



House Select Committee on Child Protection

Interim Charge Presentation

Judge John Specia, DFPS Commissioner

July 1, 2014

- Monitor the ongoing efforts of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), the work of the Protect Our Kids Commission and the National Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, and any relevant Sunset Commission recommendations;
- Assess the efficacy of ongoing prevention efforts that target resources to families at risk;
- Examine regulatory policy and contract oversight within the child welfare system;
- Consider ways to encourage consistent, transparent, and timely review of abuse and neglect fatalities;
- Monitor ongoing efforts to stabilize the CPS workforce, placing specific emphasis on improving work environment, enhancing the quality of supervision, and addressing the unique challenges facing different regions of the state;
- Suggest improvements to the screening, assessment, training, and support of potential foster and kinship families;
- Evaluate the ability of children and youth within the system to report maltreatment;
- Monitor ongoing efforts to enhance the use of data to improve outcomes; and
- Consider strategies to ensure better coordination and collaboration among local agencies, faith-based organizations, the private sector, non-profits, and law enforcement to reduce the incidence of abuse and neglect fatalities.

- The Vision and Values of CPS
- Overview of CPS and its Functions
- CPS Organization
- Case Flow
- Demographic Changes Impacting CPS
- Major Legislative Efforts

Part One

Child Protective Services

Vision & Values

The CPS Vision

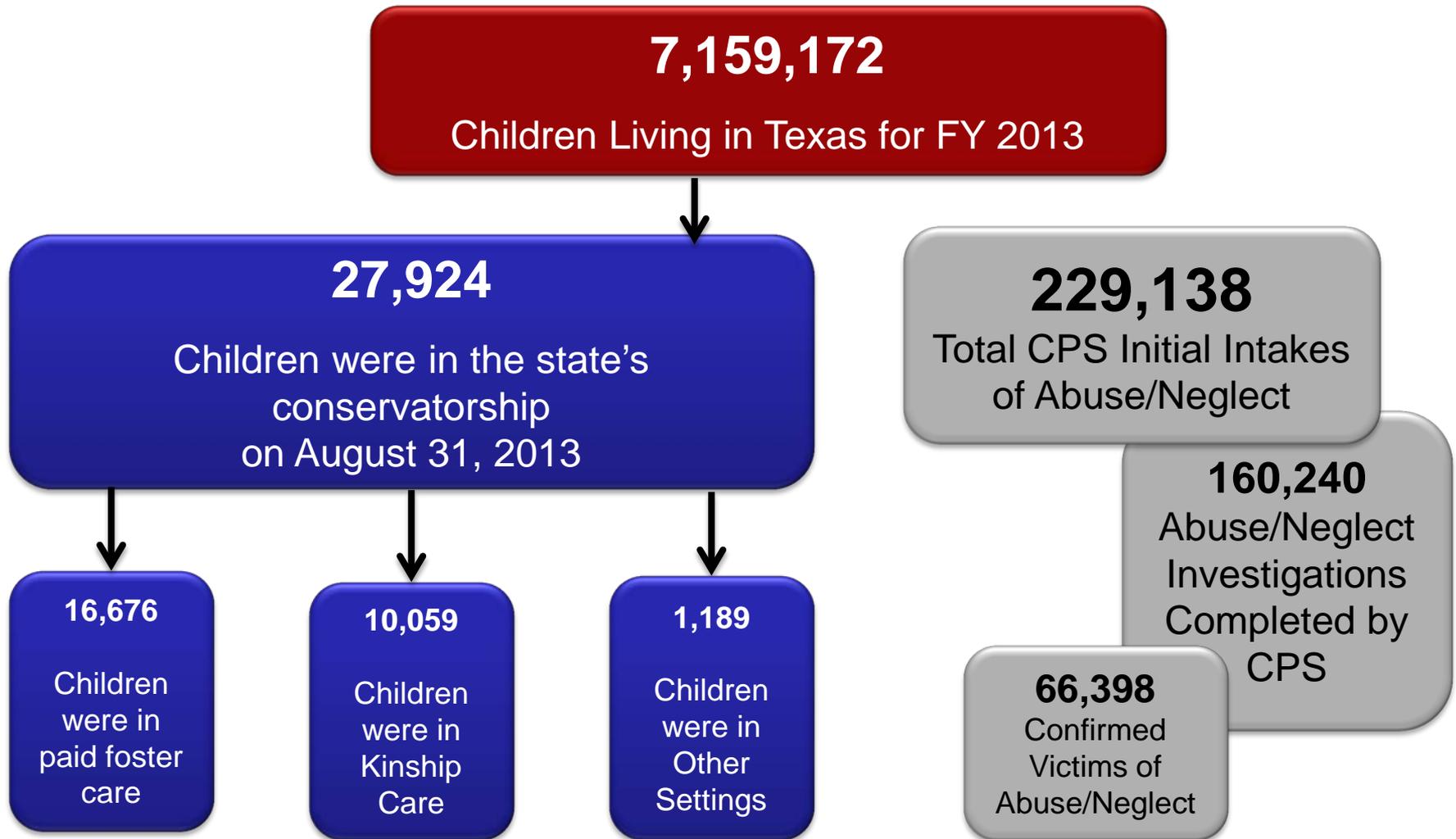
Children First: Protected and Connected

CPS Values

- Respect for Culture
 - Inclusiveness of Families, Youth and Community
 - Integrity in Decision Making
 - Compassion for All
 - Commitment to Reducing Disproportionality
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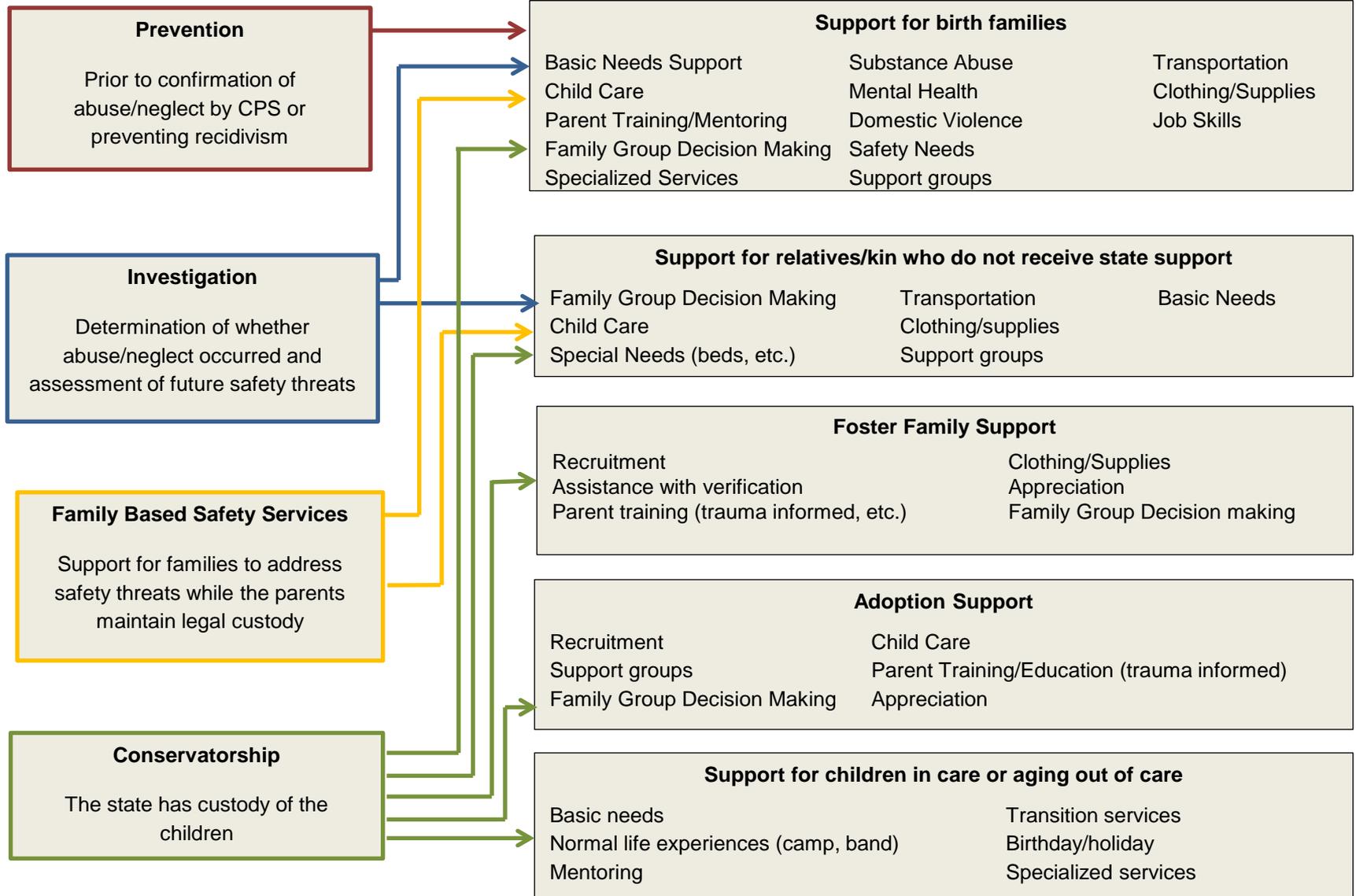
Part Two

