

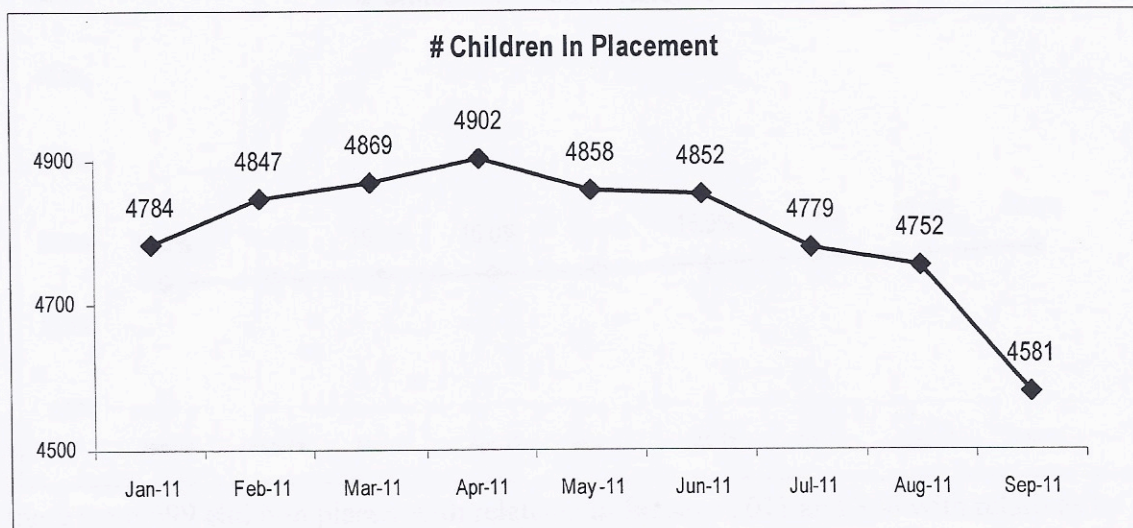
DCF Quarterly Update: Early Indicators of Progress

Over the past nine months, the Department has been undergoing considerable change on many fronts. There have been significant organizational changes at the Department – the restructuring of central office, consolidation of our institutions, expansion of the Academy and establishment of a new leadership team to oversee the six regions and central office operations. Most importantly, under the leadership of Commissioner Joette Katz, our mission is evolving to ensure that children served by the Department of Children and Families are healthy, safe, learning, experience success in and out of school, and are able to use their special talents to give back to their communities.

In addition to the changes to our mission and structure, the Department is pursuing several inter-related policy initiatives designed to improve the results we achieve for the children and families we serve. These include:

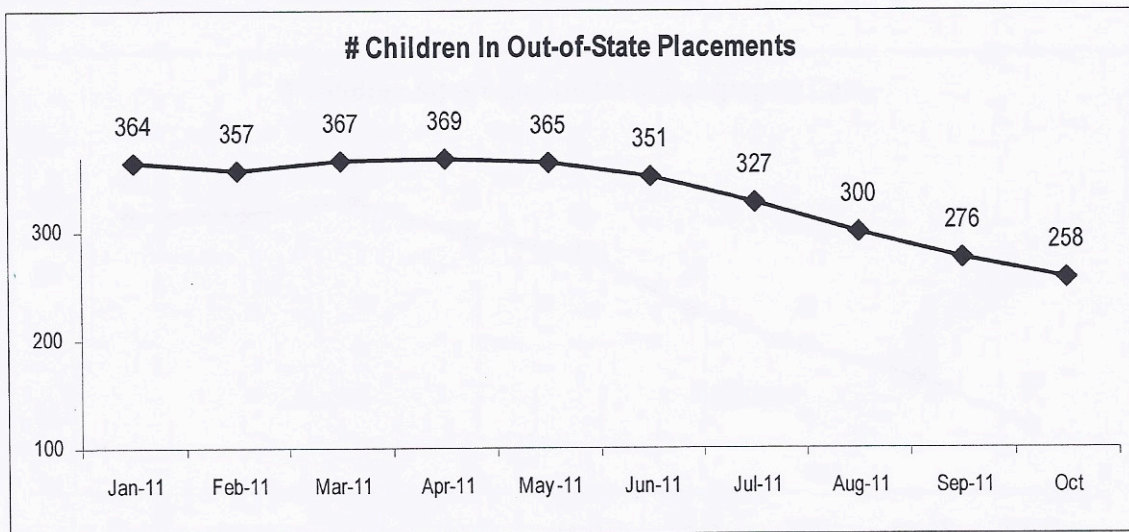
- implementation of the Strengthening Families Practice Model, which will strengthen our family engagement and ensure consistent practice across the state;
- implementation of the Differential Response System, which creates a new approach to responding to lower risk cases in partnership with community providers;
- beginning our first contact with families through announced visits whenever possible;
- reducing the number of children placed out of state;
- reducing our reliance on congregate care for children and youth in the care and custody of the Department, beginning with children ages 12 and younger;
- increasing supports for foster families, with special attention to relative foster parents;
- increasing the Department's use of evidence-based in-home and community programs, and implementation of performance-based contracting for our provider agencies;
- improving case planning as a means to meeting children and families' needs.

