

**The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board, Inc.  
2011 Annual Report  
Collier County, Florida**

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Naples, FL 34112  
www.CFCRBCollier.org  
(239)252-2740**





### 2011 Board of Directors

**President**

Willie West, BS., MSN

**Vice President**

Edward Ferguson, Ph.D.

**Treasurer**

Russell Groos

**Secretary**

Veora Little, CRNA

**DIRECTORS**

Honorable Ted Brousseau

David B. Goldstein, JD

Commander Beth Jones

Suzanne Meiners-Levy, Esq.

Lucy Ortiz, L.C.S.W

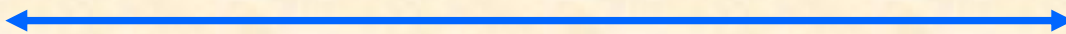
**Executive Director**

Judy Groos

### Financial Statement

Year Ending 12/31/11

Opening Balance:	\$2,857.35
Deposits:	
Donations	\$2,453.16
Expenses:	
Accounting Fees	\$165.00
Annual Filings	\$71.25
Equipment	\$63.99
Meetings	\$624.11
Office Supplies/Printing	\$1,062.83
Toys/Gifts for kids	\$37.24
Training/Education	\$290.68
Website	\$195.00
Total Expenses	\$2,510.10
Closing Balance	\$2,800.41



The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board, Inc. is a court appointed volunteer organization that promotes timely, positive, and permanent outcomes for dependent children.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB) of Collier County completed its nineteenth year of service as a non-profit organization. Under the direction of the Honorable Eliabeth Krier, and part time staff executive director Judy Groos, the thirty court appointed volunteers heard 339 cases involving 592 children. Our mission is to promote timely, positive and permanent outcomes of dependent children.

This summary report highlights the activities of CFCRB over the past year, noting positive changes as well as areas of concern.

### **CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD**

The CFCRB continues to be a vital component within the dependency court in Collier County. Panels carry out the majority of 1<sup>st</sup> appearance judicial reviews at three to five months, and post permanency reviews. Panels provide accurate, precise and complete recommendations to the court. This is supported by the fact that only two exceptions were filed in 2011.

The majority of children in care are in the zero to five year age group and the primary reason for court involvement of all cases remains substance abuse, followed by physical abuse and domestic violence categories. Our data on rate of removal of children in different ethnic groups also indicate that panels act fairly in their deliberations.

In addition to the judicial reviews heard, the Board and Ms. Groos perform the following functions within the dependency court:

- 1) Collect and analyze pertinent data and report these in the annual report.
- 2) Provide seven in-service programs to panel members with open invitations to Guardians ad Litem.
- 3) Train panel members in the use of new Safety Criteria adopted by the circuit.
- 4) Maintain scheduling calendar in use by the Department of Children and Families/Children's Legal Services (DCF/CLS), Family Preservation and defense attorneys.
- 5) Attend dependency proceedings to assure cases are properly scheduled.
- 6) Coordinate monthly dependency meetings including: scheduling, agenda, attendance and publishing and distributing minutes under the direction of Judge Krier.
- 7) Recruit volunteers and achieve minority representation to the extent possible.
- 8) Train all new volunteers.

CFCRB works diligently with all parties in the dependency court, maintaining open communications and meeting with all parties as necessary.

### **JUDICIARY**

There have been no turnovers in dependency judges. Judge Krier meets every two months with all parties in dependency to share information and propose solutions. This year Judge Krier has implemented several new policies with the goal of improving outcomes for dependent children. These include: increased visitation for parents; attendance of children in court; and the implementation of the Child Safety Guide for Judges and Attorneys. Our data show that the time children are in care has decreased.

### **DCF/Children's Legal Services (CLS)**

The CFCRB shares in the Strategic Vision as outlined by DCF Secretary Wilkins for Florida to be recognized as a world class social service system. However, from the Board's perspective, we are still far from achieving this goal. Case managers continue to struggle with a computer information system (FSFN) that impedes their ability to organize and report information accurately and efficiently in their reports. Reading and comprehending these reports can be confusing and misleading to parents and the court. We can only hope that DCF solves this problem as quickly as possible.

We are also concerned that many children are still placed in foster care outside Collier County due to bed shortages in their home county. It is our belief that this problem needs to be addressed at all levels—State and local.

We encourage DCF to incent CLS and Family Preservation to continue to improve communications and coordination and monitor the results.

## **FAMILY PRESERVATION AND CASE MANAGEMENT**

The number of children in foster care placement increased by 5.7%, whereas those in protective supervision decreased by 7.9%. This does not appear to reflect a significant trend however we will continue to monitor these numbers to determine if there is a change with the newly adopted Safety Criteria. A positive trend has been the decrease in number of children in care 13-24 months and an increase in 0-12 months.

Family Preservation has responded positively to Judge Krier's directives. Efforts are being made to reach the goal of visitation by parents 2 – 3 times a week, and children are attending court proceedings more frequently. A barrier that continues to exist with visitation is the distance parents must travel to see children placed out of county.

The numbers of reopened cases have remained relatively constant. Last year twenty nine cases reopened involving 50 children. One change was the increase in number of parents petitioning the court to reopen cases (from one to seven). It is our belief that effective concurrent goal planning for permanency must remain a priority. The number of reopened cases may be small, but any disruption in placement is detrimental to a child.

The high turnover rate in case managers remains a major concern. Ms. Groos meets with the Operations Program Administrator at Family Preservation as needed to address problems that may arise.

## **GUARDIAN AD LITEM**

The number of Guardians ad Litem (GALs) assigned showed a small drop from last year. Attendance at reviews also dropped slightly. We are pleased, however, that the number of reports received increased by 25% to nearly 80%. The efforts of Ms. Groos and the GAL circuit and county staff working together made this possible. We expect to see continued improvement.

The CFCRB strongly recommends that more emphasis be placed on assigning GALs to children in protective supervision. This is especially important for the zero to five year age groups since they are often less visible within the community.

## **ATTORNEY REPRESENTATION**

Attorney attendance at judicial reviews remains high. It is difficult to track involvement and attendance of attorneys ad litem since few of them have appeared at judicial reviews and their scope of responsibility is not clear to the CFCRB.

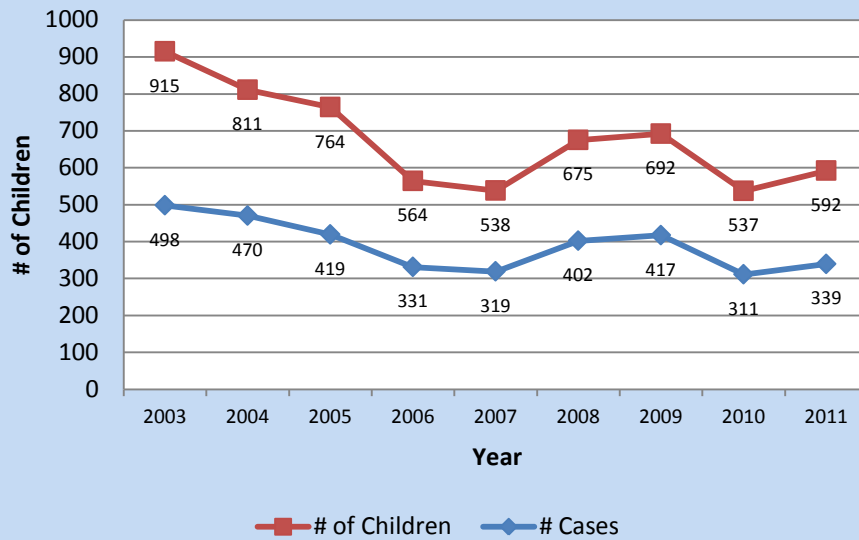
## **CLOSING**

Our goals in the coming year are to continue the positive trends seen in the past year. It is our hope that:

- There will be a greater effort made to recruit more foster care homes in Collier County
- The high rate of case manager turnover will be reversed
- There will be fewer reopened cases, and
- More children in protective supervision have GALs assigned.