Overview of CPS and Its Functions



Stages of Service

CPS Stage of Service



Prevention & Early Intervention

- Helps communities build strong families by contracting with community organizations to provide a variety of evidence-based child and family support services
- Produces Public Awareness Campaigns on issues such as child abuse prevention, safe sleeping and water safety



Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention services focuses on strengthening the following **five protective factors** in a family:

1. Nurturing and attachment between parent and child;
2. Parent's understanding of child development;
3. Parental Resilience;
4. Ability to access and rely on social supports and connections; and
5. Ability to access and utilize concrete supports.

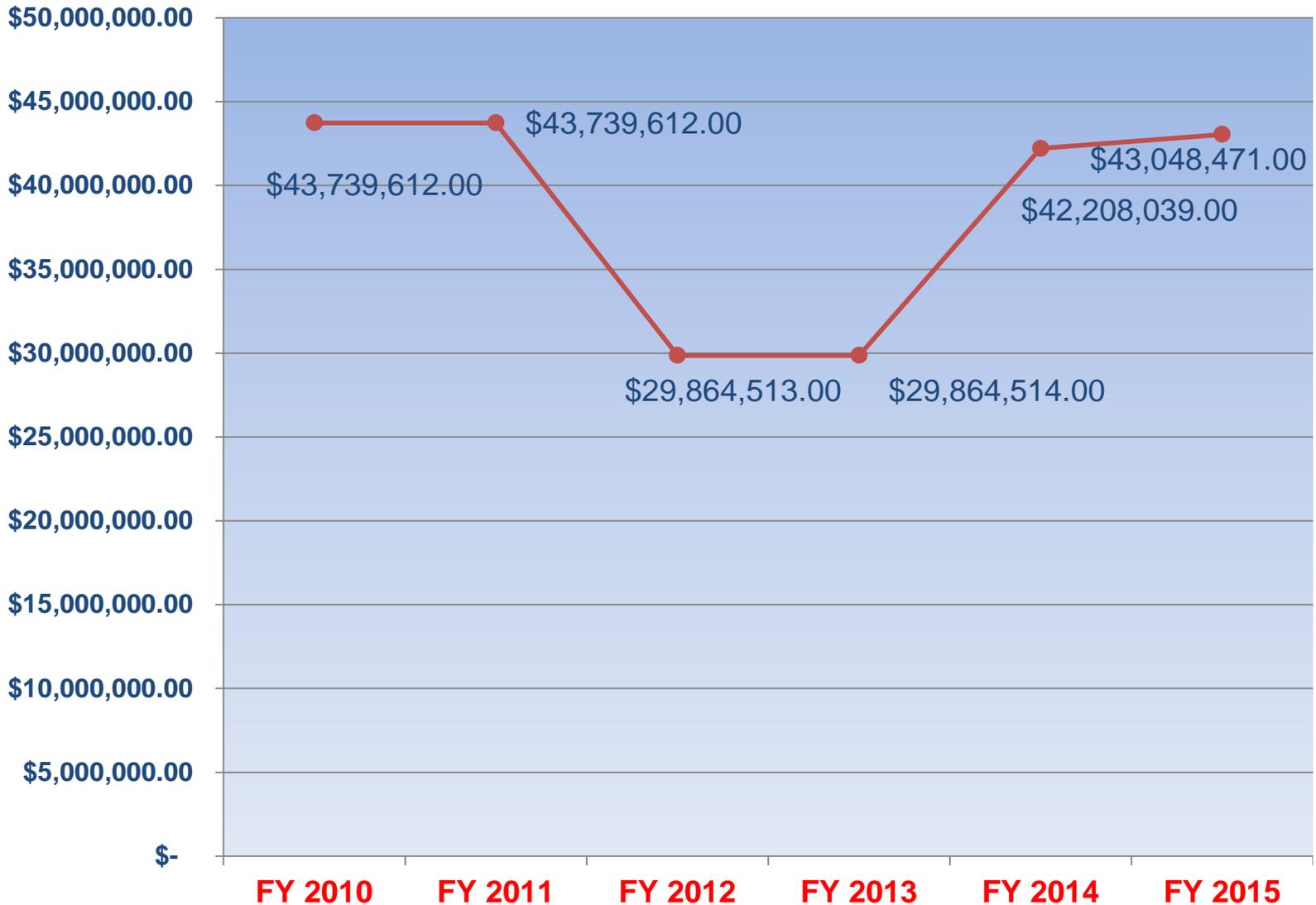
Prevention & Early Intervention

PEI Programs	Description	Number of Contracts	Number of Counties Covered	Number of Youth/ Families to be Served
Services to At-Risk Youth	Family crisis counseling, respite care, and universal prevention	31	254	26,945
Community Youth Development	Youth leadership activities in 15 targeted zip codes	13	15	13,343
Texas Families: Together and Safe	Parent education, support, and home-visiting	4	19	3,266
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention	Fatherhood Education and Support	2	3	274
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention	Parent Education and Respite Care	3	4	719
Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention	HEAL (Home Visiting, Education and Leadership)	3	3	To be determined

Prevention & Early Intervention

PEI Programs	Description	Number of Contracts	Number of Counties Covered	Number of Youth/ Families to be Served
<i>Other "At-Risk" Programs</i>				
Community-Based Family Services	Parent education, support and home-visiting for families investigated and closed out by CPS	2	6	470
Statewide Youth Services Network (SYSN)	Juvenile delinquency prevention programs	2	254	1,192
Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES)	Targeted community funding for collaborative services to support families with children 0-5	8	8	To be determined
Helping through Intervention and Prevention (HIP)	Home-visiting for targeted high-risk families with newborn children.	Based on Targeted Families		

PEI's Program Funding



Investigate allegations of abuse, neglect, and exploitation of children. In the event risk, abuse/neglect, or exploitation is discovered, then corrective action is taken to ensure the safety of the children.

