



**TEXAS**  
Department of Family  
and Protective Services

# **DFPS Rider 21 Report for Community Based Care**

August 2019



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## Introduction

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As required by the General Appropriations Act, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, DFPS Rider 21, the agency shall, on February 1 and August 1 of each year of the biennium, "Report selected performance measures identified by the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) that will allow for comparative analysis between the legacy foster care and redesigned foster care systems". The report, "shall contain the most recent data for the selected comparative performance measures, an analysis of the data that identifies trends and related impact occurring in the redesigned foster care system, identification and analysis of factors negatively impacting any outcomes, recommendations to address problems identified from the data, and any other information necessary to determine the status of the redesigned foster care system".

*It is important to note that there can be no accurate comparative analysis of data for time periods in which children in the Community-Based Care (CBC) catchment area are still transitioning to the Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC). As CBC is in the very early stages of implementation in all existing catchment areas, with the exception of catchment area 3b, children and youth were undergoing a transition between the legacy and community based care systems during the quarter being reported in this Rider 21 report. As a result, data contained in this report for catchment area 2 and catchment area 8a should not be used to evaluate current performance compared to past performance for the catchment, compared to performance across catchments or compared to the areas where CBC has not been implemented. For more information please see: "Limitations of SSCC Performance Data during Stage I Transition" section below.*

## Background

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Community-Based Care (CBC) changes the way DFPS procures, contracts, and pays for foster care services. Under CBC, a single contractor provides a full continuum of services to children and families within a designated geographic area. In Stage I, this Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) is responsible for finding foster homes or other living arrangements for children in state care and providing them with services to meet identified needs. In Stage II, the SSCC expands services to include unverified relative or "kinship" placements, and the SSCC has responsibility for the provision of legal case management. The model requires competitive procurement of performance-based SSCC contracts with financial incentives and disincentives for permanency outcomes and additional performance measures for child safety and well-being.

DFPS is implementing CBC in five catchment areas. In June 2019, the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature appropriated funding for the department to expand CBC to Stage I in two catchment areas

(Regions 1 and 8b) and Stage II in three catchment areas (Regions 3b, 2 and 8a). Stage transition is based on the SSCC's demonstrated readiness.

- **3b (Tarrant, Erath, Hood, Johnson, Palo Pinto, Parker, and Somervell counties in DFPS Region 3)** - DFPS executed a SSCC contract with ACH Child and Family Services (ACH) on January 1, 2014 for DFPS catchment area 3b. Our Community Our Kids (OCOK), the catchment area 3b SSCC operating under ACH, began placing children on September 1, 2014. DFPS renewed its contract with OCOK to continue services under Stage I (foster care and services for children) and add requirements for community-based care and transition of kinship and legal case management services. Stage II implementation is anticipated in fiscal year 2020. DFPS and OCOK have begun meeting with local stakeholders and will share plans publically once the start-up phase officially begins in September 2020.
- **Region 2 catchment area (Abilene/Wichita Falls)** - DFPS awarded a contract to Texas Family Initiative, LLC to serve as the SSCC for the Region 2 catchment area in May 2018. They formed a partnership with New Horizons Ranch and Center Inc., and created 2INgage. 2INgage began placing children on December 1, 2018. Implementation of Stage I will be ongoing during fiscal year 2020, with a focus on building the local network of foster care and services. Stage II start-up activities will begin in fiscal year 2020.
- **Region 8a catchment area (Bexar County in DFPS Region 8)** - DFPS awarded a contract to The Children's Shelter in San Antonio to serve as the SSCC for the Region 8a catchment area in August 2018. The Children's Shelter created Family Tapestry, which began placing children on February 1, 2019. Implementation of Stage I will be ongoing during fiscal year 2020, with a focus on building the local network of foster care and services. Stage II start-up activities will begin in fiscal year 2020.
- **Region 1 catchment area (Amarillo/Lubbock)** - DFPS awarded a contract to St. Francis Community Services, Inc. to serve as the SSCC for the Region 1 catchment area on July 1, 2019. DFPS and St. Francis Community Services are currently in a six-month start-up phase and implementation is anticipated to begin in January 2020.
- **Region 8b catchment area (DFPS Region 8 counties excluding Bexar)** DFPS released a Request for Application for the Region 8B catchment area on May 2, 2019. The procurement closes on August 2, 2019. A contract award is anticipated in the fall of 2019. Implementation is anticipated to begin in April of 2020, following a six month start-up phase.