If DCF hopes to achieve their Strategic Vision, we feel that a critical part will be to fix the present computer system(FSN). We look forward to continuing the positive relationship with Court Administration as the Court transitions to a new Administrative Services Manager.

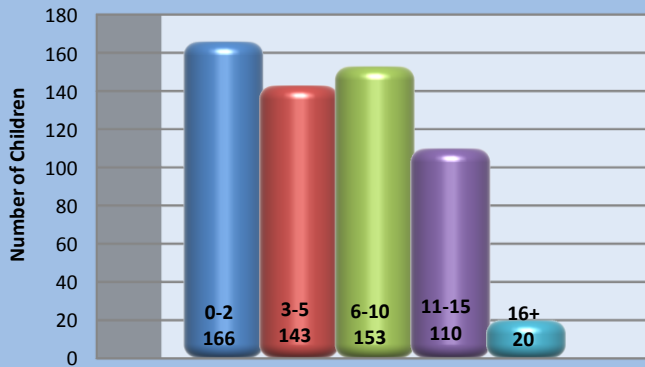
### # of Judicial Reviews/# of Children



339 Cases were heard by CFCRB involving 592 children. Of these, 267 were non-duplicated.

**TREND:** Although the number of judicial reviews conducted by the panel shows a slight increase (8.26%), this number does not reflect an accurate trend. This change may be due to a shift in scheduling from combined judicial proceedings to separate proceedings. Numbers from Children’s Network for 2011 support this opinion showing a 19.66% decrease.

### Age of Children



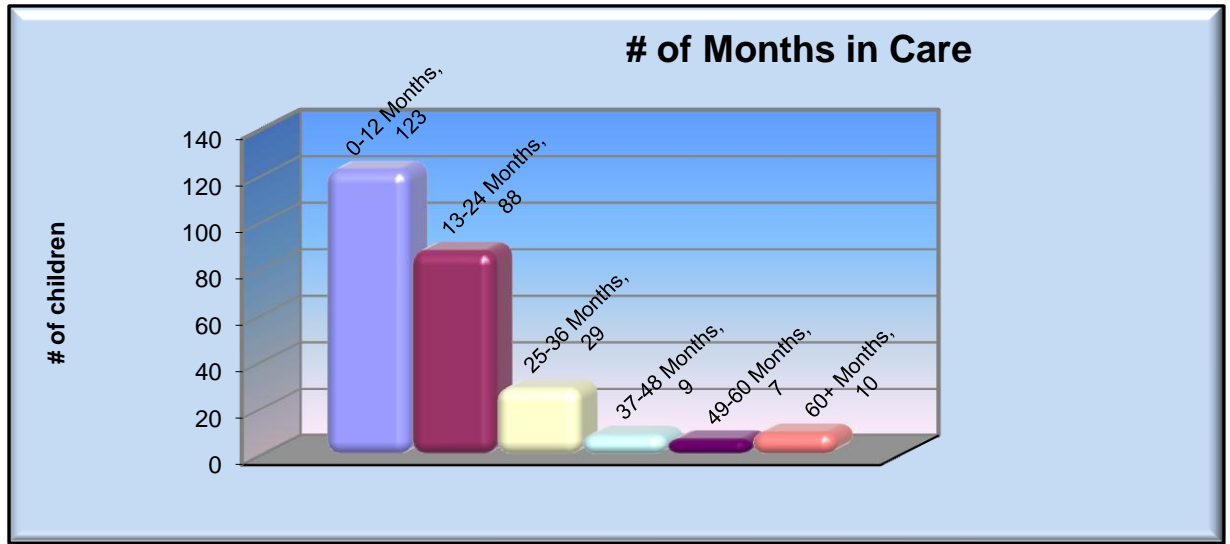
**TREND:** Children, 0-5 years of age continue to be the largest group (over 52%)

**CONCERN:** They are at increased risk because they:

- are not as visible within the community
- are not in school
- often do not attend daycare
- may not have a GAL assigned

# of Children	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
Age 0 – 2	166 28.04%	158 29.42%	211 30.49%	180 26.67%	155 28.81%	183 32.45%	185 24.21%	182 22.44%
Age 3 – 5	143 24.16%	138 25.70%	185 26.73%	157 23.26%	112 20.82%	111 19.68%	154 20.16%	165 20.35%
Age 6 – 10	153 25.84%	135 25.14%	150 21.68%	155 22.96%	127 23.61%	114 20.21%	199 26.05%	214 26.39%
Age 11 – 15	110 18.58%	78 14.53%	98 14.16%	126 18.67%	105 19.52%	111 19.68%	164 21.47%	172 21.21%
Age 16+	20 3.38%	28 5.21%	48 6.94%	57 8.44%	39 7.25%	45 7.99%	62 8.12%	78 9.62%
Total for Year	592	537	692	675	538	564	764	811

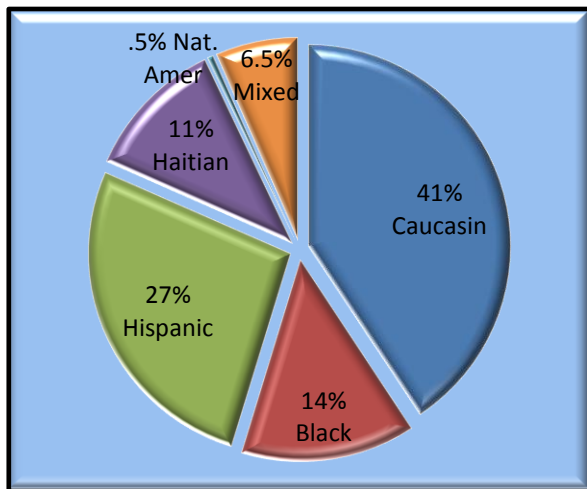
Number of months children have been in care **and** whose cases were heard by the panel **and** still open at year-end.



