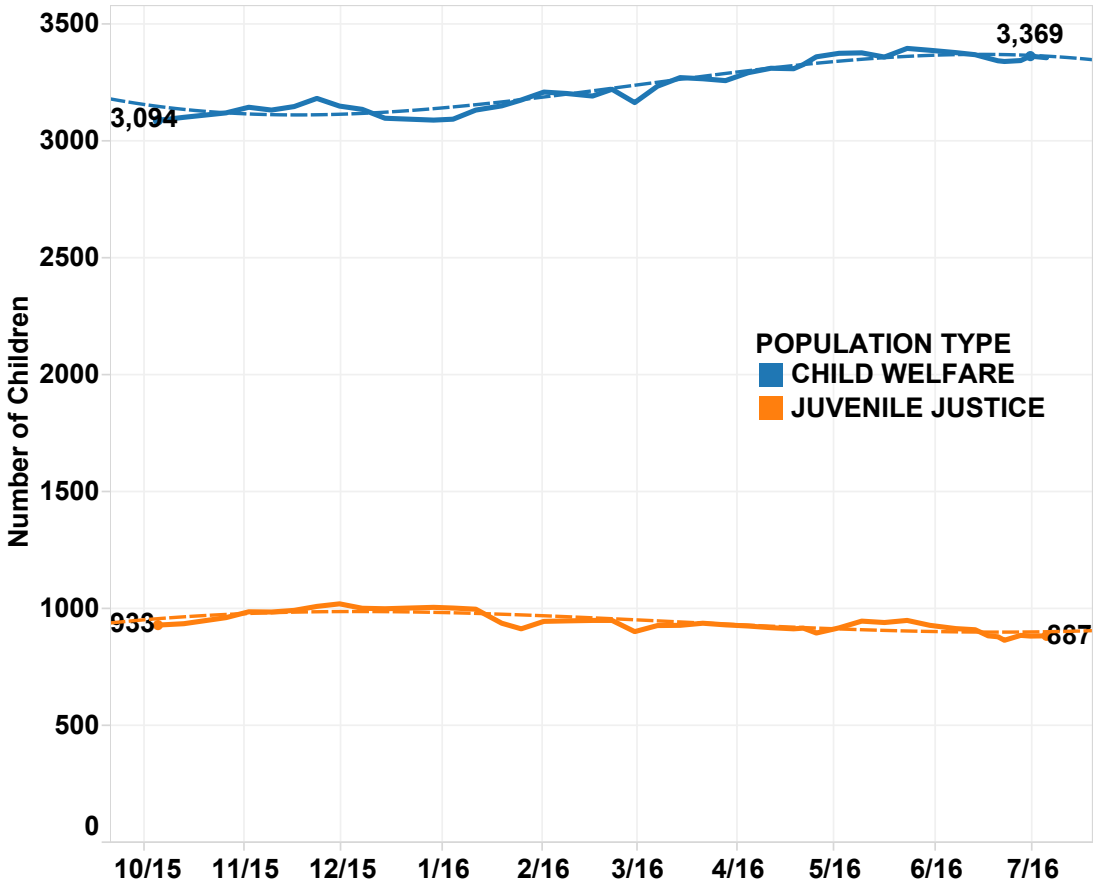


Figure 4 on the previous page presented the statewide perspective, showing that child welfare was up 8.7% and juvenile justice down 4.9%. **Figures 5-8** include data for all children out of home by court type. The four line graphs show trends by population type for the three separate juvenile courts, 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. **The graphs show that separate juvenile courts vary substantially from the statewide averages.**

Figure 5 indicates the non-separate (county) courts have **increased** Child Welfare counts by **12.0%**, and **decreased** Juvenile Justice counts by **8.7%.**

FIGURE 5. NON-SEPARATE (county) COURTS

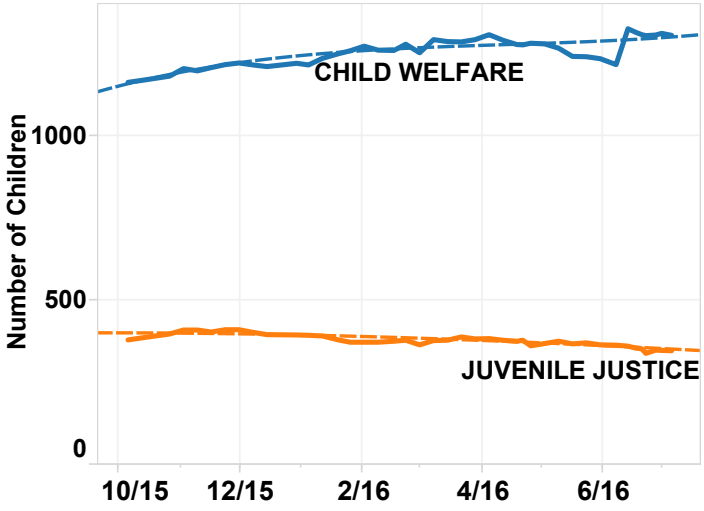


Figure 6 indicates Douglas County has **increased** Child Welfare counts by **9.7%** and decreased Juvenile Justice counts by **2.7%**.

FIGURE 6. DOUGLAS COUNTY

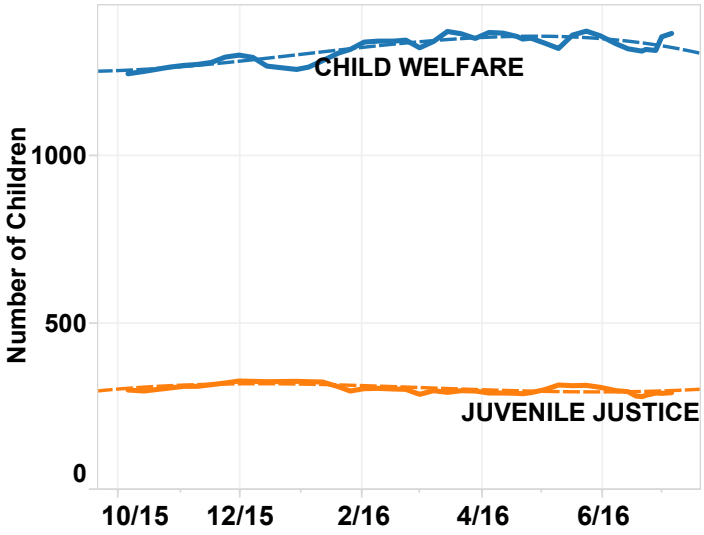


Figure 7 indicates Lancaster County has **decreased** Child Welfare counts by **23.9%**, and **increased** Juvenile Justice counts by **5.8%**. Some of the decrease may be attributable to alternative response for cases involving conditions that may be corrected without the necessity of a child's removal from the home.

FIGURE 7. LANCASTER COUNTY

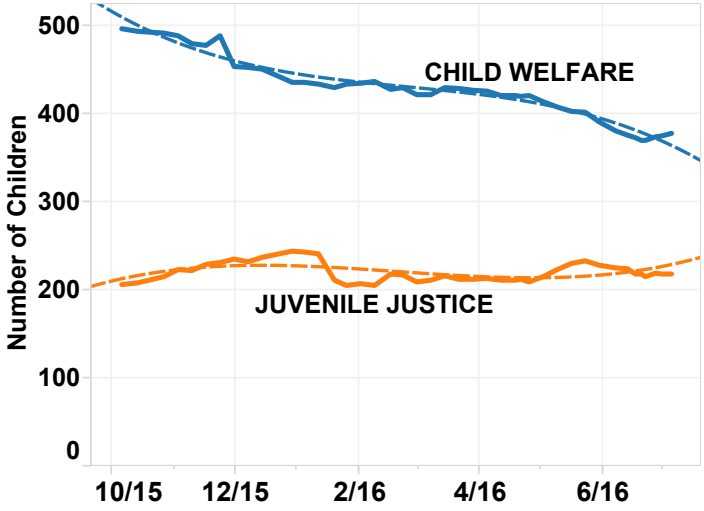
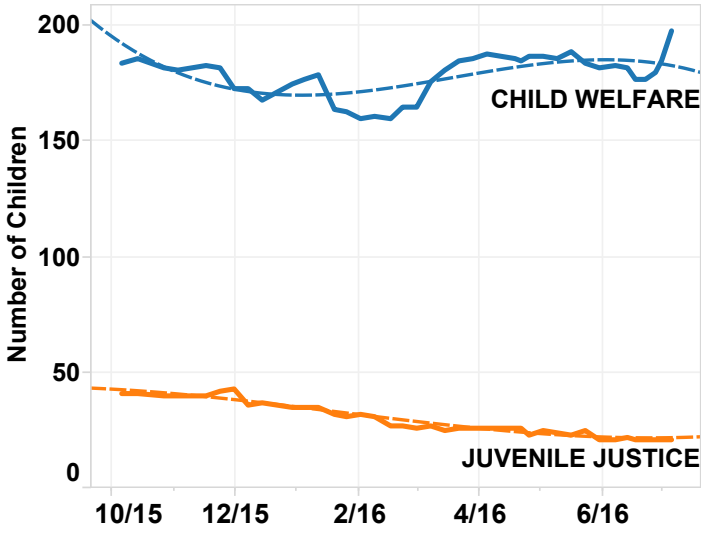


Figure 8 indicates Sarpy County has **increased** Child Welfare counts by **7.6%**, and **decreased** Juvenile Justice counts by **48.8%.** *The small "n" for the juvenile justice population impacts the percentage decrease.*

