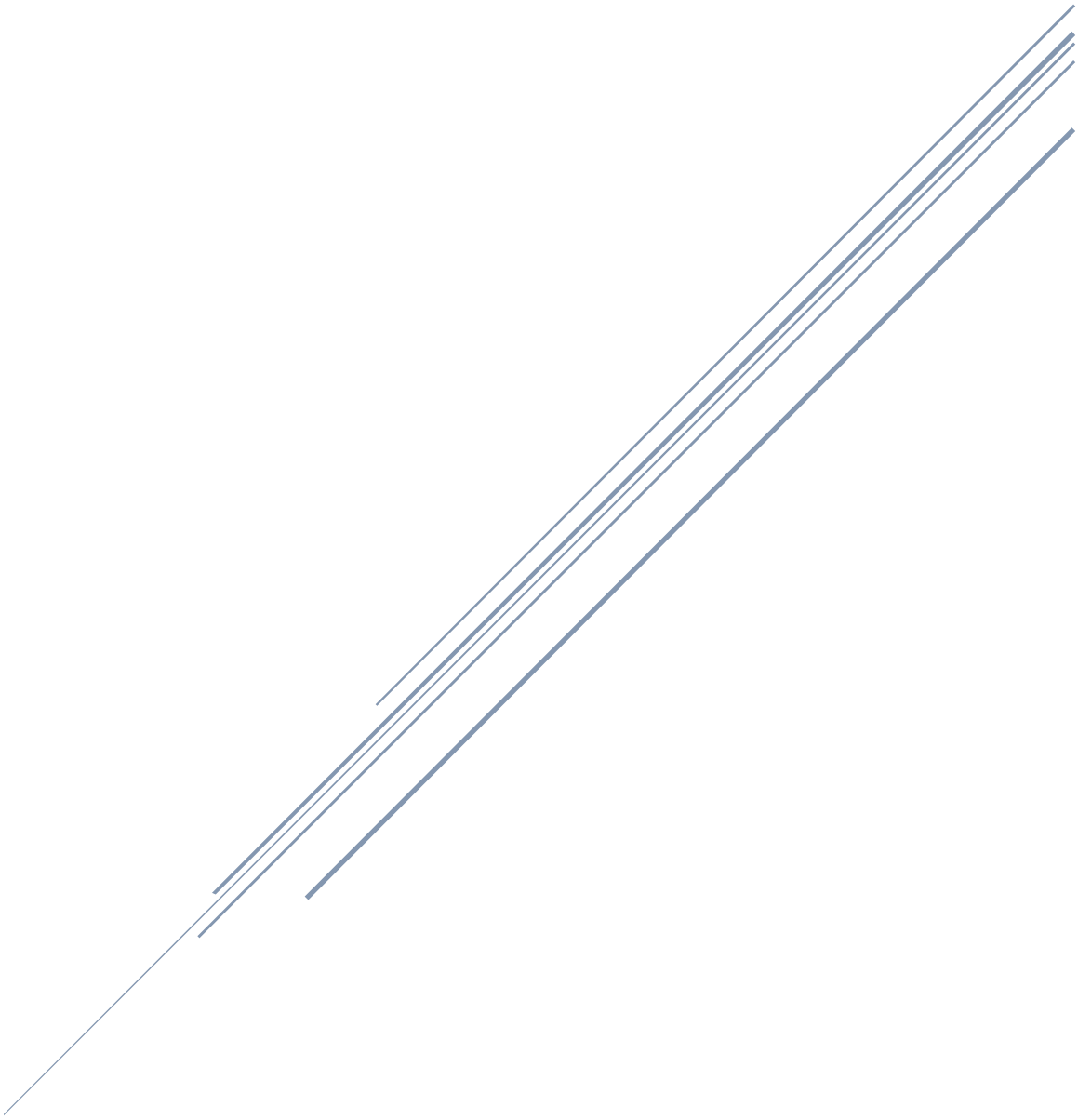
REPORT ON RELATIVE AND FICTIVE KIN PLACEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023



Cabinet for Health and Family Services
Department for Community Based Services

Introduction

Kentucky Revised Statute (KRS) 605.120(5) mandates that the Cabinet for Health and Family Services (CHFS/cabinet) track and analyze data on relative and fictive kin caregiver placements and submit a report by September 30, 2020, and upon request thereafter. This report provides data collected by the Department for Community Based Services (DCBS/department) concerning relative and fictive kin caregivers and children in their care, including demographics, custodial options selected, services provided, and permanency benchmarks for the children in their homes.

Relative and Fictive Kin Caregiver Placements

There are several legal options available to a prospective relative or fictive kin caregiver: family-arranged care through informal arrangements, court-ordered custody to the relative or fictive kin caregiver, and court-ordered custody to the cabinet. An adoptive placement can also be arranged with a relative or fictive kin caregiver. This can be informally arranged by the parents or more formally through the courts, parents, and DCBS. Relative and fictive kin caregivers have a choice as to which kind of caregiver they want to be classified as, which impacts the types of assistance they can receive.

