



Wisconsin Department of  
Children and Families

# Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services Independent Monitoring Report

2024 Annual Report  
January-December 2024

Published March 2025

# Executive Summary and Highlights

The Wisconsin Department of Children and Families (DCF) and its Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS) are focused on achieving long-lasting results that improve the safety, permanency, and well-being of children and families in Milwaukee County. From January through December 2024, DMCPS performed the following:

## Access and Initial Assessment / Independent Investigations

- A total of **15,076** child protective service reports were received.
  - **5,834 (39%)** were screened-in for further initial assessment/independent investigation.
- A total of **5,594** initial assessments and **92** independent investigations were completed.
- At the start of 2024, there were **77** initial assessment specialists (IAS) employed at DMCPS. From January through December 2024, **29** IAS were hired, and **17** IAS separated employment resulting in a **16%** annual turnover rate.

## Safety

- The case management agencies made face-to-face contact on **19,321** of the expected **20,005 (97%)** monthly face-to-face contacts.
- A total of **39** children re-entered out-of-home care (OHC) within 12 months of being discharged to reunification or guardianship.
- While in OHC, **five** children were victims of maltreatment by their provider.

## Permanency

- On average per month, **65** children entered OHC, and **64** children exited OHC.
- On average per month, **1,493** of **1,743 (86%)** children in OHC were placed in a family-like setting.
- On average per month, **698** of **1,743 (40%)** children in OHC were placed with a relative.
- On average per month, **620** of **1,743 (36%)** children were in OHC for more than 24 months.
- Of the **335** children who reunified in 2024, **141 (42%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC.

## Well-being

- On average per month, **1,605** of **1,751 (92%)** children were current with their annual medical exams.
- On average per month, **1,159** of **1,443 (80%)** children were current with their annual dental exams.

## Child Welfare Case Manager Workforce

- At the start of 2024, there were **164** child welfare case managers (CWCMs) employed at the case management agencies. From January through December 2024, **53** CWCMs were hired, and **55** CWCMs separated employment resulting in a **25%** annual turnover rate.
- On average per month, **64** of **154 (41%)** case carrying CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload.

*This report is a cumulative performance summary for DMCPS. Changes in the data between this report and prior reports reflect updates due to validation procedures as well as changes in reporting structure.*

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## 1. Introduction

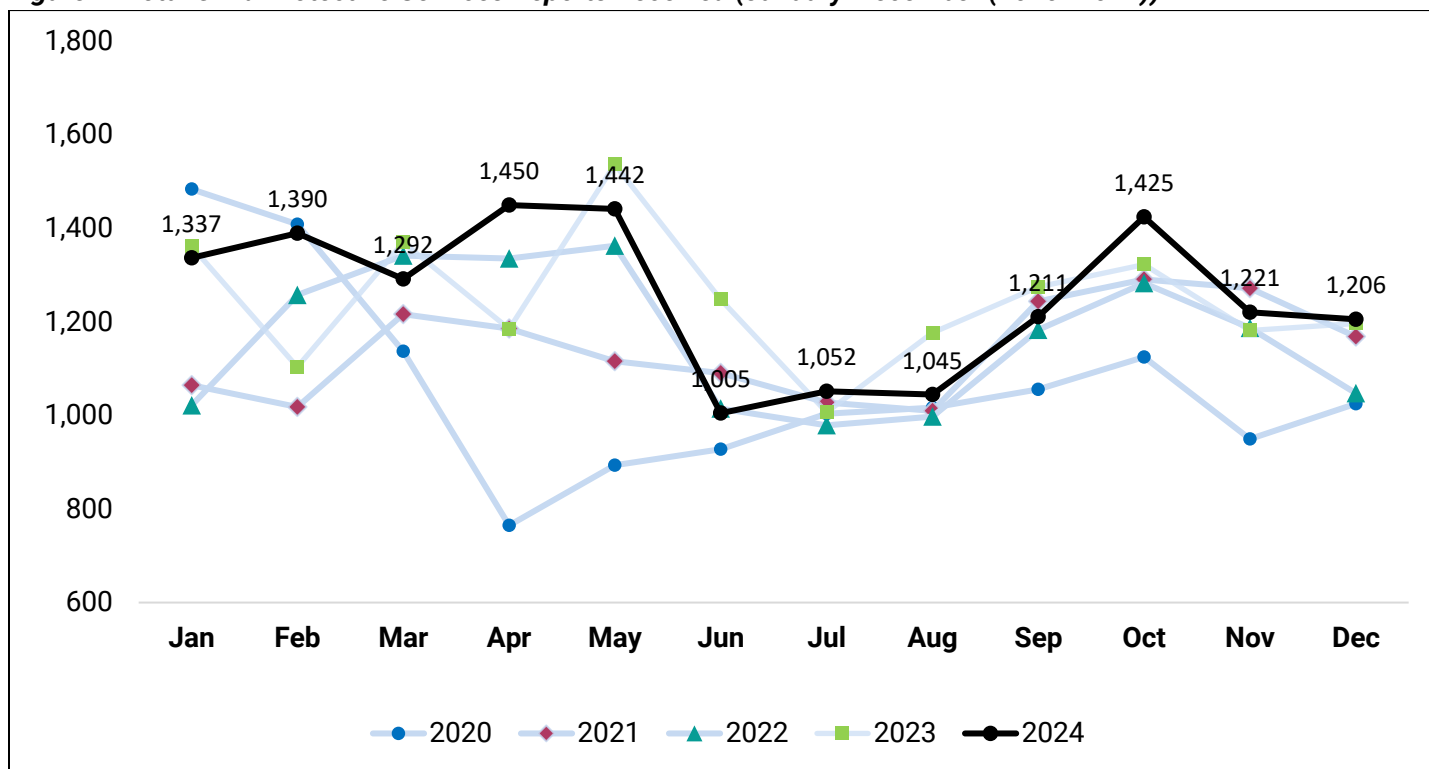
The DMCPs Independent Monitoring Report (IMR) provides pertinent information on key areas of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County. The report includes information about Access, Initial Assessment, outcomes related to safety, permanency, well-being, and the workforce. The IMR is intended to serve as a mechanism for maintaining transparency to both internal and external stakeholders while providing information about the overall functioning of Milwaukee County's child welfare system.

## 2. Access and Initial Assessment / Independent Investigations

### 2.1 Child Protective Service Reports - Volume and Response Time

From January through December 2024, DMCPs received a total of **15,076** unique child protective services (CPS) reports. This is similar to 2023.<sup>1</sup> Figure 1 shows the total number of CPS reports received from January through December from 2020 through 2024.

**Figure 1: Total Child Protective Services Reports Received (January-December (2020–2024))**



On average per month, DMCPs received **1,256** CPS reports from January through December 2024. DMCPs screened-in an average of **486** CPS reports for further assessment/independent investigation per month, resulting in an average screen-in rate of **39%**. As a result, DMCPs received 109 more CPS reports in 2024 compared to 2023, but screened in 487 less CPS reports (8% decrease). Figure 2 shows the number of screened-in and screened-out CPS reports by month during 2024. The majority (73%) of reports were received from mandated reporters.

<sup>1</sup> In calendar year 2023, 14,967 CPS reports were received.

