

2016 NJ CPAC Annual Report and Recommendations for 2017



HOW TO ATTAIN PERMANENT HOMES FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE



New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council

NJ CPAC Executive Board

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This year's annual report is dedicated to the memory of our friend and colleague, William "Bill" Wallis, who served as a member of the NJ CPAC Executive Board 2011—2016 and as a Middlesex County CPR board member for five years. His kindness, enthusiasm and unwavering devotion to serving the best interests of the children of New Jersey will always be remembered.



“The most important element of the foster care system is getting kids out of care and into a permanent placement so that they don’t have to spend their entire childhood in courtrooms, wondering if they will ever have a place to call HOME.”

Rhea Perlman
Parent, actor, writer, producer and long-time child advocate



A New Logo and Web Presence

The Child Placement Advisory Council (CPAC) unveiled a more modern logo and a redesigned website on April 14, 2016, at its annual training program in Eatontown.

To emphasize its role as a volunteer advocacy group dedicated to the well-being of New Jersey children and youth, and to distinguish its efforts from such organizations as the Conservative Political Action Conference, CPAC is now known as NJ CPAC.

The state's child welfare and protection system has vastly improved since 1978, when NJ CPAC was established by mandate under the Child Placement Review Act. The new logo depicts a shift in NJ CPAC's focus from protecting children while they are in foster care to ensuring that they are raised in safe, healthy and permanent homes (permanency). The use of blue and green represents NJ CPAC's historic association with the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) and valued relationship with the Judiciary.

The identity elements of the refreshed logo are carried into the new website www.njcpac.org.

With the introduction of the new website, NJ CPAC has established a basic resource for new and experienced CPR board volunteers. It provides information on upcoming workshops and training programs, helpful resource documents pertaining to children in placement and links to esteemed partners. Additional pages and interactive features are planned.

Prior Logo	New Logo	NJ Courts Logo
		

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Letter from the Chair

To the Esteemed Members of the New Jersey Supreme Court, Governor and Legislators:

The New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council (NJ CPAC) sets goals for the following court year at its June annual planning and election meeting. NJ CPAC is pleased to announce that significant progress was made during court year 2016 on three major initiatives.

The Family Practice Division is on target to conduct the “train the trainer” training for Children in Court (CIC) staff using the revised Child Placement Review (CPR) board training manual and Power Point. Over the course of court year 2017, it is anticipated that CIC staff will conduct training of all current CPR board volunteers. With each CPR board volunteer receiving the same training, CPR board operations should be more uniform across the state, thus adhering to the procedures as outlined in Directives #04-10 and #04-13.

In addition to the revision of the CPR training manual, the NJ CPAC chair, in collaboration with Family Practice Division staff, CIC staff and a Family Division judge, formed a working group to streamline the 45 Day Review Checklist and to revise the Recommendation to the Judge Form. These two documents have been submitted to the presiding judges for their endorsement.

NJ CPAC launched its new website with a new logo on April 14, 2016. Moving forward, the NJ CPAC Webinar Committee will consult with the website vendor to determine how best to develop webinars. By providing webinars of NJ CPAC trainings, more CPR board volunteers will be able to meet their yearly training requirements.

NJ CPAC was especially pleased with the progress made in having the CPR Act of 1978 amended to reflect a change in the timing of the initial review of children placed out of home. Thanks to state Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttel, chair, Human Services Committee, A-3892 sponsored by state Assemblywoman Pamela R. Lampitt, chair, Women and Children’s Committee, was introduced June 16, 2016. The companion bill S-2463, sponsored by state Senator Joseph F. Vitale, was introduced to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee in the summer of 2016. It is anticipated that the bills will be introduced to both the full house and the senate in court year 2017, voted on, approved, and signed into law. The NJ CPAC Legislative Committee will monitor the bills as they move through the New Jersey Legislature. NJ CPAC thanks Advocates for Children of New Jersey (ACNJ) for their support. A special thanks goes to Mary Coogan, assistant director, ACNJ, for testifying at the Assembly Women and Children’s Committee hearing.

To the NJ CPAC Executive Board, the NJ CPAC coordinator and the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC), thank you for all of your hard work in moving these initiatives forward. And the children of New Jersey thank you.

Lorene S. Wilkerson
Chair, New Jersey Child Placement Advisory Council



NJ CPAC Activities and Accomplishments for Court Year 2016

Training events

In court year 2016, NJ CPAC held one half-day training and one annual full-day training.

On Nov. 5, 2015, a half-day training entitled *Human Trafficking in New Jersey: Modern Day Slavery* was held. Dawn Roane, the statewide administrator of human trafficking, domestic violence and missing youth for the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P), gave an overview of human trafficking in New Jersey with a focus on commercial sexual exploitation. Dawn Roane also provided information on the protocols the New Jersey Department of Children and Families (DCF) uses to identify, and respond to, possible trafficking cases that may involve services to survivors.

NJ CPAC held its annual full-day training at the Doubletree Hilton Hotel in Eatontown on April 14, 2016. Having the training at this venue resulted in more than 120 individuals attending, double the attendance at full-day trainings from previous years.

Entitled *NJ Partners Against Trafficking Children*, Lynne Wilson-Bruchet, victim assistance specialist of Homeland Security Investigations, was the morning keynote. Kate Lee of the New Jersey Governor's Advisory Council Against Sexual Violence and the Junior League of New Jersey Public Affairs Committee (SPAC) spoke during lunch about the history of child advocacy in New Jersey, including SPAC's long relationship with the CPR program. Attendees were able to select from the following workshops: *Human Trafficking in New Jersey*; *The Connection Between Human Trafficking and Domestic Violence*; *Infusing Practice with Cultural Competence*; *DCP&P's Four Investigative Findings*; *How to Write CPR Recommendations*; and *The Child Placement Review Chair: Roles and Responsibilities*.

CPR volunteer training manual

The Conference of Family Presiding Judges reviewed the training manual developed by the CPR Volunteer Training Manual Committee, consisting of AOC staff and NJ CPAC members. Materials were condensed into a half-day "train-the-trainer" class for CIC staff. The Family Practice Division staff, with NJ CPAC members, trained CIC vicinage staff in December 2016 so that vicinage staff can begin training CPR board volunteers. Experienced volunteers will be included in the rollout to ensure all volunteers adhere to the

same review practices. The training manual and other review-related materials will be posted on the NJ CPAC website. NJ CPAC will continue to provide a workshop on the CPR review at annual training programs.

CPR 45 Day Review forms

The final report of the Evaluation of Directive #04-10 recommended that the 45 Day Review Checklist and the 45 Day Recommendation to the Judge Form be revised to be more easily understood by CPR boards. The Family Practice Division partnered with court staff, the Conference of Family Presiding Judges and the NJ CPAC chair to simplify both forms and to update the documentation and information required of interviewees. The new forms were used in the new 45 Day Review training of court staff and CPR volunteers.

Amendment to the Child Placement Review (CPR) Act of 1978

In their annual meeting in 2014 with Chief Justice Stuart Rabner and Judge Glenn A. Grant, the acting administrative director of the courts, NJ CPAC Chair Lorene S. Wilkerson and NJ CPAC Vice Chair Eunice I. Salton recommended changing the initial review of children in out-of-home placement from 45 days to 60 days. This recommendation was based on the findings from the evaluation of Directive #04-10, NJ CPAC's Ambassador Program and feedback from child advocates throughout New Jersey. Changing the timing of the initial review would be in line with the policy of the DCP&P that allows 60 days to complete a child abuse/neglect investigation. CPR boards also would have more complete information, allowing for more appropriate and comprehensive recommendations to the judge. As this involved amending the CPR Act, Judge Grant indicated the AOC would not oppose NJ CPAC pursuing the amendment through the legislature.

The NJ CPAC Chair Lorene S. Wilkerson and Vice Chair and Legislative Committee Chair Eunice I. Salton met with New Jersey Assemblywoman Valerie Vainieri Huttle, chair of the Human Services Committee, in the fall of 2015. Assemblywoman Huttle agreed to introduce and sponsor a bill to make the requested amendment. The NJ CPAC Legislative Committee, comprised of the chair, vice chair and board member Sandra Moss, a former deputy attorney general for the DCP&P, worked with Assemblywoman Huttle's legislative director to draft the proposed bill. Assemblywoman Huttle introduced A-3892 to the Assembly Women and Children Committee on June 16, 2016. Testimony by the three members of the NJ CPAC Legislative Committee will occur in fall 2016. The companion bill S-2463 will be presented to the Senate Health, Human Services and Senior Citizens Committee in late 2016.

