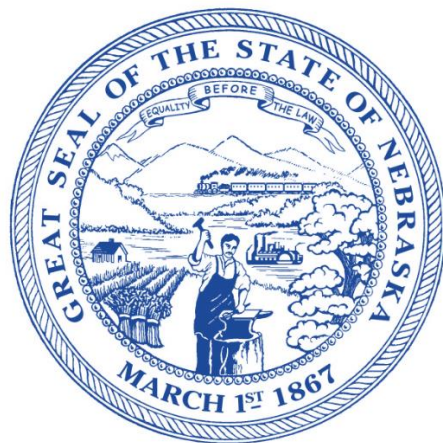


The Nebraska Foster Care Review Office Quarterly Report



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

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Executive Summary

The Foster Care Review Office (FCRO)¹ provides this Quarterly Report to inform the Nebraska Legislature, child welfare system stakeholders, juvenile justice system stakeholders, other policy makers, the press, and the public on identified conditions and outcomes for Nebraska's children in out-of-home care [aka foster care] as defined by statute, as well as to recommend needed changes as mandated.

As in past reports, the FCRO shares average daily populations and point-in-time data for Nebraska's children in out-of-home or trial home visit care, both through child welfare and through juvenile justice². Data included in this report may differ from past reports as counts have been updated to reflect any added and/or corrected records entered over time. The following are some main points from the most recent quarter of data available.

- There were, 3,965 Nebraska children in out-of-home or trial home visit placements under DHHS/CFS, DHHS/OJS, and/or the Office of Juvenile Probation on 12/31/20, a 3.0% decrease from 2019. (page 5)
- DHHS/CFS wards continue to be placed in the least restrictive, most family like settings at very high rates (96.6%). (page 11)
- 28.5% of DHHS/CFS wards have had more than four placements over their lifetime, including 11.3% of the children under age 6. (page 14)
- 32.6% of the DHHS/CFS wards in the Eastern Service Area have had more than 4 workers since the most recent removal.³ Additionally, 21.4% of wards in the Northern Service Area and 16.7% of wards in the Southeast Service Area had more than 4 workers. (page 15)
- 23.0% of DHHS/CFS wards experienced more than one court-involved removal from the parental home in their lifetime. (pages 16)
- There were 41.5% fewer youth at a YRTC than a year ago. (page 17)
- There were 21.3% fewer Probation only youth in out-of-home care than a year ago. Some of this is attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic. (page 22)
- For youth needing a congregate placement, Probation continues to place them within the state of Nebraska at high rates (88.9%). (page 25)
- The number of youth involved with both DHHS/CFS and the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation – Juvenile Services Division (hereafter

¹ See Appendix A for definitions and explanations of acronyms used in this Report.

² In past reports the FCRO has included a special study section. That was not done for this report due to a staff vacancy on the FCRO's Research Team.

³ Many former PromiseShip caseworkers were subsequently employed by Saint Francis. If the same worker remained with the child's case without a break of service, the FCRO worked to ensure that the worker count was not increased. Counts were only increased during the transfer period if a new person became involved with the child and family.

referred to as Probation), also known as dually-involved youth, decreased by 20.3% over the last year. (page 26)

- In every population examined in this report, minority children and youth continue to be overrepresented. (pages 11, 21, 24, and 28)

Recommendations

The FCRO continues to work with DHHS/CFS, the Courts, Probation, and all other stakeholders to pursue the recommendations in the 2020 Annual Report (September 2020).

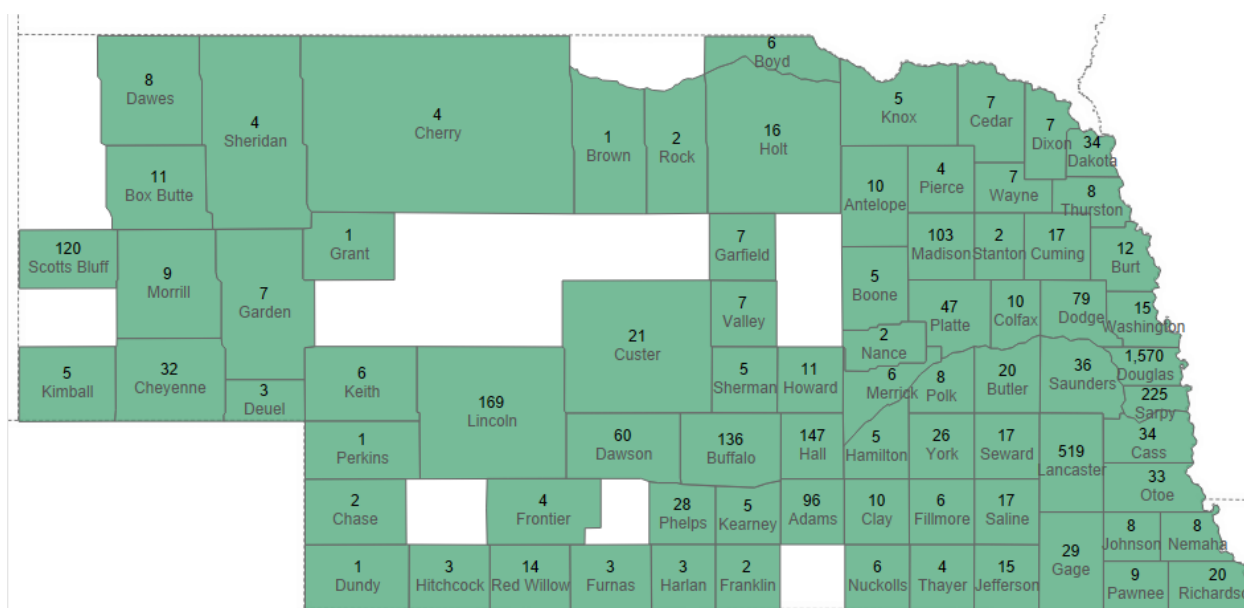


Total Children in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Placement

On 12/31/20, there were 3,965 Nebraska children in out-of-home or trial home visit placements⁴ under DHHS/CFS, DHHS/OJS, and/or the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation – Juvenile Services Division hereafter referred to as Probation.⁵ This is a 3.0% decrease from the 4,088 children in such placements on 12/31/19.

As shown in Figure 1 below, children in need of out-of-home care are found throughout the State.

Figure 1: Total Nebraska Children in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placements by County of Court Involvement on 12/31/20, n=3,965*



*Counties with no description or shading did not have any children in out-of-home care; those are predominately counties with sparse populations of children. Those counties may have had children who received services in the parental home without ever experiencing a removal. That population is not included here as it is not within the FCRO’s authority to track or review.

⁴ This does not include children in non-court Informal Living Arrangements.

⁵ See Appendix A for definitions and explanations of acronyms and some key terms.

The 3,965 children in out-of-home or trial home visit care on 12/31/20 included the following groups:

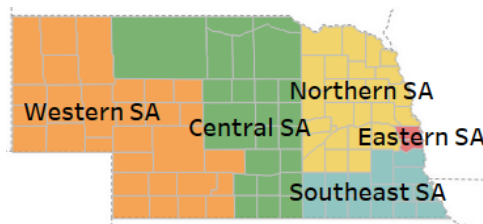
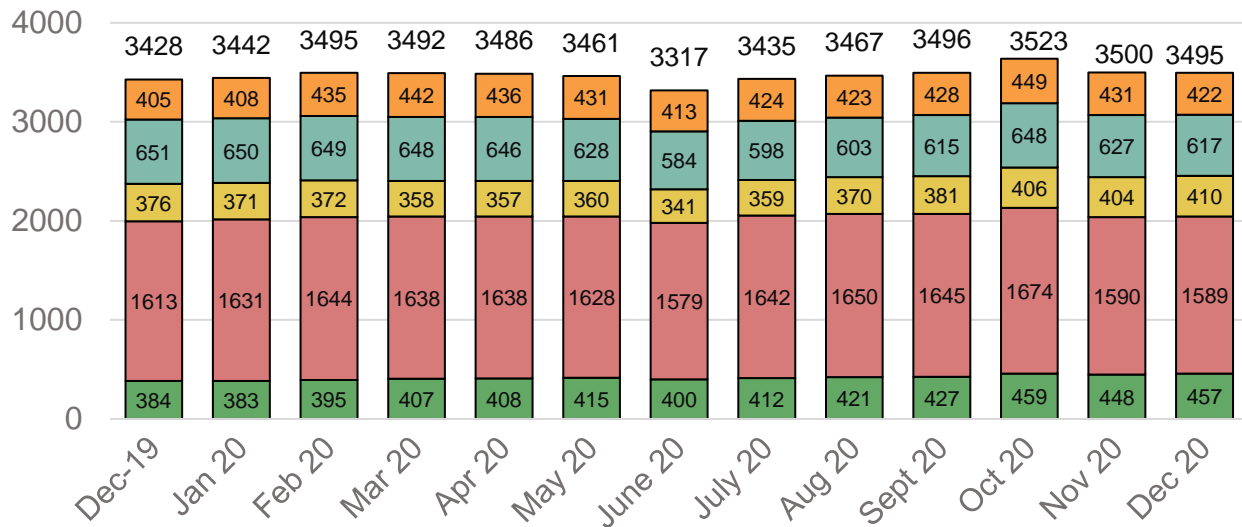
- 3,340 (84.2%) children that were DHHS/CFS wards in out-of-home care or trial home visits with no simultaneous involvement with Probation.
 - This is a 2.6% increase compared to the 3,255 children on 12/31/19.
- 441 (11.1%) youth that were in out-of-home care while supervised by Probation, but were not simultaneously involved with DHHS/CFS or at the YRTCs.
 - This is a 21.3% decrease compared to the 560 such youth on 12/31/19.
- 122 (3.1%) youth in out-of-home care involved with DHHS/CFS and Probation simultaneously.
 - That is a 20.3% decrease compared to the 153 such youth on 12/31/19.
- 57 (1.4%) youth in out-of-home care involved with DHHS/OJS and Probation simultaneously.
 - That is a 49.1% decrease compared to the 112 such youth on 12/31/19.
- 5 (0.1%) children in out-of-home care that were served by DHHS/OJS only.
 - There were 8 such children on 12/31/19.