FIGURE 8. SARPY COUNTY



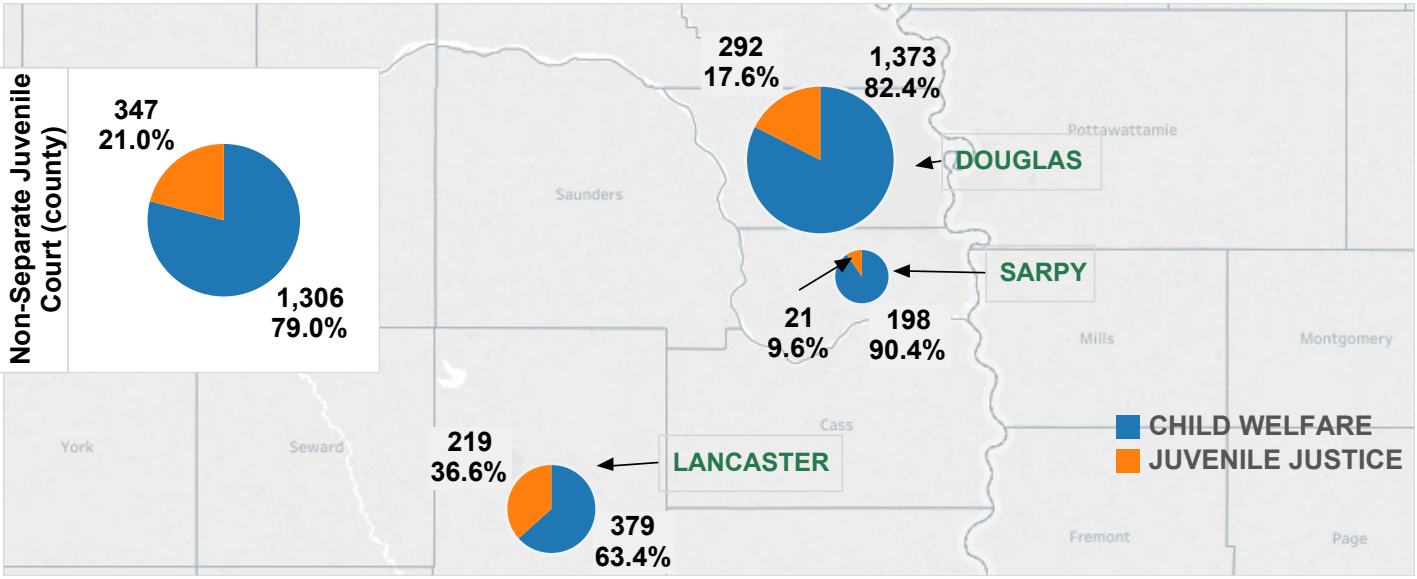
To better understand the proportionality of the populations **Figure 9** includes pie charts visually indicating the population type for each court jurisdiction **on 07/05/2016**. **Figure 3 on page 7** indicates that the state-wide ratio between Child Welfare and Juvenile Justice is roughly 79%-21% on 07/05/2016.

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, rather one population type might be higher proportionately due to efforts made to decrease the other population affecting the balance in the total population out-of-home.

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. (36.6%)

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

FIGURE 9. OUT-OF-HOME
BY POPULATION TYPE AND COURT TYPE (7/5/2016)



A. CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE (CHILD WELFARE)

This section specifically focuses on **number of DHHS children in out-of-home care**. This section is populated using a dataset going back to October 2015. **Figure 10** 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 October 2015 to July of 2016:

Eastern Service Area **increased** by **11.4%**
Southeast Service Area **decreased** by **9.8%**
Northern Service Area **increased** by **9.0%**
Central Service Area **increased** by **13.6%**
Western Service Area **increased** by **30.1%**

Below (**Figure 11)** 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 07/05/2016. 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 10. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY SERVICE AREA

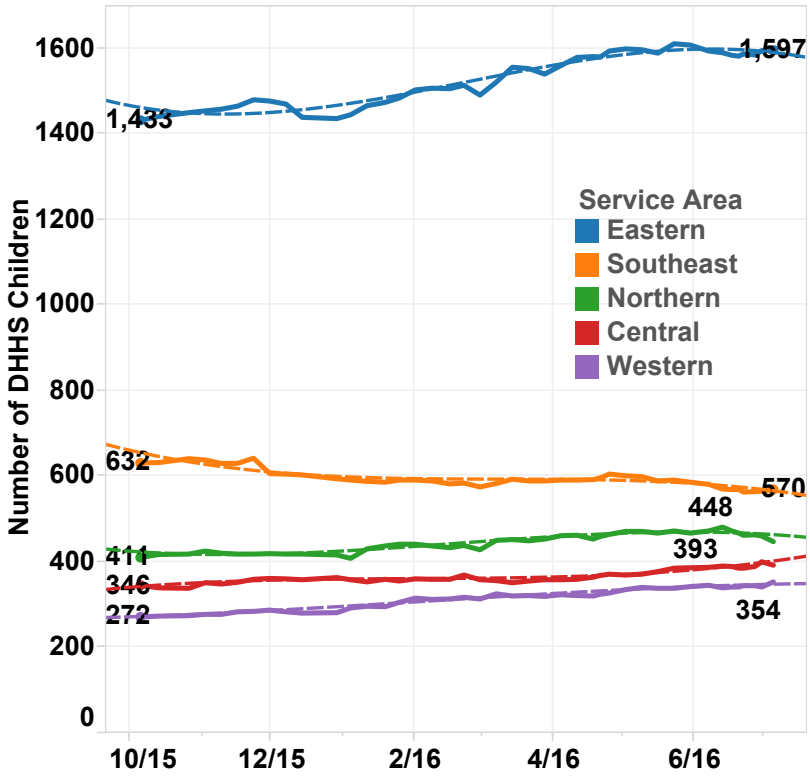
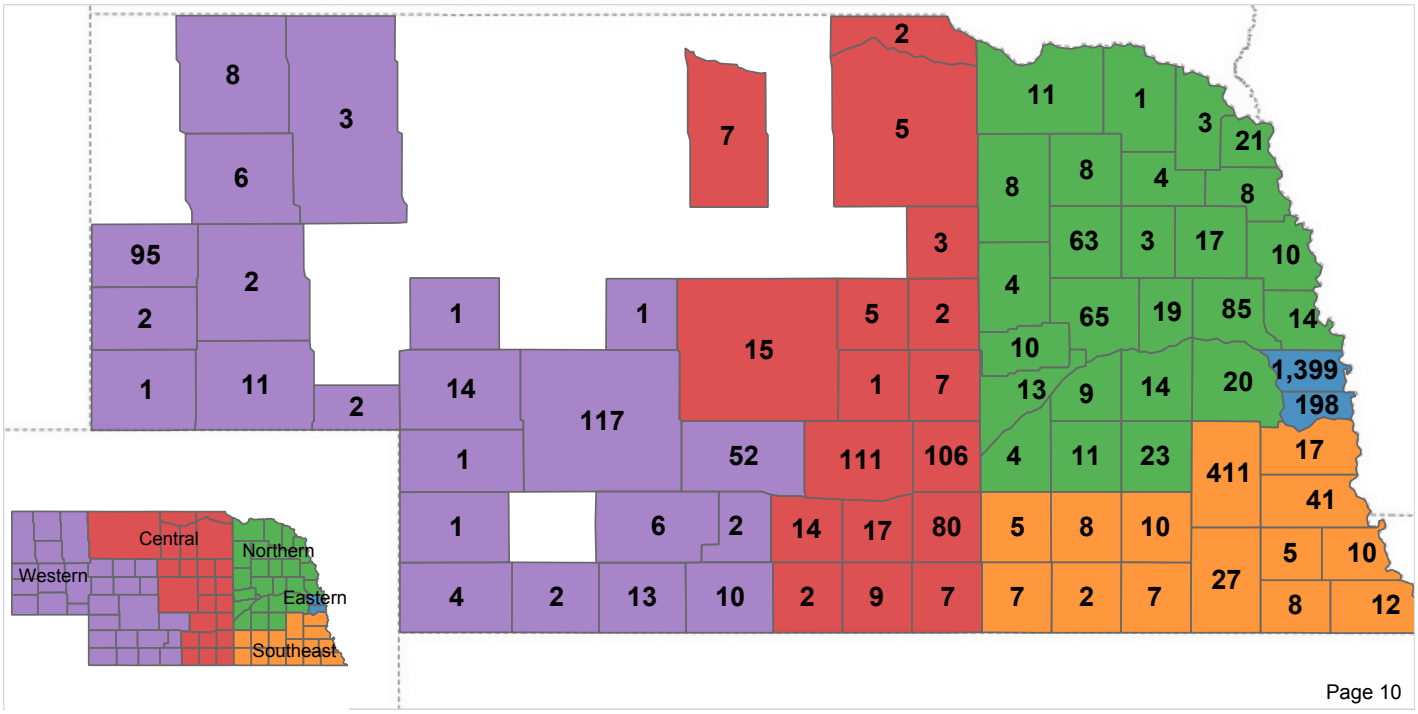


FIGURE 11. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY COUNTY (7/5/2016)



This section includes some basic demographics. **Figure 12** illustrates the DHHS children in out-of-home by age group. It shows that the increase in children has been spread across the age groups.

