



Wisconsin Department of
Children and Families

Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services Independent Monitoring Report

2025 Annual Report
January-December 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. From January through December 2025, DMCPS performed the following:

Access and Initial Assessment / Independent Investigations

- A total of **15,332** child protective service reports were received.
 - **5,375 (35%)** were screened-in for further initial assessment/independent investigation.
- A total of **5,112** initial assessments and **98** independent investigations were completed.
- At the start of 2025, there were **89** initial assessment specialists (IAS) employed at DMCPS. From January through December 2025, **21** IAS were hired, and **25** IAS separated employment resulting in a **23%** annual turnover rate.

Safety

- The child welfare case management agencies made face-to-face contact on **19,113** of the expected **19,582 (98%)** monthly face-to-face contacts.
- A total of **29** children re-entered out-of-home care (OHC) within 12 months of being discharged to reunification or guardianship.
- While in OHC, **three** children were victims of maltreatment by their provider while under the jurisdiction of Milwaukee County.

Permanency

- On average per month, **54** children entered OHC, and **57** children exited OHC.
- On average per month, **1,509** of **1,698 (89%)** children in OHC were placed in a family-like setting.
- On average per month, **749** of **1,698 (44%)** children in OHC were placed with a relative.
- On average per month, **596** of **1,698 (35%)** children were in OHC for more than 24 months.
- Of the **302** children who reunified in 2025, **112 (37%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC.

Well-being

- On average per month, **1,589** of **1,702 (93%)** children were current with their annual medical exams.
- On average per month, **1,213** of **1,436 (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 case management agencies. From January through December 2025, **56** CWCMs were hired, and **56** CWCMs separated employment resulting in a **26%** annual turnover rate.
- On average per month, **46** of **152 (30%)** 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

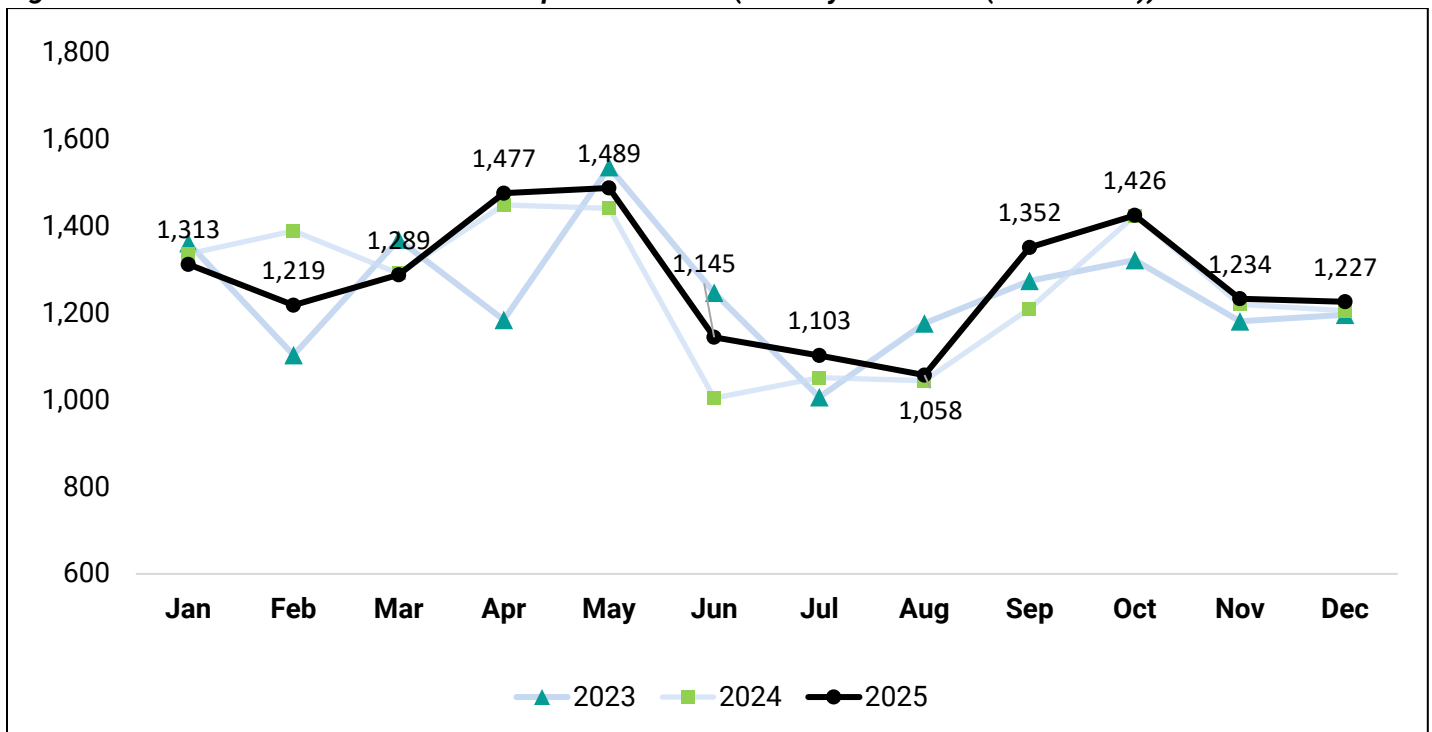
The DMCPs Independent Monitoring Report (IMR) provides pertinent information on key areas of the child welfare system in Milwaukee County. The report includes information about Access, Initial Assessment, outcomes related to safety, permanency, well-being, and the workforce. The IMR is intended to serve 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 2025, DMCPs received a total of **15,332** unique child protective services (CPS) reports. This is about a two percent increase from 2024.¹ Figure 1 shows the total number of CPS reports received from January through December from 2023 through 2025.

Figure 1: Total Child Protective Services Reports Received (January-December (2023–2025))



On average per month, DMCPs received **1,278** CPS reports from January through December 2025. DMCPs screened-in an average of **448** CPS reports for further assessment/independent investigation per month, resulting in an average screen-in rate of **35%**. As a result, DMCPs received 256 more CPS reports in 2025 compared to 2024 but screened in 459 less CPS reports (8% decrease). Figure 2 shows the number of screened-in and screened-out CPS reports by month during 2025. The majority (75%) of reports were received from mandated reporters.