NJ CPAC website and logo

NJ CPAC was pleased to announce at their April 2016 annual training program the launch of its redesigned website and logo. The new logo replaced the logo of a child carrying a large umbrella. For additional information, refer to *A New Look, A New Presence*.

Additions to the website will include training videos and webinars. NJ CPAC also intends to have some of their training workshops videotaped for CPR board volunteers who cannot attend in person. Adding these training options is in response to suggestions by CPR board volunteers. Information on NJ CPAC and CPR will continue to be available on the New Jersey Judiciary website.



Progress on Concerns Identified by NJ CPAC as Requiring Attention in Court Year 2016

For Court Years 2015 and 2016, NJ CPAC identified these same two areas of concern:

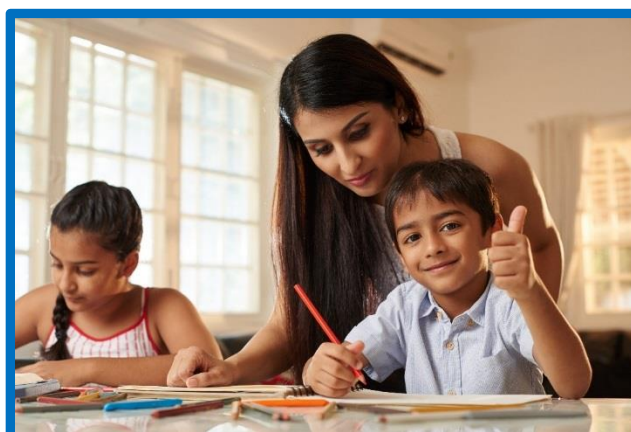
Children in out-of-home placement longer than five years

NJ CPAC's concern that children in some counties remain in out-of-home placement longer than five years was addressed by the NJ CPAC chair through the Protection Subcommittee of the New Jersey Task Force on Child Abuse/Neglect. It was determined that it was not an appropriate project for the task force and to pursue it with the DCP&P. In conference with the DCP&P deputy director of case practice, the NJ CPAC chair ascertained that DCP&P is acutely aware of this issue and has instituted a reporting system to monitor children in out-of-home placement over five years. NJ CPAC will continue to follow this issue.

For additional information, refer to *Number of Years Spent in Out-of-Home Placement*.

Timing of the 45 Day Review

Refer to *CPAC Activities and Accomplishments for Court Year 2016*.



New Concern Identified by NJ CPAC as Requiring Attention in Court Year 2017

Overrepresentation of African-American youth

Disproportionality in the child welfare system is an issue that has garnered nationwide attention in recent years. NJ CPAC, in its role as an advisory council, is concerned that DCP&P statistics indicate that African-American youth are consistently and disproportionately overrepresented in out-of-home placements. The NJ CPAC chair, as a member of the CIC Improvement Committee (CICIC) Disproportionality Subcommittee, is exploring at what decision-making point in the court system disproportionality occurs. The subcommittee will analyze the discrepancy between AOC and DCF data to determine the next steps in producing solutions. The NJ CPAC chair will keep the NJ CPAC Executive Board apprised of the subcommittee's progress.

For additional information on disproportionality in out-of-home placement, refer to *Which Children Enter Placement*.



CPR Board Activities and Accomplishments for Court Year 2016

CPR board reviews

Statewide, the number of cases reviewed by CPR boards during 45 day reviews increased from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016 as the number of meetings decreased.

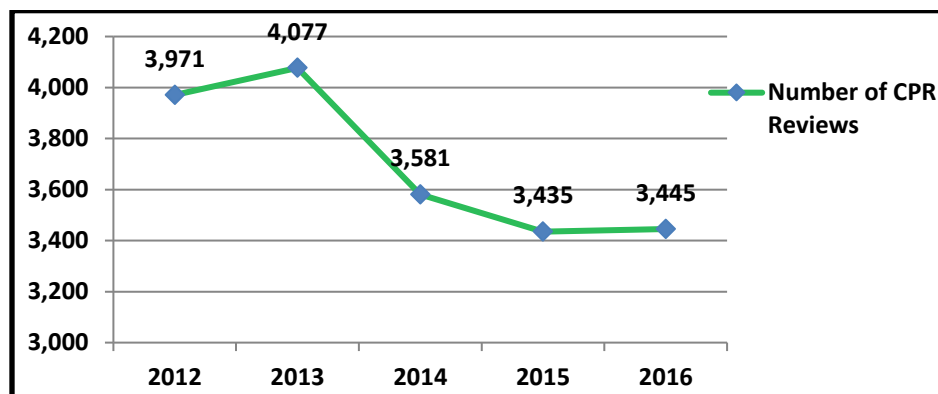
Table 1: Summary of CPR board activities 2012 through 2016

Court Year	CPR Board Meetings	Reviews
2012	562	3,971
2013	512	4,077
2014	466	3,581
2015	429	3,435
2016	411	3,445

Source: AOC casa8_rpt2.fex. Run 08.01.2016.

The next chart highlights that the total number of reviews shows a slight increase after a steep decline that began in court year 2013. More than one review can take place at a meeting.

Chart 1: The number of CPR reviews 2012 through 2016



Source: AOC casa8_rpt2.fex. Run 08.01.2016.

Table 2 below shows that the total number of CPR board meetings declined in 2016 as the number of CPR reviews increased.

Table 2: The number of CPR reviews by county vs. 2015

County	2015 CPR Board Meetings	2016 CPR Board Meetings	+/-	2015 CPR Board Reviews	2016 CPR Board Reviews	+/-
Atlantic	25	27	+2	282	248	-34
Bergen	24	21	-3	172	126	-46
Burlington	31	7	-24	218	240	+22
Camden	61	68	+7	438	382	-56
Cape May	8	5	-3	55	38	-17
Cumberland	11	12	+1	158	172	+14
Essex	22	33	+33	293	447	+154
Gloucester	17	22	+5	159	224	+65
Hudson	32	24	-8	275	194	-81
Hunterdon	4	8	+4	14	30	+26
Mercer	20	20	0	178	204	+26
Middlesex	22	20	-2	198	169	-29
Monmouth	37	41	+4	207	216	+9
Morris	11	11	0	51	85	+34
Ocean	22	23	+1	237	230	-7
Passaic	19	13	-6	179	180	+1
Salem	11	12	+1	62	60	-2
Somerset	6	5	1	45	23	-22
Sussex	15	14	-1	30	28	-2
Union	19	14	-5	137	123	-14
Warren	12	11	-1	47	26	-21
Total	429	411	-18	3,435	3,445	+10

Source: AOC casa8_rpt2.fex. Run 08.03.2016.

Table 3: The average number of reviews conducted at each meeting by county shows that CPR boards reviewed an average of eight cases per CPR board meeting. Court staff will assign a CPR board more than, or less than, the average number of reviews for a myriad of reasons, including the number of children entering placement prior to the review and court calendars.

Table 3: The average number of reviews conducted at each meeting by county

County	2016 CPR Board Meetings	2016 CPR Board Reviews	Average Number of CPR Reviews Per Board Meeting
Atlantic	27	248	9
Bergen	21	126	6
Burlington	7	240	34
Camden	68	382	6
Cape May	5	38	7
Cumberland	12	172	14
Essex	33	447	14
Gloucester	22	224	10
Hudson	24	194	8
Hunterdon	8	30	4
Mercer	20	204	26
Middlesex	20	169	8
Monmouth	41	216	5
Morris	11	85	8
Ocean	23	230	10
Passaic	13	180	14
Salem	12	60	5
Somerset	5	23	5
Sussex	14	28	2
Union	14	123	9
Warren	11	26	2
Total	411	3,445	
Average			8

Source: AOC casa8_rpt2.fex. Run 08.03.2016.

Conclusion: Atlantic, Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Mercer, Ocean, Passaic and Union exceeded the average number of reviews per meeting.

To meet the mandated requirements of the Child Placement Review (CPR) Act, a county must have at least one CPR board for every 200 reviews held in the previous year. There should be at least five court-appointed volunteers on a board. Burlington and Ocean counties do not meet these requirements. Gloucester and Hunterdon do not meet the requirement for the number of CPR volunteers.