Average Daily Population of Children with any DHHS/CFS Involvement

Daily population

Figure 2 shows the 3.8% increase in average daily population (ADP) per month of DHHS/CFS involved children in out-of-home or trial home visit placements (including those simultaneously serviced by Probation) over the course of the last 12 months, when comparing Dec. 2019 to Dec. 2020.

Figure 2: Average Daily Population of All DHHS/CFS Involved Children in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placements⁶
(includes children with simultaneous involvement with Probation)⁷



⁶ The average shown at the top of each column may not be exactly equal to the sum of the service areas due to rounding.

⁷ The FCRO's FCTS data system is a dynamic computer system that occasionally receives reports on children's entries, changes, or exits long after the event took place. The FCRO also has a robust internal CQI (continuous quality improvement) process that can catch and reverse many errors in children's records regardless of the cause in order to reflect the most accurate data available for review. Therefore, due to delayed reporting and internal CQI, some of the numbers on this rolling year chart will not exactly match that of previous reports. The same is true for additional data components described throughout the report.

Figure 3 compares the average daily populations from Dec. 2019 to Dec. 2020 by service area (SA). In Dec. 2020, there were 3.8% more DHHS/CFS wards in out-of-home care or trial home visit than at the same time last year. Differences in the number of children in out-of-home care over that period varies by service area, with the Central Service Area seeing the largest rolling year increase (+22.2%). Further research is needed to determine what may be accounting for the variance across service areas.

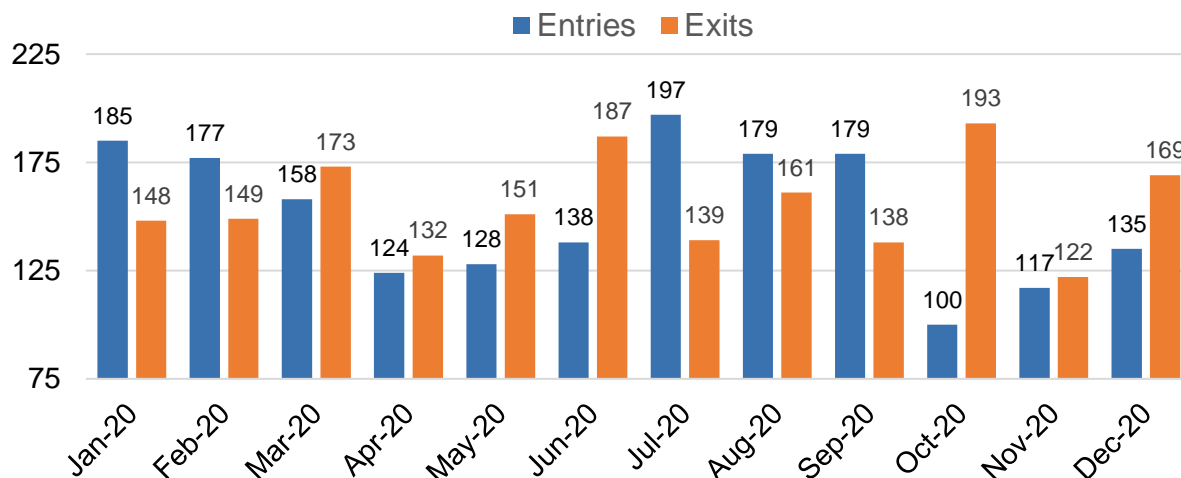
Figure 3: Percent Change in All DHHS/CFS Involved Children in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placements

	Dec. 19	Dec. 20	% Change
Central SA	374	457	22.2%
Eastern SA	1,596	1,589	-0.4%
Northern SA	365	410	12.3%
Southeast SA	647	617	-4.6%
Western SA	385	422	9.6%
State	3,368	3,495	3.8%

Entries and Exits

Figure 4 shows that in 7 of the 12 months there were more exits than entries. Nonetheless, there was a net increase (3.8%) in the overall population of children in out-of-home and trial home visit placements in Dec. 20 as compared to Dec. 19. This year entries and exits were likely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, more research will be needed to understand the direct impact COVID-19 has had on children’s placements.

Figure 4: Statewide Entries and Exits of DHHS/CFS Involved Children



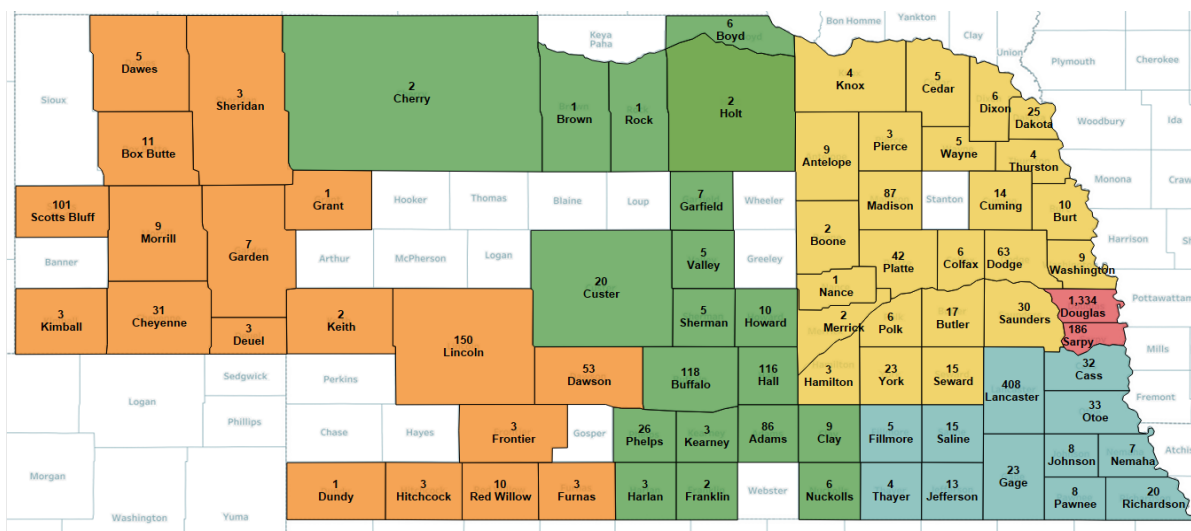
Children Solely Involved with DHHS/CFS – Point-in-time (Single Day) View

Single day data on DHHS/CFS wards in this section includes only children that meet the following criteria: 1) involved with DHHS/CFS and no other state agency and 2) reported to be in either an out-of-home or trial home visit placement.⁸ On 12/31/20 there were 3,340 children who met those criteria.

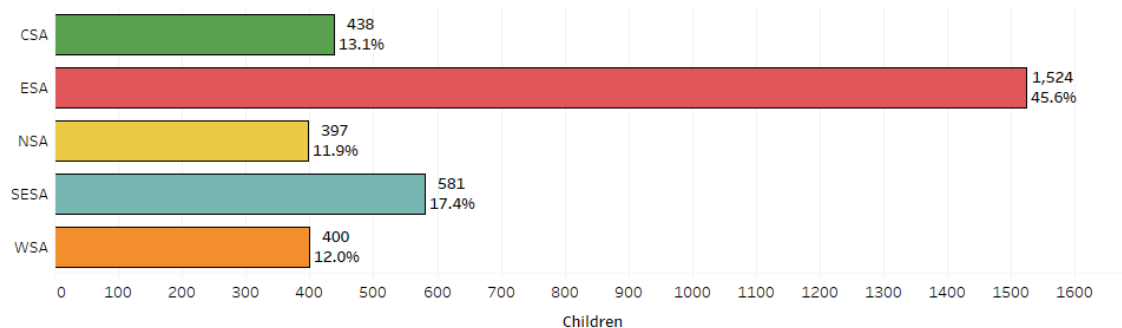
Demographics

County. Figure 5 shows the 3,340 DHHS/CFS wards by county. Child abuse and neglect affects every part of the state, as shown in the map below. Counties with the most children in care included Douglas (1,334), Lancaster (408), and Sarpy (186).

Figure 5: DHHS/CFS Wards in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placement by County of Court Involvement on 12/31/20 and DHHS/CFS Service Area, n=3,340*



*Counties without numbers had no children in out-of-home care or trial home visit on 12/31/20. Total counts for SA by county may differ from overall SA counts due to case assignments across SAs.



⁸ Youth at one of the YRTC's, youth only involved with Probation, or youth dually involved with Probation are not included. Those populations are described elsewhere in this report.

As expected, most of the children in Figure 5 are from the two largest urban areas (Omaha and Lincoln, in the Eastern and Southeast Service Areas, respectively). Perhaps more importantly, though, is the number of state wards from counties with relatively few children in the population as described in Figure 6.

When comparing the number of children in out-of-home care and trial home visit to the number of children in the population for the county, the counties with the highest rates of children in out-of-home or trial home visit placement are Garden, Lincoln, Pawnee, Boyd, Cheyenne, Phelps, Richardson, Adams, Scotts Bluff, and Buffalo (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Top 10 Counties by Rate of NDHHS Wards in Care on 12/31/2020

County	Children in Care	Total Age 0-18 ⁹	Rate per 1,000
Garden County	7	375	18.7
Lincoln County	153	8,543	17.9
Pawnee County	8	555	14.4
Boyd County	6	455	13.2
Cheyenne County	31	2,361	13.1
Phelps County	26	2,167	12.0
Richardson County	20	1,689	11.8
Adams County	86	7,533	11.4
Scotts Bluff County	101	9,026	11.2
Buffalo County	118	11,449	10.3

Gender. Girls (50.3%) and boys (49.7%) were equally represented in the population of children in care on 12/31/20, as has been true for several years.

