

WASHOE COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY  
AB 298 Reporting 2020

Pursuant to AB 298 from the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session:

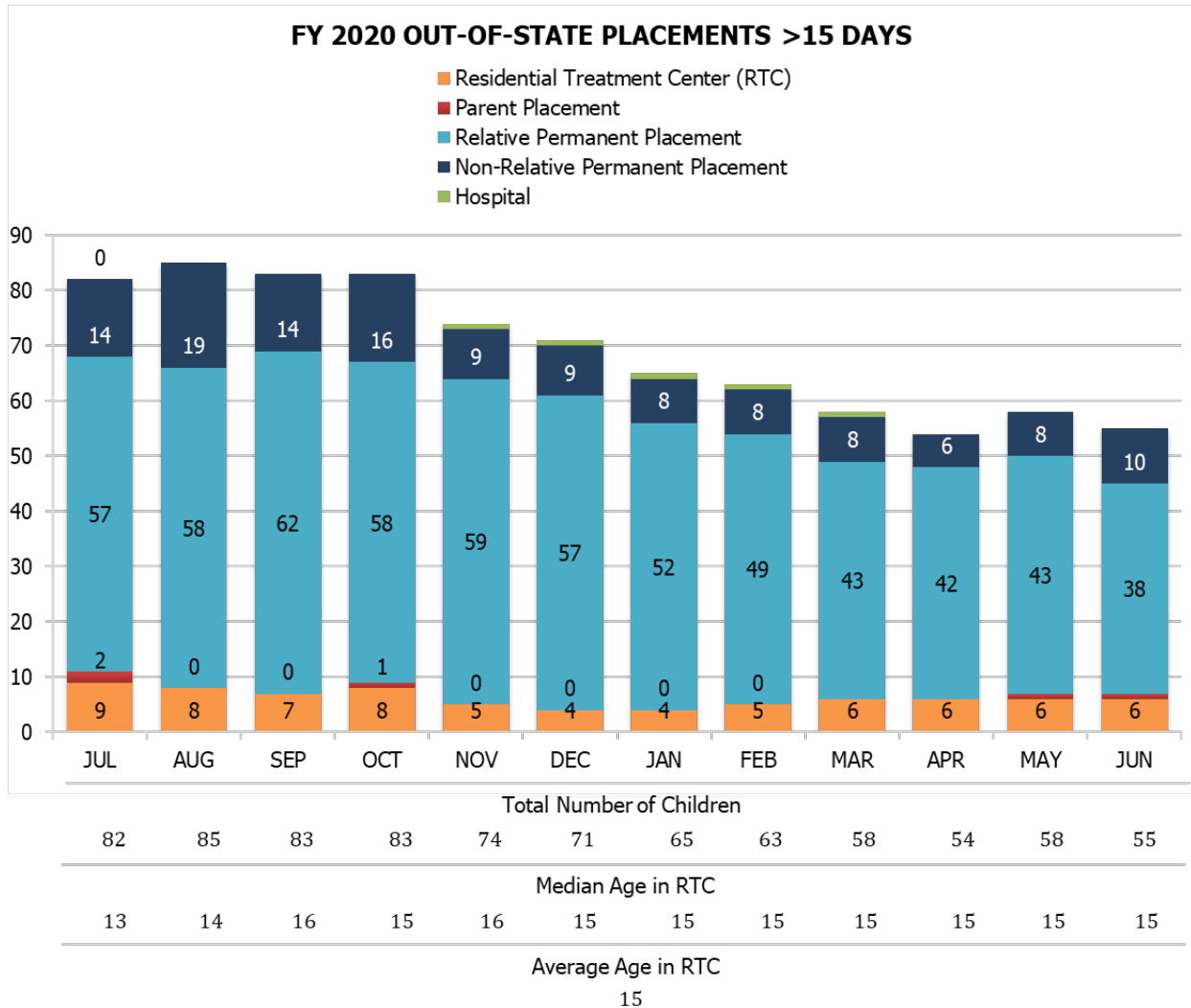
3. On or before August 1 of each year, an agency which provides child welfare services shall publish on an Internet website maintained by the agency a report which includes, without limitation:
- (a) Information relating to whether the agency achieved the goals established pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1 for each quarter of the immediately preceding year;
  - (b) The number of children placed outside this State for more than 15 days during the immediately preceding year, including, without limitation, the number of children placed in residential treatment facilities outside this State for more than 15 days during the immediately preceding year;
  - (c) The reasons for the placements described in paragraph (b);
  - (d) A summary of changes that could prevent the placements described in paragraph (b); and
  - (e) A summary of changes or actions necessary to allow children who are currently placed outside this State to return to this State.

