

Settlement Agreement Semi-Annual Report

Semi-Annual Outcomes
January – June 2007



Division of Children and Family Services
Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW)
Prepared by the BMCW Program Evaluation Managers

Please note this information is embargoed from public release or publication until 1:00 p.m. on August 29, 2007.

Contents

Contents	2
Index of Tables	3
Preface	4
<i>BMCW Demographic and Descriptive Data</i>	4
BMCW Performance January through June 2007 on remaining enforceable items – At a glance	6
Introduction	8
<i>Remaining enforceable provisions - Report overview</i>	9
Data source	12
Provision the BMCW met or exceeded during the first six months of CY 2007	13
<i>Adoption within 24 months of removal</i>	13
Performance standards demonstrating year-to-date performance only	17
<i>Maltreatment while in out-of-home care</i>	17
<i>Development of special diagnostic assessment centers</i>	23
Performance standards previously met	26
<i>Shelter placements phased-out</i>	26
<i>No children placed in shelters</i>	26
Provisions the BMCW did not meet during the first six months of CY 2007	27
<i>Timeliness of ASFA compliance</i>	27
<i>Reunification within 12 months of placement in out-of-home care</i>	32
<i>Placement stability</i>	37

Index of Tables

Table 2.1: Number of families with children in out-of-home care at end of period, January 2003 to June 2007	4
Table 2.2: Number of children who achieved permanency or exited care,	4
Table 2.3: Age of children at time of removal, January 2003 to June 2007	4
Table 2.4: Families whose children entered out-of-home care.....	5
Table 2.5: Adoptions, January to June 2007	13
Table 2.6: Adoption within 24 months: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007	13
Table 2.7: Length-of-stay (LOS) in out-of-home care for children adopted, January to June 2007.....	14
Table 2.8: Activity of Permanency Counselor at Children’s Court, January to June 2007	16
Table 2.9: Maltreatment while in out-of-home care, January to June 2007	17
Table 2.10: Substantiated maltreatment by type of placement, January to June 2007	18
Table 2.11: Maltreatment by type, January to June 2007.....	19
Table 2.12: Substantiated maltreatment type by age of child, January to June 2007	21
Table 2.13: Placement episodes as related to running away.....	24
Table 2.14: Registered group settings by specialty, January to June 2007.....	25
Table 2.15: Number and percent of children in ASFA compliance, January to June 2007.....	27
Table 2.16: ASFA compliance: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007.....	27
Table 2.17: Children who met ASFA compliance, January to June 2007	28
Table 2.18: Children in out-of-home care and children reaching the ASFA threshold, January to June 2007.....	28
Table 2.19: Adoption of children under age 12.....	29
Table 2.20: Age of children when they reached the ASFA threshold	30
Table 2.21: Reunification within 12 months of placement, January to June 2007	32
Table 2.22: Reunification: Semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007	33
Table 2.23: Permanency through reunification, January 2003 to June 2007.....	33
Table 2.24: Reunification of children in sibling groups	34
Table 2.25: Coordinated Service Team (CST) meetings conducted by month, January to June 2007.....	35
Table 2.26: Permanency staffings convened, January to June 2007.....	36
Table 2.27: Placement stability by month, January to June 2007.....	37
Table 2.28: Placement stability: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007	37
Table 2.29: Number of placements by age, January to June 2007	38
Table 2.30: Placement movement as of June 30, 2007: children entering out-of-home care (OHC), January to June 2007	38
Table 2.31: Placement movement as of June 30, 2007: children entering OHC between July and December 2006	39
Table 2.32: Placement history of children in OHC with four or more placements as of June 30, 2007.....	41
Table 2.33: Placements by age.....	41
Table 2.34: Number of placements for children under age five entering OHC, January to June 2007	42

Preface

BMCW Demographic and Descriptive Data

Table 2.1: Number of families with children in out-of-home care at end of period, January 2003 to June 2007

	Dec. 31, 2003	Dec. 31, 2004	Dec. 31, 2005	Dec. 31, 2006	Jun. 30, 2007
Number of families receiving Ongoing case management program services	2,081	1,948	1,899	1,777	1,768
Number of children in out-of-home care placements	3,489	3,151	2,825	2,621	2,617

Table 2.2: Number of children who achieved permanency or exited care, January to June 2007

Permanency achieved through:	Number of children
Reunification	334
Adoption	142
Age of majority reached	180
Transfer of guardianship	61
Subsidized guardianship	51
TOTAL	768

Table 2.3: Age of children at time of removal, January 2003 to June 2007

Age at removal (years)	CY 2003	CY 2004	CY 2005	CY 2006	Jan. – Jun. 2007
Birth to 4	44%	40%	41%	53%	44%
5 to 11	32%	32%	29%	26%	33%
12 to 15	17%	20%	20%	10%	15%
16+	7%	8%	10%	11%	8%
Total number of children removed	1,123	1,308	1,179	1,180	631

Table 2.4 below provides the number of families who entered Ongoing Case Management services since CY 2003 and further identifies the number of these families with three or more children.

Table 2.4: Families whose children entered out-of-home care

Number of children in family	Number of families CY 2003	Number of families CY 2004	Number of families CY 2005	Number of families CY 2006	Number of families 2007 YTD
< 3 children per family	411	435	422	420	184
3	55	76	80	63	34
4	21	32	37	36	19
5	8	16	19	15	9
6	9	15	4	3	5
7	2	4	1	4	2
8	0	1	2	5	0
9	2	5	1	1	0
11	0	0	0	1	0
Total families whose children entered out-of-home care	508	584	566	548	253
Families with three or more children whose children entered out-of-home care	97	149	144	128	69

BMCW Performance January through June 2007 on remaining enforceable items – At a glance

§ I.B.2 At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody reaching 15 of the last 22 months in out-of-home care during the period shall have had a Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petition filed on their behalf, or an available Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) exception documented in their case, by the end of their fifteenth month in care.*									
CURRENT PERFORMANCE 2007 – The BMCW did not meet this requirement in the first six months of CY 2007.		Past Performance							
Performance Standard	Jan–Jun 2007 Result	Period 1 Standard	Period 1 Result (CY 2003)	Period 2 Standard	Period 2 Result (CY 2004)	Period 3 Standard	Period 3 Result (CY 2005)	CY 2006 Standard	CY 2006 Result
>= 90%	88%	>= 65%	77%	>=75%	88%	>= 90%	29%	>= 90%	79%

* The method for calculating the Period 3 performance standard for this measure (going forward) was adjusted to meet the recommendations by the Legislative Audit Bureau in the Feb. 2006 audit report.

§I.B.6 Of all reunifications with parents/caregivers, at least the following percentages of children shall be reunified within 12 months of entry into care.									
CURRENT PERFORMANCE 2007 - The BMCW did not meet this requirement in the first six months of CY 2007.		Past Performance							
Performance Standard	Jan–Jun 2007 Result	Period 1 Standard	Period 1 Result (CY 2003)	Period 2 Standard	Period 2 Result (CY 2004)	Period 3 Standard	Period 3 Result (CY 2005)	CY 2006 Standard	CY 2006 Result
>= 71%	70%	Monitor Only	45.0%	>= 65%	63.0%	>= 71%	72%	>= 71%	71%

§I.B.7 At least the following percentage of children for whom an adoption is finalized within the period shall exit BMCW out-of-home care within 24 months of entry into care.									
CURRENT PERFORMANCE 2007 - The BMCW met this requirement (first six months period)		Past Performance							
Performance Standard	Jan–Jun 2007 Result	Period 1 Standard	Period 1 Result (CY 2003)	Period 2 Standard	Period 2 Result (CY 2004)	Period 3 Standard	Period 3 Result (CY 2005)	CY 2006 Standard	CY 2006 Result
>= 30%	33.1%	>= 20%	14.2%	>= 25%	15.5%	>= 30%	21.7%	>=30%	32.1%

§I.C.1. No more than the following percentages of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect allegations within the period by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed.									
CURRENT PERFORMANCE 2007 – This is an annual measure.		Past Performance - The performance standard provided here for the first six months demonstrates year-to-date performance only							
Performance Standard	Jan–Jun 2007 Result	Period 1 Standard	Period 1 Result (CY 2003)	Period 2 Standard	Period 2 Result (CY 2004)	Period 3 Standard	Period 3 Result (CY 2005)	CY 2006 Standard	CY 2006 Result
<= 0.60%	0.49%	<= 0.70%	0.57%	<= 0.65%	0.79%	<= 0.60%	0.81%	<= 0.60%	0.15%

§I.D.5 The use of shelter placements shall be phased out entirely. The BMCW phased out all shelter placements by December 31, 2003.

