Foster Care Forum
Wichita

August 21, 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:

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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.
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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:

- 7,588 children in foster care at the end of June 2018
- 2,361 more children in foster care than June 2010
- 396 more children in just last year
- 45% increase in 8 years; 6% increase in 1 year

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

- **Entries**
  - SFY 2010: 3,444
  - SFY 2018: 4,212 (+22%)

- **Exits**
  - SFY 2010: 3,347
  - SFY 2018: 3,805 (+14%)
  - Not Keeping Pace

- **Average Length of Stay**
  - SFY 2014: 16.7 months
  - SFY 2015: 18.2 months
  - SFY 2016: 18.2 months
  - SFY 2017: 18.9 months
  - SFY 2018: 19.1 months
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%
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- More kids in foster care per 1,000 kids than in 42 other states.

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Number of kids in foster care:

FY 2012: 1,277
FY 2018: 1,585

308 more kids (24% increase)

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>Referrals to FPS</td>
<td>2,870</td>
<td>2,692</td>
<td>-6%</td>
<td>609</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>-3%</td>
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Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
Potential solution:

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: Allow more families to benefit from family preservation services
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:

**Statewide Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2012-2018)**

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Substance use
- Parent / child relationship

Source: DCF data summarized by SFRH Coalition.
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Wichita Primary Removal Reason (SFY 2012-2018)

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Substance abuse
- Parent/Child relationship
- Neglect

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.

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<th>Number of children served by TANF</th>
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<td>Sedgwick</td>
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<td>July 2010</td>
<td>8,208</td>
<td>25,467</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 2017</td>
<td>2,681</td>
<td>7,516</td>
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- KU research demonstrates a causal connection

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.
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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.

• Wichita has a smaller percentage of Relative placements than Kansas statewide.

• Wichita has a slightly larger percentage of Group Residential placements than Kansas statewide.
Placement stability:

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>
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Source: Data presented to the Kansas Child Welfare Task Force summarized by SFRH Coalition.
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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 2018 to:
  - Reunification: 10 months
  - Adoption: 38 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
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Potential solutions:

• Allow more families to benefit from family preservation services

• Strengthen safety net supports

• *Update: Expand resources to address family substance abuse issues

• Provide relative placements more financial support and address potential licensing barriers

• Create conditions through policy 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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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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