**Figure 2: CPS Reports (Screened-in and Screened-out) Received by Month (January-December 2024)**

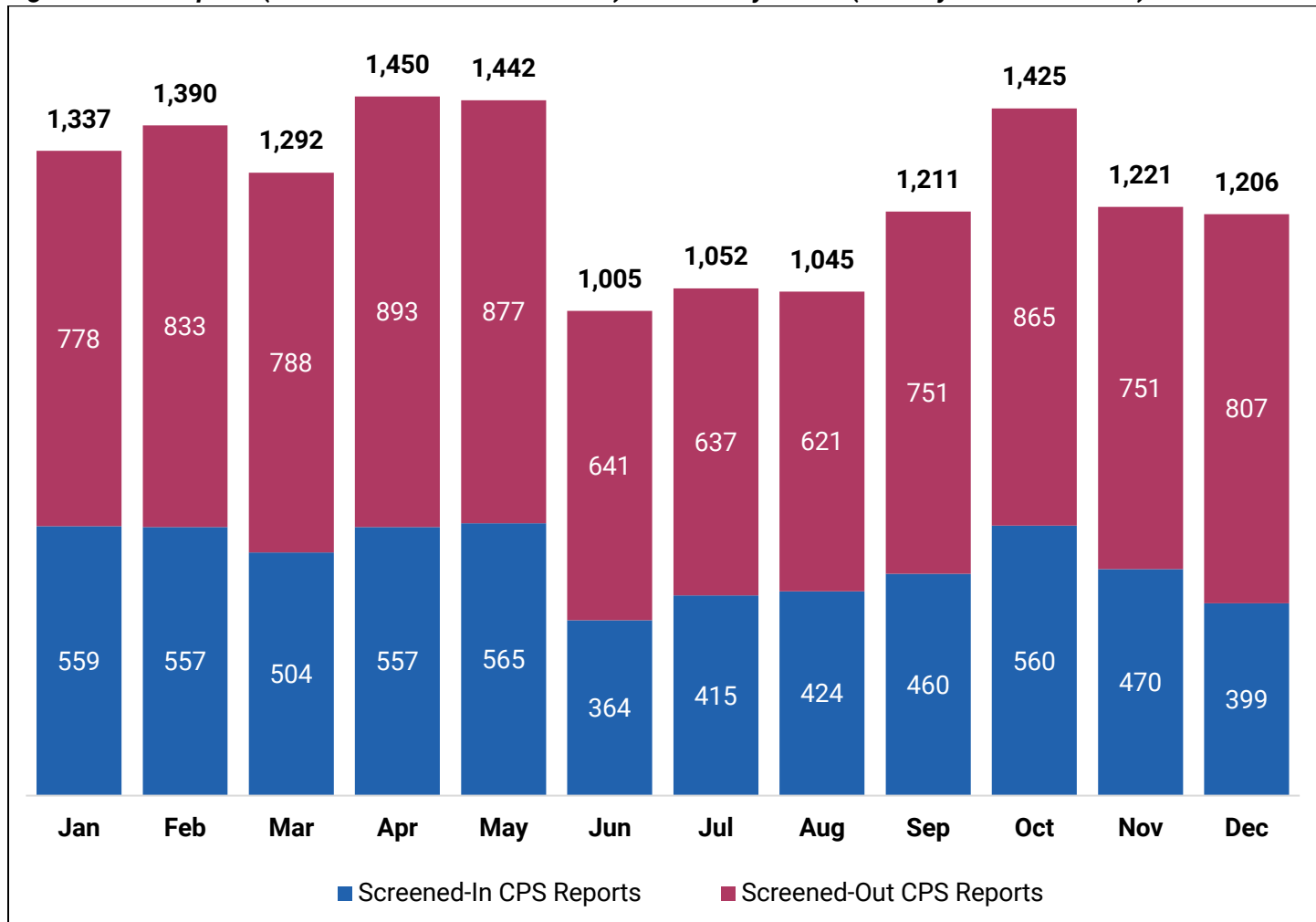


Table 1 shows the assigned response time (by percentage) of CPS reports that were screened-in by month from January through December 2024. On average per month, **16%** of CPS reports were screened-in with a same day response time, and an average of **65%** were screened-in with a response time of within five business days.<sup>2</sup>

**Table 1: Percentage of CPS Reports by Assigned Response Time by Month (January–December 2024)**

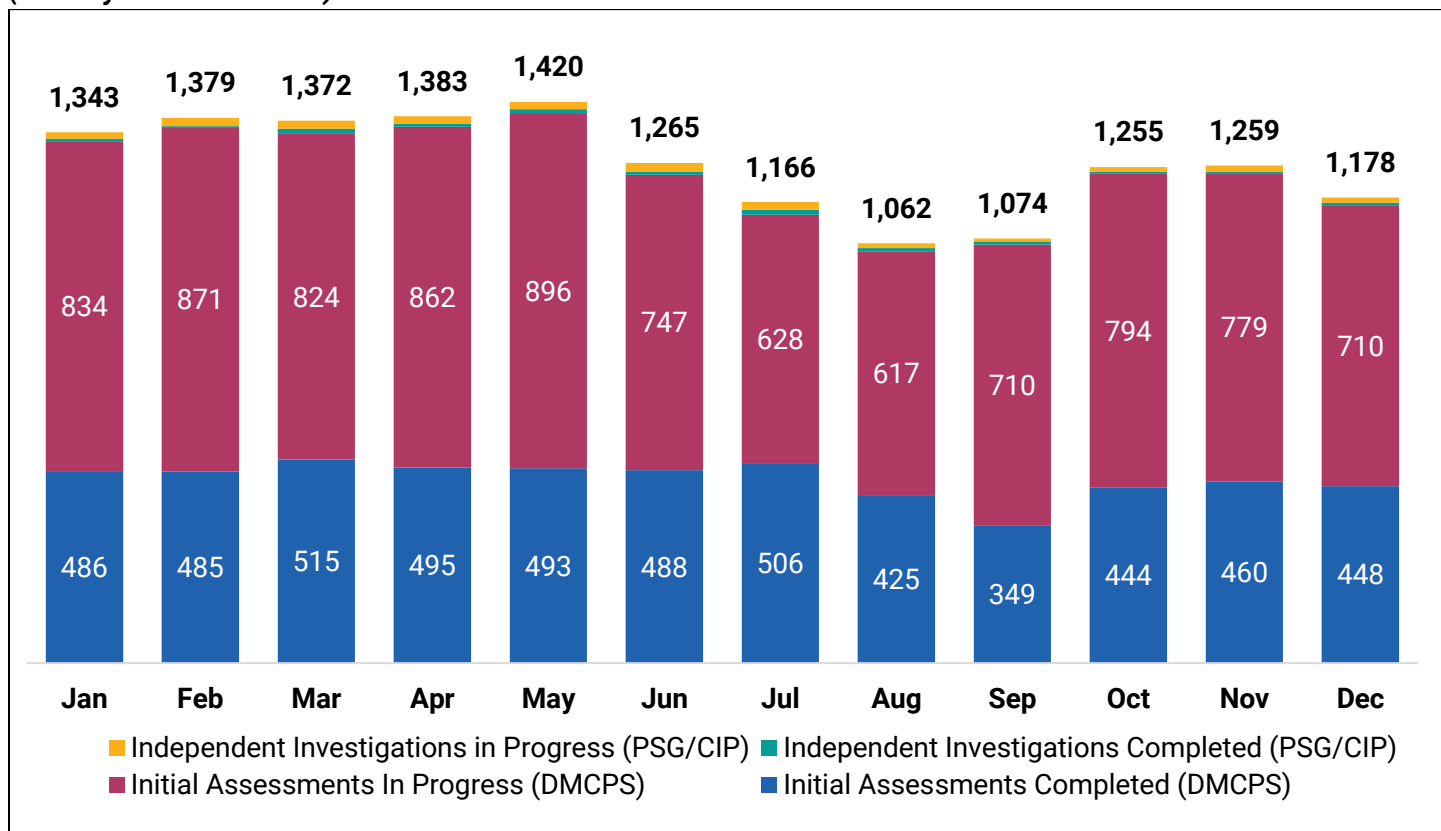
Response Time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Same Day	17%	24%	18%	22%	20%	18%	19%	18%	19%	20%		
Within 24-48 Hours	20%	18%	22%	17%	21%	23%	20%	21%	17%	16%	19%	14%
Within Five Business Days	63%	58%	60%	61%	60%	58%	62%	61%	64%	64%	81%	86%

<sup>2</sup>On November 1, 2024, DMCPs initiated a response time pilot that is in effect through December 31, 2025 (one of 11 participating child welfare agencies across Wisconsin). The pilot allows two options for response time (within 24 hours and within five business days and eliminates the same day option).