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 12. DHHS CHILDREN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY AGE GROUP

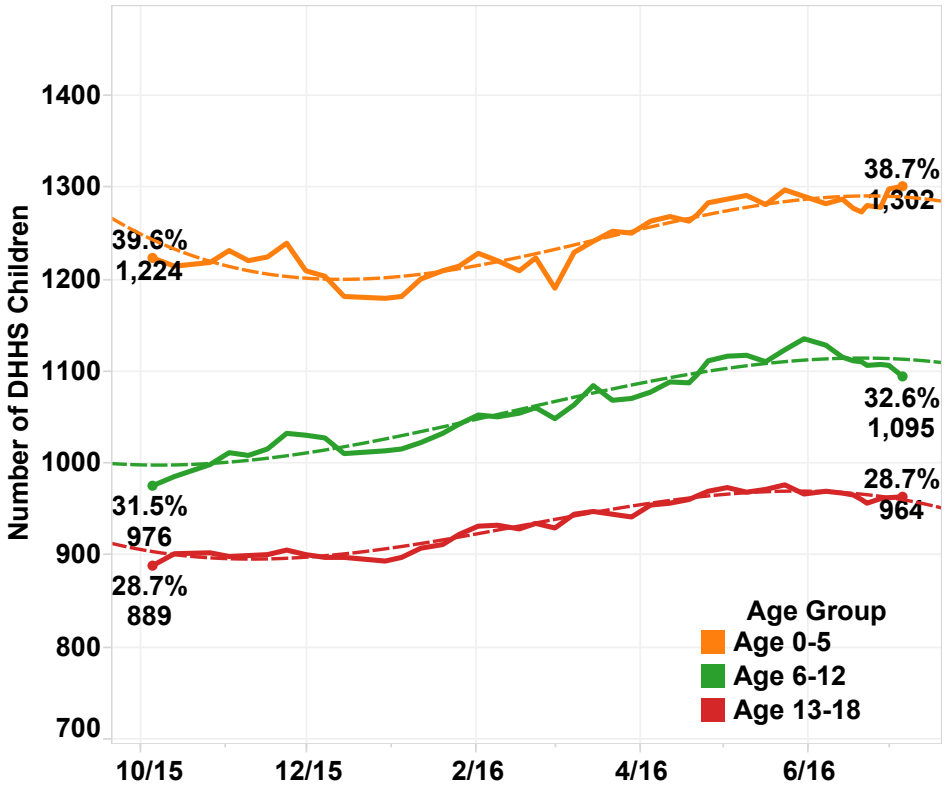
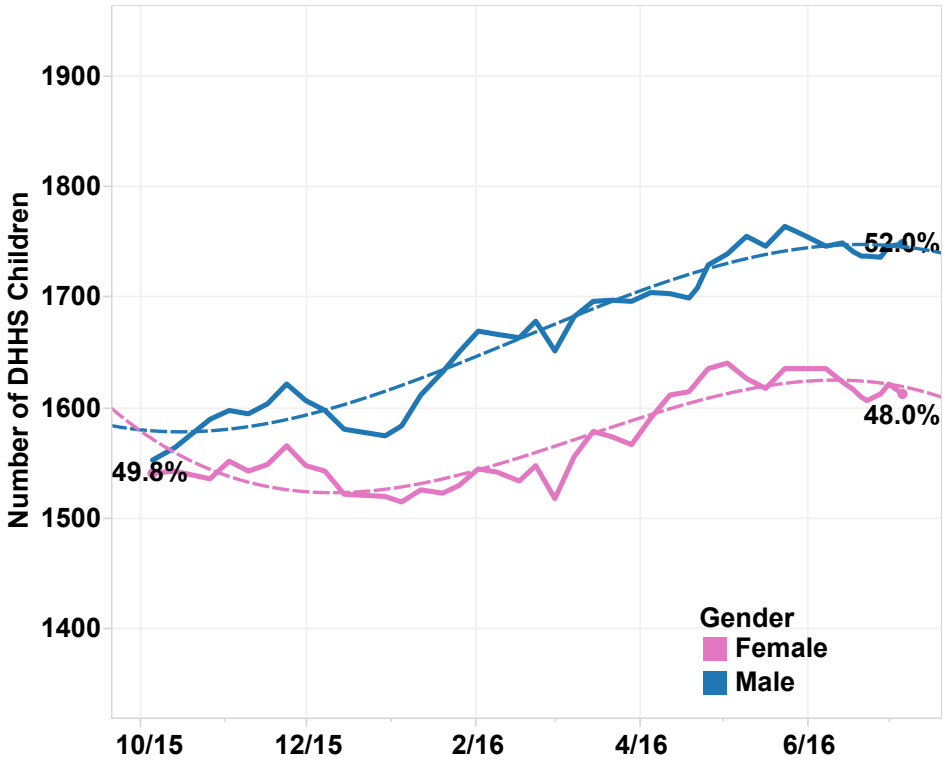


Figure 13 shows gender breakdowns for DHHS children in out-of-home care. In general boys make up about 51-52% of children in out-of-home care, girls are 49-48%. Gender ratios have remained relatively constant for many years, but does see some minor fluctuations. As you can see, there are seasonal differences 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.

Whether the child is a boy or a girl, and irrespective of the child's age, the child welfare system needs to strengthen families so those children can become healthy, productive adults.

FIGURE 13. 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 14 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 15 illustrates the same data, but simply showing the gap between exits and entries -- with decreases being green, and increases being red. Quarter 1 is January-March, Quarter 2 is April-June, Quarter 3 is July-September, and Quarter 4 is October-December.

For four out of the past six quarters there has been more entries then exits.

FIGURE 14. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE EXIT/ENTRY COMPARISON

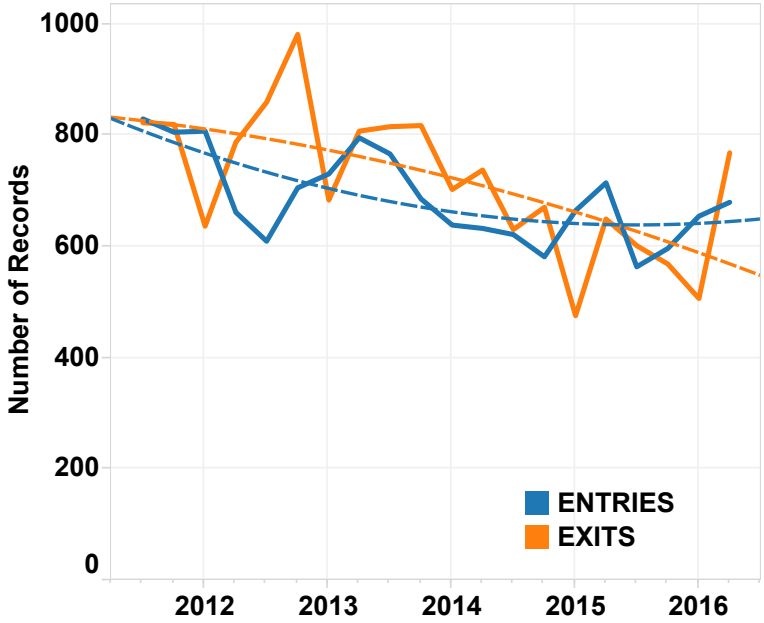


FIGURE 15. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE EXIT/ENTRY QUARTERLY GAP COMPARISON

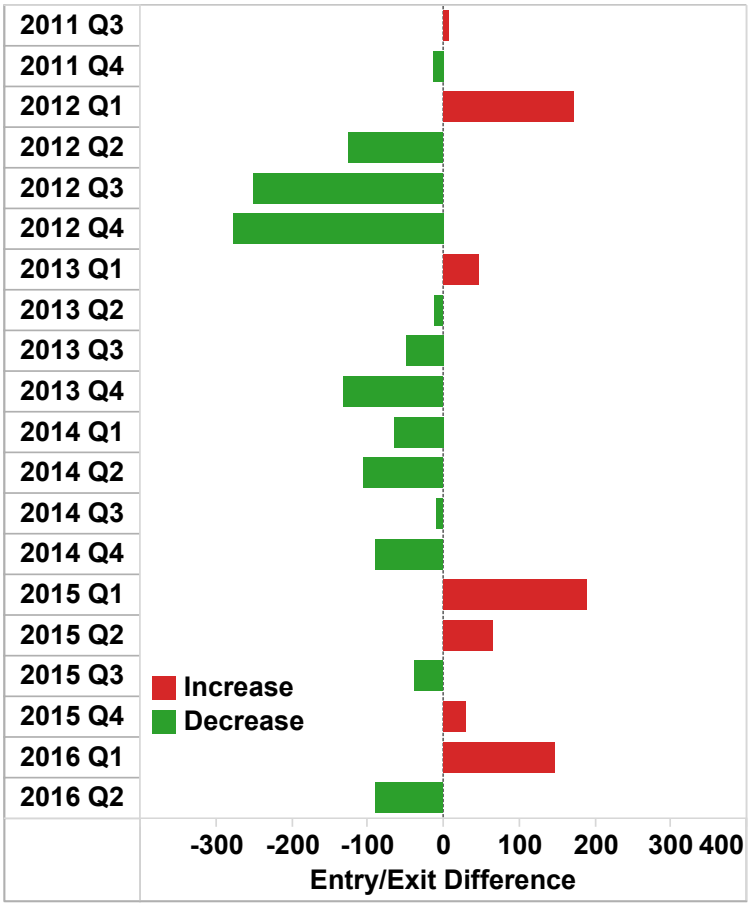


Figure 16 helps one better understand the relationship even more. The table consists of five years of aggregated exit to entry data, *thus each is a five year average*.

Quarter 1 (Q1) is January-March, Quarter 2 is April-June, Quarter 3 is July-September, Quarter 4 is October-December.

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.

Data shows that one should expect 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 16. EXIT/ENTRY AGGREGATED COMPARISON TABLE

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EXIT	**599**	**750**	**746**	**772**
ENTRY	**699**	**697**	**678**	**674**

PLACEMENT TYPES

If children cannot safely live at home, then they need to live in the least restrictive, most home-like temporary placement possible in order for them to grow and thrive.

