

# Breaking Barriers

and Rightsizing Congregate Care in Milwaukee

**Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council**

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*Jill Collins, Ongoing Services Section Manager, DMCPs*



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families

# Historical Information

- The project began in January 2022 with the support of Casey Family Programs to reduce Milwaukee's usage of Congregate Care
- In line with Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to serve more youth in family-based settings and in their homes whenever possible
- The project set the ambitious goal of reducing DMCPs Congregate Care usage by 40% by the end of 2024



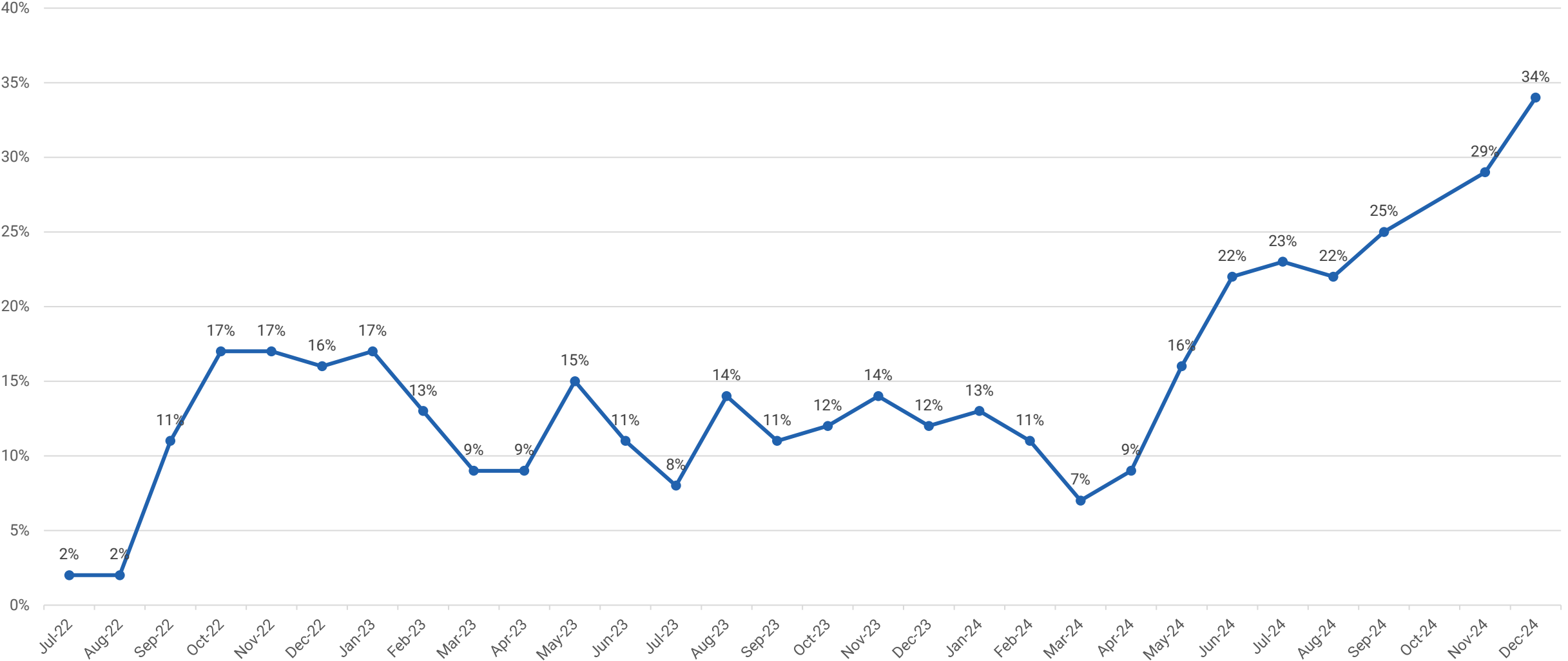
# Why was this so important?

*Priority: Moving youth from group care to family-like settings*

- Research is clear that outcomes improve when youth are placed in family-like settings
  - Less time in out-of-home care and fewer placements
  - More likely to be placed with siblings
  - More likely to be placed in community of origin
- Trauma reduction for youth



Percentage of Group Care Reduction



# Breaking Barriers & Rightsizing Congregate Care | Milwaukee

(note months on trend line may not be continuous. Baseline = Dec 2021)