§I.D.6 By December 31, 2003, and thereafter, no child shall be placed in a shelter. The BMCW no longer uses shelters as a placement for children.

§I.D.7 Diagnostic/Assessment Centers. The BMCW developed special diagnostic/assessment centers for children over 12 years of age who need further assessment in order to determine the appropriate placement by December 31, 2003. Placement in such centers shall not exceed 30 days, or 60 days if the placement is extended in accordance with applicable state law. During the first six months of 2007, 19 children stayed in a center beyond 60 days.

§I.D.9 At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current episode in BMCW custody. The number of placements will exclude time-limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-care episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation.

CURRENT PERFORMANCE 2007 - The BMCW did not meet this requirement in the first six months of CY 2007.		BMCW 2007							
Performance Standard	Jan–Jun 2007 Result	Period 1 Standard	Period 1 Result (CY 2003)	Period 2 Standard	Period 2 Result (CY 2004)	Period 3 Standard	Period 3 Result (CY 2005)	CY 2006 Standard	CY 2006 Result
>= 90%	74.3%	>= 80%	75.9%	>= 82%	72.1%	>= 90%	72%	>= 90%	73%

Introduction

In accordance with the Settlement Agreement for the federal lawsuit against the State of Wisconsin, this is the first semi-annual report for 2007. This document includes outcomes of the Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare's (BMCW) performance from January 1, 2007 to June 30, 2007 and reports on **remaining enforceable provisions**. Provisions which are no longer relevant are not discussed in this report.

The Settlement Agreement requires the BMCW to attain specific outcomes regarding the permanency, safety, and well-being of children in out-of-home care in Milwaukee County.

As of December 31, 2005, the BMCW reached the conclusion of the third year of the Settlement Agreement between Children's Rights, Inc., on behalf of the plaintiffs and the other State defendants.

Plaintiffs and defendants agreed that the Article I provisions, as listed below, are no longer subject to enforcement because defendants were in compliance with the provisions at the conclusion of Period 3 and for the most recent two consecutive six-month intervals, as evidenced by the semi-annual reports prepared by the program evaluation managers. The BMCW was released from the following 10 provisions of the Settlement Agreement:

- §I.B.1. Negotiation with Milwaukee District Attorney to ensure adequate legal representation for the prosecution of termination of parental rights (TPRs) petitions, consistent with ASFA requirements
- §I.B.3. Belated compliance with Adoption and Safe Families Act requirements
- §I.B.4. Length-of-stay in care
- §I.C.2. Timeliness of processing referrals to independent investigator
- §I.C.3. Timeliness of making case assignments and completing investigations
- §I.C.4. Timeliness in making determination of independent investigations
- §I.D.1- 2. Ongoing case managers' caseload size
- §I.D.3 Contract hold-back for not meeting requirements of monthly face-to-face contacts
- §I.D.4. Monthly face-to-face contacts
- §I.D.8. The Division of Children and Family Services shall make its best efforts to seek legislative approval of foster parent reimbursement rates consistent with USAD standards

Remaining enforceable provisions - Report overview

This is the first semi-annual report for 2007 and includes outcomes of the BMCW's performance from January 1, 2007 through June 30, 2007 on the remaining enforceable provisions.

The remaining enforceable provisions are categorized and reported under the following groupings:

- Provisions the BMCW met or exceeded during the first six months of CY 2007;
- Provisions previously met but not yet released;
- Provisions demonstrating year-to-date performance only; and
- Provisions the BMCW (and partner agencies) did not meet and that are still enforceable.

Provision the BMCW (and partner agencies) met or exceeded during the first six months of CY 2007

The BMCW was successful in meeting the following performance standard for two consecutive six-month periods (the second six-month period in CY 2006 and the first six-month period in 2007):

§I.B.7 At least the following percentage of children for whom an adoption is finalized within the period shall exit BMCW out-of-home care within 24 months of entry into care. . . .

The period goal was for 30% of all adopted children to have a finalized adoption within 24 months of entering care. The actual performance measures were 35.5% for the second six months of 2006 and 33.1% for the first six months of CY 2007.

* NOTE: While completing the reconciliation of finalized adoptions for January to June 2007, four additional (not previously reported) adoptions were identified. This number added to the BMCW's total for the second six months of CY 2006. Previously, the second semi-annual six-month report for CY 2006 indicated there were 165 finalized adoptions (July to December), of which 60 were completed within 24 months of the child entering care. The performance percentage reported for the second six months was 36.4%. The addition of the four adoptions increased the second six-month total to 169 adoptions, of which 60 were finalized within 24 months of the child entering care. The adjusted performance calculation for the second six months of CY 2006 changes to 35.5%, and an annual percentage of 32.1%.

Provisions previously met but not yet released

§I.D.5 The use of shelter placements shall be phased out entirely.

The BMCW phased out all shelter placements by December 31, 2003.

§I.D.6 By December 31, 2003, and thereafter, no child shall be placed in a shelter.

The BMCW no longer uses shelters as a placement for children.

Provisions demonstrating year-to-date performance only

§I.C.1 No more than the following percentages of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse of neglect allegations within the period by a foster parent or staff of a facility to be licensed. . . .

The BMCW achieved a measure of 0.49% maltreatment in out-of-home care; the requirement is that no more than 0.60 % of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect allegations by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed.

This is an annual calculation, which is measured over a 12-month period. The final results will be reported at the year-end for January to December 2007. The performance standard provided here is for the first six months and demonstrates year-to-date performance only.

§I.D.7 By December 31, 2003, BMCW shall develop special diagnostic/assessment centers for children over 12 years of age who need further assessment in order to determine the appropriate placement. Placement in such centers shall not exceed 30 days, or 60 days if the placement is extended in accordance with applicable state law.

The BMCW developed special Diagnostic/Assessment Centers for children over age 12 before December 31, 2003. These centers function to determine the appropriate placement for these children based on individual needs.

The BMCW met the 30-day limit (and two additional approved 15-day extension requests) for 88.7% (149) of the 168 pre-dispositional children, and exceeded the 30-day limit (and two additional approved 15-day extension requests) for 11.3% (19) of the children.

Provisions the BMCW (and partner agencies) did not meet

The BMCW (and partner agencies) was not successful in meeting the following performance standards for the first six-month period in 2007.

§I.B.2 At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody reaching 15 of the last 22 months in out-of-home care during the period shall have had a TPR petition filed on their behalf, or an available Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) exception documented in their case, by the end of the fifteenth month in care. . . .

During the first six months of CY 2007, the BMCW achieved a performance level of 88% compared to the standard that at least 90% of children in out-of-home care for 15 of 22 months must have a termination of parental rights (TPR) petition filed on their behalf, or an ASFA exception documented in their case by the end of the 15th month in care.

§I.B.6 At least the following percentages of children who are reunified with parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from BMCW out-of-home care within the period shall be reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care. . . .

During the first six months of CY 2007, 70% of all children reunified were reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care compared to the performance standard of 71%.

§I.D.9 At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current episode in BMCW custody. The number of placements will exclude time-limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-home episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation.

During the first six months of CY 2007, 74.3% of the children in an out-of-home care placement were in three or fewer placements, compared to the standard that at least 90% of children in out-of-home care within the period shall have three or fewer placements.

Data source

Most of the data presented in this report was generated from the electronic Wisconsin Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information System (eWiSACWIS). Data elements generated using eWiSACWIS were identified and developed for consistent and systematic assessment of the Agreement outcomes. The BMCW continues to work to manage artifact data and validate data. The quality of the data is dependent upon complete and accurate data entry by staff, system conversions, and system builds and updates. Improvements to the data system are continually identified and completed, enhancing the accuracy and consistency of reporting.

Provision the BMCW met or exceeded during the first six months of CY 2007

Adoption within 24 months of removal

§I.B.7 At least the following percentage of children for whom an adoption is finalized within the period shall exit BMCW out-of-home care within 24 months of entry into care. . . .

Period Goal: 30% (or above)
Actual Performance January – June, 2007: 33.1%

Table 2.5: Adoptions, January to June 2007

Time to Adoption	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	2007 YTD
24 months or less	4	5	9	12	13	4	47
(Monthly percentage)	(25%)	(26.3%)	(24.3%)	(38.7%)	(54.2%)	(26.7%)	(33.1%)
25 months or more	12	14	28	19	11	11	95
(Monthly percentage)	(75%)	(73.7%)	(75.7%)	(61.3%)	(45.8%)	(73.3%)	(66.9%)
Total number of finalized adoptions	16	19	37	31	24	15	142

Table 2.6: Adoption within 24 months: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007

	January – June	July – December	YTD performance
BMCW Period 1 (2003)	8.9%	18.8%	14.2%
BMCW Period 2 (2004)	13.8%	17.8%	15.5%
BMCW Period 3 (2005)	20.6%	23.5%	21.7%
BMCW CY 2006	28.3%	35.5%	32.1%
BMCW CY 2007 YTD	33.1%	NA	33.1%

The BMCW and its private partner agencies **met the performance standard** of 30% or above for this measure during the last six months of 2006 and the first six months of CY 2007.