## 2.2 Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations - Completed and Pending

From January through December 2024, there were **5,594** initial assessments completed by initial assessment specialists (IAS) and **92** independent investigations completed by Professional Services Group/Community Impact Programs (PSG/CIP).<sup>3</sup> On average per month, **466** initial assessments were completed by **74** IAS and **eight** independent investigations were completed by **three** PSG/CIP staff. Figure 3 shows the number of completed and pending initial assessments and independent investigations by month during 2024.

**Figure 3: Number of Completed and Pending Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations by Month (January-December 2024)**

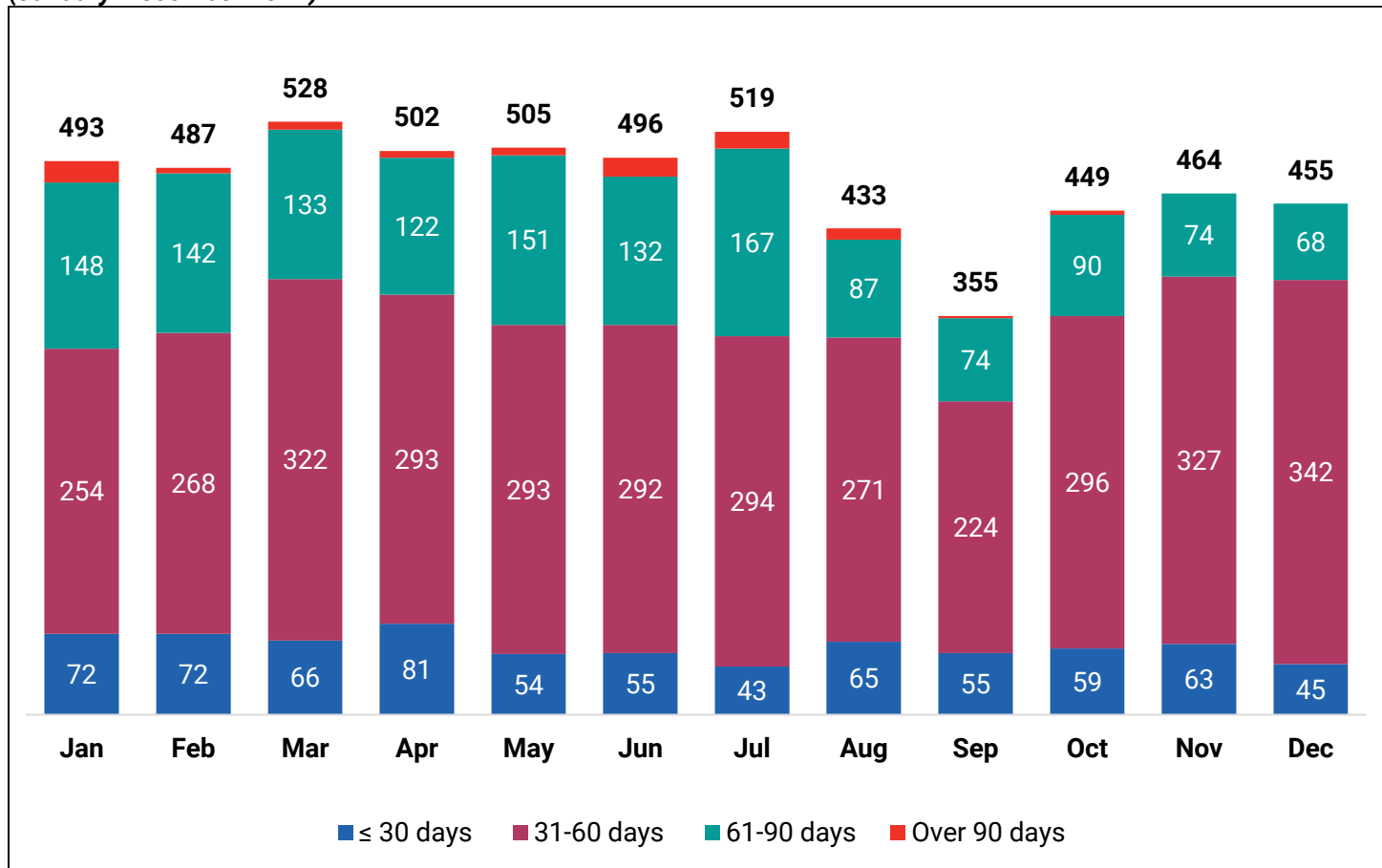


Initial assessments and independent investigations are required to be completed within 60 days of the referral. Figure 4 shows the number of days to complete initial assessments and independent investigations between January and December 2024. In 2024, **4,206 (74%)** of the **5,686** completed initial assessments and independent investigations were completed in 60 days or less. This is a significant improvement from 2023 which was the first year this measure was reported in this report.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Professional Services Group (PSG)/Community Impact Programs (CIP) staff conduct independent investigations on behalf of DMCPS.

<sup>4</sup> From January-December 2023, 3,689 of 6,178 (60%) of Initial Assessments were completed in 60 days or less.

**Figure 4: Number of Days to Complete Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations by Month (January-December 2024)**



### 2.3 Initial Assessment Specialists Staffing

At the beginning of 2024, DMCPs employed **77** IAS. Over the course of 2024, **29** IAS were hired, and **17** IAS separated employment resulting in a **16%** annual turnover rate.<sup>5</sup> Table 2 provides the monthly number of IAS at the beginning of the month, the number hired during the month, the number separating employment during the month, and the annual turnover rate for 2024.

**Table 2: Number of IAS at the Start of the Month, the Hires and Separations by Month, and the Annual Turnover Rate (January-December 2024)**

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
IAS Start of Month	77	77	77	88	84	88	88	85	84	95	92	90
IAS Hires	0	0	13	0	4	0	0	0	12	0	0	0
IAS Separations <sup>6</sup>	0	0	2	4	0	0	3	1	1	3	2	1
<b>Annual Turnover %</b>												<b>16%</b>

<sup>5</sup> Turnover rate is the number of IAS who exited employment divided by the number of IAS at the beginning of the year plus the number of IAS hired during the reporting period.

<sup>6</sup> Separations include promotions, resignations, retirements, terminations, and transfers.