¹ In calendar year 2024, 15,076 CPS reports were received; 5,834 CPS Reports were screened in.

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

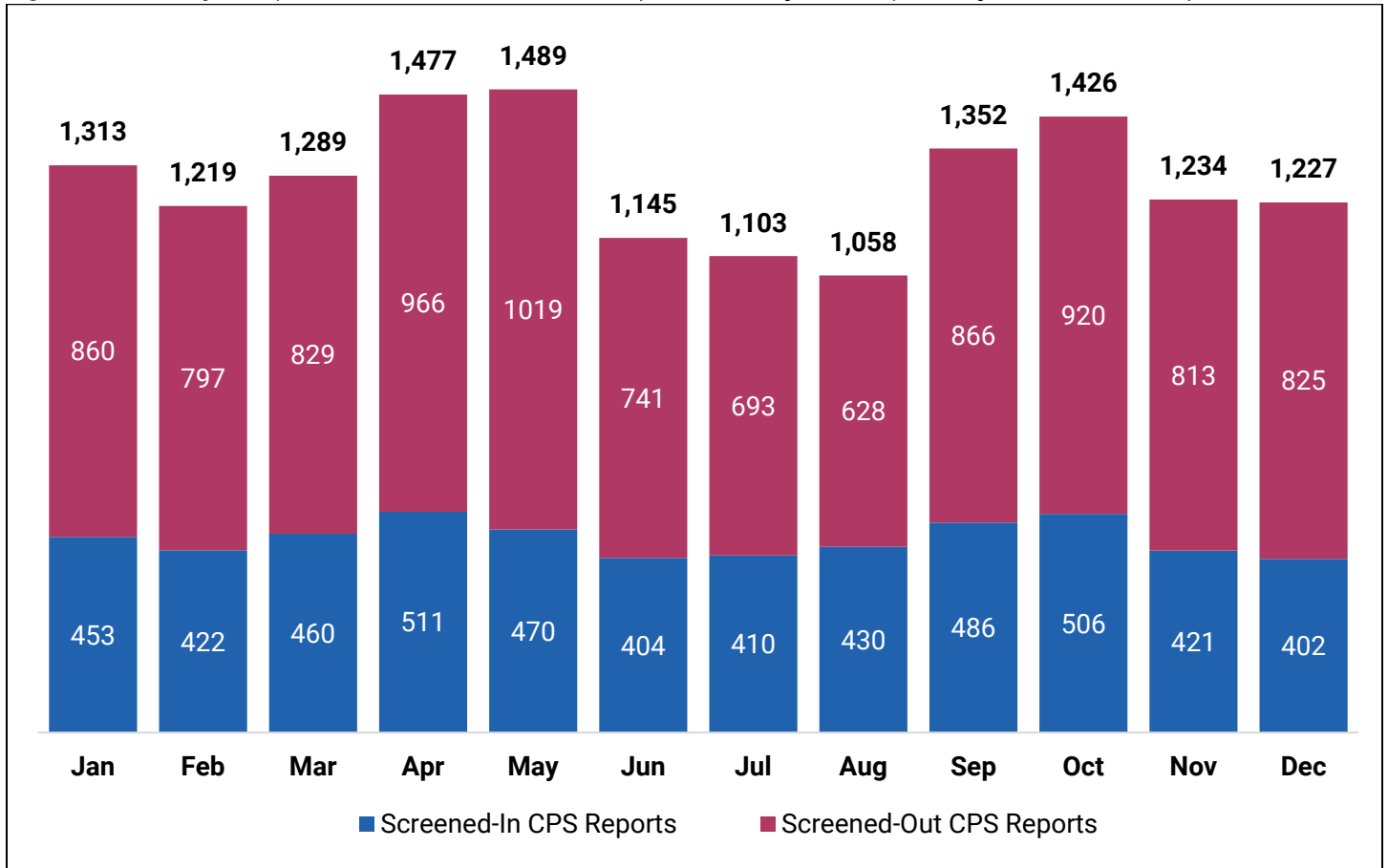


Table 1 shows the assigned response time (by percentage) of CPS reports that were screened in by month from January through December 2025. On average per month, **14%** of CPS reports were screened-in with a response time of within 24 hours, and an average of **86%** were screened-in with a response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

