## Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) Program

 **189 FCRB Volunteers**

**FY17**

**29 Local Review Boards**

**reviewed cases in 50 counties**

**1,148 reviews held for 1,899 children \***

\* This is not unique children as some children have more than one review in a year.

**Donated 12,742 hours**

**Donated 20,630 miles**

**Volunteer Contribution: $645,000**

**Background Info (if needed)**

Local Foster Care Review Boards are mandated by Iowa Code §237.20 to review the case of each child receiving foster care assigned to the local board by the state board to determine whether satisfactory progress is being made toward the goals of the case permanency plan pursuant to section §237.22. Exhibit E of our Memorandum of Understanding outlines the responsibilities of the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), as it relates to the periodic status reviews of children placed in foster care. As part of the MOU, DHS reimburses DIA for the federal share for all Child Advocacy Board costs associated with the LFCRB and DIA administrative costs involved for work performed which qualifies for federal financial participation (FFP) under Title IV-E. This includes costs associated with administering and conducting foster care administrative reviews, including the training of volunteers and personnel. As a program of ICAB, the FCRB Program receives appropriated funding from the Iowa Legislature. This appropriation pays staff salaries, benefits and other system needs such as technology, equipment and administrative resources.

Foster Care Review Board volunteers serve on local community boards that meet regularly to review case plans, hear from interested parties, and provide the Court and DHS with their findings and recommendations about the safety, well-being and permanency of children from their communities who are removed from parental custody.

**FY17 FCRB Program Results:**

**Participation of Interested Parties at Local Reviews**

Participation of Interested Parties (IP) is essential for an effective foster care review in order for board members to be well-informed about the case and what is happening in the life of the child before making recommendations to the court and interested parties. Data continues to show a need to improve participation.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Interested Party** | **Participation Rate** |
| Child’s Attorney and/or GAL | 30% |
| DHS | 85% |
| Parents | 25% |
| Youth, 14+ | 45% |
| Others | 35% |

**Timeliness of Review Reports**

“Timeliness of review reports” is a required quarterly report of DIA-DHS MOU. The MOU states, “ In 90% of the foster care cases reviewed by a LFCRB, LFCRB review reports will be provided to the juvenile court, DHS caseworker and all interested parties within 15 days of the foster care administrative review pursuant to Iowa Code §237.20(2)(a).” The average compliance in FY17 was 97.95%.

**Foster Care Review Board CFSR Findings**

DHS uses a modified Child and Family Services Review (CSFR) approach to help measure achievements for children in Iowa’s foster care system. Twenty (20) federal child welfare benchmarks are reported on by the trained FCRB volunteers at the time each youth receives a review. Those benchmarks relate to important safety, permanency and well-being issues for foster youth to determine child welfare systems strengths and areas needing to be strengthened. ICAB analyzed data gathered by the local Foster Care Review Boards in 858 CFSR reviews of children conducted between January – June 2017. The FCRB members found 100% success on 7 of the measures and more than 85% success on 9 other measures. Areas of concern are with 1) achieving reunification/guardianship/relative placement within 12 months (53%), 2) finalized adoption within 24 months (55%) and filing of termination petitions in 15 of 22 months cases (61%).

**Barriers to Permanency**

Local boards identified approximately 3,600 barriers in cases reviewed between July 2016 – June 2017.

**Top 3 Statewide Barriers to Permanency identified by local boards in FY17**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Barrier to Permanency | # of times reported | % of overall barriers |
| Parent: Chronic physical or mental health issues, substance abuse | **876** | **24%** |
| Parent: Family economic problems (housing, transportation, etc) | **376** | **10.3%** |
| Child: Chronic physical or mental health issues, substance abuse | **356** | **9.7%** |

**Comment Card Results**

Following each individual review, all groups of participants are given the opportunity to provide feedback about the reviews. The Boards and staff are diligent in their efforts to be respectful and thoughtful in their work. This set of survey responses documents that more than 97% of participants agree or strongly agree they were listened to and treated respectfully.

|  |
| --- |
| **The board listened to my comments and concerns and treated me respectfully.** |
| **Relation to Child** | **Strongly Agree** | **Agree** | **Neutral** | **Disagree** | **Strongly Disagree** | **Grand Total** |
| CASA | 94.5% | 5.5% |   |   |   | 109 |
| Child's Attorney | 100.0% |   |   |   |   | 5 |
| DHS | 76.2% | 22.1% | 1.6% | 0.2% |   | 638 |
| Foster parent | 88.5% | 10.4% | 0.3% |   | 0.8% | 356 |
| GAL | 86.6% | 11.8% | 1.7% |   |   | 119 |
| Other | 69.3% | 24.5% | 4.7% | 0.5% | 1.0% | 192 |
| Parent | 66.3% | 26.7% | 5.8% |   | 1.3% | 240 |
| Parent's Attorney | 78.0% | 19.5% | 2.4% |   |   | 123 |
| Provider | 83.3% | 14.6% | 1.7% |   | 0.4% | 239 |
| Youth | 79.3% | 19.0% | 1.7% |   |   | 58 |
| **Grand Total** | **79.1%** | **18.2%** | **2.1%** | **0.1%** | **0.4%** | **2079** |

**Suspension of Local Boards – FY17, Quarter 4**

Due to a budget cut in the latter part of FY17, CAB needed to suspend 5 local boards during the final quarter, as well as suspend contracts for independent facilitators. The suspended boards included: Bremer Cluster, Cedar-Muscatine, Des Moines, Henry-Louisa and Lee. During those three months, DHS had administrative review responsibility of 40 children projected for foster care reviews.

Supporting CFSR Data Table

**Jan-June 2017 Foster Care Review Board CFSR Findings**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| CFSR Finding | # of responses | Yes Responses | PercentYes |
| Re-entry was not within 12 months of a prior episode | 505 | 485 | 96% |
| FC placement stable, with any changes consistent with achieving goal | 832 | 804 | 97% |
| The current goal matches the child’s need for a permanent home | 837 | 761 | 91% |
| If foster care entry in past 6 months, CPP goal was written within 60 days | 279 | 260 | 93% |
| Reunification/Guardianship/Relative placement on target for 12 months | 398 | 209 | 53% |
| Adoption expected within 24 months of most recent entry to Foster Care | 289 | 158 | 55% |
| APPLA – Current placement committed to provide care until majority age | 85 | 67 | 79% |
| For child age 14, transition planning and independent living skills provided | 125 | 110 | 88% |
| TPR was sought by filing in 15 of 22 months, unless compelling reason | 237 | 145 | 61% |
| FC placement within 1 hour travel from parent of removal | 594 | 571 | 96% |
| Placement with siblings (up to 4 in same home) unless safety concerns | 539 | 479 | 89% |
| Concerted efforts for a child visits with parents and siblings in FC unless safety concerns | 686 | 680 | 99% |
| Concerted efforts to preserve a child’s connections with school, clubs, faith | 751 | 701 | 93% |
| Inquired about Indian heritage, notified tribe, and followed ICWA placement preference | 816 | 816 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts made to seek relative placement, maternal and paternal | 738 | 738 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts to promote and support positive relationships of child and parents | 621 | 621 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts made to involve child and parents in case planning process | 664 | 664 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts to meet child’s educational needs | 822 | 822 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts to meet child’s physical and dental health needs | 855 | 855 | 100% |
| Concerted efforts to meet child’s mental and behavioral health needs, including substance abuse | 705 | 705 | 100% |