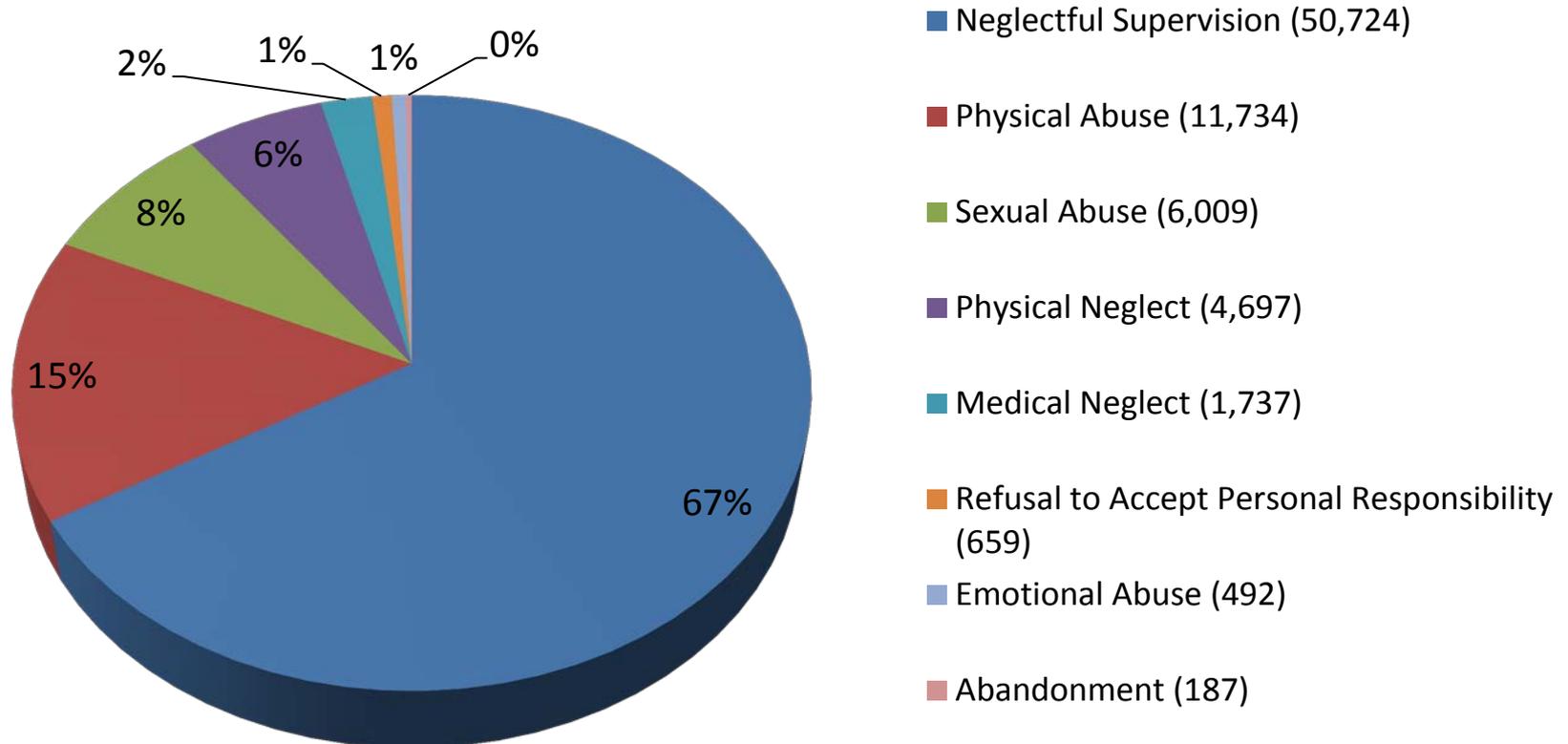
During an investigation, CPS:

- Interviews parents or caretakers, and others who know about the family
- As necessary, develops a plan to ensure the child's safety. This safety plan may stipulate a temporary placement outside the home
- Determines if child abuse or neglect occurred
- Assesses if the child is safe
- Evaluates if the child is at risk of future harm

During an investigation, CPS may refer a child or family for services in the community such as:

- Individual or family therapy
- Parenting classes
- Medical assistance
- Mental health services
- Substance abuse assessment and treatment
- Programs offering financial assistance for utilities, rent, or childcare

Confirmed Allegations of Child Abuse/Neglect by Type of Abuse, FY 2012



TOTAL CONFIRMED ALLEGATIONS 76,239

Source: Data Book FY13, p. 41

If CPS is concerned about a child's safety, the case may be referred to ongoing services:

- **Family Based Safety Services** - Parents retain legal custody with the child in the home or, sometimes with the parent's consent, the child temporarily goes to live with someone else until it is safe to return home
- **Substitute Care Services** – CPS removes child from home and seeks legal custody

Family Based Safety Services

- Family Based Safety Services (FBSS) goals are to ensure a child's safety and reduce the risk of future harm, while keeping the family intact.
- FBSS services may include:
 - Purchased client services such as daycare, counseling, or parent training.
 - Referrals to available community resources.
- In FY 2013, 29,332 families and 82,017 children received Family Preservation Services.

Substitute Care Services

If CPS staff determines it is not safe for a child to live with his or her own family, then CPS petitions the court to remove a child from the home by obtaining temporary managing conservatorship.

When a child is in substitute care, DFPS staff:

- Develop and implement a time-limited reunification service plan to correct the conditions placing the child at risk;
 - Prepare the child and family for the child's return; or
 - Find alternative permanent placements for children who cannot safely go home.
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Substitute Care Services

Services provided during substitute care can include:

- Kinship Care
- Foster Care Services
- Transitional Living Services
- Life Skill Training for Youth 14 and Older
- Medical, Behavioral and Other Health Services

In FY 2013, 17,022 children were removed from their home:

- 12,629 removed as a result of an investigation
- 4,393 from an open stage of service

On August 31, 2013:

27,924 children were in substitute care:

- 16,676 were in foster care
- 11,248 children were in other types of substitute care

Courts have 12 months to issue final orders for children in DFPS conservatorship. 6-month extensions are available in extraordinary circumstances.

The final order will result in one of the following:

- Reunification with the family (5,647);
- Adoption (5,364);
- Name a relative or another person as the permanent managing conservator (4,907); or
- Appoint DFPS as the permanent managing conservator and remaining in care (1,328).

DFPS seeks adoptive homes for children who have had parental rights terminated.

Adoption Assistance is available to eligible children to help offset costs to potential adoptive parents.

The assistance can include:

- Monthly financial benefit;
- Medicaid benefits; and/or
- One-time reimbursement of non-recurring expenses

5,364 children were adopted from DFPS in FY 2013

Children who are age 13 and above are offered help with transitioning to adulthood through the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program.