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

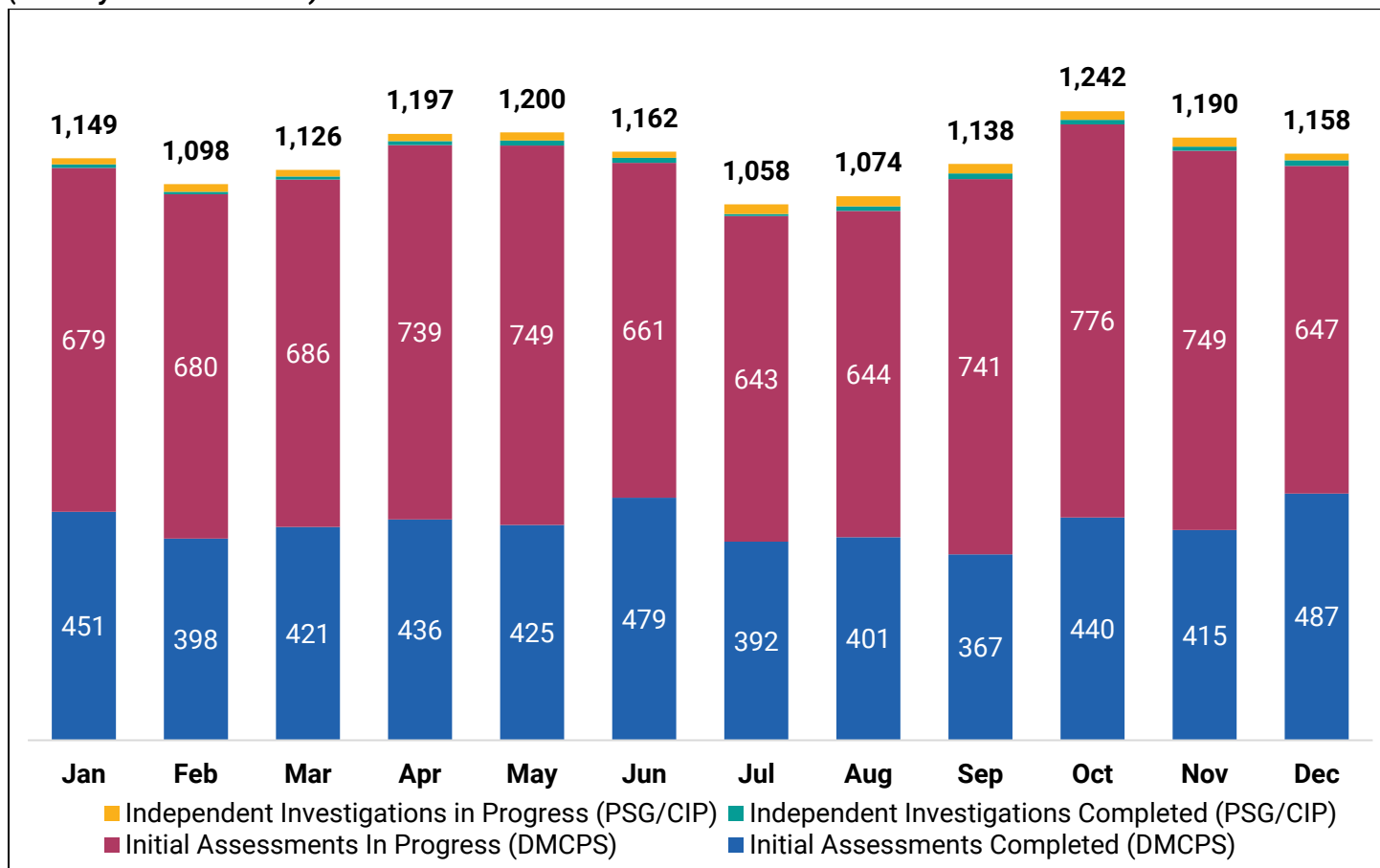
Response Time	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Within 24 Hours	17%	14%	14%	16%	13%	13%	15%	14%	12%	15%	13%	12%
Within Five Business Days	83%	86%	86%	84%	87%	87%	85%	86%	88%	85%	87%	88%

²On November 1, 2024, DMCPs initiated a response time pilot that is in effect through December 31, 2025. DMCPs is one of 11 participating child welfare agencies in the pilot 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 2025, there were **5,112** initial assessments completed by initial assessment specialists (IAS) and **98** independent investigations completed by Professional Services Group/Community Impact Programs (PSG/CIP).³ On average per month, **426** initial assessments were completed by **76** 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 2025.

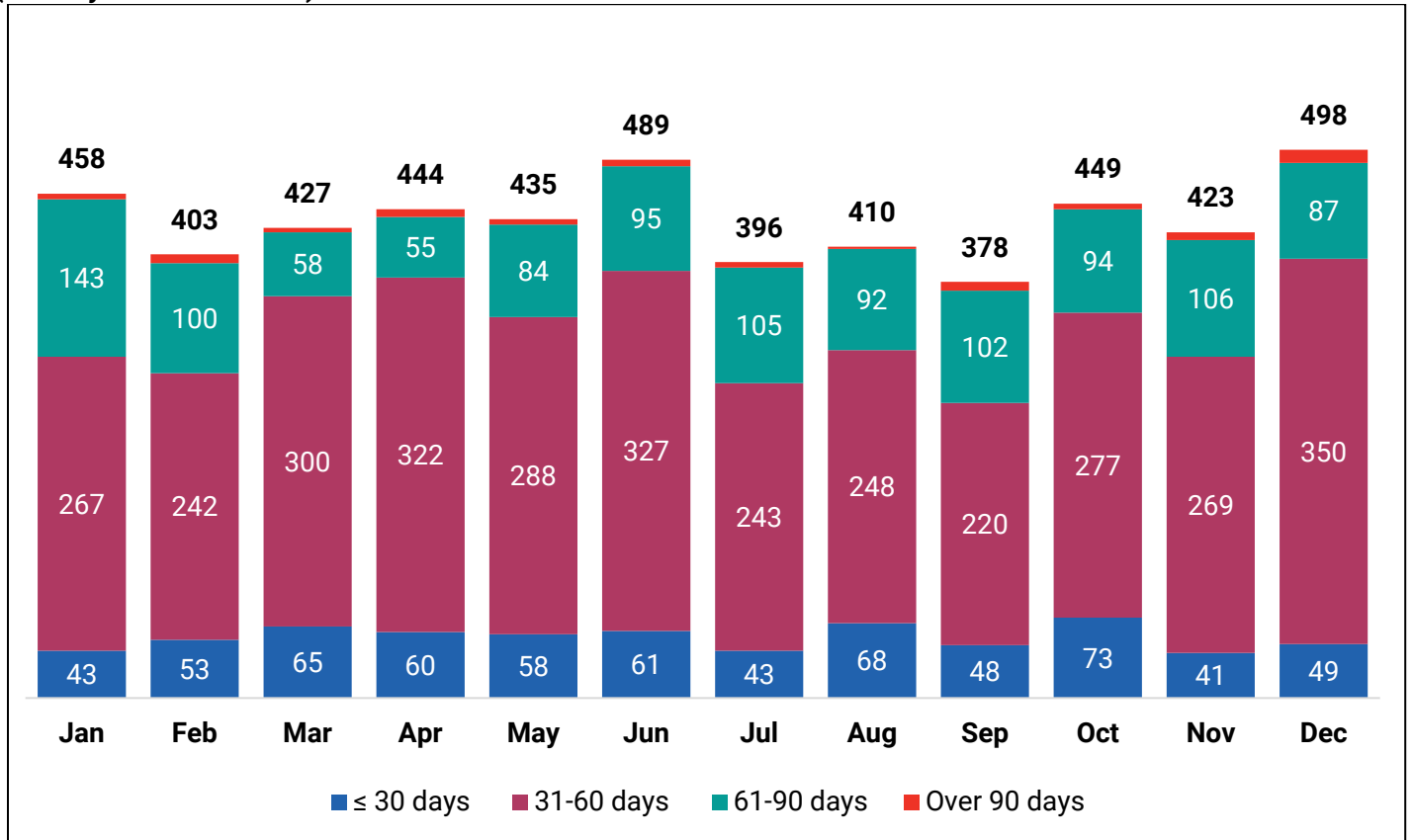
Figure 3: Number of Completed and Pending Initial Assessments and Independent Investigations by Month (January-December 2025)



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 December 2025. In 2025, **4,015 (77%)** of the **5,210** completed initial assessments and independent investigations were completed in 60 days or less.