Several indicators show the Department is making progress toward improving results for children and families. For example, there were 203 fewer children in DCF placements on September 1st compared to January 1st:



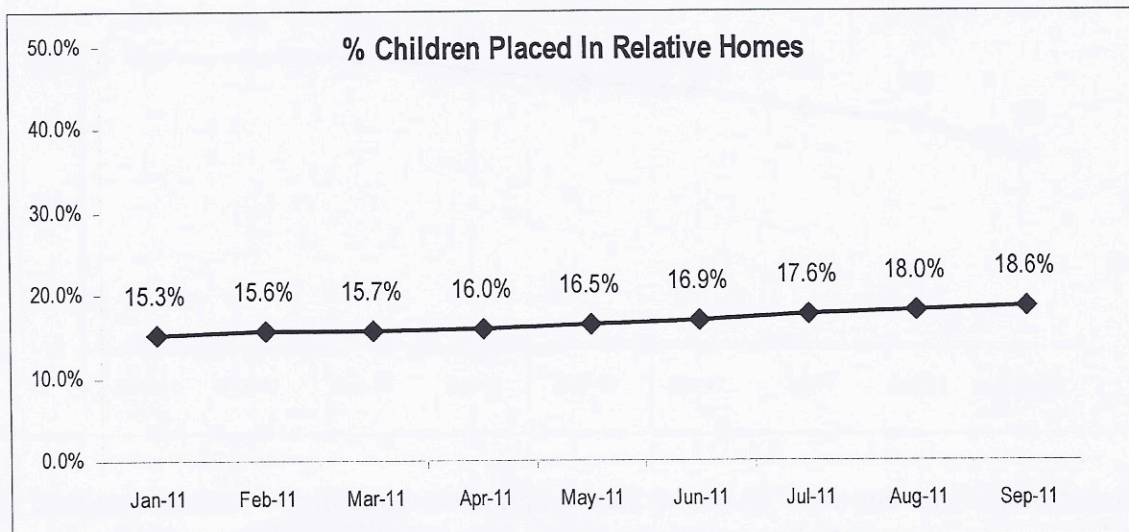
Having fewer children in placement is evidence of our increasingly effective practice of serving more children and families in their homes. This trend builds on a steady decrease on the number of children in placement in Connecticut beginning in June 2000, when there were 7,223 children in placement.

As the number of children in placement overall decreased, so has the number of children and youth placed out of state. Through the focused efforts of area office staff and our partners, the number of children and youth placed out of state has decreased from 364 in January to 258 in October:



This trend is critically important because it means more children and youth are placed closer to their communities of origin, ensuring they can maintain their important connections and improve their chances of achieving permanency with a forever family.

