

Permanency Docket Quarterly

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND DATA SOURCES

The data contained in the Permanency Docket Quarterly (PDQ) report provides a foundation for conversations between a county child welfare agency and juvenile court to improve local practices and better understand the factors which contribute to a county's performance in managing court-involved children.

Data for the "current quarter" (the quarter identified in the report title) is compiled and published approximately three months after the last day of the identified quarter.

Specific questions about child welfare data quality should be directed to the county child welfare agency. Questions about court caseload data should be directed to the Case Management Section of the Supreme Court at CaseMgmt@sc.ohio.gov.

Child welfare data in the PDQ is obtained from the Statewide Automated Child Welfare System (SACWIS) administered by the Ohio Department of Children and Youth. Court caseload and performance data is obtained from the Case Management Section of the Supreme Court of Ohio. Population demographics are obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau.

UNDERSTANDING AND INTERPRETING THE METRICS

The PDQ data dashboard includes three pages: (1) Children in Care; (2) Children Exiting Care; and (3) Court Caseload Statistics.

CHILDREN IN CARE

Children in Care

This line graph displays the number of children in abuse, neglect, or dependency dispositional status as of the last day of each calendar quarter over the last 16 quarters, under the following types of care:

- ▶ Temporary custody (TC, which includes TC, TCO, TC 1st extension, TC 2nd extension, emergency custody, and *ex parte*).
- ▶ Court ordered protective supervision (COPS, which includes COPS, TCOPS, and COPS extension).
- ▶ Permanent custody (PC, which includes permanent custody and permanent surrender).

- ▶ Planned permanent living arrangement (PPLA).

Reasons for Removals During Quarter

This pie chart shows the reasons recorded for the removal of children from their homes during the current quarter, showing the percentage of all recorded reasons. Note that multiple reasons may be selected for a given child.

Current Children in Care

This displays the number of children in care as of the last day of the current quarter, under the same categories used in the "children in care" line graph.

Children in Care Demographics and Minor Population Demographics (Census)

These pie charts display the race and ethnicity of children in care as of the last day of the current quarter. Hovering over the pie slices shows the underlying numbers of children in each race or ethnicity category.

The companion pair of pie charts display the overall race and ethnicity demographics for the entire minor population. These four pie charts together allow the reader to examine the relationship between the overall minor population demographics with those of the children in care. Race and ethnicity data for children in care are captured in SACWIS by caseworkers and are acquired through a combination of direct observation and self-identification by family members.

Minor Population (2020 Census)

This data card displays the overall population of minors and the percentage of those children who are in the care as of the last day of the current quarter.

Median Days in Care (current status)

This displays the median number of days that the children in care, as of the last day of the current quarter, have been in care under each status type. It does not display the median number of days that those children were in care under any prior status types. For example, most children in permanent custody status were previously in temporary custody and the figure shown for permanent custody does not include time the children were in temporary custody or court ordered protective supervision.

New Report Rate

This data shows the percentage of the children who, during the most recent quarter, had a new substantiated or indicated report of abuse or neglect and who had prior court involvement which had terminated within the previous 12 months.

CHILDREN EXITING CARE

Children Exiting Care

This line graph displays the number of children exiting care over each of the last 16 calendar quarters.

Children Exiting Care During Quarter

This data card shows the number of children exiting care in the current quarter, under the following exit types: (1) reunification; (2) adoption; (3) guardianship (includes non-relative legal custody); (4) relatives (kinship placement); (5) emancipation; or (6) other.

Median Days in Care Prior to Exit

This line graph displays the median length of stay (in days) for all children exiting care over each of the last 16 calendar quarters, by exit type.

Median Days in Care of Exits During Quarter

This data shows the median length of stay (in days) for all children who exited care during the current quarter, by exit type.

COURT CASELOAD STATISTICS

Total Incoming Cases

This line graph displays the total number of incoming Abuse, Neglect, or Dependency cases and Permanent Custody cases filed in the juvenile court over the last 16 calendar quarters. Total incoming cases include new filings plus reactivations and transfers.

Incoming Cases Per 10,000 Minor Population

This table shows the number of incoming Abuse, Neglect, or Dependency and Permanent Custody cases (new filings plus reactivations and transfers) filed during the current quarter per 10,000 minor population.

Terminations During Quarter

This pie chart shows the breakdown of the manner in which cases were terminated by the court during the current quarter under the case termination categories available to the courts in the Supreme Court caseload statistical reporting framework under [Sup.R. 37](#).

Case Processing Timeliness

This chart contains a combination of a line graph and a bar graph showing performance in disposing of cases within the case processing time standards promulgated by the Supreme Court under [Sup.R. 39](#). The chart shows the percentage of cases pending at the end of each quarter that have been pending (in pre-dispositional status) for longer than the applicable time standard (the overage rate). The bars show the underlying number of cases (overage cases) each quarter that were pending for longer than the applicable time standard. The time standard for abuse, neglect, or dependency cases is 90 days. The time standard for permanent custody cases will change from 270 days to 200 days on Aug. 3, 2022.

QUESTIONS AND STRATEGIES FOR COURTS TO CONSIDER

The PDQ dashboard allows courts to examine county data and compare it with statewide data and with the performance of peer counties. If a peer county appears to be doing things well – perhaps in terms of case processing timeliness, or shorter lengths of stay for children removed from their homes – consider initiating a conversation to see what you can learn from them.

Maintain a critical eye toward data quality. Good decisions require good data. If any of the data appears to be incorrect, reach out to the Supreme Court or make inquiries of your county child welfare agency to confirm the accuracy of the PDQ data.

- ▶ How does your county compare with the state, especially with children in permanent custody?
- ▶ Are front loading practices being utilized, such as family team meetings, intensive case management, and child protection mediation?

Inquire into efforts made to identify relatives or guardians if reunification is not possible.

- ▶ At hearings requesting a change or modification to a dispositional order, did the court consider if it is in the child's best interest ([R.C. 2151.42](#))?

The race and ethnicity data are provided as a first step in helping courts and child welfare agencies identify when disproportionalities may exist within their child welfare systems – that is, whether certain race or ethnicity categories are overrepresented or underrepresented compared with their percentages in the general population. For detailed guidance on this important topic: [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) (2021).

- ▶ Do the percentages of children who were removed for the various reasons reflect something different than what you observe in your interactions with your community's families?

- ▶ Does your county agency need to modify how removal reasons are recorded to ensure that all applicable reasons are properly documented?
- ▶ Do the services on the case plan meet the needs of the child and family to move towards the permanency goal?
- ▶ Are barriers to accessing service, such as cognitive delays, physical handicaps, language, and transportation being addressed?

Prior to exiting care, if children are remaining in care longer than the statewide lengths of stay, consider possible ways to seek reductions.

- ▶ Is counsel appointed to all parties at the first hearing for those who are eligible?
- ▶ Is family visitation occurring regularly, with increased frequency and decreased supervision when determined safe and appropriate?

At all hearings, inquire into the specific, individualized efforts made to safely reunify the child and address the issues that led to the removal ([Reasonable Efforts, R.C. 2151.419](#)).

Review your court's trends of cases pending over the time standards.

- ▶ Could counsel be appointed to all parties at the first hearing, for those who are eligible, to move cases more quickly to disposition?
- ▶ Are there other sources of delay that are contributing to your court's performance?

Consider convening a planning meeting with representatives from your court, the county child welfare agency, prosecutor's office, and other practitioners in order to discuss all aspects of caseload management.