³ Professional Services Group (PSG)/Community Impact Programs (CIP) staff conduct independent investigations on behalf of DMCPs. WI Department of Children and Families Bureau of Performance Management

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



2.3 Initial Assessment Specialists Staffing

At the beginning of 2025, DMCPs employed **89** IAS. At the end of 2025, DMCPs employed **85** IAS. Over the course of 2025, **21** IAS were hired, and **25** IAS separated employment resulting in a **23%** annual turnover rate.⁴ 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 2025.

Table 2: Number of IAS at the Start of the Month, the Hires and Separations by Month, and the Annual Turnover Rate (January-December 2025)

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
IAS Start of Month	89	88	92	89	88	83	79	77	76	87	86	85
IAS Hires	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	1	14	0	0	0
IAS Separations ⁵	1	2	3	1	5	4	2	2	3	1	1	0
Annual Turnover %												23%

⁴ The annual turnover rate is the number of IAS who exited employment during the year divided by the number of IAS at the beginning of the year.

⁵ 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 2025, **19,113** of the expected **19,582 (98%)** face-to-face contacts (FFC) were completed by the case management agencies. This is like the prior year⁶. Table 3 shows the number of expected and completed face-to-face contacts and the percentage of completed face-to-face contacts by month.⁷

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

FFC	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Number of Children Receiving FFC	1,611	1,611	1,598	1,618	1,611	1,601	1,579	1,579	1,573	1,585	1,582	1,565
Number of Children Requiring FFC	1,656	1,635	1,630	1,648	1,648	1,643	1,617	1,617	1,614	1,632	1,622	1,620
Percent of Children Receiving a FFC	97%	99%	98%	98%	98%	97%	98%	98%	97%	97%	98%	97%

3.2 Re-Entry

A total of **29** children re-entered OHC within 12 months of discharging to reunification or guardianship during 2025. This is 10 fewer children compared to 2024.⁸ Table 4 shows the number of re-entries by re-entry month, and time between exit and re-entry from January through December 2025.

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

Time Before Re-Entry Group	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	2025 Total
0 - 2 Months	1	0	0	4	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	3	12
3 - 6 Months	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	9
7 - 9 Months	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
10 - 12 Months	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total	2	0	1	7	2	3	6	3	1	0	1	3	29

⁶ In 2024, 19,321 of the expected 20,005 (97%) face-to-face contacts were completed by the case management agencies.

⁷ This measures one face-to-face contact per month; additional face-to-face contacts are required based on case circumstances.

⁸ Thirty-nine children re-entered OHC within 12 months from January-December 2024.

3.3. Maltreatment in Out-of-Home Care

From January through December 2025, **three** 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 2025), Child’s Age, Maltreatment Type, and Maltreaters’ Relationship to Victim

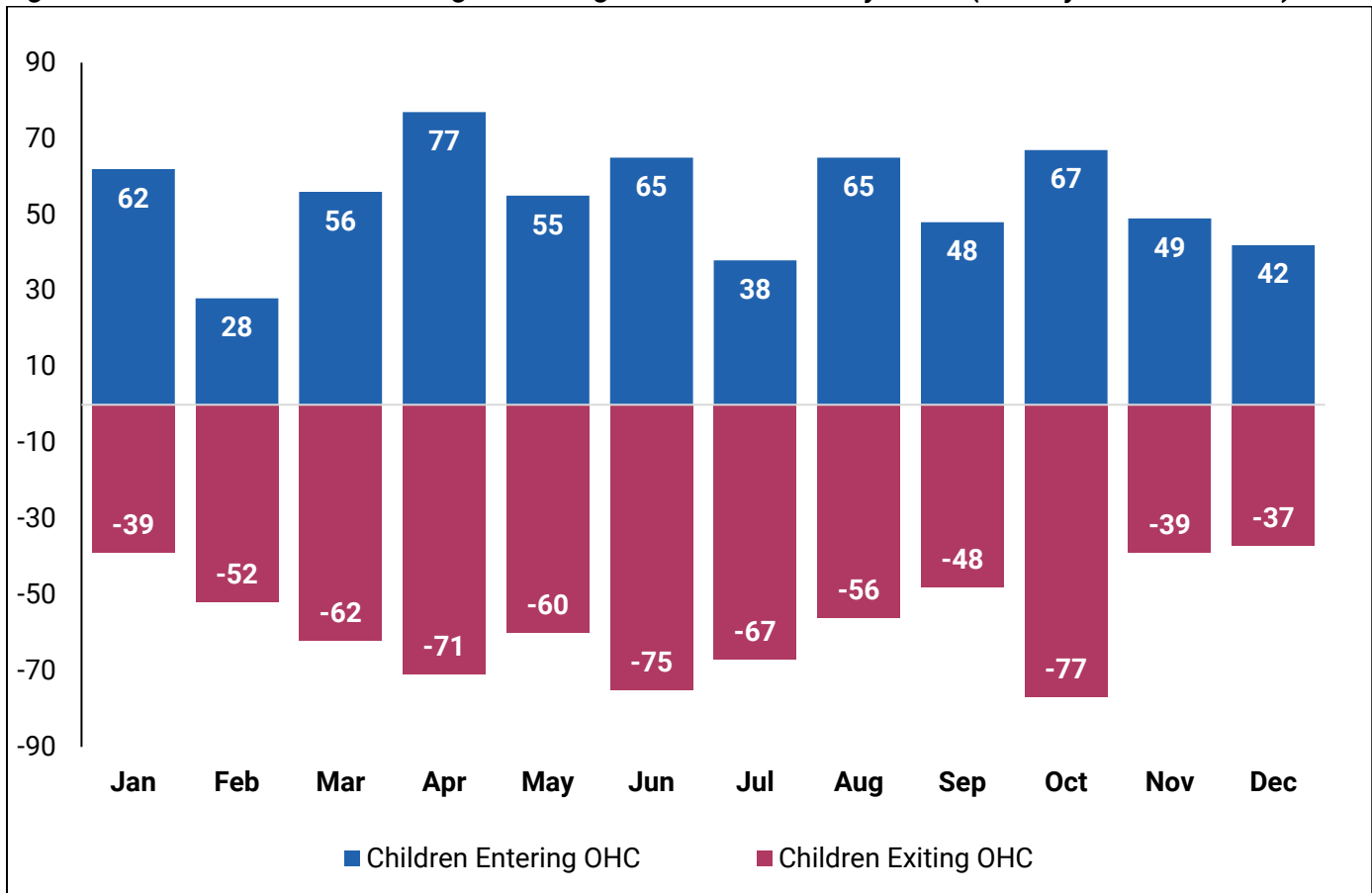
Child Victim	Month	Child’s Age at Time of Incident	Maltreatment Type	Maltreater Relationship to Victim
1	March	3	Physical Abuse	Foster Home (Non-Relative)
2	March	<1	Physical Abuse, Neglect	Kinship
3	August	3	Neglect	Foster Home (Non-Relative)

