

**2008 ANNUAL REPORT
CHILD WELFARE UNIT
&
OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES**

**DIVISION OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES
NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The Division of Children and Family Services led some exciting efforts to improve Nebraska's Child Welfare and Juvenile Services system in 2008.

- July 2008: New contracts were put in place with five lead agencies to provide an array of safety and in-home services to DCFS clients, a reduction from over 100 contracts previously. This improves how the State purchases services for Child Welfare and Office of Juvenile Services clients.
- September 2008: DCFS released the Out-of-Home Care Reform Framework. This high-level plan outlined DCFS' intentions to expand lead agencies, to take a performance-based approach to contracting for services, including non-treatment care, and to require lead agencies responsible for that care to also provide limited coordination of the services DCFS clients receive.
- December 2008: DCFS released the Out-of-Home Care Reform Request for Qualifications, focusing on providing service coordination and the continuum of safety, in-home and out-of-home services. Full implementation is anticipated in January 2010.

As reform efforts continue, we will see better outcomes, a more responsive and accountable child welfare and juvenile services system, and better oversight of contractors by DCFS.

Efforts by the Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services to establish safety, permanency and well-being for Nebraska's children and families are also showing positive results.

- The number of children in state care continues to go down.
- The number of children safely leaving state care surpasses the number of children entering care.
- Nebraska was #1 in the nation in establishing permanency for children in foster care for long periods of time in 2008.
- Nebraska ranks within the 75th percentile nationally for adoption of children in foster care for 17 months or longer.
- The number of finalized adoptions increased 92.6%, from 297 adoptions in 2003 to 572 adoptions in 2008, resulting in Nebraska receiving an Adoption Incentive Bonus.
- The new Nebraska Safety Intervention System will help DCFS reduce the number of children in out-of-home care and provide safety services to allow more children to remain safely in their home.

Making the latest technology, automation and e-government solutions available is changing how we do business. I am encouraged that more people are taking advantage of the online application option that began in September 2008 through ACCESSNebraska. An online screening tool lets people can see what programs they may be eligible for, and they can apply for services at any time from any computer with Internet access.

We will continue to work with our partners to meet the continuing challenges of reducing the number of children in the state's care, accelerating reform of the child welfare system, and improving on the federal Child and Family Service Review outcomes of safety, permanency and well-being. We will collaborate and work together to improve the lives of the children and families who look to us for services and support.



Todd L. Reckling, Director
Division of Children & Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services

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ABOUT THIS REPORT

CW AND OJS ANNUAL REPORT 2008

This report is an overview of the Child Welfare Unit (CW) and the Office of Juvenile Services (OJS) performance according to the established goals and statistics from calendar year 2008. The CW and OJS is housed within The Division of Children and Family Services' Policy Section of the larger Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services. The mission of the Division of Children and Family Services is:

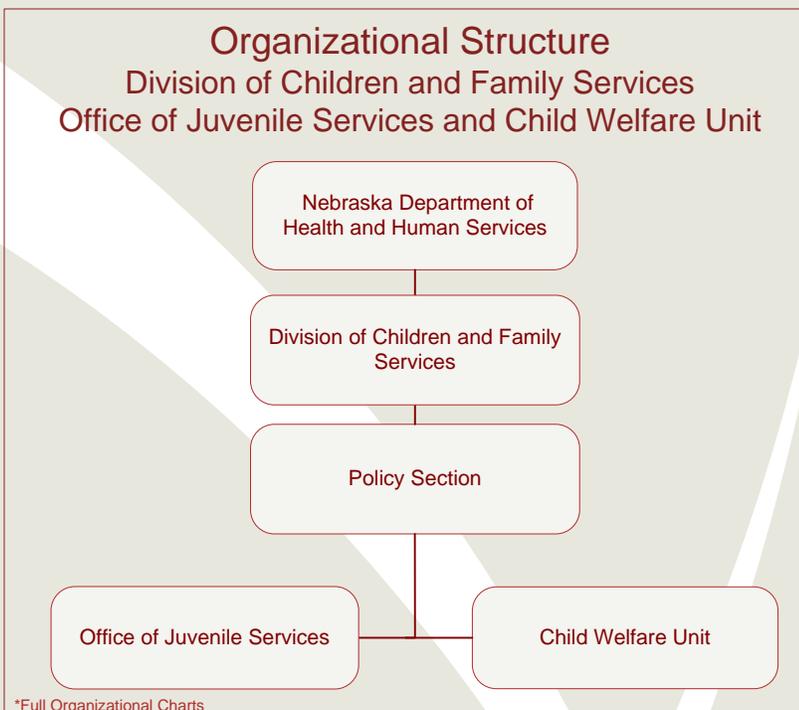
To provide the least disruptive services when needed, for only as long as needed to:

- give children the opportunity to succeed as adults
- help the elderly and disabled live with dignity and respect
- help families care for themselves

resulting in healthier families and safer, more prosperous communities

In addition to the overview, links are included throughout the document to various sources of information located on the File Tabs and the File Folders on the top right and bottom left of each page.

The data in this report reflect the calendar year beginning January 1, 2008 and ending December 31, 2008, unless otherwise specified. The data are from the Department of Health and Human Services' Nebraska Family Online Client User System (N-FOCUS), unless otherwise specified. N-FOCUS is a fully automated source of information regarding referrals, case-related activities, contracts and licensing actions, and other case-specific data.



INTRODUCTION

CW AND OJS 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

CW AND OJS

Nebraska Division of Children and Family Services Homepage

OJS Homepage

Child Welfare Unit Reference Page

In 2008, the Division of Children and Family Services began the process of improving the manner in which the State of Nebraska purchases services for Child Welfare and Office of Juvenile Services clients. More information is found on the 2009 Focus page under Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Reform or reference the In-Home and Safety Services and the Out-of-Home Care Reform link on the bottom of the page.

The **Child Welfare Unit (CW)** provides a broad spectrum of support and services that help to preserve families and enhance family strengths and functioning by actively engaging families in decision making, assessing their needs, and linking with resources. CW also provides support for services that children require when placed outside the home and in regards to other permanent living arrangements. CW services include:

- ✓ Processing child abuse and neglect reports
- ✓ Assessing safety and risk to the child
- ✓ Providing needed intervention when indicated in the assessment
- ✓ Foster care support and services
- ✓ Other levels of group home support and services
- ✓ Therapeutic living arrangements support and services
- ✓ Adoption
- ✓ Guardianship
- ✓ Other long-term arrangements

The Child Welfare Unit and the Office of Juvenile Services continue to work toward establishing three priority outcomes for the children and families we serve.

Priority Outcomes

SAFETY - Children are first and foremost protected from abuse and neglect, and safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

PERMANENCY - Children have permanency and stability in their living situations and the continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.

WELL-BEING - Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs. Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational, physical, and mental health needs.

To achieve these outcomes with the children and families we serve, we apply a philosophy of **Family-Centered Practice** to our work. Family-Centered Practice is a family-driven, community-oriented, strength-based, highly individualized planning and problem solving process.



The **Office of Juvenile Services (OJS)** provides services to youth who have committed delinquent acts through community-based services that combine behavior management, community reentry services, intensive supervision, restorative justice principles, and rehabilitative programming to meet the multiple needs of youth. OJS functions include:

- ✓ Obtaining and coordinating pre-disposition evaluations of youth who are committed to temporary custody by the courts
- ✓ Overseeing the administration of the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC)
- ✓ Informing disposition decisions and participating in parole revocation hearings
- ✓ Providing case management services to youth who are conditionally released from the YRTCs for parole supervision and youth who are committed by the courts for direct community supervision.