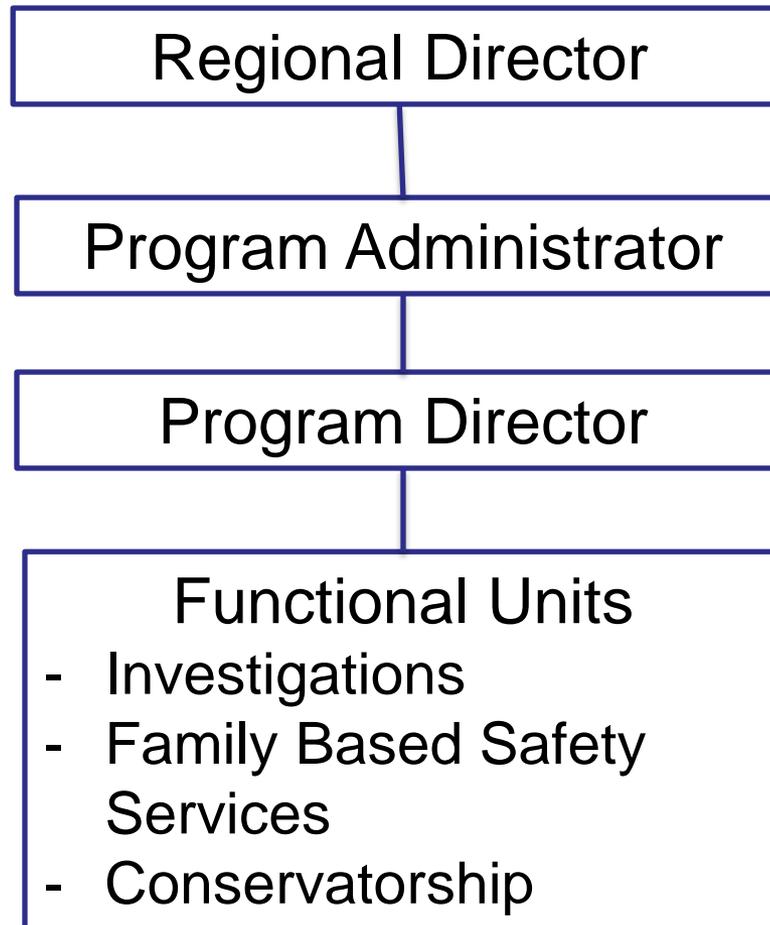
The PAL program includes the PAL Life Skills Assessment & Life Skills Training in the following areas:

- Health and safety
 - Housing and transportation
 - Job readiness
 - Financial management
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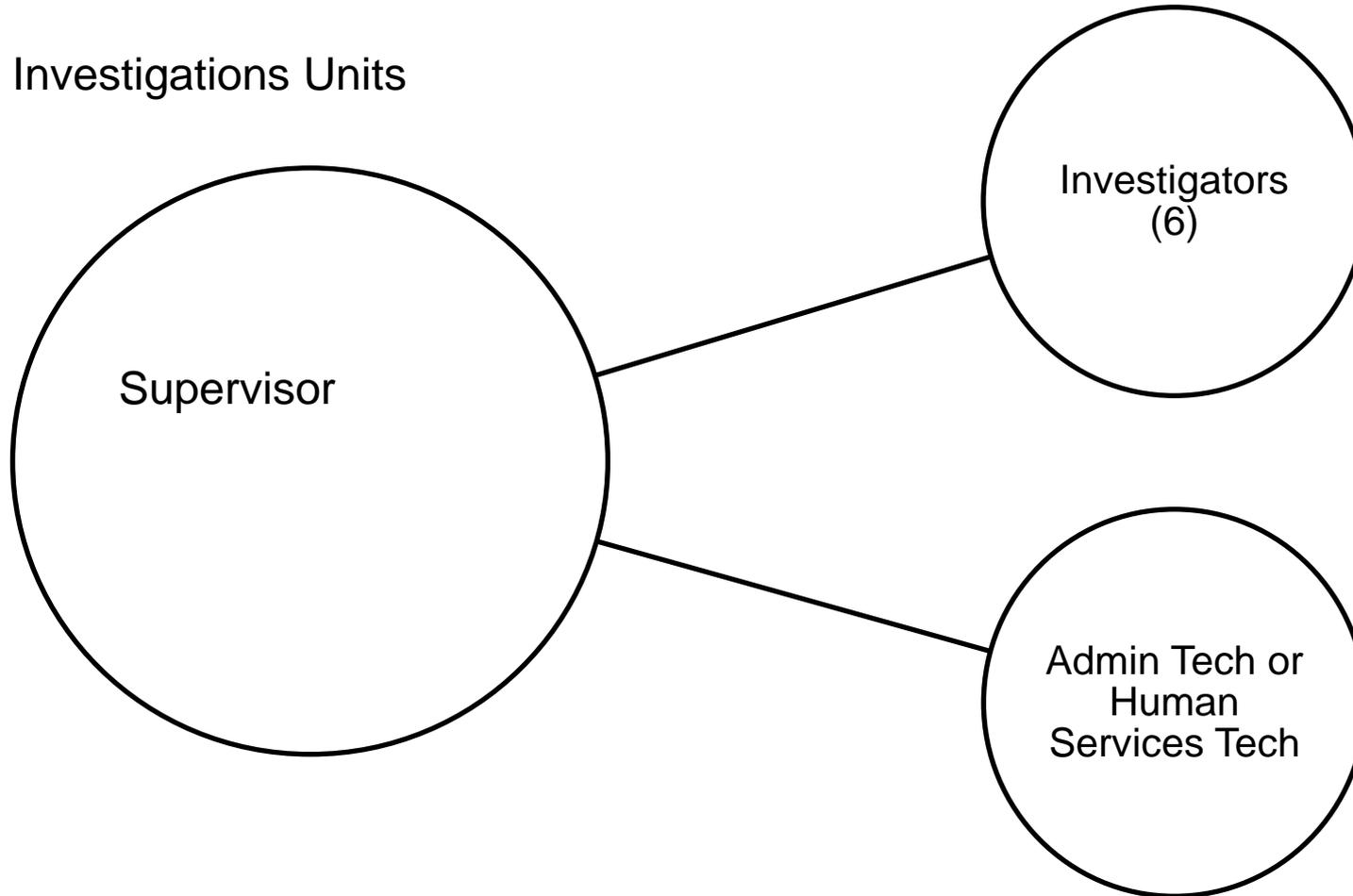
Part Three

