Citizens' Review Board for Children

December 29, 2011

The Honorable Thomas V. "Mike" Miller
President of Senate
State House, H-107
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Michael E. Busch
Speaker of House of Delegates
State House, H-101
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

Secretary Theodore Dallas
Maryland Department of Human Resources
311 Saratoga Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Gentlemen,

On behalf of the State Citizens Review Board for Children, I submit the 2011 Annual Report required by Maryland Family Law Article §5-539(b)(5) and 539.1(g) to include:

1. status of children in out-of-home placement in this State; and
2. summary of its activities, findings, and recommendations per this section of the law.

If you have additional questions about this report, please contact Ms. Sabrena McAllister, Administrator at 410-585-2257 or SMcAllis@dhr.state.md.us.

Sincerely,

Nettie Anderson-Burrs

Nettie Anderson-Burrs
State Board Chairperson

cc: Members, CRBC
Carnitra White
Kelley Ray

Citizens Review Board for Children
4201 Patterson Avenue, 5th Floor • Baltimore, Maryland 21215 • (410) 585-2240
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CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN

FY 2011 ANNUAL REPORT

Prepared for the Maryland General Assembly and Secretary, Department of Human Resources
As required by Family Law Article §5-539(b)(5) and §5-539.1(g)
December 29, 2011

Table of Contents

	Page
Executive Summary	3
About Us	4
Program Description	4
Mission, Vision, and Goals	4
Legislative Agenda	5
Case Reviews	6
Out of Home Case Review Findings	6
Adoption	9
APPLA	13
Demographics of Youth	16
Out of Home Care Statistics	18
Child Protection Panel Reviews	19
Child Protective Services Statistics	20
Recommendation Reports	21
CRBC Goals and Recommendations	22
Volunteers	23
The State Board	25

CITIZENS REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN

FY 2011 Annual Report
Summary

During fiscal year 2011 the Citizens Review Board for Children (CRBC) reviewed 1510 cases of youth in out of home placements. This was an increase from the 1158 reviews conducted during the previous fiscal year. The fiscal year marked the second year of CRBC's work plan agreement with the Department of Human Resources (DHR). In accordance with the continued work plan agreement, CRBC reviewed cases of youth with a permanency plan of adoption or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). This focus allowed CRBC to review these vulnerable and often overlooked populations.

Cases were reviewed that met the following criteria:

Adoption:

- Youth with newly established primary permanency plans of adoption (reviewed three months after the plan has been changed)
- Youth with existing plans of adoption for twelve months or longer (reviewed three months before next court review date)

APPLA:

- Youth with newly established primary permanency plans of APPLA (reviewed three months after the plan has been changed)
- Youth age 17 or 20 years old with existing or new cases (reviewed three to five months after the youth's birthday)
- Youth 16 years old and younger with existing plans of APPLA

Goals of the adoption reviews were to ensure:

- Youth are receiving the services necessary to prepare them and their pre-adoptive families for adoption
- Barriers are identified and removed so the adoption process progresses in a timely manner
- The local departments are adequately searching for and recruiting adoptive resources

Goals of the APPLA reviews were to ensure:

- That youth are receiving the services necessary to prepare them to live independently
- That the local departments are working alongside the youth to identify a permanent connection for the youth
- That APPLA is not viewed as a "catch-all" without exploring other permanency options
- That youth are made part of the service and case planning processes

About Us

Program Description

The Citizens Review Board for Children supports all efforts to provide permanence for children in foster care. This state board provides oversight to Maryland's child protection agencies and trains volunteer citizen panels to aid in child protection efforts.

The Citizens Review Board for Children has two major components – out of home care and child protection. Each component has three major modalities: case review, program monitoring and advocacy.

The Citizens Review Board for Children consists of volunteer representatives from state and local boards in each county. There are currently 54 local review boards throughout the state. CRBC reviews cases of children in out-of-home placement and monitors child welfare programs making recommendations for system improvements.

The State Board reviews and coordinates the activities of the local review boards. The board also examines policy issues, procedures, legislation, resources, and barriers relating to out-of home placement and the permanency of children. The state board makes recommendations to the General Assembly around ways of improving Maryland's child welfare system.

Mission

Volunteer reviewers monitor child welfare systems and review cases, make findings, and recommendations, and advocate improving the administration of the system and the management of individual cases. As a result, children will be safe; be placed in stable, permanent living arrangements without undue delay; enjoy continuity of relations; and have the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

Vision

The child welfare community, General Assembly, other key decision-makers, and the public will look to the Citizens Review Board for Children for objective reports on vital child welfare programs and for consistent monitoring of safeguards for children. The State of Maryland will investigate child maltreatment allegations thoroughly, protect children from abuse and neglect, give families the help they need to stay intact, place children in out-of-home care only when necessary, and provide placements that consider all the child's needs. Casework will combine effective family services with expeditious permanent placement of children.

Legislative Agenda

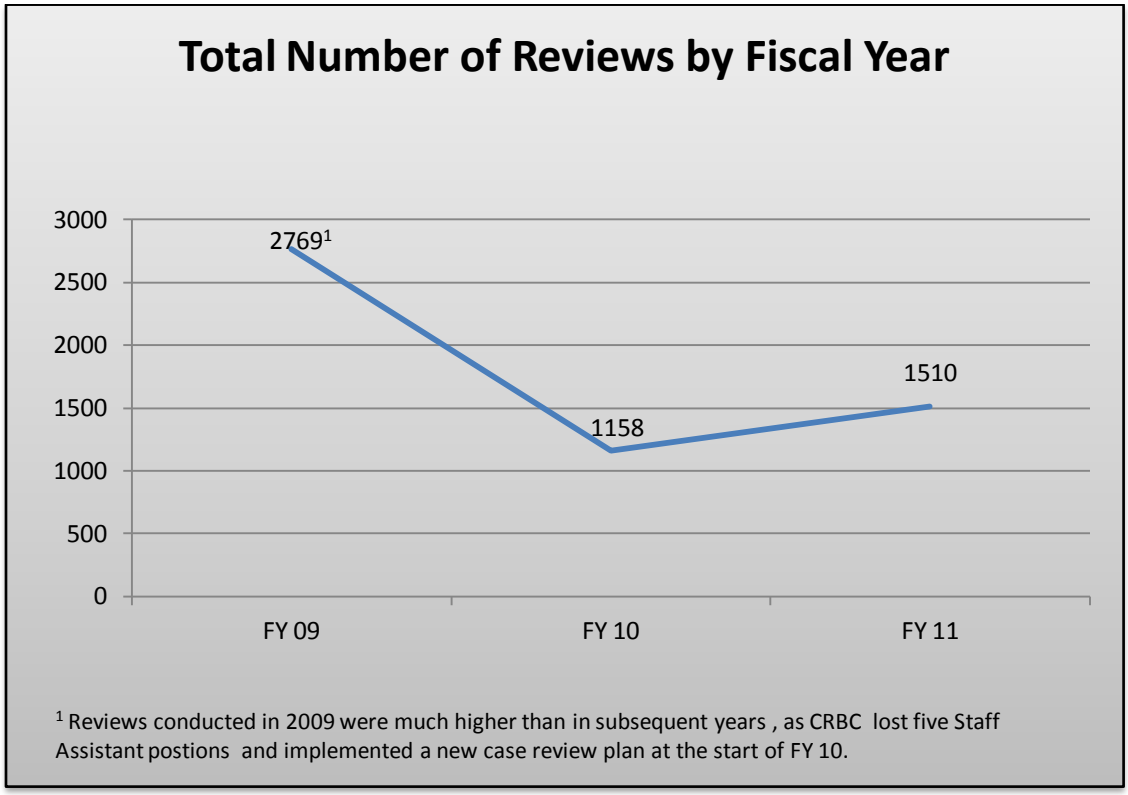
The children's legislative action committee (CLAC) is the legislative committee under the authority of State Board charged with implementing CRBC's legislative agenda. CLAC's advocacy priorities include a broad range of family services. Maryland's child welfare budget is disproportionately spent on keeping children in high-cost out of home placements while many thousands of children and families do not have access to high quality family services. The Department of Human Resources Secretary sought to change this dynamic with innovative initiatives. Savings from reducing inappropriate placements are reinvested to fund the following:

- Family team decision-making and other techniques for involving parents and other family members in planning for safety and permanency
- Intensive family preservation services, which can be cost-effective while protecting children from further abuse or neglect
- Strengthening family support services in order to prevent child abuse and neglect
- Increasing funding for and integration of mental health and substance abuse treatment services with child welfare programs
- Finding ways to identify, locate, notify, and support tens of thousands of grandparents and other relatives who are caring for children so that these children do not require State care
- Support for kinship care providers at the same level as foster parents

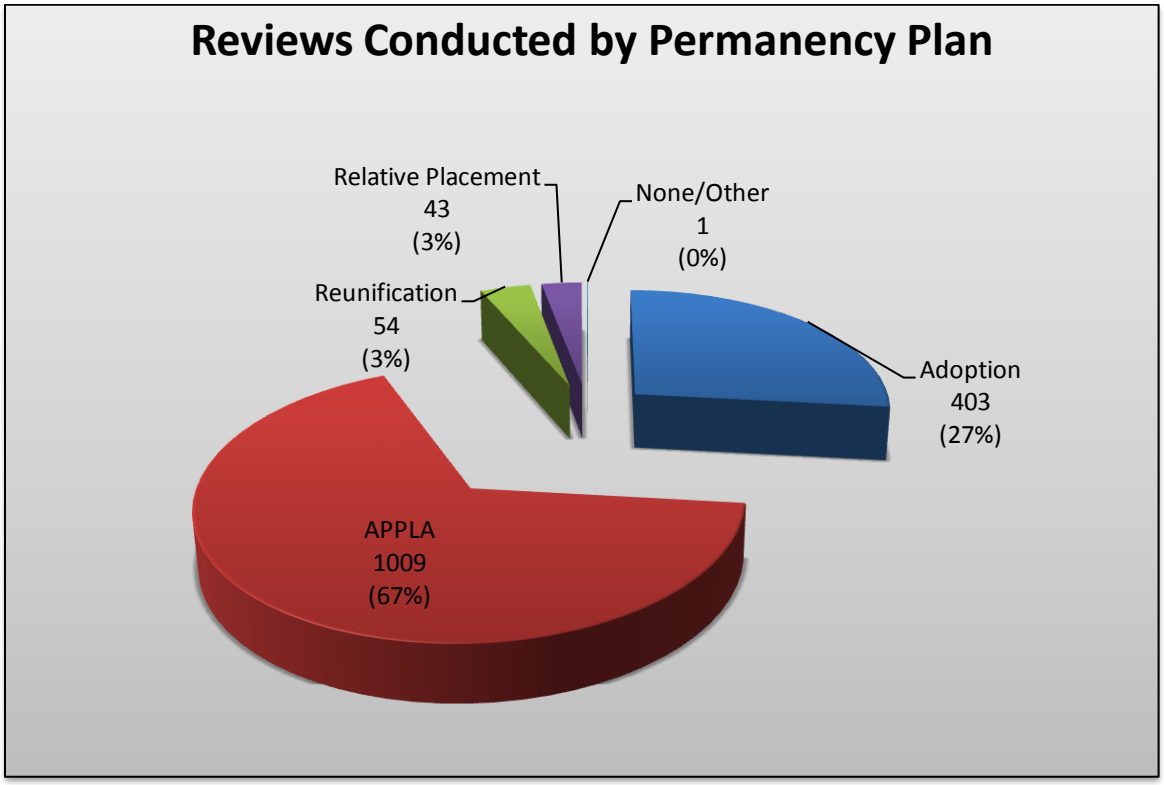
Case Reviews

Out of Home Reviews

Fiscal year 2011 was a successful year for CRBC in terms of the number of reviews conducted. During the fiscal year CRBC reviewed approximately 350 more cases than in previous fiscal year and exceeded the annual Managing For Results (MFR) goal of reviewing 1300 (116% of the goal). The increase in reviews conducted can largely be attributed to the additional Staff Assistant, improved strategy of scheduling cases, and increased training and expertise of local board members.

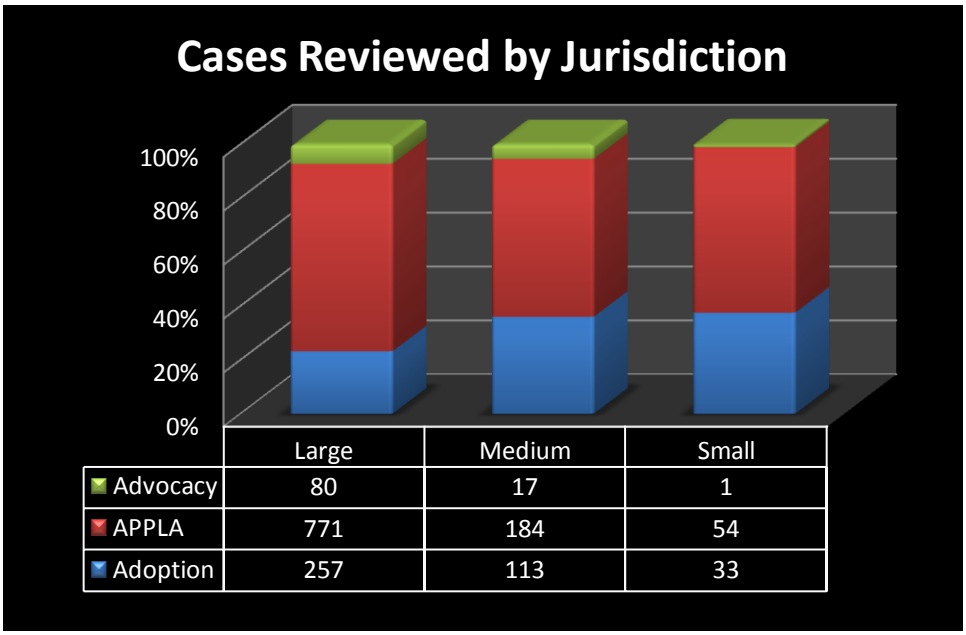


Although the majority of the reviews CRBC conducted were of youth with permanency plans of APPLA or adoption, six percent (98 reviews) were of youth with permanency plans of reunification, relative placement, or "other/none." These reviews were largely advocacy reviews that were conducted at the request of SSA, the local department or courts, or another interested party (youth's family, youth's advocates, etc.). At 1009 cases reviewed, youth with permanency plans of APPLA cases comprised the largest percentage of cases reviewed (67%).



Out of Home Review Findings

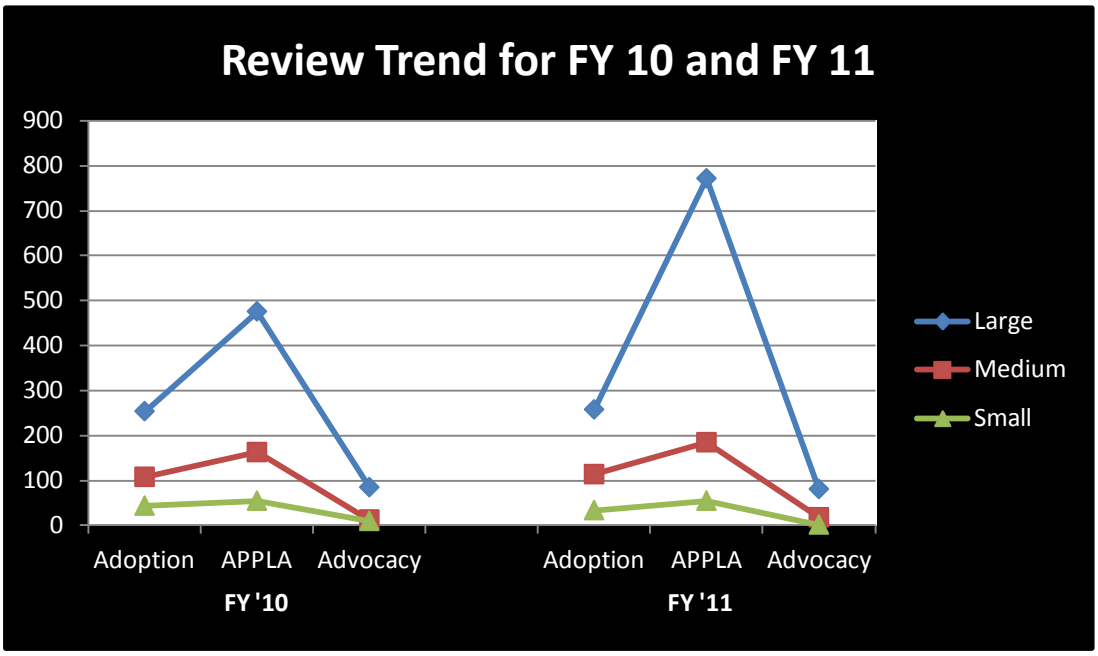
CRBC reviews cases of youth in each of the 23 Counties plus Baltimore City. As with the previous fiscal year and in accordance with DHR's Place Matters criteria, these 24 areas are classified as large, medium, and small jurisdictions based on the caseload size.