Table 2.7 shows general descriptive data about the children adopted during the first six months of 2007.

Table 2.7: Length-of-stay (LOS) in out-of-home care for children adopted, January to June 2007

		LOS in out-of-home care				
		< 24 Months	25- 36 Months	37-48 Months	49-60 Months	61 + Months
Number of Children (2007 YTD N= 142)		47	42	23	13	17
Gender	M (76)	23	22	14	10	7
	F (66)	24	20	9	3	10
Age	0 to 5	42	25	11	2	2
	6 to 11	5	15	10	7	6
	12 to 15	-	2	1	4	6
	16+	-	-	1	-	3

Discussion

During the first six months of CY 2007, the BMCW and its private partner agency, Children’s Service Society of Wisconsin, continued to show progress in children achieving timely adoption.

Of the children adopted in the first six months of 2007:

- Approximately 58% were 5 years of age or younger;
- 30% were between the ages of 6 and 11;
- 9% were between the ages of 12 and 15;
- 3% of the children adopted were 16 years old or older; and
- 10 more males were adopted than females.

Strategies to reduce length of time to adoption

Both new and continuing strategies are being used to address the length of time to adoption, these include the following:

Permanency staffings: Please refer to section §I.B.6 *Reunification within 12 months of placement in out-of-home care*, page 32 for details on the number of children’s cases staffed between January and June 2007.

Resource Family Assessment (RFA): The BMCW began using the Resource Family Assessment tool to study all foster and adoptive families. Foster care licensing and adoption staff were trained in the RFA in the fall of 2006. They are now using the tool for all new home studies. The RFA assesses families for foster care and adoption in one study so that a new home study will not be needed should the foster family become an adoptive resource.

Unlicensed caregiver assessment process: BMCW has implemented a new process for educating potential relative caregivers about foster care licensing, guardianship, the Kinship Care program, and adoption. The Ongoing case manager and permanency consultant meet with a potential caregiver to explain the benefits of licensing and to assess the ability of the caregiver to meet the child's needs for both the short and long term. During the discussions, the caregiver learns the benefits of becoming licensed including the support services available. The intent of the process is to assess caregivers prior to the child being placed with an eye to permanence for the child.

Redesign of Out-of-Home Care and Adoption: Effective March 2007, the BMCW implemented an integrated approach for the design of the Out of Home Care and Adoption programs. The rationale and details of the initiative have been documented in a previous report. Highlights of the system redesign are included below:

The system now combines the efforts to:

- Promote a shared philosophy and approach regarding foster and adoptive families;
- Emphasize overall permanency options for children;
- Recruit a pool of quality foster and adoptive parents able to meet the individual needs of children in care;
- License, re-license, and support foster and adoptive parents using a combined licensing assessment that assesses the ability of a foster home to become an adoptive home should the child need adoptive placement;
- Provide permanency consultation to children and families early in the case history; and
- Provide foster and adoptive parent training.

The system change has resulted in the awarding of four contracts. Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW) has been awarded three distinct contracts and is responsible for:

- Recruiting foster and adoptive families;
- Providing Foster Care and Adoption case management services, quality assurance, placement matching, selection, and authorization and ensuring quality families for children through the licensing and re-licensing of foster and adoptive parents; and
- Providing the Permanency Consultation program to explore all permanency options and expedite permanency for children.

Permanency Consultants now attend the family meeting early in the life of the case as well as actively participate in Coordinated Service Team meetings. The role of the permanency consultant was redefined as part of the service redesign and permanency consultants now consult on all permanency options, not just adoption.

The Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership for Professional Development (MCWPPD) within the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee was awarded the fourth contract to provide training for foster and adoptive parents.

Following a successful transition period between our former partner and CSSW, full responsibility for the functions of the three contracts was assumed by CSSW on March 12, 2007. MCWPPD also enjoyed a successful transition and assumed full responsibility for the training of foster and adoptive families on January 1, 2007. It is our belief that the new design is more functional, promotes greater efficiency in service provision, improves performance, and allows greater flexibility to meet the changing needs of the children and families we serve.

Permanency Counselor, Children’s Court: The BMCW funds a Permanency Counselor staff position at Milwaukee County Children’s Court. The Permanency Counselor meets with parents regarding issues of permanency and helps them make decisions around voluntary termination of their parental rights.

The following data are provided for informational purposes only. Table 2.8 shows the involvement of the Permanency Counselor located at the Children’s Court Center.

Table 2.8: Activity of Permanency Counselor at Children’s Court, January to June 2007

Meetings to monitor and facilitate timely permanency	Number of meetings
Meetings scheduled	492
Meetings completed	266
New meetings	114
Court only	95
Meetings cancelled/missed	17
Referral Sources	Number of referrals
Total new referrals (family cases)	114
Judges	25
Court Commissioner	1
Ongoing case managers	61
Region 1	16
Region 2	21
Region 3	24
Assistant District Attorney	4
Public Defender	22
Guardian ad Litem	1
Permanency Meeting Participants	Number of Participants
Fathers	87
Mothers	327
Grandmother	1
Other	3
Voluntary TPRs	Number of TPRs
Mothers	40
Fathers	18

There were 58 voluntary TPRs between January and June 2007 involving 89 children. There were also 56 jury trials.

Performance standards demonstrating year-to-date performance only

The performance standards provided here are for the first six months of 2007 and demonstrate year-to-date performance only:

Maltreatment while in out-of-home care

§I.C.1. No more than the following percentages of children in BMCW custody shall be the victims of substantiated abuse or neglect allegations within the period by a foster parent or staff of a facility required to be licensed. . . .

Period goal: 0.60% (at or below)
Actual Performance January to June 2007: 0.49%

Table 2.9: Maltreatment while in out-of-home care, January to June 2007

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	2007 YTD
Completed investigations – determinations	31	27	24	27	31	31	171
Substantiated Allegations (children maltreated by foster parent or agency staff)	2	2	2	2	3	5	16
Number of children entering care	99	84	114	102	124	108	631
Cumulative children in OHC (2,621 as of 01/012007)	2,720	2,804	2,918	3,020	3,144	3,252	3,252
BMCW YTD performance							0.49%

* NOTE: The performance standard provided here for the first six months demonstrates year-to-date performance only.

The measure was calculated by first identifying the number of children in an out-of-home care placement on January 1, 2007, (2,621) then adding all children entering out-of-home care during the first six months of CY 2007 (631). This total (3,252) represents all children in out-of-home care during the year. To calculate the performance standard, we divided the number of children with a substantiated

allegation of maltreatment (16) by the total of all children who were in an out-of-home care placement during the year (3,252).

This is an annual calculation based on a 12-month period. The performance standard provided here for the first six months demonstrates year-to-date performance only. The final results will be reported at the year-end for January to December 2007.

Discussion

During the first six months of CY 2007, 16 children were victims of a substantiated allegation of maltreatment while in an out-of-home care placement. Fourteen of the children were removed from the placement and the remaining were two child fatalities. One child committed suicide on November 29, 2006, and the independent investigation was completed on January 26, 2007. The second child died in her sleep on March 21, 2007 and the independent investigation was completed on May 18, 2007.

Table 2.10 below shows the types of substantiated maltreatment that occurred by type of placement.

Table 2.10: Substantiated maltreatment by type of placement, January to June 2007

Relationship to Victim	Neglect - General Lack of Care	Physical Abuse	Lack of Supervision	Medical Neglect	Total
Foster Parent	4	0	1	1	6
Treatment Foster Parent	3*	2	1	0	6
Staff at child caring institution or other licensed facility	4**	0	0	0	4
Total	11	2	2	1	16

*One additional treatment foster parent was substantiated for neglect during the first six months of 2007, but the substantiation was overturned on August 2, 2007. This case is not included in the data listed above.

**Includes two child fatalities.

Substantiated maltreatment and licensing status

Four foster care providers were found to be maltreaters of six children; all children in these placements were removed. The substantiated allegations included neglect, lack of supervision, and medical neglect. Three of the foster parents’ licenses were revoked and one license is on hold pending CAPTA and Revocation hearings with the Division of Hearings and Appeals.

Six treatment foster care providers were substantiated as maltreaters of six children; all children in these placements were removed. The substantiated allegations included neglect, physical abuse, and lack of supervision. All licenses were revoked.