The Least restrictive placements include:

- placements with relatives,
- foster family homes,
- agency-based homes,
- developmental disability homes, and
- supervised independent living.

Moderately restrictive placements includes non-treatment group homes and board schools.

Most restrictive placements includes:

- psychiatiric residental treatment facilities,
- medical facilities,
- youth rehabilitation and treatment centers at Geneva and Kearney,
- youth detention centers, and
- emergency shelters.

Figure 17 shows the number of children in each of major restrictivenss categories. Most children are in the least restrictive placement types. There have been no significant changes during this time period.

FIGURE 17. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY PLACEMENT TYPE

	10/05/2015		07/05/2016		
Placement Restrictiveness	Count	Percent..	Count	Percent..	%Change
Least restrictive	2,837	91.69%	3,120	92.80%	10.0%
Moderately restrictive	100	3.23%	93	2.77%	-7.0%
Most restrictive	122	3.94%	115	3.42%	-5.7%
Other type	4	0.13%			-100.0%
Runaway	31	1.00%	34	1.01%	9.7%

Figure 18 shows how many in the least restrictive types are placed with in a relative or kinship (person previously known to the child such as a coach or teacher) placement.

With so many children being placed with relatives or "kin", it is imperative that the system build in adequate supports for those placements. Too often the FCRO hears from relatives or kin who do not have an adequate understanding of how the child welfare system works or who indicate they are not given adequate support.

There has been a significant increase in the use of relative/kinship placements.

FIGURE 18. CHILDREN IN LEAST RESTRICTIVE PLACEMENTS BY WHETHER WITH RELATIVE/KINSHIP

	October 5, 2015		July 5, 2016	
Relative designation	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage
Non-relative	1,336	47.09%	1,272	40.77%
Relative/kinship	1,501	52.91%	1,848	59.23%
Total	2,837	100.00%	3,120	100.00%

PLACEMENT CHANGES

The line-graph to the top-right (**Figure 19**) shows that progress has been made in reducing the number of placements. In October of 2015, **14.2%** of the DHHS children in out-of-home had experienced 4 or More Placements during their first time in care. When examing the data in June of 2016 that number had decreased to **13.0%.**

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

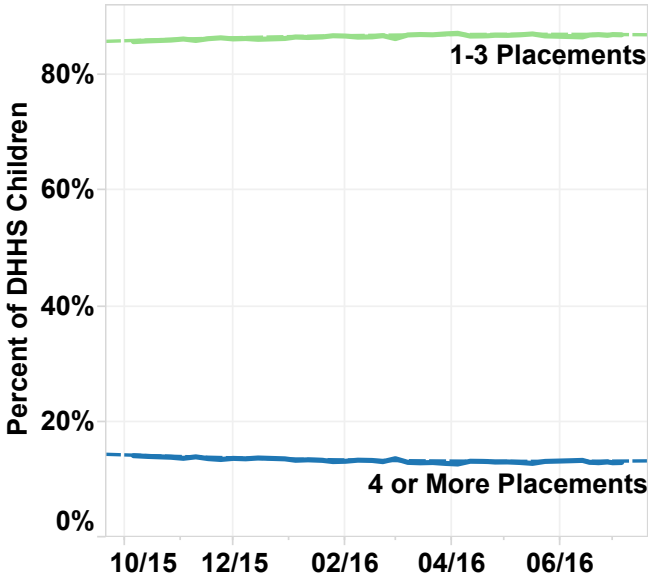
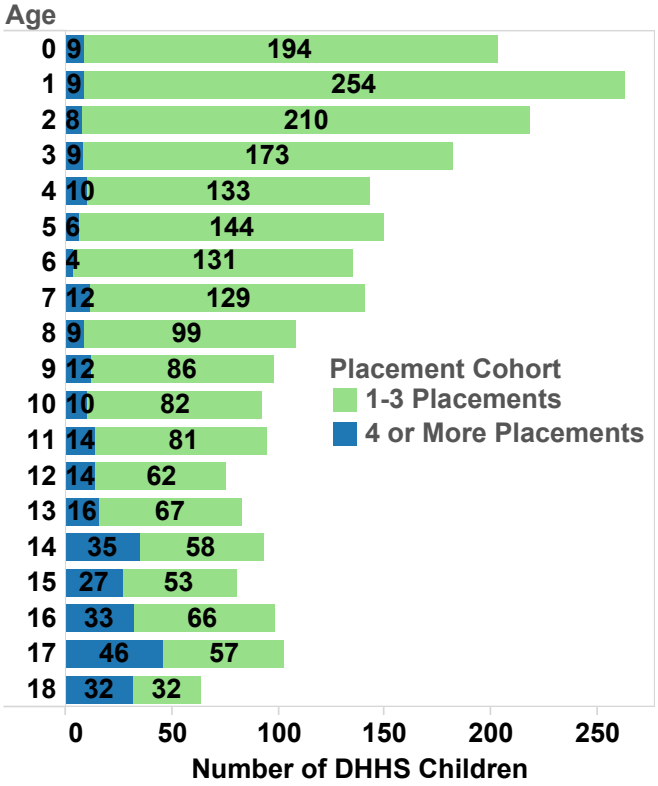


FIGURE 20. AGE OF DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY PLACEMENT COHORT ON 7/5/2016 (FIRST TIME IN CARE)



[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.

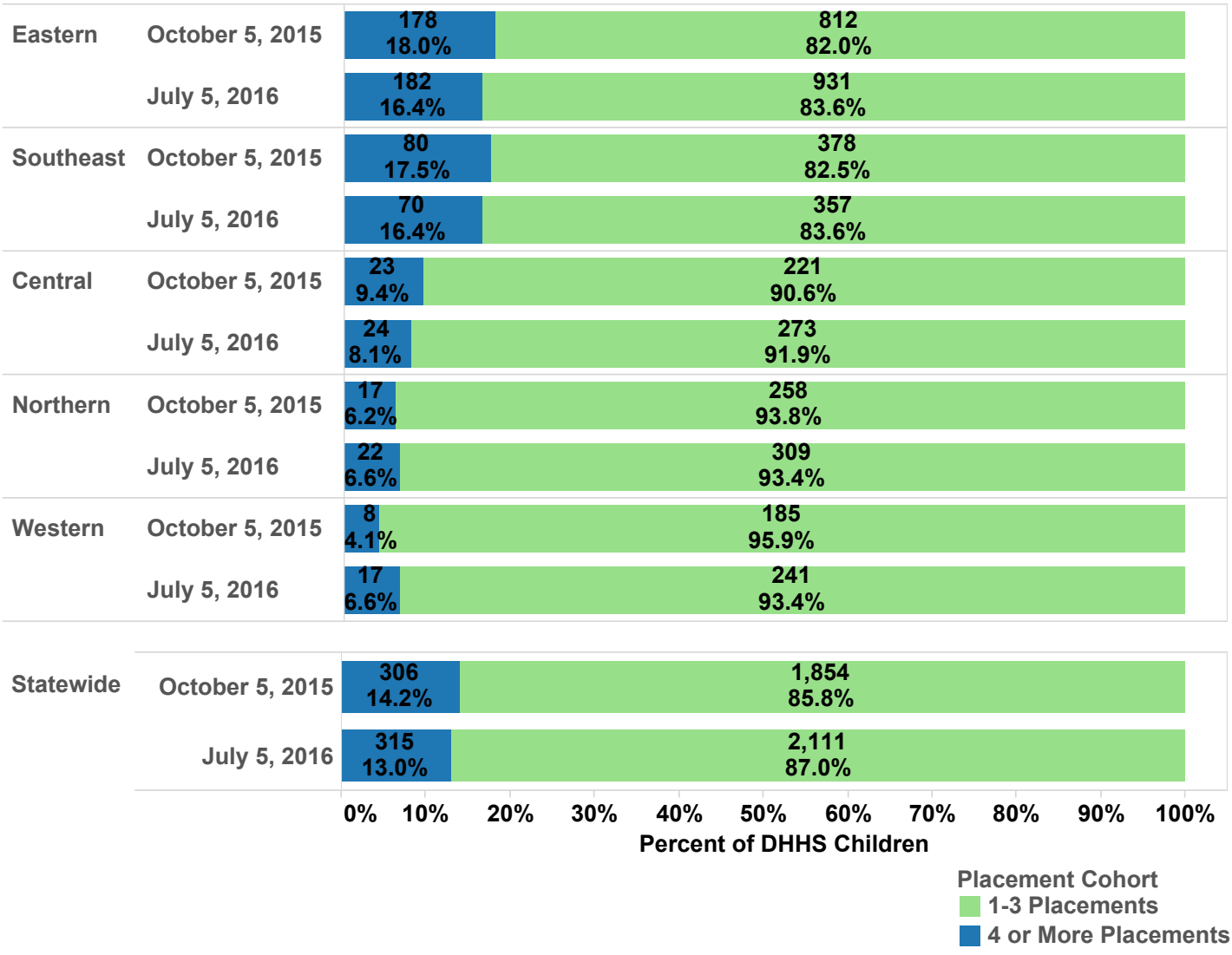
PLACEMENT CHANGES

Figure 21, shows the number of placements by DHHS service area as defined by statute. This shows the amount of stability/instability by area.

During this time period there has been little change within service areas as to the number of children with high rates of placement moves.

The Eastern and Southeast service areas exceed the state average in the percent of children with 4 or more placements over their lifetime. Some hypotheses as to why this occurs that need further research include that the Eastern and Southeast service areas have more facilities available so may be less likely to keep children where a bed is first found available, and non-urban areas may have a reluctance to move children if distances would complicate remaining in the same school, visitation with parents, etc.

FIGURE 21. DHHS CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY PLACEMENT COHORT (FIRST TIME IN-CARE)



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** during the past nine months.