	Large	Medium	Small
Advocacy	80	17	1
APPLA	771	184	54
Adoption	257	113	33

As detailed in the chart, the large jurisdictions accounted for 1108 reviews (73% of the total number of reviews).

While there was an overall increase in the number of reviews CRBC conducted, the largest increase was of APPLA reviews in the large jurisdictions where there was a 63% increase from the previous fiscal year. The introduction of 16 year olds to the review criteria may have contributed to the increase.



Adoption Reviews

Large Jurisdictions

The **Baltimore City** review Boards reviewed 150 adoption cases (37% of the adoption reviews that were conducted). Termination of parental rights (TPR) had been filed timely in 63% of the cases reviewed and had been granted in 49%. Children of legal age[1] consented to adoption in 64% of the cases; and 64% of these youth received adoption counseling. Five youth consented to adoption if certain conditions were met. Eighty-four percent of the youth reviewed were placed in pre adoptive homes and 40% of the youth had been in their pre-adoptive homes for 21 months or longer without finalization.

Thirty-two adoption reviews were conducted in **Baltimore County.** TPR had been granted in 24% of the cases reviewed. However, local Boards found TPR was filed timely in 83% of the cases. Sixty-two percent of the youth reviewed were not of legal age to consent or were unable to consent due to medical or mental health limitations. Eleven youth were able to consent to adoption. One of the eleven youth consented to adoption and four received adoption counseling. Another youth consented to adoption if certain conditions were met. Ninety percent of the youth reviewed were placed in pre-adoptive homes and 35% of the youth reviewed had been in their pre-adoptive homes for longer than 21 months.

Montgomery County review Boards conducted forty-eight adoption reviews. TPR had been filed timely in 82% of the cases reviewed and granted in 60% of the cases reviewed. Seventy-five percent of the youth reviewed who were of legal age consented to being adopted and 76% of youth able to consent received adoption counseling. Eighty-seven percent of youth were placed in pre-adoptive homes. Forty-four percent of youth reviewed were placed in their pre-adoptive home for 21 months or longer.

Review Boards in **Prince George's County** conducted thirty-four reviews. TPR had been granted in 59% of the cases reviewed. Youth of legal consenting age consented to adoption in 42% of the cases reviewed; with 58% of the youth receiving adoption counseling. Two youth consented to adoption with certain conditions. Sixty-two percent of youth reviewed resided in pre-adoptive homes. Seventy-eight percent of the youth had resided in their pre-adoptive placements for 10 months or longer.

Medium Jurisdictions

Review Boards in **Allegany County** conducted 12 adoption reviews. TPR had been granted in 25% of the cases reviewed and was filed in an additional 50%. Youth were in pre-adoptive homes in 83% of the cases reviewed. Half of the youth reviewed had been in their pre-adoptive homes for 13 to 20 months. Half of the youth reviewed were not of legal age to consent. One of the six youth of legal age to consent consented to adoption. The same youth was the only youth who received adoption counseling.

The Review Board in **Anne Arundel County** reviewed seven adoption cases. TPR was filed timely in 57% of the cases and was granted in 71% of the cases reviewed. Two of the three of the youth of legal age consented to being adopted. Two youth received adoption counseling. All of the youth reviewed were in pre-adoptive homes.

The review Board in **Cecil County** reviewed four adoption cases. TPR had been filed timely in all cases. TPR was granted in75% of the cases and was filed in the remaining 25%. The one youth of legal age to consent consented and also received adoption counseling. Youth resided in pre-adoptive homes in seventy-five percent of the cases reviewed.

[1] In the State of Maryland, the legal age for a child to consent to adoption is ten years old

The review Board in **Charles County** reviewed four adoption cases. TPR was filed timely and granted in all applicable cases. The youth's biological parents were deceased in one case. Half of the youth were of legal age to consent to adoption. Both youth consented to adoption and received adoption counseling. Three of the four youth were placed in pre-adoptive homes.

The **Frederick County** Board reviewed seven adoption cases. TPR was filed timely in 86% of the cases reviewed and granted in 43% of the cases. All of the youth reviewed were unable to consent to adoption due to age and reported mental health or medical limitations. None of the youth received adoption counseling. Fifty-seven percent of the youth were placed in pre-adoptive homes. The youth resided in their pre-adoptive homes for 10 months or longer.

The review Board in **Harford County** reviewed thirty-two adoption cases. The local Board found TPR was filed timely in 55% of the cases reviewed. TPR was granted in 39% of the cases reviewed and filed in an additional 35% of the cases. Eighty-four percent of the youth reviewed were not able to consent to adoption due to age or mental health or medical limitations. Twenty-three percent of youth received adoption counseling. Seventy-four percent of the youth reviewed resided in pre-adoptive homes where they resided for ten months or more. The majority of youth (39%) resided in their pre-adoptive homes for 16 to 20 months without finalization.

Eight adoption reviews were conducted in **St. Mary's County**. The Board found that TPR was filed timely in 87.5% of the cases reviewed. TPR was granted in 62.5% of the cases. Two youth were of legal age to consent to adoption. Neither youth consented to adoption nor received adoption counseling. All but one youth resided in a pre-adoptive home. In six cases the length of time the youth spent in a pre-adoptive home was evenly split between 10 to 12 months and 13 to 15 months. In the remaining case, the youth had resided in the pre-adoptive home for less than one month.

The **Washington County** review Board conducted twenty adoption reviews. The local Board found that TPR was filed timely in 75% of the cases reviewed. TPR was granted in 35% of the cases and filed in another 40% of the cases reviewed. Forty percent of the youth were unable to consent to adoption due to age. Of the remaining sixty percent, 42% consented to being adopted. Fifty percent of the youth reviewed received adoption counseling. Eighty-five percent of the youth resided in pre-adoptive homes. Fifty-three percent of the youth resided in their pre-adoptive placements for 21 months and longer.

Fifteen adoption reviews were conducted in **Wicomico County.** TPR was filed timely in 73% of the cases. TPR was granted in 80% of the cases reviewed and was filed in the remaining 20%. Seventy-three percent of the youth were unable to consent to adoption to due age or medical limitations. Of the remaining 27% of youth, 75% consented to adoption. Nine youth received adoption counseling. Eighty-seven percent of youth reviewed resided in pre-adoptive homes. The youth resided in their adoptive homes for 10 month and longer.

Small Jurisdictions

The **Calvert County** review Board reviewed five adoption cases. TPR had been filed timely in all but one case. TPR was granted in one case. Four youth were of legal age to consent to adoption. Of these youth, three consented to being adopted and also received adoption counseling. Eighty percent of the youth reviewed resided in pre-adoptive homes. The youth resided in their pre-adoptive homes for less than ten months.

Two adoption cases were reviewed in **Caroline County**. TPR was not filed timely in either case but was granted in one case. One of the two youth was of legal age to consent to adoption. This youth consented

to adoption and received adoption counseling. One youth was placed in a pre-adoptive home. At the time of review the youth had resided in the pre-adoptive home for one to three months.

The **Carroll County** review Board did not conduct any adoption reviews.

The review Board in **Dorchester County** conducted one adoption review. Board members found TPR was filed timely; however, TPR had not been granted at the time of the review. The youth consented to adoption and received adoption counseling. The youth resided in a pre-adoptive home for 21 months or longer without finalization.

The **Garrett County** review Board did not conduct any adoption reviews

The **Howard County** review Board conducted five adoption reviews. The local review Board found TPR was filed timely in 40% of the cases reviewed. TPR was granted in 80% of the cases and not granted or filed in the remaining case. Three of the five youth were unable to consent to adoption due to age or medical limitations. The remaining two both consented to being adopted and received adoption counseling. Eighty percent (n=4) of the youth resided in pre-adoptive homes. The youth all resided in their pre-adoptive homes for 13 months and longer; with two residing in their respective homes for 21 months or more. One of the youth was able to consent to adoption but did not consent.

The **Kent County** review Board conducted three adoption reviews. The local Board found TPR was not filed timely in any of the cases reviewed. TPR was granted in two of the cases but was not granted or filed in the remaining case. None of the youth were able to consent to adoption due to their age. The youth did not receive adoption counseling. All three youth resided in pre-adoptive homes. Youth spent 13 months and longer in their adoptive homes without finalization.