Table 4: Statute requirements vs. 2016 performance

County	Reviews By CPR Boards 2015	Minimum CPR Boards Required 2016	Actual CPR Boards 2016 ^a	Check if Met Mandated Minimum Number of CPR Boards	Minimum CPR Board Volunteers Required 2016	Actual CPR Board Volunteers 2016 ^b	Check if Met Mandated Minimum Number of CPR Volunteers
Atlantic	248	2	2	✓	5	12	✓
Bergen	126	1	2	✓	5	15	✓
Burlington	240	2	1		10	8	
Camden	382	2	3	✓	10	15	✓
Cape May	38	1	1	✓	5	6	✓
Cumberland	172	1	2	✓	5	13	✓
Essex	447	3	3	✓	15	28	✓
Gloucester	224	2	2	✓	10	8	
Hudson	194	1	2	✓	5	15	✓
Hunterdon	30	1	1	✓	5	4	
Mercer	204	2	3	✓	10	22	✓
Middlesex	169	1	2	✓	5	20	✓
Monmouth	216	2	4	✓	10	16	✓
Morris	85	1	1	✓	5	6	✓
Ocean	230	2	1		10	7	
Passaic	180	1	1	✓	5	13	✓
Salem	60	1	2	✓	5	9	✓
Somerset	23	1	1	✓	5	9	✓
Sussex	28	1	1	✓	5	5	✓
Union	123	1	2	✓	5	11	✓
Warren	26	1	1	✓	5	5	✓
Total	3,445	30	38		155	247	

^a Data for this column is collected from CPR coordinators at the close of court year 2016.

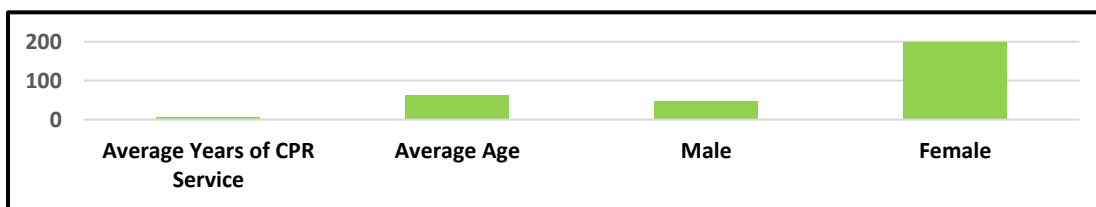
^b Data for this column was collected by VMIS August 2016 and provided to NJ CPAC by the Judiciary Office of Management and Administrative Services.

Based on data collected by the Volunteer Management Information System (VMIS) from all 15 vicinages, the average length of time served by CPR volunteers steadily increased from 5.7 years in 2011 to 7.8 years in 2015 before dropping to 5.9 years. Chart 3 also shows that the average age of CPR volunteers (61) and gender (female) have deviated little in at least a decade.

NJ CPAC wants to build relationships with all stakeholders involved with children and youth who are abused and neglected. As a result of expanding their community outreach in 2016, school administrators, child study teams, physicians and members of minority civic organizations attended NJ CPAC’s training programs and received copies of last year’s annual report.

With an eye towards future membership, NJ CPAC wants to expose a younger audience to the CPR program. Strategies for 2017 include using social media.

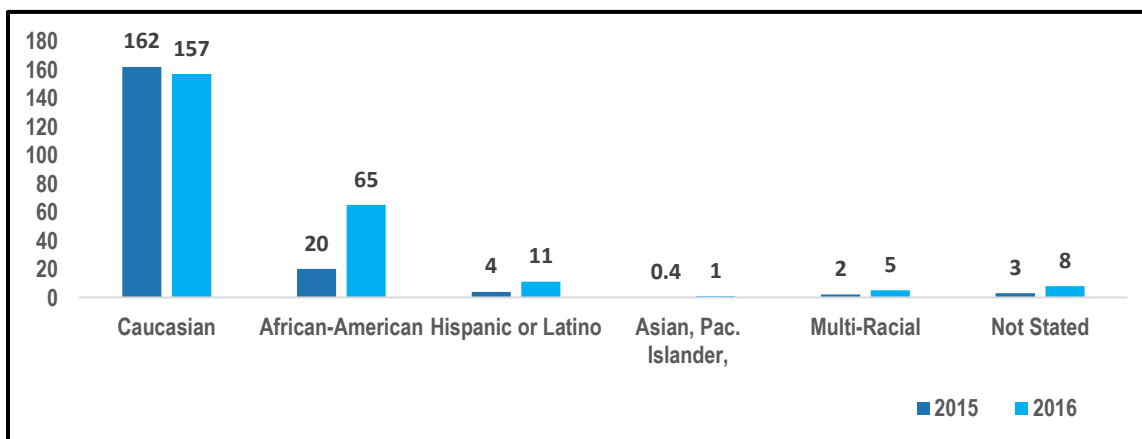
Chart 2: Gender, age and length of service of CPR board volunteers



Source: percentages based on the total number of individuals (247) in VMIS on Aug. 2, 2016.

Chart 3 shows noticeable spikes in the numbers of African-American, Hispanic or Latino, and multiracial volunteers in 2016. This indicates that the vicinages are making a concerted effort to ensure that the racial/ethnic composition of CPR boards more accurately reflects that of the children in placement they review.

Chart 3: Race and ethnicity of CPR board volunteers vs. 2015



Source: VMIS, Aug. 2016.

Conclusion: Statewide, CPR board membership is more diverse.

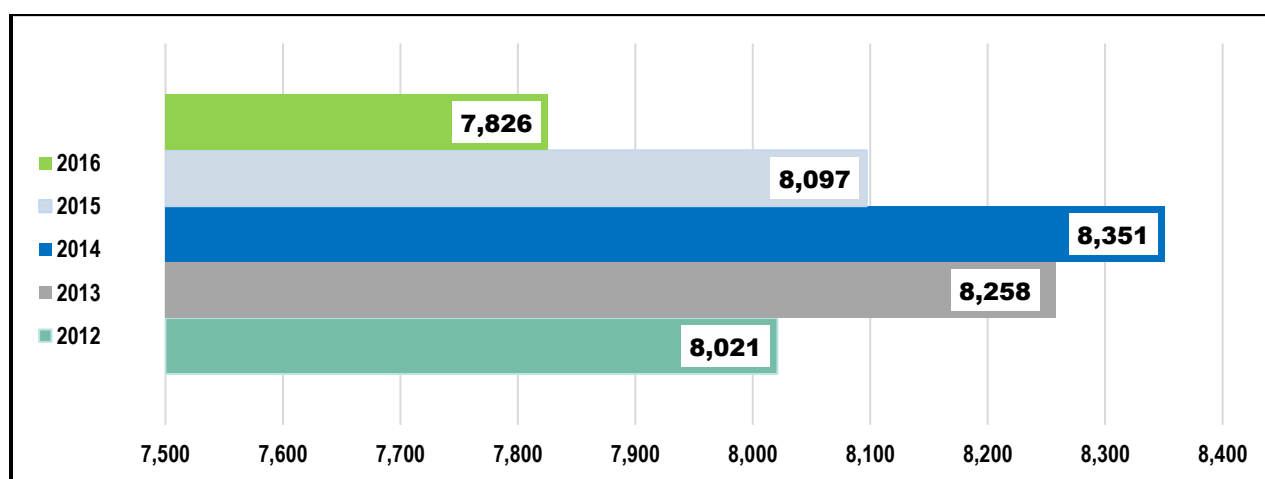
Additional Statistics, Analyses and Comments for Court Year 2016

How many children are in placement

Statewide, less children were in out-of-home placement in 2016, the lowest number in five consecutive years. There are multiple factors that can influence the number of children in placement in any given year, including the local economy and high-profile cases involving child abuse and neglect.

Several states have reported that the current opioid and heroin epidemic has drastically increased their number of out-of-home placements due to child neglect, according to an Oct. 2016 *PBS Newshour* broadcast. It is important that the DCP&P has sufficient funds and maintains adequate staffing levels in order to provide addiction recovery services. In addition, in order to accommodate the potential increase in children placed out of their homes due to the rise in opioid and heroin use, the DCP&P may need to recruit and license more resource homes.

Chart 4: The number of children in out-of-home placement 2012 through 2016



Source: AOC Casa3_pt2.fex. 08.02.2016.