Relative or fictive kin caregivers of children in DCBS custody have the option of becoming certified as a child-specific or basic foster parent since DCBS developed this new foster home type through administrative regulation in 2019. As of August 1, 2023, there were 2,014 children placed with relative and fictive kin caregivers across all available placement types. There were 432 children placed through the department in the home of a relative or fictive kin caregiver that was approved as a DCBS foster home (TWS-058 Foster Care Fact Sheet, July 30, 2023), and 616 children placed with relative and fictive kin caregivers in homes that are in the process of becoming certified foster parents (TWS-058 Children in Placement, July 30, 2023). Currently, 17% of the out-of-home care (OOHC) population is represented by children who are placed with relative and fictive kin caregivers. The ability to become foster parents allows relatives and fictive kin caregivers to receive financial support, specialized training, and ongoing support. The remaining 1,150 children were placed directly into the custody of the relative or fictive kin caregiver (TWS-M383S, In-Home Placement, August 1, 2023). This report will provide analysis of the 1,150 children and the 931 identified relative and fictive kin caregivers provided by the TWS-M383S, In-Home Placement report from August 1, 2023.

As of August 1, 2023, there were 1,150 children who were removed from their home of origin and placed with relatives or fictive kin, and 931 relative and fictive kin caregivers that accepted some form of custody (TWS-M383S, In-Home Placement, August 1, 2023). While 79% of caregivers remain over the age of 35, there was a change in the age groups 36 to 55 and 56 and above. There was an increase in caregivers over the age of 56 (39.81%), and a decrease in caregivers age 36 to 55 (39.48%). Last year, age 36 to 55 made up 42% of caregivers. Age 18 to 35 remains at approximately 20%.

When examining race among caregivers and children, data shows and remains consistent with most being Caucasian. While there is still a low percentage of Hispanic children placed with caregivers, there is an even lower percentage of Hispanic caregivers in 2023 (0.93%), as compared

to 2022. Approximately 90% are Caucasian, five percent are African American, two percent are multiracial, with three percent undisclosed. The demographic data on children illustrates that approximately 82% are Caucasian, five percent are African American, 11% are multiracial, and two percent are unable to be determined. There have been no significant statistical changes with this data over the course of this report, including the continuation of one child identified as American Indian this year.

In 2023, there was a statistical shift in sex, with more females in placement with relative or fictive kin caregivers compared to males. Approximately 52% of children in placements were female, while 48% were male. Compared to 2022, the percentages flipped. The most represented age of children placed with a caregiver continues to be zero to five, 40%. Children ages six to 11 remained slightly higher than youth aged 12-18. From 2022, age zero to five reduced by three percent, while representation of age six to 11 and 12 to 18 increased.

Custodial arrangements for children in the care of relative and fictive kin caregivers continue to show that caregivers mostly receive temporary custody at approximately 79%. Safety plan placements, previously known as prevention plan placements, make up approximately 21% of arrangements, while Power of Attorney and guardianship remain the least used arrangements.

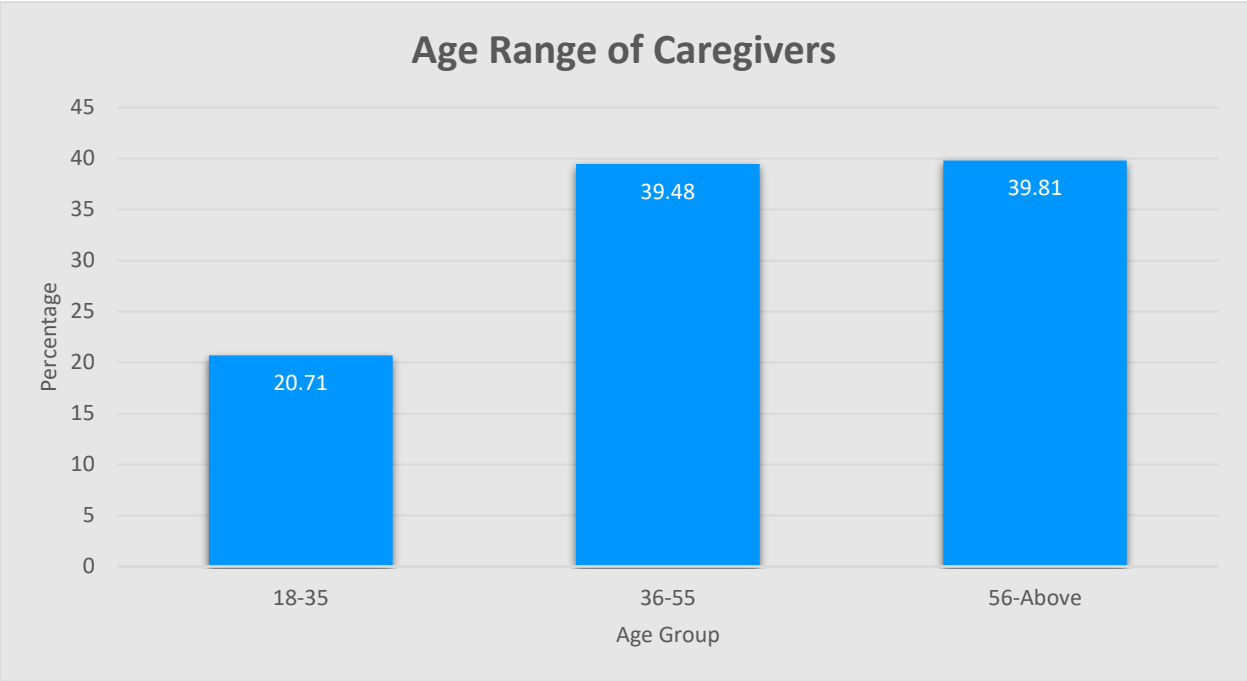
During this reporting period, 819 children achieved permanency. Permanency with a relative or fictive kin caregiver was achieved for 64% of children, while reunification with a parent or primary caregiver was 35%. One percent of youth transitioned from OOHC before permanency could be achieved. This data has remained consistent showing that caregivers, more than half the time, become permanent placements.