The **Queen Anne's County** review board conducted three adoption reviews. The local Board found TPR was filed timely in two of the cases. TPR was not granted in any of the cases reviewed. Two of the youth were of age to consent and consented to being adopted. Both youth received adoption counseling. All three youth were in pre-adoptive homes. Two youth had resided in their placements for four to six months at the time of the review. The remaining youth resided in the placement for 13 to 15 months without finalization.

Seven adoption reviews were conducted in **Somerset County**. The local Board found TPR was filed timely in four of the five applicable cases. TPR was granted in four cases, filed in one case, and TPR was not necessary in two cases. Four youth were unable to consent to adoption due to age or medical limitations. Of the three youth able to consent, two did not consent. In the remaining case, the worker presenting the case did not know if the youth consented to adoption. Two youth received adoption counseling. Four youth resided in pre-adoptive homes. The youth resided in their placements for less than one year.

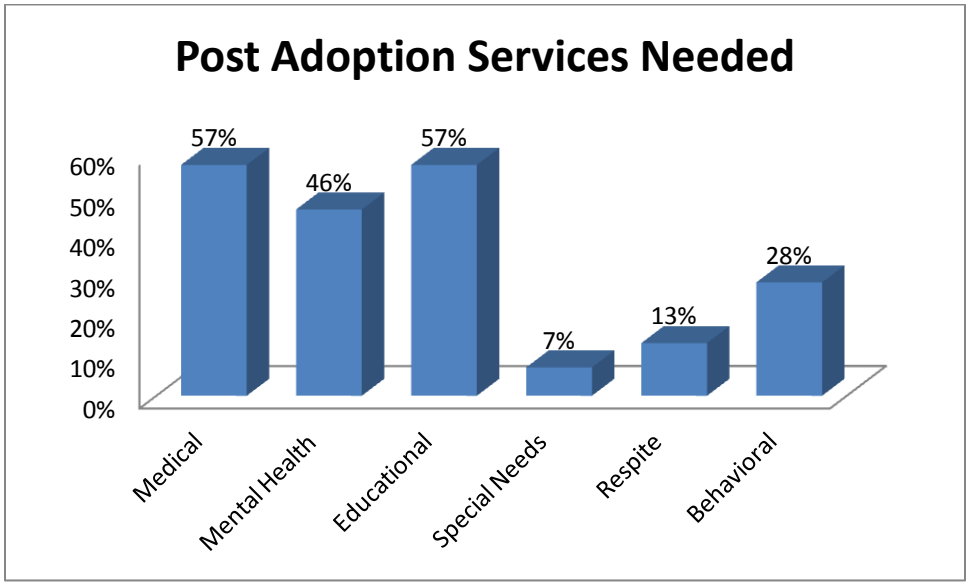
The **Talbot County** review Board conducted one adoption review. TPR had been granted in the case; however, the local board found TPR had not been filed timely. The youth was not of legal age to consent to adoption and had not received adoption counseling. The youth did not reside in a pre-adoptive placement. The youth had a plan of adoption for one to two years yet was not placed in a pre-adoptive home. Although the youth was listed on Maryland Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE) and the

Adoptuskids[2] websites, the local Board found the local department did not make adequate efforts to identify an adoptive resource for the youth.

Three adoption cases were reviewed in **Worcester County**. TPR was granted in all of the cases reviewed. Two of the three youth were not of legal age to consent to adoption. Of the two youth, the worker for one reported the youth did not consent to adoption; the worker for the other youth was unaware whether or not the youth consented. None of the youth received adoption counseling. One youth resided in a pre-adoptive home, where the youth resided for 4 to 6 months. Three youth received adoption counseling.

Post Adoption Services

Thirty-seven percent of local department of social services Case Workers indicated youth and their pre-adoptive families would require post adoption services. Once adoptions are finalized, the regular supports of the Social Worker will discontinue. Identification of needed services before adoptions are finalized is proactive. Services should address the specific needs of each youth and their family.



[2] The State of Maryland requires youth to be listed on Adopt Us Kids and MARE websites if they are not in pre-adoptive homes

Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) Reviews

Age

Forty-nine percent of youth reviewed were between 18 and 21 years of age. The largest group reviewed was comprised of youth twenty years of age (272 youth). The youngest youth reviewed was two years of age; with the oldest being twenty-one years of age. Two percent of the reviews were of youth ten years of age and younger (Baltimore City and Baltimore, Cecil, Harford, Montgomery, Prince George's, Somerset, and Washington Counties). Baltimore City and Prince George's and Somerset Counties were the only jurisdictions where reviews were conducted of youth under five years of age with permanency plans of APPLA.

Other Permanency Plans

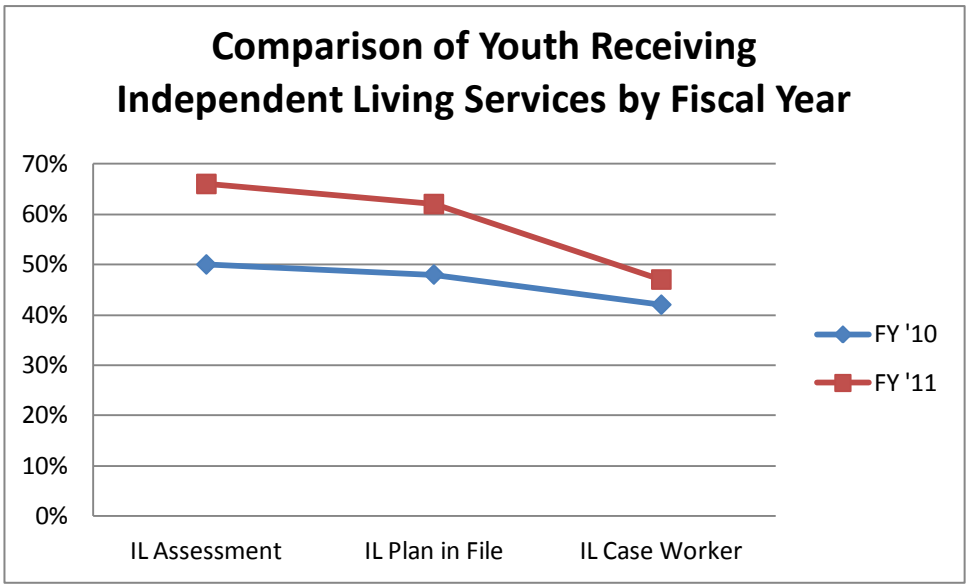
In 98% of the cases reviewed other permanency plans were considered prior to the plan of APPLA. Case Workers in Allegany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore County, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Prince George's, Washington, Wicomico Counties and Baltimore City reported no other permanency plans were considered.
In one case in Baltimore City, the Case Worker presenting the case was unsure if other permanency plans had been considered.

- Permanency plans of reunification had been considered in 87% of the cases;
- Relative Placement had been considered in 83% of the cases; and
- Adoption was considered in 69% of the cases.

Independent Living Skills

Eighty-one percent of the youth reviewed have APPLA plans with a goal of emancipation/independence. However:

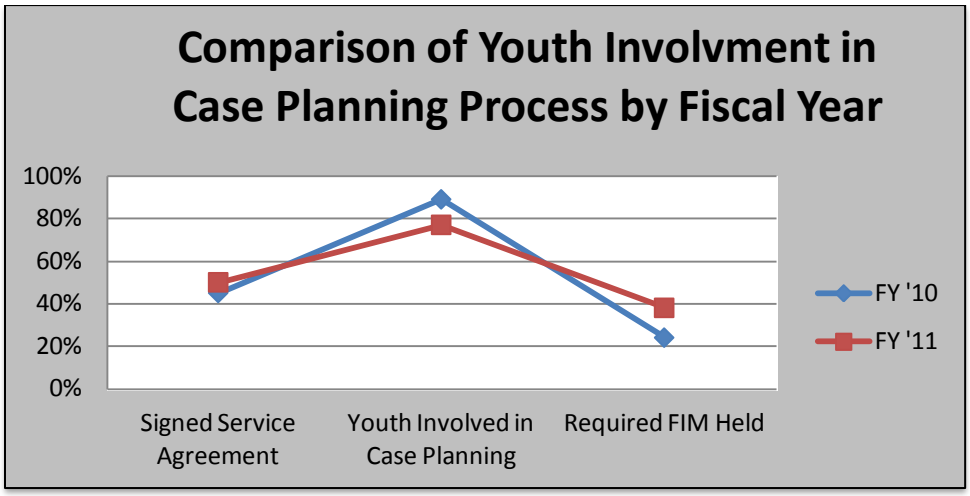
- Sixty-six percent of youth have completed an independent living skills assessment;
- Sixty-two percent of youth reviewed have an independent living plan in their file;
- Forty-seven percent of youth have been assigned an Independent Living Case Worker; and
- Sixty percent of youth wee receiving the required independent living skills.