Figure 22 outlines the annual average length of stay. As with the earlier charts, there are seasonal fluctuations. For example, many courts have Adoption Day in November, and thus the length of stay may be impacted by the length of the process of termination of rights and subsequent appeals. Other fluctuations are not as readily apparent.

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.

To paraphrase the Casey Foundation, the challenge for the child welfare system is that permanency without safety is unacceptable, but so too is safety at the expense of well-being or permanency.

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

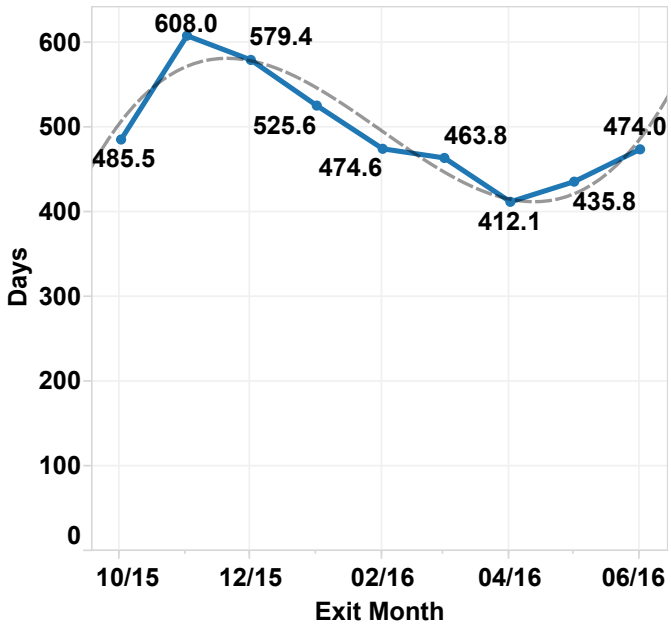
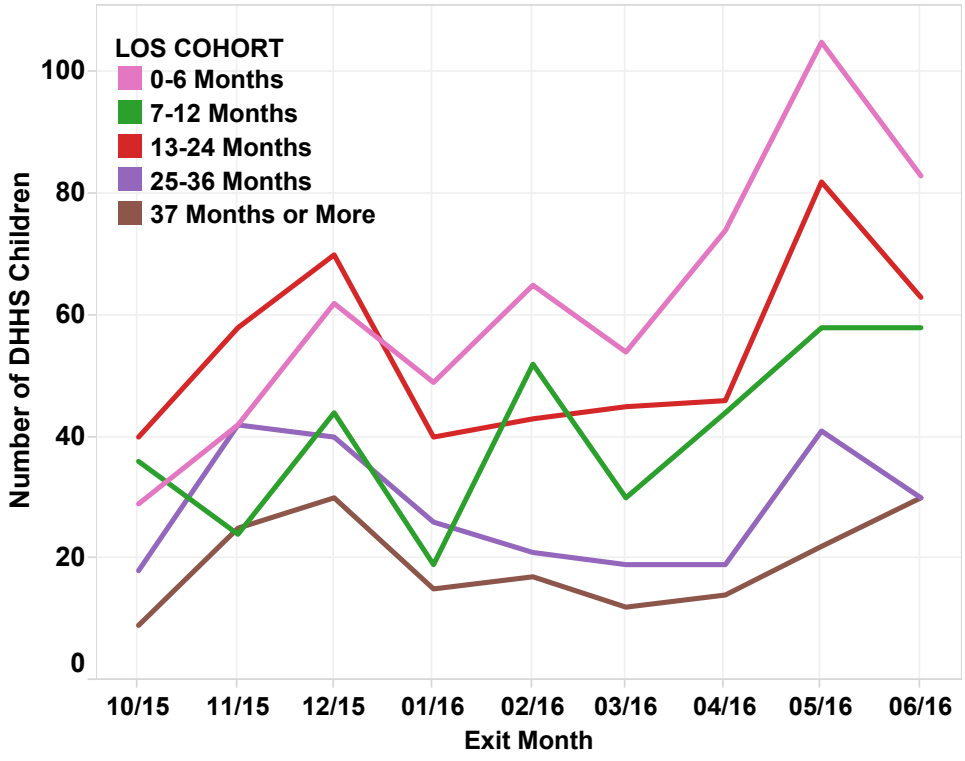


Figure 23 shows that regardless of length of stay cohort, there are certain times when more children tend to exit care. This reflects attempts to return children prior to winter holidays, adoption day, and the end of the school year. Such predictable fluctuations need to be taken into consideration when analyzing trends.

The chart also shows there has been a significant change in the numbers who left in 0-6 month cohort and the 7-12 month cohort, but less change for those who left after 2 years (25 months) or more in out-of-home care.

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 juvenile courts combined. Again, this data is compiled by combining weekly snapshots over the time period. All show some decrease in children in out-of-home care over this 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 07/05/2016 for the counties. Most of the youth were from areas with separate juvenile courts.

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

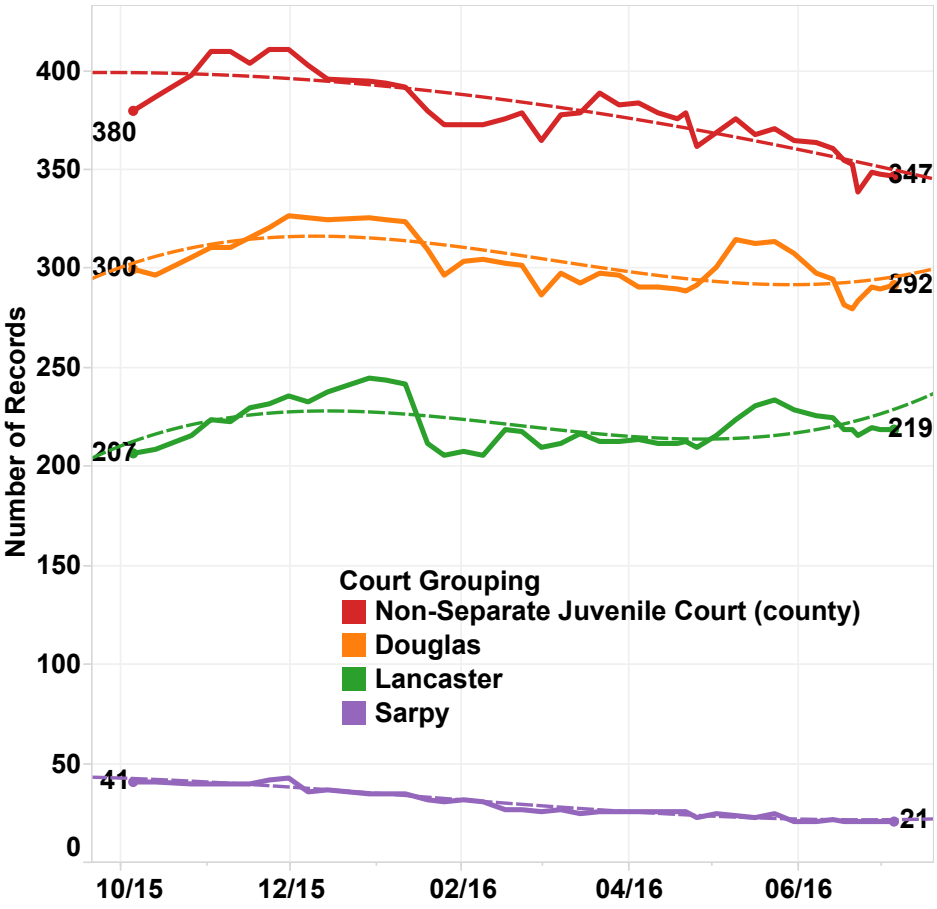


FIGURE 25. JUVENILE JUSTICE YOUTH IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE BY SEPARATE & NON-SEPARATE COURTS (7/5/2016)