4. Permanency

4.1 Entries into Out-of-Home Care

At the beginning of 2025, there were **1,708** children in OHC.⁹ On average per month, **54** children entered OHC, and **57** children exited OHC in 2025. At the end of 2025, there were **1,692** children in OHC, a decrease of **16 (<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 2025)



⁹ The number of children in out-of-home care is calculated at the end-of-the-month. This count includes unique children only (i.e., no child is counted twice in the same month). Entries are not unique children and each entry into out-of-care is counted.

4.2 Placement Groups

On average per month, there were **1,698** children in OHC between January and December 2025. 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 2025. On average per month, **89%** of children in OHC were placed in a family-like setting, **8%** were placed in a congregate care setting, and **3%** were placed in other settings.

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

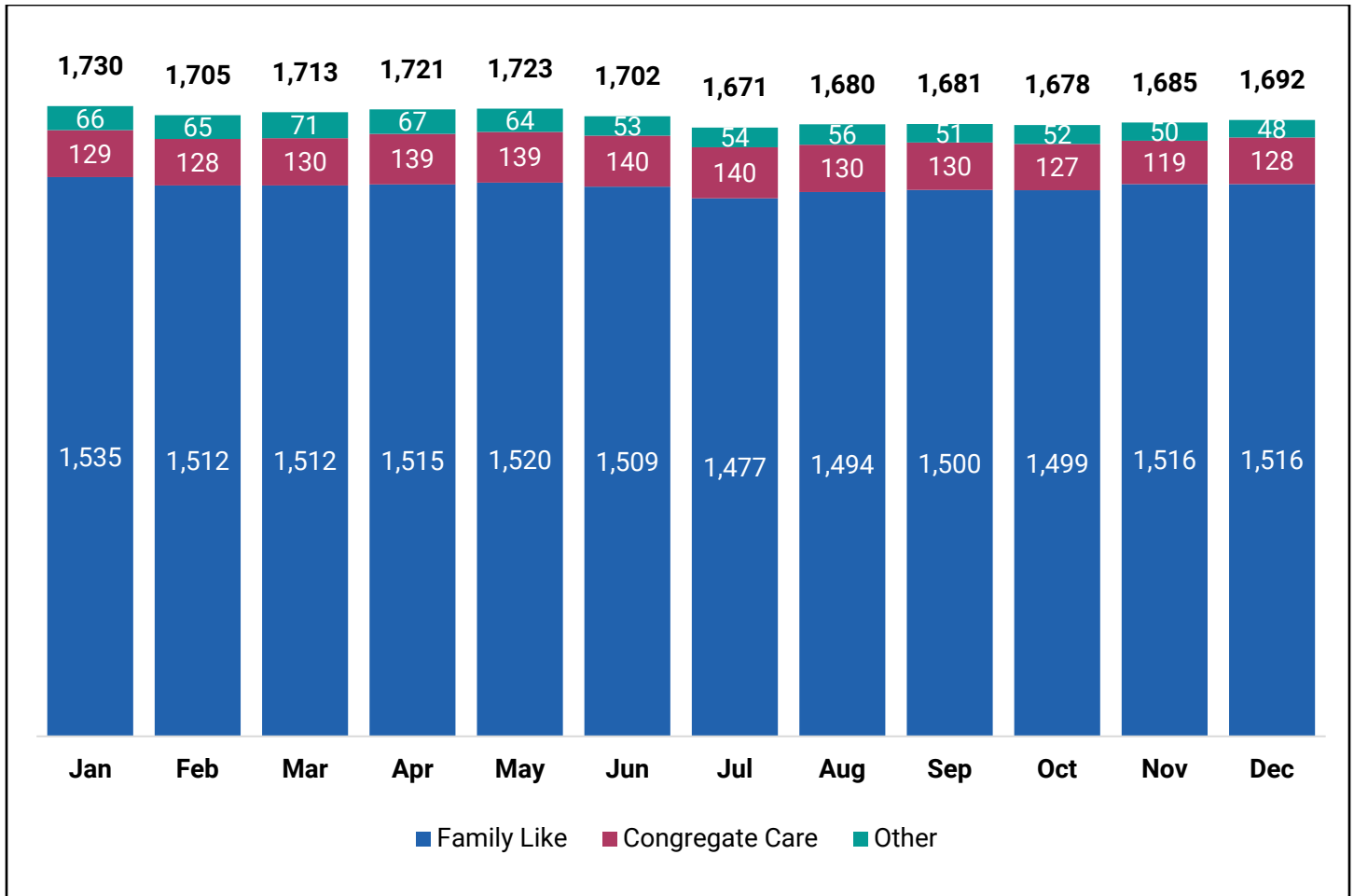


Table 6 shows the number of children in OHC by placement group, age group, and month during 2025.¹⁰ On average per month, there were **480** children aged 12 years or older in OHC. Of these older children, **300 (63%)** were placed in a family-like setting, **125 (26%)** were placed in congregate care, and **57 (12%)** were in other care. Of all the children in OHC, on average per month, **749 (44%)** of placements were with relatives (not pictured).¹¹ This is a 9% increase from 2024.¹²