As demonstrated by the graph, reviews conducted during FY '11 show improvement of delivery of independent living services from FY '10.

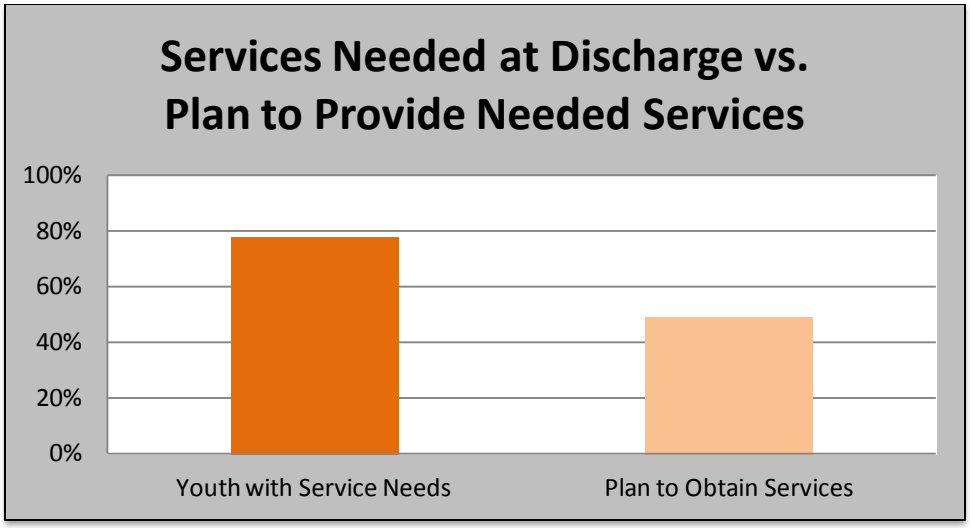
Service Planning

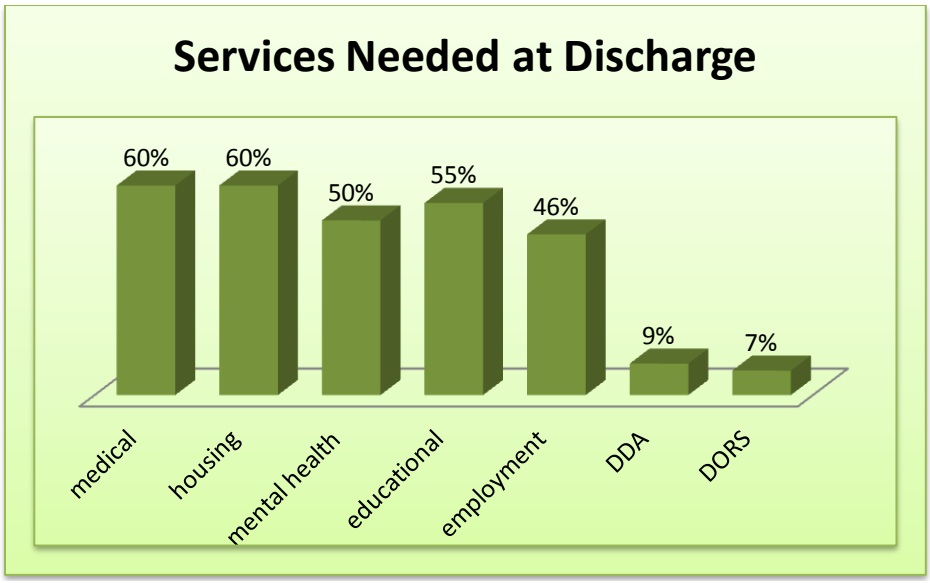
- Youth had signed service agreements in 50% of the cases reviewed;
- Workers reported efforts were made to involve youth in the case planning process in 70% of the cases reviewed;
- In 62% of the cases reviewed, the youth had not had their required family involvement meeting (FIM); and
- Board members recommended additional services should be provided to youth in fifty-seven percent of the cases reviewed.



Services

The local departments are charged with identifying service needs for youth and linking them with the appropriate resources. During reviews, Case Workers are asked to identify whether youth will need services at discharge. In 78% of the cases reviewed, Case Workers reported youth will need services at discharge. However, 49% of Case Workers reported not having a plan for youth to receive services. For instance, youth were prescribed psychotropic medication in 44% of the cases reviewed. Of these youth, less than half (49%) had a plan to obtain services in the adult mental health system.

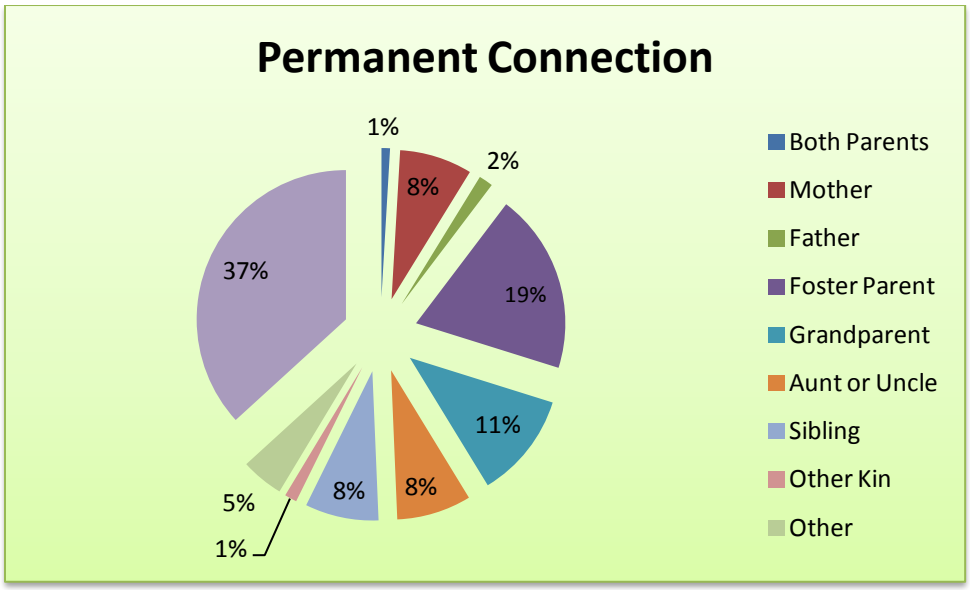




Permanent Connection

A permanent connection is someone a youth can depend on for financial and emotional support long after they have reached adulthood. Although identifying a permanent connection is important for all youth, it is especially crucial for those about to exit out of home care, as they will no longer have the State and their Social Workers to depend on.

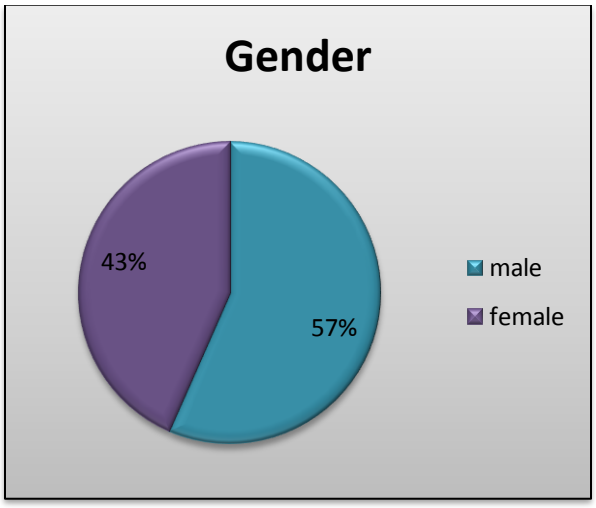
- In 63% of the cases reviewed (a decrease from the previous fiscal year), youth had a permanent connection identified.
- A family member was the identified connection in 62% of the cases in which a permanent connection was identified.