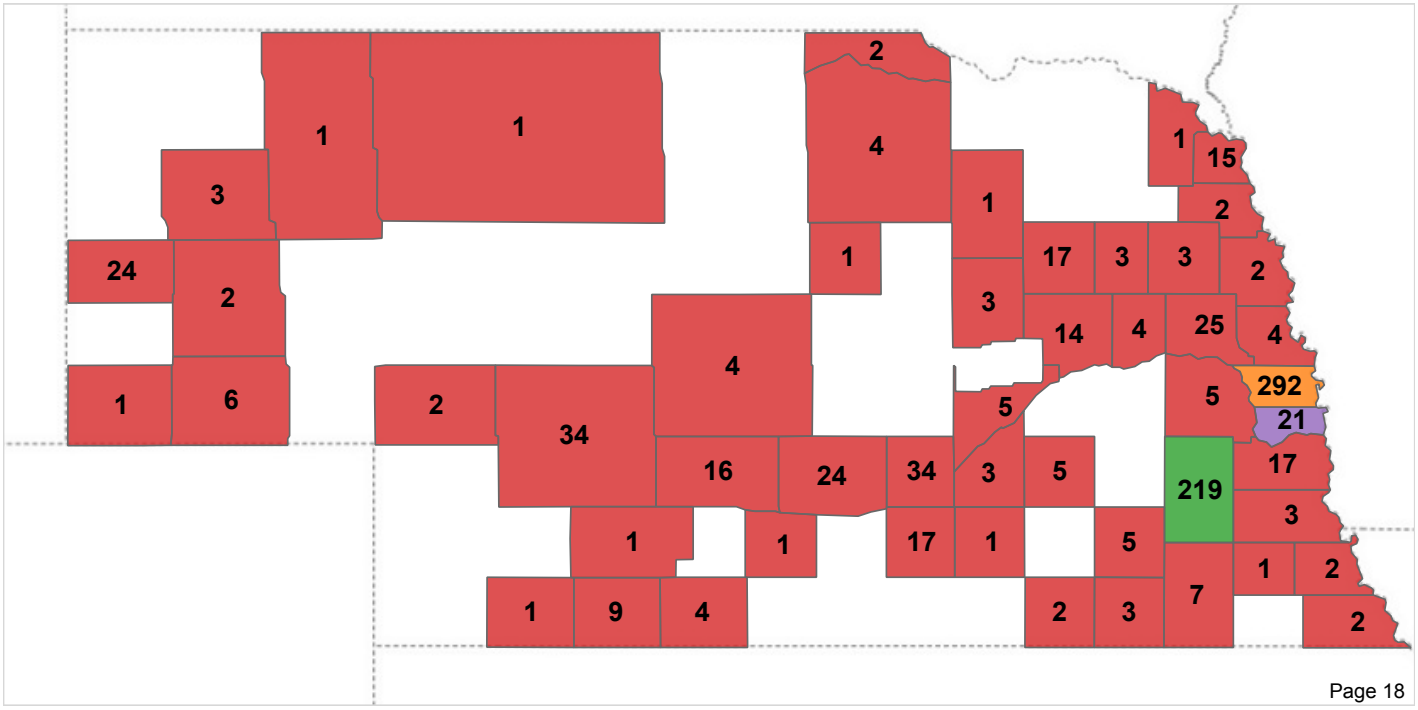


Figure 26 shows Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care by age. While the overall number of Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care has stayed relatively constant during this time period there are differences based on age. For example, there are more youth age 16-18 than youth who are under 16 years of age. Almost all age groups have slightly increased, then decreased, before increasing slightly during this time period.

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

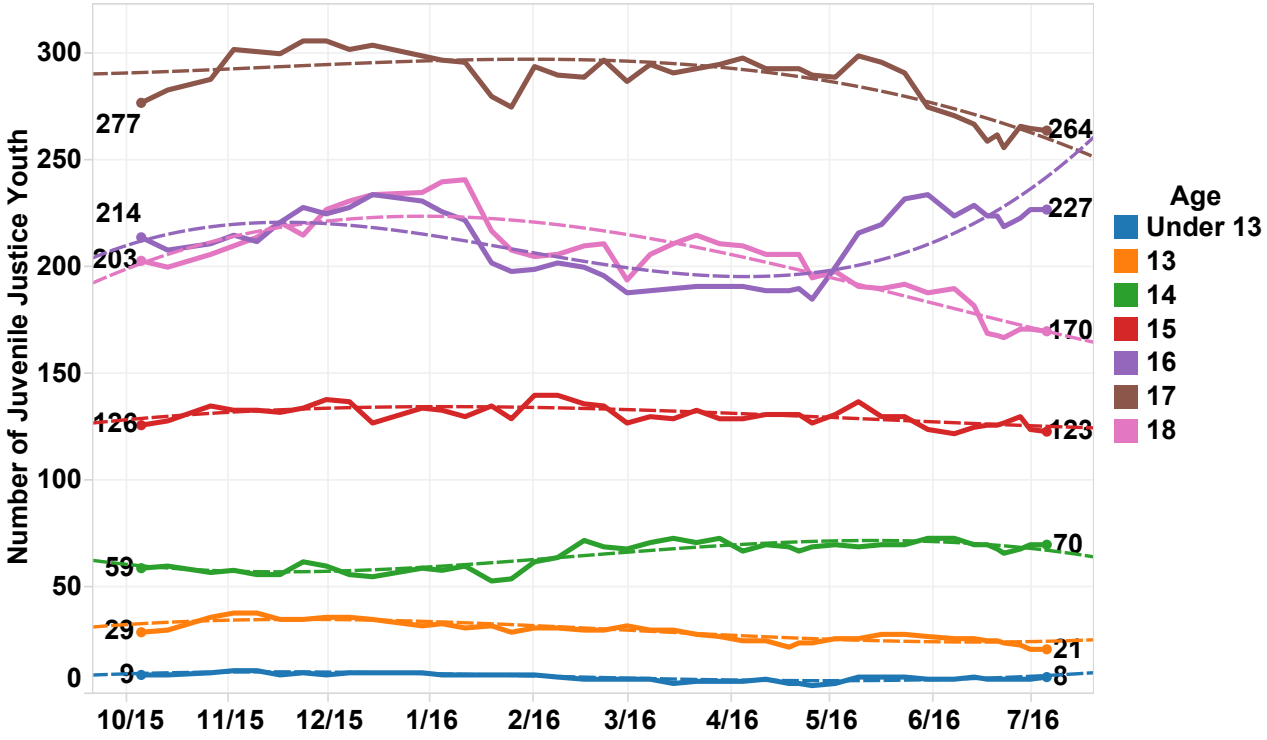
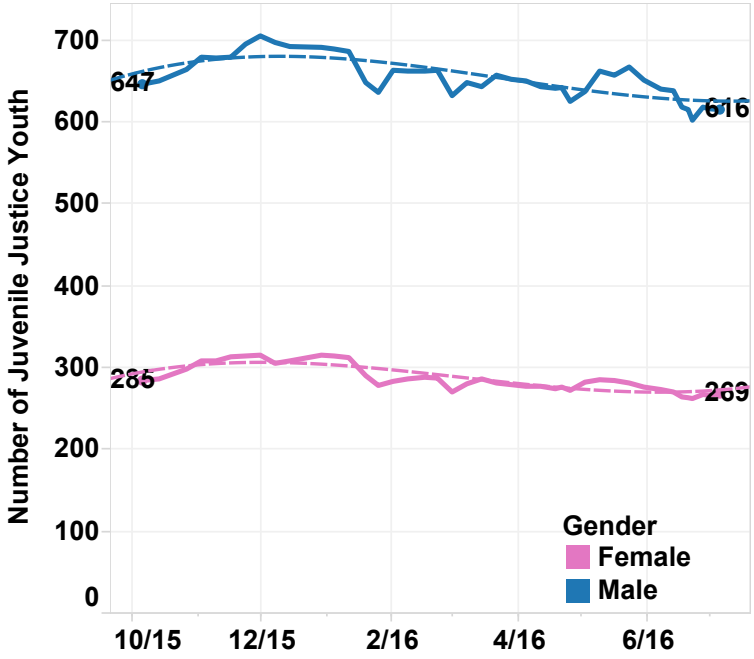


Figure 27 shows gender breakdowns for Juvenile Justice Youth in out-of-home care. The male Juvenile Justice youth make up twice as much of the population. These gender ratios have remained relatively constant for this time period.

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



II. CHILDREN IN TRIAL HOME VISITS

Nebraska statute defines a trial home visit as "a placement of a court-involved juvenile who goes from a foster care placement back to his or her legal parent or parents or guardian but remains a ward of the state." Families may need time to re-integrate after a child's removal from the home, and the system may need to stay involved with the family for a brief period of time to assure that families are able to find the natural supports (formal and informal) that they need to grow strong and thrive within their own communities.

Effective August 30, 2015, the FCRO was granted the authority to track and subsequently review cases of children who are in this status. **FIgure 28** shows how many children there are in this classification at various points from that time. There was a **7.8% increase** in trial home visits during this time period.

Figure 29 illustrates the DHHS children in trial home visits by age group.

FIGURE 28. TRIAL HOME VISITS

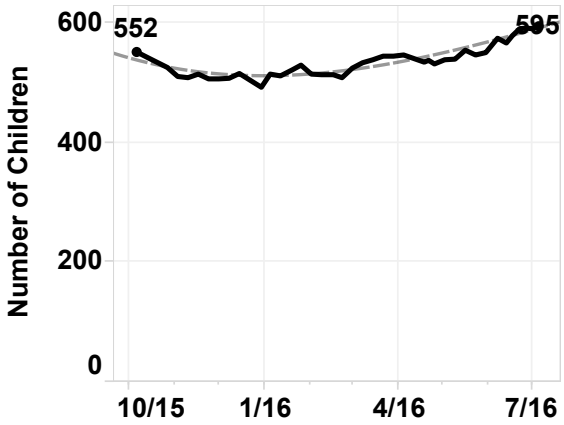


FIGURE 29. TRIAL HOME VISITS BY AGE

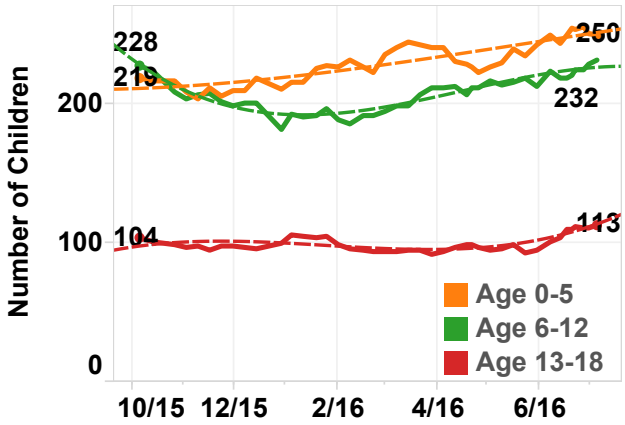


Figure 30 shows gender breakdowns for DHHS children in trial home visits. There is not a significant difference in the gender ratio of children in trial home visits.

Figure 31 shows the originating county of the children in trial home visit. Many rural areas have no children in trial home visit. The FCRO plans to share detailed review information about children in trial home visits in future reports.

