Foster Care Forum
Pittsburg

April 19, 2018
Coalition:

• Independent advocacy organizations
• Youth leaders and families with direct experience
• Came together over concerns about the record number of children in foster care
  • How did we get here?
  • What can we do about it?
Goals for this presentation:

• Share information
• Provide a common foundation for discussion
Goals for the child welfare system:

**Federal:** safety, permanency, well-being
Goals for the child welfare system:

Federal: safety, permanency, well-being

Kansas Department for Children & Families:

1. Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care
Goals for the child welfare system:

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Kansas Department for Children & Families:

1. Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care

2. Provide a more stable environment for children in out-of-home care by avoiding multiple transfers of custody and school placements
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3. Provide permanency for children in a shorter period, whether through reintegration back into their home, or, if needed, adoption
Goals for the child welfare system:

1. Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care.
Number of kids in foster care:

- 7,394 children in foster care at the end of February 2018
- About 2,000 more children in foster care compared to 2012

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Number of kids in foster care:

- Entries
- Exits
- Length of stay
Number of kids in foster care:

- Kansas is outpacing the national increase in foster care.
  - US: +9%
  - Kansas: +22%

Sources: National increase of number of children in care as of September 30th, 2012, compared to September 30th, 2016: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Trends in Foster Care and Adoption.
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Number of kids in foster care:

- Kansas is outpacing the national increase in foster care.
  - US: +9%
  - Kansas: +22%
- More kids in foster care per 1,000 kids than in 42 other states.

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Number of kids in foster care:

Crawford County
Monthly Average Number of Children in Foster Care

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
## Number of kids in foster care:

### Monthly Average Number of Children in Foster Care

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>+19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bourbon</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>+62%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cherokee</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>+42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crawford</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>+94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labette</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>-20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>+94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neosho</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>+112%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilson</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
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<td>+500%</td>
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Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

- Family preservation services have not kept pace with increased reports of potential abuse and neglect
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<td>Intake reports</td>
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<td>Referrals to Family Preservation Services</td>
<td>2,687</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>-2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family preservation</td>
<td>2687</td>
<td>2613</td>
<td>2476</td>
<td>2576</td>
<td>2621</td>
<td>2610</td>
<td>2630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>referrals statewide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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### Potential contributing factor:

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<th>Crawford County</th>
<th>SFY 2011</th>
<th>SFY 2017</th>
<th>Percent change</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intake reports</td>
<td>1,037</td>
<td>1,069</td>
<td>+3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports assigned for investigation</td>
<td>616</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removals (entry into foster care)</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>+64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to Family Preservation Services</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>+35%</td>
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Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential solution: Allow more families to benefit from family preservation services

Goal: Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care.
Reasons for entering care:

• Primary removal reason cited by DCF
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• As in other states, more removals for neglect than abuse or other reasons
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• **Primary** removal reason cited by DCF

• As in other states, more removals for neglect than abuse or other reasons

• The recent **growth** in children entering foster care has been almost entirely related to neglect
Reasons for entering care:

Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2011-2017)

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Reasons for entering care:

Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2011-2017)
Statewide

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Reasons for entering care:

Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2011-2017)
Crawford County

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

• Social safety net programs in Kansas have assisted many fewer children and families in recent years.

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Number of children served by TANF</th>
<th>Number of children served by child care assistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>25,467</td>
<td>July 2010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>7,516</td>
<td>July 2017</td>
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• KU research demonstrates a causal connection

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

- Crawford County:

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<td>313</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>July 2017</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>95</td>
<td>119</td>
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-229%                     -41%

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential solutions:

Goal: Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care.

Potential solution: Strengthen safety net supports.
Reasons for entering care:

Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2011-2017)  
Shawnee County

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

- Resources to address substance abuse issues.

**Drug Endangered Child program:**

- Comprehensive support for mothers struggling with substance abuse in Shawnee County
- Served 57 families with 108 children in 2016
- Primarily funded through the Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention grant

**Shawnee County removals**

- 2011: 148
- 2012: 45
- 2013: 40
- 2014: 30
- 2015: 20
- 2016: 10
- 2017: 5

- Substance abuse

![Shawnee County removals chart](chart.png)
Potential solutions:

Goal: Help struggling families at the first sign of trouble, while children can safely be kept in the home, in an effort to reduce the number of children placed in out-of-home care

Potential solution: Expand resources to address family substance abuse issues.
Goals for the child welfare system:

2. Provide a more stable environment for children in out-of-home care by avoiding multiple transfers of custody and school placements
Placement stability:

- Number of placement moves increasing statewide in recent years
- Compliance concerns in recent federal review
Placement stability:

- Nationally, placements with relatives are generally more stable.
- About a third of foster care placements are with relatives statewide, but that number is lower in Crawford County.
Placement stability:

Placement Settings (SFY 2017)

- Foster family home: 55% (Kansas) and 67% (Crawford County)
- Relative: 33% (Kansas) and 22% (Crawford County)
- Group Residential: 7% (Kansas) and 5% (Crawford County)

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

- Many relative homes are not licensed and receive a lower rate of payment

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<th>Statewide, SFY 2017</th>
<th>Average # of kids per month</th>
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<td>Non-relative licensed foster home (standard)</td>
<td>2,152</td>
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<td>Relative, non-licensed</td>
<td>2,182</td>
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Source: Data presented to the Kansas Child Welfare Task Force summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential contributing factor:

- Many relative homes are not licensed and receive a lower rate of payment

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<th>Statewide, SFY 2017</th>
<th>Average # of kids per month</th>
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Potential solution:

Goal: Provide a more stable environment for children in out-of-home care by avoiding multiple transfers of custody and school placements

Potential solution: Provide relative placements more financial support and address potential licensing barriers
Goals for the child welfare system:

3. Provide permanency for children in a shorter period, whether through reintegration back into their home, or, if needed, adoption.
Permanency:

- Average months spent in foster care for children exiting in SFY 2017 to:
  - Reunification: 10 months
  - Adoption: 36 months
Potential contributing factors:

• Anecdotally:
  • Services parents need as part of their reunification plans may not be available or may have waiting lists
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  • High caseloads can make it difficult for social workers to work with families intensively, and contribute to turnover
Potential contributing factors:

- Anecdotally:
  - Services parents need as part of their reunification plans may not be available or may have waiting lists
  - High caseloads can make it difficult for social workers to work with families intensively, and contribute to turnover
  - Additional services may be needed for higher-acuity youth
Potential solution: Create conditions for successful reunification or adoption: sufficient services, caseworker attention

Goal: Provide permanency for children in a shorter period, whether through reunification back into their home, or, if needed, adoption
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3. Provide permanency for children in a shorter period, whether through reintegration back into their home, or, if needed, adoption
Potential solutions:

• Allow more families to benefit from family preservation services
• Strengthen safety net supports
• Expand resources to address family substance abuse issues
• Provide relative placements more financial support and address potential licensing barriers
• Create conditions for successful reunification or adoption: sufficient services, caseworker attention
What does this community need?

1. What does this community need to better support families and keep kids safe and out of foster care?
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2. What does this community need to make sure kids in foster care have more stable placements?
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3. How can kids in foster care from this community spend less time in foster care and achieve permanency (reunification, adoption) more quickly?
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4. What are important issues in this community that we’re not talking about?
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