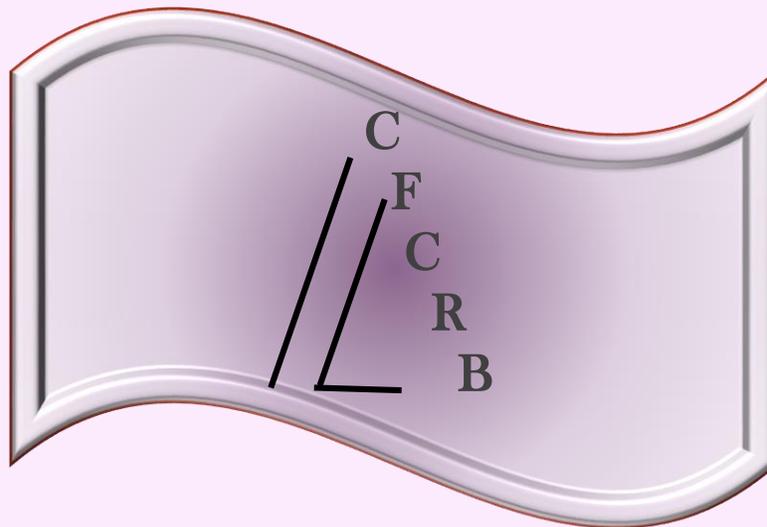


CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC. COLLIER COUNTY 2017 ANNUAL REPORT



P O Box 10746
Naples, FL 34101

www.cfcrcollier.com
cfcrcollier@gmail.com

MISSION STATEMENT

THE CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD'S (THE "CFCRB) MISSION IS TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE THE INTERESTS OF ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN AND YOUNG ADULTS IN COLLIER COUNTY WHO COME UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE DEPENDENCY COURT BY PROVIDING WELL-TRAINED VOLUNTEERS TO OVERSEE THEIR SAFETY, STABILITY AND WELL-BEING.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND OFFICERS

President	Lisa Akita Cannon
Vice President	Sgt. Tom Wedlock
Secretary	Nancy Faight-Tarrete
Treasurer	Robert Nossen
Director	Fernand Billon
Director	The Honorable Judge Ted Brousseau
Director	Lori Cohen
Director	Kenneth I. Shevin

Congratulations to our outgoing board of director John D'Alimonte for his outstanding service and commitment.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As stakeholders in the dependency court system we share a common goal---to preserve families and protect children. Guided by core values of impartiality, fairness and integrity, the thirty-one volunteer panel members of the Citizen's Foster Care Review Board (CFCRB), conducted 207 judicial reviews in Collier County. Marking our 25th year, we look forward to continued service to the community and the court.

Pursuant to Florida Statute 39.702, the CFCRB submits its annual report to the 20th Judicial Circuit Chief Judge, Michael McHugh. It is also shared with our Dependency Judges, State and local child welfare agencies and related stakeholders within the community.

This annual report summarizes the data collected by the CFCRB panel members during judicial reviews and compares it to previous years. In the last ten years, there has been a steady decline in the number of cases reviewed while the types of placements have fluctuated. This year, the number of reviews continued to decrease. The primary cause of entry into the system remains substance abuse. Placement of children with relatives and non-relatives increased, licensed foster care placements decreased and length of time in care increased.

The goal in sharing this information is to motivate all of us to work collaboratively to provide the best possible solutions, practices and outcomes in addressing this complex societal problem. Our report also highlights the activities undertaken by the CFCRB in meeting its administrative statutory obligations. In 2017, our volunteers conducted 207 judicial reviews involving 312 children.

As changes and improvements in programs are made over the years, challenges remain. Stakeholders and the community must continue to work together to find solutions. This is where the CFCRB is in a unique position to serve as a link and voice to the community.

THE WORK OF THE CFCRB

We were established in 1992 under Florida law through the efforts of Dependency Judge Ted Brousseau. Citizen panels were established to allow more time for review of dependency cases, thus allowing judges to focus on more complex cases. Since 1992, the Board has been an important and valued community partner with the Collier County Dependency Court by providing these panels of trained volunteers to perform Judicial Reviews.

