



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services Independent Monitoring Report

2025 Semi-Annual Report
January-June 2025

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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. To that end, this report highlights the following key data points of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County:

Access and Initial Assessment / Independent Investigations

- A total of **7,930** child protective service reports were received.
 - Of this total, **2,718 (34%)** were screened-in for further initial assessment/independent investigation.
- A total of **2,610** initial assessments and **46** independent investigations were completed.
- At the start of 2025, there were **89** initial assessment specialists (IAS) employed at DMCPS. From January through June 2025, **six** IAS were hired, and **16** IAS separated employment resulting in a **17%** semi-annual turnover rate.

Safety

- The case management agencies made face-to-face contact on **9,650** of the expected **9,860 (98%)** monthly face-to-face contacts.
- A total of **15** children re-entered out-of-home care (OHC) within 12 months of being discharged to reunification or guardianship.
- While in OHC, **two** children were victims of maltreatment by their provider.

Permanency

- On average per month, **57** children entered OHC, and **60** children exited OHC.
- On average per month, **1,517** of **1,716 (88%)** children in OHC were placed in a family-like setting.
- On average per month, **746** of **1,716 (43%)** children in OHC were placed with a relative.
- On average per month, **604** of **1,716 (35%)** children were in OHC for more than 24 months.
- Of the **154** children who reunified during the first six months of 2025, **60 (39%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC.

Well-being

- On average per month, **1,617** of **1,721 (94%)** children were current with their annual medical exams.
- On average per month, **1,217** of **1,446 (84%)** children were current with their annual dental exams.

Child Welfare Case Manager Workforce

- At the start of 2025, there were **162** child welfare case managers (CWCMS) employed at the contract agencies. From January through June 2025, **29** CWCMS were hired, and **29** CWCMS separated employment resulting in a **15%** semi-annual turnover rate.
- On average per month, **54** of **152 (35%)** case carrying CWCMS had more than 15 children on their caseload.

1. *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

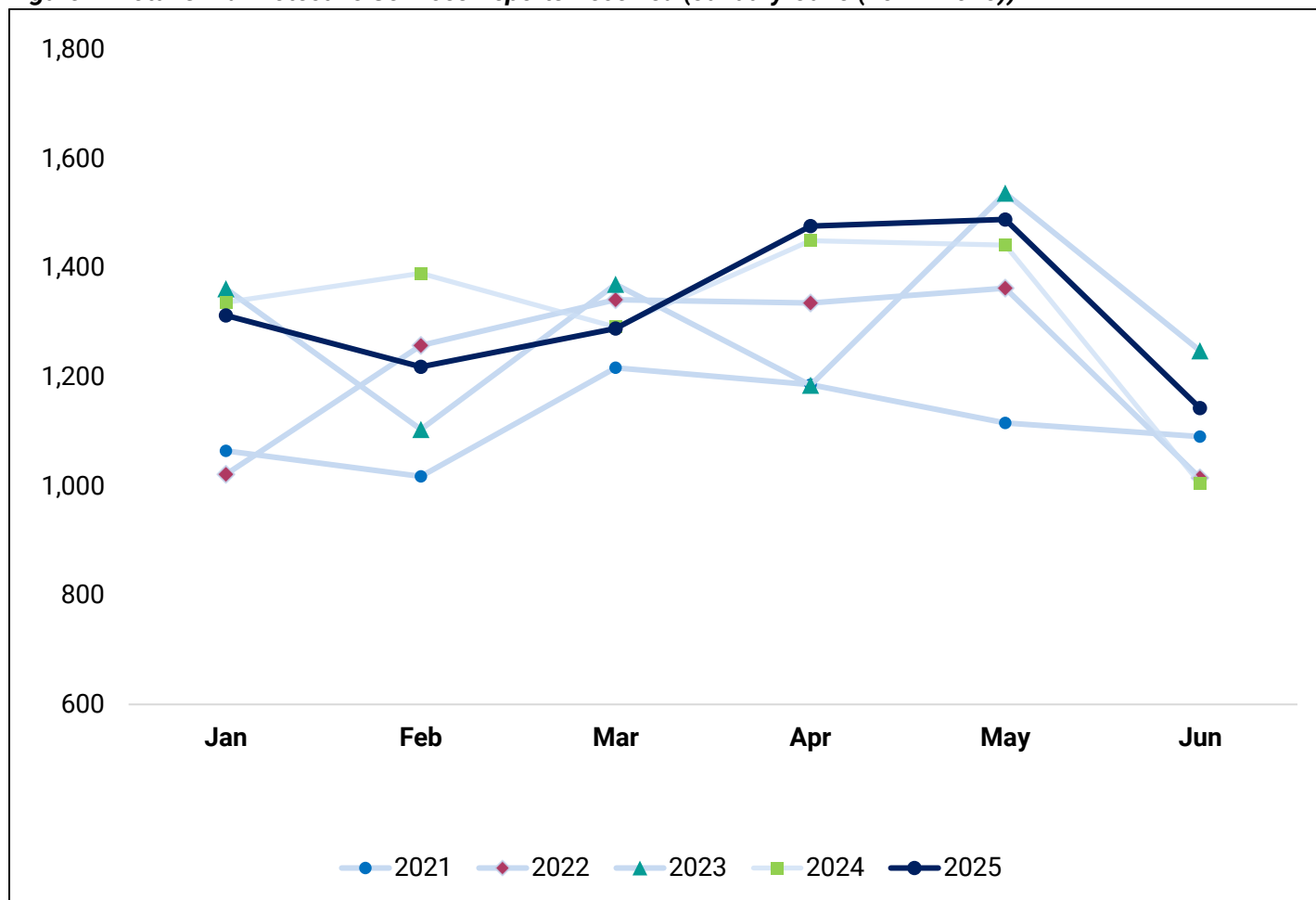
The DMCPs Independent Monitoring Report (IMR) is intended to serve as a mechanism for ensuring transparency of DMCPs operations to both internal and external stakeholders. The IMR provides information that assists with understanding the overall functioning of Milwaukee County's child welfare system. The IMR contains pertinent information on key areas of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County, including Access, Initial Assessment, outcomes related to safety, permanency, and well-being, and the child welfare case manager workforce.