- ≡≡≡ In-Home and Safety Reform
- ≡≡≡ Out-of-Home Care Reform
- ≡≡≡ Service Areas

CHILD WELFARE UNIT

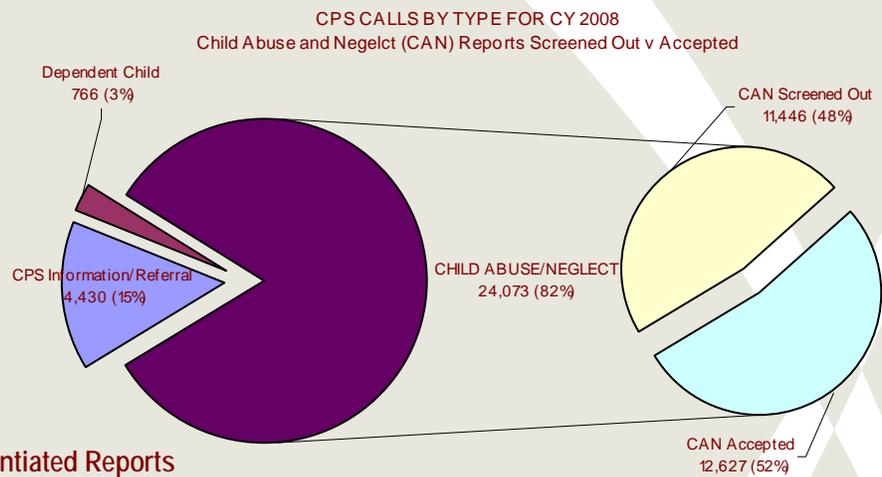
CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES (CPS)

Nebraska CPS Web page

Nebraska defines Child Abuse and Neglect as:

- ✓ A child who is abandoned or who lacks proper parental care
- ✓ Parent neglects or refuses to provide:
 - proper or necessary food, clothing and shelter and education;
 - special care made necessary by the mental condition of the child or
- ✓ A child who is in a situation or engages in an occupation dangerous to life or limb or injurious to the health or morals

In Nebraska, every person is a mandatory reporter for child abuse and neglect. If you have reasonable cause to believe child abuse and/or neglect is occurring please call **1-800-652-1999** to report it. **Child Abuse and Neglect reports can be made anonymously.**



Children Involved in Substantiated Reports

Calendar Year	Service Area	Abuse	Neglect	Sexual Abuse	Children Involved in Substantiated Reports
2008	Central	67	401	75	356
	Eastern	312	2,291	197	1,840
	Northern	78	578	67	482
	Southeast	222	2,619	94	1,828
	Western	62	445	65	396
	Total	741	6,334	498	4,902

Neglect is the most common complaint reported to DHHS. Nationally, child neglect is the most prevalent form of child maltreatment. Neglect is defined by different types such as physical, emotional, medical, and educational. Some indicators of child neglect include poor weight gain, inadequate medical care or a delay in obtaining medical treatment, or frequent absences from school.

DID YOU KNOW...

- ✓ Nebraska statutes allow children to be interviewed by law enforcement and/or DHHS without prior parental consent when investigating a child abuse and neglect complaint.
- ✓ You may be contacted by law enforcement or DHHS as a collateral contact. Collateral contacts are made with a person identified as having relevant information when a Child Abuse and Neglect investigation is occurring. If someone contacts you as a collateral contact please provide the necessary information to ensure child safety.

CPS Statistics

CHILD WELFARE UNIT

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Nebraska APS Page

National Adult Protective Services Association (NAPSA)

National Center on Elder Abuse (NCEA)

Nebraska Area Agency on Aging

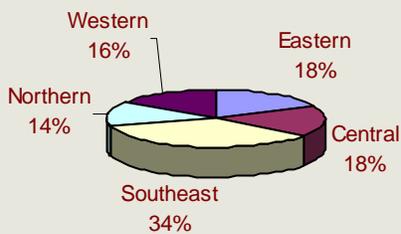
Adult Protective Services protects vulnerable adults who cannot protect themselves and have no one else willing or able to protect them. When providing intervention, Adult Protective Services promotes self-sufficiency, self-care and independent living and balances the duty to protect the safety of the vulnerable adult with the adult's right to self-determination.

If you have reasonable cause to believe a vulnerable adult is being abused, neglected, or exploited call

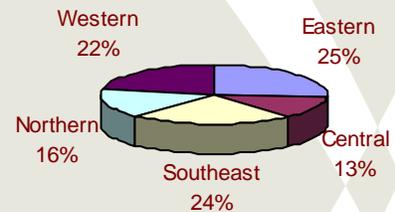
1-800-652-1999 or your local law enforcement.