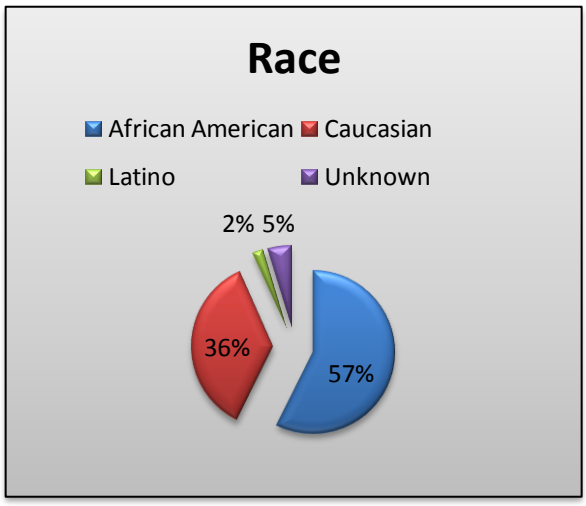


Demographics of Youth Reviewed

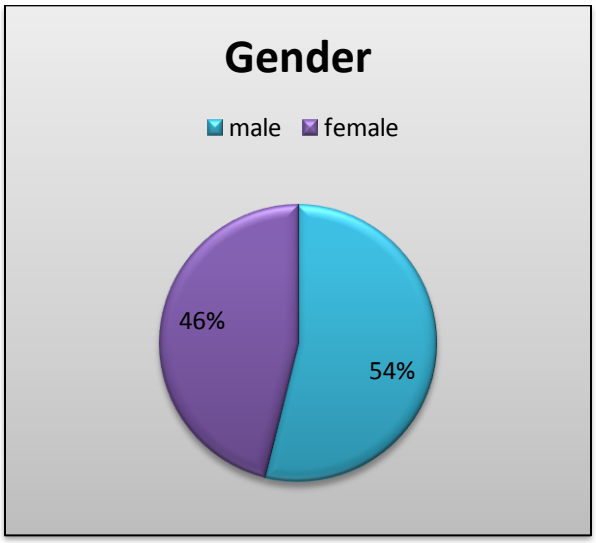
In both adoption and APPLA cases, African Americans and males comprised the largest group of youth reviewed.

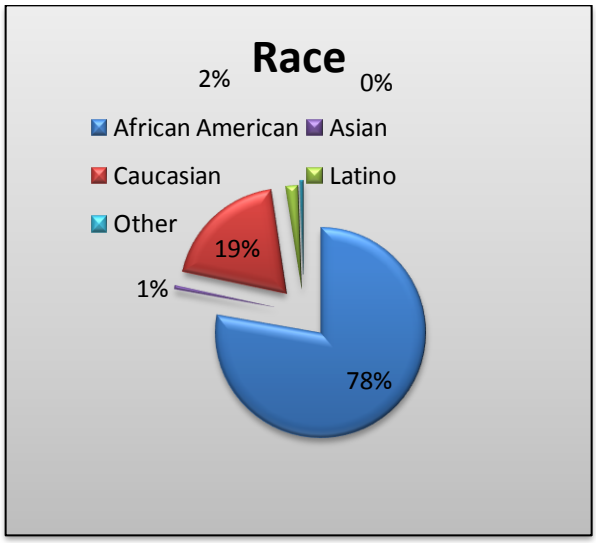
Adoption Cases:





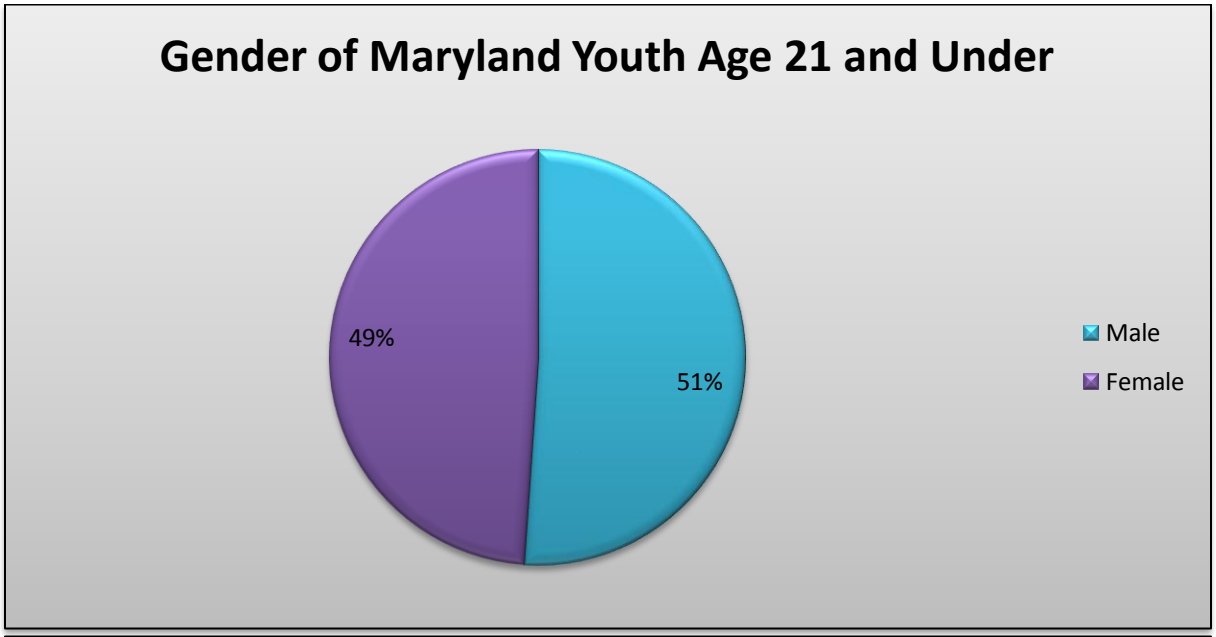
APPLA Cases

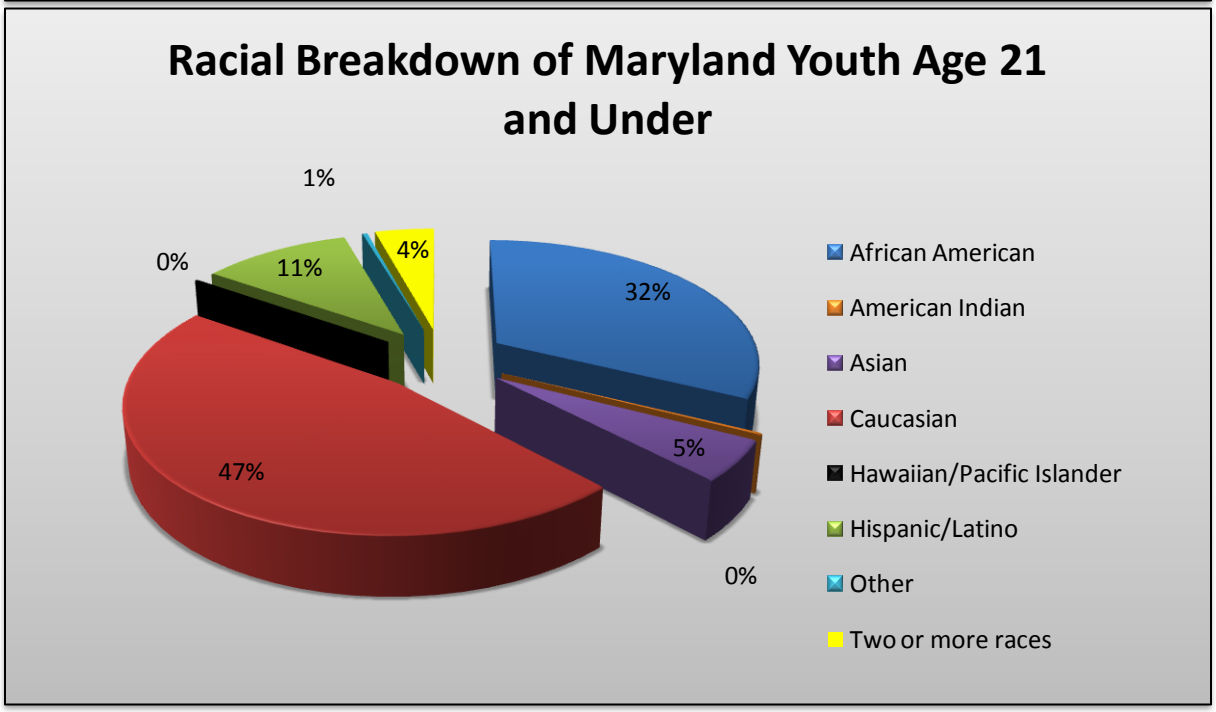




Demographics of Maryland Youth[3]

The statewide percentage of male to female youth was consistent in CRBC reviews. However, the percentage of African American youth reviewed was disproportional to their representation in Maryland's population.