2. Access and Initial Assessment and Independent Investigations

2.1 Child Protective Service Reports - Volume and Response Time

From January through June 2025, DMCPs received a total of **7,930** unique child protective services (CPS) reports. This is similar to the first six months of 2024.¹ Figure 1 shows the total number of CPS reports received from January through June from 2021 through 2025.

Figure 1: Total Child Protective Services Reports Received (January-June (2021–2025))



On average per month, DMCPs received **1,322** CPS reports from January through June 2025. DMCPs screened-in an average of **453** CPS reports for further assessment/independent investigation per month, resulting in an average screen-in rate of **34%**. As a result, DMCPs received 14 more CPS reports in the first half of 2025 compared to the same period in 2024 but screened in 388 less CPS reports (12% decrease). Figure 2

¹ In the first six months of 2024, 7,916 CPS reports were received.

shows the number of screened-in and screened-out CPS reports by month during the first six months of 2025. The majority (77%) of reports were received from mandated reporters.

Figure 2: CPS Reports (Screened-in and Screened-out) Received by Month (January-June 2025)

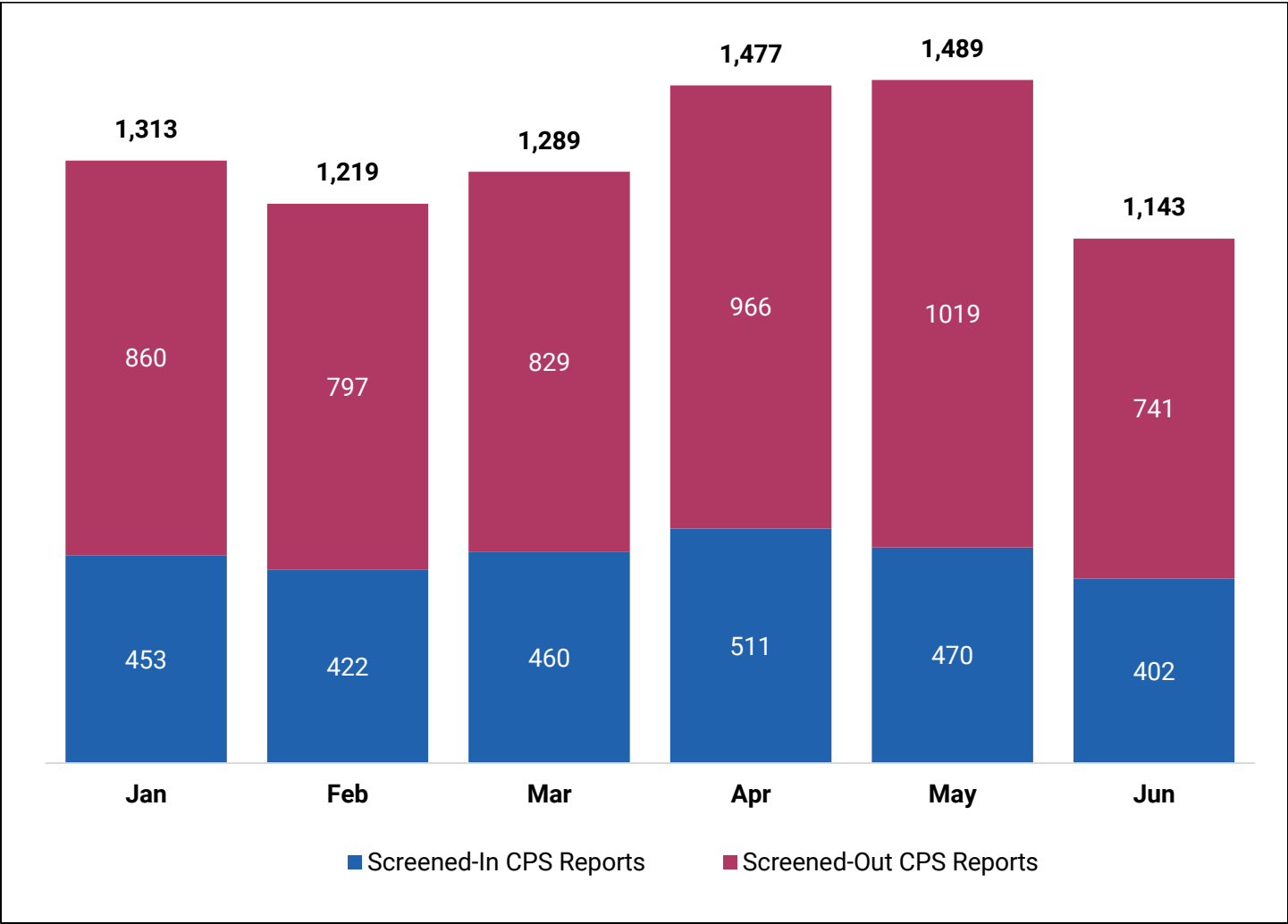


Table 1 shows the response time (by percentage) of CPS reports that were screened-in by month from January through June 2025. On average per month, **14%** of CPS reports were screened-in with a response time of within 24 hours, and an average of **86%** were screened-in with a response time of within five business days.²

Table 1: Percentage of CPS Reports by Response Time by Month (January–June 2025)

Response Time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Within 24 hours	17%	14%	14%	16%	13%	13%
Within Five Business Days	83%	86%	86%	84%	87%	87%