### 3. Safety

#### 3.1 Face-to-Face Contact by the Case Management Agencies

From January through December 2024, **19,321** of the expected **20,005 (97%)** face-to-face contacts (FFC) were completed by the case management agencies. This is an improvement from the prior year<sup>7</sup>. Table 3 shows the number of expected and completed face-to-face contacts and the percent of completed face-to-face contacts by month.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3: Number of Expected and Completed Face-to-Face Contacts by Month (January-December 2024)**

FFC	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of Children Receiving FFC	1,567	1,552	1,581	1,593	1,639	1,651	1,646	1,598	1,605	1,626	1,632	1,631
Number of Children Requiring FFC	1,654	1,648	1,650	1,659	1,680	1,708	1,690	1,671	1,644	1,670	1,670	1,661
Percent of Children Receiving a FFC	95%	94%	96%	96%	98%	97%	97%	96%	98%	97%	98%	98%

#### 3.2 Re-Entry

A total of **39** children re-entered OHC within 12 months of discharging to reunification or guardianship during 2024. This is 15 less children when compared to 2023.<sup>9</sup> Table 4 shows the number of re-entries, by re-entry month, and time between exit and re-entry from January through December 2024.

**Table 4: Number of Children who Re-Entered OHC by Month (January-December 2024)**

Time Before Re-Entry Group	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2024 Total
0 - 2 Months	1	2	1	1	0	1	2	0	1	3	0	0	12
3 - 6 Months	1	4	2	0	3	0	0	2	1	1	1	3	18
7 - 9 Months	2	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	8
10 - 12 Months	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>39</b>

<sup>7</sup> In 2023, 18,647 of the expected 19,451 (96%) face-to-face contacts were completed by the case management agencies.

<sup>8</sup> This measures one face-to-face contact per month; additional face-to-face contacts are required based on case circumstances.

<sup>9</sup> Fifty-four children re-entered OHC within 12 months from January-December 2023.



### 3.3. Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care

From January through December 2024, **five** children were victims of maltreatment by their provider while in OHC. Table 5 shows the month of maltreatment, the child's age, the maltreatment type, and the maltreaters' relationship to the victim.

**Table 5: Child Victim by Month (January-December 2024), Child's Age, Maltreatment Type, and Maltreaters' Relationship to Victim**

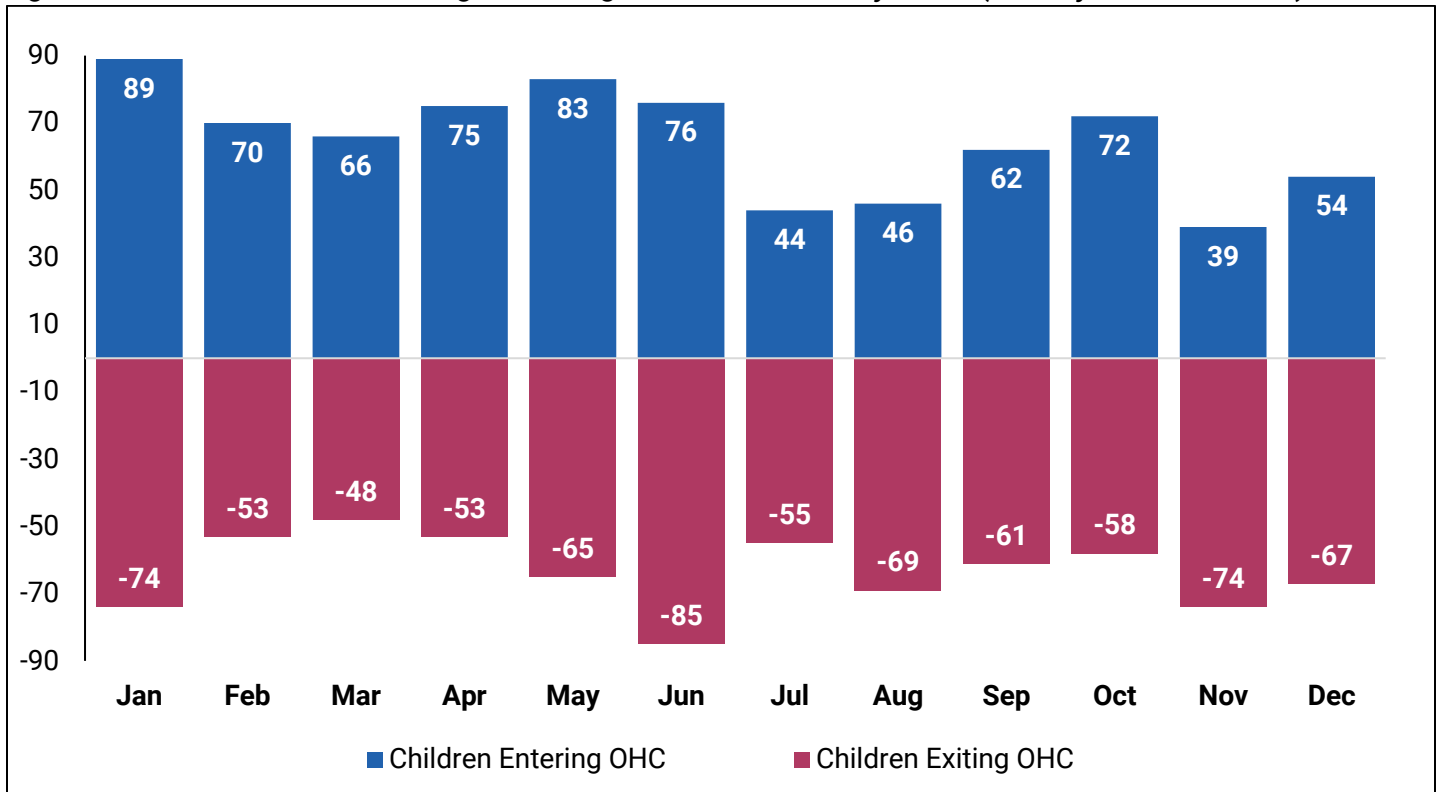
Child Victim	Month	Child's Age at Time of Incident	Maltreatment Type	Maltreater Relationship to Victim
1	March	5	Physical Abuse	Treatment Foster Home (Non-Relative)
2	May	2	Physical Abuse	General Foster Home (Non-Relative)
3	August	6	Sexual Abuse	Kinship
4	August	6	Sexual Abuse	Kinship
5	September	4	Neglect	General Foster Home (Relative)

## 4. Permanency

### 4.1 Entries into Out-of-Home Care

At the beginning of 2024, there were **1,721** children in OHC.<sup>10</sup> On average per month, **65** children entered OHC, and **64** children exited OHC in 2024. As a result, there were **1,708** children in OHC at the end of 2024, a decrease of **13 (<1%)** from the beginning of the year. Figure 5 shows the number of children entering and exiting OHC by month.

**Figure 5: Number of Children Entering and Exiting Out-of-Home Care by Month (January-December 2024)**



<sup>10</sup> Children in out-of-home care is based on the number of children at end-of-month; this count includes unique children only (i.e., no child is counted twice in the same month).

## 4.2 Placement Groups

On average per month, there were **1,743** children in OHC between January and December 2024. The placement types are divided into three groups: family like (foster home, kinship care, treatment foster home, unlicensed non-relatives, trial reunification), congregate care (group home, residential care center, shelter), and other (detention, institutions, hospitals, missing from OHC, supervised independent living). Figure 6 shows the number of children in OHC by placement group and month during 2024. On average per month, **86%** of children in OHC were placed in a family like setting, **9%** were placed in a congregate care setting, and **5%** were placed in other settings.