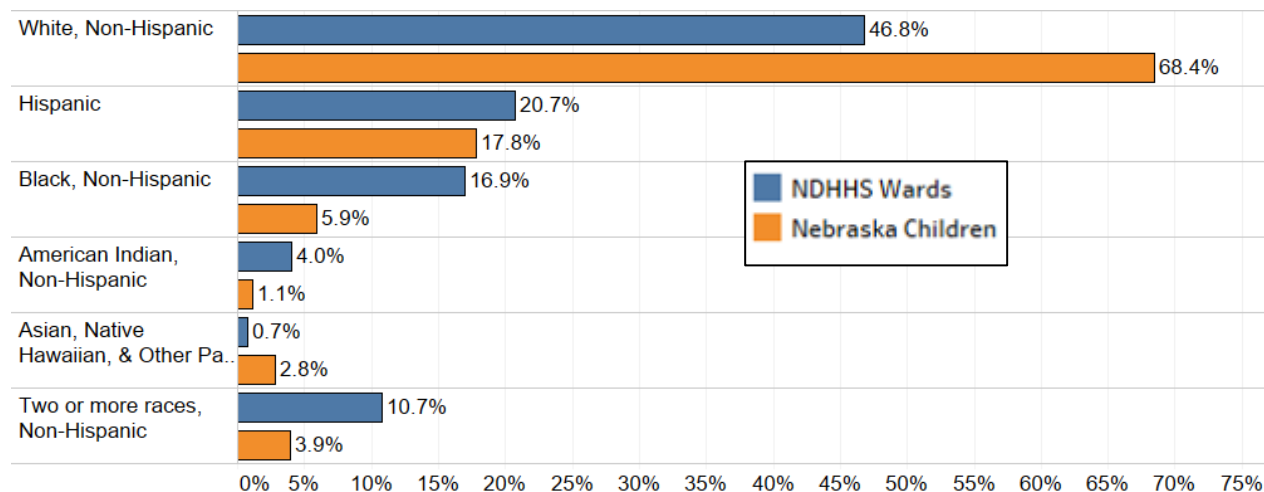
Age. Results are consistent with past reports:

- 39.9% of children in care are 5 and under,
- 32.8% are between 6 and 12, and
- 27.4% are teenagers.

Race and Ethnicity. As the FCRO and others have consistently reported, minority children continue to be overrepresented in the out-of-home population (Figure 7). The Census estimates that 5.9% of Nebraska's children (ages 0 through 18) are Black or African American, 1.1% are American Indian or Alaska Native, and 3.9% are multiracial; yet all three groups are overrepresented among DHHS/CFS wards when compared with their representation in the general population of children in Nebraska.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, July 1, 2019 as found at [Nebraska State Data Center | Center for Public Affairs Research | University of Nebraska Omaha \(unomaha.edu\)](https://datacenter.nebraska.gov/) on 2/9/2021.

Figure 7: DHHS/CFS Wards in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placement on 12/31/20 by Race or Ethnicity, n=3,340*



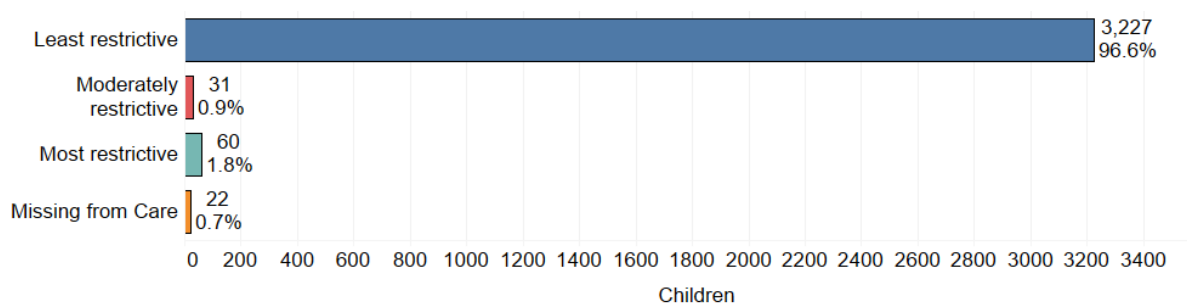
*Nebraska children is based on US Census for Nebraska children ages 0-18.

Placements

Placement Restrictiveness. Children in foster care need to live in the least restrictive, most home-like temporary placement possible in order for them to grow and thrive. Some children need congregate care, which could be moderately or most restrictive. A more moderate restrictiveness level includes non-treatment group facilities, and the most restrictive are the facilities that specialize in psychiatric, medical, or juvenile justice related issues and group emergency placements.

Figure 8 shows that most (3,227 or 96.6%) DHHS/CFS wards in out-of-home placements or trial home visits were placed in a family-like, least restrictive setting. The proportion of children in the least restrictive setting has remained above 95% for the past three years.

Figure 8: Placement Restrictiveness for DHSS/CFS Wards in Out-of-home or Trial Home Placements on 12/31/20, n=3,340



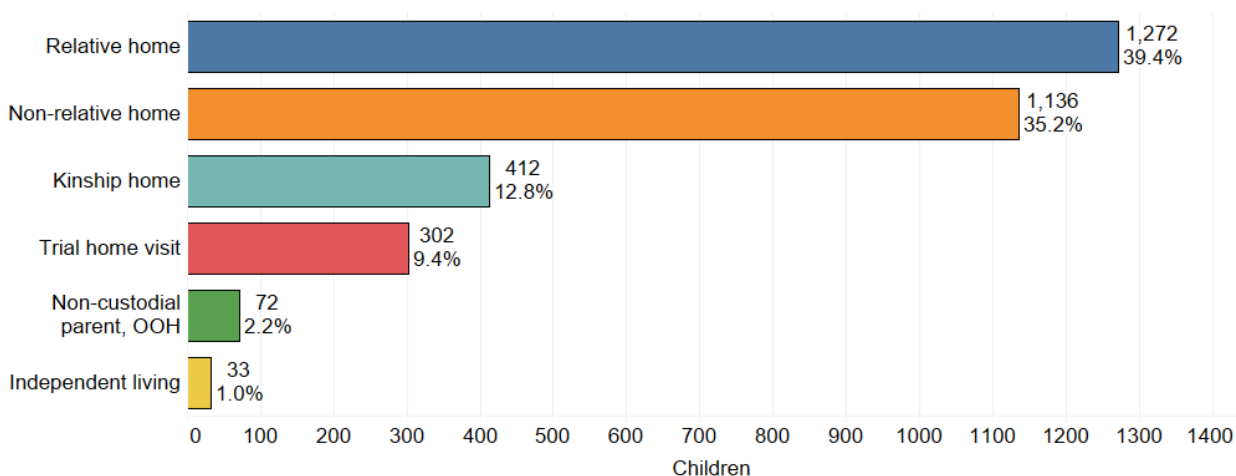
Children “missing from care” must always be a top priority as their safety cannot be assured. This was tragically illustrated in 2019 when a teen actively missing from foster care died in a car accident. Children missing from care may also be subjected to maltreatment, exploitation, and trafficking.

Types of Least Restrictive Placements. There are several different types of least restrictive placements, which provide care to children in home-like settings. Nebraska defines some of these placements differently than other states:

- “Relative” is defined in statute as a blood relationship, while “kin” in Nebraska is defined as fictive relatives, such as a coach or teacher, who by statute are to have had a prior positive relationship with the child.
- “Non-custodial parent out-of-home” refers to instances where children were removed from one parent and placed with the other but legal issues around custody have yet to be resolved.
- “Independent living” is for teens nearing adulthood, such as those in a college dorm or apartment.
- “Trial home visit” (THV) by statute is a temporary placement with the parent from which the child was removed and during which the Court and DHHS/CFS remain involved.

The majority (52.2%) of children in a foster home are placed with relatives or kin (Figure 9). These percentages are up slightly from 12/31/19 (48.9%).

Figure 9: Specific Placement Type for DHHS/CFS Wards in the Least Restrictive Placement Category on 12/31/20 (see Figure 8), n=3,227



Licensing of relative and kinship foster homes. Under current Nebraska law, DHHS can waive some of the licensing standards and requirements for relative (not kin) placements. For a variety of reasons DHHS is approving rather than licensing the vast majority of these homes. That practice creates a twofold problem:

- 1) approved caregivers do not receive the valuable training that licensed caregivers get on helping children who have experienced abuse, neglect, and removal from the parents, and

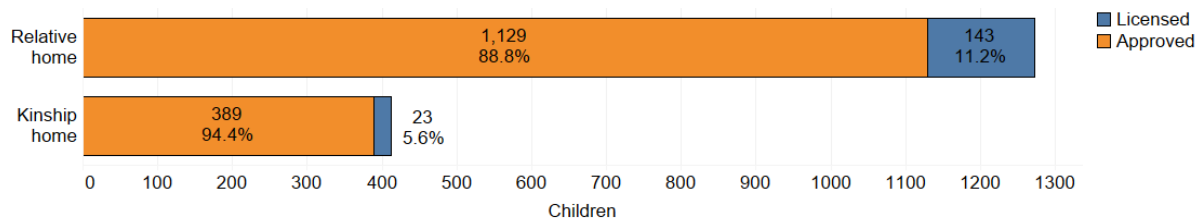
- 2) in order to receive Federal Title IV-E funds, otherwise eligible children must reside in a licensed placement, so Nebraska fails to recoup a significant amount of federal funds.

Kinship homes cannot receive a license waiver, but a relative can be granted a waiver of one or more of the following requirements:

- That the three required references come from no more than one relative.
- The maximum number of persons for whom care can be provided.
- The minimum square feet per child occupying a bedroom and minimum square footage per individual for areas excluding bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchen.
- That a home have at least two exits on grade level.
- Training.

Current License Status. Due to the fiscal impact and training issues the FCRO looked at the licensing status for these specific types of placement. As shown in Figure 10, in keeping with the FCRO's focus on individual children, we see that relatively few of those children are in a licensed placement.