² 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).
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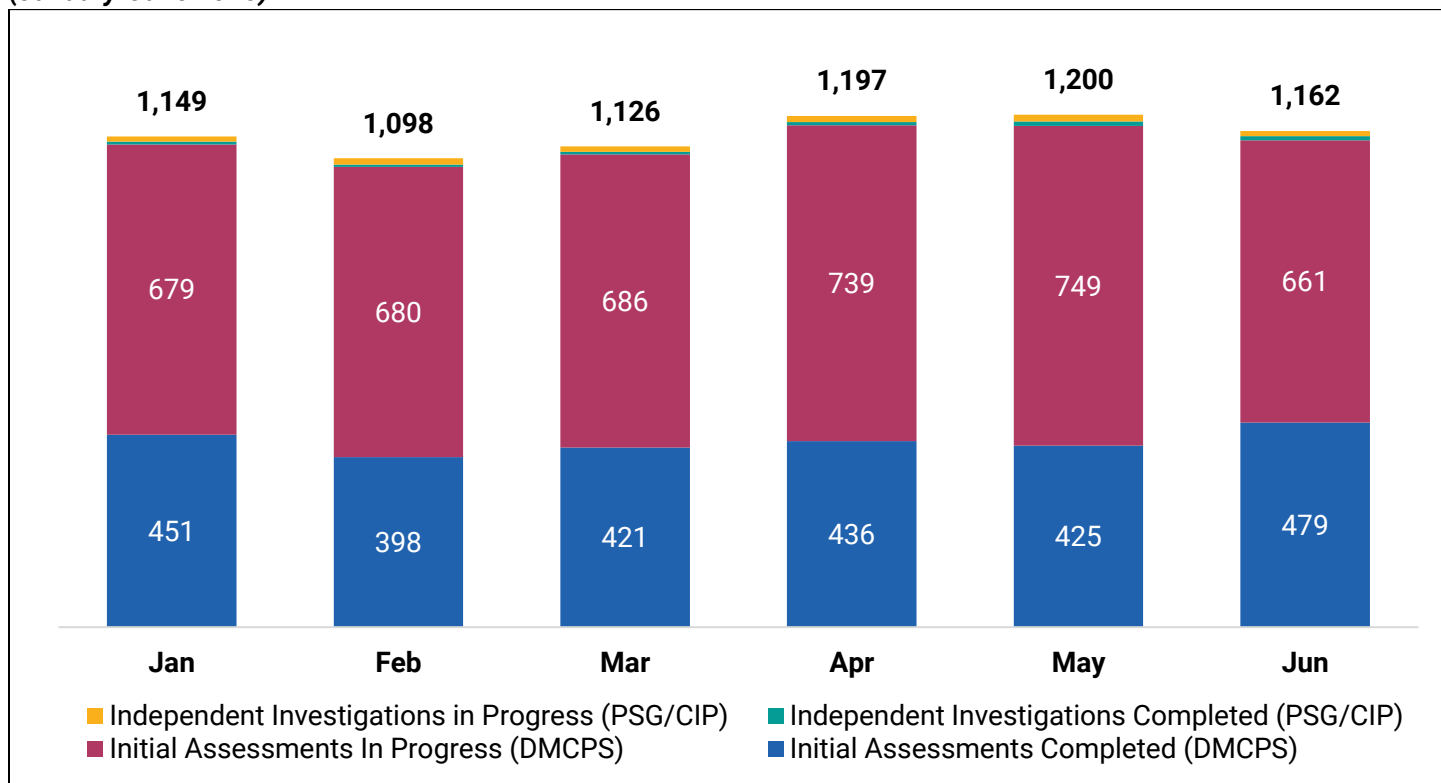
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Data Sources: See Appendix

2.2 Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations - Completed and Pending

From January through June 2025, there were **2,610** initial assessments completed by initial assessment specialists (IAS) and **46** independent investigations completed by Professional Services Group/Community Impact Programs (PSG/CIP).³ On average per month, **435** initial assessments were completed by **79** 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 the first six months of 2025.

Figure 3: Number of Completed and Pending Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations by Month (January-June 2025)