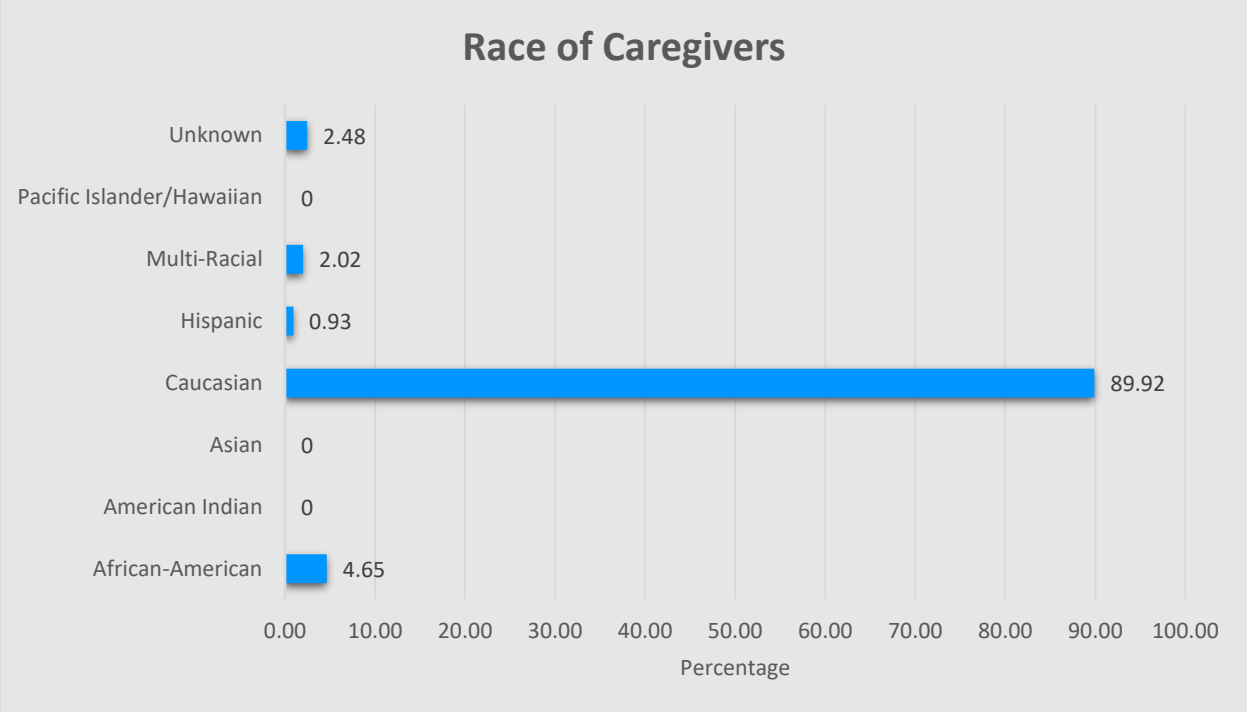
During this period, 125 youth endured a placement move with the majority being placed with another relative or fictive kin caregiver (85%), and 13% entered OOHC. One child each entered hospitalization or a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) placement.