Conclusion: The number of children who are in out-of-home placement on June 30 peaked in 2014 at 8,351.

Table 5 below reveals that the number of new case (FC) filings declined in 2016, a trend that began in court year 2013.

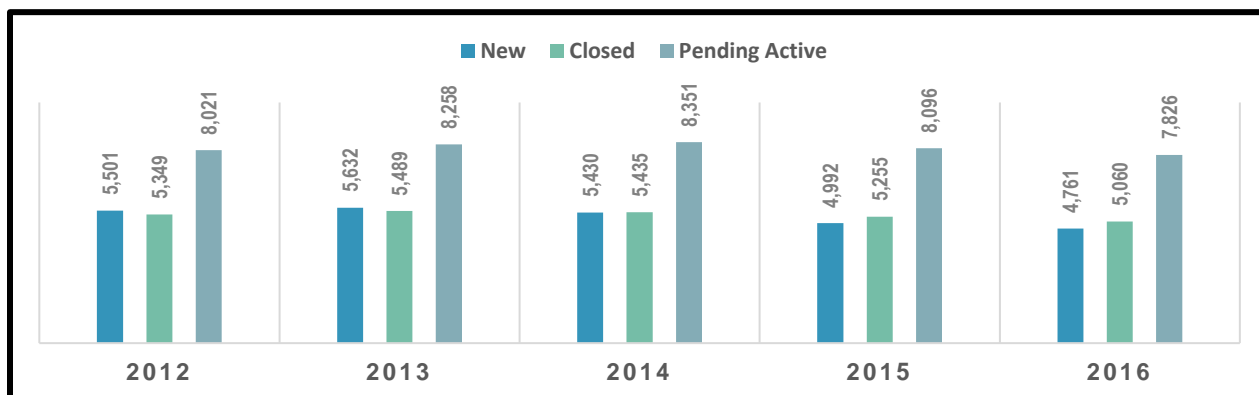
Table 5: The number of children who entered placement 2012 through 2016

Court Year	Number of New Filings	Number of Active Cases
2012	5,501	8,021
2013	5,632	8,258
2014	5,430	8,351
2015	4,920	8,097
2016	4,679	7,809

Source: AOC New Filings of FC Dockets. AOC casa9_rpt.fex. Run 8/2/2016. MSFCT. Run 8/2/2016.

The ratio of children entering the system (new cases) to children exiting the system (closed cases) has changed little over five years, according to Chart 5 below. There has been significant improvement in the number of children exiting the system at the same time. The number of children entering has decreased raises the question as to whether the DCP&P needs new strategies for achieving permanency. For reasons as to why children leave the system, refer to *Why CIP Cases Are Closed*.

Chart 5: The number of cases (FC) opened, closed and pending active 2012 through 2016

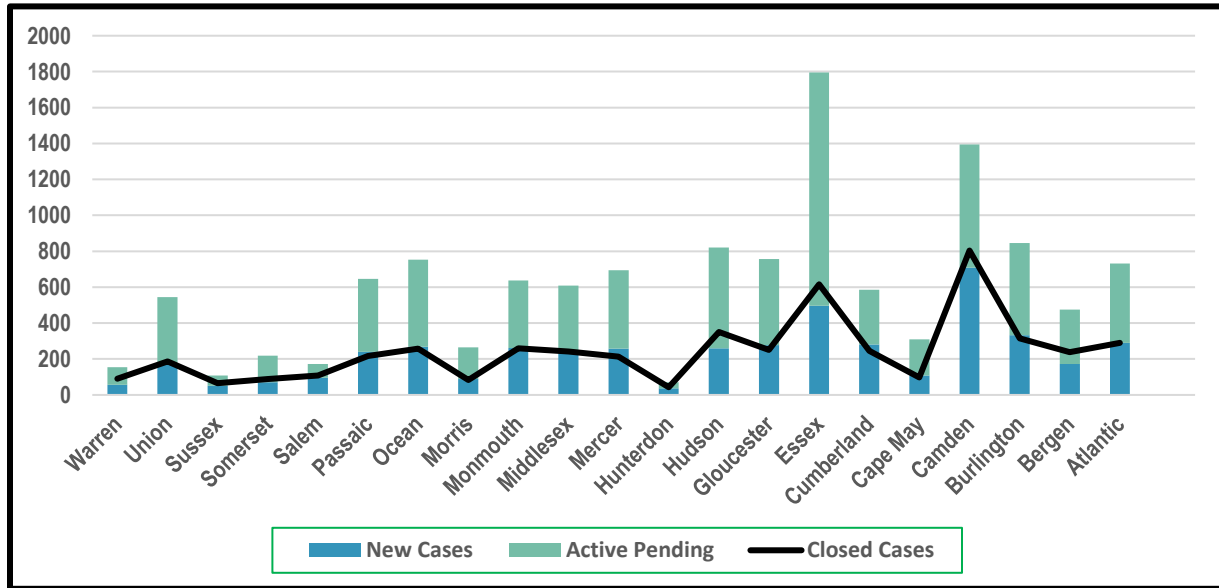


Source: AOC New Filings of FC Dockets. AOC casa9_rpt.fex. Run 8/02/16.

Note: Active pending cases include new cases filed.

The chart below shows that several counties could experience difficulties should a sudden influx of new cases actually occur.

Chart 6: The number of cases (FC) opened, active pending and closed by county



Source: AOC New Filings of FC Dockets. AOC casa9_rpt.fex. Run 8/02/16.

Conclusion: Counties experiencing the widest gaps in the number of active (pending) cases and children leaving the system are Atlantic, Burlington, Camden, Essex Gloucester, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Mercer, Monmouth, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset and Union.



The next table provides information on how many new cases were opened by each county. The two columns on the far right show the increase or decrease in FC caseload for 2016. Statewide, the number of children entering placement declined.

Table 6: The number of new case filings (FC) opened by county 2012 through 2016

County	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	+/-	% Change
Atlantic	321	336	295	357	290	-67	-23
Bergen	273	255	230	196	173	-23	-13
Burlington	358	381	438	349	332	-17	-51
Camden	825	852	820	744	709	-35	-32
Cape May	118	88	87	111	109	-2	-2
Cumberland	176	205	195	210	281	+71	+25
Essex	748	687	645	550	496	-54	-11
Gloucester	231	287	260	267	278	+11	+4
Hudson	416	411	445	394	259	-135	-47
Hunterdon	41	46	43	36	36	0	0
Mercer	223	301	280	238	258	+20	+8
Middlesex	365	391	358	223	236	+13	+6
Monmouth	258	301	272	271	262	-9	-3
Morris	118	101	99	85	89	+4	-4
Ocean	268	295	288	278	269	-9	-3
Passaic	254	221	193	249	240	-9	-4
Salem	102	85	63	80	95	+15	+16
Somerset	60	80	83	91	71	-20	-28
Sussex	80	92	73	37	51	+14	+27
Union	194	161	185	159	170	+11	+6
Warren	72	56	78	67	57	-10	-18
Total	5,501	5,632	5,430	4,992	4,761	-231	-5

Source: AOC New Filings of FC Dockets. AOC casa9_rpt.fex. Run 8/02/16.

Conclusion: Counties with percentage increases in 2016 are Cumberland, Gloucester, Mercer, Middlesex, Salem, Sussex and Union.

Why children enter placement

Table 7 below shows that in 2016, abandonment is the primary reason for placing a child out-of-home. Abandonment is included in the New Jersey legal definition of abuse and neglect (N.J.S.A. 9:6-1, abuse, abandonment, cruelty and neglect of child).

Another recurring trend is the decline of a parent's substance use. In last year's annual report NJ CPAC attributed this drop to the success of the Judiciary's voluntary and mandatory drug court programs. NJ CPAC also wrote of the need for more long-term (in excess of 30 days) residential recovery centers. This year, NJ CPAC backs efforts to transform more state prisons into drug treatment centers.

