CHILD PLACEMENT REVIEW BOARD

of the State of Delaware

ANNUAL REPORT

FY2005

(July 2004-June 2005)

820 North French Street · Wilmington, DE 19801 · (302) 577-8750

WHO WE ARE

The Child Placement Review Board (CPRB) serves children in the care and custody of the State of Delaware. As an independent review body, the CPRB monitors the care provided to these children to be sure they receive care consistent with the goals that have been set for them. CPRB reviews also help ensure that children in the State's care and custody also receive appropriate educational, medical, dental, and social services.

In addition to completing regular reviews of children in the State's system, the CPRB is charged with making recommendations to the Family Court of the State of Delaware and to the Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families (DSCYF). The agencies that supervise the children under review, namely the Division of Family Services (DFS) and the Division of Youth Rehabilitative Services (YRS), are part of DSCYF. Finally, the CPRB is directed to be an advocate for the needs of the children in the State's system.

The CPRB makes its recommendations in the course of the year through Findings and Recommendations issued after each review. Further, the CPRB takes advocacy positions and makes recommendations in its collaborative work with the professionals of DFS, YRS, and other groups and agencies with an interest in children, in letters and petitions to Family Court, and in its annual report.

THE CHILDREN WE SERVE

The CPRB serves two groups of children whose ages range from infancy to 18 and, under some circumstances, beyond. The first group is made up of foster children who are in the custody of the State. Their cases are managed by DFS. The second group, adjudicated youth, is made up of minors remanded by Family Court to alternative placements or out-of-home care (but not to detention or incarceration facilities). Their cases are managed by YRS. Both foster children and adjudicated youth are guaranteed basic social services by the State.

During FY2005, Delaware had 1,388 children in foster care. Of these, 585 children received reviews; some received more than one review, bringing the total number of DFS reviews to 670. Numbers of children in foster care and number of CPRB reviews for the past three years are given below:

Children in Foster Care (DFS) and CPRB Reviews

Category	FY2005	FY2004	FY2003	FY2002
Children in Foster Care	**1,388**	1,209	1,133	1,218
CPRB Reviews	**670**	733	652	754
Unduplicated Children Reviewed	**585**	547	509	714
Exiting System Before Eligible for a Review	**280**	134	203	206
Not Yet Eligible for a Review	**523***	342*	278*	298*

**Includes children who were reunified with their families but remain in State custody.*

While the number of children in care increased by 179 over FY2004, it is too early to know whether this represents a trend or is a short-term reality. In either event, the addition of this large number of children to the foster care system places significant burdens on caseworkers to find foster homes where the skills of the foster family match the child's needs.

The CPRB also conducted 75 YRS reviews to evaluate the placements and progress of adjudicated youth. Outcomes of these reviews will be treated later in this report.

Finally, the CPRB conducted 23 mixing reviews. These are reviews of adjudicated youth supervised by YRS and mixed with other youth in educational or residential settings. The purpose of mixing reviews is to ensure that adjudicated youth are not harmful to or a negative influence on children and youth who are not in the judicial system.

HOW WE OPERATE

Governance of the CPRB is straightforward. Board members are appointed by the Governor, as are the Chair and five members of the Executive Committee. The Board elects five additional members to the Executive Committee. During the year, the Executive Committee is required to meet six times; however, it normally meets monthly.

Review committees are formed from among the Board members based on geographical distribution; they are listed at the end of this report. Volunteer board members of the CPRB contributed more than 4,200 hours to reviews and advocacy efforts in FY2005.

Advocacy, direction, and support are furnished by the staff, which consists of an Executive Director, a Review and Training Supervisor, four Review Coordinators, and two administrative specialists.

SERVING CHILDREN BETTER

Training. This year, review committees benefited from additional efforts to recruit and retain volunteers. Recruitment involved news profiles, advertisements, and follow-up by Executive Committee members.

Board training is designed to equip review committee members to address the best interests of each child. Presiding officers of each review committee receive specialized training, and all Board members are offered training at the CPRB's annual meeting and in the form of site visits during the year.

Scholarships. The CPRB administers the Ivyane Davis Memorial Scholarship Program, which is funded by the State to honor a long-term children's advocate and early member of the CPRB. Again this year, the CPRB partnered with DFS to administer the federal Education and Training Vouchers (ETV) in conjunction with the Davis Scholarship. During FY2005, Delaware contributed the mandatory State matching funds from the $50,000 Davis Scholarship budget allocation; this was combined with the ETV award of $73,626. Additional funds totaling $17,628 were carried over from FY2004. Forty-two scholarship awards were made; total scholarship value was $141,254. These awards allow Delaware residents who were in the State's foster care system the opportunity to attain post-secondary education.