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

Placement Types & Ages of Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual AVG
Family Like	1,535	1,512	1,512	1,515	1,520	1,509	1,477	1,494	1,500	1,499	1,516	1,516	1,509
0 to 2	399	385	390	394	390	387	376	376	379	383	376	366	383
3 to 4	244	240	243	249	252	246	241	245	233	228	243	245	242
5 to 11	575	571	574	575	582	585	582	582	588	591	595	599	583
12 to 15	193	193	192	183	181	177	169	182	189	189	187	185	185
16+	124	123	113	114	115	114	109	109	111	108	115	121	115
Congregate Care	129	128	130	139	139	140	140	130	130	127	119	128	132
5 to 11	7	7	6	6	7	5	4	8	7	8	7	6	7
12 to 15	66	64	63	68	68	67	70	60	58	52	46	51	61
16+	56	57	61	65	64	68	66	62	65	67	66	71	64
Other	66	65	71	67	64	53	54	56	51	52	50	48	58
0 to 2	0	1	1	1	2	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
3 to 4	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5 to 11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
12 to 15	28	28	27	22	20	16	17	21	20	20	20	21	20
16+	38	36	43	43	41	35	37	35	31	31	29	25	35
Totals	1,730	1,705	1,713	1,721	1,723	1,702	1,671	1,680	1,681	1,678	1,685	1,692	1,698

¹⁰ Placement group and age as of the end-of-month.

¹¹ Relative as defined in [§48.02\(15\)](#)

¹² In 2024, 687 of 1,743 (39%) of children were placed with a relative.

4.3 Foster Homes

From January through December 2025, the average number of open foster homes was **461**. A total of **170** providers were newly licensed, and **152** providers were closed. Table 7 shows the number of 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 2025.

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

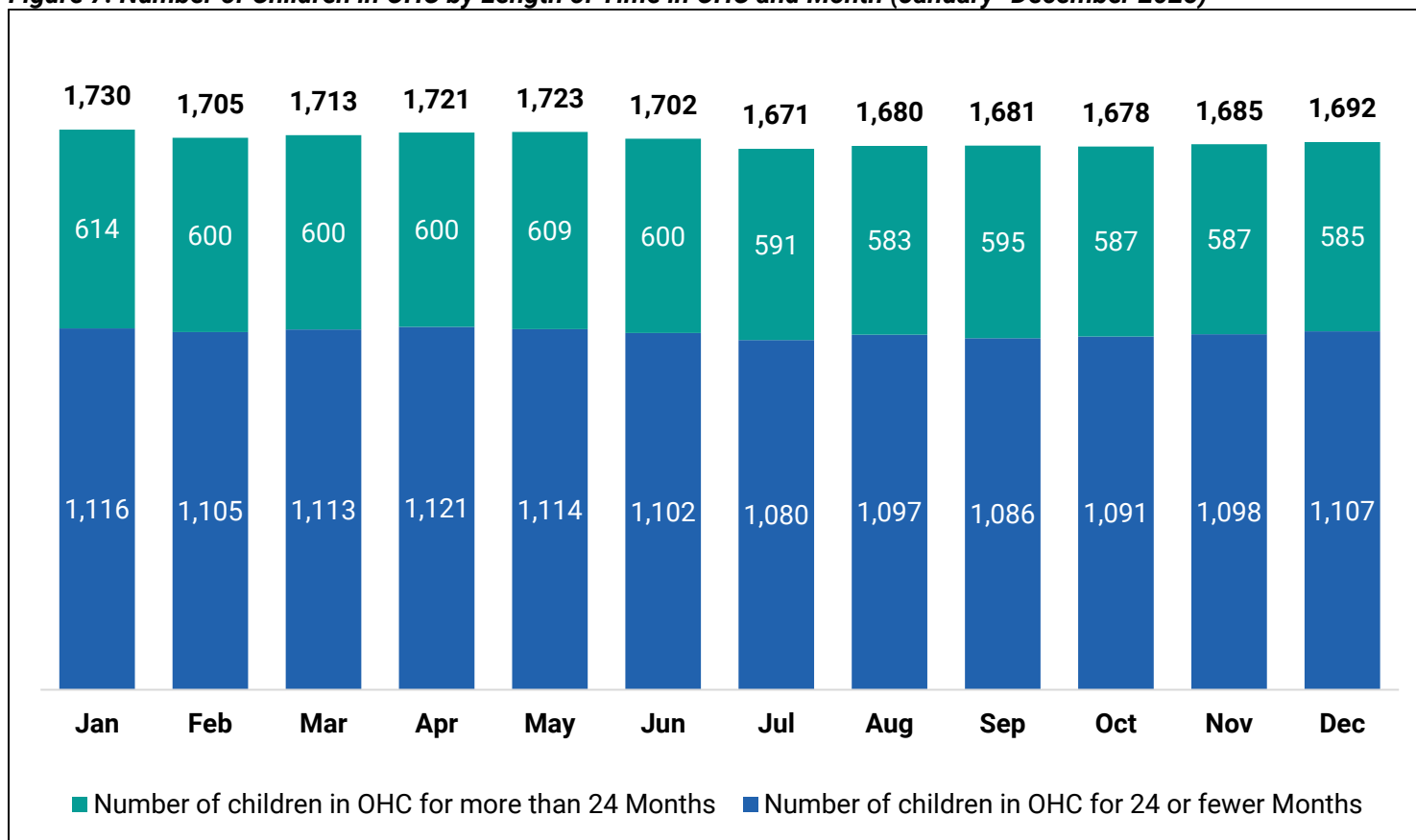
Foster Homes	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Foster Homes at the End of the Month	451	464	463	469	469	471	454	460	463	462	451	449
New Foster Homes	11	20	17	20	7	21	10	13	20	12	10	9
Closed Foster Homes	19	9	20	17	9	14	16	10	13	5	11	9

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

On average per month, **596** of **1,698** (**35%**) children were in OHC for more than 24 months in 2025.¹³ This is similar to 2024.¹⁴ 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 2025.