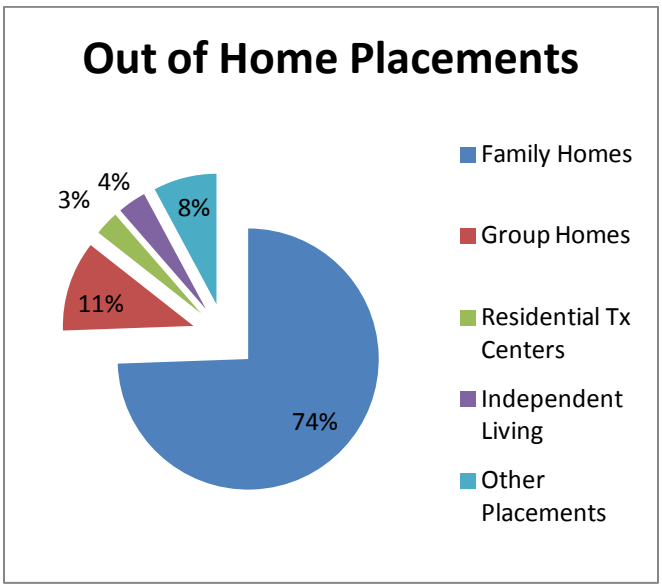


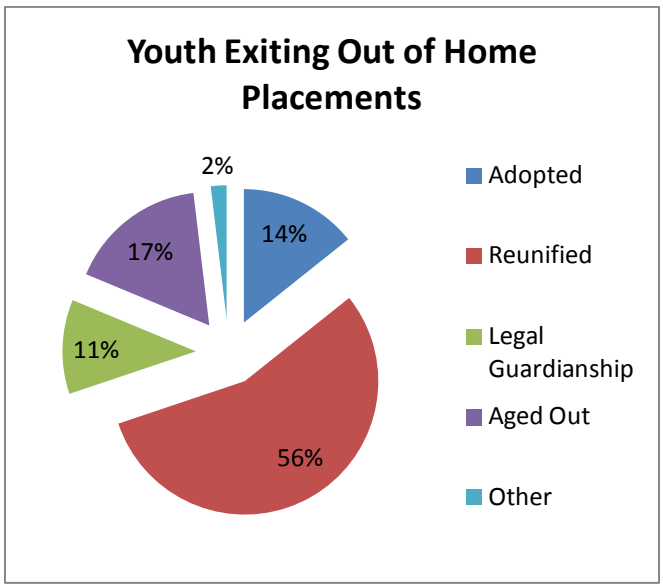


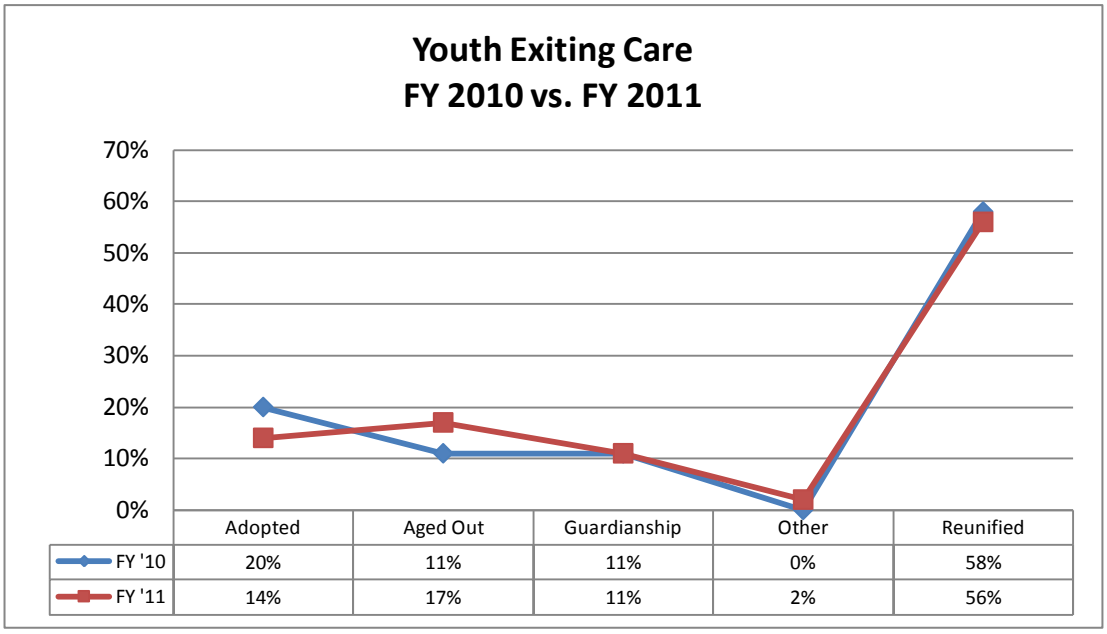
[3] 2010 Census data

Out of Home Care Statistics[4]

At the end of the fiscal year, DHR and SSA reported there were 7,411 youth in out of home placements. This was a decrease of 602 youth from the end of the previous fiscal year. Four percent were new out-of-home placements.







	Adopted	Aged Out	Guardianship	Other	Reunified
FY '10	20%	11%	11%	0%	58%
FY '11	14%	17%	11%	2%	56%

[4] Maryland Statestat

Child Protection Panel Reviews

In 1998, CRBC became a Citizen Review Panel in response to the Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) and State law requiring citizen oversight of the child protection system. CRBC's reviews emphasize policies, procedures, and cases pertaining to reports of child abuse and neglect. A local panel may be established in each jurisdiction. It reports its findings and recommendations to CRBC's State Board and to the local department of social services.

The reviews address five child welfare outcomes that are aligned with the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). For each review the panels decide if the outcome is substantially achieved, partially achieved, not achieved, or not applicable. CRBC has child protection panels in 11 jurisdictions. The jurisdictions are: Allegany, Anne Arundel, Queen Anne's, Montgomery, Talbot, Washington, and Worcester Counties and Baltimore City.

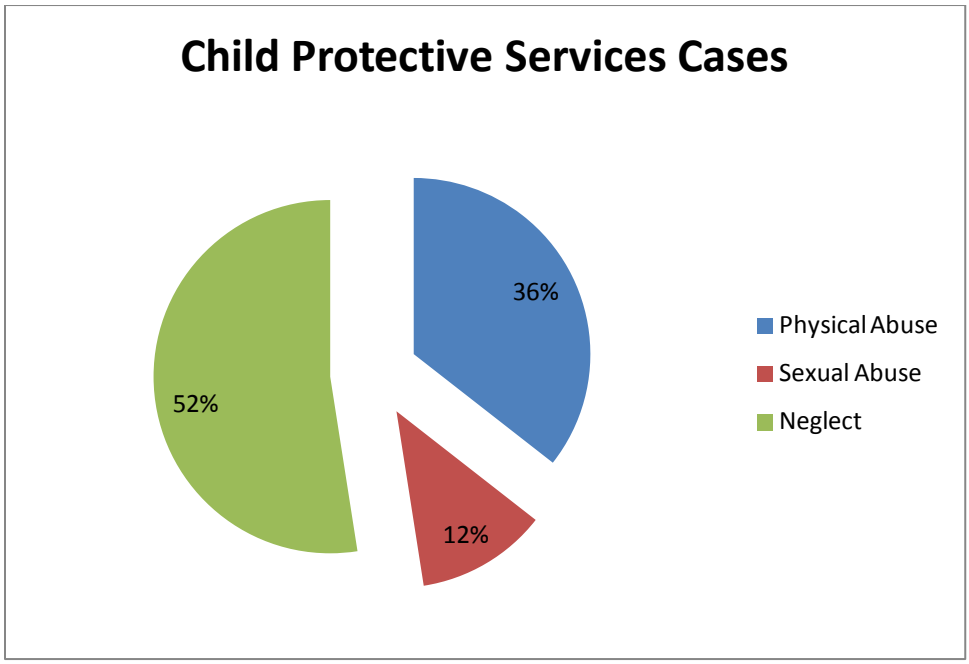
Outcome Area	Measure	Effectiveness Rating by Panel
Safety Outcome 1	Children and first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect	The outcome was: • Substantially achieved in 62.5% of cases • Partially achieved in 37.5% of cases
Safety Outcome 2	Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate	The outcome was: • Substantially achieved in 50% of cases • Partially achieved in 37.5% of cases • Not achieved in 12.5% of the cases

Outcome Area	Measure	Effectiveness Rating by Panel
Well Being Outcome 1	Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their needs	The outcome was: • Substantially achieved in 50% of cases • Partially achieved in 37% of the cases • Not achieved in 6.5% of the cases • Not applicable in 6.5% of the cases
Well Being Outcome 2	Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs	The outcome was: • Substantially achieved in 41.5% of the cases • Partially achieved in 7% of the cases • Not achieved in 10% of the cases • Not applicable in 41.5% of the cases
Well Being Outcome 3	Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs	The outcome was: • Substantially achieved in 45% of cases • Partially achieved in 10% of cases • Not achieved in 17% of cases • Not applicable in 28% of cases

Child Protective Services Statistics[5]

At the end of the fiscal year, there were five thousand five hundred and fourteen (5,514) open child protective services (CPS) investigations. Forty-one percent (2244) of these investigations were new allegations, received within 30 days.