There is conflicting research supporting the efficacy of traditional 12-step recovery programs, such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, for all individuals with substance abuse disorders.^c NJ CPAC recommends that the Judiciary ensure that family court judges and staff are aware of alternative, evidence-based addiction treatment and recovery options for individuals who experience consecutive multiple relapses and for those who are unresponsive to a traditional 12-step format.^d

Inadequate housing rose to second place in 2016. A contributing factor to "inadequate housing" is homelessness, which reinforces the DCP&Ps need for sufficient resources and a flexible workforce to manage fluctuating demands for critical preventative services. Parents need a stable place to live with their children as they work with case managers to obtain permanent housing. Yet, NJ CPAC is aware of at least one New Jersey agency with a standing wait list for families needing transitional housing. In April 2016 the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development announced that it was shifting federal funding from transitional programs to programs focusing on permanent housing for the chronically homeless. It is premature to know if the "housing first" program will prove detrimental or beneficial for families who need transitional shelters with requisite services and for homeless youth vulnerable to traffickers, violence and other dangers.

Table 7: The top five reasons why children were placed vs. 2014 and 2015

Rank	2014	2015	2016
1	Abuse/Neglect	Abandonment	Abandonment
2	Abandonment	Abuse/Neglect	Inadequate Housing
3	Inadequate Housing	Inadequate Housing	Abuse/Neglect
4	Incarceration	Incarceration	Incarceration
5	Parent's Substance Use	Child's Behavior Issues	Child's Behavioral Issues

^c <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/16856072>

^d Alcoholics Anonymous and other 12-step programs for alcohol dependence, Ferri M, Amato L, Davoli M.

Table 8 below shows a parent's disability and a parent's substance use disorder as leading causes of abuse and neglect declined in 2016, suggesting that more parents are benefitting from treatment. A child's delinquency also declined as a reason. A child's substance use disorder rose 67 percent in 2016 as a chief reason for that child's placement.

Table 8: The chief reasons why children were placed 2012 through 2016

Based on the Notices of Placements filed by the DCP&P. There can be several reasons for placement.

	2012 Total	2013 Total	2014 Total	2015 Total	2016 Total	+/-	% Change
Parent-Related Reasons for Child's Out-of-Home Placement							
Abandonment	729	832	884	890	865	-25	-3
Abuse/Neglect	2,802	1,913	1,258	861	581	-280	-48
Death	69	75	82	54	72	+18	+25
Substance Use Disorder	1,413	838	491	367	243	-124	-51
Financial Problems	17	8	5	1	1	0	0
Inadequate Housing	704	668	649	631	605	-26	-4
Incarceration	463	582	566	508	508	0	0
Mentally Disabled	194	111	63	31	17	-14	-82
Physically Disabled	31	20	10	8	4	-4	-100
Surrender of Child	36	39	52	49	43	-6	-14
Child-Related Reasons for Child's Out- of-Home Placement							
Behavioral Issues	516	498	448	430	445	+15	+3
Delinquency/FJ Case	109	93	41	30	17	-13	-76
Disability	58	50	62	50	41	-9	-22
Drug/Alcohol Abuse	6	7	2	2	6	+4	+67
Other Reasons for Child's Out-of-Home Placement							
Other Reasons	355	219	139	90	50	-40	-80

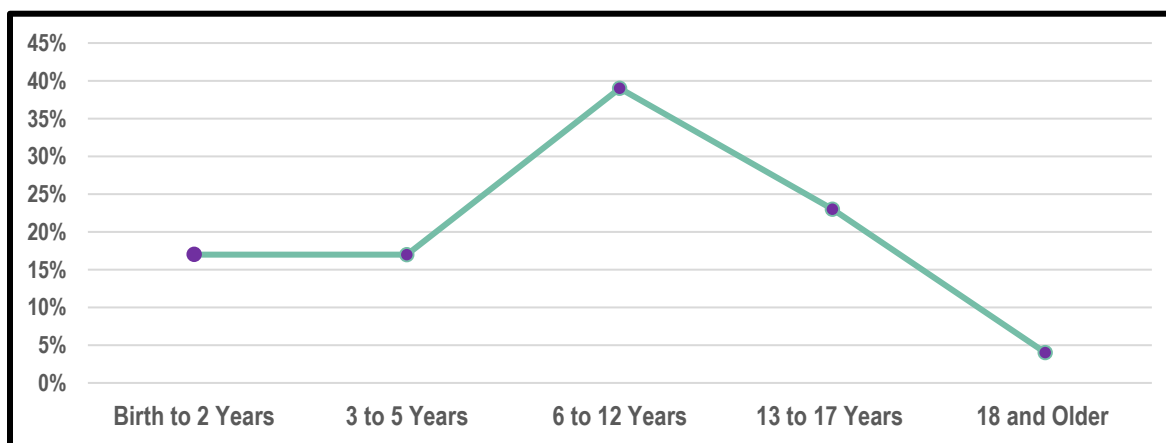
Source: AOC Casa6_rpt2.fex. Run 8/17/16.

NJ CPAC recognizes the Department of Children and Families (DCF) Children's System of Care (CSOC) for its commitment to providing services to children and adolescents with emotional and behavioral health care needs, substance abuse issues and developmental challenges. Working collaboratively with the DCP&P, children with these issues have access to appropriate services which results in children being able to remain in their homes.

Which children enter placement

Statewide, the majority of New Jersey children who were actively in out-of-home placement on Dec. 5, 2015 were under 13 years of age.

Chart 7: The ages of children and youth in out-of-home placement



Source: the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Dec. 5, 2015, <http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/>

Additional data from the DCP&P reveals that slightly more than half of the children in out-of-home care receiving services are male. This ratio has remained consistent in recent years.

NJ CPAC again recommends that the category of “other” be added in all DCP&P and AOC reports for children and youth who wish to self-identify as transgender, questioning or as gender fluid.

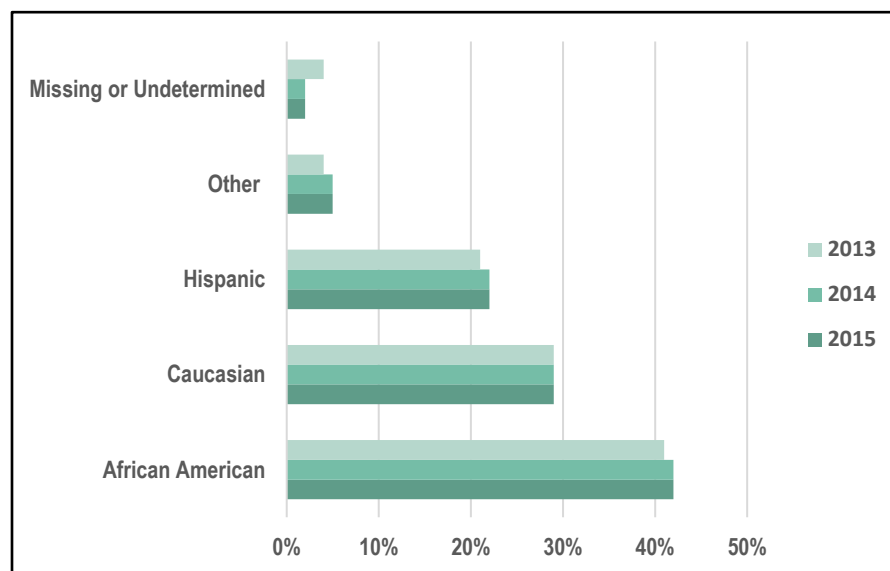
In 2013, CPAC reported that the gaps between the numbers of African-American and Hispanic children in New Jersey foster care and the number of Caucasian children in foster care shrank as more Caucasian children entered the system. However, Chart 8 on the next page indicates that in 2015 these gaps stabilized. While incorporating disproportionality and cultural competence in training and practices were positive actions, additional measures are needed to address the disproportionate number of African-American children in placement.

NJ CPAC shares the Judiciary’s concerns about disparities in justice results for minority youth. The 2014 – 2015 report of the New Jersey Supreme Court Committee on Minority Concerns noted that Hispanic and Latino youth are “basically equitably represented throughout the juvenile justice decision-making continuum; Caucasian youth are consistently underrepresented; Asian youth are consistently and disproportionately underrepresented; and African-American youth are consistently and disproportionately overrepresented.”^e

^e <http://www.judiciary.state.nj.us/ccr/minority.html>

NJ CPAC has raised the issue of inconsistent electronic data collection on race and/or ethnicity in past annual reports. In May 2016, President Obama signed H.R. 4238 into law^f, modernizing language on minority populations in federal statutes. The updated race/ethnic designations are African-American, Hispanic, Puerto Rican, Native American, Pacific Islander, Hawaiian Native and Alaska Native. NJ CPAC believes uniformly tracking information on children and youth across New Jersey departments and divisions is necessary to identify and reduce disparities.