Acting under the authority of the Dependency Court, panels of 5 well-trained volunteers conduct judicial hearings to evaluate the parent's progress towards fulfilling the tasks required for resolution of their case, and the return of the children to their home, or another permanent placement.

Based on the information received at these hearings and calling upon their backgrounds and experiences, the panels make recommendations to the Dependency Court Judge regarding the safety of the children and the progress of the family toward case resolution. Upon acceptance by the Judge, the recommendations become fully enforceable court orders.

Pursuant to Florida law, a judicial hearing in a dependency case must be held at 3-to-6 month intervals to determine whether it is advancing in an expeditious and appropriate fashion. At the discretion of the Dependency Court, this hearing may be held before a CFCRB panel. Panels hear cases at least every six (6) months and again at around nine (9) months. This allows for greater continuity and familiarity with the cases. At 12 months, the case goes to the Dependency Judge for a permanency hearing. Hearings are held in the Collier County Courthouse in a judicial setting with the panel acting as "eyes-and ears" of the court.

Prior to each hearing, panel members review the case documents provided by the Court. The parents, the Department of Children and Families, the case manager, caregivers, Guardian ad Litem, the children, and the attorneys representing the parties to the case attend the hearing. Each person present is questioned by, and entitled to be heard by the panel. The children who are the subject of the proceeding are required by law to be present. They are offered the opportunity to speak with the panel, out of the presence of the other parties, thus encouraging open communication.

The panel examines the safety, education, enrichment activities, physical (medical/dental), psychological and emotional needs of the children. When a need is identified (for example, medical treatment, tutoring or counseling), the panel, working with the other parties, seeks to identify a potential remedy, which is then included in its recommendations to the court. The goal of the panel is to reduce the instability that dependency instills in

the children and their families by encouraging the team of people involved to move effectively and efficiently to create a permanent solution for the children so their lives can move forward in a safe and stable environment.

At the end of the hearing, the panel makes recommendations to the Court. Once reviewed and approved by the Court, those recommendations become an order of the Court that must be complied with by all parties.

Studies show that the sooner children are returned to a secure and stable living environment with adequate support services, preferably with their families, the better they fare.

The negative impact of a dependency proceeding on children and, indeed, the entire family is undeniable. The longer the proceeding and the related instability, the greater the negative impact. It is widely acknowledged that children who linger in dependency situations suffer short and long term detrimental effects, which may be demonstrated in psychological, social, physical, emotional and/or educational behaviors.

By helping to avoid unnecessary delays in the dependency process, the panels help to ensure the safety and well-being of the children while expediting permanent placements. The panels bring the objective voice of the community to the dependency process. In addition, by bringing the experience, thought processes and intellectual efforts of five trained members of the community to bear on each hearing, a comprehensive analysis of each case will result. At the same time, the panels ensure the accountability of all participants in the proceedings, and afford all parties - but, particularly the children - the opportunity to be heard.

Finally, by assuming part of the burden of the Dependency Court, the panels work provides the judicial process the ability to focus more time and attention on each case in pursuit of an optimal outcome.

Our vision remains steadfast in its commitment to children, young adults and their families in the Dependency system---*That every child has the most meaningful possible outcomes; that the court reach timely resolutions; that every child and young adult lives in a safe, secure, healthy and permanent home and that families are reunified whenever possible.*

2017 STRATEGIC HIGHLIGHTS

The CFCRB is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization administered by its Board of Directors with the assistance of a Steering Committee. It is the responsibility of the BOD to administer the panels that perform the judicial reviews.

The following objectives were met in 2017:

- ◆ New part-time administrative assistant hired to provide support in maintaining the administrative work and programs of the organization.
- ◆ Six in-service programs provided for panel members and other stakeholders
- ◆ New panel members recruited and trained
- ◆ Committee established for panel chairpersons; new and existing chairs trained
- ◆ "Data collection form" for panel reviews completed and procedure implemented
- ◆ Periodic newsletter distributed
- ◆ Meetings with stakeholders; Camelot Community Care (CMO), Dependency Court attorneys and judiciary

LOOKING FORWARD

While it is important to review past accomplishments, our main focus remains on the future and improving our program to achieve our goals for 2018.:

- ◆ Provide the technological vehicle for panel members to have immediate comprehensive access to materials, answers to questions and on-going training information.
- ◆ Increase our presence in the community, so resources and financial support becomes available to address the needs of children in foster care and in the dependency court system.