## Evaluation of Community-Based Care

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Evaluation of Community-Based Care is on-going to support Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and includes both process and outcome components. DFPS and the Public Provider Partnership (PPP), which continues as the guiding body for Community-Based Care, define the

key elements to be evaluated (guiding principles and logic model). Process and outcome evaluation findings help determine whether these elements are being implemented with fidelity to the model and are yielding the desired outcomes. DFPS uses findings to assist in assessing performance, trends, design changes, and any problems or issues in the CBC catchment areas.

As required by the General Appropriations Act, 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, DFPS Rider 21 requires the use of an independent evaluator to complete a process evaluation of the rollout and implementation of Community Based Care in each established catchment area. The process evaluation will help DFPS and the SSCC identify and address initial challenges during implementation and make adjustments prior to successive roll out of Community-Based Care in new catchment areas. DFPS contracted with Texas Tech University in fiscal year 2019 to conduct the process evaluation. The evaluation includes assessment of change processes and collaboration in each catchment area. Texas Tech has participated in site visits in the 3b and 2 catchment areas and will conduct a site visit in the 8a catchment area this fall.

Outcome evaluation includes measuring both contract performance and system change. In addition to the contract performance measures in this Rider report, DFPS continues to work with Chapin Hall affiliated with the University of Chicago to provide independent data analysis of each SSCC's performance on placement within 50 miles and paid foster care days, which will become the basis for incentive payments in Stage III.

The results of independent evaluation efforts will be reported separately from the Rider 21 report but are an important part of meeting the requirement to assess the redesigned system, including identification of and recommendations for addressing problems, and may be referenced in future Rider 21 reports.

## Using the Rider 21 Report to Evaluate Performance

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Rider 21 requires a comparative analysis of the CBC model performance outcomes for the state as a whole, for non-CBC catchments, and for individual SSCCs, over time. Section A of the Attachment includes select LBB performance measures for children in substitute care. As a result, performance is calculated for all children in substitute care in each catchment. These measures will reflect SSCC performance in Stage II. Section B of the Attachment reports contract performance measures specific to the population of children served in Stage I, which is children in contracted foster care placements. Section B reports performance for SSCC and comparative state populations defined as follows:<sup>i</sup>

- **Statewide Population** - The statewide population is the performance of the entire state with regard to SSCC and "SSCC-eligible" legacy placements. "SSCC eligible" placements are foster care placements that would be within the scope of an SSCC contract.

- **Statewide Non-CBC Population** - The statewide “non-CBC” population aggregates data for children in “SSCC-eligible” placements in catchment areas where DFPS has not implemented CBC.
- **SSCC Population** - The performance of each SSCC is reported individually. The SSCC population includes children who were in foster care prior to the SSCC start date and transfer to the SSCC, along with children newly entering foster care or requiring a placement change who are placed by the SSCC. Each SSCC develops a plan for transitioning foster care providers to the SSCC network over a period of up to six months following the go-live date. Transition may be accelerated or slowed to ensure success. *For new SSCCs, performance cannot be compared to the historical performance of eligible children in the catchment until most children have transferred to the SSCC.*
- **Eligible Population** - The “eligible” population shows the historical performance for children in foster care placements in the catchment prior to implementation and the slowly decreasing population of children who have not yet transferred once implementation has begun. Any children who remain in legacy contracts outside of the SSCC network are represented here. *The performance of this small number of remaining children can no longer be compared to historical performance.*

Once most of the foster care population has transferred, and as Community Based Care progresses through staged implementation, the data can be used to answer the following questions:

1. **Are there statewide trends affecting SSCC performance?** Compare state and state “non-CBC” performance trends to SSCC catchment trends. Similarities may point to statewide factors influencing performance in CBC catchments.
2. **Is the redesigned system doing better than the legacy system?** Compare SSCC performance to the performance of the non-CBC population. If the SSCC catchment areas are improving over their historic baseline more than the legacy catchment areas are improving over theirs, the changes made to the foster care system under CBC are effective.
3. **Is a particular SSCC improving performance over time?** Compare individual SSCC performance across fiscal years. Improvement may take time as DFPS transitions services to each SSCC and the SSCC works to build the network of services in the area.
4. **Are some SSCCs performing better than others?** Compare SSCC performance one to another. If a specific SSCC is improving outcomes compared to historical performance at a faster rate, the specific strategies implemented by the SSCC may be more effective.

## Limitations of SSCC Performance Data during Stage I Transition

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Prior to implementation of Stage I, the SSCC develops, and CPS approves, a transition plan that is individualized to the current children in foster care in the catchment and the providers with whom they are placed. Transition occurs incrementally over several months. Performance data reported for SSCCs during the transition and before most of children in foster care are transferred has several significant limitations.

1. Some children are duplicated, meaning they are both in the Eligible and SSCC populations during the transition as a result of time spent in each population during the performance period. This means their full experience may be captured only partially for each population.
2. The population “mix” is influenced by the specific transition plan implemented by the SSCC and is in a state of change over the course of the transition. “Mix” may refer to the proportion of children in foster homes (least restrictive) and children in other foster care settings. It may also be geographic given the trend of SSCCs to begin with local providers caring for the greatest numbers of children before extending to providers farther out and those caring for smaller numbers of children.

This makes interpreting specific performance measures during the time children are transitioning to the SSCC difficult for the following reasons:

- Least restrictive placement – the baseline for this measure is based on the total care days experienced by children during a fiscal year. To the extent that an SSCC transfers more children in foster homes earlier or later in the process, the percent of care days that are least restrictive will be increased or decreased. In addition, start dates after September 1 will represent fewer care days compared to an annual baseline.
- Proximity – to the extent that a provider transfers “in area” providers before providers located farther away, the percent of children placed close to home will be increased or decreased. Because children in foster homes are more likely to be placed closer to home, this measure is also influenced by the pace at which Child Placing Agencies transfer under the SSCC. Chapin Hall produces data for this measure which is not available until the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter.
- Stability – this measure is based on the number of placements experienced by children over the course of a fiscal year. Separating placement experience into time spent in legacy and time with the SSCC lowers the rate for both populations.
- Siblings placed together – although this data is based on the last day of the quarter and reflects more sibling groups transferred, sibling groups that are separated across legacy and SSCC populations may not be counted as placed apart for either population.

- Preparation for Adult Living - Children who began taking PAL classes prior to transfer completed their program under the legacy DFPS contract, although they are now reported as placed with the SSCC.

Outcome measurement takes time. Time is needed to transition children currently in foster care to the SSCC network. Time is needed for the SSCC to build a local network of services, including identifying and making changes they think will lead to improved outcomes. Finally, time is needed to collect data on the experiences of children and families once changes take hold. Not until an SSCC has served all catchment area children in foster care for a sufficient amount of time will the data clearly reflect performance.

## SSCC Performance

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DFPS uses a CQI approach that includes formal processes for assessing performance and addressing performance issues. DFPS and the SSCC review quarterly performance data and other data and information to better understand factors driving performance, including areas of strength and areas to target for improvement. DFPS requires formal performance improvement plans when trends show sustained performance below the contract baseline. The SSCC develops goals and action steps to address issues and concerns.