CHILDREN AND THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM

When children enter the foster care system, they are coming from a disrupted or unstable family situation. The goal of the DFS caseworker is to place the child in a safe setting and work toward finding a viable long-term means of meeting the child's needs. In practical terms, this often means initial placement in a shelter and a second placement chosen as a longer-term solution.

The table at right shows the number of placements for children in foster care. DFS has developed new foster care contracts and options designed to reduce the number of placements required to find a good fit; the data in this table will furnish a baseline for evaluating success in meeting that goal.

Some multiple placements occur as a result of re-entry into the system. This is the case for children who enter foster care, are returned to their homes when the immediate crisis is resolved, and are put back in foster care when the next emergency flares. For these and other children, the disruptions of life can be measured not only in the number of placements but also in the number of entries into the foster care system.

Number of Placements

Placements	FY2005		FY2004		FY2003	
1	85	(15%)	94	(17%)	107	(21%)
2	124	(21%)	97	(18%)	99	(19%)
3	71	(12%)	80	(15%)	61	(12%)
4	62	(11%)	47	(9%)	45	(9%)
5-9	127	(22%)	126	(23%)	118	(23%)
10-14	50	(9%)	48	(9%)	34	(7%)
15-19	30	(5%)	24	(4%)	22	(4%)
20-24	15	(3%)	14	(3%)	10	(2%)
25-44	21	(4%)	17	(3%)	13	(3%)
Total	585	(100%)	547	(100%)	509	(100%)

Number of Entries into Foster Care

Entries	FY2005		FY2004		FY2003	
1	1106	(80%)	936	(77%)	881	(78%)
2	224	(16%)	213	(18%)	188	(17%)
3	37	(3%)	39	(3%)	48	(4%)
4	14	(1%)	14	(1%)	11	(1%)
5 or more	7	(1%)	7	(1%)	5	(0%)
Totals	1388	(100%)	1209	(100%)	1133	(100%)

THE SEARCH FOR PERMANENCY IN FOSTER CARE

One of the primary reasons for the formation of the Child Placement Review Board is stated clearly in the enabling legislation: a system of independent reviews "insures continuing efforts to obtain permanent homes for these children. . . ." Federal timelines and the legislation known as the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) added new pressures for permanency. ASFA guidelines also encourage the reunification of the family as the optimum outcome unless the health or safety of the child would be endangered by reunification.

Stated permanency goals for children in DFS foster care are shown below. The effect of ASFA can be seen in the rising rate of reunification and the strong presence of adoption, which requires the termination of parental rights (TPR) and is listed as TPR/adoption. The table also shows that alternative planned permanent living arrangement/independence (APPLA) is the goal for nearly 40 percent of foster care children and part of a rising trend since FY2002.

Permanency Goals for Reviewed Children (Set by DFS)

Goal	FY2005	FY2004	FY2003	FY2002
APPLA/ Independence	230 (39%)	202 (37%)	190 (37%)	219 (31%)
Reunification	165 (28%)	127 (23%)	115 (23%)	145 (20%)
TPR/Adoption	163 (28%)	186 (34%)	192 (38%)	298 (42%)
Guardianship	17 (3%)	19 (3%)	8 (2%)	21 (4%)
Relative Custody	9 (2%)	11 (2%)	4 (1%)	5 (2%)
Unclear	1 (0%)	2 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (1%)
Total	**585 (100%)**	**547 (100%)**	**509 (100%)**	**714 (100)**

With more than one third of Delaware's children assigned a permanency goal of APPLA, it is increasingly important to assign priority to the identification and development of positive, long-term placements in foster homes or group homes. However, when a stable foster placement cannot be maintained for such a youth, APPLA runs counter to the ultimate goal of achieving permanency.

New recruitment strategies could be developed to find foster parents who have shown an interest in adopting children with special needs or to recruit individuals who have shown a particular interest in a given child. APPLA should not become a catch-all category but should represent thoughtful placement for children whose best hope for stability lies in a healthy and supportive foster home.