- ◆ Update the CFCRB technological and internet presence to achieve our goals for fundraising, volunteer recruitment and members' only access.
- ◆ Provide more in-depth and relevant in-service trainings to panel members.
- ◆ Provide an upstream/downstream communication process between community-based stakeholders, such as; Department of Children and Families (DCF), Camelot Community Care, Dependency Court attorneys, Judicial Court and community services.
- ◆ Develop a strategic plan to increase our recruitment efforts for panel members and leadership.
- ◆ Provide internship opportunities to college students interested in social work, the legal process and child development.
- ◆ Increase our effectiveness in assuring families are maintained, needed services are provided and children are safe. .

FINANCIAL REPORT AND SUMMARY

CITIZEN'S FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD INC			
2017 FINANCIAL STATEMENT			
INCOME			
Donations		3,600	
Grants		1,000	
TOTAL INCOME			4,600
EXPENSES			
Administrative		2,100	
Program:		3,100	
In-Service Trainings/Volunteer Appreciation	1,600		
Training	200		
Program Development	1,300		
TOTAL EXPENSES			5,200
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)			(600)

FINANCIAL NOTES:

The Citizen's Foster Care Review Board, Inc., a non-profit organization, receives funding sources from the public, businesses and grants.

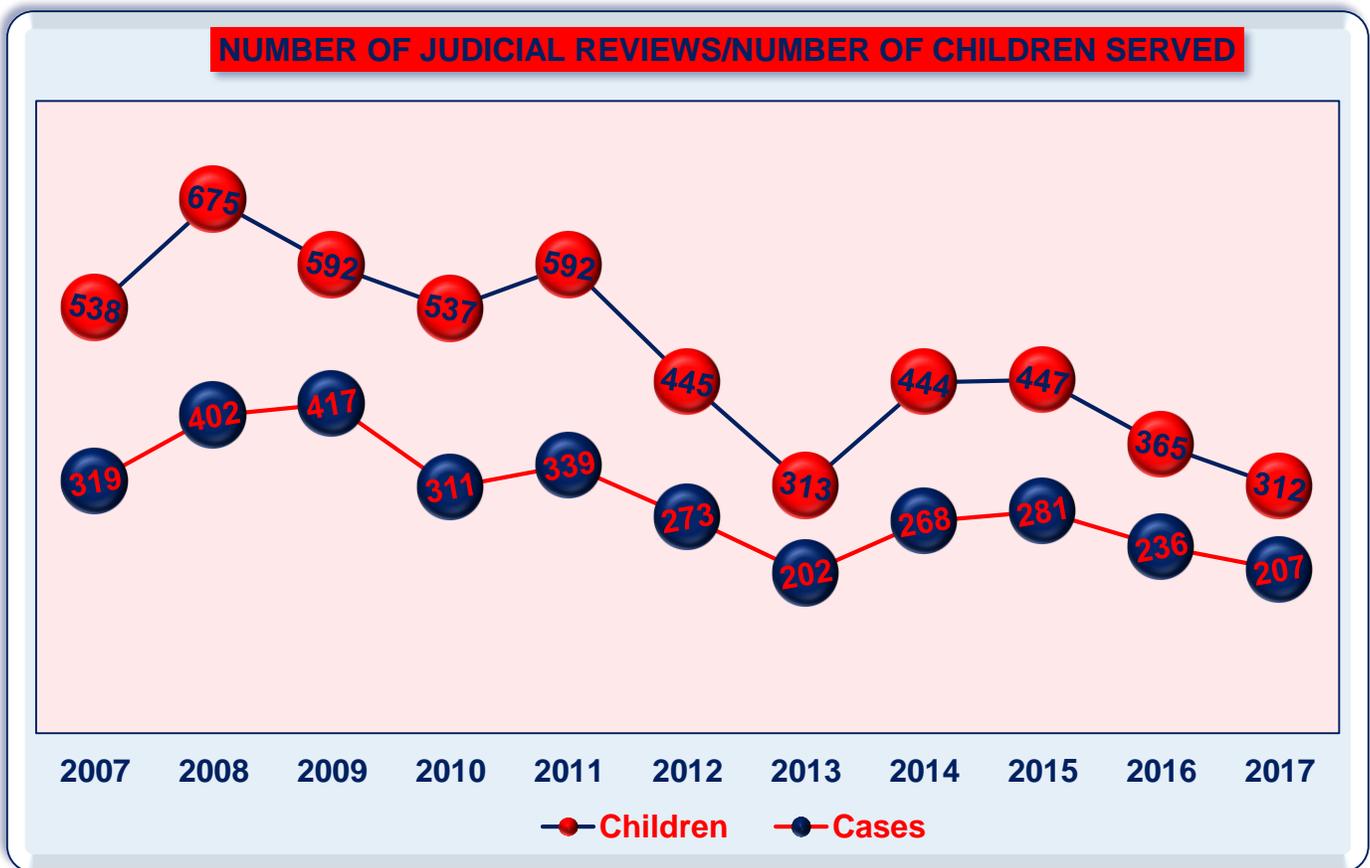
The largest administrative expense is insurance coverage for director and officers of the board, \$1,350. The CFCRB's human resource is an average of 30+ volunteers, with an all-volunteer Board of Directors and Steering Committee. The only paid staff is a part-time administrative assistant. The Collier County Bar Association granted funding of \$8,000 to subsidize the cost of hiring the Administrative Assistant.