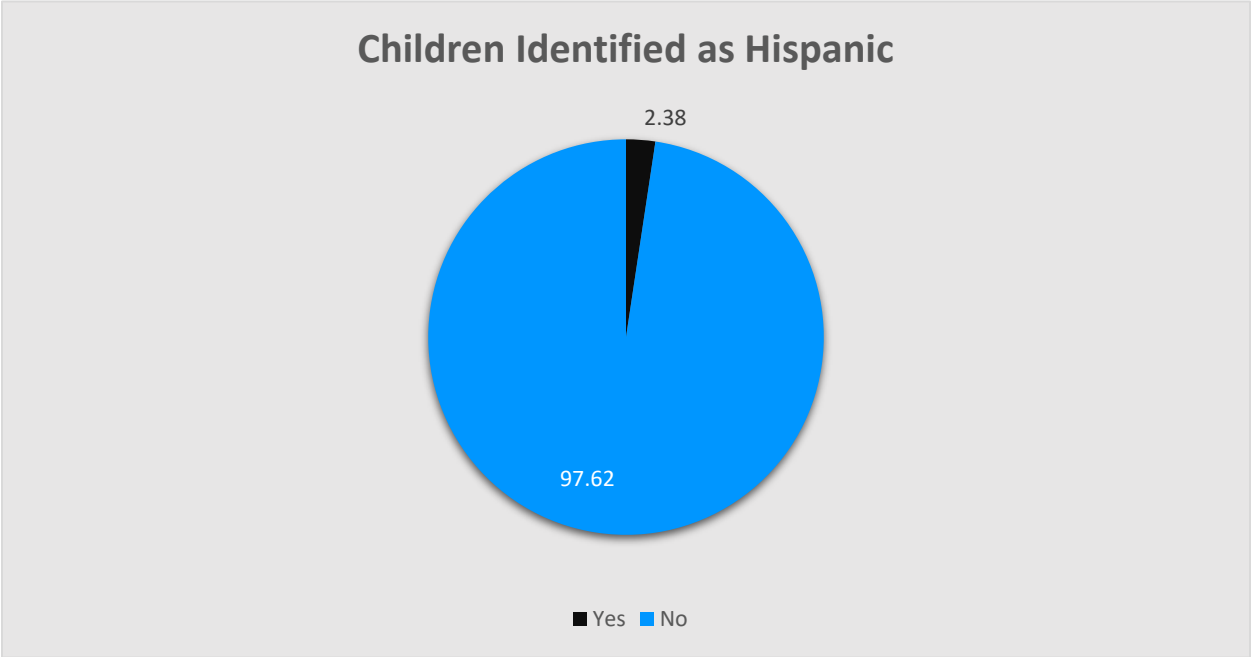
Service provision data is divided into two groups based upon the caregiver relationship to the child - relative or fictive kin. Due to state and federal restrictions, there is one provision fictive kin caregivers are not eligible for, the Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP), which is federally funded.

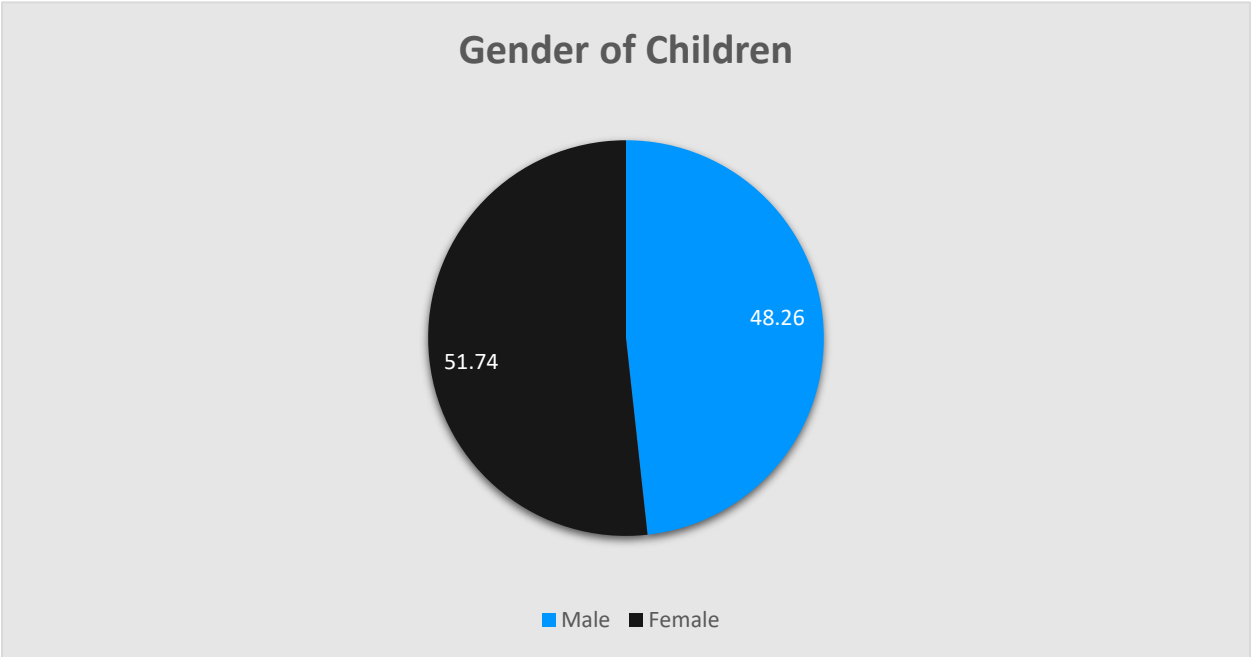
When looking at services offered and accepted, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was the highest provision accepted by families (53%). This was followed by Medicaid as being the next highest provision accepted by families (52%). This report is now capturing Kentucky-Kinship Information, Navigation, and Support (KY-KINS) as a service provision for relative and fictive kin caregivers. It is anticipated there will be an increase in utilization of this peer-to-peer support program now that it is available statewide.