EXIT OUTCOMES

Exit outcomes do not always match the planned goals. **During FY2005, family** reunification was the stated goal **for 28% percent of the** children in the foster care system. **Among children who** actually exited the system, however, **251—a full 50 % of** the total—left the system to be reunified **with their families.** As the table below shows, **adoption or assignment** of permanent guardianship was **the exit outcome for a** quarter of those leaving foster care **in FY2005.**

Exit Outcome: DFS Cases

Exit Outcome	FY2005	FY2004	FY2003	FY2002
Reunification	251 (50%)	10 (6%)	47 (33%)	115 (56%)
Adoption/ Guardianship	130 (26%)	76 (47%)	60 (42%)	43 (21%)
Aged Out	67 (13%)	65 (40%)	30 (21%)	26 (13%)
Relative Custody	47 (9%)	11 (7%)	5 (3%)	18 (9%)
Other	5 (1%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	3 (2%)
Totals	**500 (100%)**	**163 (99%)**	**144 (100%)**	**206 (100%)**

REVIEWING THE STATUS OF ADJUDICATED YOUTH

During FY2005, the CPRB completed 75 reviews of young people supervised by YRS. Of these 75 cases, 65 involved males. The largest age groups among the males were 16 (26%), 17 (18%), and 18 (26%) years of age. Forty-nine percent (49%) of the males were African-American, 43% were Caucasian, and 6% were Latino.

Among the 10 females in alternative placements or out-of-home care reviewed by the CPRB, nine were African-American and one was Caucasian. Overall, the number of YRS females reviewed by the CPRB has risen, and they enter the system at earlier ages. In FY2004, only 4 females were reviewed, and they were 18 years old and above. This year, the 10 females reviewed were 15, 16, and 17 years old.

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Of the 75 YRS cases reviewed, only 6 youth (8%) were housed in Delaware. The other 92% of these adjudicated youth were housed out-of-state. Twenty-seven of YRS cases (36%) were in Pennsylvania and 17 (23%) in South Carolina. South Dakota housed 10 (13%)—more than the number who remained in Delaware. On the positive side, more placements were made in states closer to Delaware than in previous years.

The CPRB continues to be concerned about the large number of adjudicated youth who must be sent to out-of-state facilities to receive appropriate treatment because Delaware lacks the needed treatment options. Distance and cost of travel limit family visitation and reduce or remove the possibility of family-based therapy. In addition, YRS supervision is indirect in cases where the young person is removed from Delaware.

State of Placement

State	FY05		FY04		FY03	
Pennsylvania	27	(36%)	24	(32%)	24	(28%)
South Carolina	17	(23%)	18	(23%)	18	(21%)
South Dakota	10	(13%)	5	(6%)	5	(6%)
Virginia	8	(10%)	2	(3%)	5	(6%)
Delaware	**6**	**(8%)**	**11**	**(14%)**	**8**	**(9%)**
Iowa	3	(4%)	8	(10%)	13	(15%)
Florida	2	(3%)	2	(3%)	0	
Tennessee	2	(3%)	0		1	(1%)
Minnesota	0		3	(4%)	3	(4%)
North Dakota	0		2	(3%)	0	
Utah	0		1	(3%)	2	(2%)
Maryland	0		0		5	(6%)
Total	**75**	**(100%)**	**77**	**(100%)**	**85**	**(100%)**

INTERAGENCY RELATIONS

The focus of the CPRB is children. One mechanism for serving children is maintaining positive, collegial relationships with other professionals in the child welfare field.

DSCYF. The Department of Services for Children, Youth, and Their Families includes DFS, YRS, and the Division of Child Mental Health (CMH). One area of emphasis for DSCYF during FY2005 was the continuing development of the Holistic Services Team (HST). The HST is designed to improve service delivery to children with specialized or multiple needs. Establishing multidisciplinary teams for case management streamlines the process of supplying and coordinating a range of State services. Experience with the holistic approach shows that having a CMH caseworker on the team, often as the team leader, helps deliver counseling or related mental health services more seamlessly.

- **DFS.** During FY2005, DFS made significant system-wide improvements in its residential services contracts. The Division put all residential service contracts out to bid in an effort to secure services that would better meet the needs of the children in the foster care system. The bidding system and revamped contracts are leading to better service delivery. The CPRB is hopeful that these improvements will help reduce the number of placements required for service delivery and bring more stability to foster children.

  The Executive Director of the CPRB welcomed the opportunity to serve as the chair of the DFS Advisory Committee and the Foster Care Residential Services Request for Proposals (RFP) Review Panel.

- **CMH.** Work with CMH professionals during regular reviews and with the Holistic Services Teams was constructive. The Executive Director of the CPRB continues to serve on the CMH Advisory Committee. The CPRB supported the CMH budget request for funding for Behavioral Health Specialists. These professionals bring advanced skills to the assessment of children's needs and the foster care placement decisions in an effort to reduce the number of placements experienced by children in foster care.

Family Court. Family Court is another major focal point for interaction with the CPRB. During FY2005, the CPRB received more reports from Family Court. This was a welcome development. To date, however, the Family Court system does not have a central data collection system to monitor compliance with ASFA timeliness requirements. Development of such a system would help ensure that children in care receive the services, reviews, and oversight required by this legislation.