**Figure 6: Number of Children in OHC by Placement Group and Month (January-December 2024)**

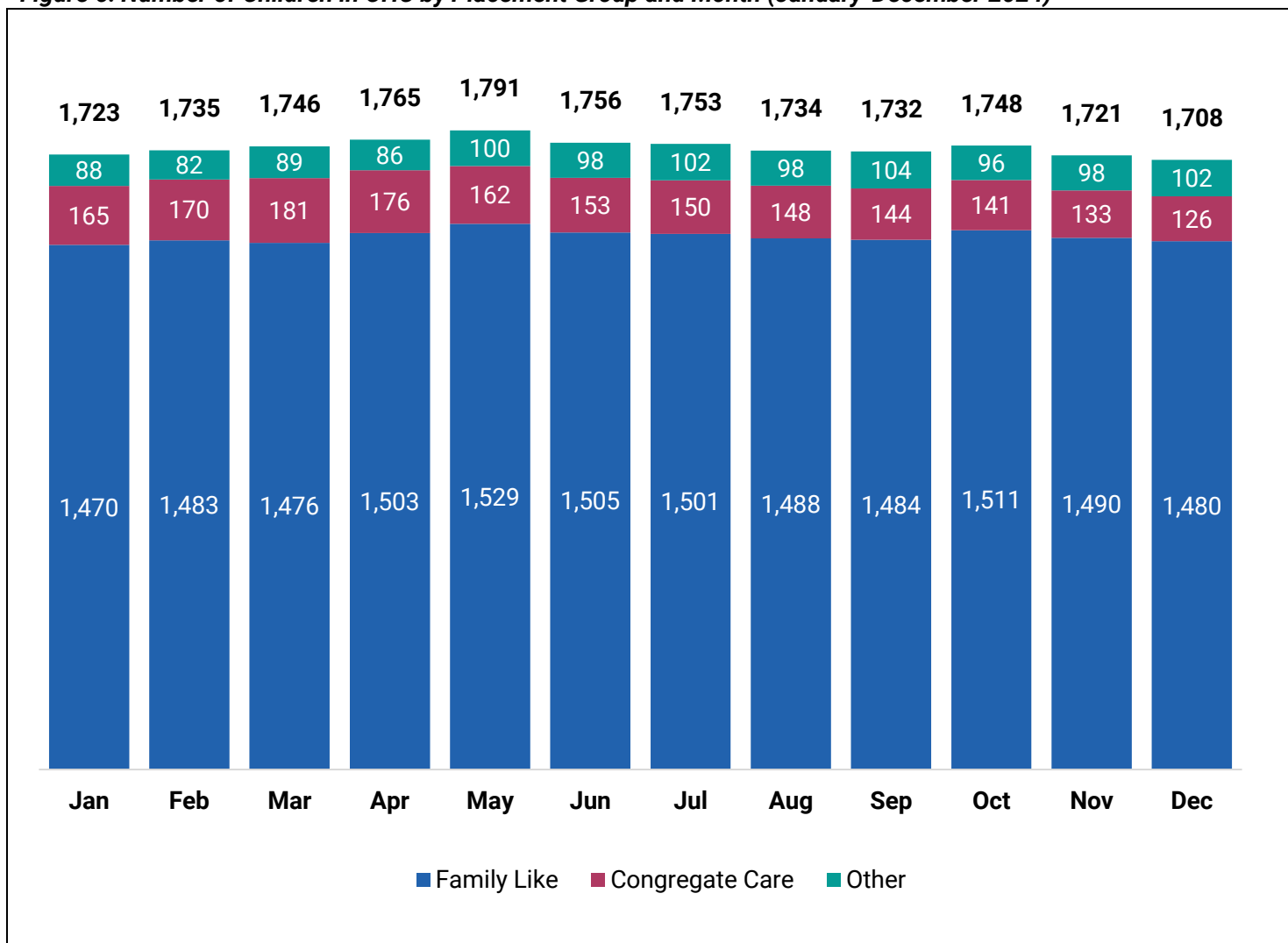


Table 6 shows the number of children in OHC by placement group, age group, and month during 2024.<sup>11</sup> On average per month, there were **515** children aged 12 years or older in OHC. Of these older children, **275 (53%)** were placed in a family like setting, **146 (28%)** were placed in congregate care, and **94 (18%)** were in other care. Of all the children in OHC, on average per month, **687 (39%)** of placements were with relatives (not pictured).<sup>12</sup>

**Table 6: Number of Children in OHC by Placement Group, Age Group, and Month (January-December 2024)**

Placement Types & Ages of Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual AVG
<b>Family Like</b>	<b>1,470</b>	<b>1,483</b>	<b>1,476</b>	<b>1,503</b>	<b>1,529</b>	<b>1,505</b>	<b>1,501</b>	<b>1,488</b>	<b>1,484</b>	<b>1,511</b>	<b>1,490</b>	<b>1,480</b>	<b>1,493</b>
0 to 2	417	417	418	432	447	432	416	411	422	419	416	408	422
3 to 4	227	235	228	228	230	230	242	235	223	235	228	235	231
5 to 11	553	557	559	566	575	564	568	564	570	581	572	563	566
12 to 15	177	179	173	182	188	191	186	191	185	186	190	190	185
16+	96	95	98	95	89	88	89	87	84	90	84	84	90
<b>Congregate Care</b>	<b>165</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>176</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>155</b>
5 to 11	11	8	8	9	7	9	9	9	6	8	6	5	8
12 to 15	80	81	91	81	76	75	71	75	79	75	69	60	76
16+	74	81	82	86	79	69	70	64	59	58	58	61	71
<b>Other</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>95</b>
0 to 2	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	3	1	0	0	1	1
5 to 11	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
12 to 15	24	26	26	24	29	29	31	23	27	26	28	32	27
16+	64	55	61	61	69	69	69	72	76	69	69	68	67
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,723</b>	<b>1,735</b>	<b>1,746</b>	<b>1,765</b>	<b>1,791</b>	<b>1,756</b>	<b>1,753</b>	<b>1,734</b>	<b>1,732</b>	<b>1,748</b>	<b>1,721</b>	<b>1,708</b>	<b>1,743</b>

<sup>11</sup> Placement group and age as of the end-of-month.

<sup>12</sup> Relative as defined in [§48.02\(15\)](#)

### 4.3 Foster Homes

From January through December 2024, the average number of open foster homes was **470**. A total of **191** providers were newly licensed, and **216** providers were closed. Table 7 shows the foster homes at the end of the month, the number of providers licensed as new foster homes, and the number of providers closed from each month of 2024.

