

***Kentucky Foster Care Census
The Status of Well-Being among Kentucky's Children***

The Kentucky Cabinet for Families and Children (CFC) is charged, first and foremost, with keeping vulnerable children safe. Once children come into foster care, the Cabinet is charged with ensuring that children have a home that will nurture attachment and autonomy and support their well-being.

The highly publicized events in Florida have drawn national as well as local attention to the issues related to the delivery of quality foster care services in this country. The situation has sparked legislators and the public in Kentucky to ask how is the Commonwealth ensuring that children in Out-of-Home Care are safe and cared for.

Our own recent internal reviews reveal weaknesses in visitations to the foster homes where our children are placed. We need data about the essentials of well-being (described below) among children in OOHC.

This initiative is a proactive response to these national, local, and agency concerns. The scope and innovation envisioned in this initiative will set a new national protocol for reviewing the status of safety and well-being among children in OOHC.

Goals:

1. Conduct a statewide census of children in OOHC within the 1600 Cabinet for Families and Children foster adoptive homes.
2. Verify the placement for each child.
3. Gather data on the essentials of child well-being.

Plan:

- Between now and October 30, 2002, visit every CFC foster adoptive home (1600 homes) in Kentucky that has a child in OOHC.
- During the home visit the census-taker will interview at least one parent in the home and complete a census form for every child.
- The census-takers will 'see' every child in a CFC foster adoptive home.
- A group of some 100 graduate and undergraduate students from Kentucky's eight State universities will collect the data as part of coursework.
- To achieve this, a statewide research consortium is being formed with between the university faculty, University Training Consortium, and students.

Essentials of child well-being include safety and permanency and the following:

1. *Attention:* Every child in its care is visited by CFC at least once per month.
2. *Supported, Informed, and Active Foster Adoptive parents.*
3. *Family:* Children have nurturing contact with biological parents and siblings.
4. *Empowerment:* Children have a voice in decisions about their life.
5. *Services:* Children and families receive support through a service array.
6. *Health:* Children receive medical, psychological, and dental care.
7. *Competence:* Children receive an education that promotes their competence.
8. *Self-mastery:* Children develop the skills for adult autonomy.

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