Others. Other collegial links that help the CPRB address the needs of children include the Inter-Agency Committee on Adoption (IACOA), the Child Protection and Accountability Coalition (CPAC), and CPAC subcommittees.

GOALS FOR FY2006

CPRB staff members have worked to identify and address barriers impacting the children served by the HST. Strengthening the HST approach will continue to be a focus area. Its promise for foster care children with special or multiple needs makes it a worthy area of effort.

In the legislative arena, CPRB leadership will work to develop a smooth system of educating new legislators about the Board and its work and to keep all legislators more fully informed about issues related to children and youth in foster care and in adjudicated placements.

The CPRB continues to be committed to developing and maintaining strong working relationships with the professional colleagues of DFS, YRS, and CMH. In addition, the CPRB finds links to community boards, agencies, and committees an effective mechanism for communicating its work and concerns to the child welfare community.

The CPRB is using targeted recruitment strategies to fill its review committees, especially those conducting YRS reviews. Recruitment efforts will focus on certain backgrounds or capabilities, for example targeting retired law enforcement personnel and others who have experience with adjudicated youth.

The CPRB remains committed to the safety and the healthy development of the children in Delaware's foster care system and the youth in adjudicated placements. By combining professional staff and dedicated volunteers, the Child Placement Review Board will continue to bring expertise, commitment, and passion to the task of serving children in the care and custody of the State.

THE CPRB: VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

The strength of the CPRB is built on the skill and dedication of its Board members. These volunteers combine backgrounds in education, medicine, psychology, and child welfare with insight and commitment. The volunteer Board members of the CPRB give children in the State's custody or care an independent and caring assessment, a focus on permanency, and an assurance of ongoing advocacy. The volunteer members of the CPRB are listed below in conjunction with the review committees on which they serve. The Presiding Officer of each committee is marked by an asterisk (*). General members elected to serve on the Executive Committee are noted by a box (■). A leave of absence is noted as (LOA).

Executive Committee
Bill Murray*
Janice Baly
Barbara Blair
Ron Bythwood
Eleanor Kiesel
Don Schneck
Mary Austria ■
Carolyn Karney ■
Bonnie Maull ■
Sunnie Moon ■
Virginia VanSciver ■

New Castle 1
Jeff Davidson* (LOA)
Robin Ryan* (Acting)
Eva Abbott
Marion Gibbs
Linda Hartzel
Mary Morgan
Yahna Talley

New Castle 2
Nancy Czeiner*
Caroline Bither
Karla Jensen
Helen Willauer

New Castle 3
Lillian McGowan*
Tina Light
Bill Miller
Sunnie Moon
Gertrude Shipp
Barbara Williams

New Castle 4
Jane Holloway*
Phyllis Faulkner
Barbara Freedman
Susan Schneider

New Castle 5
Jeanmarie Leonard*
Tanya Bell-Hynson
Sylvia Galarza
Bonita Herring
Lou Himelreich
Elma Jackson

New Castle 6
Mary Jane Johnson*
Christine Adams
Kellie Fresolone
Mildred Hamilton
Carolyn Karney
Elaine Markell
Judy Melman

New Castle 8
Pamela Meyer*
Diane Bourne
Arlene Cronin
Laura Katz (LOA)
Fran Pullella
Ann Southmayd

New Castle 9
Mary Field*
Vicky Kleinman
Marian Wilson

Kent 1
David Miller*
Jane Fox
Kathleen Jamison
Bruce Morris
Rodney Smith

Kent 2
Gail Allen*
Charles Carter
Evelyn Figueroa
Wilberta Lewis
Sheri Morris
Alice Rasmussen
Candice Swetland

Kent 3
Dana Stonesifer*
Mary Austria
Ellen Holler
Lorraine Lovely
Elizabeth Olsen

Kent/Sussex
Virginia VanSciver
Bonnie Maull
Ray Moore

Sussex 1
Tiffany Derrickson*
O.D. Basinski
Louise Henry
Martha Keller
Sandra Lord

Sussex 3
Stacia Girley*
Shirley Butler
Cora Norwood Selby
Barbara Seth
Marie Wallop

Resigned:
Charles Brogden
Brendan Buschi
Alexis Ciconte
Alyson Gauthier
Joan Herman
Katherine Kallal
Patricia Mullen
Joyce Nolan
Dana Newman

CPRB STAFF

Julia Pearce Executive Director
Linda Lampinen Review and Training Supervisor
Lisa Cookson, Edna Maldonado, Denise Partridge, Amy Wilburn Review Coordinators
Patricia Clarke and Nancy Ripple Support Staff

The staff and volunteers of the CPRB fondly remember Linda Tyson, administrative specialist, who died this year.