Adult Protective Services receives reports of abuse, denial of essential services, including self-neglect and financial exploitation of vulnerable adults. Adult Protective Services received 9,098 intakes in 2008. Of the 9,098 calls, a total of 2,653 (29%) were accepted for investigation.

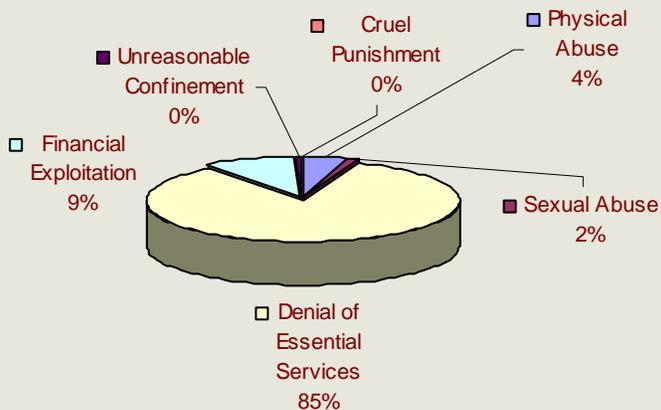
Total Intakes by Service Area



Intakes Accepted for Investigation by Service Area



Substantiated Allegations



There were 716 total substantiated allegations of abuse, denial of essential services, and exploitation.



DID YOU KNOW...

- ✓ Vulnerable adults are persons 18 and older who have a substantial functional or mental impairment or who have a guardian appointed.
- ✓ Autonomy, capacity and the ability to consent are key components in working with vulnerable adults.

- More APS Statistics
- Nebraska Health Care Association
- National Council on Independent Living
- Center for Independent Living

CHILD WELFARE UNIT

ADOPTION

ADOPTION

Nebraska Adoption Homepage

Requirements for Adoptive Parents

ICPC

There are instances in which family reunification is not in the best interests of children, despite the diligent efforts of workers and struggling families. In such cases adoption is the preferred placement option. The CW adoption population consists of adoption planning for children in the Department's custody when reunification is not a viable and safe option.

Adoption services provided by this program include:

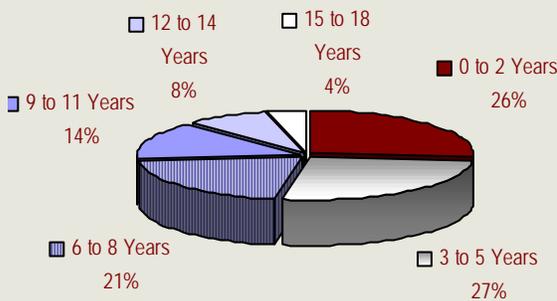
- ✓ Assessing the appropriateness of relatives, kinship, or those known to the child as potential adoptive placements.
- ✓ Approving and licensing adoptive families.
- ✓ Matching and placing children with adoptive families.
- ✓ Placing children in other states when appropriate through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).
- ✓ Supervising placements.
- ✓ Providing Subsidized Adoption for children who qualify as special needs.

Nebraska continues to increase the number of finalized adoptions and has received national recognition and funds for this accomplishment. Reference the Accomplishments 2008 page.



Nebraska matches children of all ages with adoptive families. In 2008, close to 50% of the children adopted were 6 years of age or older.

Age of Children Adopted During Calendar Year 2008



DID YOU KNOW...

Nebraska observed National Adoption Awareness Month in November 2008 by:

- ✓ Displaying pictures and narrative descriptions of children in need of adoption in the Nebraska State Office Building and the Federal Building in Kansas City.
- ✓ Requesting Governor Heineman sign a proclamation declaring November as Adoption Month in Nebraska.
- ✓ Coordinating with Nebraska Courts for the participation in National Adoption Day, November 15th, in which the courts are open for the purpose of finalizing adoptions in special ceremonies. 112 adoptions were finalized on this day.
- ✓ Recognizing adoptive families at events across the state on National Adoption Day.