FIGURE 30.THV BY GENDER

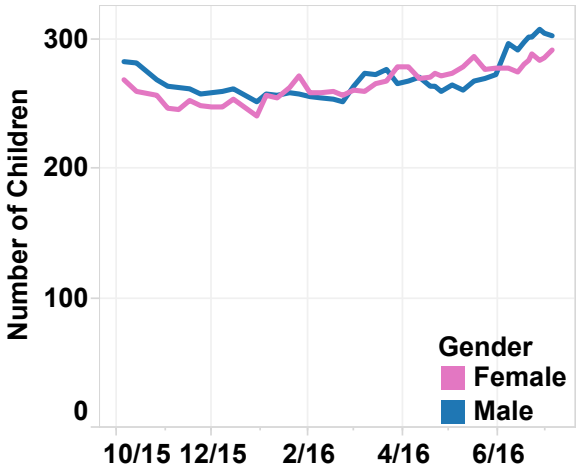
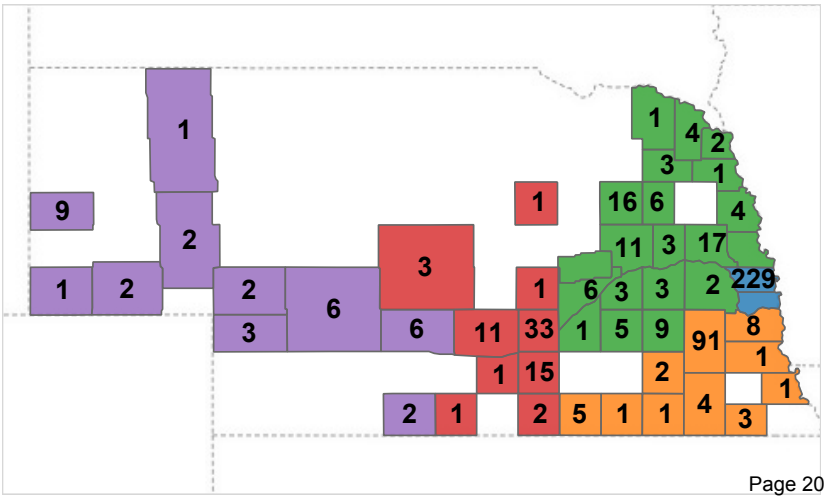


FIGURE 31. CHILDREN IN TRIAL HOME VISIT BY COUNTY (7/5/2016)



III. 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 the 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 Nebraska.

Since October of 2015 there has been significant decline in the utilization of out-of-state congregate placements system-wide, a **32.2% decrease** (**Figure 32**).

Figures 33 (a,b) illustrate the states that children were placed in on the beginning date of this analysis 10/05/2015, and on 07/04/2016 for comparison purposes. The figures illustrate that work by the members of the collaborative are reducing placements outside Nebraska. In addition, many of those out of state are in bordering states, where distance to the parents may be favorable to available in-state beds.

FIGURE 32. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS

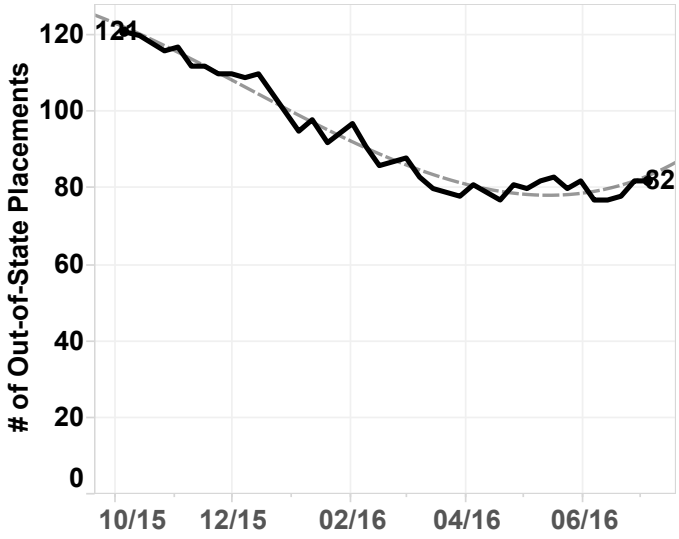


FIGURE 33a. OOS PLACEMENTS BY STATE 10/5/2015

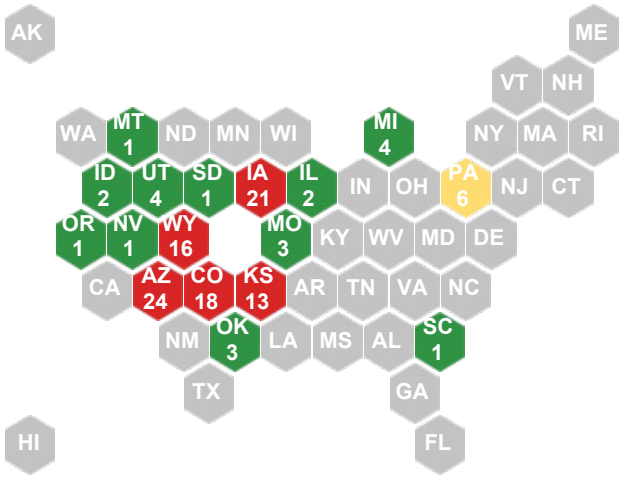
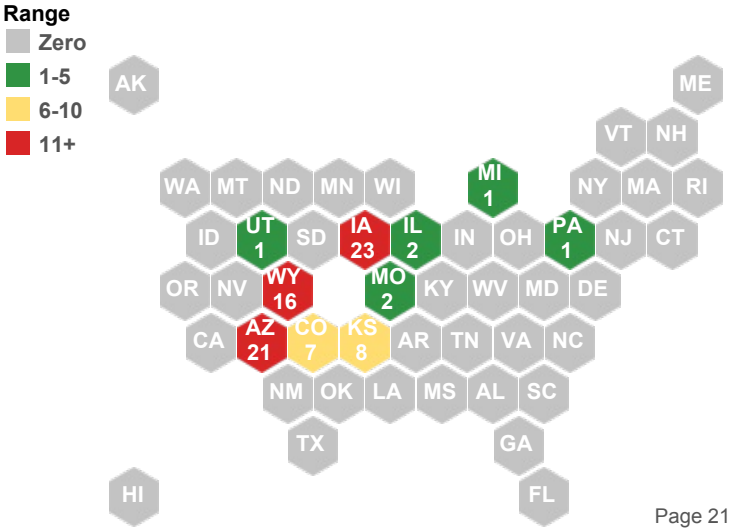
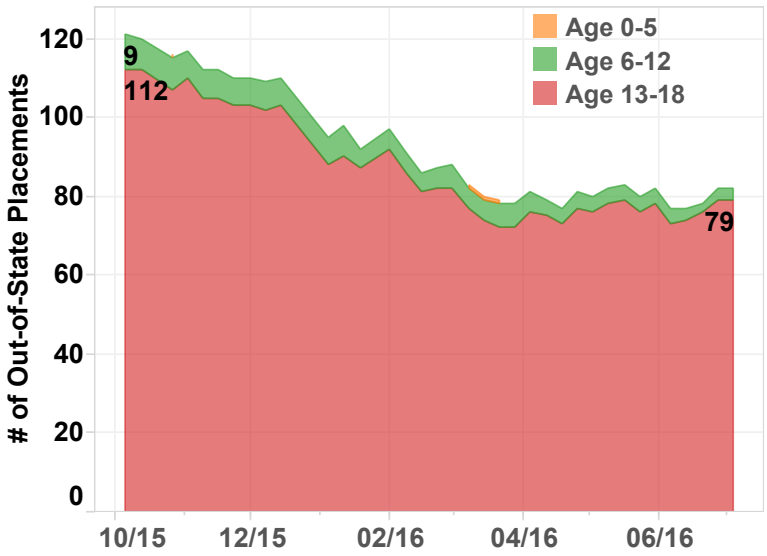


FIGURE 33b. OOS PLACEMENTS BY STATE 7/4/2016



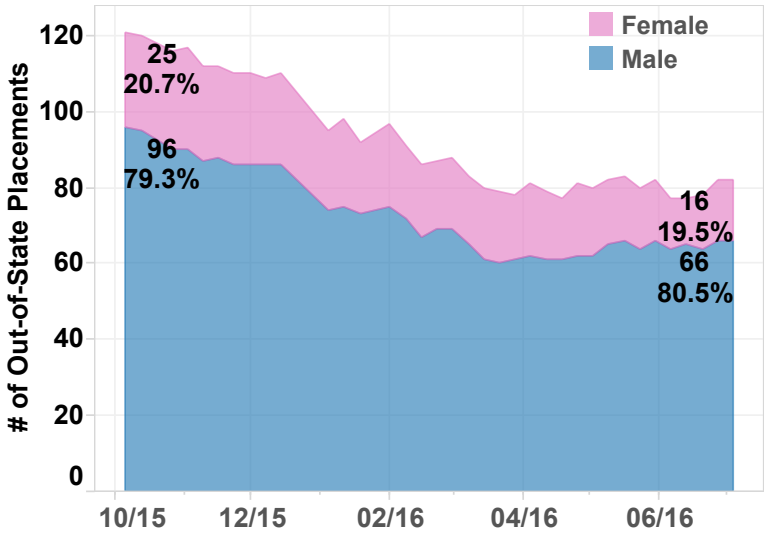
In order to better understand the youth placed out of state we first looked at the ages (**Figure 34**). Clearly the majority placed out of Nebraska in congregate care are in their teen years (96.3% of those in care July 4, 2016). This was not unexpected.