Chart 8: The proportion of African-American, Hispanic, Caucasian and all other races in out-of-home placement



Source: The New Jersey Department of Children and Families, <http://www.state.nj.us/dcf/>.

Note: Based on a June 30, 2015 population of 7,501 children aged 0 to 21.

“If the standard route for creating a family had worked for me, I wouldn't have met this child.”

Nia Vardalos

Actor, screenwriter, producer and adoptive parent of a foster care child.

^f <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4238>

The following table provides information about children and youth in out-of-home placement on June 30, 2016 as captured by the AOC based on information provided by all 21 counties. Prior year annual reports from the AOC included a category on Alaskan Native. This category does not appear in the 2016 report.

Table 9: The age, gender and race/ethnicity of children and youth in out-of-home placement vs. 2015

Year	Age	Gender	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Island	Native American	Not Stated	Other	Total
2016	<1	F	124	127	3	1	0	33	7	295
		M	106	130	6	4	0	32	7	295
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	<1	F	109	116	11	1	0	52	6	295
		M	136	118	8	1	0	36	3	302
		U	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
2016	1	F	146	155	8	0	0	19	3	341
		M	163	146	4	1	0	38	2	354
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	1	F	162	142	8	1	0	44	6	363
		M	155	136	8	2	0	51	8	360
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016	2	F	146	123	7	0	0	30	4	310
		M	136	133	9	3	0	34	6	321
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	2	F	130	112	9	2	0	46	5	304
		M	145	131	11	1	0	41	6	335
		U	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
2016	3	F	107	105	6	2	0	32	2	254
		M	124	126	7	1	0	21	8	287
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	3	F	119	109	7	1	0	28	2	266
		M	113	114	11	2	0	35	4	279
		U	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
2016	4	F	114	96	3	0	0	22	3	238
		M	96	91	8	0	0	14	4	213
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	4	F	88	104	12	0	0	19	6	229
		M	89	111	17	1	0	31	4	253
		U	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Year	Age	Gender	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Island	Native American	Not Stated	Other	Total
2016	5	F	87	94	7	1	0	13	4	206
		M	88	108	9	0	0	8	3	216
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	5	F	80	90	16	1	0	20	4	211
		M	100	100	9	0	0	28	3	240
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2016	6	F	76	95	6	0	0	9	1	187
		M	97	103	4	0	0	15	2	221
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	6	F	97	78	7	0	0	16	1	199
		M	95	101	10	1	0	22	3	232
		U	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
2016	7	F	82	75	8	4	0	9	1	179
		M	90	87	8	2	0	16	1	204
		U	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
2015	7	F	82	76	12	0	0	21	5	197
		M	86	77	9	1	0	26	1	200
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2016	8	F	79	73	7	0	0	14	2	175
		M	82	83	5	0	0	12	0	182
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	8	F	94	92	16	1	0	13	2	218
		M	96	80	9	0	0	16	1	202
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2016	9	F	80	96	9	0	0	9	2	196
		M	96	72	5	0	0	9	2	184
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	9	F	60	61	10	0	0	10	0	141
		M	60	84	8	0	0	11	2	165
		U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	10	F	62	54	6	0	0	9	2	133
		M	50	75	4	0	0	11	1	141
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	10	F	49	49	6	0	0	15	0	119
		M	77	56	11	1	0	8	2	155
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016	11	F	64	63	9	0	0	7	1	144
		M	62	64	4	0	0	15	1	146
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	11	F	54	61	6	0	0	10	0	131
		M	66	56	11	0	0	13	0	146
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

Year	Age	Gender	Black	Caucasian	Hispanic	Asian/ Pacific Island	Native American	Not Stated	Other	Total
2016	12	F	58	53	6	0	0	5	1	123
		M	67	53	9	0	0	8	0	137
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	12	F	57	54	2	1	0	15	0	129
		M	62	40	5	0	0	11	0	118
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2016	13	F	63	42	5	1	0	15	0	126
		M	56	39	5	0	0	8	1	109
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	13	F	49	50	13	1	0	10	2	125
		M	58	39	8	2	0	9	0	116
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2016	14	F	51	65	7	1	0	15	1	140
		M	62	48	9	1	0	5	0	125
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	14	F	71	51	12	1	0	13	1	149
		M	52	42	9	0	0	12	2	117
		U	0	0	0	0	0	9	0	0
2016	15	F	69	65	16	1	0	10	0	161
		M	65	44	7	0	0	4	1	121
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0
2015	15	F	75	51	11	0	1	11	2	151
		M	75	39	9	1	0	9	0	133
		U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	16	F	69	65	16	1	0	10	0	161
		M	65	44	7	0	0	4	1	121
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2015	16	F	98	59	13	1	0	10	3	184
		M	86	50	15	0	0	10	1	162
		U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2016	17	F	85	53	16	1	0	22	5	182
		M	85	52	18	0	0	12	1	168
		U	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2015	17	F	92	57	12	2	0	16	3	182
		M	84	54	20	1	0	12	0	171
		U	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2016	18	F	89	53	6	3	0	4	2	157
		M	80	66	14	1	0	7	0	168
		U	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
2015	18	F	94	38	11	1	0	16	1	161
		M	67	51	9	2	0	8	0	137
		U	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0

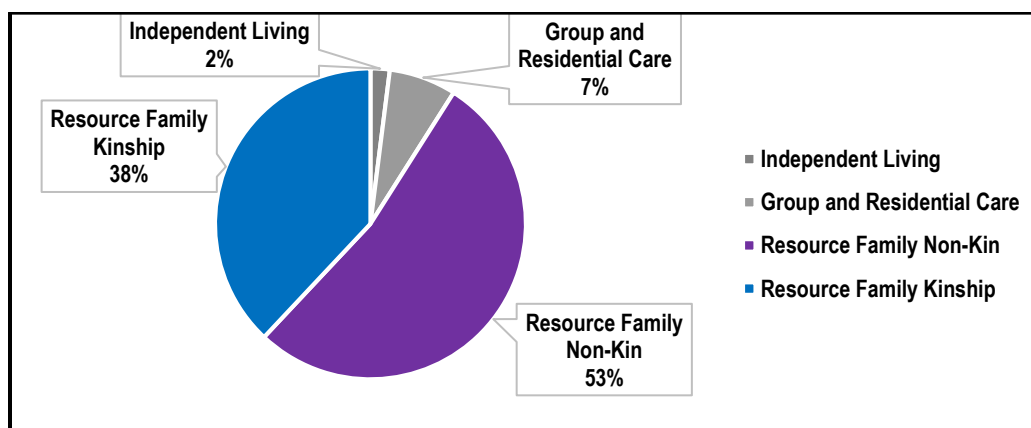
Key: F = Female; M = Male; U = Unknown or Not Documented.

Source: AOC Casa1_rpt2.fex, 8/22/2016/ 11.39.43

Types of placement

The following chart shows that on June 30, 2016, slightly more than 50 percent of children in out-of-home placement lived with a resource (foster) family and slightly less than 40 percent lived with a family member.

Chart 9: The types of placement for children and youth in out-of-home placement



Source: the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Commissioner's Monthly Report, Aug. 15, 2016.

In August 2016, the DCP&P provided approximate percentages on the number of children under 21 years placed in out-of-home treatment settings (group and residential care.) A breakdown of the percentage ranges for each treatment setting follows, based on 1,400 children.

Table 10: Types of out-of-home treatment settings

Type of Out-of-Home Treatment Setting	Percentage Range of Children Receiving Treatment
Residential Treatment Center	25% to 30%
Specialty Bed	25% to 30%
Treatment Home	15% to 20%
Psychiatric Community Home	10% to 15%
Group Home	5% to 10%
Intensive Residential Treatment Center	3% to 5%

Source: the New Jersey Department of Children and Families, Commissioner's Monthly Report, Aug. 15, 2016.

How many times children are placed

The New Jersey Judiciary tracks repeat placements by the number of new placement cases (FC) it opens for the same child. The Judiciary opens a new placement case (FC) every time the DCP&P files a Notice of Placement to place the minor outside of the home. The next table provides a snapshot of the number of placements experienced by children on June 30 for the years 2013 through 2016. Of the 7,828 children in active placement on June 30, 2016, 19 percent were experiencing their second placement. This apparent lack of progress in attaining permanent stability is of concern to NJ CPAC.