	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
0-12 Months	123 46.24%	65 30.37%	140 49.12%	163 51.1%	132 48.48%	65 36.52%	149 35.48%	147 27.22%
13-24 Months	88 33.08%	101 47.20%	70 24.56%	84 26.33%	79 28.42%	58 32.58%	122 29.05%	180 33.33%
25-36 Months	29 10.90%	20 9.35%	31 10.88%	29 9.10%	24 8.63%	20 11.24%	54 12.86%	110 20.37%
37-48 Months	9 3.38%	11 5.14%	17 5.96%	11 3.45%	18 6.47%	12 6.74%	17 4.05%	47 8.7%
49-60 Months	7 2.63%	6 2.81%	4 1.40%	16 5.02%	5 1.80%	7 3.93%	17 4.05%	23 4.26%
60+ Months	10 3.76%	11 5.14%	23 8.07%	16 5.02%	20 7.19%	16 8.99%	61 14.52%	33 6.11%

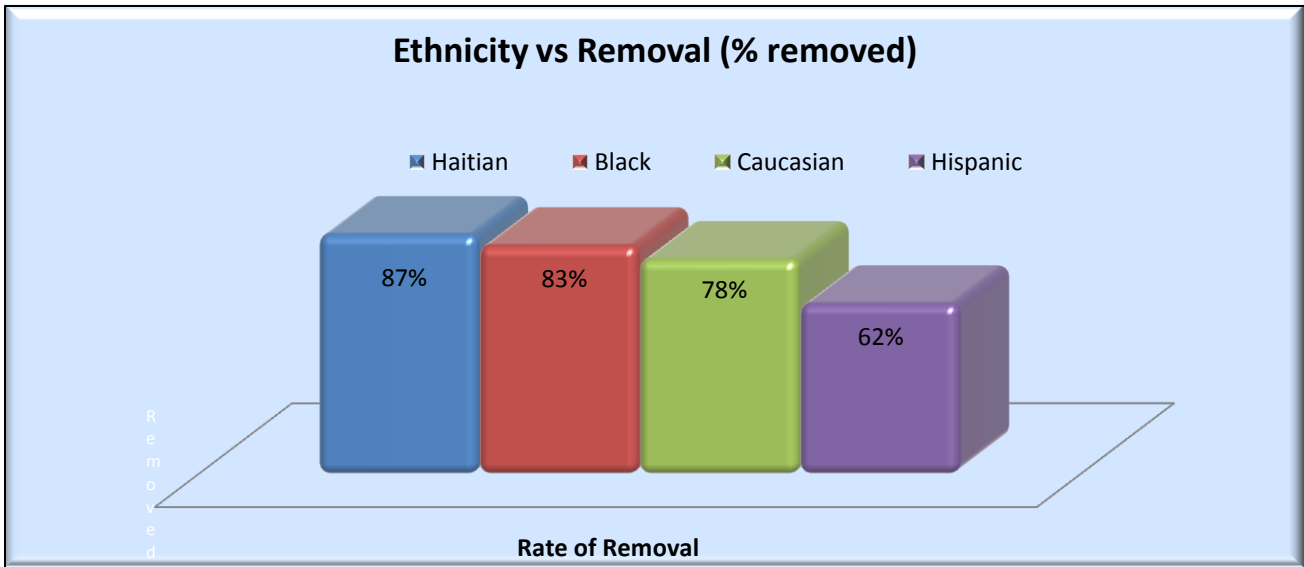
**TREND:** A comparison of 2011 to 2010 numbers indicate the percentage of children in care from 0 – 12 months increased, while the percentage in care 13 -24 months decreased. We see this as a positive trend that children may not be lingering in care longer than necessary.

### Ethnicity



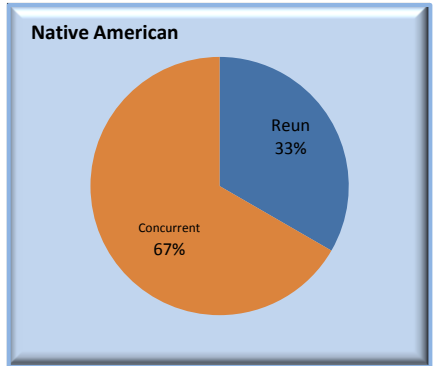
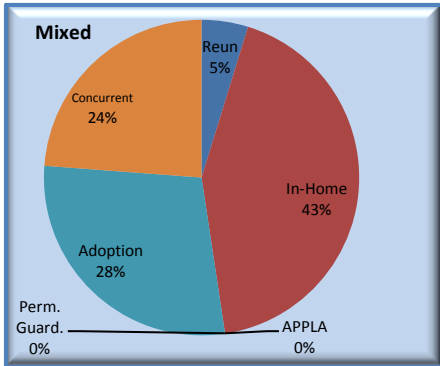
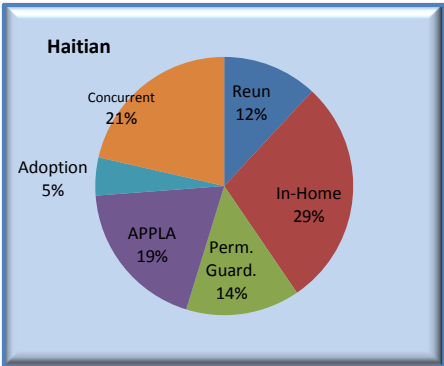
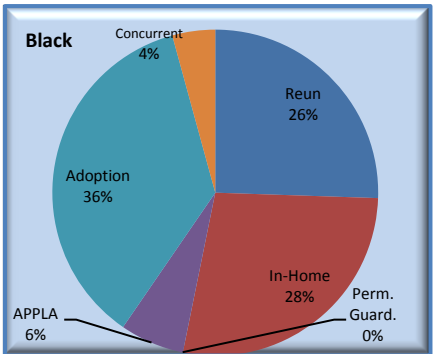
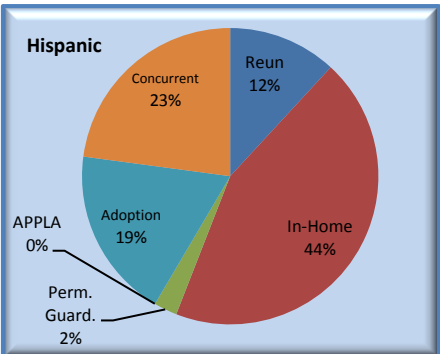
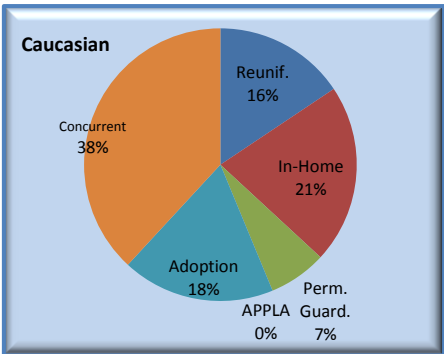
	2011	Current Collier Schools Stats
Caucasian/White	41%	39.4%
Hispanic	27%	44.3%
Afro American/Black	25% {	12%
Haitian		11%
Mixed	6.5%	2.1% <i>Not reported separate from black</i>
Native American	.5%	<i>Not Reported</i>
Other	0%	2.1%

Numbers reported from current Collier County Schools were used as a comparison to the percentage of children involved in the Dependency System.



**OBSERVATIONS:** In comparing ethnic groups to rate of removal, there does not appear to be disparity across racial groups in the court’s decision making. It is interesting to note that Hispanics had a lower rate of removal.