Four facilities, (two group homes and two residential care centers), licensed by the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing were involved in substantiated allegations of maltreatment of four children. Each of these cases involved substantiated neglect allegations. Both child deaths occurred at residential care centers. The other two children were removed from the placement following the allegations.

The number of substantiated allegations for “neglect – general lack of care” remained the most frequent form of substantiated maltreatment. During the first six months of CY 2007, this category accounted for 68% of the substantiated allegations.

Of the 16 victims of substantiated allegations to date in 2007, two were under age five.

Table 2.11: Maltreatment by type, January to June 2007

Type of substantiated maltreatment	Number of substantiations	Percent of total substantiations
Neglect - general lack of care	11	69%
Physical abuse	2	12.5%
Lack of supervision	2	12.5%
Other medical neglect	1	6%
Emotional maltreatment	0	NA
Sexual abuse	0	NA
Total	16	100%

The following descriptions provide detail on each case of substantiated maltreatment in out-of-home care:

Neglect – General Lack of Care (11 children)

- A teenage child with a known history of a seizure disorder died in her sleep at a residential care center.
- A teenage child committed suicide at a residential care center.
- An allegation of neglect was substantiated when the foster parent failed to prevent her biological son from sexually assaulting two children placed in her home. The biological son was 17-years-old and was charged with first-degree sexual assault. The children were removed and the foster home license was revoked.
- A treatment foster care provider did not follow medical instructions regarding the infant’s hearing aids. The infant was born with hearing loss and failure to use the hearing aids can cause cognitive delays. The child was removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked.

- A treatment foster care provider locked the child upstairs, without access to a phone or an exit, for eight hours while the foster parent left the county. The child would not have been able to call for help or escape the home in an emergency. The child was removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked.
- A group home staff member allowed a child to have unauthorized and unsupervised contact with her biological family for four days. The child was removed from the group home.
- A foster parent did not provide adequate clean clothing or monitor the two children's basic hygiene needs and failed to administer prescribed medications as directed. The children were removed, and the foster home license was revoked.
- A treatment foster care provider allowed illegal drug activity in the home and failed to provide a safe environment for the children. The children were removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked.
- A group home staff member did not allow the adolescent to re-enter the home after he ran away three days earlier. Rather, the child stayed outside on the porch for the night. The child was removed from the group home, and the Bureau of Regulation and Licensing revoked the group home license.

Medical Neglect (one child)

- A foster care provider failed to attend to the child's dental and health needs when she did not seek medical attention for obvious cavities and abscesses in the child's upper mouth. The child was removed, and the foster care license is on hold pending an appeal hearing with the Division of Hearings and Appeals.

Physical Abuse (two children)

- A treatment foster care provider used inappropriate physical discipline. The provider disciplined the child for stealing at school by beating him with a small baseball bat. When the child stole candy during the holiday season, his hands were chained together. The child was removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked. The provider faces criminal charges for child abuse.
- A treatment foster care provider gave the child "whoopings" with a belt or extension cords when he had a bad day at school. The child was removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked. The provider was charged and convicted of committing criminal battery.

Lack of Supervision (two children)

- A foster parent failed to provide adequate supervision to a toddler who incurred scratches, marks, and a burn. An allegation of physical abuse by an unnamed maltreater was also substantiated. The children were removed, and the foster care license was revoked.

- A treatment foster care provider did not provide line-of-sight supervision as required, and allowed the foster child, who had significant behavioral issues, to roam the community freely during the day. The child committed acts of vandalism while unsupervised. The child was removed, and the treatment foster home license was revoked.

Table 2.12: Substantiated maltreatment type by age of child, January to June 2007

Age	Neglect - General Lack of Care	Physical Abuse	Lack of Supervision	Medical Neglect	Total
Birth to 4 yrs	1		1		2
5 to 11 yrs	2	2	1	1	6
12 to 15 yrs	4				4
16 + yrs	4				4
Total	12	2	2	1	16

Strategies to address maltreatment of children in out-of-home care

The BMCW and its partner agencies consider the safety and well-being of children to be its primary responsibility. Efforts to reduce the number of children who suffer maltreatment while in out-of-home care are continuous. In 2007, several strategies were implemented or expanded, including:

Mobile Urgent Treatment Team for Foster Families (MUTT-FF):

Please refer to page 44 for details on the MUTT-FF activity between January and June 2007.

Stabilization meetings: Within the first week of a new placement, Ongoing case managers and licensing specialists conduct a joint home visit (initial stabilization meeting) with the foster family to identify potential behaviors or other issues that may stress the family’s capacity to nurture the child and maintain the placement. Together, with the foster family, a plan is developed to enable a smooth transition of the child to his or her new home. From January to June 2007, approximately 168 initial stabilization meetings were held and 553 quarterly meetings were held for a total of 721 meetings during the period.

To strengthen and better customize support plans, CSSW continues to audit case files ensuring that support plans are completed. Between January and June 2007, CSSW updated 374 support plans and created 121 emergency support plans to maintain stability of the child’s placement, for a total of 495 plans developed during the period.

Foster parent training: Foster parent training continues to be enhanced. Beginning in January 2007, foster and adoptive parent training has been provided by the Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership for Professional Development (MCWPPD) in the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Since assuming responsibility for the foster and adoptive parent training program, MCWPPD has initiated changes to the general approach taken in training, as well as the content and delivery of particular training offerings. These changes include drawing on a broad array of community experts to assist with program strategy and

logistics, as well as to provide actual training to foster and adoptive parents in various areas of expertise. Training offerings in 2007 that may impact upon maltreatment in out-of-home care include:

- Understanding and managing teens;
- Parenting children with a history of sexual abuse;
- MUTT for Foster Families;
- Parenting with love and logic;
- “Advanced” discipline (a six hour course devoted to practicing specific, discipline techniques for a variety of children and situations);
- Fostering lesbian, gay, transsexual, or gender questioning youth;
- Bedwetting: Why it happens and what parents can do;
- Supporting your child’s therapy;
- Cross-cultural parenting;
- Working with primary families (a six hour course devoted to understanding the emotional and behavioral effects of separation from primary families and developing skill in relating to primary families in order to support children’s emotional health and well-being).

Development of special diagnostic assessment centers

I.D.7. By December 31, 2003, the BMCW shall develop special diagnostic/assessment centers for children over 12 years of age who need further assessment in order to determine the appropriate placement. Placement in such centers shall not exceed 30 days or 60 days if the placement is extended in accordance with applicable state law.

BMCW complied with the requirement to develop special diagnostic/assessment centers for children over 12 years of age.

- Legal status of the Child in Need of Protective Service (CHIPS) petition/order has a direct impact on the length-of-stay in an assessment center or placement stabilization center. Consistent with the Department's administrative rule, adolescents who are "pre-disposition" (under a Temporary Protective Custody order with a disposition of the CHIPS petition pending) may be placed in a center for 30 days per episode and two additional approved 15-day extension requests (60 total days). By statute, adolescents who are "post-disposition" (under an active CHIPS order) may be placed in a center for no more than 20 days per episode.

Between January and June 2007 there were 259 adolescents who were placed in an Adolescent Center.

- The 259 adolescents accounted for 424 placement episodes;
- Of the 168 adolescents who had a pre-dispositional legal status, 149 (88.7%) were placed in a center 60 days or less and 19 (11.3%) remained in a center beyond 60 days;
- For the 256 adolescents who had a post dispositional legal status, 173 (67.6%) were placed in a center 20 days or less and 83 adolescents (32.4%) remained in a center beyond 20 days.

Many adolescents who remained in centers beyond the prescribed time limits demonstrated a number of challenging behaviors requiring close supervision. These behaviors may include severe mental illness compounded by non-compliance with medications, substance abuse, physical aggression, fire setting, self-harming behaviors, and physical and/or sexual abuse of younger children and animals. Other adolescents demonstrated delinquency behaviors, such as stealing, physical aggression, truancy, violation of curfew, and running away.

Placement resources, including higher level of care placements, were difficult to find in a timely manner; however, 32 adolescents were subsequently placed in a higher level of care setting.

Overall, the majority of the adolescents (180, or 70%) were placed in a center once. There were 79 adolescents with multiple placement episodes, meaning that they entered adolescent center care more than once during the first six months of 2007:

- 40 adolescents had two placement episodes;
- 13 adolescents had three placement episodes;
- 17 adolescents had four placement episodes;

- Nine adolescents had four or more placement episodes.