Nebraska Adoption Agencies Association (NAAA): This organization is composed of private adoption agencies that are licensed to place in Nebraska. Their population focus is placing infants and counseling individuals involved in unplanned pregnancies.

National Adoption Exchange and Nebraska Adoption Exchange: The National Adoption Exchange is a federally funded web site www.AdoptUskids.org that is dedicated to matching children available for adoption from various states with potential adoptive families by posting pictures and descriptive narratives of children awaiting adoption. Nebraska Adoption Exchange also has these pictures and narratives posted on the Department's web site <http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/adoption/children.htm>.

Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association (NFAPA): This association provides services such as support and mentoring to adoptive parents. The population focus is support services for those individuals who adopt children who were in the state's custody. NFAPA has a statewide adoption conference every November, a toll-free contact number, provides pertinent adoption literature, an informative newsletter, and other services.

- ≡≡≡ Nebraska Adoption Exchange
- ≡≡≡ National Adoption Exchange
- ≡≡≡ NFAPA
- ≡≡≡ NAAA

CHILD WELFARE UNIT

FOSTER CARE

FOSTER CARE

Foster Care
Homepage

Foster Care in
Nebraska

Foster care is a safety service for children when they are unable to remain safely at home. The Department provides the child with a substitute family that is approved or licensed. The child's stay is temporary while the parents of these children get support in working toward the safe return of their child.

The main goal for children in foster care is to return them to their families. Foster parents are to help children and their parents achieve this goal. Foster family care is usually families helping families. When it is not possible to get the family back together, the goal becomes finding a permanent family that will become the child's parents. This is done by adoption or guardianship.

Types of Foster Care

There are three ways Nebraska provides foster care:

- ✓ **Emergency Foster Care:** Providing care for children in crisis. You would be available for a child on a 24-hour basis with no prior notice. The care can last a few hours to a maximum of 30 days.
- ✓ **Foster Care:** Providing temporary care for the child until the child is placed back with their parent or another permanent living situation is located.
- ✓ **Fos-Adopt:** Provide a foster home to a child that you would adopt if the child became legally free for adoption.



Becoming a Foster Parent

1-800-7PARENT

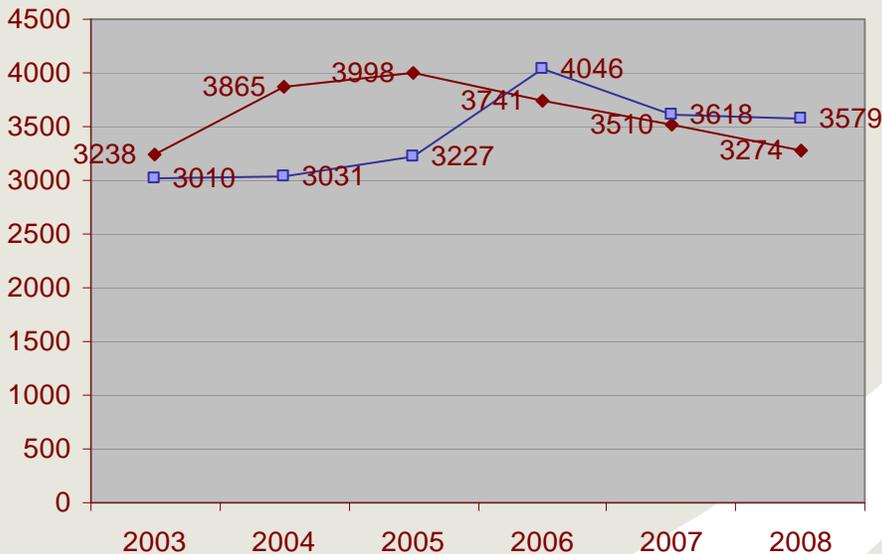
Foster parents participate as a team member for the child. Their goal is to work with the child, family and caseworker toward achieving the child's goals. A foster parent must:

- ✓ Meet the challenge of helping children grow and develop mentally and physically.
- ✓ Be able to provide care and supervision.
- ✓ Be able to work as part of a team with social workers and biological parents.
- ✓ Be skilled in creative problem-solving and listening.
- ✓ Be financially independent of the foster care payment.