### Goal at Conclusion of CFRB Judicial Review – By Ethnicity

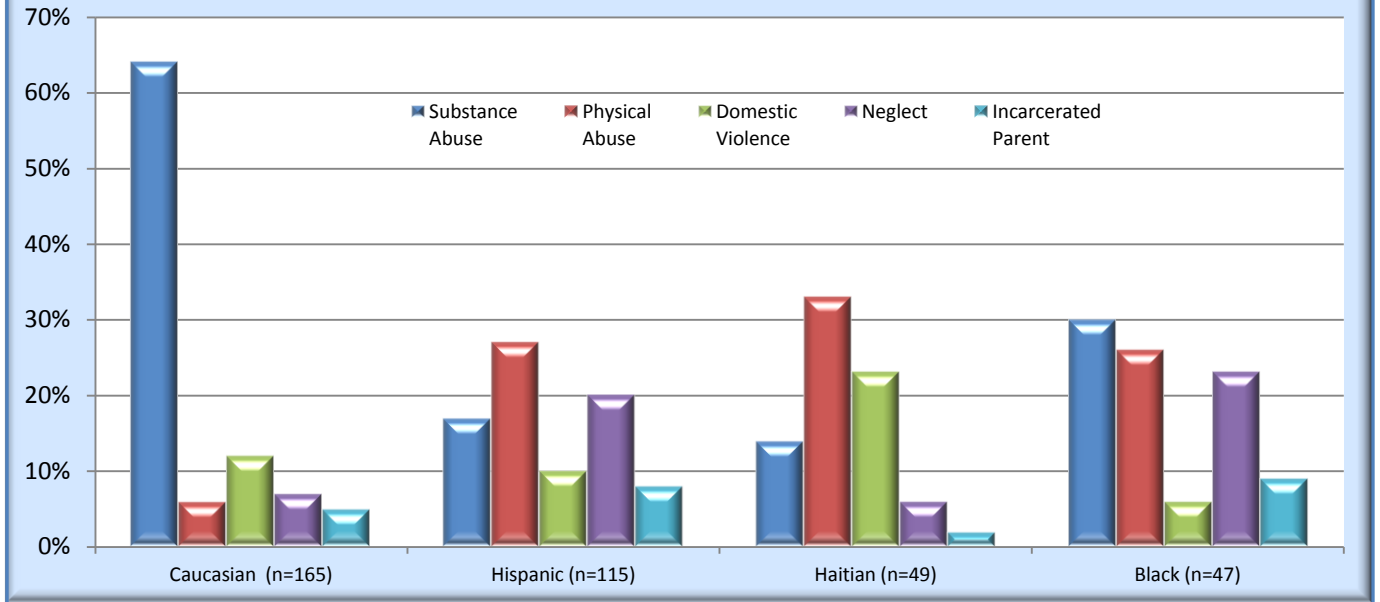


**OBSERVATIONS:**

New Statistic kept in 2011. Trends will be noted over future years

- Hispanics had highest % of in-home cases
- Blacks had the highest % of Adoption goals (Native American and Mixed – not significant enough to factor)

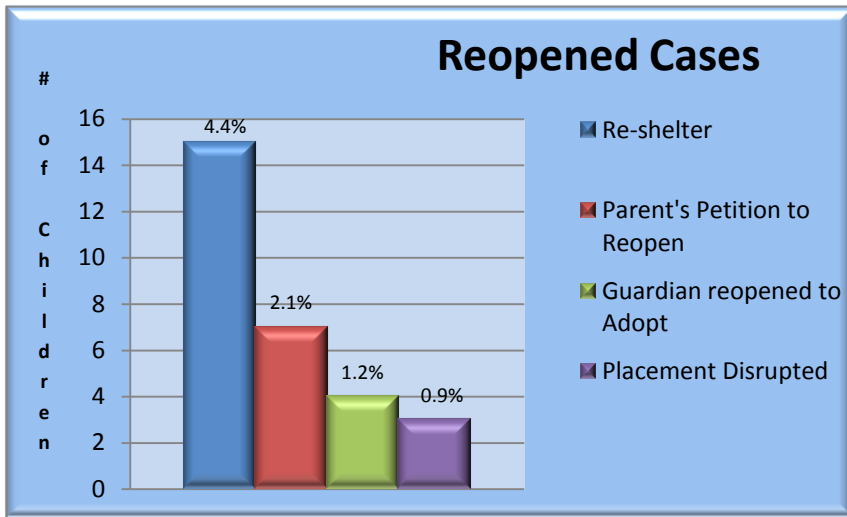
## Ethnicity vs Primary Reason for Court Involvement



**OBSERVATIONS:** Only primary reasons for court involvement are listed. Often these are combined with another reason. Not shown are: mental health, abandonment, sexual abuse and deceased parent.

- Substance Abuse was the leading cause for court involvement for both Caucasians and Blacks
- Physical Abuse was the leading cause for court involvement for both Haitian, Hispanic and Black Groups.
- Blacks had the lowest incidence of Domestic Violence, but the highest incidence of having an incarcerated parent

(data collected since April, 2011)

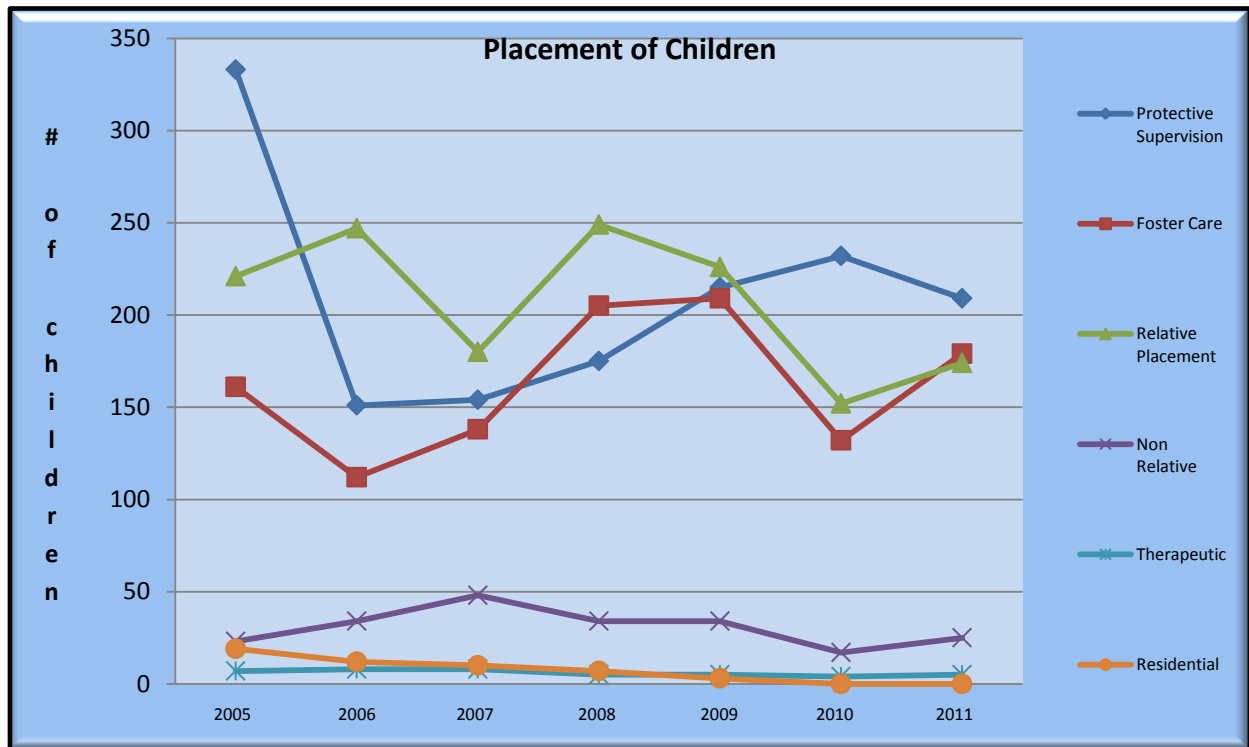


Year Reopened	2011	2010	2009
Re-sheltered	15	16	14
Parent(s) Petitioned to Reopen	7	1	7
Perm. Guard. Reopened to Adopt	4	5	2
Perm. Placement Disrupted	3	3	6
Total (# of cases)	29	25	29

