

FAR Services Pilot Expansion

Children's Justice Conference | May 4, 2026

Original Date: March 23, 2026

Child Welfare Division | Approved for distribution by Programs and Practice

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Agenda

Topic	Presenter
FAR Services: Response to Evolving Work	Hannah Merley
Initial Impact of FAR Services Pilot	Hannah Merley & Alissa Copeland
Pilot Expansion and Impact Data Tracking	Hannah Merley & Alissa Copeland
Summary and Q&A	Hannah Merley



FAR Services: Response to Evolving Work

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Family Assessment Response (FAR) Services Overview



- FAR is Washington's Differential Response CPS Pathway.
- Low-to-Moderate allegations of abuse or neglect.
- Assessment and Planning.
- Voluntary Services.
- FAR Services is a new way to deliver services on FAR cases.



What is the FAR Program?

Family Assessment Response (FAR) program at DCYF is an alternative to traditional child protective (CPS) investigations for low-to-moderate risk allegations of child abuse or neglect.



It focuses on supporting families through services rather than finding parents at fault, with a goal of keeping children safe at home.



FAR cases may be open up to 180 days to allow families time to receive goods and complete services aimed at mitigating child abuse and neglect.

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Key Aspects of the Differential Response Pathway (Family Assessment and Response)

Two-Track System: Agencies separate reports into a traditional **Investigation Track** (high risk) and a **Family Assessment Track** (low/moderate risk).

Non-Adversarial: The assessment track does not aim to prove or disprove abuse or officially substantiate a perpetrator, reducing conflict with families.

Focus on Needs: Caseworkers connect families with community resources, such as housing, counseling, or parenting classes, to reduce future risk.

Voluntary Participation: In many systems, services offered through this pathway are voluntary, allowing families to accept help without being forced The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare.

Targeted Cases: Typically used for neglect cases or minor physical abuse where there is no immediate, severe safety threat.

Safety Net: If, during a Family Assessment, severe dangers are uncovered, the case can be elevated to a formal investigation.

Drifting From the Intent of FAR

Business need

- Combining Investigative and FAR workloads in many areas resulted in an inconsistent approach to the two CPS pathways

Contributing factor

- Challenges related to provider availability – further impacted by the pandemic

Lessons learned from implementation

- Did not adequately build in infrastructure to develop and maintain referral pathways with community-based resources.

Impacts from competing circumstances like the opioid epidemic/fentanyl crisis

- More higher risk cases, requiring more caseworker time and energy to ensure child safety when parental substance use was a factor.



What is the FVS Program?

FVS is a voluntary program through DCYF that helps engage families in either community or in-home services that build skills to keep their children safe, healthy, and well. Caseworkers support families as they complete an assessment of their strengths, needs, and the safety of their children.



Families can choose to stop working with DCYF at any time. If a family chooses to stop FVS, caseworkers must assess the level of safety and risk before closing the case. If there is still a safety concern for the child, DCYF may ask the court to step in by filing a dependency petition.



FVS may be offered following a CPS investigation when services and resources can help keep children safe and families stable. Families can also ask for FVS services when they need help by calling DCYF.

Two Entry Pathways to FVS

From open DCYF case:

Offered to families when DCYF assessment identifies:

- Mod-High- or High-Risk score
- A safety plan can be used to manage the safety threat and avoid removal
- Child placed on Voluntary Placement Agreement due to safety threat

Non-CPS entry:

- Available to families who call intake to request services.
- Intakes regarding youth under 12 who are at shelters or have runaway.



Family Voluntary Services (FVS) Workflow





FAR-Services:

When FAR cases are
treated like FVS



TIME

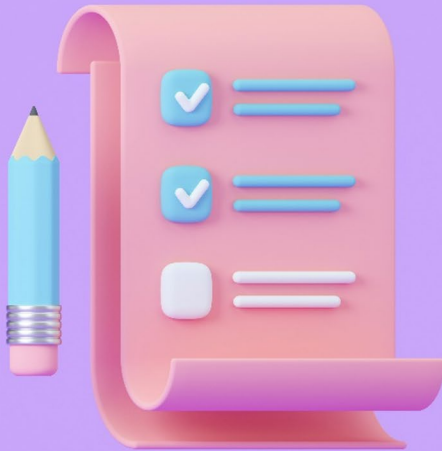


FOR



CHANGE

Original FAR vs. FAR-Services Workflow



1. A FAR Intake is assigned to a CPS caseworker.
2. The caseworker completes the FAR Family Assessment, gathering information about the allegations and identifying strengths and needs.
3. The family agrees to participate in voluntary services.
4. The case transfers to a Family Voluntary Services (FVS) unit.