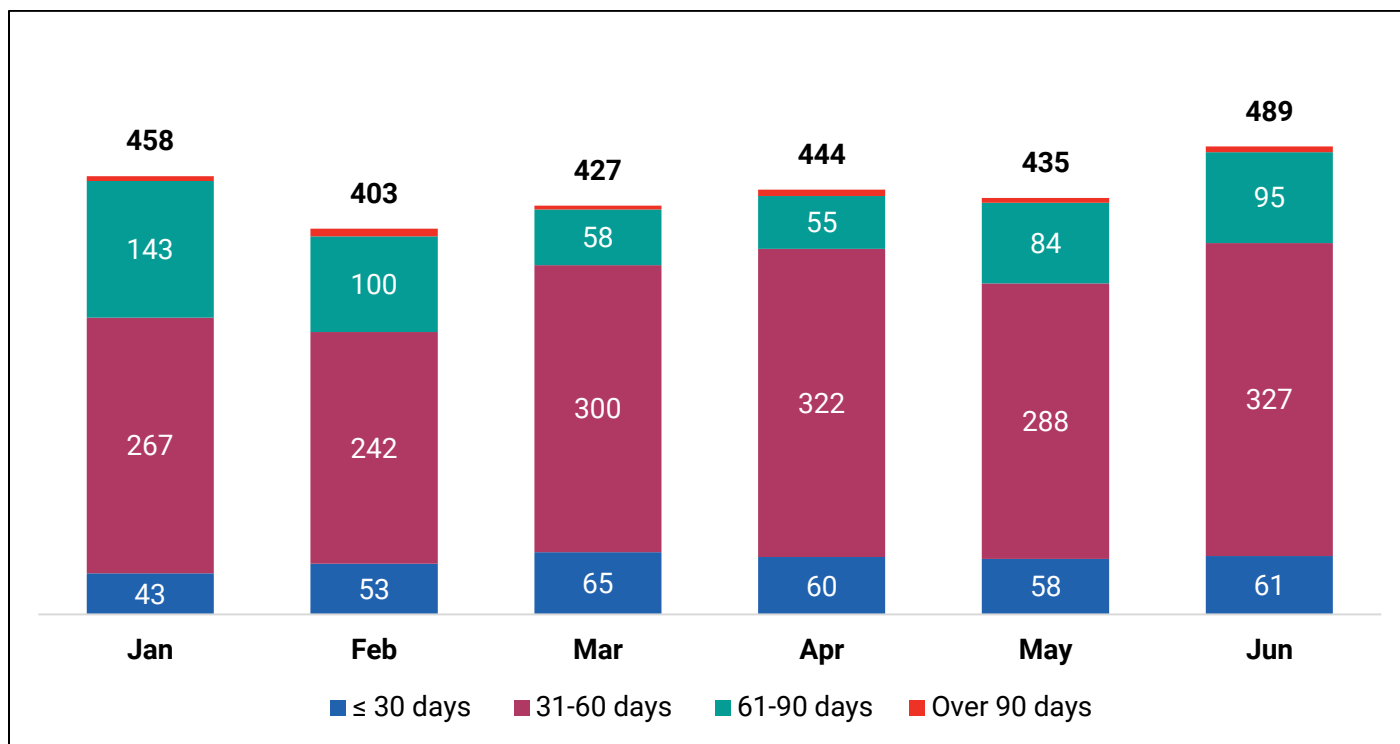


Initial assessments and independent investigations are required to be completed within 60 days of the referral. Figure 4 shows the number of days to complete initial assessments and independent investigations between January and June 2025. In the first six months of 2025, **2,086** of the **2,656 (79%)** completed initial assessments and independent investigations were completed in 60 days or less. This performance is an improvement from the first six months of 2024.⁴

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

⁴ During January-June 2024, 2,122 of 3,011 (70%) of Initial Assessments were approved in 60 days or less.

Figure 4: Number of Days to Complete Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations by Month (January-June 2025)



2.3 Initial Assessment Specialists Staffing

At the beginning of 2025, DMCPs employed **89** initial assessment specialists (IAS). In the first six months of 2025, **six** IAS were hired, and **16** IAS separated employment resulting in a **17%** semi-annual turnover rate.⁵ 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 semi-annual turnover rate for the first half of 2025.

Table 2: Number of IAS at the Start of the Month, the Hires and Separations by Month, and the Semi-annual Turnover Rate (January–June 2025)

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
IAS Start of Month	89	88	92	89	88	83
IAS Hires	0	6	0	0	0	0
IAS Separations	1	2	3	1	5	4
Semi-annual turnover %						17%

⁵ 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.

3. Safety

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

In the first half of 2025, **9,650** of the expected **9,860 (98%)** face-to-face contacts (FFC) were completed by the case management agencies. Table 3 shows the number of expected and completed face-to-face contacts and the percent of completed face-to-face contacts by month.⁶

Table 3: Number of Expected and Completed Face-to-Face Contacts by Month (January-June 2025)

FFC	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Number of Children Receiving a FFC	1,611	1,611	1,598	1,618	1,611	1,601
Number of Children Requiring a FFC	1,656	1,635	1,630	1,648	1,648	1,643
Percent of Children Receiving a FFC	97%	99%	98%	98%	98%	97%

3.2 Re-Entry

A total of **15** children re-entered OHC within 12 months of discharging to reunification or guardianship in the first half of 2025. This is eight less children when compared to the first six months of 2024.⁷ Table 4 shows the number of re-entries, by re-entry month, and time between exit and re-entry from January through June 2025.

Table 4: Number of Children who Re-Entered OHC by Month (January-June 2025)

Time Before Re-Entry Group	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jan-June Total
0 - 2 Months	1	0	0	4	0	1	6
3 - 6 Months	1	0	1	1	1	0	4
7 - 9 Months	0	0	0	1	1	2	4
10 - 12 Months	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total	2	0	1	7	2	3	15

3.3. Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care

From January through June 2025, **two** 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-June 2025), 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	3 yrs	Physical Abuse	General Foster Home (Non-Relative)
2	March	10 months	Physical Abuse / Neglect	General Foster Home (Relative)

⁶ This measures one face-to-face contact per month; additional face-to-face contacts are required based on case circumstances.