Of the total 339 cases heard in 2011, 50 children were involved in the twenty nine cases which reopened.

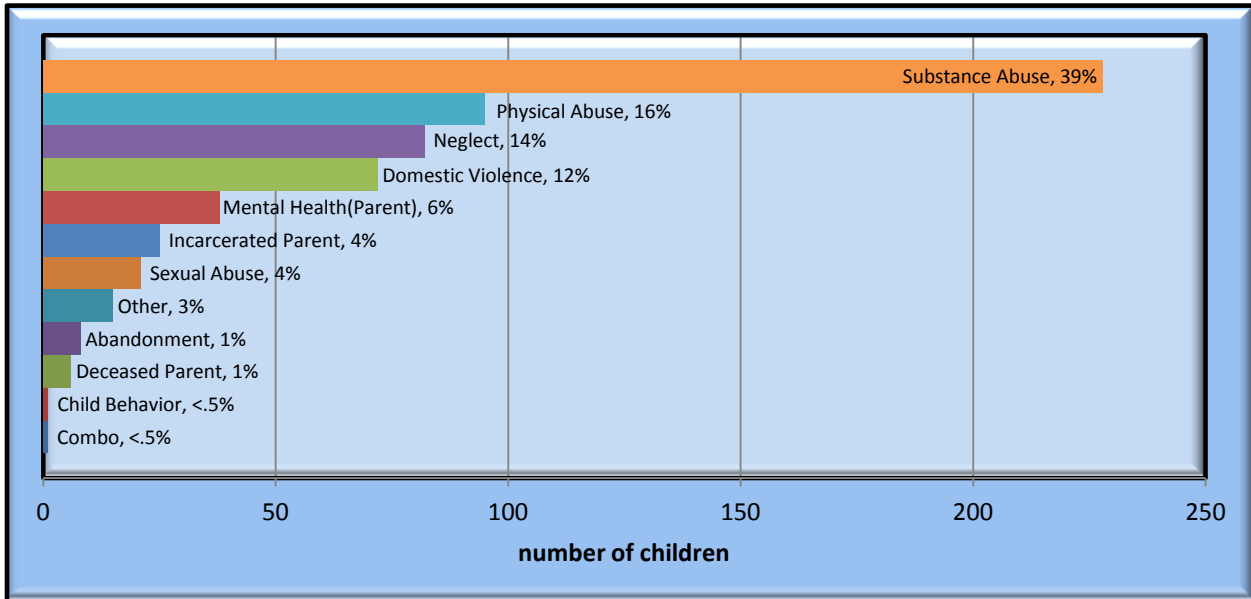
**OBSERVATION:**

Although the number of reopened cases is small, any disruption to placement is detrimental to a child. An increase was seen in the number of parents petitioning the court to reopen a case.



**OBSERVATION:** From 2010 to 2011 there was a slight increase in foster care placement and a small decrease in Protective Supervision Placement. We will continue to monitor this in light of the fact that the Circuit Court has adopted new safety criteria.