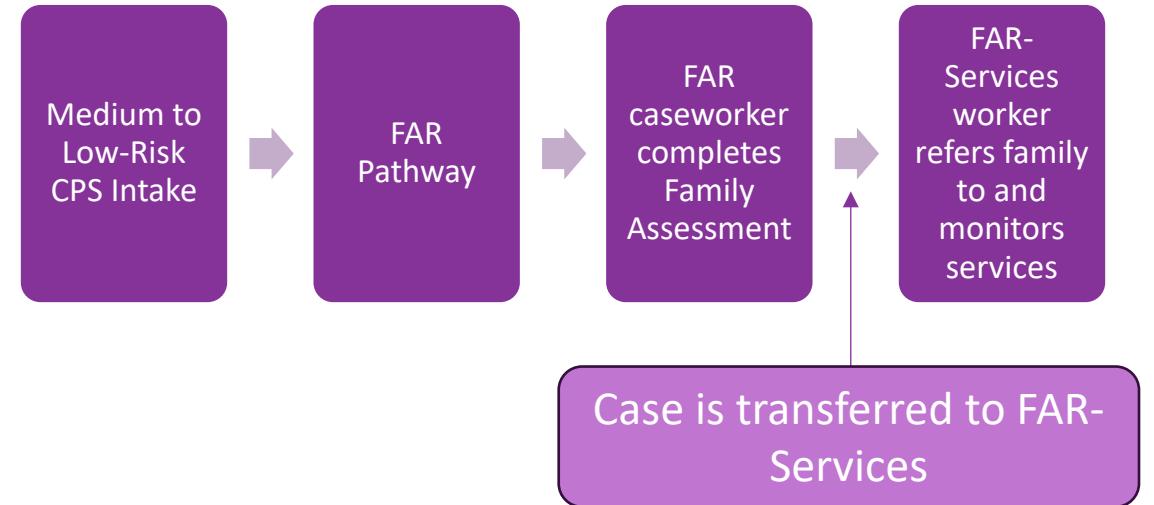
New case type – CPS FAR Services.

Original FAR vs. FAR-Services Workflow Cont.

Original FAR Pathway



New FAR-Services Pathway



Initial Impact of FAR Services Pilot

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Initial Pilot and Findings Pertaining to FAR Services Program