CPS Organization

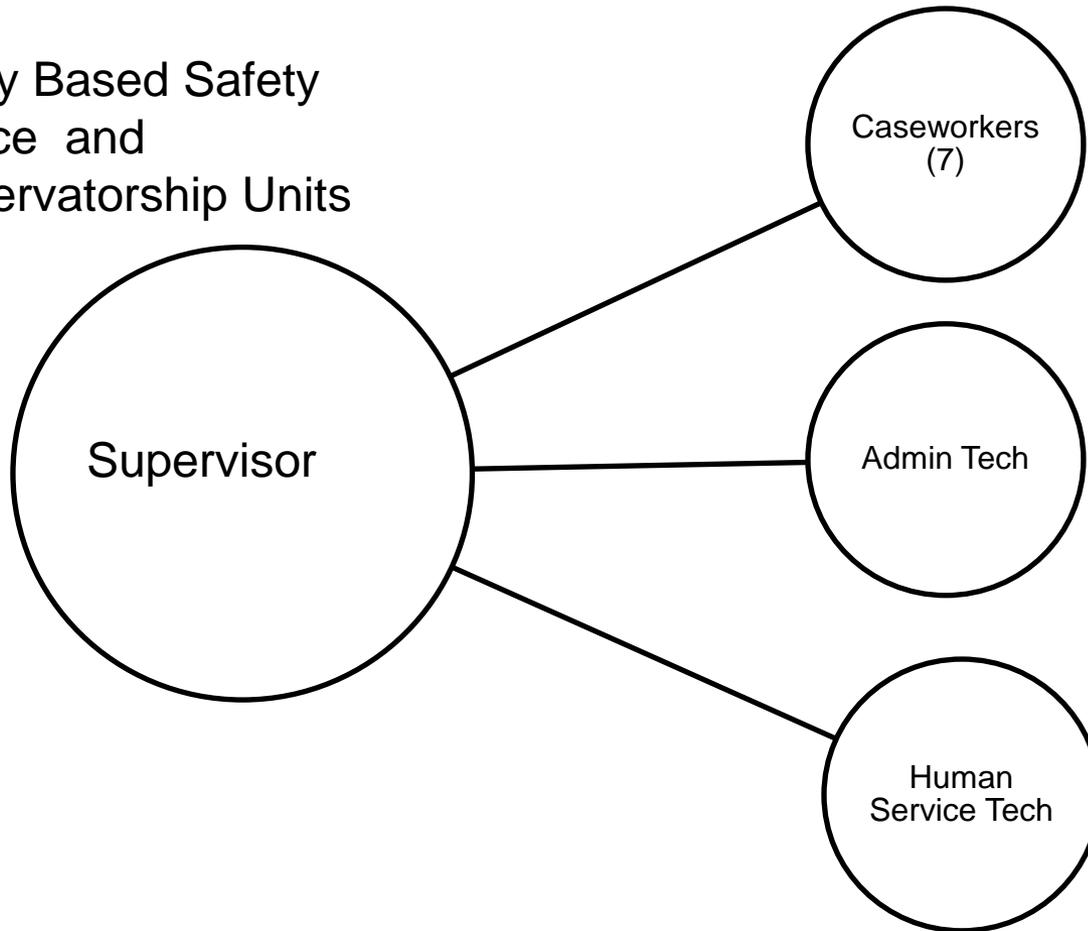
- Units specialized by function are deployed in 3 stages of service:
 - Investigations,
 - Family Based Safety Services, and
 - Conservatorship
- Specialists provide support to functional units:
 - Child safety specialists
 - Special investigators
 - Education specialists
 - Master investigators or Master Conservatorship caseworkers
 - Daycare Coordinators
 - Developmental Disability Specialists



Investigations Units



Family Based Safety
Service and
Conservatorship Units

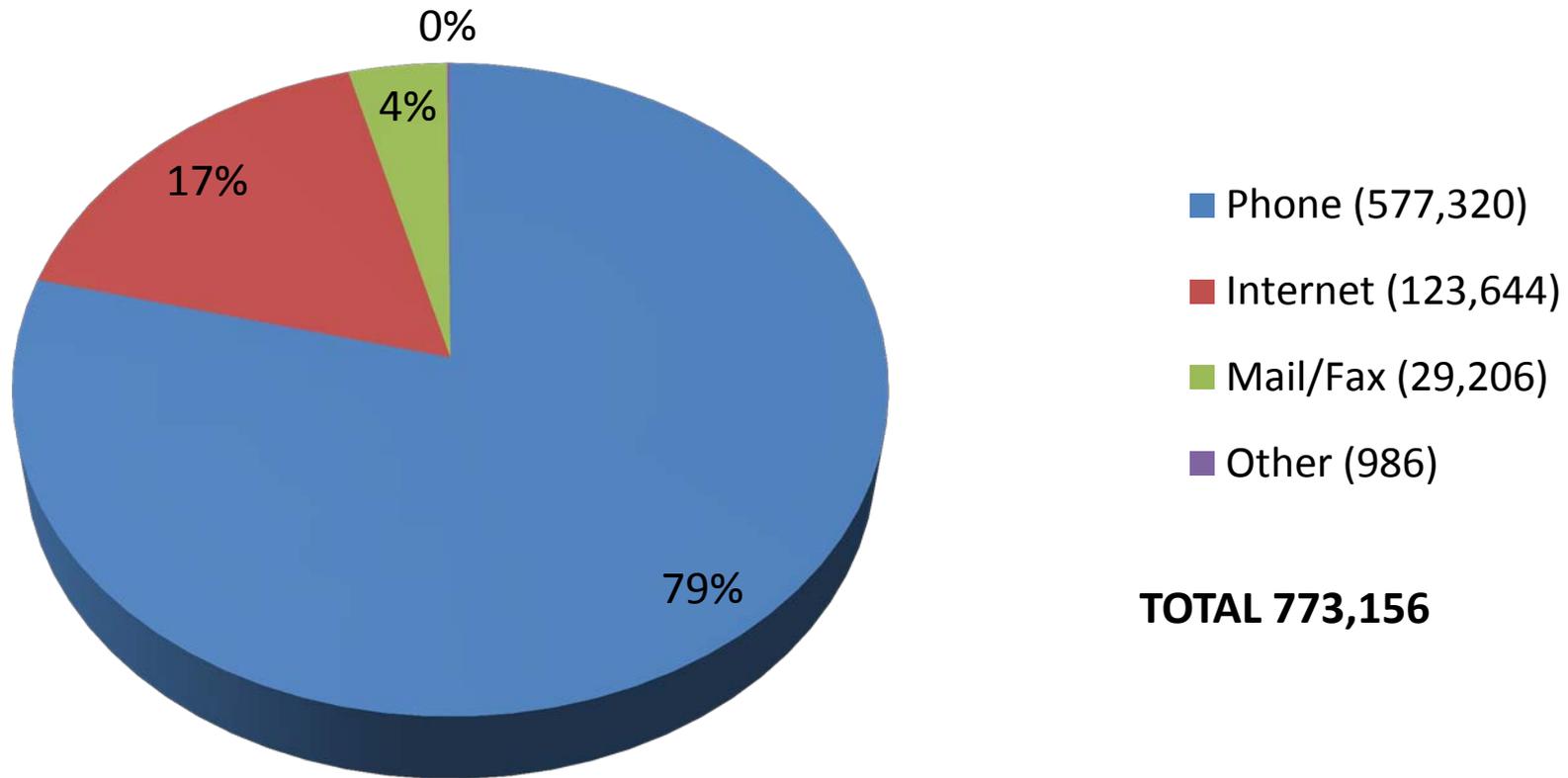


Part Four Case Flow

Protecting children and adults begins with the report of alleged abuse or neglect. Intake is the first step in the casework process. Statewide Intake (SWI) is DFPS' centralized point of intake.

- SWI operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Reports are received via phone, internet, fax, or mail.
- Methods of contact:
 - Phone (1-800-252-5400)
 - DFPS website (www.txabusehotline.org)
 - Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline - Crisis counseling and referrals for troubled youth and families.