Figure 10: Licensing for DHHS/CFS Wards in Relative or Kinship Foster Homes on 12/31/20, n=1,272 (relatives) and n=412 (kinship)

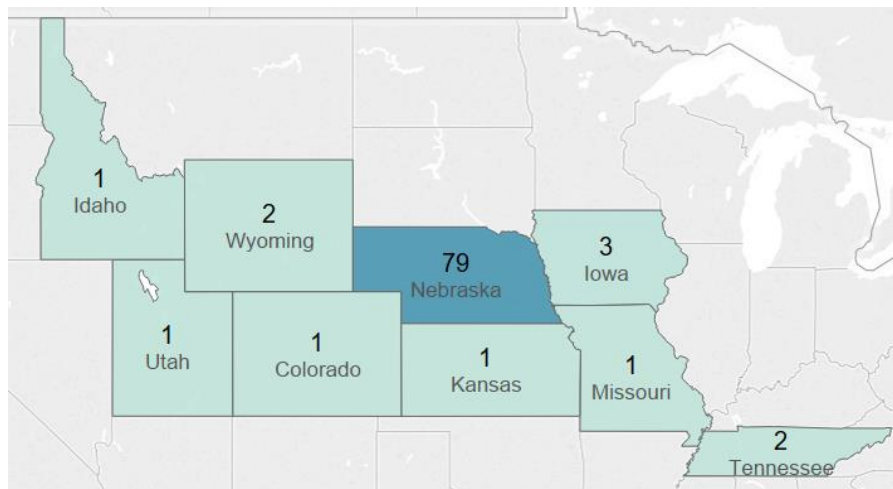


The FCRO has repeatedly advocated for licensing for relative and kinship foster homes, both for accessing federal funding and for the important training needed for caregivers. It is a positive step that DHHS/CFS recently made online foster parent training available for relative and kinship foster care providers.

Congregate Care. On 12/31/20, 91 (or 2.7%) of DHHS/CFS wards were placed in moderately or most restrictive congregate care facilities. This compares to 106 such children and youth on 12/31/19, a 14.2% decrease.

Figure 11 shows that of the 91 DHHS/CFS wards in congregate care, most (79 or 86.8%) are in Nebraska. Congregate care facilities should be utilized only for children with significant mental or behavioral health needs, and it is best when those needs can be met by in-state facilities in order to keep children connected to their communities.

Figure 11: State of Placement for DHHS/CFS Wards in Congregate Care on 12/31/20, n=91

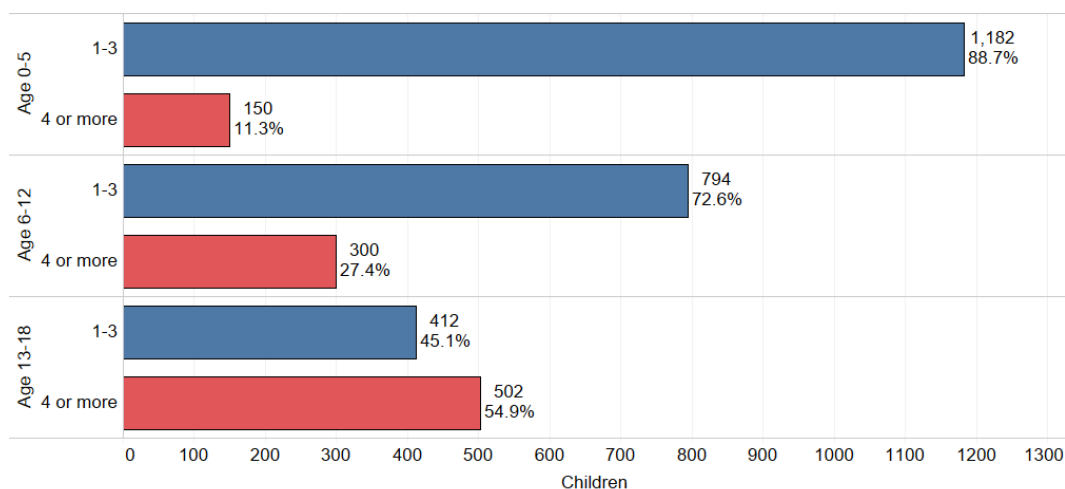


Multiple placements

Of the 3,340 children in care on 12/31/20, 952 children (28.5%) had experienced four or more placements over their lifetime (Figure 12).¹⁰ That compares to 27.1% of wards on 12/31/19. Further, it is concerning that 11.3% of young children have experienced a high level of placement change while simultaneously coping with removal from the parent(s).

The [FCRO 2017 Annual Report](#) included information on the effects of placement changes on children, and the description is still valid today.

Figure 12: Lifetime Placements for DHHS/CFS wards in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit on 12/31/20, n=3,340



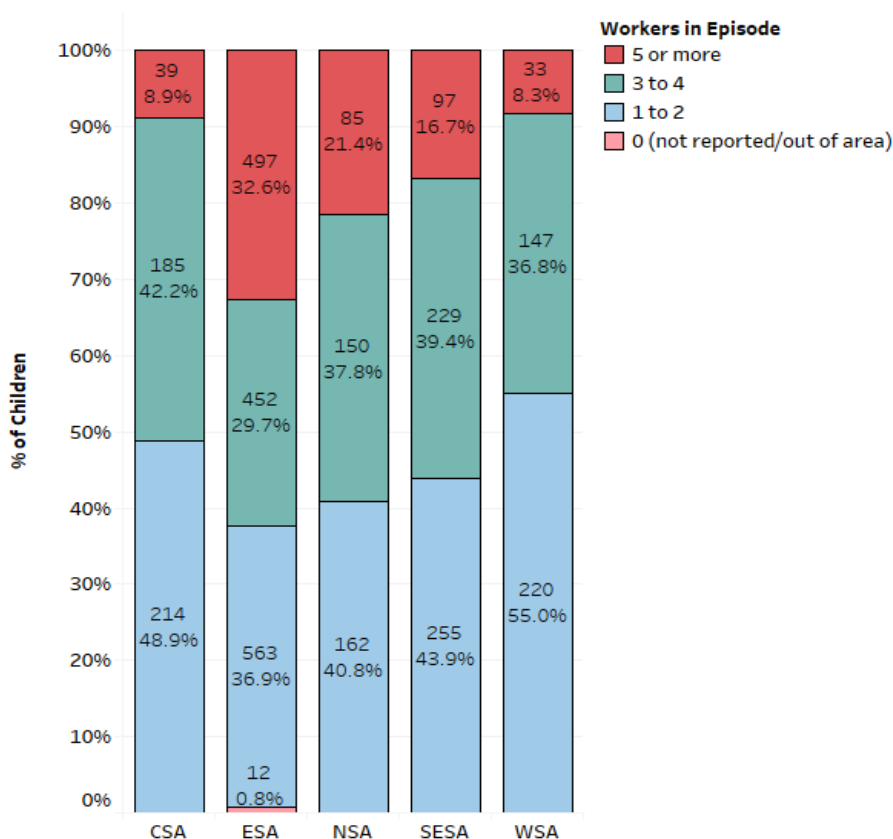
¹⁰ This does not include placements with parents, respite short-term placements (such as to allow foster parents to jointly attend a training) or episodes of being missing from care.

Number of Workers during Current Episode of Care

Figure 13 shows the number of workers during the current episode of care for 3,340 children in out-of-home or trial home visit placement on 12/31/20 as reported by DHHS. Workers here include lead agency workers in the Eastern Service Area where DHHS/CFS contracts for such services, and DHHS/CFS case managers elsewhere.

More than four workers is considered an unacceptable number of worker transfers that likely significantly delays permanency.¹¹ Depending on the geographic area, between 8.9% - 32.6% (see footnote) of the children have had five or more workers since most recently entering the child welfare system.¹²

Figure 13: Number of Workers for DHHS/CFS Wards 12/31/20 in Current Episode, n=3,340



¹¹ Review of Turnover in Milwaukee County Private Agency Child Welfare Ongoing Case Management Staff, January 2005.

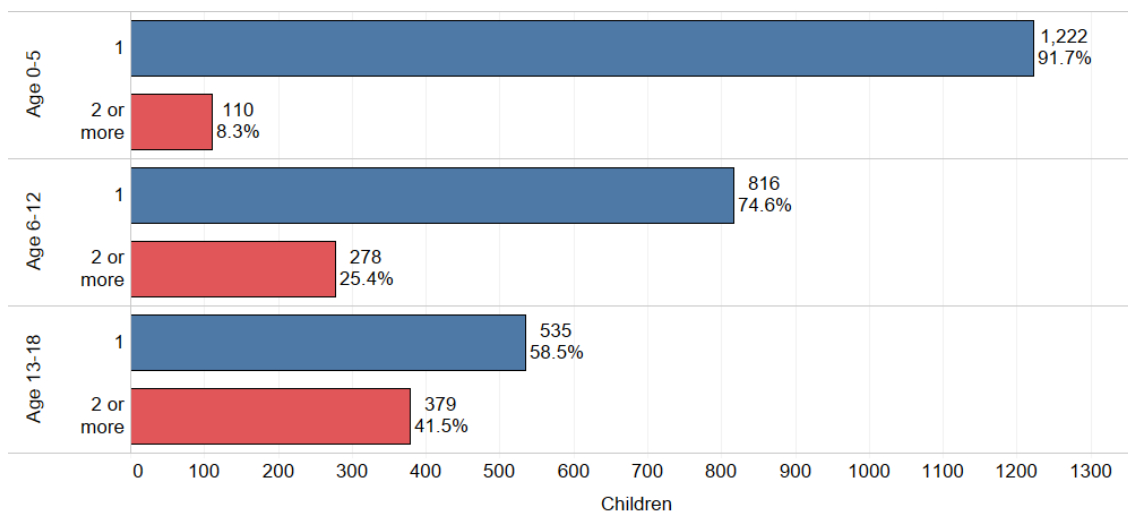
¹² PromiseShip held the lead agency contract with DHHS until 2019 when the contract was rebid by DHHS and awarded to Saint Francis Ministries. Cases transferred in the fall of 2019. Many former PromiseShip caseworkers were subsequently employed by Saint Francis. If the same worker remained with the child's case without a break of service, the FCRO worked to ensure that the worker count was not increased. Counts were only increased during the transfer period if a new person became involved with the child and family.

Lifetime episodes involving a removal from the home

Figure 14 shows that 767 (23.0%) of the DHHS wards in care on 12/31/20 had experienced more than one court-involved removal from the parental home. This compares to 22.8% on 12/31/19. Each removal can be traumatic and increases the likelihood of additional moves between placements.

Child abuse prevention efforts need to include reducing or eliminating premature or ill-planned returns home that result in further abuse or neglect. The State must do more to determine and then address why more than 1 in 5 children currently in the system had a prior removal, and why with fewer children in care this critical indicator has not improved.

Figure 14: Lifetime Removals for DHHS/CFS Wards in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placements on 12/31/20, n=3,340



Average Daily Population of DHHS/OJS Youth Placed at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC)

Placement at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center (YRTC) is the most restrictive type of placement, and by statute a judge can order a youth to be placed at a YRTC only if the youth has not been successful in a less restrictive placement. The DHHS Office of Juvenile Services (DHHS/OJS) is responsible for the care of youth at the YRTCs.