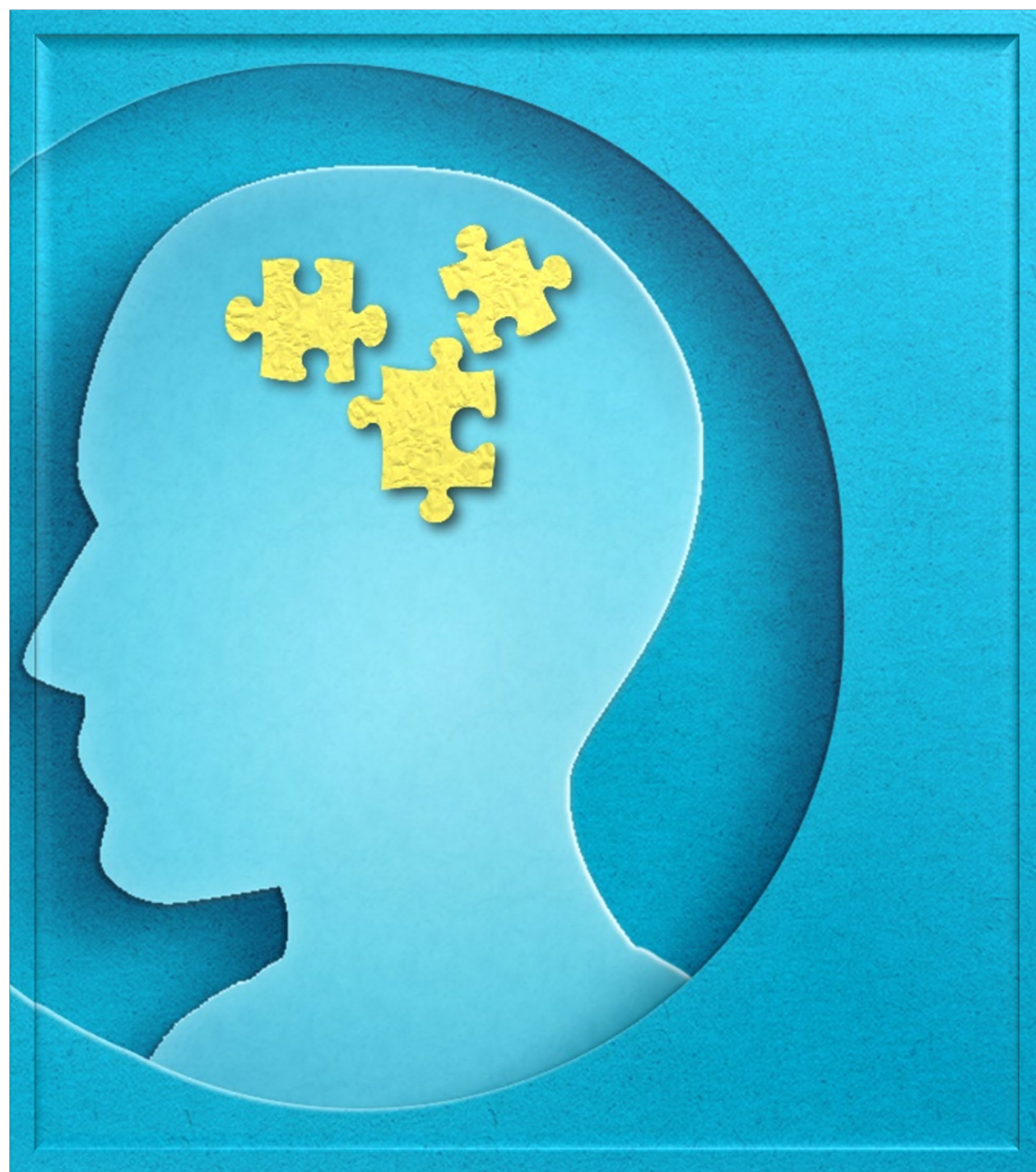
- Comprehensive Assessment and Planning
 - 59% of pilot cases had comprehensive risk/safety assessment. Non-pilot cases – 37%.
 - 29% of pilot cases had a case plan documented in the case file – 6% had a written case plan. Non-pilot cases, 3% and 0%, respectively.
 - Higher percentage of pilot cases received an EBP.
- Positive Impacts to Workload and Retention
 - Equitably balances caseloads for CPS and FVS caseworkers.
 - Improved engagement with families.

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Why are Written Case Plans Important?

Why

We are required to case plan with families any time we are offering or providing services **and/or** any time a case is open for more than 45 days.

“A good case plan provides hope.”

~Jennifer Justice, FIRST Legal Clinic



Why are Written Case Plans Important?