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



¹³ Length of stay is the episode length calculated as of the end of the month.

¹⁴ In 2024, an average of 620 of the 1,743 (36%) children were in OHC for more than 24 months.

4.5 Permanency Outcomes

A total of **683** children exited OHC in 2025. Figure 8 shows that **302 (44%)** children were reunified, **134 (20%)** children had a transfer of guardianship (TOG), **145 (21%)** children were adopted, and **102 (15%)** children discharged for another reason.

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

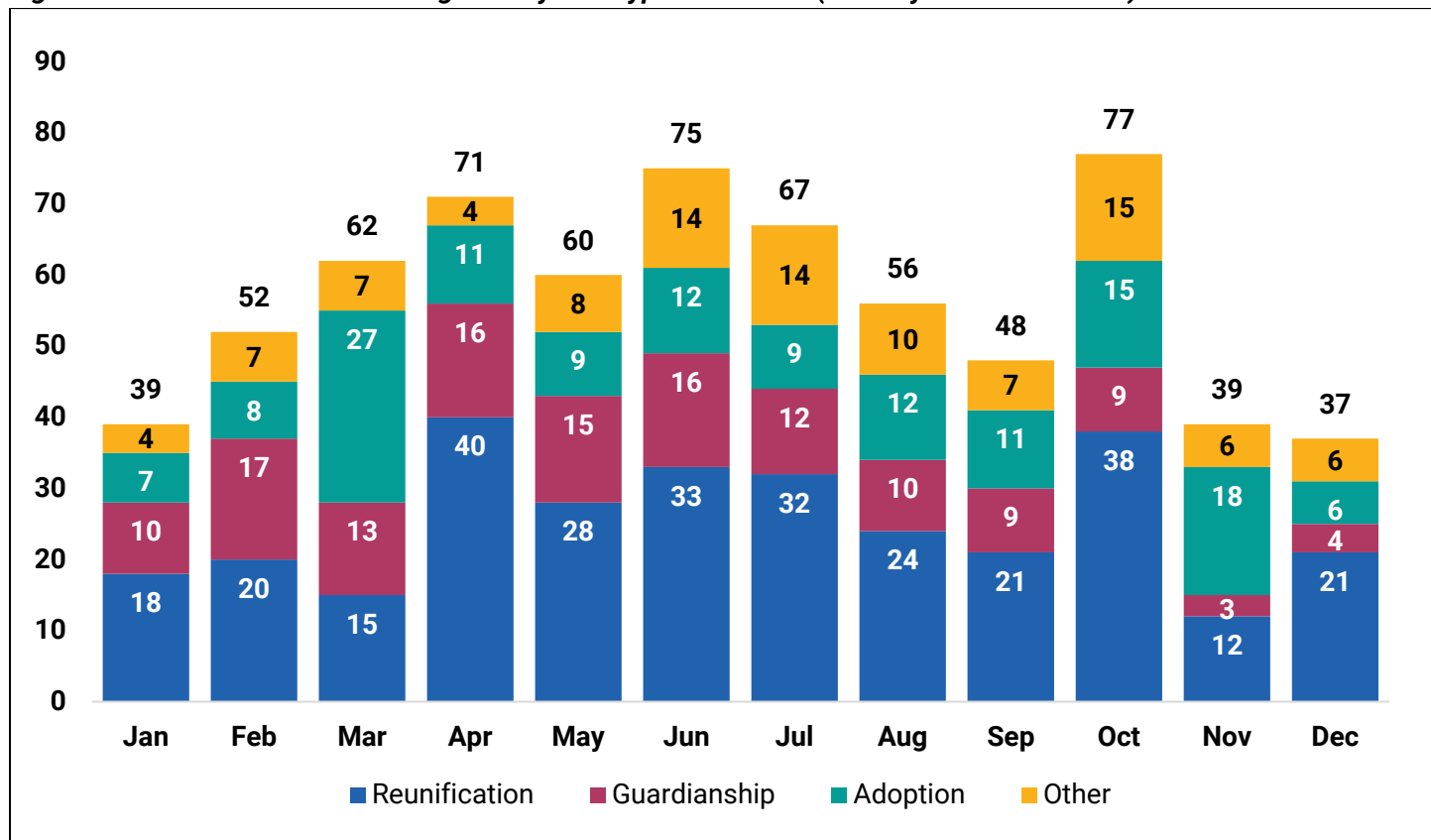


Table 8 shows the length of time that children were in OHC prior to exiting, grouped by monthly intervals. Of the **302** children who reunified, **112 (37%)** reunified within 12 months of entering OHC. Of the **134** children who had a TOG, **46 (34%)** achieved permanency within 24 months or less. Of the **145** children who were adopted, **42 (29%)** 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 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	12	16	20	34	30	131	39	11	9	302
Guardianship	0	0	3	0	3	40	39	21	28	134
Adoption	0	0	0	4	5	33	37	20	46	145
Other	2	4	3	2	4	23	16	12	36	102
Total	14	20	26	40	42	227	131	64	119	683