## Primary Reason for Court Involvement

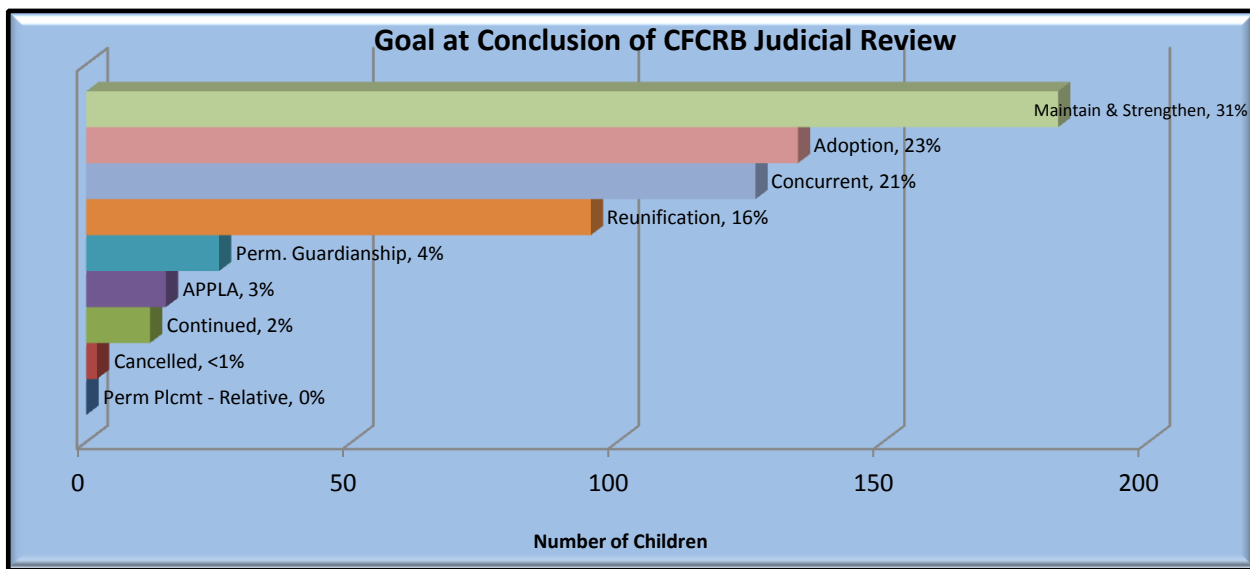


	Substance Abuse	Abandonment	Abuse Physical	Abuse-Sexual	Child Behavior	Deceased Parent	Domestic Violence	Incarcerated Parent	Mental Health Parents	Neglect	Other	Comb.
2011	228 38.5%	8 1.4%	95 16.0%	21 3.5%	1 .2%	6 1.0%	72 12.2%	25 4.2%	38 6.42%	82 13.9%	15 2.5%	1 .2%
2010	237 44.13%	10 1.9%	59 10.99%	18 3.35%	1 .19%	2 .37%	49 9.12%	26 4.84%	44 8.19%	76 14.15%	11 2.05%	4 .74%
2009	286 41.33%	11 1.6%	71 10.26%	31 4.48%	0 0.0%	2 .29%	81 11.7%	35 5.06%	25 3.61%	128 18.5%	8 1.16%	14 2.02%
2008	264 39.11%	21 3.1%	114 16.89%	30 4.44%	1 .15%	5 .74%	33 4.89%	19 2.81%	20 2.96%	143 21.19%	15 2.22%	10 1.48%
2007	242 44.99%	18 3.35%	94 17.47%	13 2.42%	0 0.00%	9 1.67%	33 6.13%	2 .37%	27 5.02%	75 13.94%	8 1.49%	17 3.16%
2006	240 42.55%	9 1.6%	67 11.88%	14 2.48%	0 0.00%	3 .53%	84 14.89%	2 .35%	43 7.62%	67 11.88%	17 3.01%	18 3.19%
2005	207 27.10%	26 3.4%	2 2.68%	26 3.40%	0 0%	1 1.31	99 12.96%	14 1.83%	37 4.84%	94 12.30%	37 4.84%	110 14.40%
2004	235 28.98%	31 3.8%	118 14.55%	26 3.21%	1 .12%	1 .12%	113 13.93%	42 5.18%	24 2.96%	177 21.82%	43 5.30%	
2003	321 35.08%	36 3.93%	119 13.01%	58 6.34%	3 .33%	1 .11%	123 13.44%	33 3.61%	26 2.84%	158 17.27%	37 4.04%	

Data is reflective of the “Primary” Reason for Entry into Care. Frequently, a combination of factors may exist, commonly coupled with Substance Abuse.

### OBSERVATIONS:

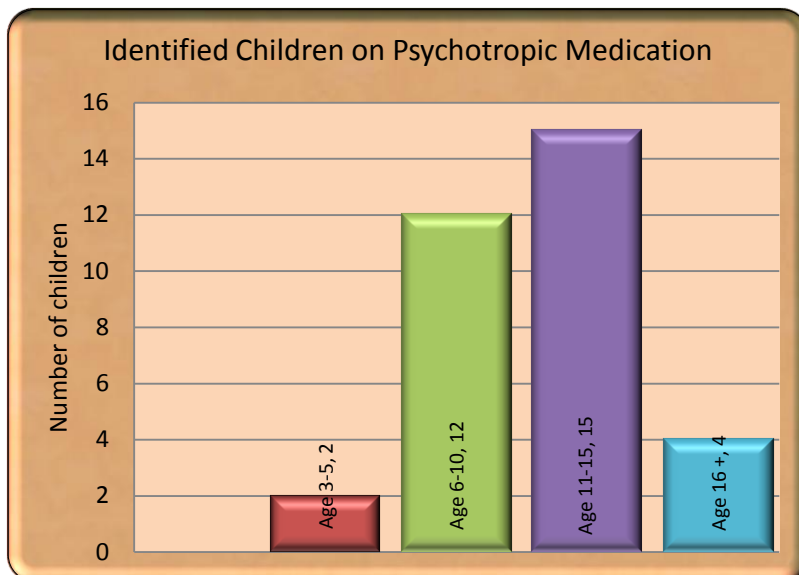
- Substance abuse decreased over 5%, but remains the highest primary reason for court involvement
- Physical Abuse up over 5% - highest since recording
- Domestic Violence rose 3% - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level since 2003
- Mental Health concerns remain high



Goal does not reflect the final outcome of case, but the recommended goal of the CFRB Panel.

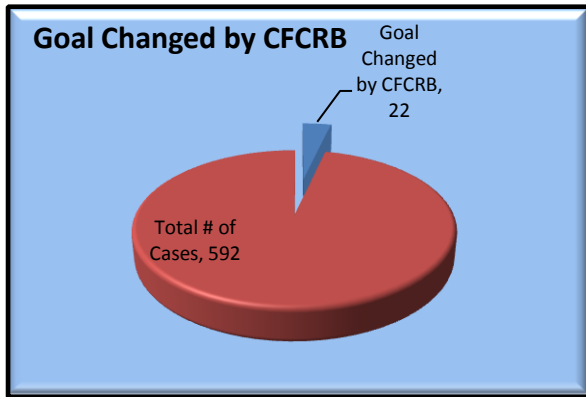
	Maintain & Strengthen	Adoption	Concurrent	Reunification	Perm Guard.	APPLA	Continued	Cancelled	Perm Placed Fit Relative	LTLC	LTC NR	LTC Rel	Ind. Living	TPR
2011	183 31%	134 23%	126 21%	95 16%	25 4%	15 3%	12 2%	2 <1%	0 0%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2010	169 31.47%	93 17.32%	128 23.84%	79 14.71%	22 4.10%	8 1.49%	30 5.59%	1 .19%	7 1.30%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2009	151 21.82%	116 16.76%	156 22.54%	133 19.22%	27 3.90%	23 3.32%	81 11.71%	5 .72%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2008	145 21.48%	90 13.33%	130 19.26%	147 21.78%	20 2.96%	43 6.37%	96 14.22%	4 .59%	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2007	137 25.46%		113 21.00%	105 19.52%			39 7.25%	Cancelled	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2006	166 29.43%		102 18.09%	122 21.63%			11 1.95%		0 0.00%	N/A	6 1.06%	18 3.19%	7 3.19%	3 5.32%
2005	276 36.13%		152 19.90%	134 17.54%			38 4.97%		New in 2006	10 1.31%	8 1.05%	41 5.37%	12 1.57%	0 0.00%
2004	253 31.20%		217 26.76%	115 14.18%			41 5.06%		New in 2006	11 1.36%	15 1.85%	43 5.30%	7 .86%	1 .12%

**TREND:** The goal of adoption increased to 23% of all cases reflecting a 6% increase from last year, while other goals remained relatively stable.



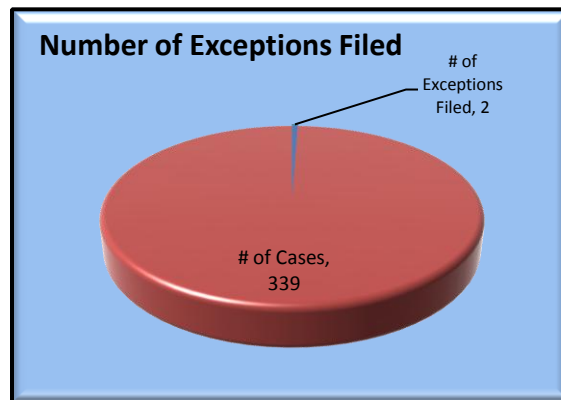
Age	0-2	3-5	6-10	11-15	16+
2011	0	2	12	15	4
2010 Partial year	0	1	7	10	3

❖ Accuracy of data is dependent upon Case Manager's Judicial Review Report.



The goal recommended by DCF was not accepted by the panel for 22 children. This number represents a small (<4%) proportion of cases.