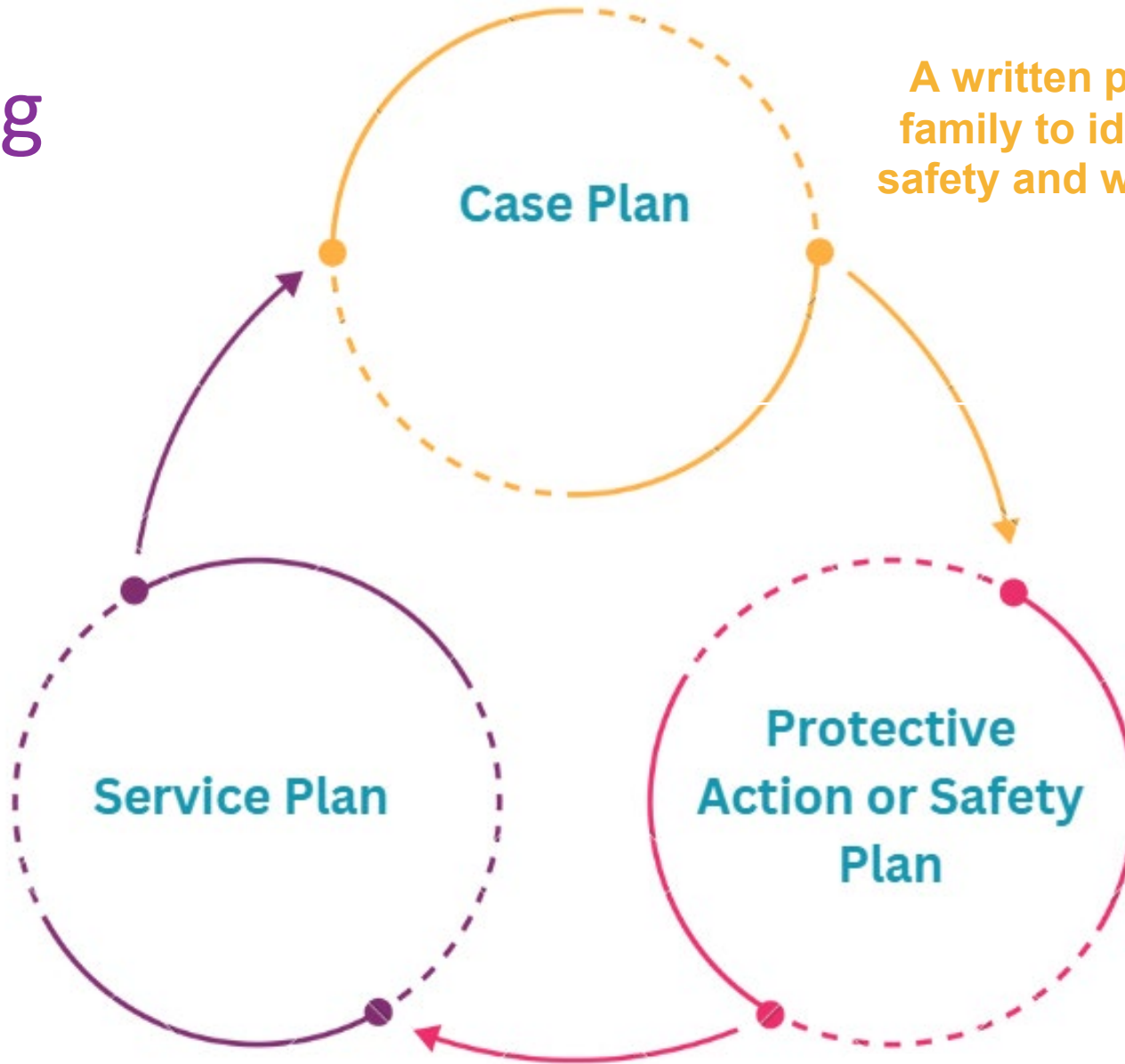
Case Plans are a Shared Process:

- Identify a family's short and long-term goals.
- Elevate family voice by developing mutually agreed upon expectations.
- Preserve families by increasing protective capacities and decreasing the risk of child abuse and neglect.
- Ensuring child safety over time by supporting the health, safety and well-being of children, youth, and families.
- Transparency and accountability, everyone knows what is expected.



Case Planning

Recommended, court-ordered, or agreed upon services to build skills, increase protective factors, and support family wellbeing.



A written plan developed with the family to identify goals supporting safety and well-being into the future.

Time-limited agreements developed with the family and their supports to address immediate threats to child safety.



Safety Plans vs. Case Plans

Safety Plans	Case Plans
Create safety in the present	Create safety in the future
Prevent removal (despite threat)	Prevent future placement and/or re-referral
Actions to immediately manage threats to child safety, does not rely on parental behavioral change	Services to build parental protective capacities to manage threats to child safety, behavioral change
Short-term (<30 days)	Short-term to long-term (30 days – 6 months)
Informed by safety assessment	Informed by family assessment and developed with the family
Narrow, only addresses identified threats to child safety	Broad, addresses long-term safety, permanency, and wellbeing