Prior to August 2019, boys were placed at the YRTC in Kearney and girls at the YRTC in Geneva. As a result of an August 2019 incident at Geneva, some girls were moved to the Lancaster County Youth Services Center in Lincoln and then to the Kearney YRTC, with additional girls transferred to the Kearney YRTC thereafter.

On 10/21/19 DHHS-OJS announced development of a modified YRTC system with 3 facilities. Due to these changes, Figure 15 shows the average daily number of DHHS/OJS wards by gender, instead of by facility location. Decreases in the number of boys placed at a YRTC began in March 2020, which is when the state began to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 15: Average Daily Number of DHHS/OJS Wards Placed at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center

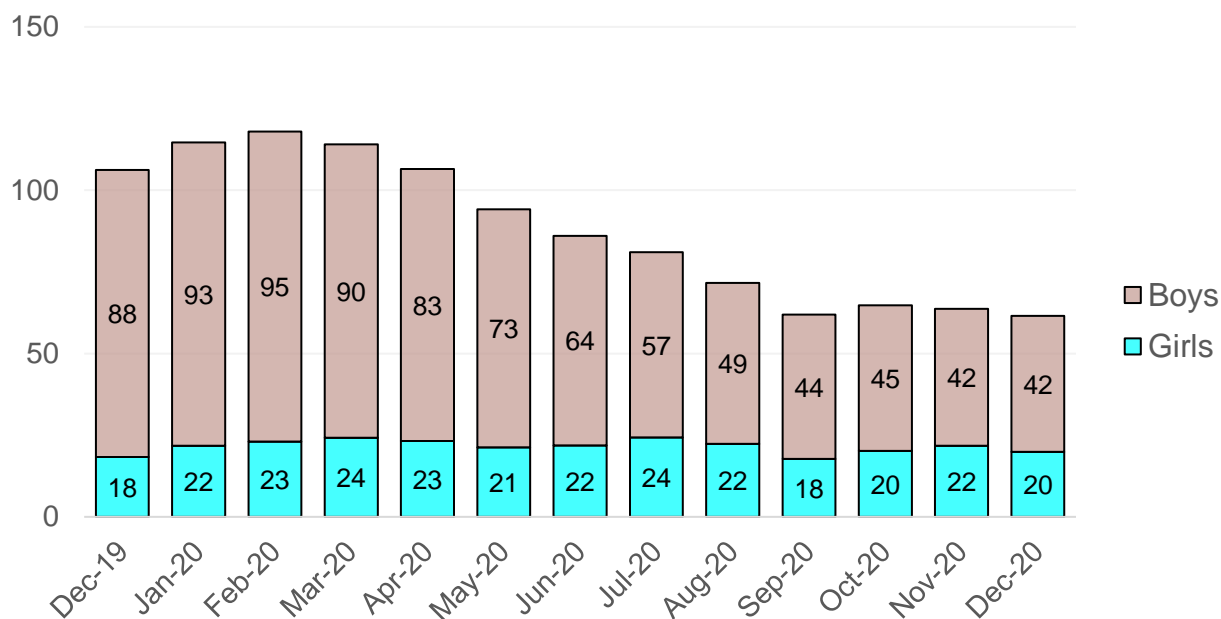


Figure 16 shows the percentage change between Dec. 2019 and Dec. 2020. There were marked differences by gender.

Figure 16: Percent Change in Youth Placed at the YRTC

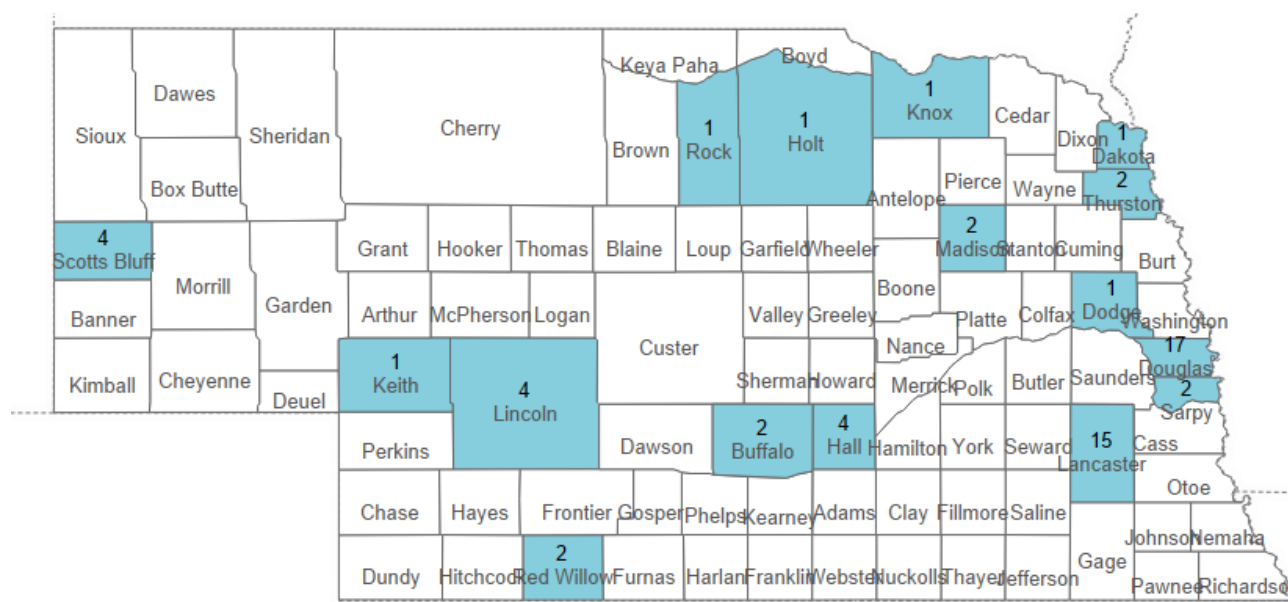
	Dec 19	Dec 20	% Change
Girls	18	20	11.1%
Boys	88	42	-52.3%
Total	106	62	-41.5%

DHHS/OJS Youth Placed at a YRTC – Point-in-time (Single Day) View

Demographics

County. Youth at the YRTCs come from every region of the state, as illustrated in Figure 17; with most coming from the more populous regions, as would be expected. On 12/31/20, there were 60 youth placed at a YRTC; a significant reduction from prior years.

Figure 17: Boys and Girls Placed by Juvenile Court at a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center under DHHS/OJS by County of Court Involvement on 12/31/20, n=60*



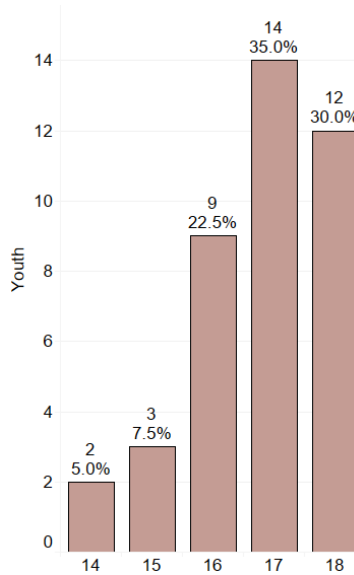
*Counties with no shading had no youth at one of the YRTCs on 12/31/20.

Per Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-251.01(4), boys and girls committed to a Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Center must be at least 14 years of age. Children can be committed to a YRTC through age 18. There can be challenges when serving troubled boys and girls from such a wide age, and therefore, developmental range. Youth are committed to a YRTC for an indeterminate amount of time to allow them to work through the program.¹³

¹³ See Nebr. Rev. Stat. §43-286 for more details on how a court can commit a youth to a YRTC, and see §43-407(2) for details on the services available.

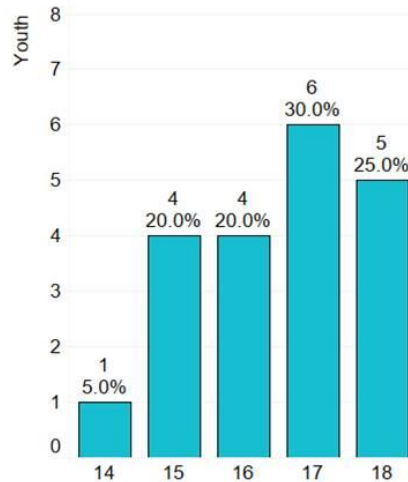
Age and Gender. On 12/31/20, 40 of the youth placed at a YRTC were boys (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Ages of Boys Placed at a YRTC under DHHS/OJS on 12/31/20, n=40



On 12/31/20, 20 of the youth placed at a YRTC were girls. National research indicates that girls are less likely to be a part of the juvenile justice population; the number of girls in Figure 19 reflects this pattern when compared to the figure on boys above.¹⁴

Figure 19: Ages of Girls at a YRTC under DHHS/OJS on 12/31/20, n=20



The median age for both boys and girls was 17.0 years.

¹⁴ National Center for Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Court Statistics 2018, April 2020, Sarah Hockenberry and Charles Puzzanchera.

Race and Ethnicity. There is significant racial and ethnic disproportionality in the YRTC populations (Figures 20 and 21). Nebraska general population estimates are based on data from US Census for Nebraska youth who are ages 10 through 18, by gender.

- Black and multiracial boys are disproportionately placed at a YRTC.
- Hispanic youth (for boys and girls) are disproportionately placed at a YRTC.