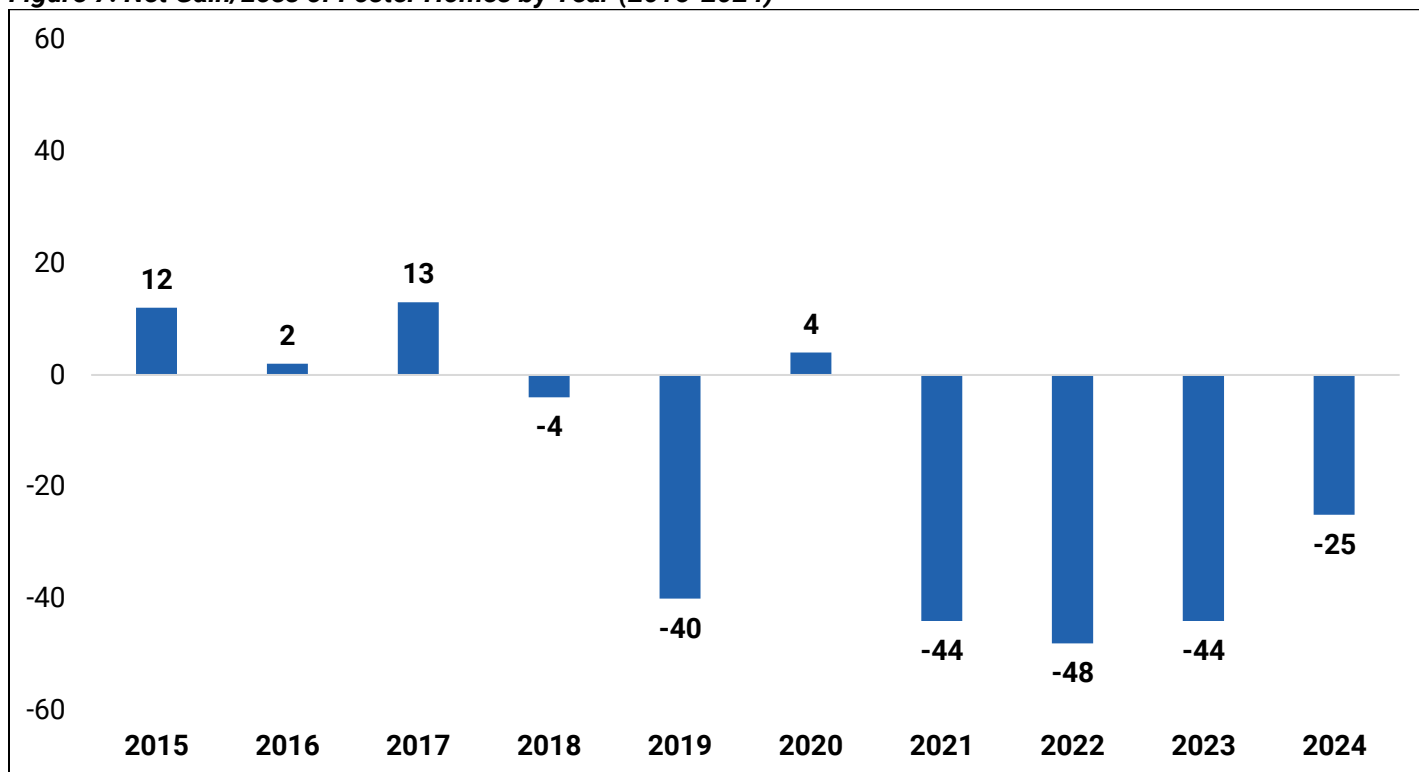
**Table 7: Number of Foster Homes by Month (January–December 2024)**

Foster Homes	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Foster Homes at the End of the Month	481	483	477	470	462	475	465	471	467	464	467	461
New Foster Homes	16	22	14	14	13	20	14	20	11	13	22	12
Closed Foster Homes	30	19	16	18	19	11	25	12	16	17	17	16

*Note: Differences between the number of foster homes at the end of the month and the number of foster homes at the beginning of the following month could be the results of belated data entry and/or pending work.*

The number of foster homes at the end of the year decreased during each of the last five years: 651 (2019), 640 (2020), 594 (2021), 548 (2022), 497 (2023), and **461** (2024). Figure 7 shows the net gain/loss of foster homes over the last ten years (2015 through 2024).<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 7: Net Gain/Loss of Foster Homes by Year (2015-2024)**

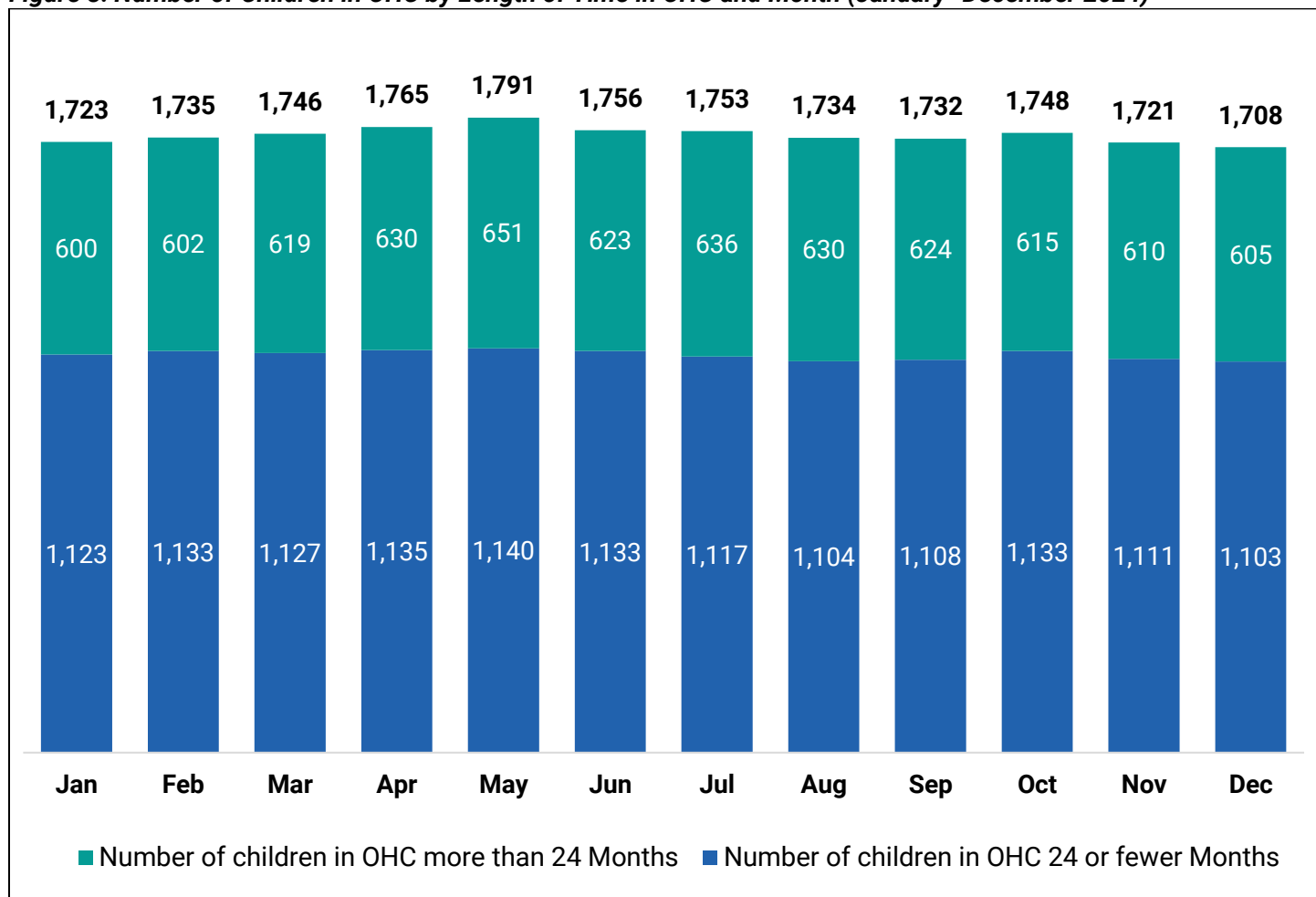


<sup>13</sup> Net Gain/Loss was calculated by subtracting closed foster homes from new foster homes by year.