Running away represented 66.4% (189) of all discharges from placement episodes at centers. The average age of adolescents who ran away was 15 and most (70%) had post-dispositional legal status. Among the children who ran away, 31% (n=28) were between the ages of 12 and 14. Seventy-nine adolescents ran away from a center more than once. These adolescents returned to the centers 101 times, usually within one day.

Table 2.13 below provides information on the number of children, placement episodes, and running away discharges from the centers as a percentage of discharges.

Table 2.13: Placement episodes as related to running away

Number of placement episodes	Number of children	Total Placements	Discharges due to Run Away Behavior	Percent of total discharges due to Run Away Behavior
1	180	180	27	15%
2	40	80	28	35%
3	13	39	28	72%
4	17	68	59	87%
5	4	20	14	70%
6	2	12	10	83%
8	2	16	15	94%
9	1	9	8	89%
	259	424	189	

Strategies to address the Special Diagnostic Centers

Group setting registration process: Effective April 2007, the BMCW began using a new group settings registration process. This initiative assures enhanced programming and specialized settings to meet children’s individual needs. All registrants are required to provide general programming including independent living skills, reproductive health, domestic violence, AODA issues, and assistance with continued contact with children’s birth families. Specialized group settings provide additional programming focusing on the needs of pregnant and parenting teens, chronic runaways, sibling groups, or youth struggling with AODA issues.

Eleven facilities completed the group setting registration process during the first six months of 2007. By August 2007, there were over 20 registered group settings. Of the 11 facilities registered by June 30, 2007, three are licensed as treatment foster homes and eight are licensed as group homes. Table 2.14 shows specialty areas of registrants from January to June 2007.

Table 2.14: Registered group settings by specialty, January to June 2007

Specialty	Number of Registered Facilities
General	5
Independent living	2
Sibling groups	1
Chronic runaway	2
Pregnant and parenting teens	1
Total	11

BMCW staff examine each registration application before approving a facility as a registered group setting. Fiscal program evaluation managers examine each agency's budget and financial information. Program and fiscal evaluation managers conduct on-site visits in coordination with the child placing agency and discuss programming at each facility. The BMCW and the child placing agency coordinate quarterly on-site visits with each registered facility to assure quality services for children in care.

Performance standards previously met

BMCW met the following standards, but has not yet been released from reporting and enforcement under the Settlement Agreement:

Shelter placements phased-out

§I.D.5. The use of shelter placements shall be phased out entirely.

The BMCW phased out all shelter placements by December 31, 2003.

No children placed in shelters

§I.D.6. By December 31, 2003, and thereafter, no child shall be placed in a shelter.

The BMCW no longer uses shelters as a placement option for children.

Provisions the BMCW did not meet during the first six months of CY 2007

Timeliness of ASFA compliance

§I.B.2. At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody reaching 15 of the last 22 months in out-of-home care during the period shall have had a TPR petition filed on their behalf, or an available Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) exception documented in their case, by the end of their fifteenth month in care

Period goal: 90% (or above)
Actual Performance January – June 2007: 88%

Table 2.15: Number and percent of children in ASFA compliance, January to June 2007

Month	Number of children with available exception or TPR (N = 305)	Number of children reaching 15 of 22 months in OHC (N = 345)	Monthly Compliance %	YTD Compliance %
January	73	78	93.5%	93.5%
February	29	35	82.8%	90.2%
March	37	44	84.1%	88.5%
April	57	64	89.1%	88.7%
May	62	71	87.3%	88.4%
June	47	53	88.7%	88.4%

Table 2.16: ASFA compliance: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007

	January to June	July to December	Annual Performance
BMCW Period 1 (2003)	70%	84%	78%
BMCW Period 2 (2004)	87%	90%	88%
BMCW Period 3 (2005)	29%	29%	29%
BMCW CY 2006	77%	80%	79%
BMCW CY 2007 YTD	88%	NA	88% (YTD)

The BMCW and its private partner agencies did not meet the performance standard of 90% during the first six months of CY 2007.

Discussion

The data in Table 2.16 above show that 305 of the 345 children met timely ASFA compliance during the first six months of CY 2007. These children are moving toward, or have already achieved, permanence. Forty children did not meet timely ASFA compliance.

- 12 of the 40 children who did not meet timely ASFA compliance were waiting for a TPR to be filed by the District Attorneys office; and

- Four of the 40 children met “belated” compliance within 60 days of exceeding their 15 of 22 months in an out-of-home-care placement.

Table 2.17 shows how the 305 children met ASFA compliance during the first six months of CY 2007, compared to CY’s 2005 and 2006.

Table 2.17: Children who met ASFA compliance, January to June 2007

Month	Number of TPRs Filed	Number of “Relative Placement” Exceptions	“Not in Best Interest” Exception
Jan (N=78)*	3	37	33
Feb (N=35)	8	9	12
Mar (N=44)	9	13	15
Apr (N=64)	20	14	23
May (N=71)	7	34	21
Jun (N=53)	5	26	16
2007 YTD	52 (17%)	133 (44%)	120 (39%)
CY 2006	124 (22%)	252 (45%)	180 (32%)
CY 2005	23 (11%)	91 (45%)	88 (44%)

* N= Number of children each month who reach 15 of 22 months in out-of-home care.

For the past two and a half years, use of the “Relative” ASFA exception remains the most frequently utilized exception.

Table 2.18 below provides, by age, the percentage of children who entered an out-of-home-care placement during the first six months of CY 2007. The table also includes point-in-time data for all children in an out-of-home-care placement on June 30, 2007, as well as the percent of children who reached the ASFA threshold of 15 of 22 months in out-of-home-care.

Table 2.18: Summary statistics: Children in out-of-home care and children reaching the ASFA threshold, January to June 2007

Age of child	Percent of children entering OHC Jan. to June 2007	Percentage of children in OHC (by age) on June 30, 2007	Age of children when they reached the ASFA threshold, 2007 YTD
0 to 4	44%	28%	35%
5 to 11	33%	30%	34%
12 to 15	15%	23%	16%
16 +	8%	19%	15%

- Since CY 2003, 72% to 79% of all children who entered an out-of-home-care placement were under 12 years old. As of June 30, 2007, 58% of all children in an out-of-home-care placement were age 12 or younger.
- During the first six months of CY 2007, 44% of the children who entered an out-of-home-care placement were under five years old; only 28% of the total children in out-of-home care were under five years old.

ASFA: Permanency and Age

- Since CY 2003, 70% to 74% of all children who were reunified in 12 or fewer months of entering out-of-home-care were under 12 years old when they entered care.
- Of children adopted, a large percentage were under age 12:

Table 2.19: Adoption of children under age 12

CY Year	Children Adopted (N)	Percent of Adopted Children under age 12	Percent of Adopted Children under age 12, adopted within 24 months
2005	368	76%	90%
2006	317	78%	92%
2007 (YTD)	142	87%	96%

Although the number of children reaching permanence through adoption is encouraging, it is important to note that 69.4% of all children who reached the ASFA threshold (in care 15 of the last 22 months) were under the age of 12. Children under two-years-old accounted for the largest number of children reaching the 15 of 22 months mark in the first six months of 2007. The next most frequent group reaching the 15 of 22 months mark were children between two and three-years-old.

Table 2.20 below shows more detailed information about the ages of children who reached their 15 of 22 months in out-of-home care during the first six months of CY 2007.

Table 2.20: Age of children when they reached the ASFA threshold

Age at ASFA (yrs)	Total number of children	Cumulative percentage of children
1 to < 2	49	14%
2 to < 3	28	22%
3 to < 4	24	29%
4 to < 5	21	35%
5 to < 6	16	40%
6 to < 7	22	46%
7 to < 8	20	52%
8 to < 9	13	56%
9 to < 10	17	61%
10 to < 11	12	64%
11 to < 12	18	69%
12 to < 13	12	73%
13 to < 14	17	78%
14 to < 15	12	82%
15 to < 16	14	86%
16 to < 17	27	93%
17+	23	100%
Total	345	

Although the majority of children reaching permanence are under age 12, it is important to consider the experiences of those children under age 12 who have been in care at least fifteen months without achieving permanence. Further research designed to study the dynamics of these cases might include monitoring younger children who entered care (as a cohort group). Over time, permanence through adoption or reunification will not materialize for a subset of those children. Data on the reasons for not reaching permanence could be highly instructive.

Strategies to address meeting the ASFA requirement

Training: Updated training for staff is being conducted to clarify and explain ASFA requirements and to review the concepts of the permanency goals, permanency planning, and the connection to documentation at 15 of 22 months in care. Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership for Professional Development at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee began consultation with the National Center for Legal and Judicial issues on their experience and expertise with the development of the ASFA fundamentals for training purposes.

