

The Kentucky Foster Care Census The Status of Safety and Well Being among Kentucky's Children in Care

On July 2, 2002, Secretary Miller of the Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children initiated a massive statewide effort to ensure the safety and verify the placement of every child in Kentucky's out-of-home foster care system. The Kentucky Foster Care Census is an intensive effort involving multiple and diverse professionals, students, and service providers from across the Commonwealth. To achieve the objectives set forth by the Cabinet Secretary, every child is being seen and met in their foster home during a census visit. Before the census visit, foster/adoptive parents and Cabinet staff complete a Child Census Form for each child, yielding extensive information on child well being indicators. During the census visit, foster/adoptive parents work with the Census Taker to complete a comprehensive assessment of their needs for support and training by the Cabinet, and the needs of their children for an adequate services and support.

To implement the Census, a statewide research consortium was initiated among Cabinet staff, foster/adoptive parents, the University Training Consortium, faculty from 8 universities, and well over 100 census takers from graduate and undergraduate programs at 10 public and private universities in Kentucky. More than 3,000 children will be seen and over 1400 foster homes will be visited by October 31, 2002.

This effort is innovative and proactive with win-win opportunities for all. The data from the Census will be rich with ideas to help us understand the needs and well being of every child in Kentucky's care. Such an innovative and extensive effort deserves an equally innovative closure.