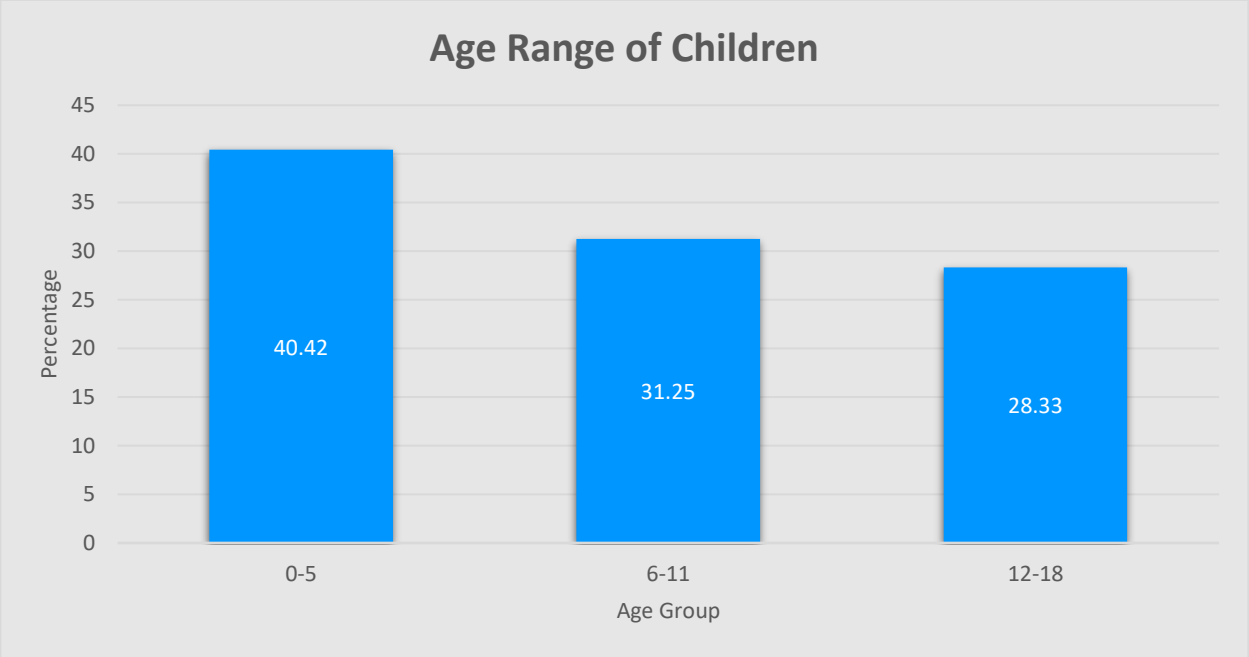
Data collected is illustrated in the graphs below. Source: TWS-M383S August 1, 2023