Permanency staffings: In 2007, the BMCW continued to convene internal permanency staffings for children in care nine months or more as part of the case process. The purpose of the meeting is to expedite permanency by examining all permanency options, including adoption and moving forward with a realistic plan to achieve the goal of meeting the best interests of the child. The staffings include children in care between nine and 14 months who have not yet reached the ASFA

threshold and who may or may not have an allowable exception indicated or a TPR petition filed, and also children who have passed the ASFA threshold but who have not yet reached permanence.

Please refer to the information on *Permanency Staffings Convened January – June 2007*, page 36, for details on the number of children staffed between January and June 2007.

Reunification within 12 months of placement in out-of-home care

§I.B.6. At least the following percentages of children who are reunified with parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from BMCW out-of-home care within the period shall be reunified within 12 months of entry into out-of-home care. . . .

Period goal: 71% (or above)
Actual Performance January 1– June 30, 2007: 70%

Table 2.21: Reunification within 12 months of placement, January to June 2007

	Jan. 2007	Feb. 2007	Mar. 2007	Apr. 2007	May 2007	June 2007	Total (YTD)
CFCP – Region 1							
Reunifications (N)	19	14	14	9	15	10	81
Number of children reunified in 12 or fewer months	12	7	10	8	9	6	52
Percentage reunified in 12 or fewer months	63%	50%	71%	89%	60%	60%	64%
CFCP – Region 2							
Reunifications (N)	19	16	19	17	27	17	115
Number of children reunified in 12 or fewer months	10	12	15	14	16	10	77
Percentage reunified in 12 or fewer months	53%	75%	79%	82%	59%	59%	67%
La Causa – Region 3							
Reunifications (N)	30	24	14	22	28	20	138
Number of children reunified in 12 or fewer months	16	18	13	14	28	14	103
Percentage reunified in 12 or fewer months	53%	75%	93%	64%	100%	64%	75%
BMCW							
BMCW Reunifications (N)	68	54	47	48	70	47	334
Number of children reunified in 12 or fewer months	38	37	38	36	53	30	232
Percentage reunified in 12 or fewer months	55.9%	68.5%	80.9%	75.0%	75.7%	63.8%	69.5%

The BMCW and its private partner agencies did not meet the performance standard (71%) for this measure for the first six months of 2007.

Table 2.22: Reunification: Semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007

	January - June	July - December	YTD
BMCW Period 1 (2003)	44%	47%	45%
BMCW Period 2 (2004)	59%	68%	63%
BMCW Period 3 (2005)	69%	75%	72%
BMCW CY 2006	70%	72%	71%
BMCW CY 2007 YTD	70%	NA	70%

NOTE: During Period 1, there was no established performance standard. Period 2 was the first year when there was an enforceable performance standard (65%).

Table 2.23: Permanency through reunification, January 2003 to June 2007

	Period 1 2003	Period 2 2004	Period 3 2005	2006	Jan. to June 2007
Percentage of children reunified in 12 or fewer months	45%	63%	72%	71%	70%
Percentage of children reunified in 24 or fewer months	61%	77%	83%	88%	86%
Percentage of children reunified in 24 or more months	39%	23%	17%	12%	14%
Children with three or fewer placements at time of reunification	72%	83%	89%	85%	87%
Children with four or more placements at time of reunification	28%	17%	11%	15%	13%
Reunified in 12 or fewer months, age when entered out-of-home care:					
0 to 4 years old	40%	44%	44%	41%	48%
5 to 11 years old	33%	33%	30%	29%	27%
12 to 15 years old	21%	16%	20%	21%	19%
16 plus years old	6%	7%	6%	9%	6%
Reunified in 12 or more months, age when entered out-of-home care:					
0 to 4 years old	40%	43%	16%	39%	35%
5 to 11 years old	48%	48%	37%	43%	47%
12 to 15 years old	12%	8%	27%	15%	18%
16 plus years old	0%	1%	20%	3%	NA
	(2 children)				

Discussion

The following information relates to the children who have exited out-of-home care and achieved permanency through reunification between CY 2003 and June 2007.

- The data show the BMCW is maintaining consistent efforts in reunification within 12 or fewer months of children entering out-of-home care.
- Children under age 12 accounted for approximately 70% of the children who were reunified in 12 or fewer months of entering out-of-home care in CY 2006. In 2007, this measure increased to 75%.
- 21% (69) of the 334 children who were reunified in the first six months of CY 2007 had a previous episode in out-of-home care.
- The number of children who were part of a sibling group and who were reunified decreased in the first six months of 2007 as compared to CY 2006.
- 95% (221) of the children reunified in 12 or fewer months of entry into out-of-home care had three or fewer placements at the time of their reunification. This is the largest percentage observed in the last three years.

Table 2.24: Reunification of children in sibling groups

Number of Children in sibling group reunified	Number of sibling groups for each size (2005)	Number of sibling groups for each size (2006)	Number of sibling groups for each size (2007 YTD)	Percentage of all reunifications (2007 YTD)
2	94	100	42	18%
3	40	42	20	9%
4	21	15	3	1%
5	5	3	2	1%
6	3	2	0	NA
7	0	1	0	NA
8	0	1	0	NA
9	0	1	0	NA

NOTE: The data in the above table do not infer that the siblings reunified at the same time; rather, it indicates, for example, that during the past 12 months, 42 sibling groups with two children reunified with their families. The children may have reunified with their family at a different time (staggered reunification) during the 12-month period.

Barriers to Reunification

Despite strong efforts to reunite children and their families in a timely manner, that goal has not yet materialized for many children. These children often belong to families with a range of multiple co-existing problems including AODA, mental health, and domestic violence issues in the home. Recent research indicates that progress within the family towards resolution of these compounding issues improves the opportunity for reunification. (*Integrated services for families with multiple problems*, Children and Youth Services Review, Vol. 28, Issue 9, Sept. 2005) Unfortunately, some families do not actively and consistently participate in the resources and services available.

Since CY 2004, the largest number of children returning to out-of-home care returned because of an unstable living environment, including parental relapse (AODA), untreated mental health issues, and domestic abuse within the home. In most circumstances, it is a combination of the above factors which precipitated an incident(s) which lead to the child's reentry.

Unrecognized violence within the family is not only a barrier to achieving reunification but also appears to be a significant influence on children returning to out-of-home-care. Each additional compounding issue may seriously impact the functioning and protective capacity of an already fragile family and may impede how the family operates and cares for their children.

Families struggling with multiple and compounding issues are not excluded from the possibility of reunification. However, their challenges highlight the importance of partnerships between the family, courts, service providers, and case managers. All systems must work together to help a family access the services available. After resources are accessible, the next step is engaging the family and assuring meaningful participation in those services.

One key element to achieve successful reunification is related to the protective ability and functioning level of the family. Many BMCW families struggle not only with the AODA, domestic abuse, and mental health issues listed above, but also with unemployment, homelessness, and physical health issues (lack of health care). Thus, the time the family is involved in care provides important opportunities to assist the family with resolving and managing multiple issues that impact the safety of their home and the return of their children.

Strategies to address timely reunification

Coordinated Service Team meetings: Permanency planning is a continuous process that involves many different people and systems. Coordinated Service Team meetings (CSTs) are conducted to support families in achieving and maintaining safety, well-being, and permanency for their children. The CST meetings involve communication and collaboration with all BMCW partners, service providers, family members, community resources, and natural supports. The meetings help develop case plans, evaluate cases, and assess progress on a case plan. The BMCW policy is to facilitate CST meetings on all Ongoing Case Management cases on a quarterly basis, at a minimum.

Table 2.25 provides the number of CSTs conducted during CY 2007.

Table 2.25: Coordinated Service Team (CST) meetings conducted by month, January to June 2007

Month (2007)	Number of CST Meetings Conducted
January	350
February	299
March	340
April	333
May	364
June	365
Total	2,051

Permanency staffings: Beginning in August 2006 and continued in 2007, the BMCW convened permanency staffings as part of the case planning process. The purpose of the staffings is to expedite permanency by examining all options, including adoption. The objective is to move forward with a realistic plan to achieve the goal best suited to the needs of each child. Between January and June of 2007, 1318 permanency staffings were completed.

Table 2.26: Permanency staffings convened, January to June 2007

	Number of months in care		Total staffed
	9 months	Over 9 months	
Number of staffings	427	891	1,318

Permanency consultants assist in case planning by giving focus to the variety of permanency options that need to be considered as a child’s case moves forward. This includes concurrent planning, which is exploring the option of locating an adoptive home while the parent works toward meeting the court orders for reunification. In 2007, permanency consultants attended 662 permanency staffings and 459 CST meetings.