The Federal Monitor's Period 16 Report, issued in January 2015, cited the "high rate of repeat maltreatment of children and their family's re-involvement with the DCP&P within one year of reunification." The DCP&P attributed this finding to the 2013 implementation of the four-tier investigative findings system.⁹ As the high rate of repeat maltreatment has been a long-standing issue, NJ CPAC is concerned that factors in addition to the four-tier reporting system could be contributing to this phenomenon. Possibilities include premature reunification and the recurrence of the circumstance or combination of circumstances that originally contributed to the removal of a child from the home. Longer-term treatment programs and community-based services would enable parents to comply more easily with court-ordered services.

Table 11: The average number of placements per child 2013 through 2016

Court Year	In 1st Placement	In 2nd Placement	In 3rd Placement	In 4th Placement	In 5th Placement	In 6th Placement	In 7th Placement	In 8th Placement
2013	5,971	1,758	376	110	26	9	4	1
2014	6,165	1,691	360	97	24	9	4	0
2015	6,015	1,597	359	85	28	7	4	0
2016	5,839	1,491	385	80	28	3	2	0

Source: AOC Casa5_rpt2. Run 08/24/2016, 13.26.34

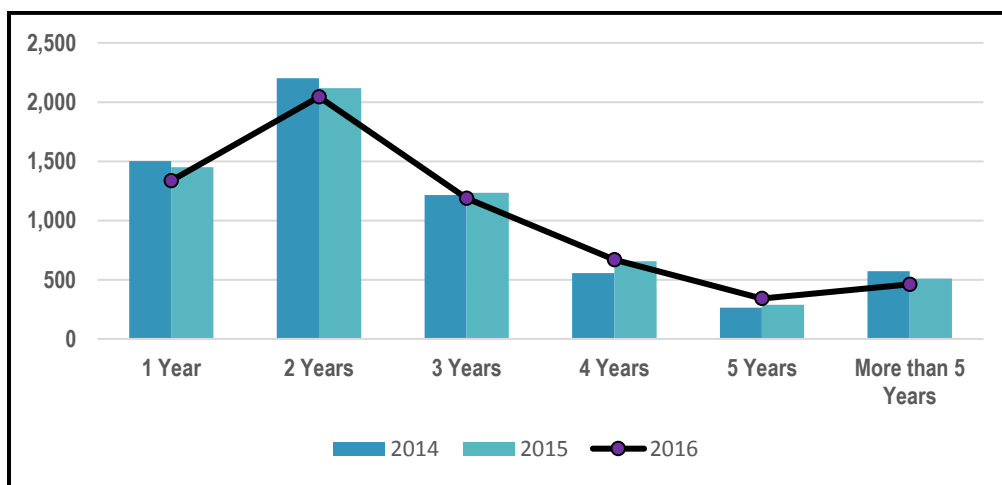
Note: As of June 30 of each year listed. Includes prior placements and current placement.

⁹ http://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/new-jersey-charlie-and-nadine-h-v-christie/document/Charlie_and_Nadine_H._v._Christie_Monitoring_Report_XVI_11_4_15.pdf

Number of years spent in out-of-home placement

Most New Jersey children stay in out-of-home placement slightly under two years. A child could leave placement for reasons other than achieving permanency, such as aging out of the system.

Chart 10: The average length of time children remained in out-of-home placement vs. 2014 and 2015



Source: AOC Casa7_rp72.fex 2014, 2015, 2016

Conclusion: *The majority of children remain in out-of-home placement for two years.*



The next table provides a county view of time spent in out-of-home placement. Just as a child or youth may leave placement for a variety of reasons, several factors can contribute to a child staying in placement. For example, a child could require constant medical care.

Table 12: The average time by county children and youth spent in out-of-home placements vs. 2012 through 2016

County and Years	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	More than 5 Years	Up ↑ Down ↓ Flat ↔	Children in Placement	% in Placement for More than 5 Years
Atlantic										
2012	129	73	94	63	29	8	28		422	7
2013	100	97	117	67	29	14	22		446	5
2014	85	77	123	62	36	14	14		411	3
2015	133	108	94	59	23	15	10		442	2
2016	102	87	146	46	31	13	16	↑	441	4
Bergen										
2012	103	97	89	52	13	7	27		388	7
2013	89	79	110	47	34	7	23		389	6
2014	108	68	103	67	18	11	19		394	5
2015	88	57	93	60	45	8	17		368	5
2016	70	38	82	43	34	25	11	↓	303	4
Burlington										
2012	150	108	69	49	17	7	36		436	8
2013	151	82	148	39	25	10	30		485	6
2014	162	103	125	91	20	9	21		531	4
2015	126	87	127	79	47	11	18		495	4
2016	145	89	127	67	38	26	13	↓	505	3
Camden										
2012	284	141	169	78	36	17	51		776	7
2013	233	176	182	97	44	19	45		796	6
2014	251	155	190	94	46	15	42		796	5
2015	207	166	200	96	50	25	37		781	5
2016	201	121	168	94	47	18	36	↓	685	5
Cape May										
2012	60	34	43	24	11	5	13		190	7
2013	36	39	65	27	5	6	7		185	4
2014	30	23	59	35	13	2	9		171	5
2015	43	39	37	35	18	5	9		186	5
2016	45	44	63	24	10	7	6	↓	199	3

County and Years	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	More than 5 Years	Up ↑ Down ↓ Flat ↔	Children in Placement	% in Placement for More than 5 Years
Cumberland										
2012	67	27	72	27	21	15	18		247	7
2013	90	38	41	41	9	12	20		251	8
2014	71	45	91	31	17	5	22		282	8
2015	74	57	46	50	17	9	16		269	9
2016	91	60	74	25	32	8	16	↔	306	5
Essex										
2012	306	305	302	154	111	53	241		1,472	16
2013	301	285	452	200	95	54	194		1,581	12
2014	270	266	423	278	91	33	162		1,523	11
2015	240	228	371	238	146	54	129	↓	1,406	9
2016	225	187	346	206	127	88	111	↓	1,290	7
Gloucester										
2012	87	54	71	38	23	16	15		305	5
2013	90	77	86	43	29	16	18		359	5
2014	112	81	95	43	25	16	16		388	4
2015	103	88	129	69	26	16	22		453	5
2016	95	95	131	78	37	15	27	↑	478	6
Hudson										
2012	138	133	195	90	48	21	46		671	7
2013	168	101	140	117	54	23	45		648	7
2014	137	144	173	65	67	33	41		660	6
2015	157	101	174	102	39	37	44		654	7
2016	85	83	158	110	59	18	50	↑	563	9
Hunterdon										
2012	17	12	16	6	4	1	5		61	8
2013	18	11	13	12	3	1	1		59	2
2014	10	15	11	2	0	0	1		39	2
2015	8	9	19	6	0	0	0		42	0
2016	12	10	9	4	0	0	0	↔	35	0
Mercer										
2012	79	57	46	39	21	23	40		305	13
2013	119	73	75	25	20	8	50		370	14
2014	105	75	110	50	8	9	42		399	16
2015	94	61	112	60	35	2	29		393	7
2016	98	82	124	62	36	18	18	↓	438	4

County and Years	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	More than 5 Years	Up ↑ Down ↓ Flat ↔	Children in Placement	% in Placement for More than 5 Years
Middlesex										
2012	121	73	60	45	10	16	34		359	9
2013	110	81	82	40	24	4	32		373	9
2014	104	85	109	49	24	16	21		408	5
2015	56	72	115	67	22	15	25		372	7
2016	82	64	73	79	42	14	17	↓	371	5
Monmouth										
2012	103	61	92	34	21	21	40		372	11
2013	113	63	103	60	17	14	37		407	9
2014	112	68	99	53	40	12	33		417	8
2015	82	77	84	57	22	23	28		373	8
2016	106	71	96	43	27	8	25	↓	376	7
Morris										
2012	43	31	56	43	10	4	5		192	3
2013	43	30	32	38	32	5	4		184	2
2014	46	26	49	20	12	19	7		178	4
2015	39	23	43	34	11	6	15		171	9
2016	40	37	41	26	17	4	11	↓	176	6
Ocean										
2012	107	93	72	36	17	8	39		372	10
2013	107	98	132	29	25	10	28		429	7
2014	113	115	134	86	12	9	22		491	4
2015	114	86	143	66	43	3	15		470	3
2016	139	80	112	89	32	19	13	↓	484	3
Passaic										
2012	111	115	126	51	41	18	22		485	5
2013	85	74	117	65	21	17	27		406	7
2014	102	44	87	58	24	17	28		360	8
2015	102	80	86	48	32	12	26		386	7
2016	115	67	105	49	28	18	25	↓	407	6
Salem										
2012	38	25	38	8	3	2	11		125	9
2013	21	20	30	28	3	1	6		109	6
2014	24	15	23	18	19	0	9		106	8
2015	17	16	23	10	6	13	6		91	7
2016	27	14	18	3	3	0	12	↑	77	16