Figure 20: Race and Ethnicity of Boys placed at a YRTC under DHHS/OJS on 12/31/20, n=40

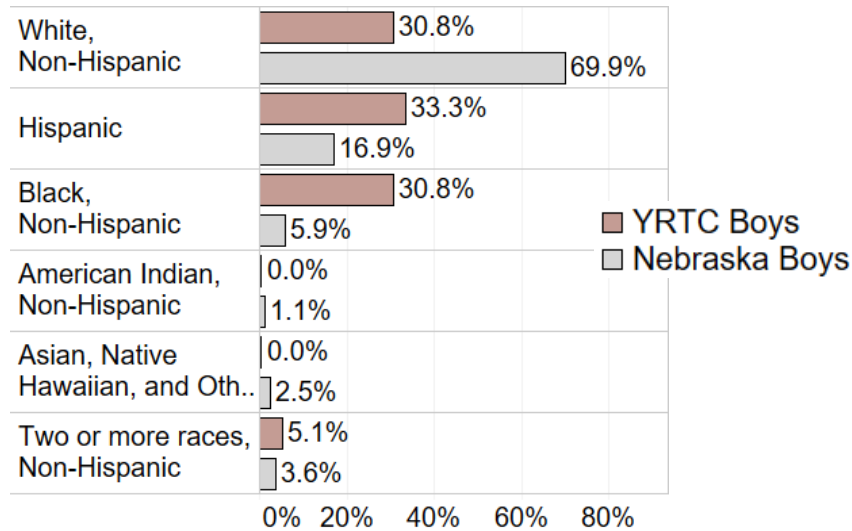
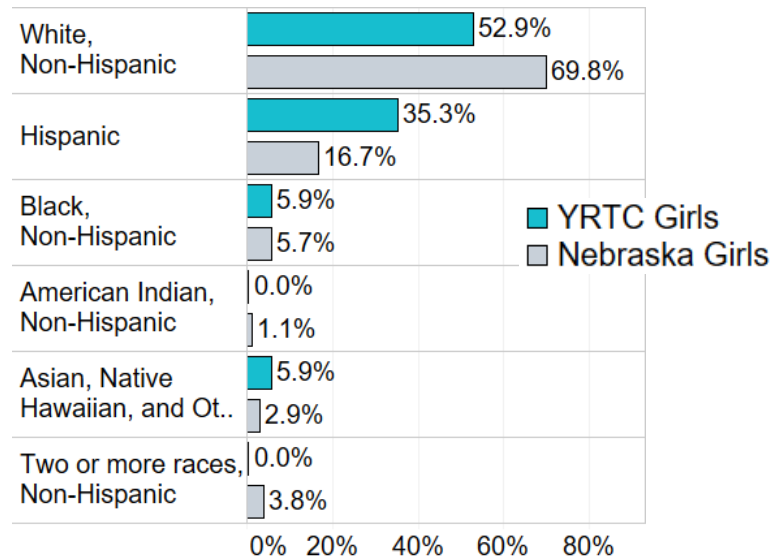


Figure 21: Race and Ethnicity of Girls placed at a YRTC under DHHS/OJS on 12/31/20, n=20



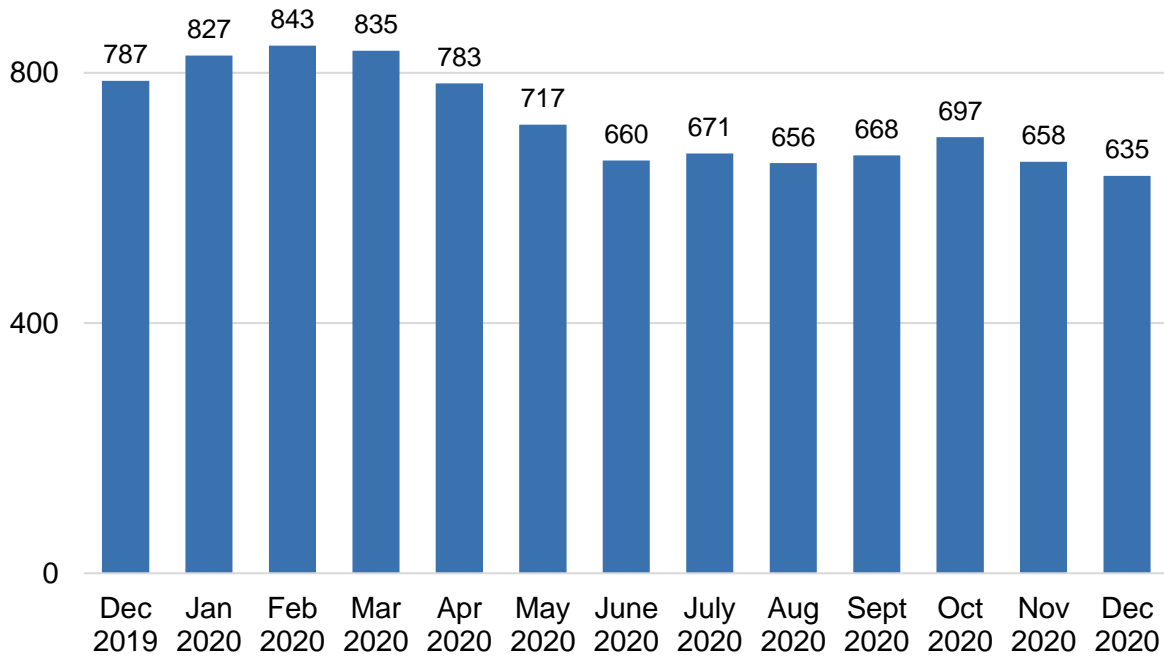
Average Daily Population for Youth Out-of-Home With Any Probation Involvement

Average daily population

Figure 22 shows the average daily population (ADP) per month of all Probation-involved youth in out-of-home placements for the last 13 months (including those with simultaneous involvement with DHHS/CFS and DHHS/OJS). The average daily population in out-of-home care began to decrease in April 2020, which coincides with the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 22: Average Daily Population of Youth in Out-of-Home Care Supervised by Probation

(includes youth with simultaneous involvement with DHHS/CFS and DHHS/OJS)



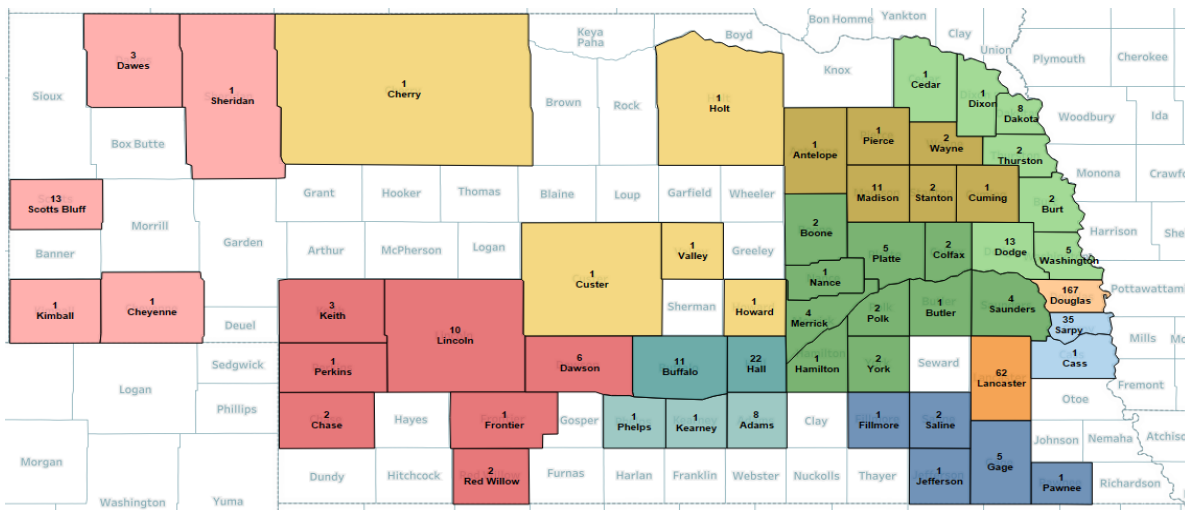
Youth in Out-of-Home Care Supervised by the Office of Juvenile Probation - Point-in-time (Single Day) View

Single-day data on Probation involved youth in an out-of-home placement here includes only those youth whose involvement is solely with Probation.

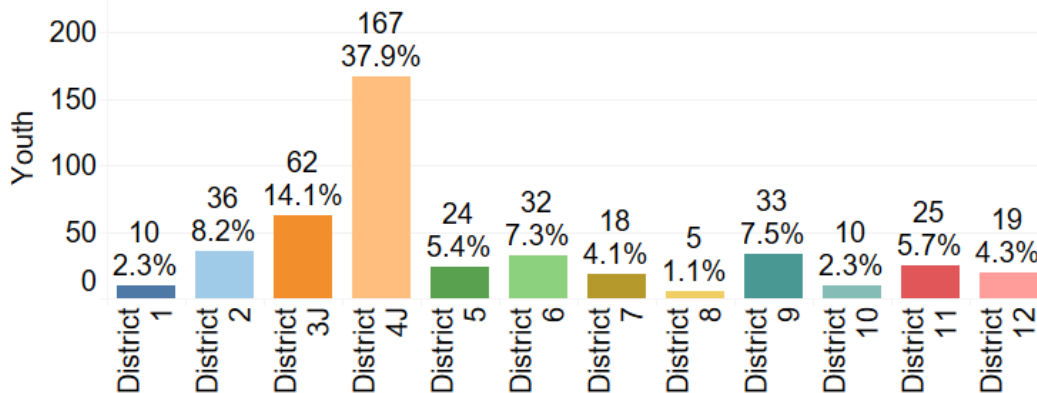
Demographics

County. Figure 23 shows the Probation district and the county of court for the 441 Probation youth in out-of-home care on 12/31/20 that are not involved with either DHHS/CFS or DHHS/OJS. That is 21.3% fewer than the 560 on 12/31/19. Part of the decrease might be attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 23: County of Court for Probation Supervised Youth in Out-of-Home Care by County of Court Involvement on 12/31/20, n=441*

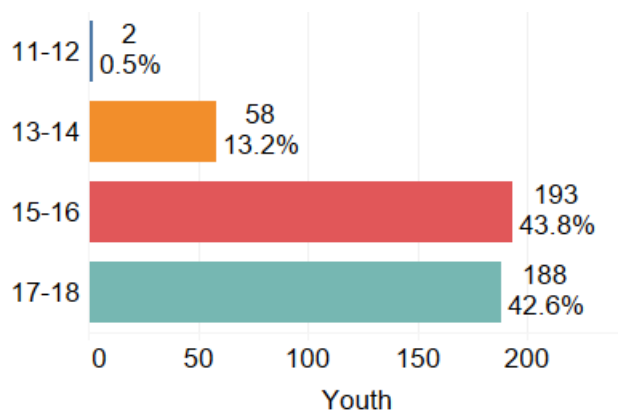


*Counties without numbers have no youth in out-of-home care on 12/31/20.