Goal changed by CFCRB	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
	22	11	24	18	24	26	16
	3.72%	2.05%	3.47%	2.67%	4.46%	4.6%	2.1%



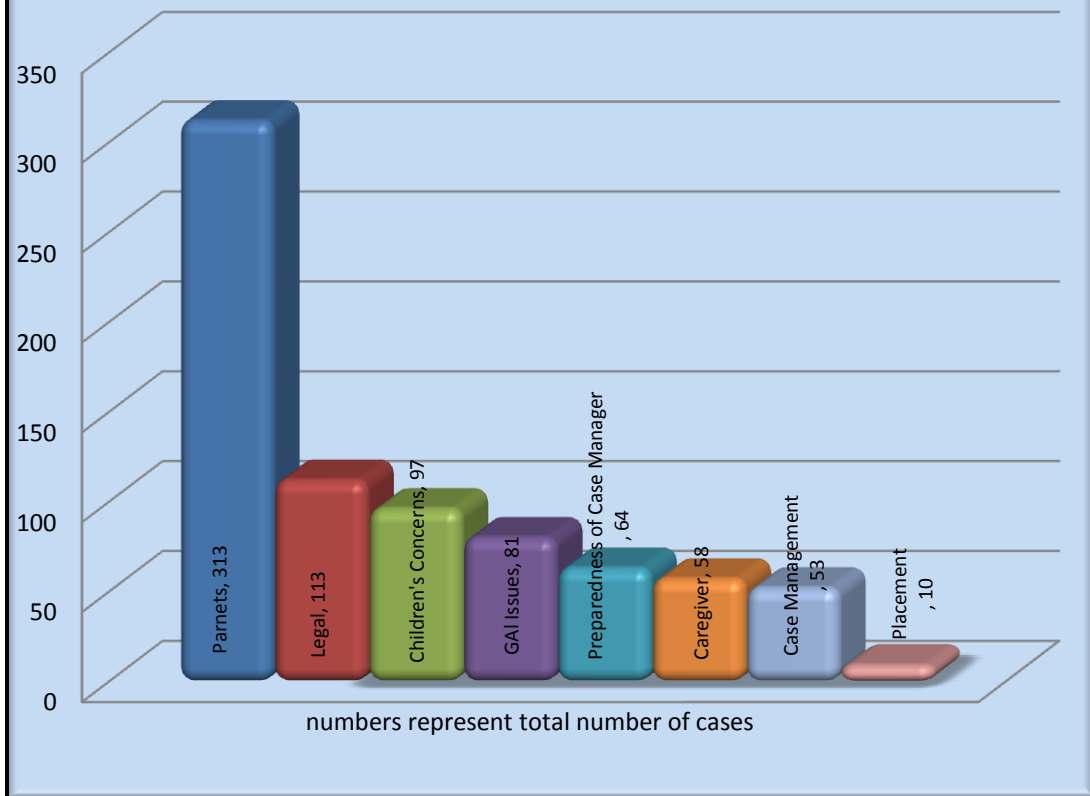
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
# Objections/Exceptions	2	0	4	1	3	2	6	9
	.59%	0%	.96%	.25%	.94%	.6%	1.43%	1.94%

## Panel Volunteers

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
# of Active Volunteers as of December 31	30	23	26	23	23	31	35	40
Panel Member Hours	843	690	955	969	923	936	1425	1,405
In-Service Hours	195	155	144	150	188	220	274	202
Steering Committee/Board Meeting Hours	75	38	56	39	40	37	46	44
Preparation Hours (Approx.)	1000	687	852	768	879	957	1230	1,224
Total Hours	2113	1570	2034	1965	2107	2150	2975	2,875

- It is impossible to track the true amount of time donated by our volunteers.
- In addition to these volunteer hours, many of our Board Members and Steering Committee Members met throughout the year at various special meetings and spent an enormous number of hours in preparation for these meetings.

## Barriers to Permanency/Concerns

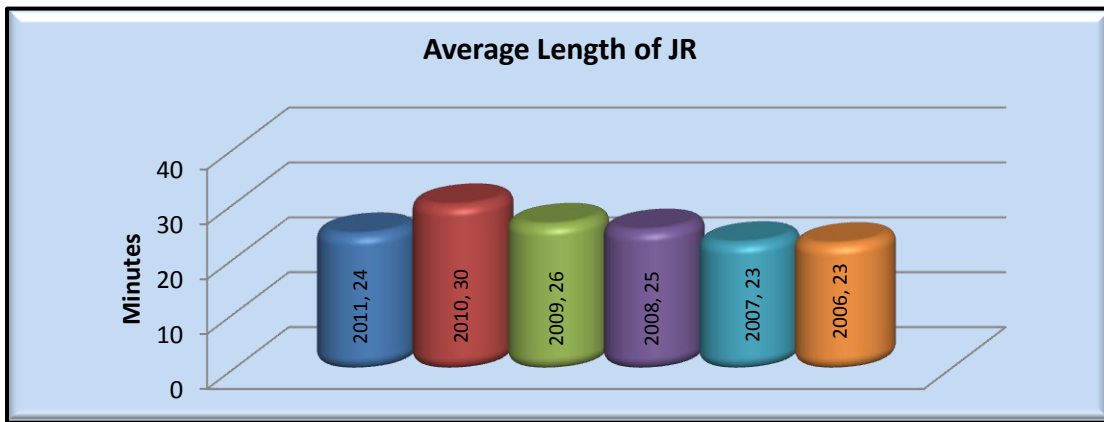


CATEGORY	2011	2010	2009	2008
Parents	313 37.3%	249 36.09%	131 20.7%	125 19.1%
Legal	113 13.5%	112 16.23%	147 23.3%	165 25.2%
Children's Concerns	97 11.6%	36 5.22%	5 ≤ 1%	9 1.4%
GAL Issues	81 9.7%	107 15.51%	22 3.4%	54 8.3%
Preparedness of Case Manager	64 7.6%	62 8.99%	46 7.2%	75 11.5%
Caregivers	58 6.9%	48 6.96%	10 1.6%	11 1.7%
Case Management	53 6.3%	31 4.49%	47 7.4%	54 8.2%
Placement Issues	10 1.2%	45 6.52%	223 35.3%	160 24.5%
Cases with no Barriers/Concerns	50 6%	29 9.32%	Statistic not kept	Statistic not kept

### TRENDS AND BARRIERS TO CASE COMPLETION AND SUCCESSFUL CLOSURE

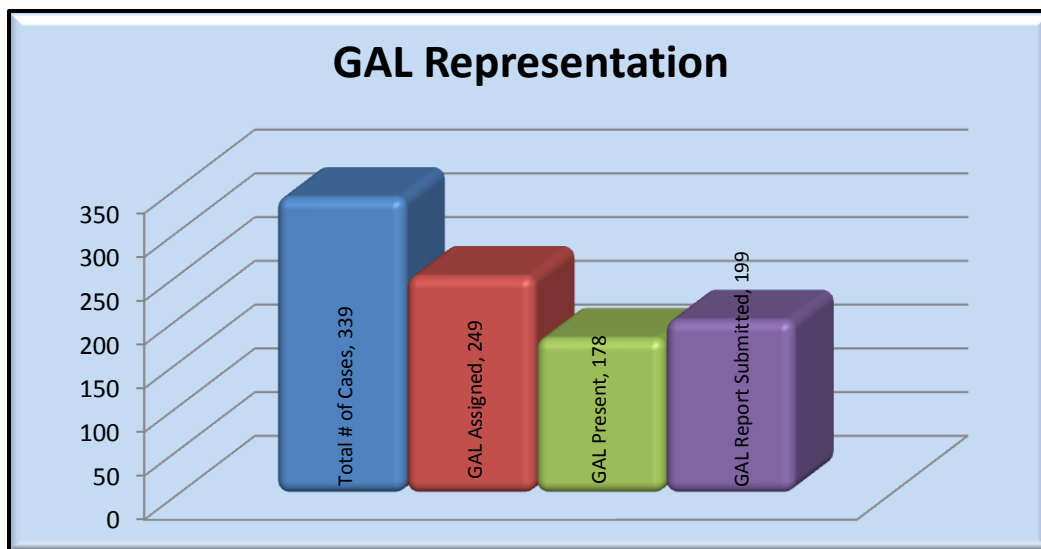
- The leading concern continues to be the parents' lack of compliance with court ordered tasks.
- Children's concerns increased which may be reflective of the increased number of children attending judicial reviews, in keeping with Judge Krier's policy.