#### 4.4 Length of Stay

On average per month, **620** of **1,743 (36%)** children were in OHC for more than 24 months in 2024.<sup>14</sup> This is similar to 2023.<sup>15</sup> Figure 8 shows the total number of children in OHC broken out by the number of children in OHC 24 or fewer months and the number of children in care more than 24 months. The percentage of children in OHC more than 24 months remained stable throughout 2024.

**Figure 8: Number of Children in OHC by Length of Time in OHC and Month (January–December 2024)**



<sup>14</sup> Length of stay is determined based on episode length as of the end of month.

<sup>15</sup> In 2023, an average of 628 of the 1,746 (36%) children were in OHC more than 24 months.

#### 4.5 Permanency Outcomes

A total of **762** children exited OHC in 2024. Figure 9 shows that **335 (44%)** of children were reunified, **157 (21%)** of children had a transfer of guardianship (TOG), **189 (25%)** children were adopted, and **81 (11%)** discharged for another reason.

**Figure 9: Number of Children Exiting OHC by Exit Type and Month (January-December 2024)**

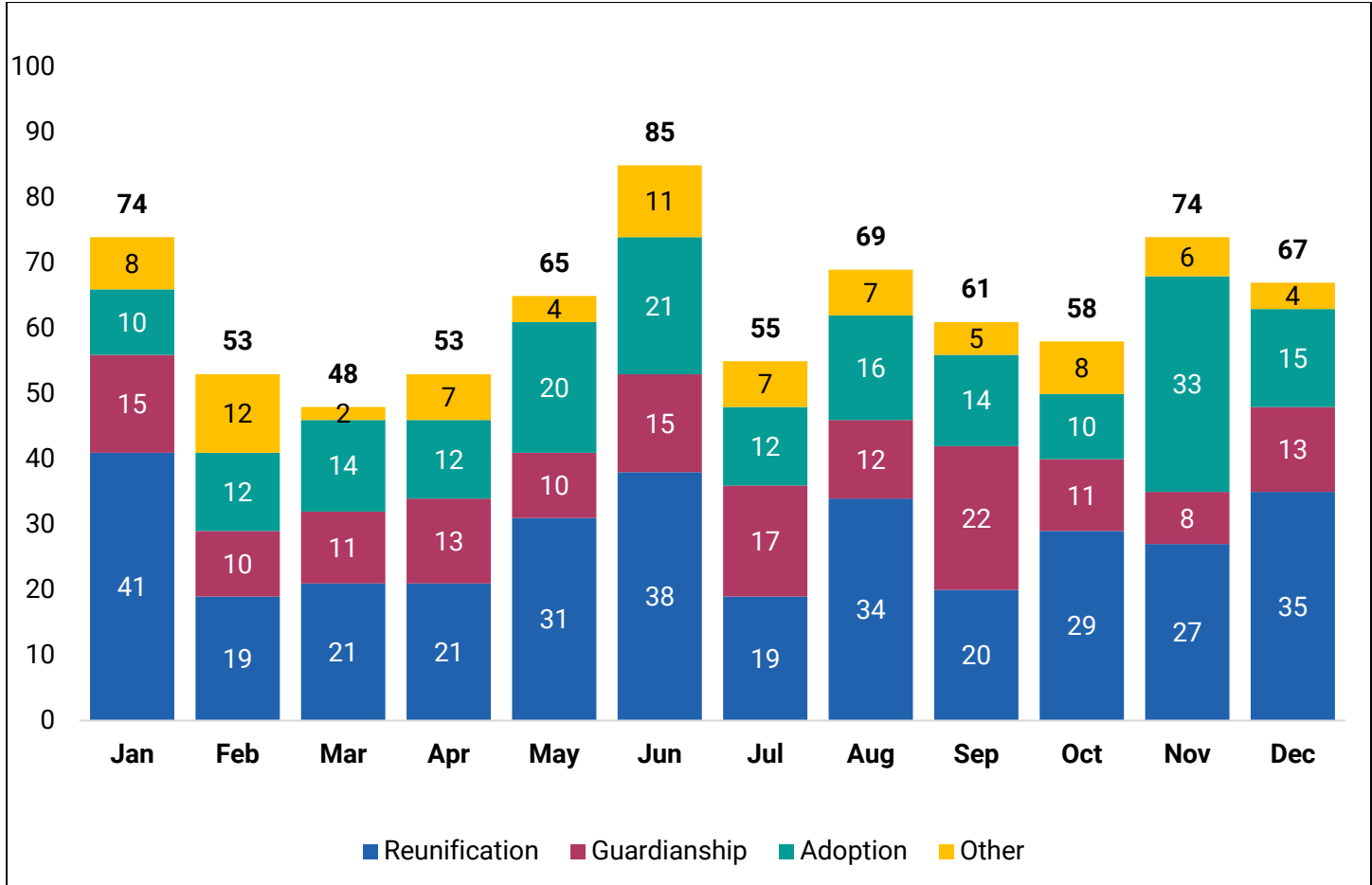


Table 8 shows the length of time that children were in OHC prior to exiting, grouped by monthly intervals. Of the **335** children who reunified, **141 (42%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC. Of the **157** children who had a TOG, **66 (42%)** achieved permanency within 24 months or less. Of the **189** children who were adopted, **60 (32%)** were adopted within 24 months or less.

**Table 8: Number of Children Exiting OHC, by Exit Type and Length of Time in OHC (January-December 2024)**

Exit Reason	<= 1 Month	2 - 3 Months	4 - 6 Months	7 - 9 Months	10 - 12 Months	13 - 24 Months	25 - 36 Months	37 - 48 Months	>= 49 Months	Total
Reunification	17	12	29	34	49	111	49	11	23	335
Guardianship	0	1	0	1	2	62	66	16	9	157
Adoption	0	0	0	4	7	49	33	37	59	189
Other	3	1	2	0	3	13	16	16	27	81
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>762</b>