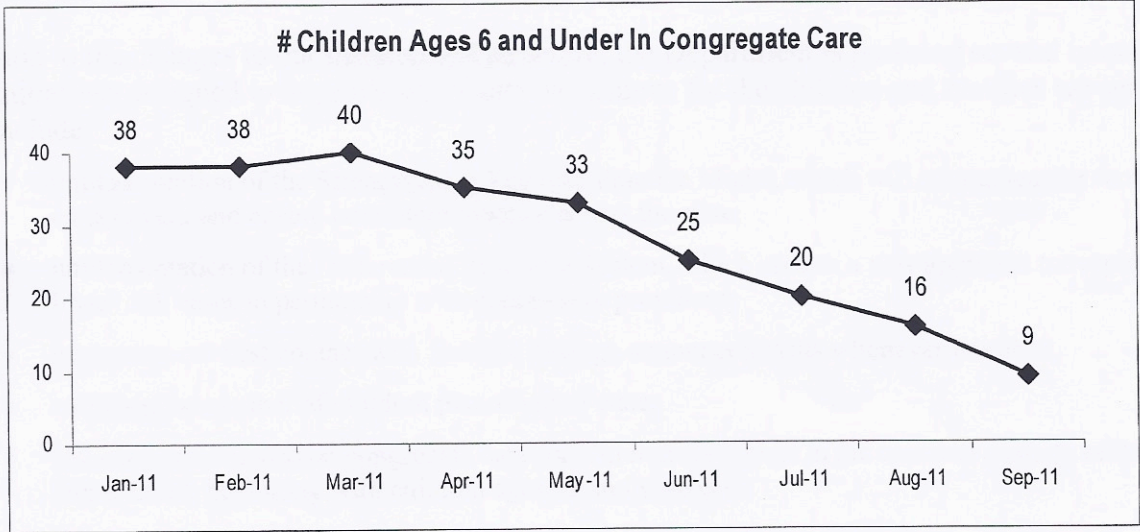
The past nine months have also seen a steady increase in the percentage of children placed with relatives, from 15.3% in January to 18.6% in September:



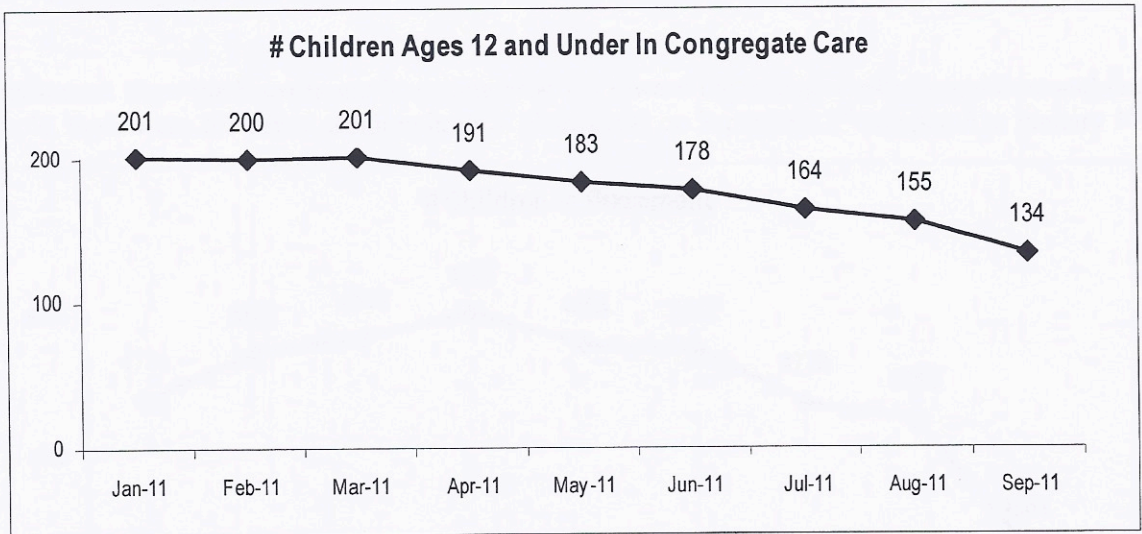
In all, there were 699 children placed with relatives in January 2011 and 846 with relatives by the middle of September 2011.

Our belief is that, if children must enter foster care, the preferred placement is with relatives or kin. This policy direction is informed by a growing body of research that demonstrates children experience greater stability in relative foster homes. This will also help alleviate the demand on our core foster homes over time.

Finally, Commissioner Katz has also made a priority of reducing the use of congregate care settings for young children. DCF staff from the regions, central office and the DCF facilities, in partnership with the provider community, have made considerable progress in this area. The number of children ages 6 and under in congregate care has decreased from 38 in January to 9 in September:



Similarly, the number of children ages 12 and under in congregate care settings has decreased from 201 in January to 134 in September:



Over the coming months, we will continue to report back to you on these and other indicators of our progress. We will also develop additional methods for measuring and understanding our work with families, from conducting case reviews to providing opportunities for children and families to provide us feedback.