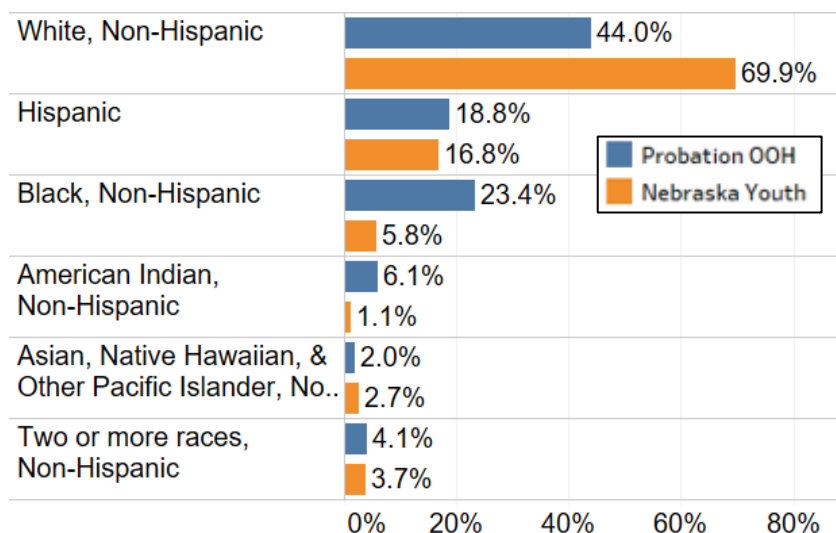
Age. Figure 24 shows the ages of Probation youth in out-of-home care on 12/31/20. The average age was 16.1 for girls and 16.0 for boys, similar to last quarter.

Figure 24: Age of Probation Supervised Youth in Out-of-Home Care on 12/31/20, n=441



Race and Ethnicity. Disproportionate representation of minority youth continues to be a problem (See Figure 25). Black youth make up 5.8% of the Nebraska’s youth (ages 10 through 18), yet account for 23.4% of the Probation youth out-of-home. Native children are also represented at a rate more than five times their proportion of the general population.

Figure 25: Race and Ethnicity of Probation Supervised Youth in Out-of-Home Care on 12/31/20, n=441



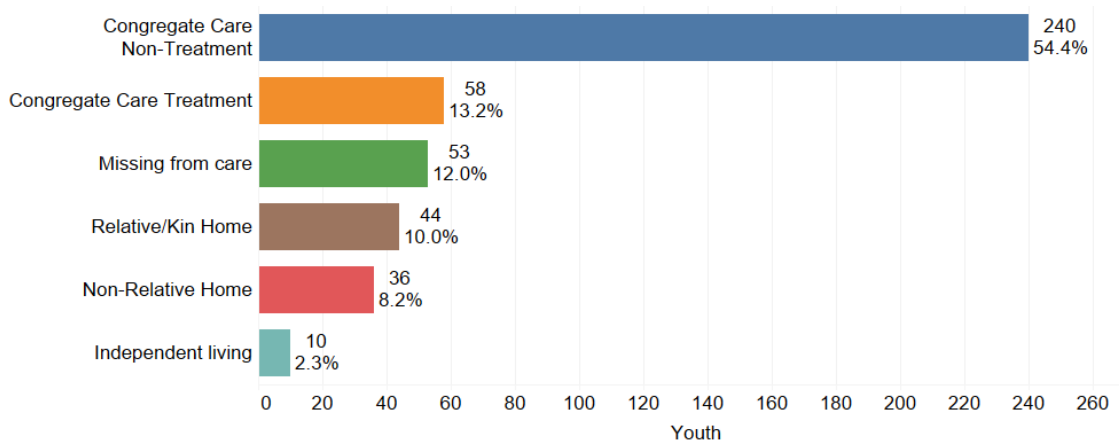
Gender. There are over twice as many boys (72.3%) in out-of-home care served by Probation as there are girls (27.7%). That is similar to the last few years.

Placements

Placement Type. Figure 26 shows that 13.2% of Probation youth in out-of-home care on 12/31/20 are in congregate treatment placements, comparable to the 16.1% on 12/31/19. Congregate treatment placements include acute inpatient hospitalization, psychiatric residential treatment facilities, short term residential and treatment group home.

Non-treatment congregate care includes crisis stabilization, developmental disability group home, enhanced shelter, group home (A and B), maternity group home (parenting and non-parenting), independent living and shelter. Non-treatment congregate care is where 54.4% of the youth were placed.

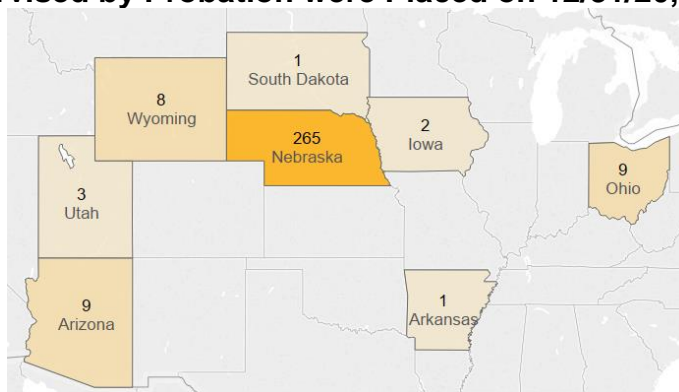
Figure 26: Treatment or Non-Treatment Placements of Probation Supervised Youth in Out-of-Home Care on 12/31/20, n=441



Youth missing from care must always be a top priority as their safety cannot be assured.

Congregate Care. When congregate care is needed, Probation most often utilizes in-state placements. Per Figure 27, 88.9% of youth in congregate care were placed in Nebraska, which is nearly the same as the 90.0% on 12/31/19.

Figure 27: State Where Youth in Congregate Care Supervised by Probation were Placed on 12/31/20, n=298



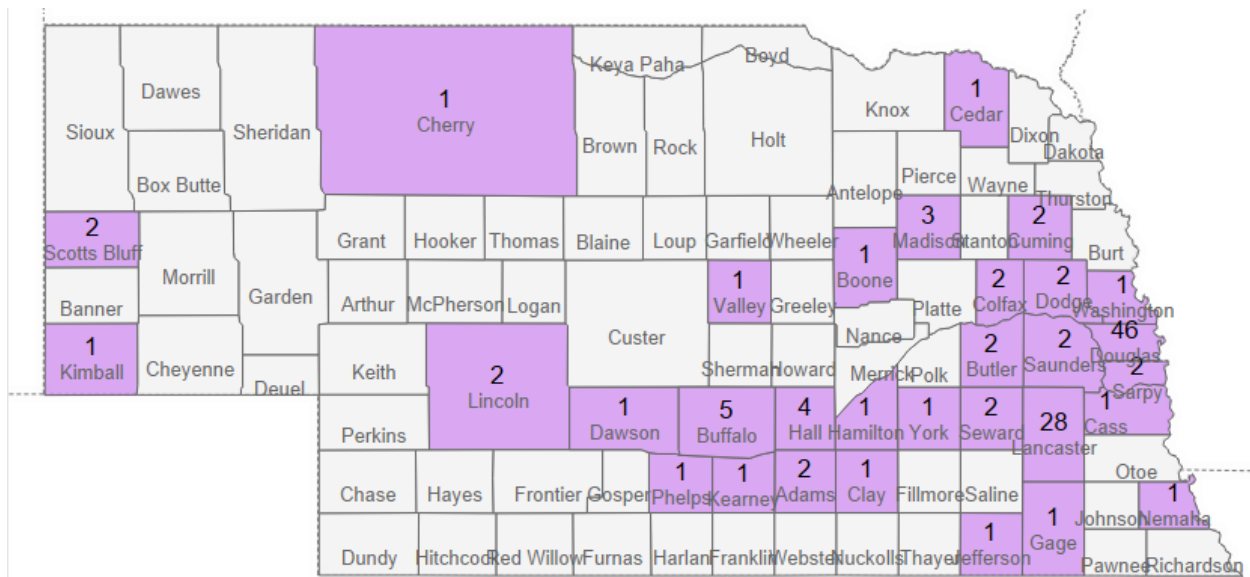
Youth in Out-of-Home Care with Simultaneous DHHS/CFS and Probation Involvement – Point-in-time (Single Day) View

On 12/31/20, 122 youth were involved with both DHHS/CFS and Probation (also known as dually-involved youth), which is 20.3% fewer than the 153 such youth on 12/31/19.

Demographics

County. Dually-involved youth come from each region of the state, as illustrated in Figure 28 below, with the majority from the most populous areas (Douglas and Lancaster counties), as would be expected.

Figure 28: Dually-Involved Youth in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Visit Placement by County of Court Involvement on 12/31/20, n=122*

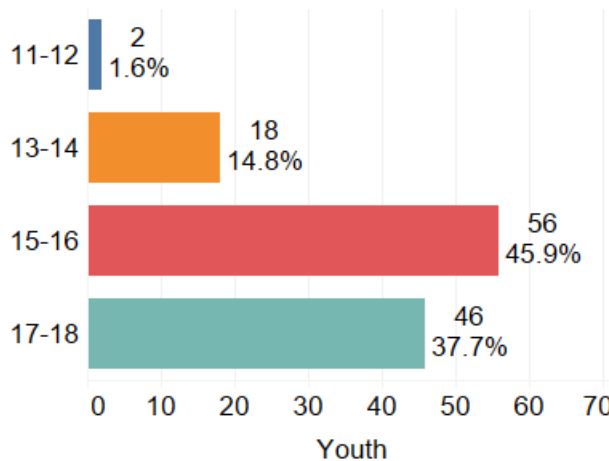


*Counties without numbers have no dually-involved youth in out-of-home care on 12/31/20.

Compared to one year ago (12/31/19), the number of dually involved youth in Douglas County decreased from 58 to 46, in Buffalo County decreased from 9 to 5, in Madison County decreased from 6 to 3, in Platte County decreased from 4 to zero, and in Lincoln County decreased from 8 to 2.