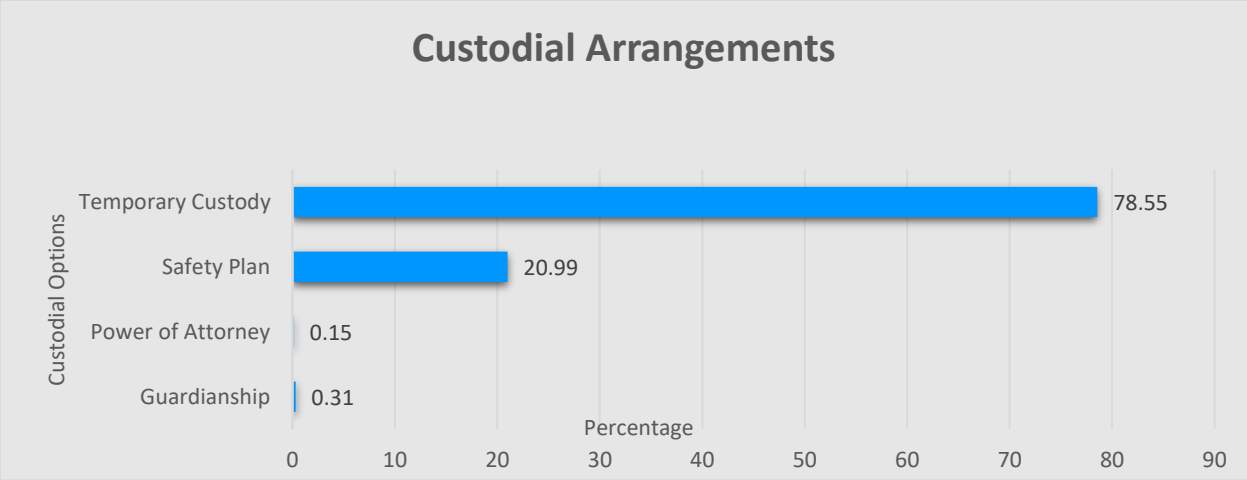


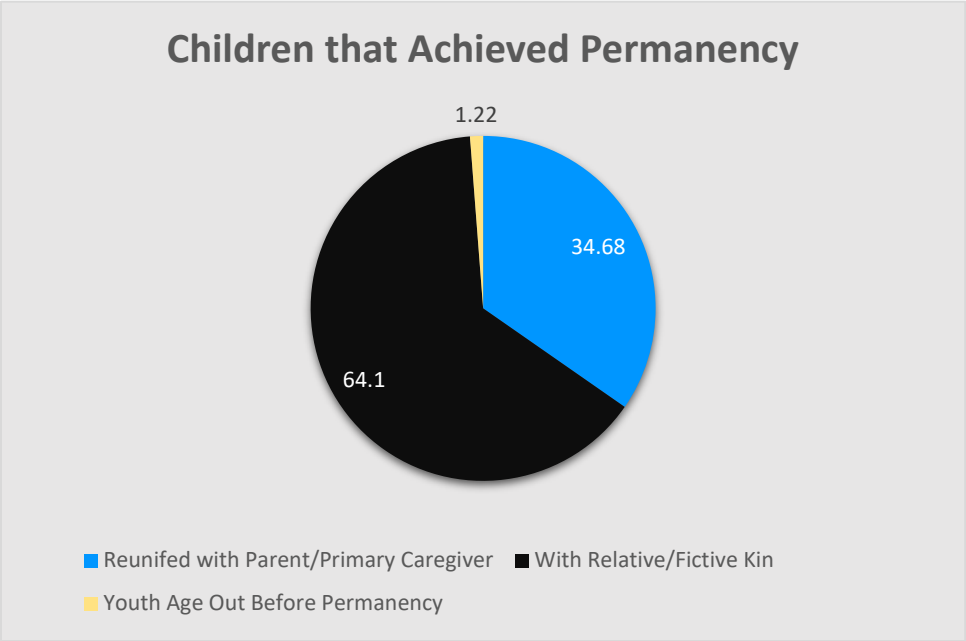


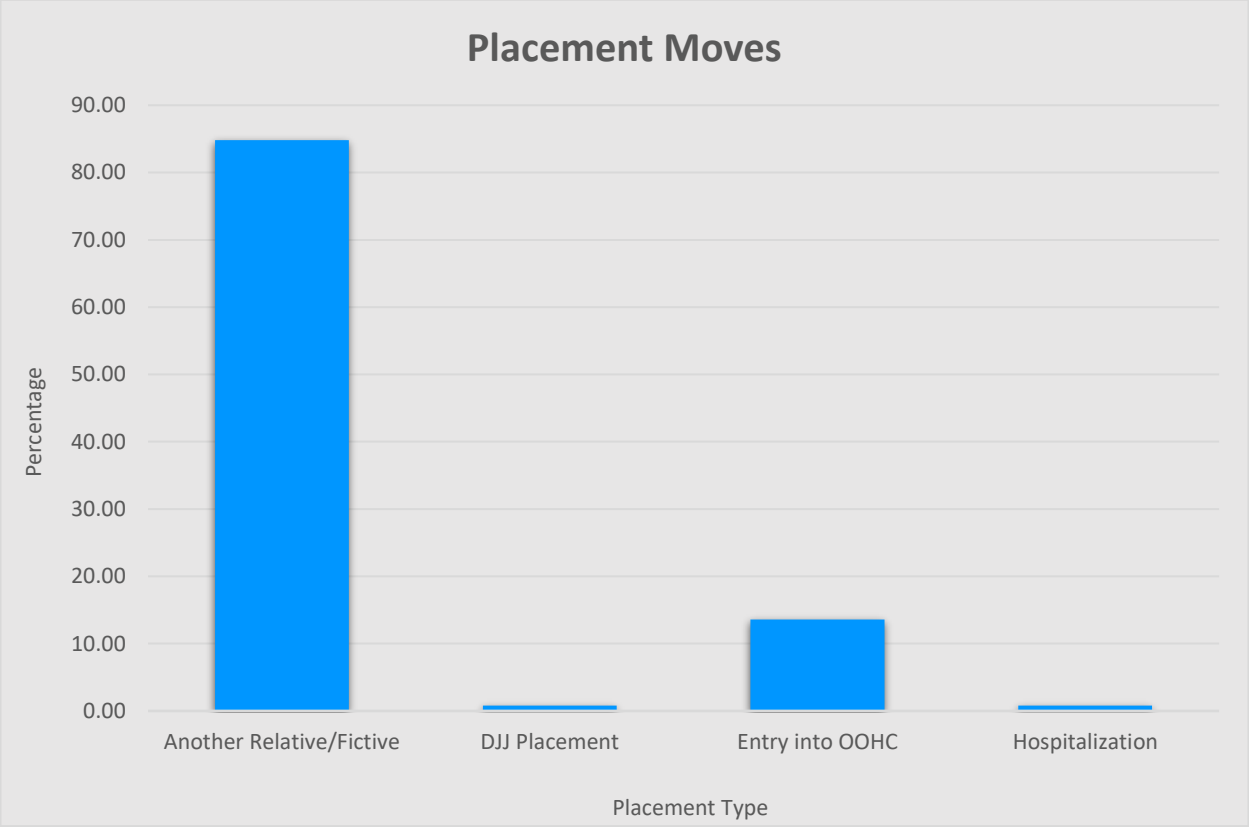

Children Identified as Hispanic
2.38
97.62
Yes
No

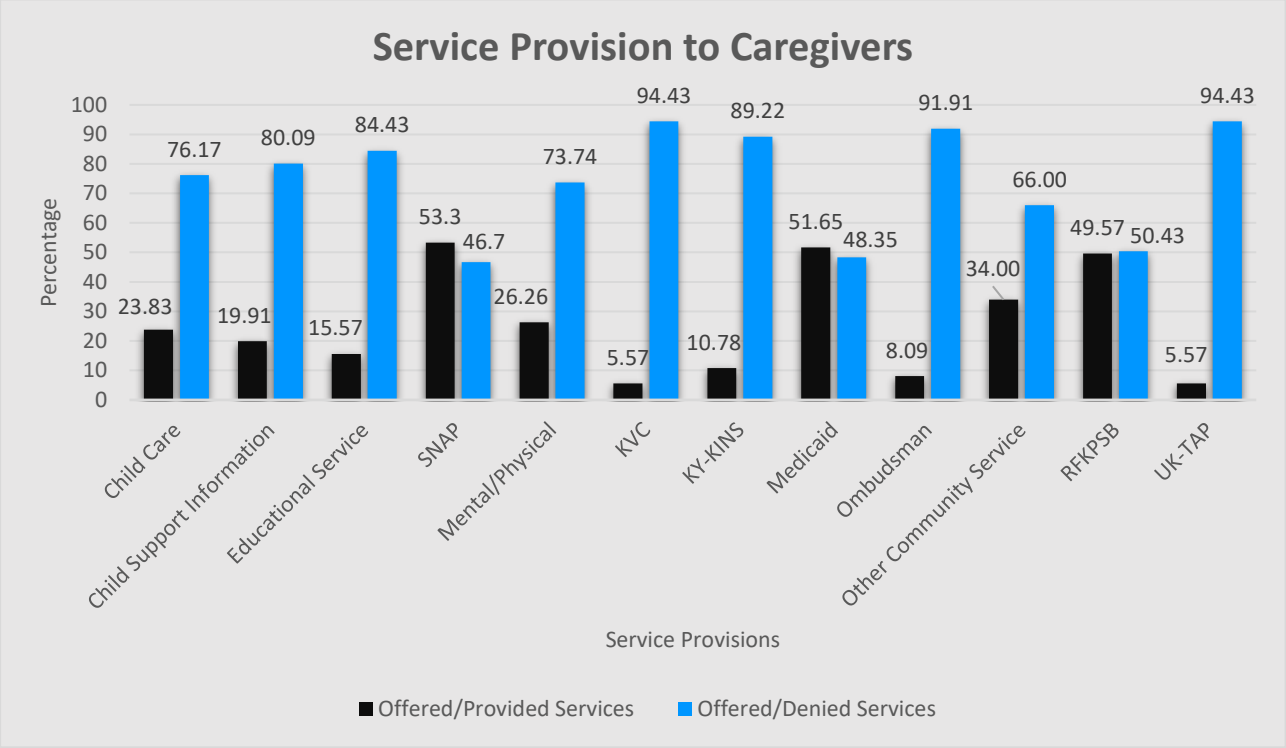

Gender of Children
48.26
51.74
Male
Female

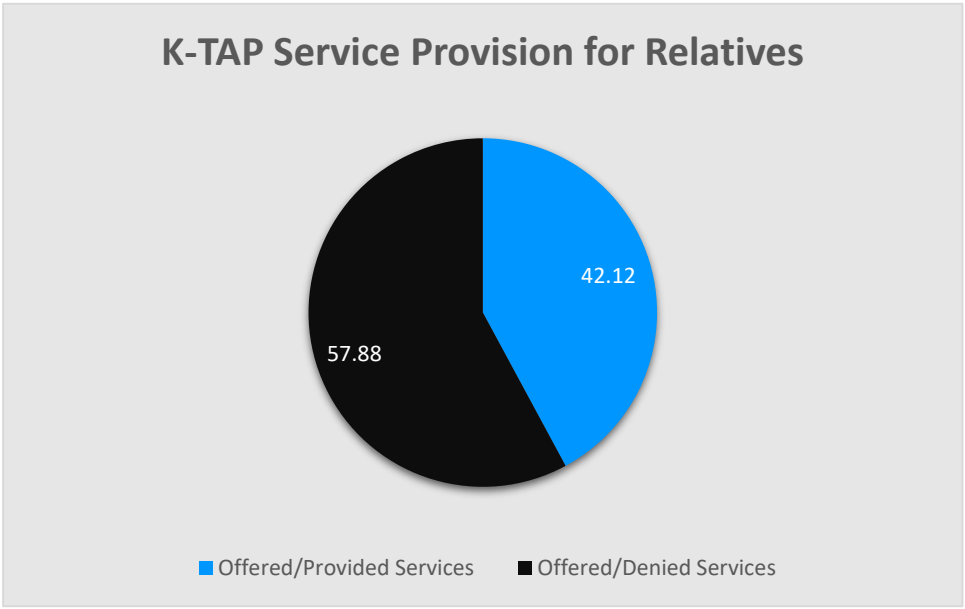

Age Range of Children
45
40
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
Percentage
40.42
31.25
28.33
0-5
6-11
12-18
Age Group


Custodial Arrangements
Custodial Options
Temporary Custody
Safety Plan
Power of Attorney
Guardianship
78.55
20.99
0.15
0.31
Percentage
0
10
20
30
40
50
60
70
80
90


Children that Achieved Permanency
1.22
34.68
64.1
Reunifed with Parent/Primary Caregiver
With Relative/Fictive Kin
Youth Age Out Before Permanency


Placement Moves
90.00
80.00
70.00
60.00
50.00
40.00
30.00
20.00
10.00
0.00
Percentage
Another Relative/Fictive
DJJ Placement
Entry into OOHC
Hospitalization
Placement Type