## Baseline (Dec 2021)

179

Group Home	RCC
134	45

## Current Month (12/1/2024)

119

Group Home	RCC
95	24

## Change from Baseline

-34%

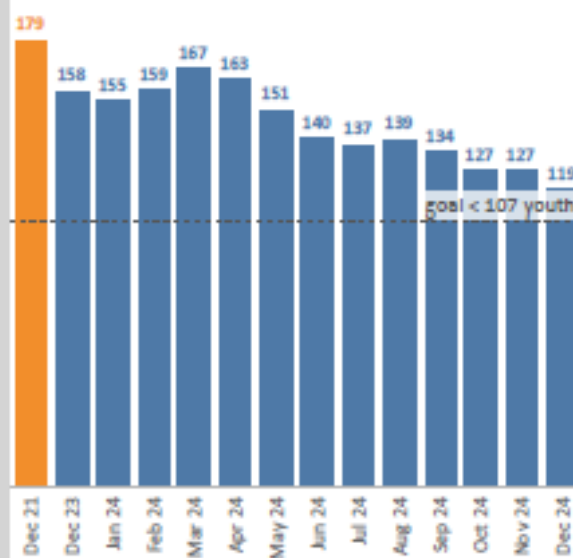
Group Home	RCC
-29%	-47%

## Percent of all State Youth

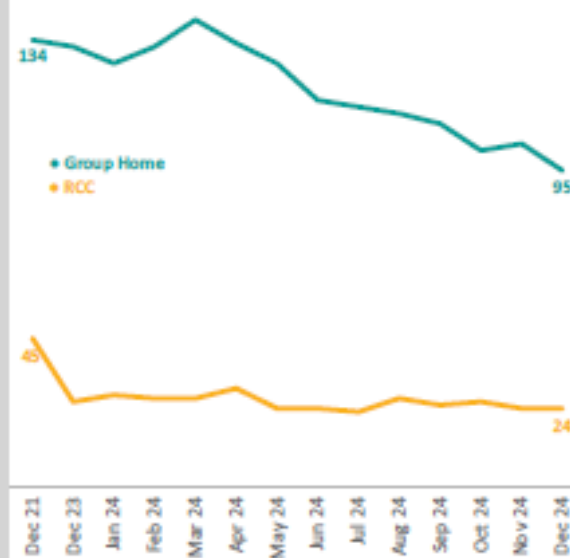
Once new source developed this will be % of selected county contribution to whole

Once new source developed this will be % of selected county contribution to whole, by GH and RCC

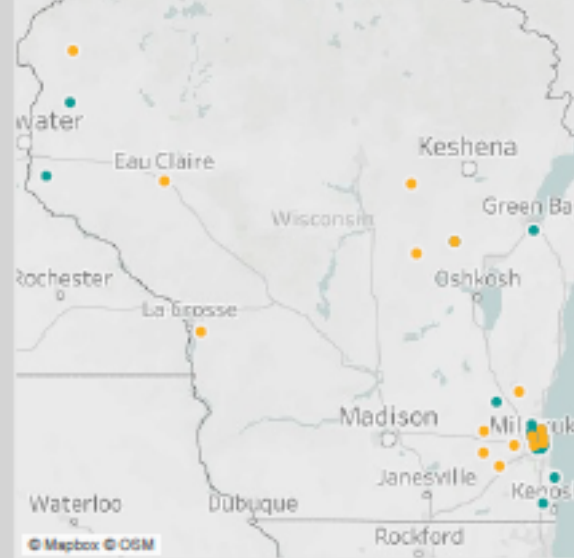
Children in group placement.



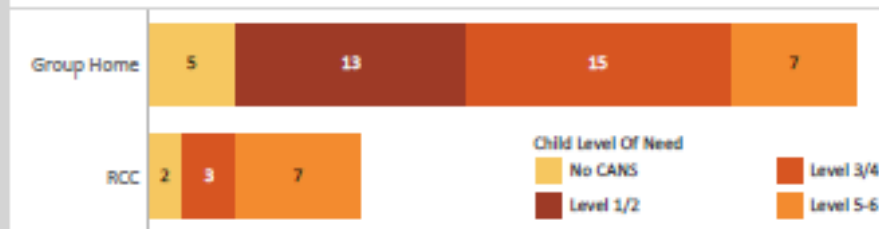
Children in group placement by placement type.