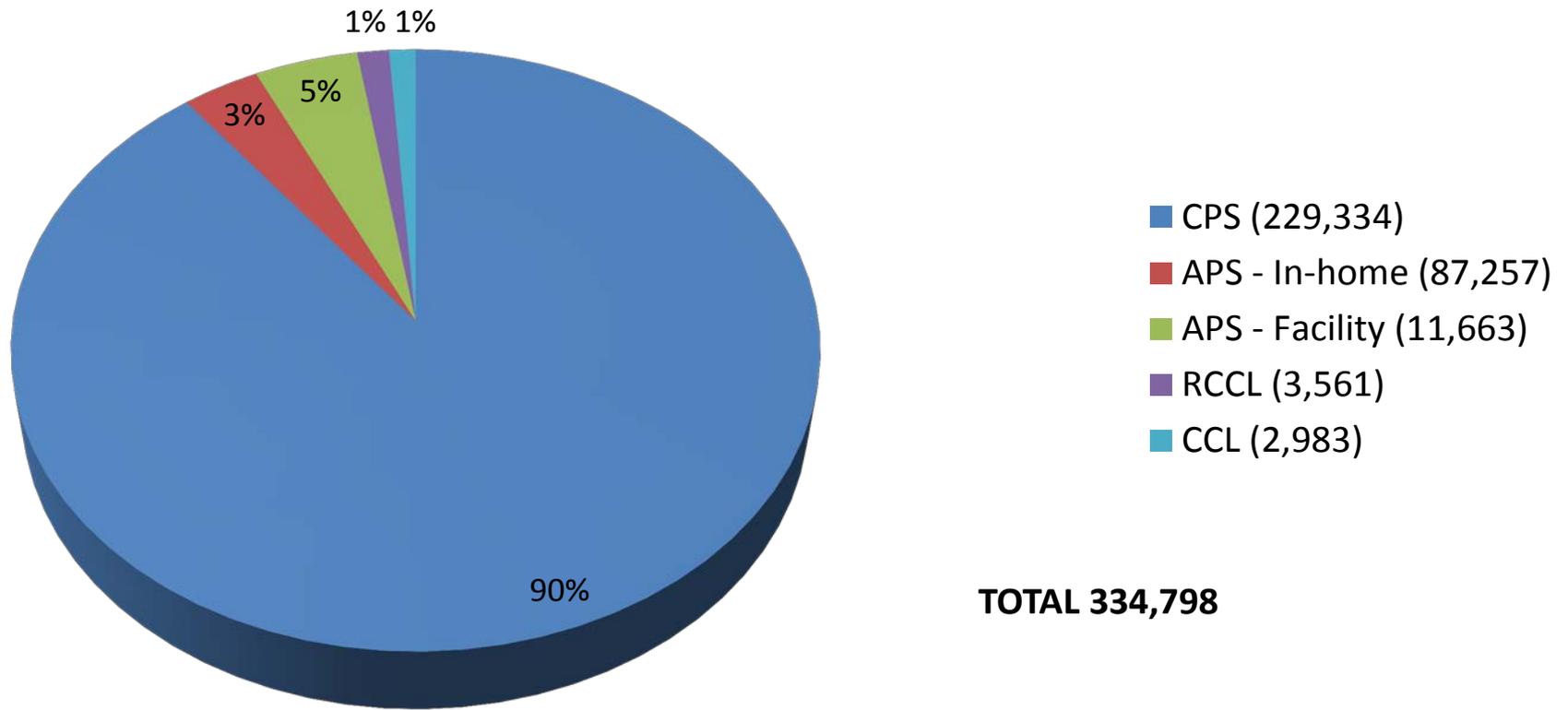
**Contacts Received by Method of Receipt
Fiscal Year 2013**

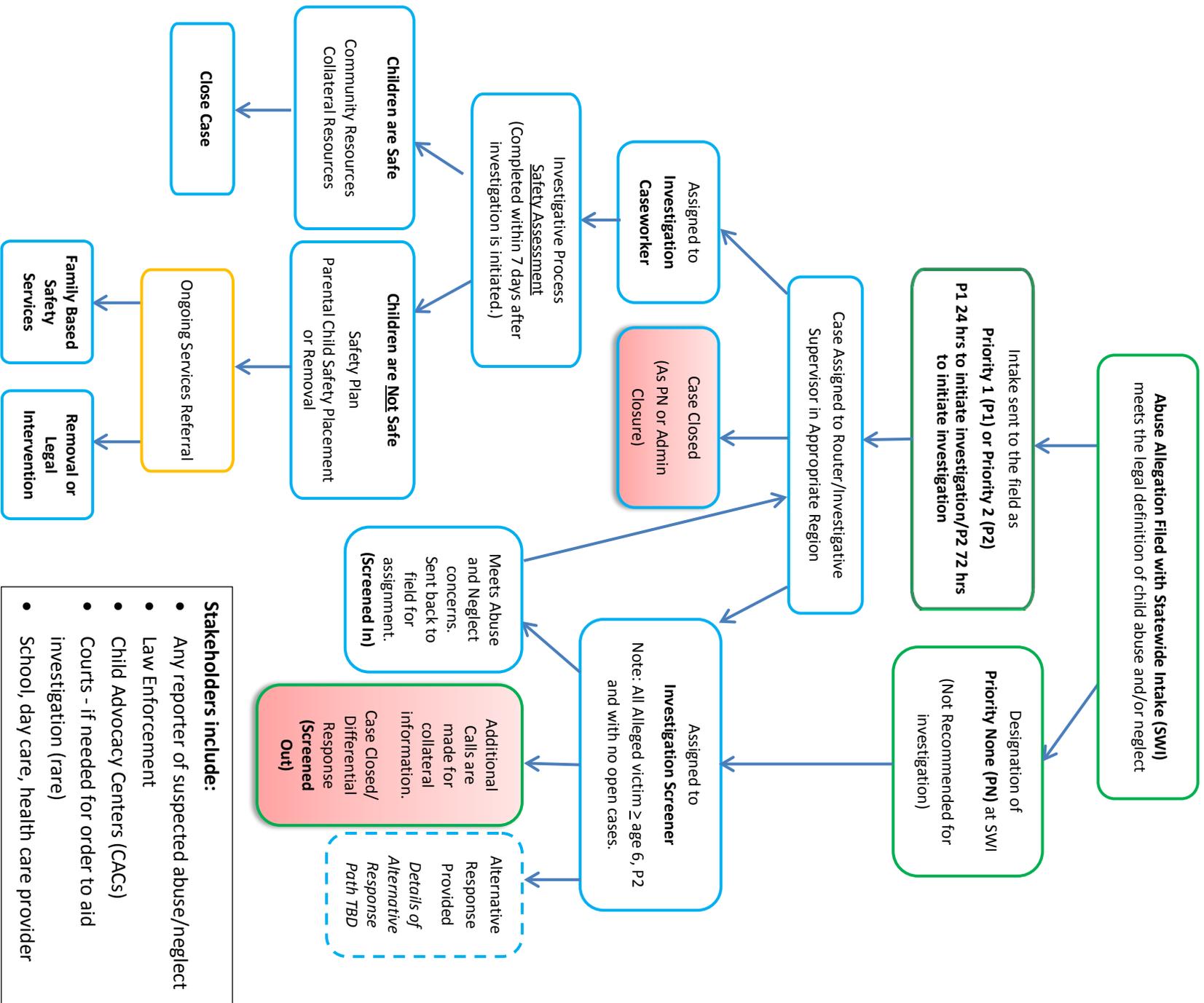


When Intake Specialists receive a report, they:

- Determine if reports meet statutory definitions of abuse neglect or exploitation.
- Search for previous DFPS history.
- Assess safety of alleged victim.
- Prioritize case for further action.
- Determine field jurisdiction and route to field.
- Notify law enforcement.
- Provide referrals to other state agencies or resources.