Service Provision to Caregivers
Percentage
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
23.83
76.17
19.91
80.09
15.57
84.43
53.3
46.7
26.26
73.74
5.57
94.43
10.78
89.22
51.65
48.35
8.09
91.91
34.00
66.00
49.57
50.43
5.57
94.43
Child Care
Child Support Information
Educational Service
SNAP
Mental/Physical
KVC
KY-KINS
Medicaid
Ombudsman
Other Community Service
RFKPSB
UK-TAP
Service Provisions
Offered/Provided Services
Offered/Denied Services


K-TAP Service Provision for Relatives
42.12
57.88
Offered/Provided Services
Offered/Denied Services

Training

Efforts to increase permanency and secure service provisions in local communities are being developed and deployed in pilot sites across the state. DCBS has partnered with the University of Kentucky Training and Research Center (UK-TRC) to bolster support for relative and fictive kin caregivers through the creation of the KY-KINS program. KY-KINS is designed to have a positive effect on permanency benchmarks and outcomes for children placed with relative and fictive kin caregivers. KY-KINS served its first families on April 28, 2021, within the Cumberland and Salt River Trail service regions. Since then, KY-KINS has been made available statewide.

Between the dates of August 1, 2022, and August 1, 2023, the program received 179 referrals from DCBS and 18 self-registrations, totaling 197 referrals. The program is currently serving 69 families and has served 132 families during this period.

In addition to the KY-KINS program, in partnership with UK-TRC, the department offers the Kinship Virtual Interaction Program (KIN-VIP). This program, also statewide, has offered a total of 70 groups. In April of 2023, Kinship Families Impacted by Substance Use group was offered as a closed pilot and served 10 group members consistently. This group will be added in the fall and opened to new members.

The last program offered in partnership with UK-TRC is the Kinship Catalogue. It is a suite of brief trainings conceptualized to meet the evolving needs of kinship and fictive kin providers throughout Kentucky. All trainings are delivered via UK's Learning Management System (LMS), which allows caregivers on-demand access. Kinship Catalogue training content is ever-growing and includes an array of topics ranging from self-care for caregivers, child trauma, legal issues related to caregiving, and others. There have been 12 live webinars. Live webinars will continue each month featuring an educational series, internet safety, understanding housing in Kentucky, and advocacy in Fall 2023.

Bair Foundation: Kindred Roots Program

The Bair Foundation has partnered with UK and DCBS to address the needs of kinship caregivers, the children in their care, and their biological parents by providing comprehensive reunification and support services.

The Bair Foundation and Kindred Roots team understand the strengths of kinship care are many, and that children often do best when they remain in the care of their relatives. The goal of the Kindred Roots program is to help children find permanency with relatives or kinship caregivers, shorten the time to reunification, improve placement stability, build parenting capacity, and strengthen family relationships. Utilizing a trauma-responsive understanding of multi-generational experiences, Kindred Roots builds parenting capacity and skills for kinship caregivers and biological parents. The evidence-based practices assist families in successfully completing their case plans and preparing for successful futures. Support services within the program include family reunification, family aftercare, supervised visitation, fatherhood engagement, and resource coordination. The program currently services a county in the Northern Bluegrass and Southern

Bluegrass service regions, with plans to expand to another county in the Southern Bluegrass Service Region.

Kindred Roots has served 107 children with 91% of these children/families completing the program. Of the 91% that completed the program, 59% of the children were reunited with birth parents, and 39% of children achieved permanency with relative or fictive kin caregiver, giving the program a 98% success rate in reunifying children with parents, and permanency with caregivers with no placement moves. Two percent of children were placed elsewhere upon case closure (one child, residential).

Subsidized Permanent Custody

DCBS continuously seeks ways to better serve relative and fictive kin caregivers. DCBS is working diligently to lift the Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP). GAP is a federal Title IV-E program, in which states can utilize Title IV-E funds (for children who are Title IV-E eligible) to pay relative and fictive kin caregivers, who have become certified foster parents, and had a child placed in their home for six consecutive months. Once it has been determined that return to parent and adoption are not appropriate permanency options, the child can be eligible for GAP subsidy. Much like an adoption subsidy, this program will allow relative and fictive kin caregivers to receive subsidy payment (cannot be higher than the foster care maintenance payment) while receiving permanent custody. While working to lift GAP, DCBS' vison for this program is that this will be a Title IV-E and state funded program.

GAP benefits for families and children:

1. Families will continue to receive subsidy after receiving permanent custody.
2. Qualifying families may be reimbursed for childcare with a possible copay.
3. Grandparents/aunts/uncles/cousins/fictive kin can maintain their identity as that relationship to the child, as compared to becoming the parent after adoption.
4. Parental rights are not terminated, allowing parents to continue working towards reunification.
5. Children aged 14 and older will be consulted before a decision is made regarding permanency.

GAP benefits for the courts and DCBS:

1. Timely permanency for children.
2. Fewer termination hearings.
3. Reduction in worker caseloads.
4. Allows for DCBS to support relative and fictive kin placements after case closure to prevent disruptions.

Kentucky is one of 14 states without GAP. DCBS strongly believes that in conjunction with the relative service array, this is an important link to providing a continuum of care to relative and fictive kin caregivers and children.