Child placement by zipcode (Dec 2024)



Children's Wisconsin (Dec 2024)



Wellpoint Care Network (Dec 2024)



# Comparison Data

## Breaking Barriers & Rightsizing Congregate Care | Children's Wisconsin

(note months on trend line may not be continuous. Baseline = Dec 2021)



Baseline (Dec 2021)	Group Placements (12/1/2024)	Change from Baseline
91	52	-43%

## Breaking Barriers & Rightsizing Congregate Care | Wellpoint Care

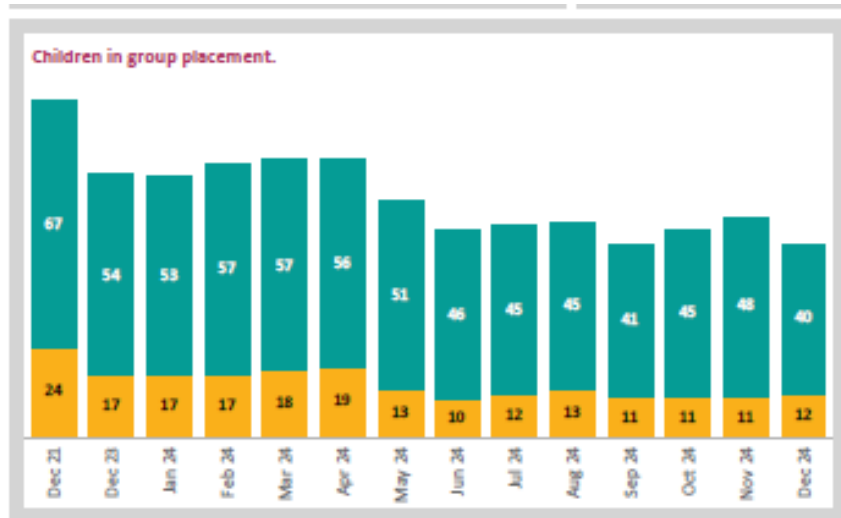
(note months on trend line may not be continuous. Baseline = Dec 2021)



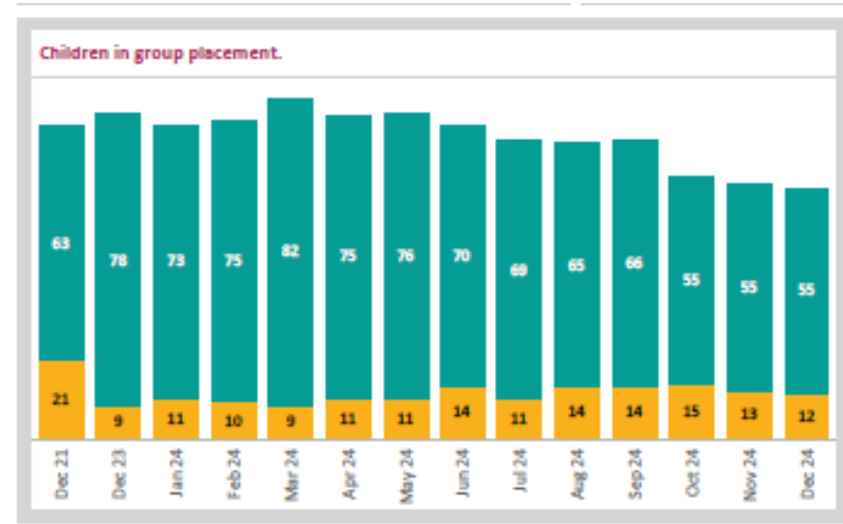
Baseline (Dec 2021)	Group Placements (12/1/2024)	Change from Baseline
84	67	-20%



# Group Home and RCC Numbers



Children's Wisconsin



Wellpoint Care Network





# Strategies Implemented

Disruptive Leadership

Design Team (met 2x/month)

Implementation Teams

- Youth with L1/2 CANS Scores in GHs
- Kin-Forward Culture
- Prevention of Step-Up Placements
- TFC Provider Engagement
- Supporting young people as they transition to lower levels of care

Supervisor Implementation Team

First Placements Pilot with IAB

“The Sprint”



# Lessons Learned

- This work is HARD
- Once youth are in group care, it's really hard to move them to lower levels
- Sibling groups are difficult
- When additional attention is on group care placements, it has improved over time



# Changes to Practice

- Weekly/Monthly staffings at the agencies regarding youth in group care
- **Additional oversight of placements in group care**
  - **Management-level discussions and plans**
- Different thought-work
- Expansion of placement team and relative searches



# What's the Future?

- Continuing to focus on group home and residential care center placements by:
  - Focusing on placement moves to and from group care
  - Continuing lessons learned
  - Collaborative staffings
  - Addition of measurement to case management contract focusing on group care
  - In-home placements, like-kin placements and identification of alternative placement resources for higher level of needs youth
  - Family Finding Pilot



# Questions?

[jill.collins@wisconsin.gov](mailto:jill.collins@wisconsin.gov)

[DCFDMCPSOngoingServicesSection@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DCFDMCPSOngoingServicesSection@wisconsin.gov)