Placement stability

§I.D.9. At least the following percentages of children in BMCW custody within the period shall have had three or fewer placements after January 1, 1999, during their current episode in BMCW custody. The number of placements will exclude time-limited respite care placements and returns to the same caretaker after an intervening placement during the same out-of-home episode. Those children in BMCW custody through the Wraparound Milwaukee program shall be excluded from this calculation.

Period goal 90% (or above)
Actual Performance January – June 2007: 74.3%

Table 2.27: Placement stability by month, January to June 2007

Placements	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	Jun.
Three or Fewer (N)	1,669	1,668	1,695	1,698	1,736	1,771
Percentage	73.4%	73.7%	73.9%	74.2%	75.1%	75.3%
Four or More (N)	604	596	600	589	576	580
Percentage	26.6%	26.3%	26.1%	25.8%	24.9%	24.7%
Semi-Annual Percentage (YTD)	73.4%	73.6%	73.7%	73.8%	74.1%	74.3%

Table 2.27 above provides, on a month-by-month basis, the number of children with three or fewer placements. The 2007 YTD average for children with three or fewer placements was 74.3%. The BMCW did not meet the expected performance standard of 90% or above during the first six months of 2007.

Table 2.28 below summarizes the semi-annual and annual performance from January 2003 to June 2007.

Table 2.28: Placement stability: semi-annual and annual performance, January 2003 to June 2007

	January - June	July - December	Annual Performance
BMCW Period 1 (2003) Performance expectations 80% or above	75%	77%	76%
BMCW Period 2 (2004) Performance expectations 82% or above	71%	73%	72%
BMCW Period 3 (2005) Performance expectations 90% or above	71%	72%	72%
BMCW CY 2006	73%	73%	73%
BMCW CY 2007 YTD	74.3%	NA	74.3% (YTD)

Discussion

Table 2.29 illustrates placement stability, including data on number of placements stratified by child age.

Table 2.29: Number of placements by age, January to June 2007

Child Age (years)	Number of children with:					Percent of total placements
	1 Placement	2 Placements	3 Placements	4+ Placements	Total Placements	
0 to 4	303	272	99	55	729	31.0%
5 to 11	268	228	118	127	741	31.6%
12 to 15	130	91	60	197	478	20.4%
16 +	74	79	49	201	403	17.0%
Total	775	670	326	580	2351	100.0%
Percent of total	32.9%	28.5%	13.9%	24.7%	100.0%	

*Table 2.29 and following analysis does not include children placed in a Wraparound placement.

Children with multiple placements:

As Table 2.29 indicates, there were 580 children with four of more placements. This group of children represents nearly 25% of all children in a placement. Included below is an in-depth analysis of children with multiple placements.

Placements within 6 months of entering out of home care:

Between January 1 and June 30, 2007, 631 children were removed from their home and entered an out-of-home care placement. Table 2.30 below shows the placement movement for these children.

Table 2.30: Placement movement as of June 30, 2007: children entering out-of-home care (OHC), January to June 2007

Current Number of Placements	Number of children	Percent of children
1	414	65.6%
2	170	26.9%
3	36	5.7%
4	8	1.3%
5	2	0.3%
6	1	0.2%
Total	631	100%

- 584 children (92.5%) experienced two or fewer placements since they entered out-of-home care.
- 36 children (5.7%) experienced three moves since entering out-of-home care.
- 11 children (1.8%) experienced four or more moves since entering out-of-home care.

Although the majority of the children have not experienced placement instability, the 11 children with four or more placements demonstrate rapid placement movement in a short period of time.

This data set includes children with their first placement up to or on June 30, 2007. To further explore placement movement for children entering out-of-home care, the data set was expanded to include those children who entered out-of-home care between July 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006. Table 2.31 below shows the number of placements for children who enter care in the last six months of 2006.

Table 2.31: Placement movement as of June 30, 2007: children entering OHC between July and December 2006

Current Number of Placements	Number of Children	Percent of children
1	193	37.0%
2	221	42.4%
3	71	13.6%
4	21	4.0%
5	6	1.2%
6+	9	1.7%
Total	521	100%

*NOTE – Children who achieved permanence before January 1, 2007 were not included in Table 2.31. Children who achieved permanence after January 1, 2007 are included above.

The data in Table 2.31 show placement movement of children who have been in care between six and 12 months. In comparison, the data in Table 2.30 show placement movement of children who have been in care for a maximum of six months. Comparing these data, we find that as children are in care longer, fewer remain in their first placement; the number of children in at least their second placement increased.

Between January and June 2007, 110 children who were in their 3rd or fewer placement on December 31, 2006 moved into at least their fourth placement. The average age of these children was 11.2 years old, with a mean of 14 and a mode of 15.

By June 30, 2007, of children who had been in at least their fourth placement on December 31, 2006:

- 406 children did not change placements;
- 98 children (16.3%) experienced one placement change;
- 96 children (16%) experienced two or more placement changes;

- The average length of stay for these children is 58 months, with a median of 39 months;
- The average number of placements for this group of children was eight, with a median of six.

The data continue to indicate that some children experience placement instability independent of length of time in care. It is possible to experience instability even within a relatively short period of time in out-of-home care.

Impact of placement stability within the first 18 months in removal

Research on placement stability has often attributed frequent changes in placements to: 1) problems children have when they enter foster care, 2) type of placement (relative versus non relative) and 3) the length of time a child was in care. For instance, a hallmark study out of the University of California (Child Welfare 2000; *Placement Stability for Children in Out-of-Home Care: A Longitudinal Analysis*, Barth et al.) found that children under age six who had more than one placement move during their first year of care were more likely to experience three or more placements in subsequent years than if they did not move or were moved only once during their first year in care.

A recent study from the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine (Pediatrics 2007: “The Impact of Placement Stability on Behavioral Well-being for Children in Foster Care,” Rubin et al.) sought to disentangle the “cascading relationship” between children’s early behaviors at the time of removal that would have rendered the child at greater risk for placement instability. The study identified the independent impact of placement stability on behavioral outcomes, after controlling for risk factors for instability, and examined placement stability over the first 18 months of care. Findings indicate that within the first 18 months in care, children either achieved early stability, late stability, or remained unstable. In conclusion, the study indicated that, “Children in foster care experience placement instability unrelated to their baseline problems and this instability has a significant impact on their behavioral well-being.”

The BMCW examined placement stability of all children with four or more placements in an effort to determine the number of placements for children within the first 18 months in care. Table 2.32 below provides information on placement movement and number of placements for children in out-of-home care for at least 18 months.

Table 2.32: Placement history of children in OHC with four or more placements as of June 30, 2007

Age of child	Children with four or more placements		Children with four or more placements AND who have been in OHC for 18 months or more			Percent of placements occurring within first 18 months for children with 4 or more placements
	Number of children	Total placements	Number of Children	Total Placements	Placements within first 18 months	
0 to 4	55	252	35	166	135 (81%)	54%
5 to 11	127	671	105	577	379 (66%)	56%
12 to 15	197	1389	164	1206	634 (53%)	46%
16 +	201	1784	186	1701	666 (39%)	37%
Total	580	4096	490	3650	1814 (50%)	44%

Children in out-of-home care for 18 months or more achieved half of their total placements within their first 18 months in care. This placement cohort represents 44% of the total placements for all children in four or more placements. All children, regardless of age, with four or more placements experience multiple and rapid placements within the first 18 months in care.

A comparison of children who are currently 12 or older in out-of-home-care was done with two specific subsets of the group:

- The first group includes 155 children who entered out-of-home-care when they were five years old or under and who are currently age 12 or older.
- The second group includes 273 children who entered in out-of-home-care when they were 12 or older and have been in care at least 24 or more months.

Table 2.33: Placements by age

Summary Measures	Age five or under at entry (N=155)	Age 12 or older at entry and in care 24 + months (N=273)
	(Number of placements)	(Number of placements)
Average	8.7	5.7
Median	6	5
Mode	2	1
Range	38	28
Minimum	1	1
Maximum	39	29

- The most striking difference between the two groups of children is the maximum number of placements. Children who entered out-of-home-care when they were five years old or under had a maximum of 38 placements and those over 12 when they entered out-of-home-care had a maximum of 29 placements.
- Both groups of children have a median point above four placements, and the medians differ by only one placement.
- 55 of the 155 (35.4%) children who entered care at age five or younger had three or fewer placements. In comparison, among the children

entering care at age 12 or older, 109 of the 273 (39.9%) children had three or fewer placements.

The data suggests some children experience a level of stability in placement regardless of age when they entered or of length of time in care. However, children who are 12 years or older and have been in care at least 24 months are more likely to experience at least four placements while in care. Children who enter care at a younger age have a greater likelihood that he or she will experience at least four placements if they do not achieve permanency.