To have foster children in your home you must have a state license. There is no fee for a foster care license. The requirements and process for licensure are available on this web site: www.dhhs.ne.gov/reg/t474.htm.

Foster Care Entries and Exits

◆ Entry □ Exit



DID YOU KNOW...

- ✓ Due to the commitment of DHHS to serve children and youth in-home rather than out-of-home, there is a reduction in the number of children entering foster care.
- ✓ There is also a reduction in state wards overall, see the 2008 Accomplishments page.

≡≡≡ Rates of Payment

≡≡≡ Foster Parent Training

≡≡≡ Foster Parent License

OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Office of Juvenile Services

The Office of Juvenile Services within the Division of Children and Family Services provides services, evaluation, case management and treatment services to court adjudicated delinquent youth who are committed by the courts for direct community supervision, are committed to the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC) and those that are conditionally released from YRTCs for parole supervision.

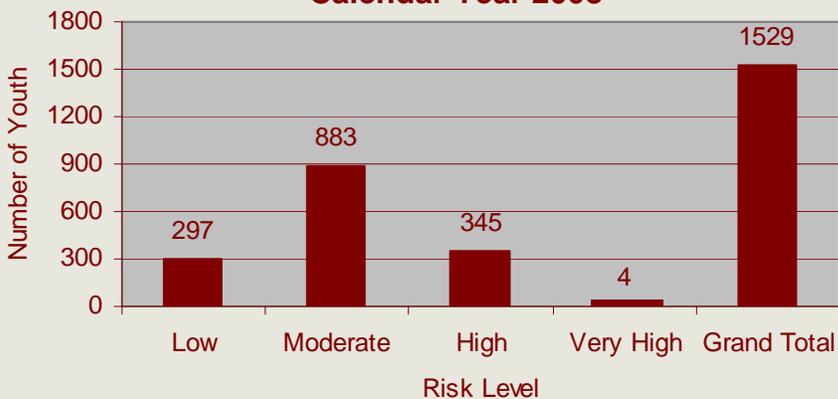
Parole Revocations and Court Recommitments: To ensure community safety OJS workers or Nebraska Juvenile Courts return juveniles to YRTCs who need that level of structure.

Office of Juvenile Services Evaluation: Enables the court to make informed decisions and aids OJS facility and program workers in establishing effective placement, supervision and treatment plans. An OJS evaluation is completed on all delinquent youth committed to OJS. The evaluation includes: 1) analysis of the current problem(s); 2) medical history and health check; 3) school and employment history; 4) drug and alcohol issues; 5) legal history; 6) family assessment; 7) psychiatric and psychological assessment; 8) collateral information; and 9) case formulation/clinical impressions. In 2008 a total of **1,615 youth** were referred to OJS by the courts for an OJS evaluation.



Interstate Compact on Juveniles (ICJ): Provides the procedures for the cooperative supervision of delinquent juveniles on probation or parole traveling to other states and the return of runaways, delinquents and escapees to the home state. Follow the ICJ link below to learn where ICJ offices are located in all 50 states and Nebraska's new initiative to activate a new compact.

**YLS/CMI Assessment Risk Levels
Calendar Year 2008**



Youth Level of Service/Case Management Inventory (YLS/CMI): The YLS/CMI is a multi-faceted assessment designed to help assess risk, need and responsivity factors, and includes a risk/needs assessment, professional override feature, and goal reports for delinquent youth. Deciding upon the proper level of service from the outset is crucial in working toward positive change in the offender. OJS juveniles receive the assessment at different stages of their commitment to OJS. In 2008 there were **1,529 YLS/CMI** assessments completed on delinquent youth.

DID YOU KNOW...

- ✓ Nebraska became the **37th** state to join the new Interstate Compact for Juveniles via LB 237 (2009).
- ✓ OJS is providing multiple services for youth through the Juvenile Services Youth Links Program in Omaha.
- ✓ OJS and State Probation entered into an Inter Agency Agreement to serve Douglas County juvenile delinquents in the capacity of providing a more coordinated system of services.