CPS investigations are classified as allegations of neglect, physical abuse, or sexual abuse[6]. The graph below displays the statewide breakdown of allegation by category as of the end of fiscal year 2011. As shown, the total of all abuse cases is less than the neglect cases (48% vs. 52%)



[5] Maryland Statestat

[6] Mental Injury cases are recorded as either mental injury – neglect or mental injury- abuse. For CRBC reporting purposes the mental injury cases are classified as either neglect or abuse cases. Four of the total CPS cases were classified as mental injury cases (mental injury – neglect, 1 and mental injury – abuse, 3)

Recommendation Reports

After hearing case presentations from Case Workers, youth, families, and other advocates of the youth; CRBC board members spend a significant amount of time identifying recommendations to the local departments. The recommendations are individualized to each youth that is reviewed. The purpose of the recommendations is to advocate for youth who reside in out of home placements as well as provide another point of view to the Case Workers and the courts. Additional time and energy is spent by the Staff Assistants who complete recommendation reports for each review that is conducted. CRBC continues to struggle with the local department's response to recommendation reports. Statewide, CRBC received responses from 60% of the submitted recommendation reports. Of the total number of responses CRBC received, 24% were received on-time.

Jurisdiction	# Sent	#Received	#Received On-Time
Allegany	25	25	25
Anne Arundel	54	41	14
Baltimore City	701	336	2
Baltimore County	120	78	4
Calvert	14	9	9
Caroline	4	0	0
Carroll	0	0	0
Cecil	21	21	15
Charles	12	2	0
Dorchester	6	0	0
Frederick	34	23	7
Garrett	5	5	0
Harford	67	66	38
Howard	20	20	6
Kent	4	4	4
Montgomery	142	121	41
Prince George's	145	55	14
Queen Anne's	6	3	0
Saint Mary's	16	0	0
Somerset	15	15	15
Talbot	8	8	8
Washington	49	42	13
Wicomico	36	35	7
Worcester	6	0	0
TOTAL	**1510**	**909**	**222**

Based on the responses received, the local departments agreed with 94% (n=858) of CRBC's recommendations

Goals and Recommendations

Looking forward, CRBC has identified the following goals*:*

- CRBC will continue the goal of increasing the number of youth who attend reviews

- Strength in numbers! CRBC will continue to collaborate with other child protection panels with the United States and in Maryland.

- Increase the number of reviews conducted. Beginning fiscal year 2012, CRBC will amend the review criteria to include youth with plans of reunification in addition to current reviews of youth with plans of adoption or APPLA. Reviewing youth with plans of reunification will allow CRBC to monitor whether the local departments are offering appropriate services to families to foster reunification. Additionally, reviews will assess the frequency at which concurrent planning is occurring which will allow cases to move forward more quickly.

To improve the outcomes for children, youth, and families, DHR should:

- **Give youth the tools they need to succeed.** Statewide, only 53% of youth had a plan to complete high school or earn a GED. Only 31% had a plan for postsecondary education. When accounting for youth underage, only 26% of youth were working. While it can be difficult to motivate some youth, of those who were receiving post secondary education, only 56% of youth were receiving support services.

- **Give youth every opportunity to have permanence.** During reviews of youth with plans of APPLA, only 8% of youth had received adoption counseling in the most recent six months. CRBC requests that Social Workers revisit adoption and other permanency options (including guardianship) with youth and families often. *This has been an ongoing recommendation with no response or policy clarification from SSA.*

- **Provide pre-adoptive families with supports and relevant information.** During reviews, Social Workers identified that 37% of youth and their adoptive families would need post adoptive services. Additionally, only 57% of pre-adoptive families received the youth's social summary. Not having this information may put families at a disadvantage as they decide whether to adopt a youth. This may be particularly true as youth's behaviors or needs that families were unaware of present themselves.

- **Help families and youth adjust to adoption.** Statewide, pre-adoption counseling was provided to 63% of youth who are of legal age to consent to adoption. Additionally, youth in Frederick, Harford, Montgomery, Washington, and Wicomico Counties, not yet able to consent to adoption were offered and participated in adoption counseling. Providing this service to younger youth seems to be proactive and may benefit them both in the present and in the future. Youth unable to consent to adoption may still benefit from adoption counseling.

- **Empower youth and their families.** Statewide, only 38% of youth had a required FIM.

- **Youth should be encouraged to advocate for themselves.** Youth and interested parties have reported that Social Workers are discouraging youth from attending reviews. It has been reported that youth and others involved have been told CRBC reviews are "unimportant." Youth who attend reviews state they feel they are finally being heard.

Volunteers

CRBC's volunteers are a group of highly motivated and deeply committed individuals. They range from working professionals to retirees with expertise in child welfare, education, health, families, and young people. CRBC has new volunteers who began service during the fiscal year and those who have served since the inception 30 years ago. On average, volunteers have served 12 years.

Below is a list of our dedicated volunteers:

Delores Alexander
Nettie Anderson-Burrs
Doris Asti
Pam Bear
Anna Mae Becker
Roberta Berry
Juanita S. Bellamy
Fred Bowman
Brenda Boyd
Sarah R. Boyd-Walker
George Braxton
Barbara Brown
John Brown
Erwin Brown, Jr.
Otanya Brown
Michele Burnette
Heidi Busch
Frances Carr
Carol Carson
Rev. Cameron A. Carter
Bernice Cohen
Janet Cole
John Coller
Mary Jo Comer
Elaine Conley
Emily Cooke
Nicole Cooksey
Phyllis Cooper
Beverly Coporal
Sheila Craig-Whiteman
Barbara Crosby
Cherra Culbreath
Glenda Curtis
Tracey Curtis
Cheri Dallas
Jodi M. Davis
Kenneth Davis
Ardena Dixon
Sean Doherty
Jackie Donowitz
Margaret Drury
Scott Durum
Russell Ebright
Cheryl Emery
Tracey Estep
Sandra Farley
Rev. Mary Farnell
Ruth Fender
Allyn Fitzgerald
Robert Foster
Dianne Fox
Nina Gallant
Bernard Gibson
Dr. Walter Gill
Betty Golombek
Carolyn Goodrich
Nancy Graham
Prince Green
Carolyn Gregory
Lauretta Grier
Charles Grinnell
Sharon Guertler
Kirkland Hall
Stacia Hammond
Rosina Handy
Elaine Hanratty
Rebecca Hartman
Lettie Hayes
Ruth Hayn
Virginia Hedenreich
Doretha Henry
Leon Henry
Dee Hoffman
Wesley Hordge
Robert Horsey
Holly Hutchins
Reed Hutner
Judith Ingold
Beulah Jackson
Carmen Jackson
Kenneth C. Jackson, Sr.
Ernestine Jackson-Dunston
Helen Diane Jackson, MSW
Roslie Johnson
Portia Johnson-Ennels
Gilda Kahn
Mae Kastor, LCSW
Gail Kaufman
Dr. Fatai Kazeem
Stephen Keith
Darlene Kennedy
Pamela King
Janice Lake
Pat Latkovski
Lois W. Levy
Denise Lienesch
Mary MacClelland
Dian MacNichol
Joanne Magness
Cathy Mason
Joanne Masopust
Margaret Mattson
Dianne Mayfield
Patricia McFadden
Mary Lu McNeal
Rosemarie Mensuphy-Bey
Deanna Miles-Brown
Beatrice Moore
Suzanne Moran
Sadie Nelson
Judith Niedzielski

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