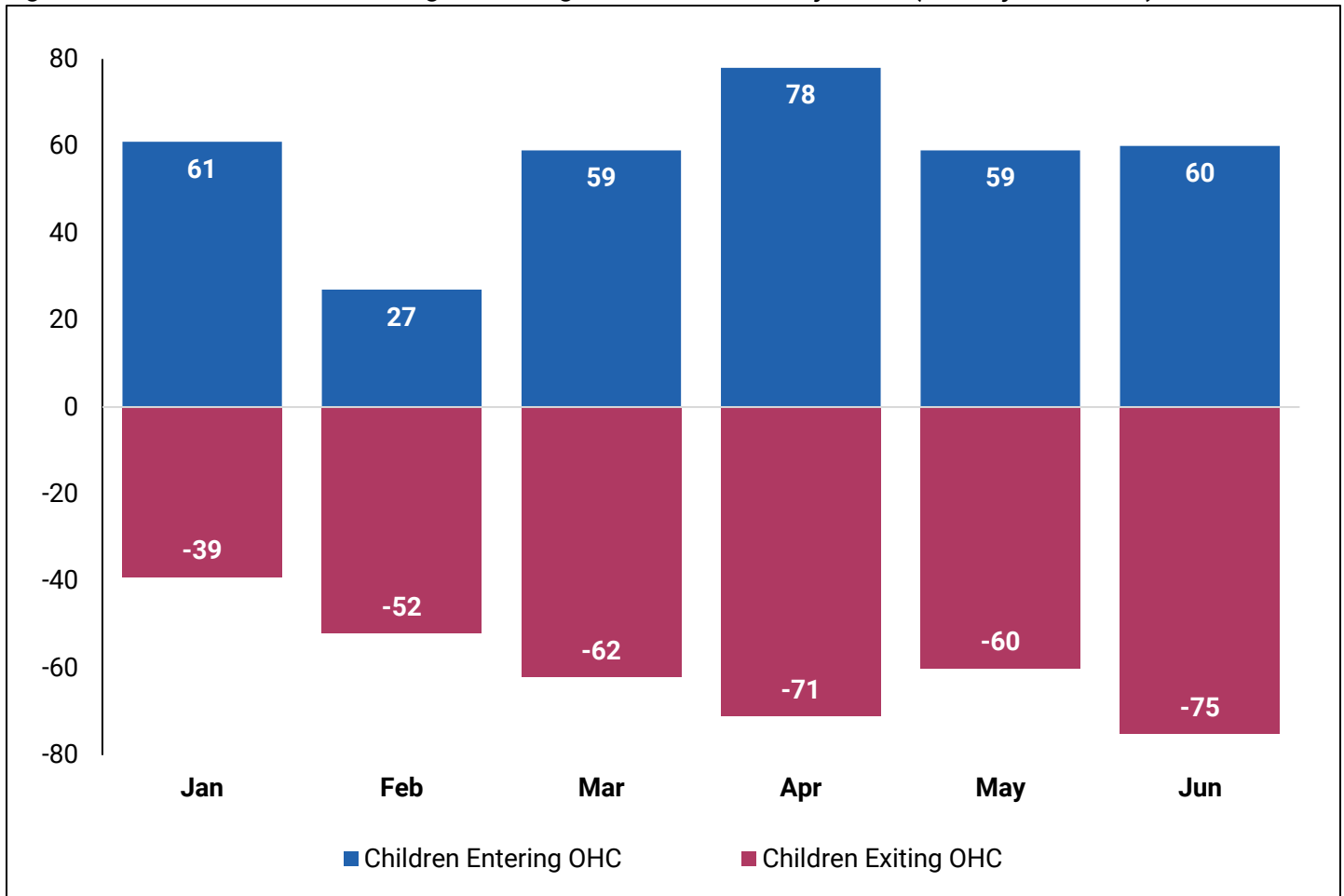
⁷ A total of 23 children re-entered OHC within 12 months from January-June 2024.

4. Permanency

4.1 Entries into Out-of-Home Care

At the beginning of 2025, there were **1,708** children in OHC⁸. On average per month, **57** children entered OHC, and **60** children exited OHC during the first six months of 2025. 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-June 2025)



4.2 Placement Groups

On average per month, there were **1,716** children in OHC between January and June 2025. The placement types are divided into three groups: family like (foster home, kinship care, treatment foster home, unlicensed non-relatives, trial reunification, and supervised independent living), congregate care (group home, residential care center, shelter), and other (detention, institutions, hospitals, missing from OHC). Figure 6 shows the number of children in OHC by placement group and month during the first six months of 2025. On average per month, **88%** of children in OHC were placed in a family like setting, **8%** were placed in a congregate care setting, and **4%** were placed in other settings.

⁸ 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).

Figure 6: Number of Children in OHC by Placement Group and Month (January–June 2025)