FIGURE 34. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS



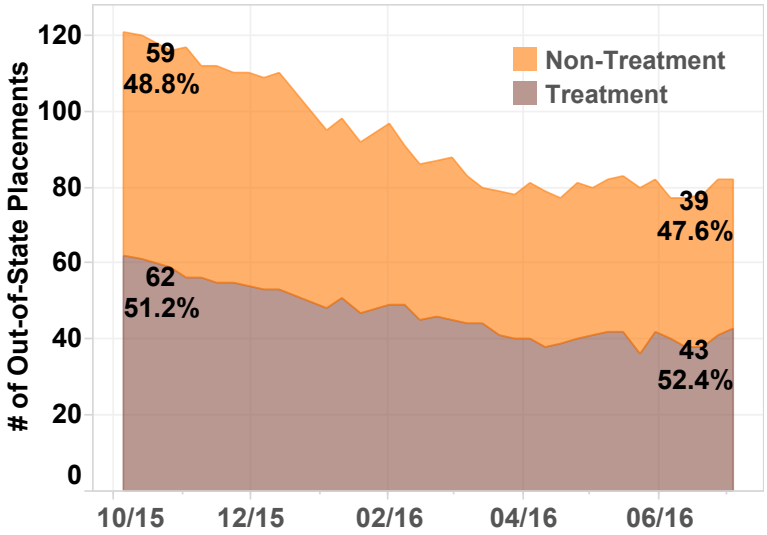
Next we looked at gender (**Figure 35**). Here we see a disproportionate number of boys when compared to girls (boys 80.5% to 19.5% for girls). This raises more questions that require further study.

FIGURE 35. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS



Finally we looked at treatment type (**Figure 36**). If children are placed outside Nebraska due to a deficit of treatments for specific issues, it would be expected that most placed out of state would be in treatment facilities, but that is not the case. On July 4, 2016, 47.6% of those placed outside Nebraska were in non-treatment congregate settings.

FIGURE 36. OUT-OF-STATE PLACEMENTS



Figures 37 shows the downward trend for both the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare out-of-state population. The Juvenile Justice population has seen a **decrease of 30.6%** and the Child Welfare population has seen a **decrease of 36.0%**.

Figures 38(a,b) & 39(a,b) further illustrate this broken out by whether the child came from child welfare or juvenile justice (duals are not mapped due to the small "n"). In each 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. When comparing the figures we find that for each system as fewer children are placed out of state, border states are housing a larger percentage. The trend is positive, but some larger questions remain for the Workgroup to consider such as what, if any, specific types of facilities need to be developed in Nebraska.

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

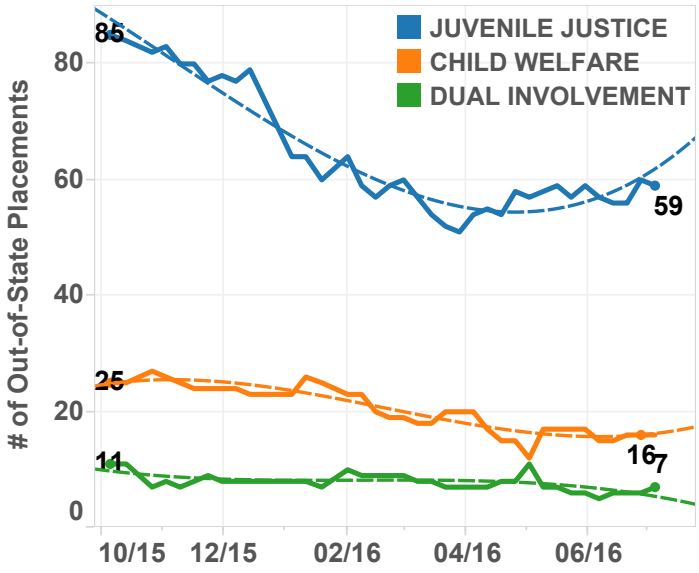


FIGURE 38a. OOS BY STATE 10/5/2015 CHILD WELFARE

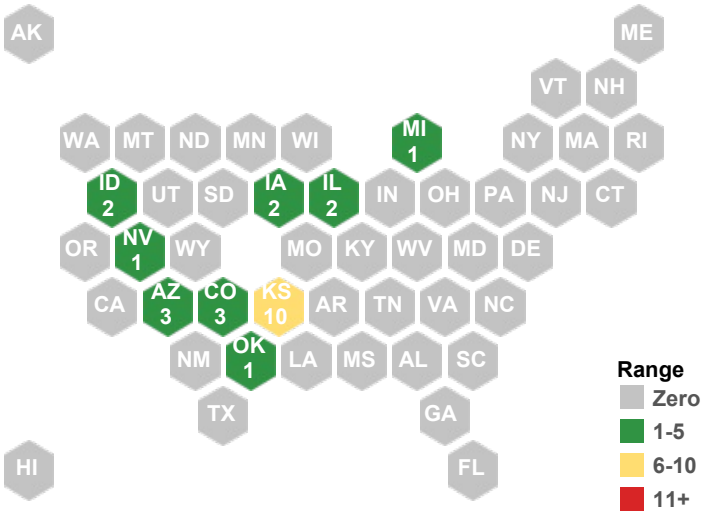


FIGURE 38b. OOS BY STATE 7/4/2016 CHILD WELFARE

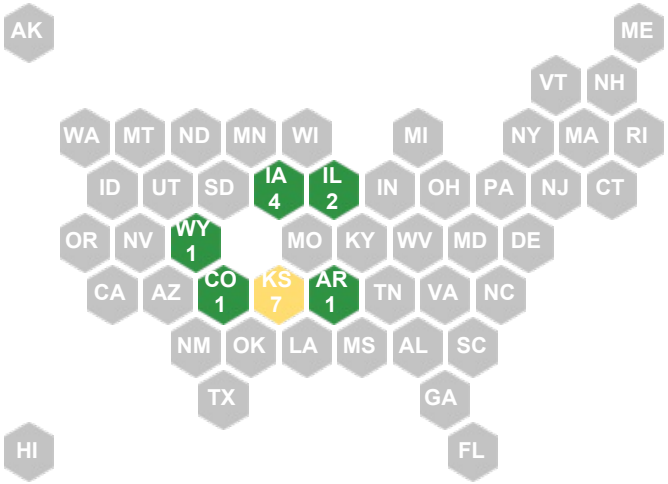


FIGURE 39a. OOS BY STATE 10/5/2015 JUV. JUSTICE

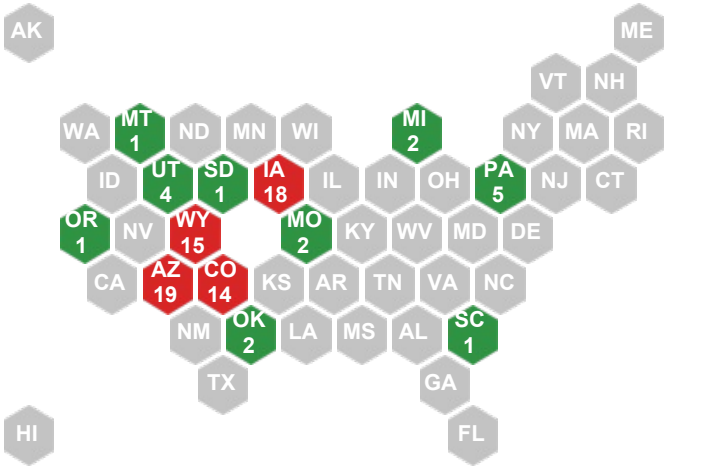
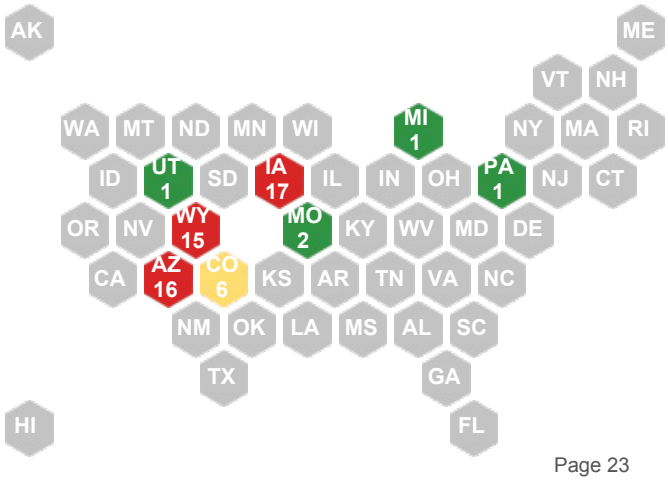


FIGURE 39b. OOS BY STATE 7/4/2016 JUV. JUSTICE



Figures 40 and 41 show the Court in charge of the children and the number of youth from that Court that are placed out of state in congregate facilities. Most of the children either came from a border county or separate juvenile court.

Figure 40 shows the originating county and whether the children are placed in a state that borders Nebraska. It shows that 68.3% of the children are in border states. Interestingly the number of children and youth from Douglas County in non-bordering states (20) exceeds those in bordering states (16).

Figure 41 shows the total number from each county and gives a better sense of the geographical distribution of originating counties.

The Out of State Placement Collaborative Workgroup continues to meet to discuss how Nebraska can best meet the needs of its children in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

FIGURE 40. COUNTY OF COURT FOR CHILDREN PLACED OUT-OF-STATE (07/04/2016)

	Border States	Non-border States
Banner	1	
Boyd	1	
Buffalo		1
Cass	4	
Cheyenne	3	
Clay		1
Colfax	1	
Dakota	2	
Douglas	16	20
Furnas	1	
Kimball	1	
Lancaster	10	1
Platte	1	
Red Willow	1	
Sarpy	6	
Scotts Bluff	7	1
Seward		1
York	1	1
Grand Total	56	26

FIGURE 41. COUNTY OF COURT FOR CHILDREN PLACED OUT-OF-STATE (07/04/2016)