Case Planning is Fluid

Initiate Case Plan ~ 15 days

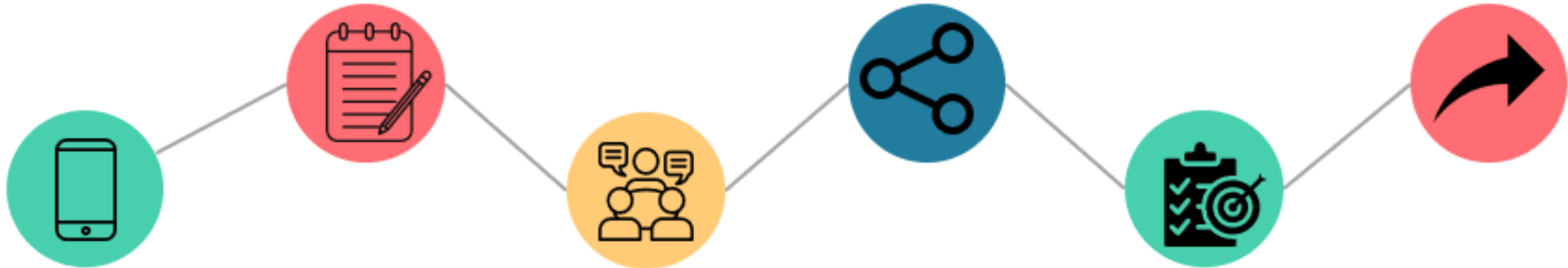
Specific services may have been identified already, initiate the case plan by indicating any initial service referrals, document in case plan, and obtain parent signature.

Shared Process

Case planning is a shared process with families incorporating elements driven by the family voice as well as services identified through assessment or by court order.

Additional Resources Identified

Case planning with families is fluid, additional services or resources may be identified. Case plans should be reviewed monthly and updated as needed throughout the life of a case.



Initial Contact

Follow program-specific requirements for initial contact and scheduling your first meeting or visit with the family.

Engagement and Assessment

As you complete your assessment, continue to engage the family in case planning discussions.

Complete Case Plan ~ 45 days

Finalize the case plan to include all services and resources identified throughout engagement, assessment, and shared development of the case plan.



FAR Services Pilot Expansion and Impact Data Tracking

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Implementation and Training

- Official Launch 1/1/2026 for pilot expansion.
- Integrate into Case Planning Initiative.
- Training Plan:
 - FVS leads to provide regional support.
 - Case Planning Foundations of Practice and Q&A Session.
 - Priority for in-person Case Planning training/Q&A.
 - Additional support for FVS caseworkers and supervisors.



FAR Services Pilot Offices

Region 1

- Spokane Central

Region 2

- Richland
- Walla Walla
- Yakima

Region 3

- Bellingham
- Everett
- Lynnwood
- Sky Valley

Region 4

- King East/Bellevue
- Martin Luther King Jr.

Region 5

- Bremerton
- Lakewood
- Parkland
- Puyallup
- Tacoma

Region 6

- Aberdeen
- Kelso
- Long Beach
- South Bend
- Tumwater – Ranier
- Tumwater - Deschutes
- Vancouver – Clark



FAR Services Tracking Metric: **Workload Reports**

- **Tracks:** Ratio of cases to worker, broken out by program type
- **Expected results:** FAR cases will be transferred to FAR services workers at the same or higher rate as CPS cases are transferred to FVS, and the caseload ratios will reflect this.



FAR Services Tracking Metric: Ad Hoc Service Reports

- **Tracks:** Number of combined in-home service referrals, case plan completion file up-loads
- **Expected results:** The percentage of FAR cases that are referred for in-home services and that have an uploaded, completed case plan will increase.



FAR Services Tracking Metric: Point-in-Time Pilot Office FFPSA Office Assessment Readiness Report

- **Tracks:** Case (prevention) plan uploads; accurate, ongoing assessments of risk & safety; and use of therapeutic prevention services that are rated as promising, supported, or well-supported in the federal EBP clearinghouse ([Home | Title IV-E Prevention Services Clearinghouse](#))
- **Expected results:** The percentage of FAR cases that are referred for in-home services and that have an uploaded, completed case plan will increase. The percentage of cases where safety assessments were completed on time and caseworker assessed safety with everyone in the home will increase.