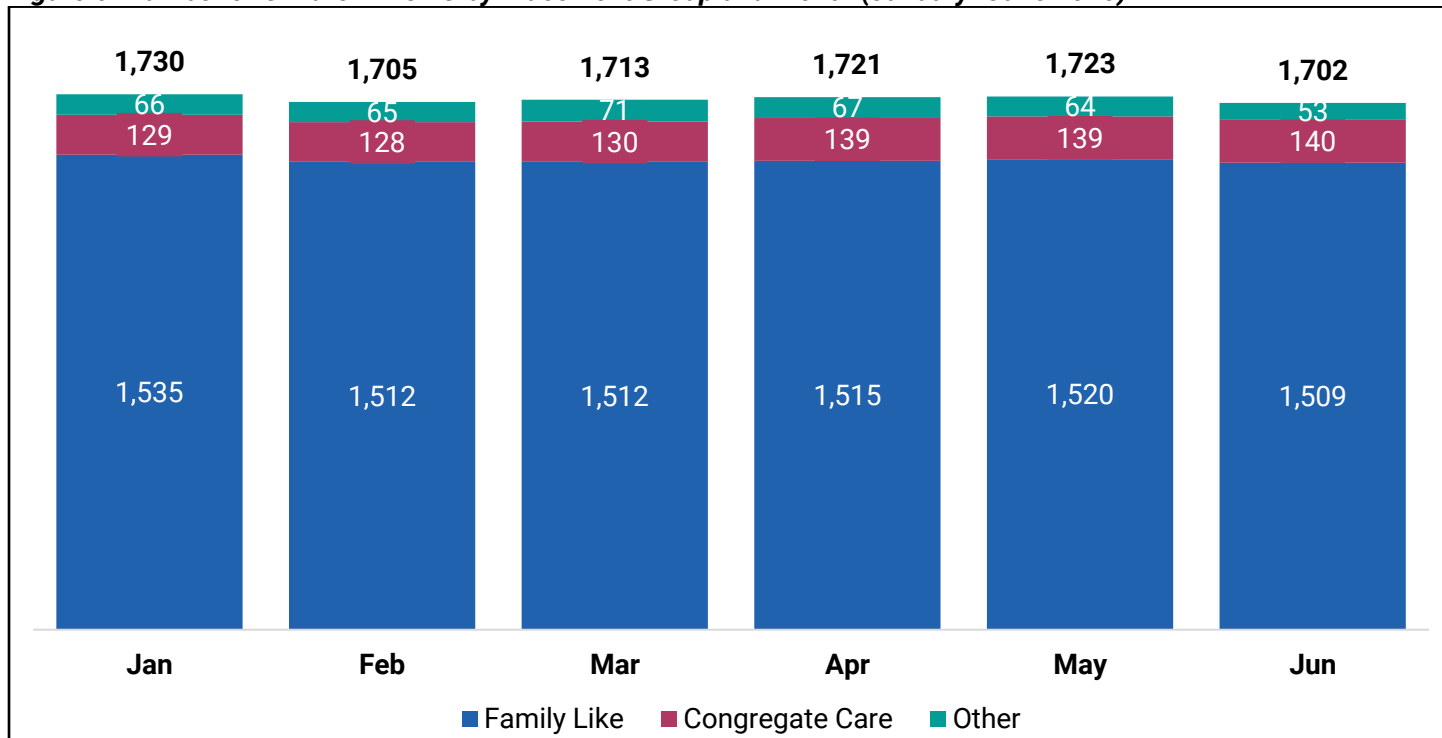


Table 6 shows the number of children in OHC by placement group, age group, and month during the first six months of 2025⁹. On average per month, there were **494** children aged 12 years or older in OHC. Of these older children, **304 (61%)** were placed in a family like setting, **128 (26%)** were placed in congregate care, and **63 (13%)** were in other care. Of all the children in OHC, on average per month, **746 (43%)** of placements were with relatives.¹⁰

Table 6: Number of Children in OHC by Placement Group, Age Group, and Month (January–June 2025)

Placement Groups & Age Groups of Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Family Like	1,535	1,512	1,512	1,515	1,520	1,509
0 to 2	399	385	390	394	390	387
3 to 4	244	240	243	249	252	246
5 to 11	575	571	574	575	582	585
12 to 15	193	193	192	183	181	177
16+	124	123	113	114	115	114
Congregate Care	129	128	130	139	139	140
5 to 11	7	7	6	6	7	5
12 to 15	66	64	63	68	68	67
16+	56	57	61	65	64	68
Other	66	65	71	67	64	53
0 to 2	0	1	1	1	2	2
5 to 11	0	0	0	1	0	0
12 to 15	28	28	27	22	20	16
16+	38	36	43	43	41	35
Totals	1,730	1,705	1,713	1,721	1,723	1,702

⁹ Placement group and age were measured as of the end-of-month.

¹⁰ Relative is defined in §48.02(15)

4.3 Foster Homes

From January through June 2025, the average number of open foster homes was **465**, a total of **96** providers were newly licensed, and **88** providers were closed. Table 7 shows the number of providers licensed as new foster homes, the number of providers closed, and the resulting monthly number of foster homes.

Table 7: Number of Foster Homes by Month (January–June 2025)

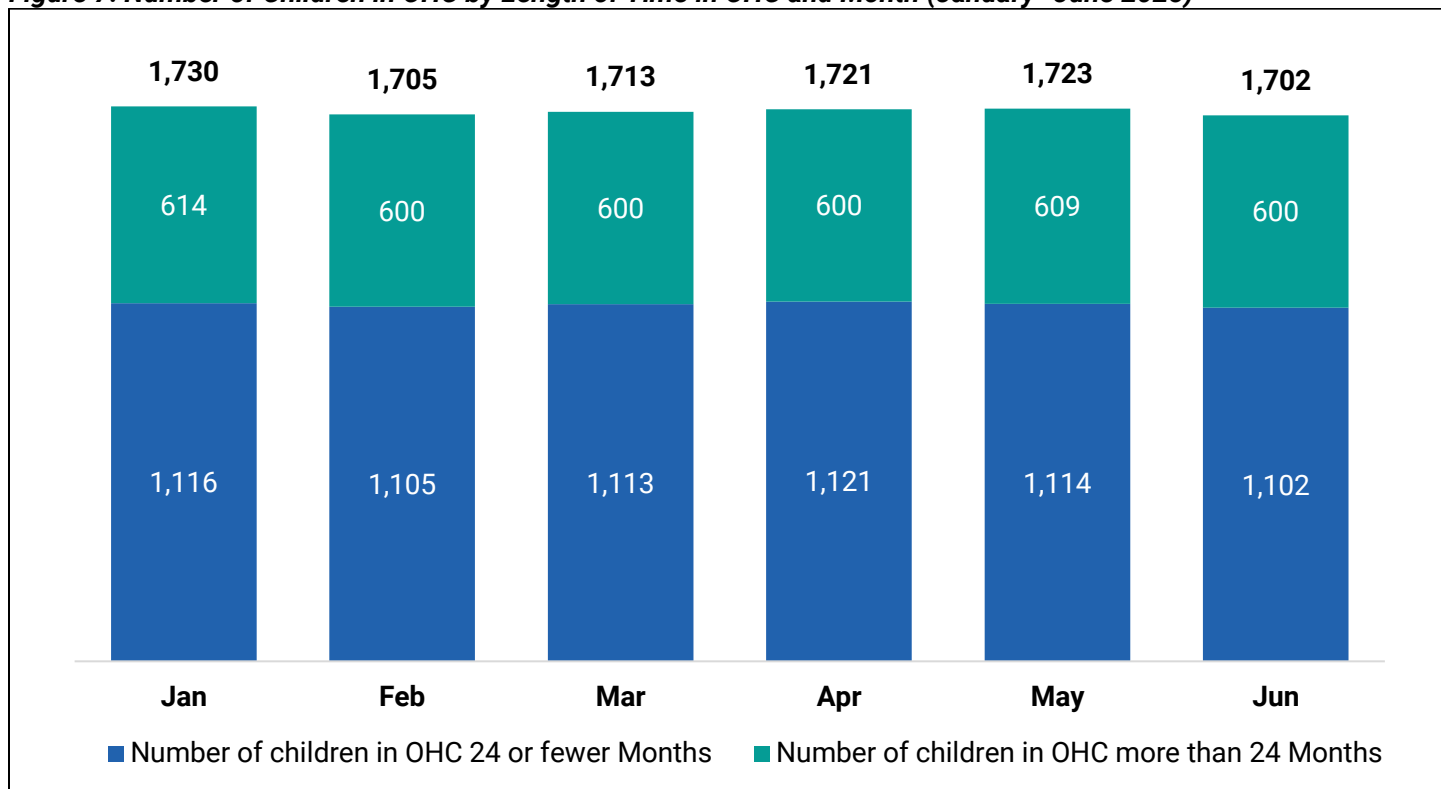
Foster Homes	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Foster Homes at the End of the Month	451	464	463	469	469	471
New Foster Homes	11	20	17	20	7	21
Closed Foster Homes	19	9	20	17	9	14

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.