The 2018 forecast of finances includes the cost of a part time administrative assistant, insurance coverage and expanding our program to meet the continuing needs of the families and children in our community.

Form 990 and financial records are available upon request.

Contributions are made payable to: **CFCRB, Inc P O Box 10746, Naples FL 34101**. In advance, we thank you for your consideration.

2017 DATA REVIEW



OBSERVATIONS:

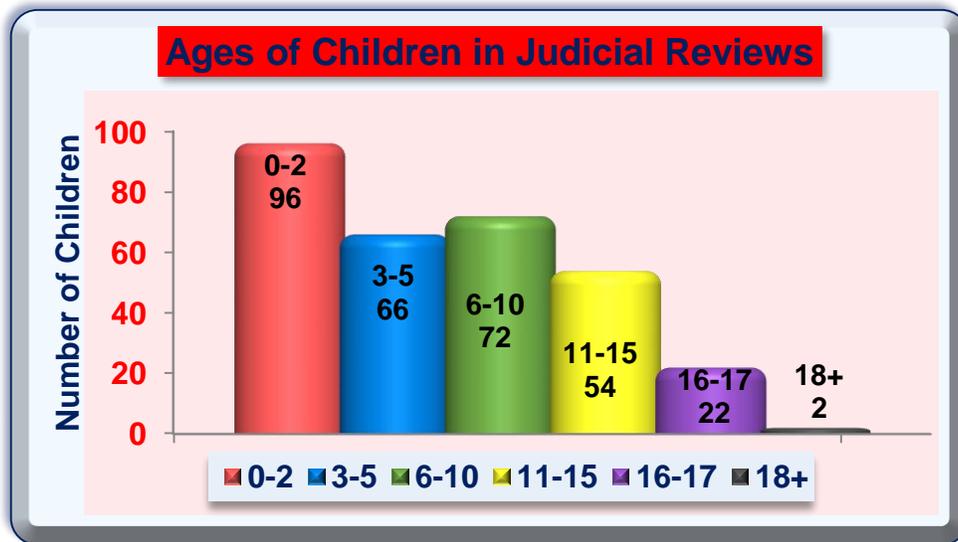
207 Judicial Reviews were conducted by CFCRB involving 312 children

The number of reviews conducted by the panels in 2017 decreased by 12% to 207. This number also includes the cases heard a second time by the panel. Panels review cases at 3-6 months and at about 9 months. The permanency hearing is conducted by the Unified Family Court Judge at about 12 months.

