

Permanency Outcomes for Foster Care 2005-2008

An Agency Overview

Since 2005, Casey Family Services has used the Permanency Teaming Process, a youth- and family-involvement approach to child welfare practice, as the framework for strengthening and preserving families and achieving permanence for children and youth in its foster care services. The approach aims to help all young people grow up in legally permanent families, not foster or institutional care.

Through its foster care services, Casey works in partnership with public child welfare agencies in New England and Maryland to serve a wide range of children, including those who are older, who have significant behavioral or mental health needs, and who have a history of multiple, unstable, or residential placements. This summary presents a brief overview of the agency's permanency practice framework, its client profile, and its emerging outcomes and indicators.

Casey Family Services is the direct service agency of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, a national philanthropic organization focused on improving outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

OUR APPROACH TO FOSTER CARE: THE PERMANENCY TEAMING PROCESS

Until 2005, Casey was primarily a long-term foster care agency, serving older children and youth for whom reunification or adoption had not been achieved. Today, the goal is to establish permanence for every child. To do so, Casey provides a variety of family strengthening and permanency planning services. Through its Permanency Teaming Process, practitioners mobilize youth, family members, other significant adults, and professionals, to meet each young person's need for safety, well-being, and an enduring family. The organization's foster care census includes approximately 400 children and youth at any given time.

CLIENT PROFILE

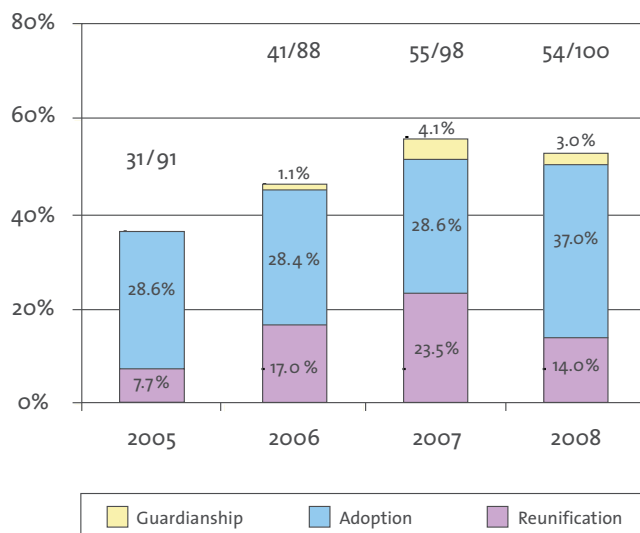
Casey's clients include children with complex special needs. Among the 2008 entry cohort:

- 67 percent were age 9 or older
- 67 percent had three or more placements before entering Casey's care
- 47 percent had special education needs
- Approximately 50 percent had multiple psychiatric diagnoses
- 72 percent of youth who were age 9 or older had experienced placements in residential, hospital, or institutional settings

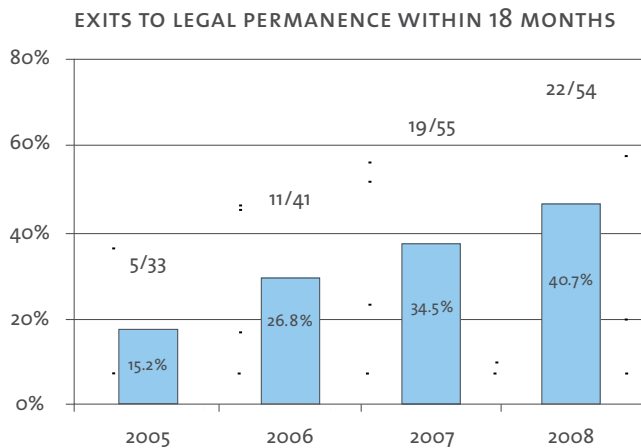
OUTCOMES

More children exiting Casey care are achieving legal permanence. As Casey Family Services has implemented its Permanency Teaming Process, the number of young people exiting to legal permanence has increased. In 2005, more than one-third of young people left Casey care to legal permanence. In 2008, 54 percent of youth exited care to permanent, legal family relationships.

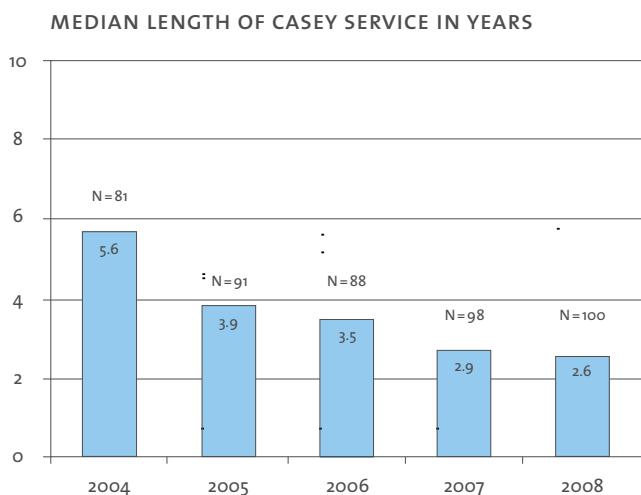
EXITS FROM CASEY FOSTER CARE TO PERMANENCE



Casey youth are achieving legal permanence faster. How long does it take young people to reach permanence? In 2005, 15 percent of young people who left Casey with legal permanence did so within 18 months. In 2008, nearly 41 percent achieved permanence in that same time period.



Children and youth exiting Casey are spending less time in foster care. The Permanency Teaming Process is reducing the amount of time Casey clients spend in foster care, whether they leave with legal permanence or not. In 2004, before implementation of the Permanency Teaming Process, young people leaving Casey care had spent an average of nearly six years with the agency – not unexpected, given Casey’s role as a long-term foster care provider. In the years that followed, stays were much shorter – less than three years in 2008, for example.



YOUTH AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT INDICATORS

Youth and family involvement is crucial to the Permanency Teaming Process. Indeed, the process calls for each young person to have his or her own planning and decision-making team that includes, whenever possible, the young person, family and other significant adults, and professionals. Casey Family Services tracks who attends team meetings and what participants say about their team involvement. The following indicators reflect youth and family involvement and perceptions of progress for cases in which large team meetings were held between 2004 and 2008. Indicators also reflect team participants’ feelings about how well plans generated by the team addressed safety, well-being, and legal permanence for the child or youth.

Participation of youth

- 88 percent of youth over age 12 attended their team meetings

Participation of birth family and other adults important to youth

- 69 percent of teams involved birth parents(s)
- 88 percent of teams involved foster parent(s)

Shared planning and decision making

- 100 percent of young people said they “had a say”
- 87 percent of all team participants agreed the plan they developed addressed all of their concerns

Meeting youth needs

- 95 percent of all team participants felt the team plan addressed safety
- 94 percent felt the plan addressed well-being
- 94 percent felt the team addressed legal permanence