FAR Services Tracking Metric: Child Welfare Safe Reduction Dashboard

Filters

Race/Ethnicity

All

Age Group

All

SDM Score

All

Intake Reason

All

Major CAN

All

Prior CPS Intakes

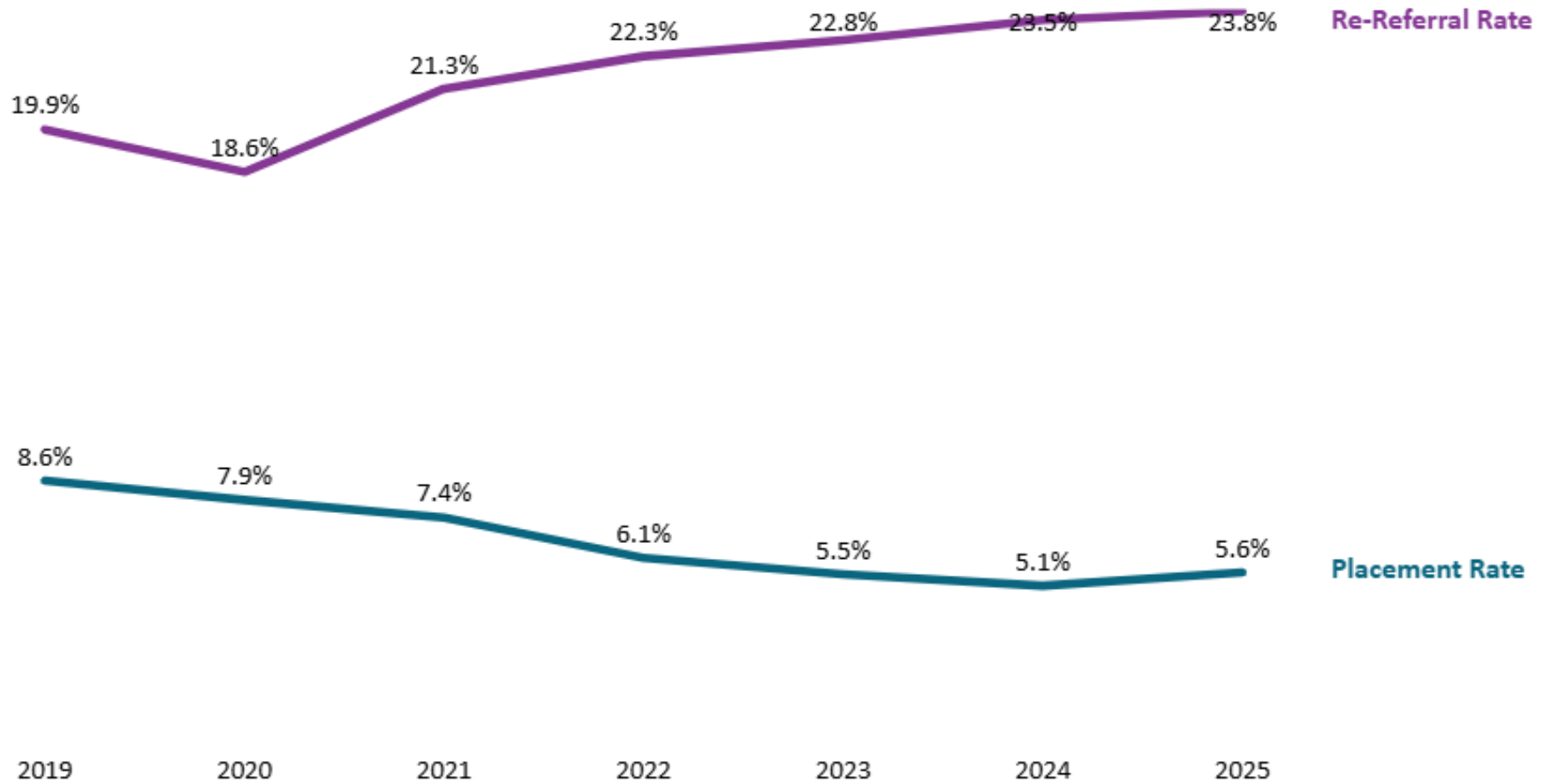
All

[Design Document](#)

Data as of:

1/5/2026

Re-Referral and Placement Trends within 180 Days - Statewide Trends



Year Selector:

Confidential client & provider information, and summary numbers between 1-9, can only be used for DCYF internal business purposes, unless explicitly authorized by a DCYF data share contract or approved by the Office of Innovation, Alignment, and Accountability

FAR Services Tracking Metrics:

Future targeted case review of ICW or Reason-to-know FAR-services Cases



- **Tracks:** Collaboration with Tribes on FAR cases via:
 - Targeted case review of ICW or Reason-to-Know FAR Services Cases
- One of the ideas that came from the tribes was working with the active efforts specialists.
- What ideas do you have?



Summary and Q&A

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Summary

FAR-Services

- New program type at DCYF offered to families with FAR cases who want to participate in services
- Intended to resolve risk factors and prevent children from coming into the system via provision of evidence-based parenting programs and case management practices
- Initial findings on the program's impact on case planning and service completion are promising
- It is being expanded across the state and efficacy data will continue to be collected



Q & A

Thank you!

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