COMMENTS:

The National data of entry rate for children in Foster Care continues to rise. Florida has also reported an increase, however, there are wide variations observed by regions within the State. Collier County's numbers continue to show a decrease.





OBSERVATIONS:

The numbers have remained consistent over a 10-year period. Children from ages 0-5 (52%) continue to be the largest grouping by age followed by the 6-10-year group (23%).

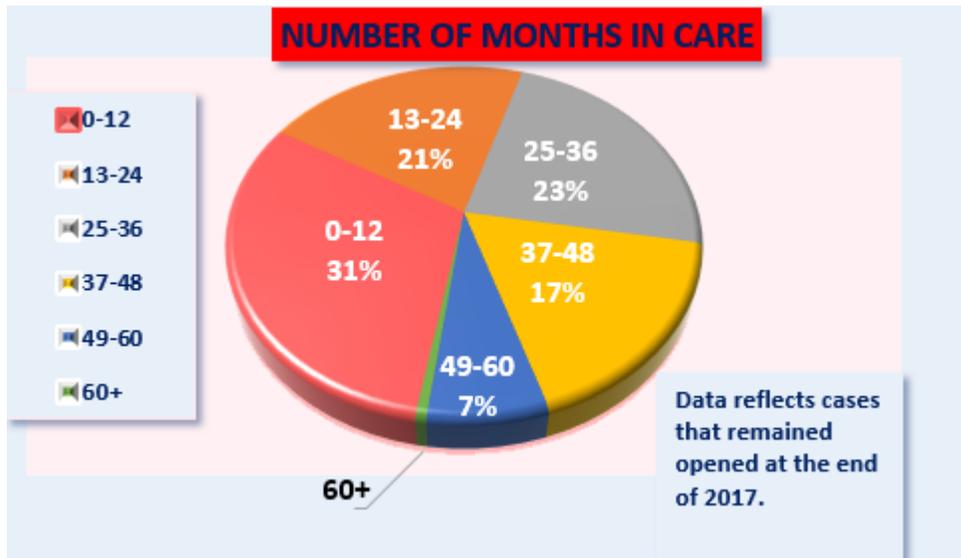
COMMENTS:

The 0-5 age group is at higher risk because they are less visible within the community, may not be in school or daycare, are too young to express themselves or have no GAL assigned. While all age groups are negatively impacted by trauma stress, children between zero to five years old are at particular high risk. Research on early brain development confirms the detrimental effects of abuse, neglect and removal. During this time, brain growth and development is most active and a positive, nurturing, safe environment is critical for future health. The majority of children seen at our judicial reviews fall into this vulnerable age bracket (52%).

Knowledge of developmental issues and the effect of trauma on all age groups coming before the panels are valuable assets in the judicial process. Careful review of information provided before and during judicial reviews, assists the panel in providing thoughtful recommendations to the court.

HISTORICAL DATA:

Age Groups	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0-2	180	211	158	166	117	85	134	122	106	96
	27%	30%	29%	28%	26%	27%	30%	27%	29%	31%
3-5	157	185	138	143	114	75	82	91	69	66
	23%	27%	26%	24%	26%	24%	18%	20%	19%	21%
6-10	155	150	135	153	115	85	118	120	88	72
	23%	22%	25%	26%	26%	27%	27%	27%	24%	23%
11-15	126	98	78	110	68	37	79	83	77	54
	19%	14%	15%	19%	15%	12%	18%	19%	21%	17%
16-17	57	48	28	20	31	31	31	22	21	22
	8%	7%	5%	3%	7%	10%	7%	5%	6%	7%
18+								9	4	2
								2%	1%	1%
Yearly Totals	675	692	537	592	445	313	444	447	365	312



OBSERVATIONS:

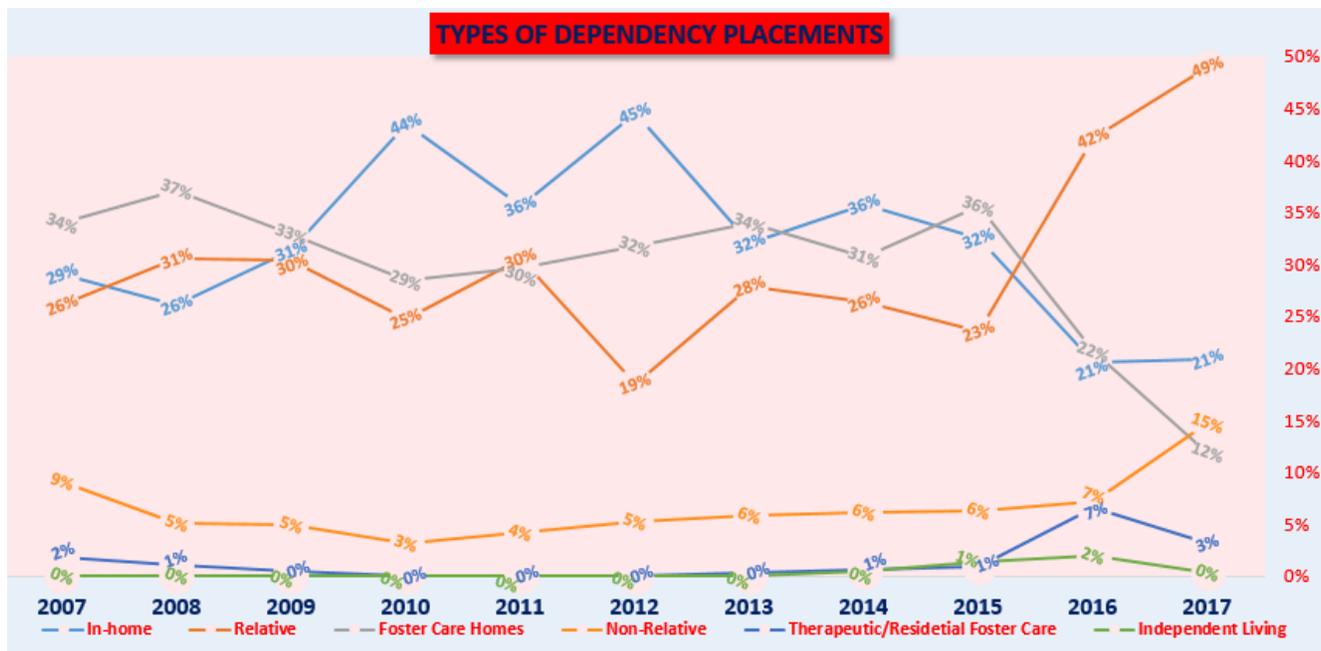
- 0-12 months 31%
- 13-24 months 21%
- 25-36 months 23%
- 37-48 months 17%
- 49-60+ months 8%

When compared to 2016 there was a decrease of 21% of children in care for 0-24 months. However in 2017 an increase of 21% is seen in the 37-60 months group. Data reported later in this report suggests that children are remaining in relative/non-relative care for a longer time in order to achieve adoption.

Months In Care	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
0-12 Months	163	140	65	123	101	135	242	72	59	96
	51%	49%	30%	46%	52%	63%	77%	39%	27%	31%
13-24 Months	84	70	101	88	57	49	54	86	99	66
	26%	25%	47%	33%	29%	23%	17%	47%	46%	21%
25-36 Months	29	31	20	29	18	17	6	20	49	72
	9%	11%	9%	11%	9%	8%	2%	11%	23%	23%
37-48 Months	11	17	11	9	4	2	3	0	4	54
	3%	6%	5%	3%	2%	1%	1%	0%	2%	17%
49-60 Months	16	4	6	7	1	3	5	2	3	22
	5%	1%	3%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	7%
60+ Months	16	23	11	10	15	8	6	3	1	2
	5%	8%	5%	4%	8%	4%	2%	2%	0%	1%
Yearly Totals	319	285	214	266	196	214	316	183	215	312

“The Supreme Court recognizes the need to timely resolve court disputes involving children as court delays may considerably extend a child’s temporary placement in foster care.”