## Our Community Our Kids

OCOK saw continued performance gains on many contract outcomes for fiscal year 2019 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter compared to the contract baseline (FY16-17 average). Areas for improvement include safety and placement stability.<sup>ii</sup>

- **Safety** – 99.8 percent of children were safe in foster care placements - The target is 100 percent safe in care.
- **Placement Stability** - Rate of 1.40 placements per child appears to be on target, but is higher than the 1.38 rate achieved in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2018.
- **Least Restrictive Placement Setting** – 81 percent of foster care days spent in foster family or kinship foster homes compared to 75 percent baseline.
- **Sibling Groups Placed Together** – 64 percent of sibling groups placed together on the last day of the quarter compared to 63 percent baseline.
- **Preparation for Adult Living** – 95 percent of youth turning 18 completed PAL compared to 86 percent baseline.

The following factors contributed to 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter performance:<sup>iii</sup>

- More children placed in foster homes - DFPS data shows more children placed in foster homes as a first placement for children removed in the fiscal year entering foster care (82 percent compared to 7 percent placed in emergency shelters), more children overall with a foster home placement at some point in the fiscal year (87 percent), and a decrease in

placement disruptions or changes resulting in shelter placements (only 5 percent of all children with a shelter placement). Data also shows an increase in teens spending time in foster home settings (56 percent of all care days for youth age 14 and older compared to 47 percent baseline).

- Treatment services for children in foster homes - OCOK's Professional Home Based CARE (PHBC) program, which serves children who have had multiple residential treatment stays, psychiatric hospitalizations, and/or runaway episodes, has been in operation for one year. The program provides children intensive home-based care and wraparound behavioral health services that include the biological family alongside their PHBC foster parents. The program has served 15 children, with only two disruptions and two exiting to a positive permanency outcome to date.
- Foster home stability - OCOK continues efforts to support stable foster home placements that include disruption mitigation practices, implementation of provider reviews, and attention to low performing Child Placing Agencies. OCOK is identifying specific clinical subgroups where stability is improving (such as physically aggressive children) and those to be targeted for improvement (children who have run away). Stability in non-foster homes settings (residential treatment facilities) continues to be an area to target for improvement. ACH anticipates that its new residential treatment program will begin accepting placements in August.
- More small sibling groups placed together - OCOK continues efforts to build and/or reserve capacity for small sibling groups (80 percent of sibling groups of two placed together). Capacity to place large sibling groups together continues to be a need.

## 2INgage

2INgage began making foster care placements for Region 2 children newly entering care or who required a placement change on December 1, 2018. DFPS began transferring children in existing foster care placements to the 2INgage network monthly according to an approved transition plan. As of May 31, 2019, the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter reporting period for which data is presented in this report, 96 percent of Region 2 children in foster care were being served with the 2INgage network.<sup>iv</sup>

Safety is the single performance measure that can be evaluated since it looks at investigations of incidents that occurred after the start date of an SSCC placement and the target is 100 percent safe in care.

- **Safety** - 99.7 percent of children placed with 2INgage were safe in foster care.

As described on page 4, there are limitations to performance data gathered during the transition such that it does not yet accurately reflect performance or allow for a comparison to historical baseline.

- **Placement Stability** – 1.2 placements per child is artificially low as a result of beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter when compared to a baseline based on the full fiscal year. The average

FY17-18 performance as of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter is 1.3. DFPS expects that there may be more placement changes early on in the transition as the SSCC works to place children locally while developing local service capacity.

- **Least Restrictive Placement Setting** – Performance cannot be accurately assessed until most of the eligible population have transferred and spent more care days with the SSCC.
- **Sibling Groups Placed Together** – Performance reflects children separated between the legacy population and SSCC. Single children transferred or referred to the SSCC for placement would not be counted as separated from any siblings until all siblings transferred. Performance cannot be accurately assessed until all sibling groups have transferred and more time has passed.
- **Preparation for Adult Living** – 100 percent of children turning 18 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter completed PAL. Youth already taking classes continued under the legacy contractor. SSCC network foster care providers maintained continuity by ensuring that youth attend classes.