This data is gathered by trained panel members. It is our belief that tracking this data will help us go beyond case-specific barriers and obtain a snapshot of the year as a whole, informing us as to what may be slowing down or impeding the stated permanency goals.



The average Judicial Review lasted 24 minutes. The shortest case lasted 5 minutes; longest case 92 minutes.

**ACTION:** The panel will continue to work with the professional participants to complete judicial reviews in an expeditious manner, without compromising due process.



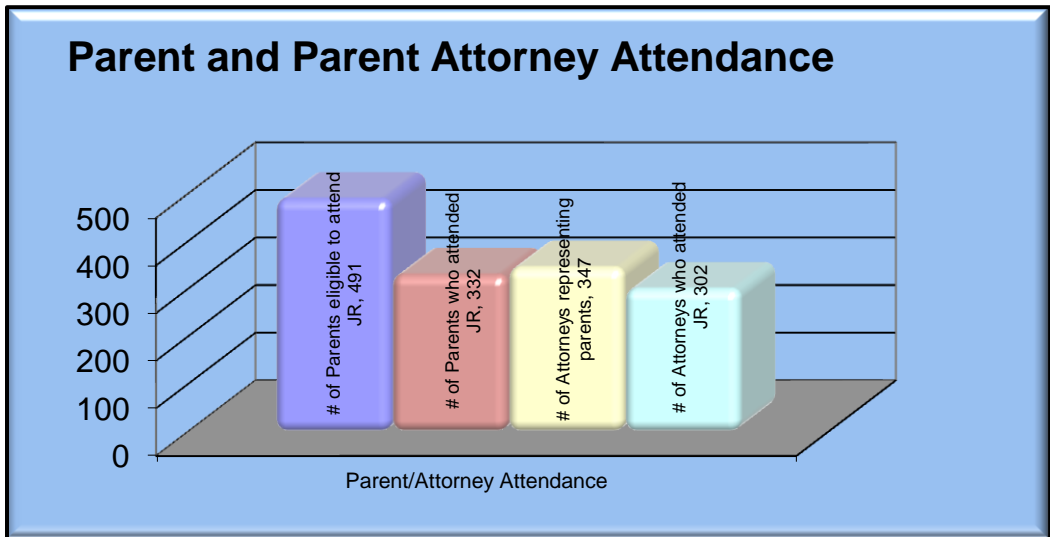
	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
GAL's Assigned	249	241	274	249	170	167	158	151
% of Cases with GAL assigned	73.45%	77.49%	65.71%	61.94%	53.29%	50.45%	37.71%	32.13%
% of assigned GALs who attended JRs	71.49%	74.69%	71.53%	73.90%	79.41%	68.86%	68.99%	73.51%
Report submitted	199	134	176	202	144	130	137	138
	79.92%	55.60%	64.23%	81.12%	84.71%	77.84%	86.71%	91.39%
Total JRs	339	311	417	402	319	331	419	470

**OBSERVATION:** Although more GAL reports were received in 2011 (80%), attendance was slightly down (71%).

## Attendance at Panel Judicial Review

	Mom	DadA	DadB	Child	Care Giver	Therapist	GAL	GAL Rpt	GAL Atty	Interpreter	Mom Atty	DadA Atty	DadB Atty	Case Mgr	Case Super	DCF Atty	Other
2011	191	133	8	73	181	4	178	199	239	21	104	155	61	292	154	338	49
2010	185	115	3	58	146	4	180	134	228	32	153	88	7	261	196	311	38
2009	234	150	10	53	173	3	196	176	222	33	145	82	7	362	186	407	51
2008	198	134	7	49	143	7	184	202	217	47	188	118	7	348	232	399	37
2007	157	104	3	28	120	7	135	144	169	39	146	80	1	304	175	319	45
2006	144	86	3	29	123	13	115	130	145	25	146	83	5	319	47	329	37
2005	222	171	11	46	159	17	118	137	130	42	178	99	1	377	107	404	71
2004	216	152	7	67	183	30	111	138	128	39	211	136	4	431	147	463	24
2003	273	176	7	57	144	33	110	128	127	57	240	168	14	460	169	478	55

**TREND:** Number of children coming to JRs continued to rise in keeping with Judge Krier’s policy. Increase in caregiver attendance was also noted.



	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004	2003
Parents Involved	491	477	644	564	390	414	574	614	671
Parents Attended	332	303	416	385	264	265	404	375	462
	67.61%	63.52%	64.60%	68.26%	67.69%	64.01%	70.38%	61.07%	68.85%
Attorneys Assigned	347	318	437	422	249	271	376	462	506
Attorneys Attended	302	259	264	357	209	225	297	351	404
	87.03	81.45%	60.41%	84.60%	83.94%	83.03%	78.99%	75.97%	79.84%

**OBSERVATIONS:**

- Attendance by Parent’s attorneys again increased. This contributed to fewer re-schedulings and better JR outcomes
- Parent attendance remained constant at 68%

# 2011 Panel Member Volunteers

**Terry Abraham-Whalley**

**Bob Bogle**

**Ed Bransilver**

**Stephen Brazina**

**Ann Campbell**

**Lori Cohen**

**Mike Dias**

**Jane Ellsworth**

**Jan Eustis**

**David Goldstein**

**Russ Groos**

**Colette Hall**

**Liz Hayes**

**Joe Jaffe**

**Kay Jasso**

**Fran Kieselhorst**

**Mary Kniaz**

**Suzanne Meiners-Levy**

**Susan Nordbeck**

**Rob Nossen**

**Sally Salzer**

**Jim Schoenwetter**

**Ken Shevin**

**Elli Taylor**

**Sue Vogel**

**Paul Wachsmith**

**Irving Waldman**

**Marv Weisberg**

**Willie West**

**Carmen Wise**



## 2011 Steering Committee Members

**Bob Bogle**

**Ed Bransilver (Chair)**

**Lori Cohen**

**Jan Eustis**

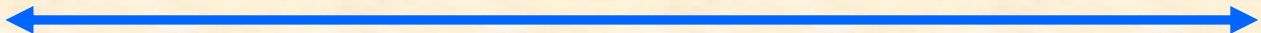
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**Suzanne Meiners-Levy**

**Rob Nossen**

**Elli Taylor**

**Irving Waldman**



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