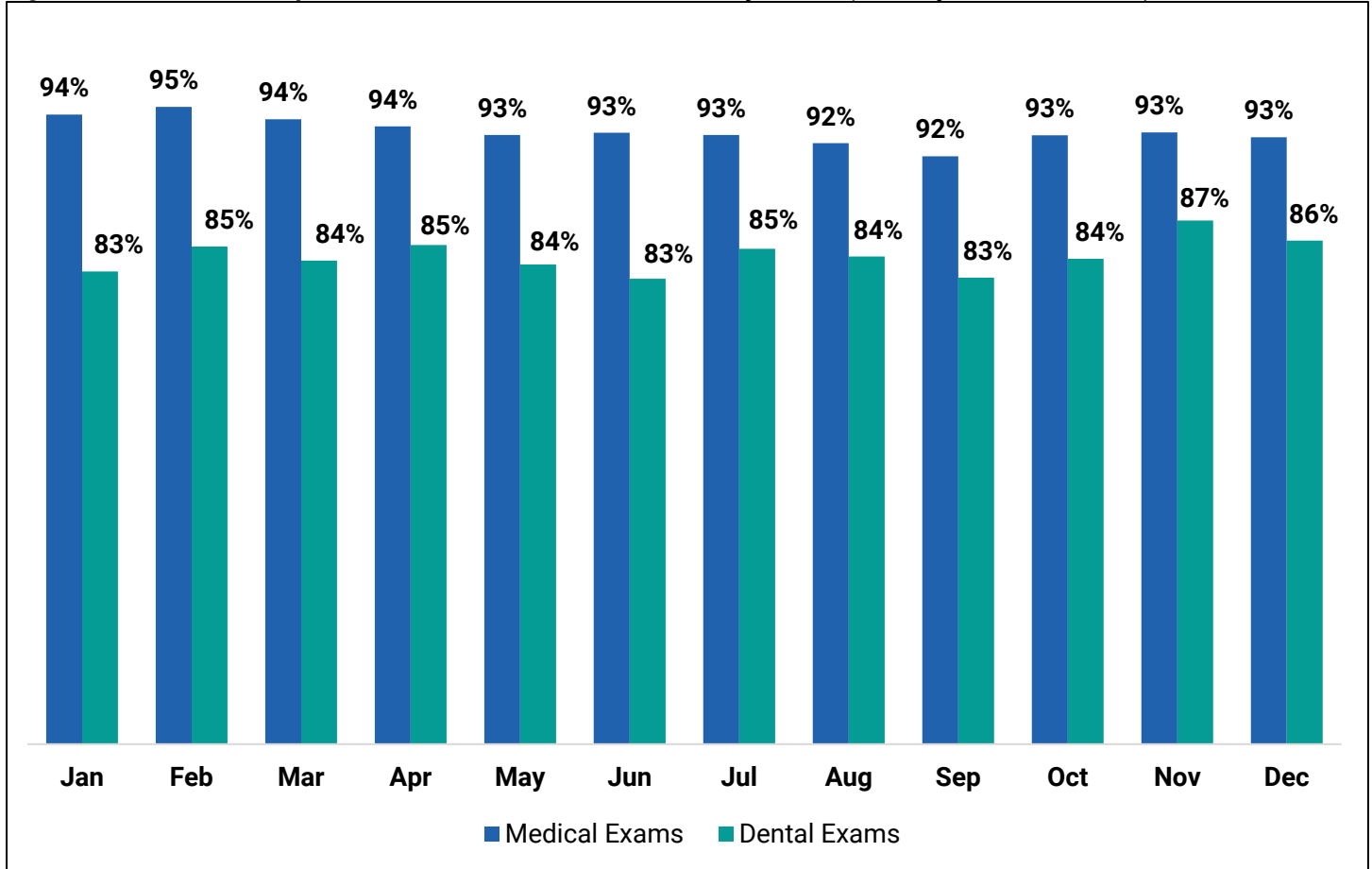
*Other includes age of majority, custody transfer, missing from OHC

Well-being

5.1 Annual Medical and Dental Exams

During 2025, a monthly average of **1,702** children were expected to have an annual medical exam and **1,589 (93%)** were completed and documented. For annual dental exams, **1,436** children were expected to have an annual dental exam and **1,213 (84%)** were completed and documented. Both are improvements compared to 2024.¹⁵ Figure 9 provides the percentage of annual medical and dental exams that were completed during 2025.

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



¹⁵ In 2024, an average of 1,605 of 1,751 (92%) of children had an annual medical exam; 1,159 of 1,443 (80%) of children had an annual dental exam.

6 Child Welfare Case Manager Workforce

6.1 Child Welfare Case Manager Turnover

Both at the start and end of 2025, there were **162** child welfare case managers (CWCMs). During 2025, **56** CWCMs were hired and **56** CWCMs separated employment, resulting in a **26%** annual CWCM turnover rate.¹⁶ At the end of 2025, there were **162** CWCMs. Table 9 provides the number of CWCMs at the beginning of the month, the number of CWCMs hired during the month, the number of CWCMs separating employment during the month, and the annual CWCM turnover rate for 2025.

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 2025)

Turnover	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Start of Month	162	157	163	164	163	160	161	159	162	166	162	163
Hires	2	8	6	2	6	5	2	7	8	6	4	0
Separations	7	2	5	3	9	4	4	4	4	10	3	1
Annual Turnover %												26%

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 2025, **46** of **152 (30%)** case-carrying CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload. This is a significant improvement from 2024 and continues the positive trend over the last five years¹⁷ Table 10 shows the number of CWCMs with cases, the number of CWCMs with more than 15 children on their caseload, and the percentage 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 2025)

Caseloads with 16+ Children	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
CWCMs with Caseload of >15 Children	60	61	59	59	42	42	39	41	42	42	34	33
CWCMs Carrying Cases	156	151	147	154	152	149	149	151	151	156	149	153
% CWCMs with Caseload >15 Children	38%	40%	40%	38%	28%	28%	26%	27%	28%	27%	23%	22%

¹⁶ The annual turnover rate is the number of CWCMs who exited employment during the year divided by the number of CWCMs at the beginning of the year

¹⁷ The average from January-December 2024 was 64 of 154 (41%) CWCMs had more than 15 children on their caseload.

7 Appendix-Data Sources

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

For questions about data in this report, please email Tyler Oettinger at 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