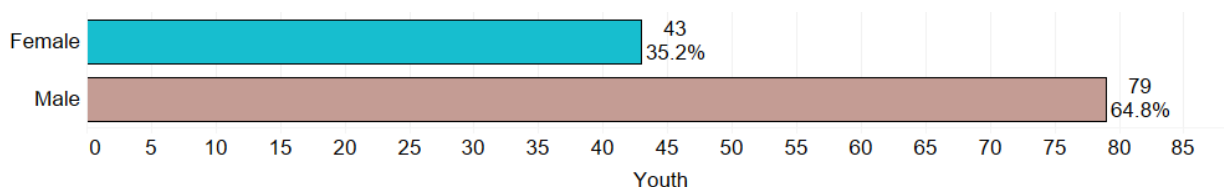
Age. Figure 29 indicates that nearly all dually-involved youth are teenagers.

Figure 29: Ages of Dually-Involved Youth in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Placement on 12/31/20, n=122



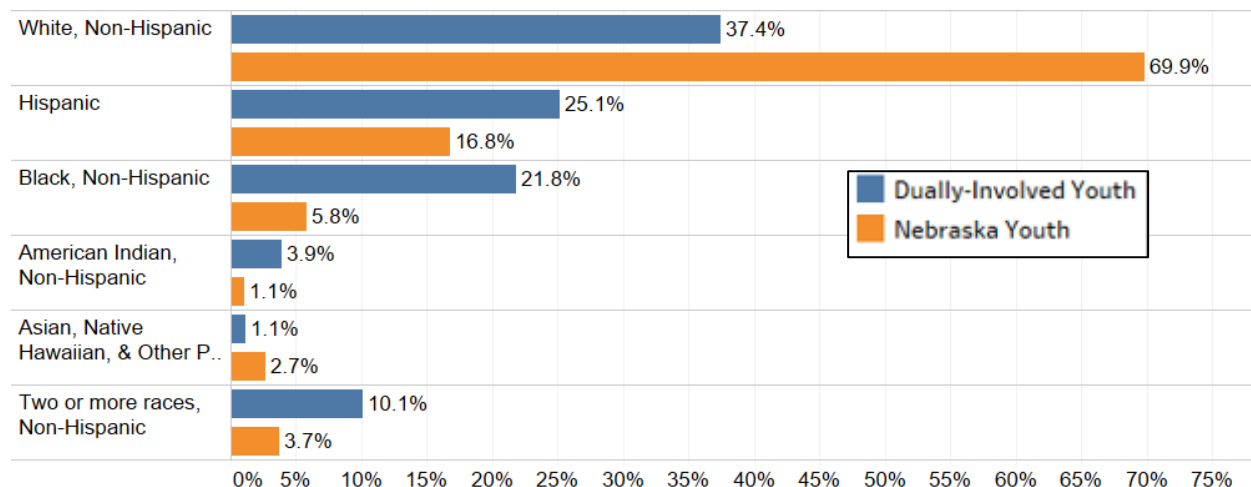
Gender. Figure 30 shows that, as is true with other juvenile justice populations, there are more boys (64.8%) in this group than girls (35.2%). On 12/31/19, the percent of girls was 41.8% and boys was 56.9%.

Figure 30: Gender of Dually-Involved Youth in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Placement on 12/31/20, n=122



Race and Ethnicity. Black, American Indian, and multi-racial youth continue to be overrepresented in the dually-involved population (Figure 31). For example, 21.8% of dually-involved youth are Black, compared to 5.8% in the general population of Nebraska’s youth ages 10 through 18 (per US Census).

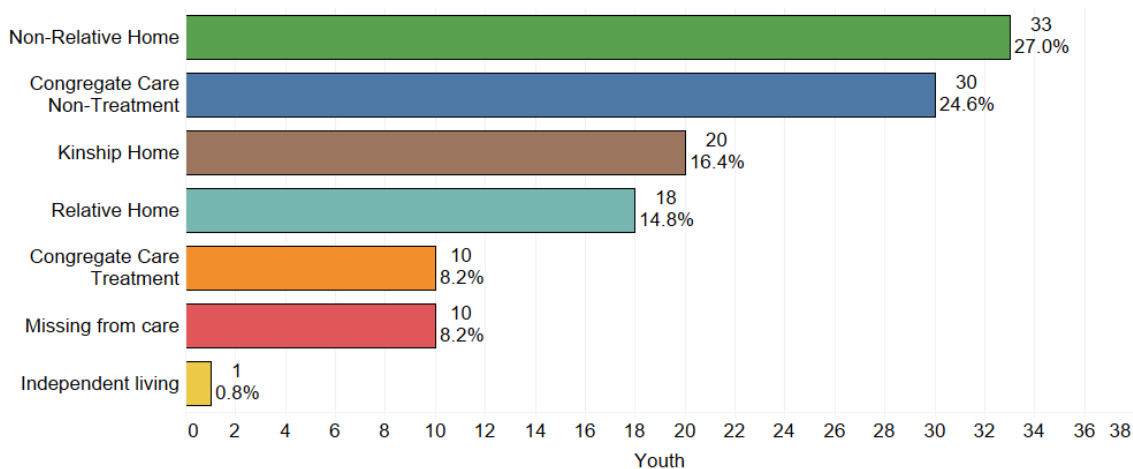
Figure 31: Race and Ethnicity of Dually-Involved Youth in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Placement on 12/31/20, n=122



Placements

Placement Type. Figure 32 shows the placement types for youth with dual-agency involvement, using Probation’s definitions of treatment and non-treatment.

Figure 32: Placement Types for Dually-Involved Youth in Out-of-Home or Trial Home Placement on 12/31/20, n=122



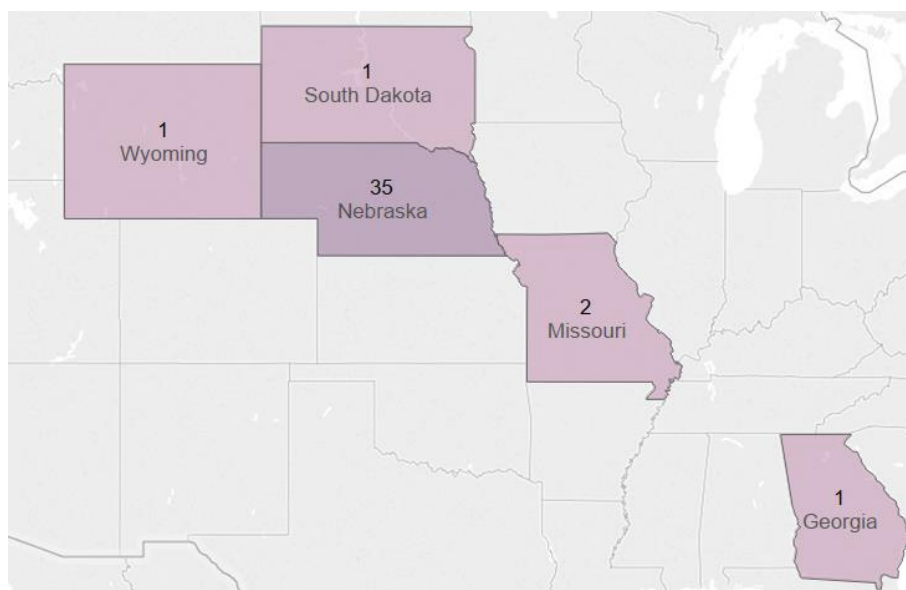
Youth missing from care must always be a top priority as their safety cannot be assured.

There are some substantial differences in the percentage in some of the placement types comparing this year to last. For example,

- Non-Treatment Congregate Care – 24.6% on 12/31/20 compared to 30.7% on 12/31/19.
- Treatment Congregate Care – 8.2% on 12/31/20 compared to 15.0% on 12/31/19.
- Missing from Care – 8.2% on 12/31/20 compared to 12.4% on 12/31/19.¹⁵

Congregate Care. Figure 33 shows the state where dually-involved youth in congregate care are placed; 87.5% were placed in Nebraska. Most of the out-of-state youth were in bordering states, with the exception of one youth. The total number in congregate care is significantly fewer (decrease of 42.9%) than the 70 youth on 12/31/19.

Figure 33: Placement State for Youth in a Congregate Care Facility on 12/31/20 that are Served by both DHHS/CFS and Probation, n=40



¹⁵ Missing from care is a status rather than a placement type; however, the comparison is to the like population in the previous year.

APPENDIX A: Definitions

- **FCRO** is the Foster Care Review Office, author of this report.
- **Child** is defined by statute as being age birth through eighteen; in Nebraska a child becomes a legal adult on their 19th birthday.
- **Youth** is a term used by the FCRO in deference to the developmental stage of those involved with the juvenile justice system.
- **Out-of-home care** is 24-hour substitute care for children placed away from their parents or guardians and for whom the State agency has placement and care responsibility. This includes, but is not limited to, foster family homes, foster homes of relatives, group homes, emergency shelters, residential treatment facilities, child-care institutions, pre-adoptive homes, detention facilities, youth rehabilitation facilities, and runaways from any of those facility types. It includes court ordered placements and non-court cases.

The FCRO uses the term “out-of-home care” to avoid confusion because some researchers and groups define “**foster care**” narrowly to be only care in foster family homes, while the term “**out-of-home care**” is broader.

- A **trial home visit** by statute is a temporary placement with the parent from which the child was removed and during which the Court and DHHS/CFS remain involved.
- **DHHS/CFS** is the Department of Health and Human Services (**DHHS**) Division of Children and Family Services.
- **DHHS/OJS** is the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of Juvenile Services. **OJS** oversees the **YRTCs**, which are the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers.
- **Probation** is a shortened reference to the Administrative Office of the Courts and Probation – Juvenile Services Division.
- Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-1901(9) defines “**relative placement**” as that where the foster caregiver has a blood, marriage, or adoption relationship, and for Indian children they may also be an extended family member per **ICWA** (which is the Indian Child Welfare Act).
- Per Neb. Rev. Stat. 71-1901(7) “**kinship home**” means a home where a child or children receive foster care and at least one of the primary caretakers has previously lived with or is a trusted adult that has a preexisting, significant relationship with the child or children or a sibling of such child or children pursuant to section 43-1311.02.

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