4.4 Length of Stay

In the first six months of 2025, **604** of **1,716** (**35%**) children were in OHC for more than 24 months¹¹. This percent is similar to that of the first six months of 2024.¹² Figure 7 shows the total number of children in OHC broken out by the number of children in OHC for 24 or fewer months and the number of children in OHC for more than 24 months. The percentage of children in OHC for more than 24 months remained stable throughout the first six months of 2025.

Figure 7: Number of Children in OHC by Length of Time in OHC and Month (January–June 2025)



¹¹ Length of stay is determined based on episode length as of the end of month.

¹² From January through June 2024, an average of 621 of the 1,753 (35%) children were in OHC more than 24 months.

4.5 Permanency Outcomes

A total of **359** children exited OHC during between January and June 2025. Figure 8 shows that **154 (43%)** children were reunified, **87 (24%)** children had a transfer of guardianship (TOG), **74 (21%)** children were adopted, and **44 (12%)** children discharged for another reason.

Figure 8: Number of Children Exiting OHC by Exit Type and Month (January-June 2025)

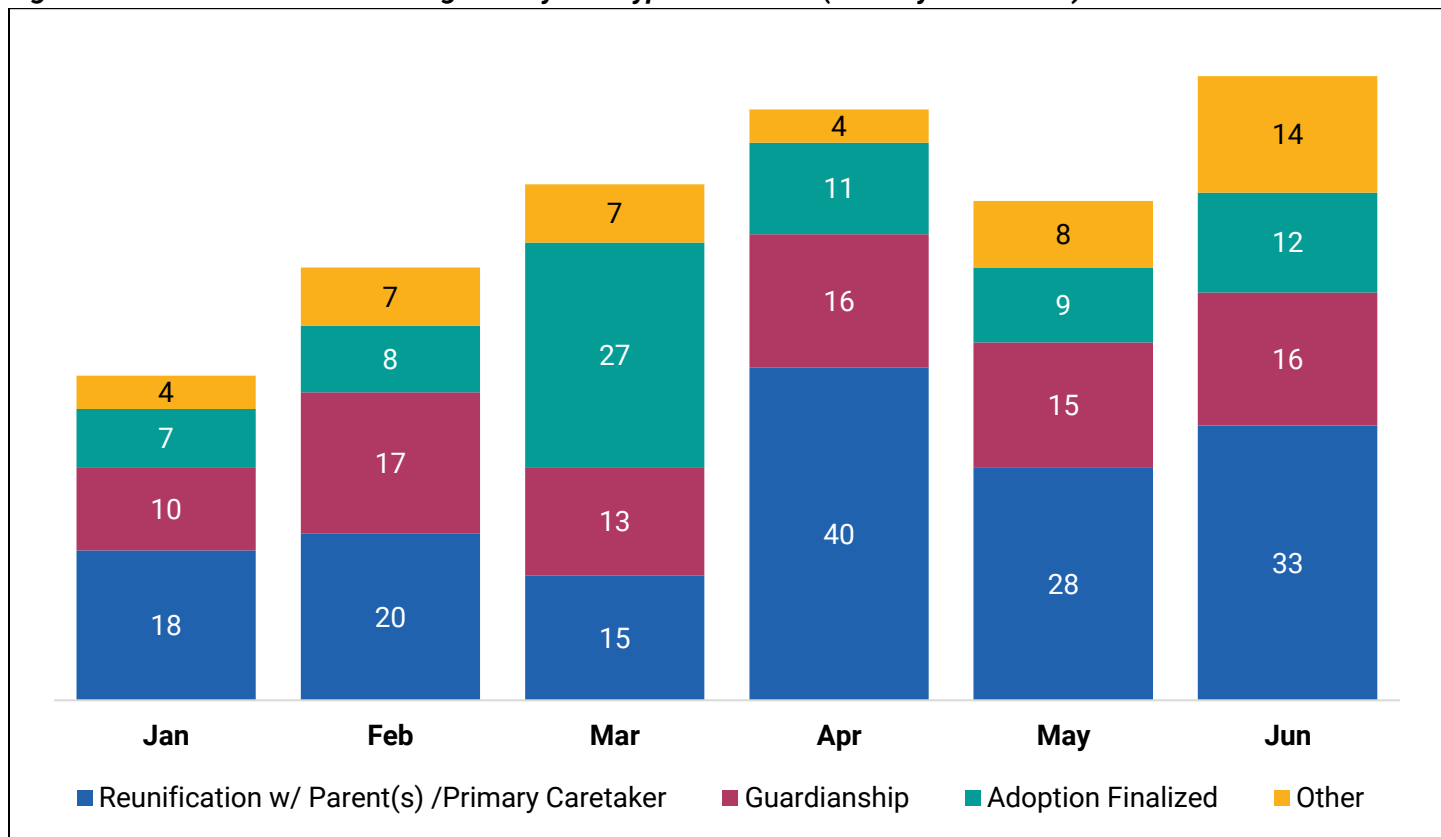


Table 8 shows the length of time that children were in OHC prior to exiting, grouped by monthly intervals. Of the **154** children who reunified, **60 (39%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC. Of the **87** children who had a TOG, **26 (30%)** achieved permanency within 24 months or less. Of the **74** children who were adopted, **20 (27%)** were adopted within 24 months or less.