As shown in the national research, BMCW data also suggest that there is a connection between placement instability and length of stay in care. Given the number of placements prior to the first 18 months in care, as a child ages through the system they will likely experience a cycle of rejection and impermanence that can predict instability in future placements and opportunities to achieve permanency.

Placement type

Children are initially placed in a variety of placement types, which can be categorized as non-relative or relative placements. Non-relative placements include placements at an assessment home (for children under age 12), or an assessment center (for adolescents over age 12). A review of relative and non-relative placement types for children under age five who entered OHC in the last six months is illustrated below.

Table 2.34: Number of placements for children under age five entering OHC, January to June 2007

Initial placement type & number of children (N)		Placement movement				Total placements as of 6/30/07	
		Non-relative to relative	Relative to relative	Relative to non-relative	Non-relative to non-relative	Last placement: non-relative	Last placement: relative
Initial placement with non-relative	49	48	8	30	91	29	20
Initial placement with relative	8	8	2	13	5	2	6
Total	57	56	10	43	96	31	26

The data above show that children experienced multiple placements regardless of whether they were initially placed with a relative or non-relative.

Assessment homes and assessment centers are often the first placement for children at the time of removal. The purpose of an assessment placement is to assess and stabilize a child while identifying the child's needs. Accurate identification of needs allows for placement with an appropriate caregiver. However, within the first 18 months of care children have had multiple placements regardless of the child's initial placement.

Placement Stabilization Centers also are included in the number of placements. The information provided in the section on Assessment centers indicates that the prospect for future stability for adolescents with severe mental illness, delinquency, and repeat running away behaviors is guarded. Overall, the majority of the adolescents (180, or 70%) had one placement in a center. However, 79 adolescents had multiple placement episodes in the placement stabilization. Of the cumulative number of discharges (n=162) from the centers, running away represent 66.4% of all discharges from a placement episode.

In CY 2006, there were 795 children who were in a higher level of care (HLOC) setting. Of that total, 124 children entered a HLOC setting as their initial placement. The data indicates the average length of time in a HLOC setting was six months and the median length of time was three months. In addition, there were 317 children with multiple placements in HLOC settings within 12 months. Over time, some children enter out-of-home care and move up the continuum into different levels of care (treatment foster homes, group homes, and residential care centers) to meet their extensive behavioral, emotional, medical and educational needs. Some of these children then move back down the continuum of care to the least restrictive setting where their needs can be met.

The data would imply that the number and rapidity of placements within the first 18 months, regardless of placement type may set the trajectory of a child's stability over the long term. Multiple placements within the first 12 to 18 months may have an adverse effect on the child's sense of rejection and impermanence as well as their ability to form emotional ties with their caregivers. In turn, multiple placements undermine stability in subsequent placements and may significantly decrease the likelihood of permanency.

Permanency

Children with multiple placements are often considered "hard to place" due to their behavior and are more likely to age-out of the system rather than achieve permanency. Since CY 2003, the majority of children who achieved permanency through reunification had three or fewer placements at the time of reunification. By percentage, in the first six months of CY 2007, this group of children accounted for 87% of the children reunified.

In CY 2006, 92.2% of the children adopted within 24 months of entering out-of-home care had three or fewer placements while they were in care. Overall, 76.7% of the children adopted in CY 2006 had three or fewer placements at the time of adoption, and 85.9% had four or fewer placements at the time of their adoption.

Conclusion

The study completed by the University Of Pennsylvania found compelling evidence that placement stability, independent of a child's problem at entry into care, can influence well-being for children in out of home care. "Regardless of a child's

baseline behavior risk for instability, in the study, those children who failed to achieve placement stability were estimated to have a 36% to 63% increased risk of behavioral problems compared with children who achieved any stability in foster care."

The analysis provided in this report indicates that nearly one in three children, with three or more placements did not achieve any placement stability.

Strategies to address placement stability

The BMCW and its partner agencies consider the safety and well-being of children to be its primary responsibility. BMCW strategies to address placement stability are multi-faceted and include, but are not limited to:

- Redesigned responsibilities of permanency consultants;
- Stabilization meetings;
- Workgroups that are addressing unlicensed caregiver (relative), assessment process, and placement disruption;
- Permanency staffings;
- Coordinated Service Team meetings;
- Outcome performance measures;
- Mobile Urgent Treatment Team for Foster Families (MUTT-FF);
- Child placement activities;
- Adoptive and foster parent recruitment.

Mobile Urgent Treatment Team – Foster Families (MUTT-FF): In October 2005, BMCW worked with the Milwaukee County Human Services, Behavioral Health Division and expanded its crisis intervention services for foster families provided by their Mobile Urgent Treatment Team (MUTT).

There is now a mobile crisis team dedicated to providing immediate mental health services 24 hours-a-day to foster children and their families. In addition, the team develops a 21-day response plan, which includes any follow-up visits to the foster home to evaluate how the child and foster family are doing and identify other mental health service needs. The team also prepares a long-term crisis plan for children who are at risk for a recurring mental health, emotional, or behavioral crisis. The use of the service from January to June 2007 was as follows:

- 86 children were enrolled in MUTT-FF program;
- 26 children completed services in 2007;
- 11 children were successfully managed in their existing foster home;
- 12 children transitioned to an appropriate level of care, such as relative placement, pre-adoptive home, residential treatment center, group home, treatment foster care, or reunification;
- Three children were placed in a new foster home;

- 60 children remained in the program as of June 30, 2007; and
- 43 children were provided with one-on-one crisis stabilization services in addition to crisis intervention.

The BMCW and MUTT-FF are in the process of exploring utilizing the MUTT-FF in a more proactive manner. For example, the MUTT-FF team would be contacted when: 1) the licensing specialist believes a disruption is imminent, 2) the foster parent requests an immediate removal of the child, or 3) a 30 Day Notice of Request for Removal by the Foster Parent is requested by the Foster Parent.

In addition, MUTT-FF will participate in the initial stabilization meeting at the child's next placement. If the child is disrupting from a non-licensed placement, the Ongoing case manager will also contact MUTT-FF for stabilization services.

MUTT-FF will also provide core training to Ongoing case managers, licensing specialists, permanency consultants, Adoption workers, and foster parents regarding children's and adolescent's behavioral or mental health issues and the use of MUTT-FF.

Child Placement Activities: Children's Service Society of Wisconsin is focusing placement activities in several areas to enhance placement stability:

- **Review of placement requests for change:** Placement requests that involve moving a child from one foster home to another are reviewed by program management. The purpose of the review is to prevent unnecessary moves. Problem-solving meetings, stabilization meetings, and/or an updated support plans are tools that assist in supporting placements and avoiding a move for children. Any services needed to support the placement are identified and put in place.
- **Enhanced placement matching:** When a placement change is necessary, the placement team is focused on carefully matching children and placement resources. A child's needs are reviewed and that information is shared with potential caregivers. The team searches out siblings who may be in care to see if children can be placed together.
- **Unlicensed caregiver process:** The BMCW has implemented a new process for assessing potential caregivers early in the life of the case. The Ongoing case managers and permanency consultants meet with potential caregivers to explain the benefits of licensing and to assess the ability of the caregiver to meet the child's needs. The caregivers are educated about foster care licensing, guardianship, kinship care, and adoption.
- BMCW has now implemented the registration process for group homes and group settings. These facilities provide at-risk youth additional services to meet their needs and increase stability. By August 2007, there were over 20 registered group settings.

Recruitment efforts: Strategies for enhanced recruitment include:

- Raising general awareness of the need for safe, nurturing, and culturally competent foster and adoptive homes with a particular emphasis on recruiting homes for teens and sibling groups. This will be

accomplished through attendance at events and in many venues throughout the year.

- Keeping consistent visible messages in the public promoting a positive image of the child welfare system. This will be done through pitching various foster care and adoption success stories in print, radio and television media. Key message points have been developed regarding the need for foster/adoptive parents and explaining what people can do to help.
- CSSW has partnered with Liberty and Truth Ministries and Faith Partnership Network to promote awareness and recruit families who are willing to help. This initiative includes raising awareness within the community of the need for relatives to take an active role in helping family members who have children in care. The Faith Consortium has hired a faith recruiter who has been making contact with various churches in the community, doing short presentations at church services to share information about foster care and adoption. In addition, a city-wide faith-based foster care and adoption Recruitment Advisory Council has been established and will guide the work of the Faith Consortium.
- The Foster/Adoptive Parent Ambassador program continues. It utilizes active foster/adoptive parents as formal recruiters. The ambassadors are paired with staff to be present for events, presentations, and festivals to share their experiences in foster care and adoption.