- ICJ; AJCA
- Youth Links
- Inter Agency Agreement

OFFICE OF JUVENILE SERVICES

YOUTH REHABILITATION TREATMENT CENTER

YRTC

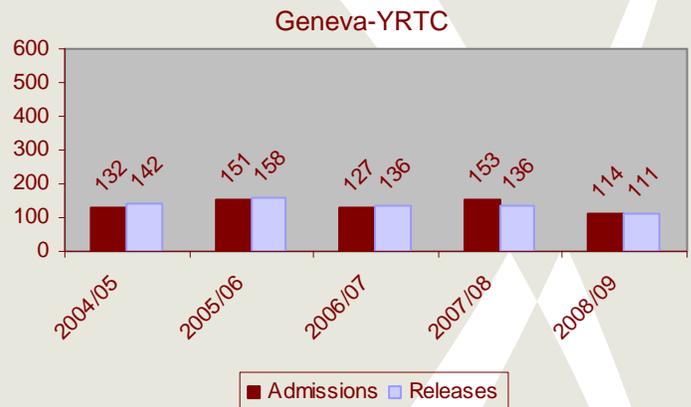
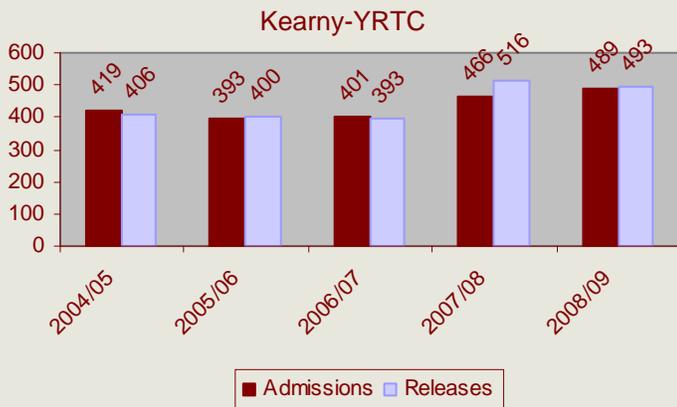
YRTC Geneva
Annual Report

YRTC Kearney
Annual Report

The Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Centers (YRTC) at Kearney and Geneva, Nebraska provide residential services, comprehensive programming and rehabilitation to youth between the ages of 12 and 18 who have been court adjudicated as delinquents and committed to state custody. At Kearney, the YRTC provides services for males, while Geneva-YRTC provides services for females. The mission of both Youth Rehabilitation & Treatment Centers is to help youth live better lives and protect society by providing safe, secure, and nurturing environments in which young men and women learn to develop a sense of self, and return to the community as productive, law-abiding citizens. To accomplish this both YRTCs provide a diverse programming response to meet individual's unique needs. YRTCs offer a variety of educational, recreation, community service, and treatment programs. Learn more about Kearney and Geneva YRTCs by accessing information from their 2008 annual reports. Review the parent manual and programming offered to youth.

The tables below show the total admissions to both facilities.

YRTC Juvenile Admissions and Releases



DID YOU KNOW...

- ✓ Geneva-YRTC was awarded renewal accreditation in 2008 through the American Correctional Association. ACA staff reviewed 431 national standards, YRTC was found to be in compliance with 99.3% of the essential standards and 100% of the mandatory standards.
- ✓ Kearney-YRTC will have its American Correctional Association renewal in Fall 2009.
- ✓ At Kearney-YRTC "Today's Father Program" has been implemented and provides education and support for the young fathers and their children.
- ✓ YRTCs were recognized by the National Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators following the April 2009 Performance Based Standards data collection. The recognition was based on YRTCs meeting Critical Outcomes and required PbS process and methodology at the national level.
- ✓ YRTCs initiated a consultant contract for Motivational Interviewing and have completed the first two stages toward having multiple certified campus trainers. YRTCs will be implementing Train the Trainer training for Motivational Interviewing to all direct care staff.