Although more time is needed to produce sufficient outcome data, systems-level changes intended to produce outcomes may be observed earlier. 2INgage is implementing the following efforts and innovations:<sup>v</sup>

- 2INgage is focusing efforts with community providers on developing foster home capacity to keep children within their home communities. 2INgage network providers created a joint foster home recruitment plan, including the joint recruitment website [www.WeNeedMoreFosterParents.com](http://www.WeNeedMoreFosterParents.com)
- 2INgage utilizes an empirically validated placement matching tool called Every Child a Priority (ECAP), which generates the best match placement for children and youth based on their unique characteristics and the profiles of potential foster homes.

## Family Tapestry

Family Tapestry began making foster care placements for Bexar County children newly entering care or who required a placement change on February 1, 2019. DFPS began transferring children in existing foster care placements to Family Tapestry in three phases according to an approved transition plan. As of May 31, 2019, the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter reporting period for which data is presented in this report, 80 percent of Bexar County children in foster care were being served with the Family Tapestry network.

Safety is the single performance measure that can be evaluated since it looks at investigations of incidents that occurred after the start date of an SSCC placement and the target is 100percent safe in care.

- **Safety** – 99.9 percent of children placed with Family Tapestry were safe in foster care.

As described on page 4, there are limitations to performance data gathered in the transition such that it does not yet accurately reflect performance or allow for a comparison to historical baseline.

- **Placement Stability** – 1.14 placements per child is artificially low as a result of beginning in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter when compared to a baseline based on the full fiscal year. The average FY17-18 performance as of quarter 3 is 1.37. DFPS expects that there may be more placement changes early on in the transition as the SSCC works to place children locally while developing local service capacity.
- **Least Restrictive Placement Setting** – Performance cannot be accurately assessed until most of the eligible population have transferred and spent more care days with the SSCC.
- **Sibling Groups Placed Together** – Performance reflects children separated between the legacy population and SSCC. Single children transferred or referred to the SSCC for placement would not be counted as separated from any siblings until all siblings transferred. Performance cannot be accurately assessed until all sibling groups have transferred and more time has passed.
- **Preparation for Adult Living** – 100 percent of children turning 18 through the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter completed PAL. Youth already taking classes continued under the legacy contractor. SSCC network foster care providers maintained continuity by ensuring that youth attend classes.

Although more time is needed to produce sufficient outcome data, systems-level changes intended to produce outcomes may be observed earlier. Family Tapestry is implementing the following efforts and innovations: <sup>vi</sup>

- Family Tapestry is delivering network training to improve quality of care and build consistency throughout the provider network. Family Tapestry formed a Training Committee composed of network providers to recommend training topics and is partnering with Texas A&M San Antonio to provide training at no cost to providers on a quarterly basis. Topics to date have included psychotropic medications and working with children with autism.
- Family Tapestry has launched a targeted foster care recruitment campaign to build capacity to meet local needs, including a focus on developing more placement capacity for older youth and children with medical needs and those with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD). The campaign seeks to break down foster care myths about these underserved populations. Marketing materials include brochures and public service announcements available to all network providers to support individual agency recruitment efforts while promoting a unified recruitment message.
- To support a guiding principle of safety, Family Tapestry has contracted with Praesidium, a research-based risk and safety assessment and training organization, to conduct its “Know Your Score (KYS)” assessment with providers. The assessment produces a safety score and recommendations to improve on practice and policy. Assessments will begin in August 2019.

<sup>ii</sup> All quarter 3 and historical performance data is from DFPS Rider Report August 2019 Submission DRIT#92807, published as an attachment.

<sup>iii</sup> Additional fiscal year 2019 CQI data calculated from Open Foster Care Placements DRIT #93471; historical QQI data baselines calculated from DRITs #94172,#94155, #92809,#94045,#94159; information reported by OCOK, July 24, 2019.

<sup>iv</sup> Data Source: SSCC Transfer Counts, DRIT # 94493

<sup>v</sup> Information reported by 2INgage July 25, 2019

<sup>vi</sup> Information reported by Family Tapestry, July 24, 2019