Table 8: Number of Children Exiting OHC, by Exit Type and Length of Time in OHC (January-June 2025)

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	7	9	11	13	20	68	18	3	5	154
Guardianship			2		2	22	29	18	14	87
Adoption				2	3	15	20	14	20	74
Other*	1		1	2	2	13	7	6	12	44
Total	8	9	14	17	27	118	74	41	51	359

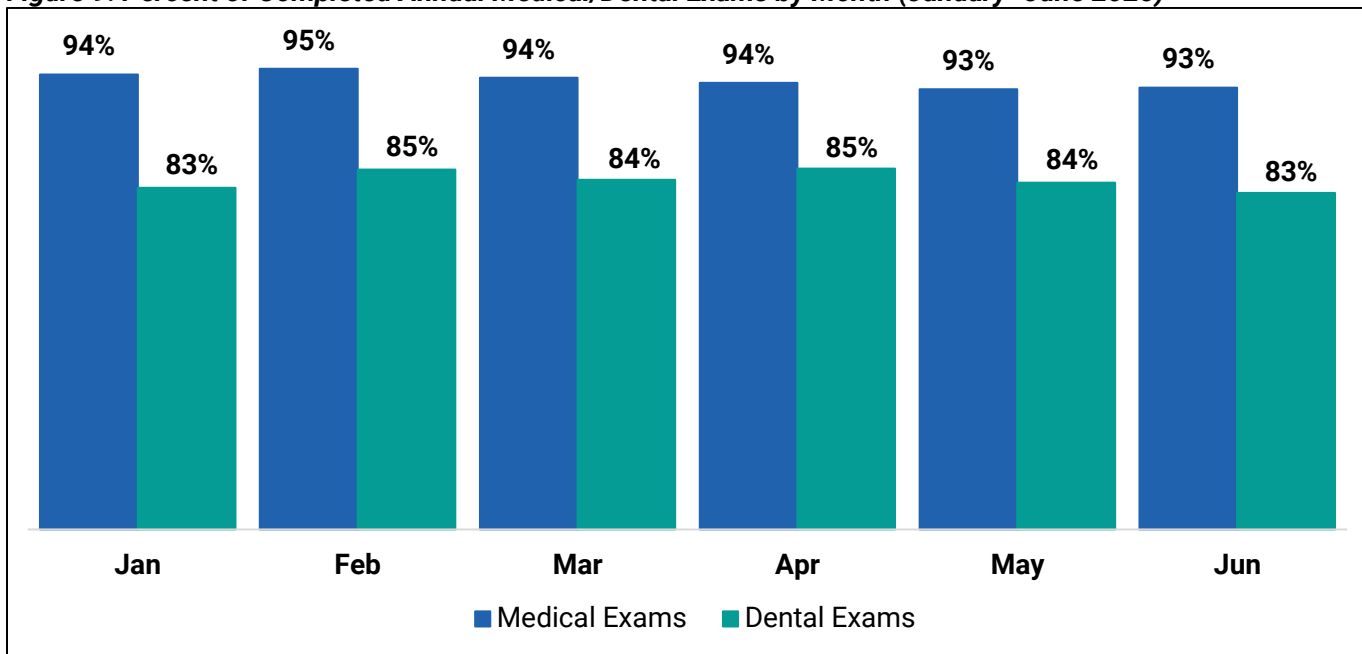
*Other includes age of majority, custody transfer, missing from OHC

5 Well-being

5.1 Annual Medical and Dental Exams

During the first half of 2025, a monthly average of **1,721** children were expected to have an annual medical exam and **1,617 (94%)** were completed and documented. For annual dental exams, **1,446** children were expected to have an annual dental exam and **1,217 (84%)** were completed and documented. Both are improvements compared to the first six months of 2024.¹³ Figure 9 provides the percent of annual medical and dental exams that were completed during the first six months of 2025.

Figure 9: Percent of Completed Annual Medical/Dental Exams by Month (January–June 2025)



6 Child Welfare Case Manager Workforce

6.1 Child Welfare Case Manager Turnover

On January 1, 2025, there were **162** child welfare case managers (CWCs). During the first half of 2025, **29** CWCs were hired and **29** CWCs separated employment, resulting in a **15%** semi-annual CWC turnover rate.¹⁴ The turnover rate mirrors the first six months of 2024.¹⁵ At the end of June 2025, there were **162** CWCs, the same as at the beginning of the year. Table 9 provides the monthly number of CWCs at the beginning of the month, the number of CWCs hired, the number of CWCs separating employment, and the semi-annual CWC turnover rate for the first half of 2025.

Table 9: Number of Child Welfare Case Managers at the Start of the Month, the Hires and Separations by Month, and the Semi-annual Turnover Rate (January–June 2025)

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Start of Month	162	158	164	165	164	161
Hires	2	8	6	2	6	5
Separations	6	2	5	3	9	4
Semi-annual turnover %						15%

¹³ In the first six months of 2024, 1,603 of 1,755 (91%) children had an annual medical exam; 1,144 of 1,441 (79%) children had an annual dental exam.

¹⁴ Turnover rate is the number of CWCs who exited employment divided by the number of CWCs at the beginning of the year plus the number of CWCs hired during the reporting period.

¹⁵ The turnover rate for the first six months of 2024 was also 15%; 28 CWCs were hired and 28 separated employment.

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 June 2025, **54 of 152 (35%)** case-carrying CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload. This percent is an improvement from the first half of 2024.¹⁶ 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-June 2025)

Caseloads with 16+ Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
CWCMs with Caseload of >15 Children	60	61	59	59	42	42
CWCMs Carrying Cases	157	151	147	154	152	149
% CWCMs with Caseload >15 Children	38%	40%	40%	38%	28%	28%

¹⁶ The average from January-June 2024 was 67 of 156 (43%) 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