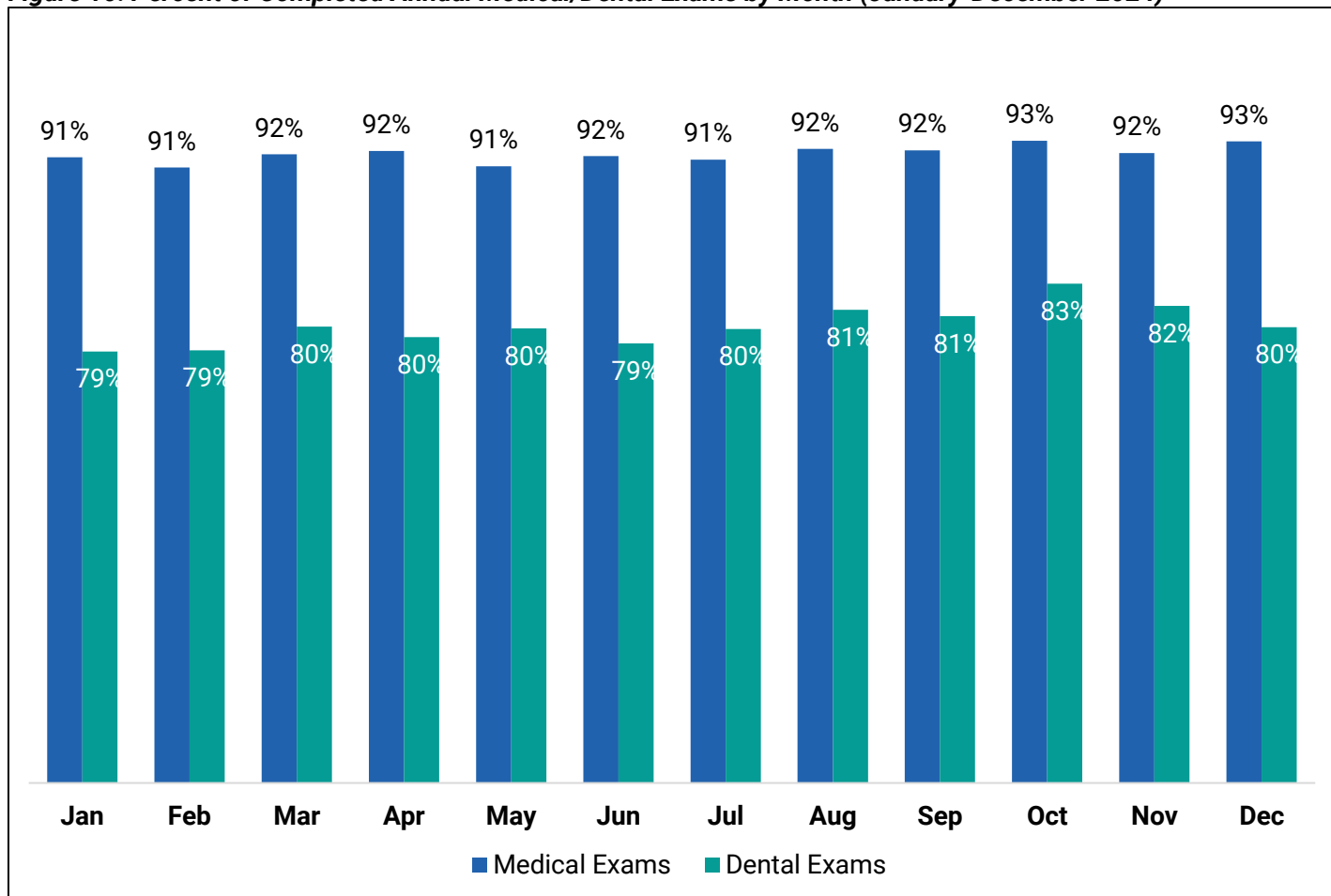
\*Other includes age of majority, custody transfer, missing from OHC

## Well-being

### 5.1 Annual Medical and Dental Exams

During 2024, a monthly average of **1,751** children were expected to have an annual medical exam and **1,605 (92%)** were completed and documented. For annual dental exams, **1,443** children were expected to have an annual dental exam and **1,159 (80%)** were completed and documented. Both are considerable improvements compared to 2023.<sup>16</sup> Figure 10 provides the percent of annual medical and dental exams that were completed during 2024.

**Figure 10: Percent of Completed Annual Medical/Dental Exams by Month (January-December 2024)**



<sup>16</sup> In 2023, an average of 1,547 of 1,757 (88%) of children had an annual medical exam; 1,031 of 1,437 (72%) of children had an annual dental exam.

## 6 Child Welfare Case Manager Workforce

### 6.1 Child Welfare Case Manager Turnover

On January 1, 2024, there were **164** child welfare case managers (CWCMs). During 2024, **53** CWCMs were hired and **55** CWCMs separated employment, resulting in a **25%** annual CWCM turnover rate.<sup>17</sup> The turnover rate continues to improve. It has decreased over the last three years after its all-time high in 2021.<sup>18</sup> At the end of 2024, there were **162** CWCMs. Table 9 provides the monthly number of CWCMs at the beginning of the month, the number of CWCMs hired, the number of CWCMs separating employment, and the annual CWCM turnover rate for 2024.

**Table 9: Number of Child Welfare Case Managers at the Start of the Month, the Hires and Separations by Month, and the Annual Turnover Rate (January-December 2024)**

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Start of Month	164	172	170	162	166	163	164	163	160	160	167	166
Hires	11	2	2	5	4	4	6	3	6	7	3	0
Separations	3	4	10	1	7	3	7	6	6	0	4	4
<b>Annual Turnover %</b>	<b>25%</b>											

### 6.2 Child Welfare Case Managers with a Caseload of More than 15 Children

One measure of workload intensity is the proportion of CWCMs with more than 15 children on their caseload. On average, from January through December 2024, **64** of **154 (41%)** case carrying CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload. This is an improvement from 2023.<sup>19</sup> Table 10 shows the number of CWCMs with cases, the number of CWCMs with more than 15 children on their caseload, and the percent of CWCMs with more than 15 children on their caseload.

**Table 10: Number and Percent of CWCMs with a Caseload of More than 15 Children by Month (January-December 2024)**

Caseloads with 16+ Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CWCMs with Caseload of >15 Children	67	69	71	64	65	65	63	63	62	62	58	55
CWCMs Carrying Cases	153	161	156	157	152	154	152	154	149	150	156	156
% CWCMs with Caseload >15 Children	<b>44%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>35%</b>

<sup>17</sup> Turnover rate is the number of CWCMs who exited employment divided by the number of CWCMs at the beginning of the year plus the number of CWCMs hired during the reporting period.

<sup>18</sup> The turnover rates the last three years were 26% (2023), 37% (2022), and 46% (2021).

<sup>19</sup> The average from January-December 2023 was 68 of 155 (44%) of CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload.



## 7 Appendix-Data Sources

Measure	Report Name	Report Type
2.1 Child Protective Service Reports - Volume and Response Time	SM02X100 - Access Report (Enhanced)	eWReports - Monthly Batch
2.2 Initial Assessments / Independent Investigations - Completed and Pending	SM06A109 - Initial Assessment Report	eWReports - Monthly Batch Agency Verification
2.3 Initial Assessments Specialists Staffing	IAS Hires Exits and Turnover DMCPS Organizational Chart	Manual Agency Verification
3.1 Face-to-Face Contact by Case Management Agencies	CM06X103 - BMCW Face to Face Contacts	eWReports - Monthly Batch
3.2 Re-Entry	SM10A112 - Placement Activity and Detail (Exits Tab)	eWReports - Monthly Batch Agency Verification
3.3 Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care	SM06A109 - Initial Assessment Report Independent Investigation Database	eWReports - Monthly Batch
4.1 Entries into Out-of-Home Care	SM10A114 - Permanency Outcomes	eWReports - Monthly Batch
4.2 Placement Groups	SM10A113 - Placement Count	eWReports - Monthly Batch
4.3 Foster Homes	PM02A100 - BMCW New Foster Homes	eWReports - Monthly Batch
4.4 Length of Stay	SM10A113 - Placement Count	eWReports - Monthly Batch
4.5 Permanency Outcomes	SM10A114 – Permanency Outcomes	eWReports - Monthly Batch Agency Verification
5.1 Annual Medical and Dental Exams	CM01X107 - BMCW Medical-Dental Initial/Annual Examinations	eWReports - Monthly Batch
6.1 Child Welfare Case Manager Turnover	Agency – Turnover-Caseloads	Manual Agency Verification
6.2 Child Welfare Case Manager with a Caseload of More than 15 Children	Agency – Turnover-Caseloads	Manual Agency Verification

For questions about data in this report, please email Tyler Oettinger at [tyler.oettinger@wisconsin.gov](mailto:tyler.oettinger@wisconsin.gov).

For more information and links to historical reports, visit  
[DMCPS Data | Wisconsin Department of Children and Families](#)  
[dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/data](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/mcps/data)