County and Years	6 Months	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years	5 Years	More than 5 Years	Up ↑ Down ↓ Flat ↔	Children in Placement	% in Placement for More than 5 Years
Somerset										
2012	25	16	49	24	14	13	8		149	5
2013	31	31	28	35	17	8	9		159	6
2014	49	10	47	20	27	9	7		169	4
2015	51	16	40	23	13	13	8		164	5
2016	23	27	43	26	16	4	7	↓	146	5
Sussex										
2012	30	15	18	10	2	2	5		82	6
2013	38	18	22	13	4	1	4		100	4
2014	25	7	32	15	3	2	4		88	5
2015	10	11	25	14	8	0	3		71	4
2016	12	10	15	6	10	2	2	↓	57	4
Union										
2012	97	61	103	91	24	20	65		461	14
2013	64	65	93	64	55	10	54		405	13
2014	92	47	96	58	43	29	36		401	9
2015	74	49	114	45	45	16	41		384	11
2016	58	58	80	82	30	30	36	↓	374	10
Warren										
2012	21	33	30	21	14	16	10		145	7
2013	30	12	35	25	7	6	17		132	13
2014	26	29	32	21	11	5	15		139	11
2015	26	18	42	17	8	6	12	↓	129	9
2016	17	5	26	23	12	4	10	↓	97	10
(2016) Total	1,788	1,329	2,037	1,185	668	339	462		7,808	6

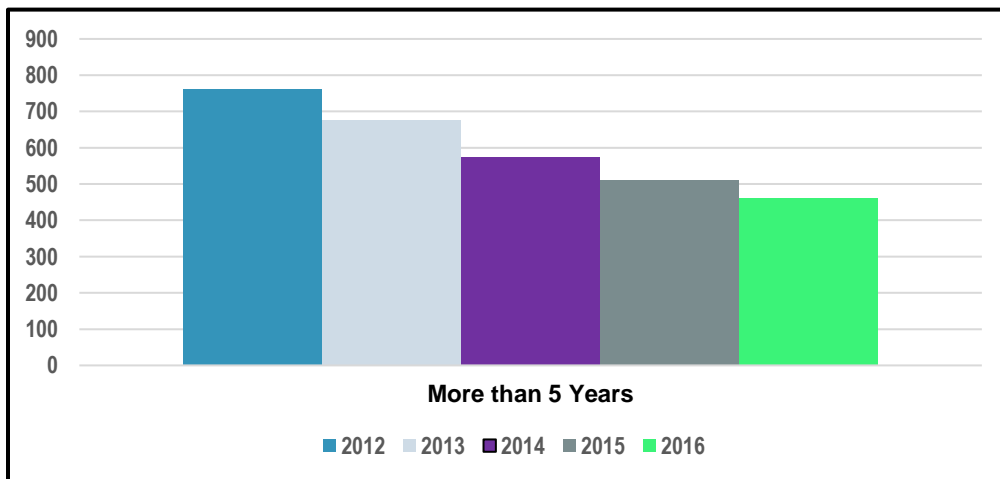
Source: AOC Casa7_rpt2.fex 2016

Conclusion: New Jersey shows only slight improvement in reducing the total number of children in placement for five years or more. Last year all counties reduced their numbers, with the exceptions of Atlantic, Gloucester, Hudson, Salem and Warren counties.

The two prior annual reports identified the counties with significantly higher percentages of children in out-of-home placement more than five years. During court year 2016, as a result of NJ CPAC's reporting, at least one of these counties contacted the AOC to verify the data, identify the cases involved, and investigate the barriers preventing these children from finding permanent homes.

The DCP&P has advised NJ CPAC that it is keeping track of children in out-of-home placement five years and over; and strategizing with DCP&P local offices to reduce this time frame.

Chart 11: The number of children who remained in out-of-home placement for more than five years vs. 2012 through 2015

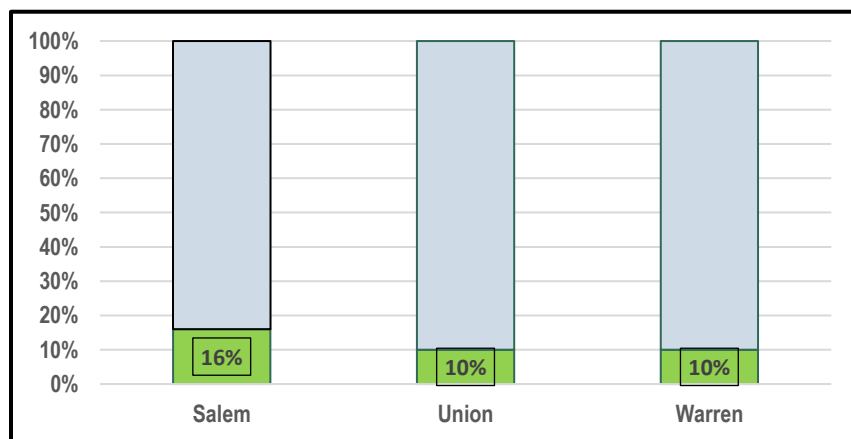


Source: AOC Casa7_rp72.fex 2014, 2015, 2016

Conclusion: The total number of children remaining in out-of-home placement for more than five years is declining.

Despite progress in achieving shorter out-of-placement stays, New Jersey still has some way to go to achieve permanency for all its children. The following chart identifies three counties with at least 10 percent of its children in out-of-home placement for more than five years. The child welfare community should continue to partner and share ideas, data and resources in order to develop solutions for achieving permanency for children who could be more challenging to place, such as children belonging to large sibling groups or have severe behavioral disorders and other disabilities.

Table 13: Counties where the percentage of children in out-of-home placement for more than five years is at least 10 percent



Reasons why CIC cases are closed

Knowing the reasons why cases are closed helps to determine whether the DCP&P's permanency plans are successful at reuniting children with their parent (reunification) or finding new, safe family settings. In 2016, the goal of permanency was attained in fewer cases. There were two notable exceptions: the percentage of family members granted Kinship Legal Guardianship over a child, which was unchanged from 2015; and the percentage of children adopted, which was up by 1.4 percent.

Slightly more than half of the total number of children in out-of-home placement in 2016 achieved reunification, but at a slightly lower percentage than in 2015 (65.3 percent). The counties that had at least 50 percent of its children return home in 2016 were Bergen, Burlington, Cumberland, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union and Warren. The number and percentage of children who died while in placement is unchanged from 2015.

Camden County is to be commended for placing 26 percent of its children with a relative in 2016. With 20.1 percent placed with a relative, Atlantic County placed second in this category.



Table 14: How cases (FC) were resolved

Reason Case Closed	CY 2016 Cases Closed	% Of Total Cases
Child Reached 18	309	6
Child Died	6	.1
Adoption Finalized	1,146	22.4
Placement with Relative Finalized	494	9.6
Placement with Friend Finalized	8	.2
Child Entered Military	0	0
Child got Married	1	0
Child Under Division of Developmental Disabilities	6	.1
Child in Mental Health Facility	2	0
Child Returned Home	2,697	52.7
Kinship Legal Guardianship Granted	203	4
Child Missing	24	.5
Child Transferred to Care Maintenance Organization	22	.4
Other	95	1.9
Child Transferred to Another County	105	2.1
Child Transferred to Another State	2	0
Total Cases Closed	5,120	

Source: AOC MSFCFT. 01/09/2016.

“Transitioning out of foster care is hugely an emotionally and psychologically overwhelming thing ... On one hand they really want to be on their own, and on the other hand, they are terrified.”

Cynthia White
Executive Director of Kids Hurt Too



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