≡≡≡ YRTC- Geneva

≡≡≡ YRTC- Kearney

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2008

Children's Outcomes Measured
in Protection and Safety Statistics
(COMPASS)

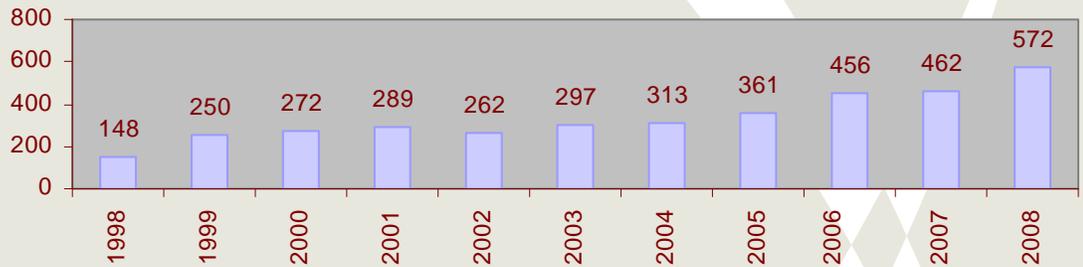
Permanency

Nebraska surpassed two federal measures and ranks #1 in the nation for achieving permanency for children in care for long periods of time.

- ✓ Timeliness of Adoption is being met. The national standard is 106.4 and in December of 2008 Nebraska was at 112.43.
- ✓ Permanency of Children in Foster Care is also being met. The national standard is 121.7 and Nebraska was at 154.82 in December 2008.

Adoption

Adoptions Finalized by Calendar Year



- ✓ Nebraska increased the number of finalized adoptions by 92.6% from 2003 to 2008
- ✓ Nebraska received an Adoption Incentive Bonus in 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2008

Reduce Number of State Wards

Nebraska continues to make progress on its goal to move children to a permanent home and thus lowering the number of state wards. 2008 marks the third consecutive year in which the number of children safely exiting state care surpassed the number of children entering care.

- ✓ 2008 demonstrated an 16.6% decrease in number of wards from all-time high in April 2006 to 6506 state wards in 2008 and is the lowest number since October 2003
- ✓ As of 2008, 4,227 children are in out-of-home care, the lowest number since the state began collecting this data in January 2001

"Mothers and Babies"

Geneva-YRTC "Mothers and Babies Program" staff member was recognized as being "**The Best in the Business**" by the American Correctional Association. The Mother & Babies program was initiated about 2 ½ years ago and continues to provide invaluable support and education to the young mothers and their children.

- Other Data and Reports
- Administration and Policy Memos

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Contracts

The vision of DHHS-CFS is to ensure the safety of children, reduce the percentage of children and youth in out-of-home care, reduce the length of time children and youth remain in out-of-home care, provide safe permanency for children in a timely manner and provide for community safety.

Improve on the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR)

Outcomes of:

- ✓ Safety
- ✓ Permanency
- ✓ Well-being

In response to the onsite CFSR in July 2008, a Program Improvement Plan was created to address the improvement of these outcomes.

CFSR

Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Reform

CW and OJS announced plans and are taking steps to improve services to children, youth, and their families by contracting for the full array of safety, in-home and out-of-home (non-treatment) services and service coordination from selected lead providers. More information is available under the Out-of-Home Care Reform: Framework link below.

The Nebraska Safety Intervention System (NSIS) was developed with the assistance of the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services to improve our safety interventions with children and families throughout the State and was fully implemented by the Spring of 2008.

NSIS

YRTC

YRTCs will ensure work to implement cognitive, evidence based treatment programming for delinquent juveniles.

YRTCs will continue to make improvements to the Youth Treatment Programs that include daily youth programming and treatment.

☰ Child Welfare and Juvenile Services Reform

☰ NSIS

☰ YRTC



GENERAL CONTACT INFORMATION

DHHS General Information (402) 471-3121
Child/Adult Abuse/Neglect Hotline (800) 652-1999

childrenandfamilyservices@nebraska.gov
http://www.dhhs.ne.gov/Children_Family_Services/

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