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3. (a) As this report is the first required by AB298, Washoe County Human Services Agency does not have goals established pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection 1.

3. (b):

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Children are placed out-of-state with parents, relatives or non-relatives with a plan to exit the foster care system by achieving permanency. These children are not typically expected to return to Washoe County.

### 3. (c)(d) and (e)

#### Reasons for Out-of-State Residential Treatment:

- Community decrease in availability of intensive outpatient services
- Lack of community-based intensive outpatient or residential treatment options in Washoe County or Nevada to meet the severe behavioral or psychiatric needs of children
- Children in need of specialized treatment services to treat their specific behavioral or psychiatric needs

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- Failed placements and/or treatment interventions available in Washoe County and Nevada

Prevention is key to maintaining children in their community. The Families First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) is aimed at prevention and family services to help keep children safe and supported at home, to ensure that at risk of entering the child welfare system and children in foster care receive treatment services and are placed in the least restrictive, most family-like, and appropriate settings. Prior to FFPSA, WCHSA has had a "Voucher Program" to contract with community services providers of mental/behavioral/and Substance use treatment, along with additional specialized services. WCHSA has re-structured its Clinical Services team in order to provide behavioral health services to children and their families involved with the child welfare system. These services include crisis intervention, assessment, clinical care coordination, short-term therapies (individual, family, and groups), and efforts to prevent placement disruption and parent training.

Washoe County Human Services Agency (WCHSA) is collaborating with local, state, and federal partners to enhance the service array for preventative services. The State of Nevada, Division of Child and Family Services received an extension to the System of Care grant that they have been using the last 4 years to try to improve and expand the behavioral health service array for children and youth state-wide. The extension specified that the grant is targeted for rural and frontier areas of Nevada. However, Washoe County continues to be involved in efforts to expand service delivery options for children and youth; particularly those in child welfare.

Additionally, Washoe County HSA in partnership with the Second Judicial Court launched a Safe Babies Model Court program July 1, 2019 to provide additional support to families with infants and young children. The program aims to reduce recidivism in the child welfare system and equip parents with needed supports and resources early on. This is a systems change initiative originally developed by the Zero to Three (National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families) and designed to address the needs of young children in foster care. The goals of the Safe Babies approach is to reduce the recurrence of substantiated reports of abuse and neglect, improve the well-being of young children in foster care by meeting developmental needs, fostering a secure caregiver relationship, encouraging family involvement with the child and reducing the time children are out of the family/permanent home, thus reducing potential trauma factors that can have lifelong impacts.

WCHSA is identifying and adopting evidenced based practices for the purpose of developing a well-trained workforce to provide key behavioral health services. WCHSA has a goal to develop and enhance out-of-home placement options for families. We were able to offer respite services for foster families this past year and plan to continue to provide respite and look at other resources to support our foster parent partners.

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Human Services Agency is promoting family environments and working with current Specialized Foster Care providers to change from a "group home" model with shift staff to a family foster model where a parent(s) live in the home. Additionally, WCHSA is providing guidance to providers to develop an additional service type (Qualified Residential Treatment Program) to meet specific needs of children in need of out-of-home placement.

Washoe County is in need of Intensive Outpatient Programs (IOP) that provide intensive, short-term services for children ages 6-18. An increase in local IOPs would allow youth to be immersed in services in their own community and increase the availability of natural supports for the youth and family, and potentially decrease the rate of entry into foster care. Additionally, Washoe County has identified a need for additional therapeutic foster homes to accommodate children and youth with more significant behavioral or emotional needs to remain in a family setting. This is another area of focus with the FFPSA efforts.

Finally, WCHSA is reviewing its rate structure with the goal of creating a sustainable rate to support foster families and recognize the valuable service they provide our community.