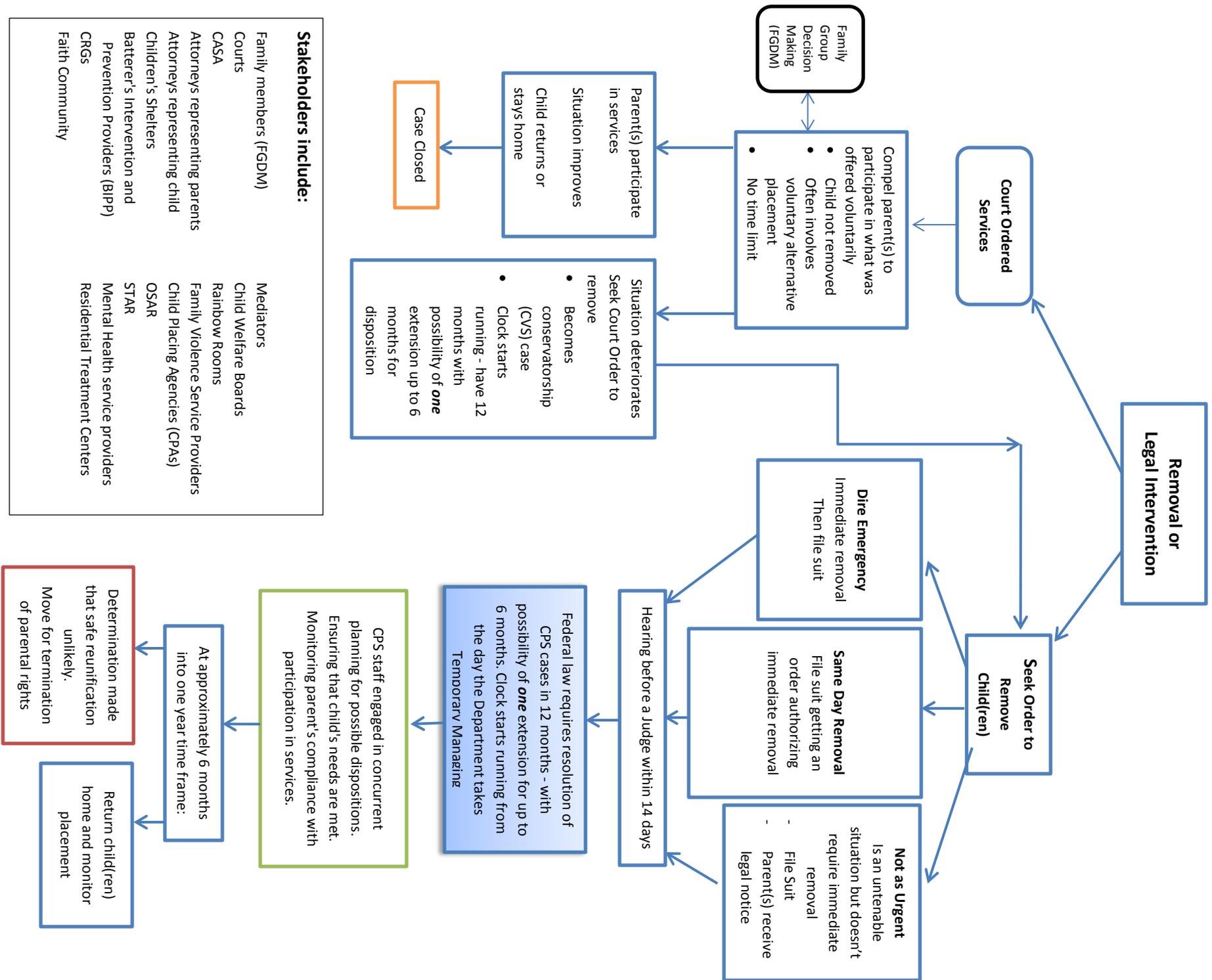
Reports of Abuse, Neglect, and Exploitation by Program Fiscal Year 2013

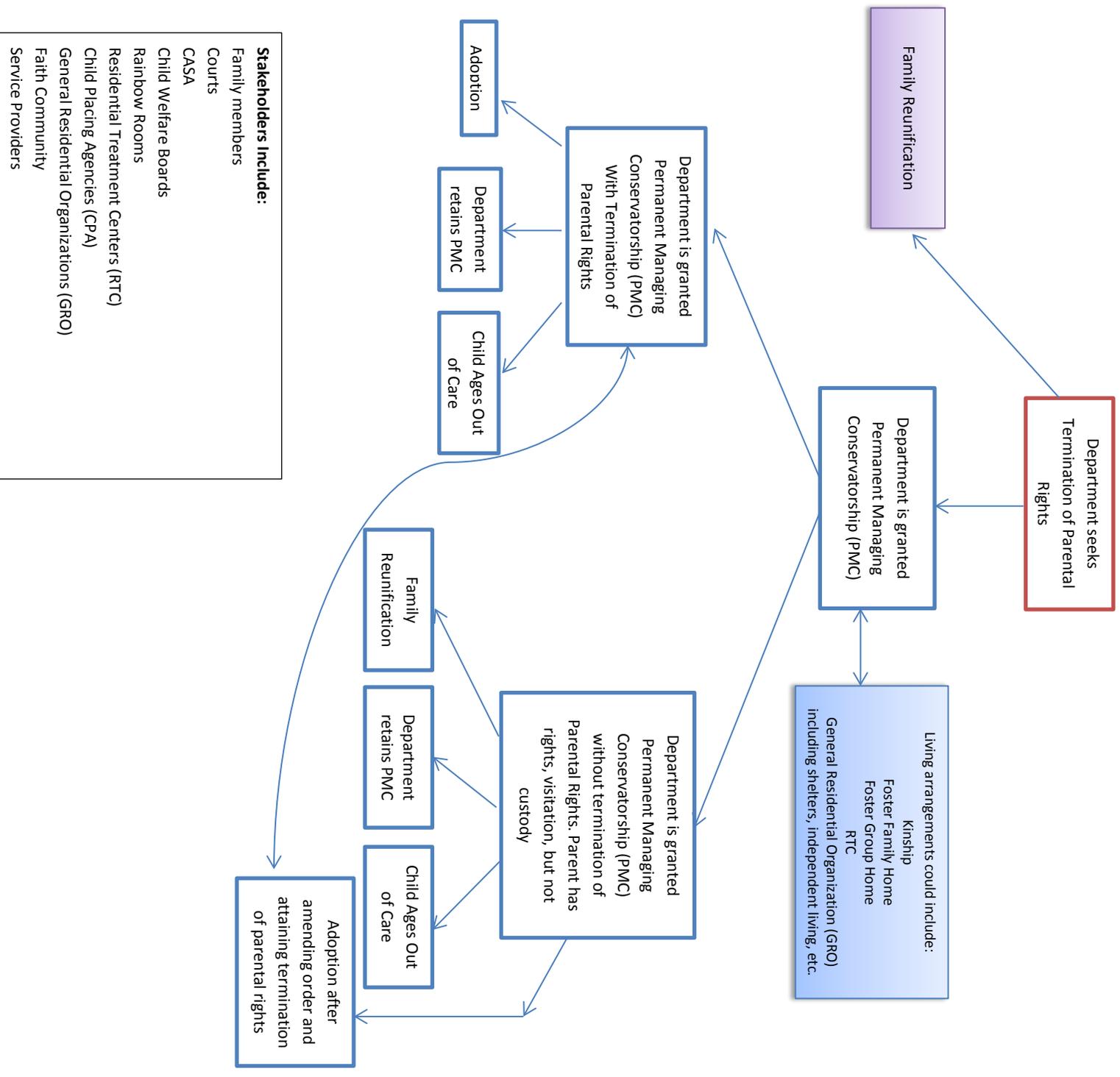




Stakeholders include:

- Any reporter of suspected abuse/neglect
- Law Enforcement
- Child Advocacy Centers (CACs)
- Courts - if needed for order to aid investigation (rare)
- School, day care, health care provider





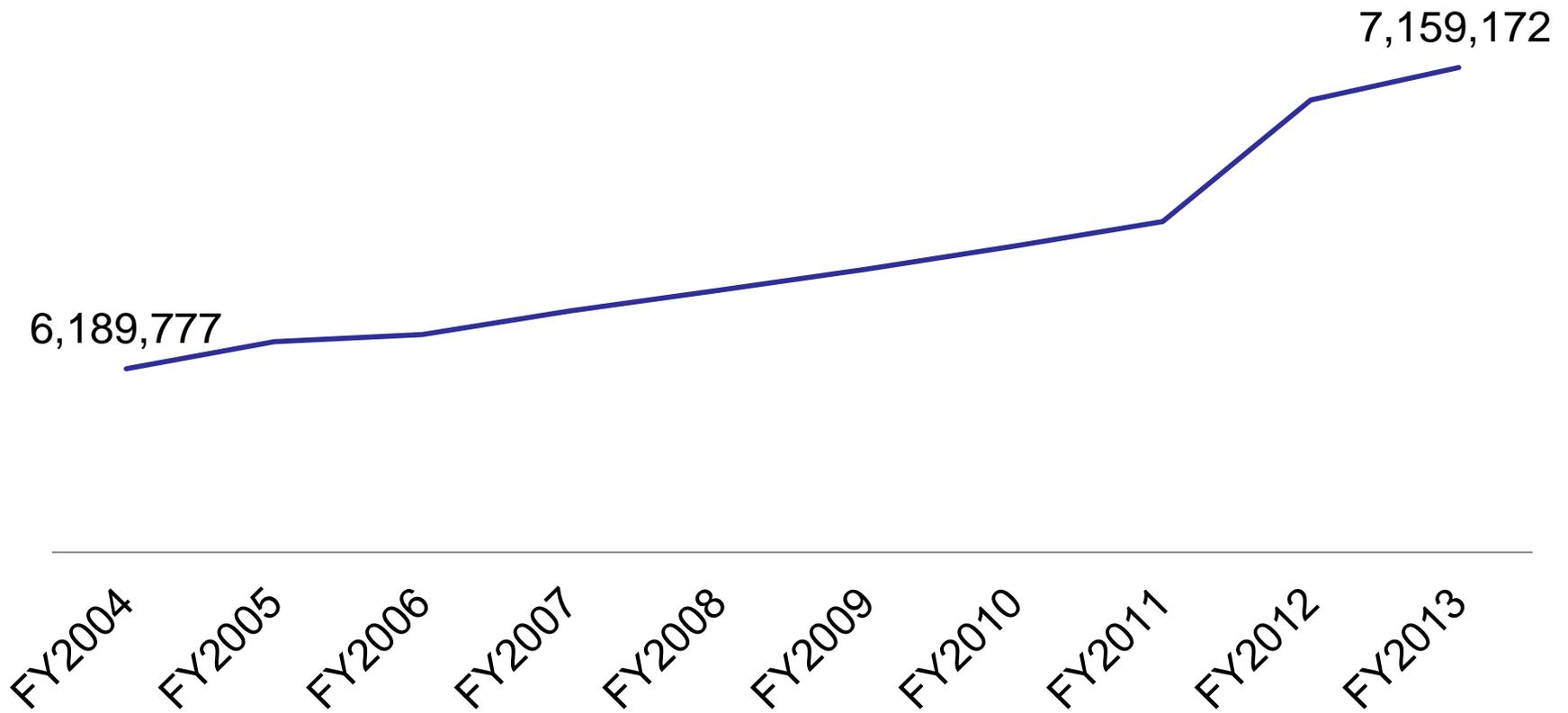
Stakeholders Include:

- Family members
- Courts
- CASA
- Child Welfare Boards
- Rainbow Rooms
- Residential Treatment Centers (RTC)
- Child Placing Agencies (CPA)
- General Residential Organizations (GRO)
- Faith Community
- Service Providers

Part Five

Demographic Changes Impacting CPS

Child Population in Texas



Part Six

Major Legislative Efforts

Major Legislative Efforts

The following is a summary of the significant legislation related to child protection in recent legislative sessions.

In 2005, **Senate Bill 6** directed systemic CPS reform by:

- Restructuring investigations;
- Improving caseworker performance;
- Requiring review of CPS actions to identify disproportionate effects on certain racial and ethnic groups.
- Increasing the number of kinship care (families and family friends) placements;
- Supporting youth aging out of the foster-care system;
- Improving medical services for children in state care; and

Major Legislative Efforts

In the 80th Legislative Session (2007), **Senate Bill 758** required DFPS to develop and implement a plan for improving services for children and families to:

- include a new post psychiatric hospitalization step-down rate for certain foster youth;
- improve the quality and accountability of foster care;
- reduce the rate of growth of foster care, as well as the length of time children spend in foster care; and
- mandating access by CPS to medical and other records relating to a report of child abuse or neglect.

Major Legislative Efforts

The 81st Legislature passed both **SB 2080** and **HB 1151** in 2009, which did the following:

- Created the Permanency Care Assistance (PCA) Program for family members who assume permanent custody of a child in foster care.
- Extended foster care eligibility to age 21.
- Expanded adoption and PCA eligibility until a youth's 21st birthday for youth who left DFPS custody after turning 16.

In response to findings in Texas' 2008 federal Child and Family Services Review, **SB 939** did the following:

- Expanded eligibility for the college tuition waiver benefit and increased the maximum age for enrollment up to age 25.
 - Required a child's permanency plan to include concurrent permanency goals
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Major Legislative Efforts

The 82nd Legislative Session sought to redesign the foster care system through the passage of **SB 218**. SB 218 streamlined and enhanced the foster care system, focusing on changing the ways that DFPS contracts and pays for services in order to:

- increase the number of children and youth placed with their siblings and in their home communities;
 - decrease the average time children spend in foster care before achieving permanency;
 - decrease the number of times children move placements while in foster care;
 - create robust and sustainable service continuums in communities throughout Texas.
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Major Legislative Efforts

The 83rd Legislative Session passed **SB 423** to create the alternative response track for CPS. Key measures in SB 423 include:

- allowing CPS to conduct an assessment rather than a traditional investigation, when responding to less serious allegations of abuse or neglect;
- ensuring that DFPS does not designate an alleged perpetrator in alternative response cases but does link these families to the appropriate services.

HB 915 adds new duties related to the review of medical care by a guardian ad litem, attorney ad litem, and the court, for children in DFPS conservatorship. The bill outlines requirements for informed consent for psychotropic medications and enhances the training for medical consenters.

- Performing our core functions more effectively
- Spending more time with families
- Improving assessments of child safety
- Supporting field staff better