Supreme Court of Florida No. AOSC17-11



OBSERVATIONS:

Comparison of placements 2016 to 2017 (Increase/Decrease)

Relative Care	153	(49% of children)	7% increase
In-Home-Care	65	(21% of children)	0% unchanged
Non-Relative Care	46	(15% of children)	8% increase
Licensed Foster Care	37	(12% of children)	2% decrease
Residential/Therapeutic	10	(3% of children)	4% decrease

COMMENTS:

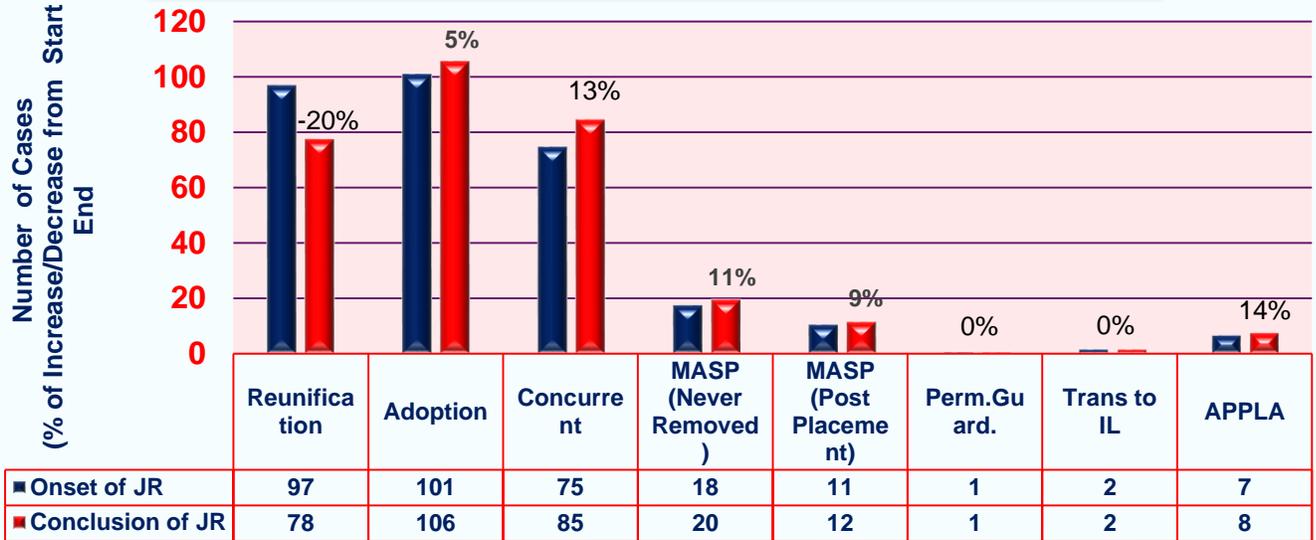
The majority of children (79%) at reviews were placed in Out-of-Home Care (OHC). Of these, 64% were placed with relatives or non-relatives an increase of 15% from the previous year. The number placed in Licensed Foster Care at 12% is the lowest observed since we have gathered data.

Relative care has psychological advantages for the child, especially when there are established close bonds with the relative. However, care must be taken that the same level of support services and supervision is provided to these relatives as to regular foster care placements and that it does not lead to an unintended, indirect return of the child to the parent.

A consistent and stable relationship with an adult who is nurturing, protective, and provides security and trust are beneficial factors in children developing into healthy human beings. This is particularly critical in young children. Any time a child is removed from their home, compounded by changes in placement or caregiver, is stressful.

There remains a shortage of suitable foster homes, as well as therapeutic foster homes in Collier County. This may result in children needing to change school districts upon placement change. Out of county placement also sometimes necessitates the need for a change in therapists, resulting in a delay in achieving therapeutic treatment goals. Transportation issues continue, placing additional burdens on parents, family support worker staff and children who have to travel long distances for weekly visitations.

Goals at the Onset and Conclusion of a Judicial Review

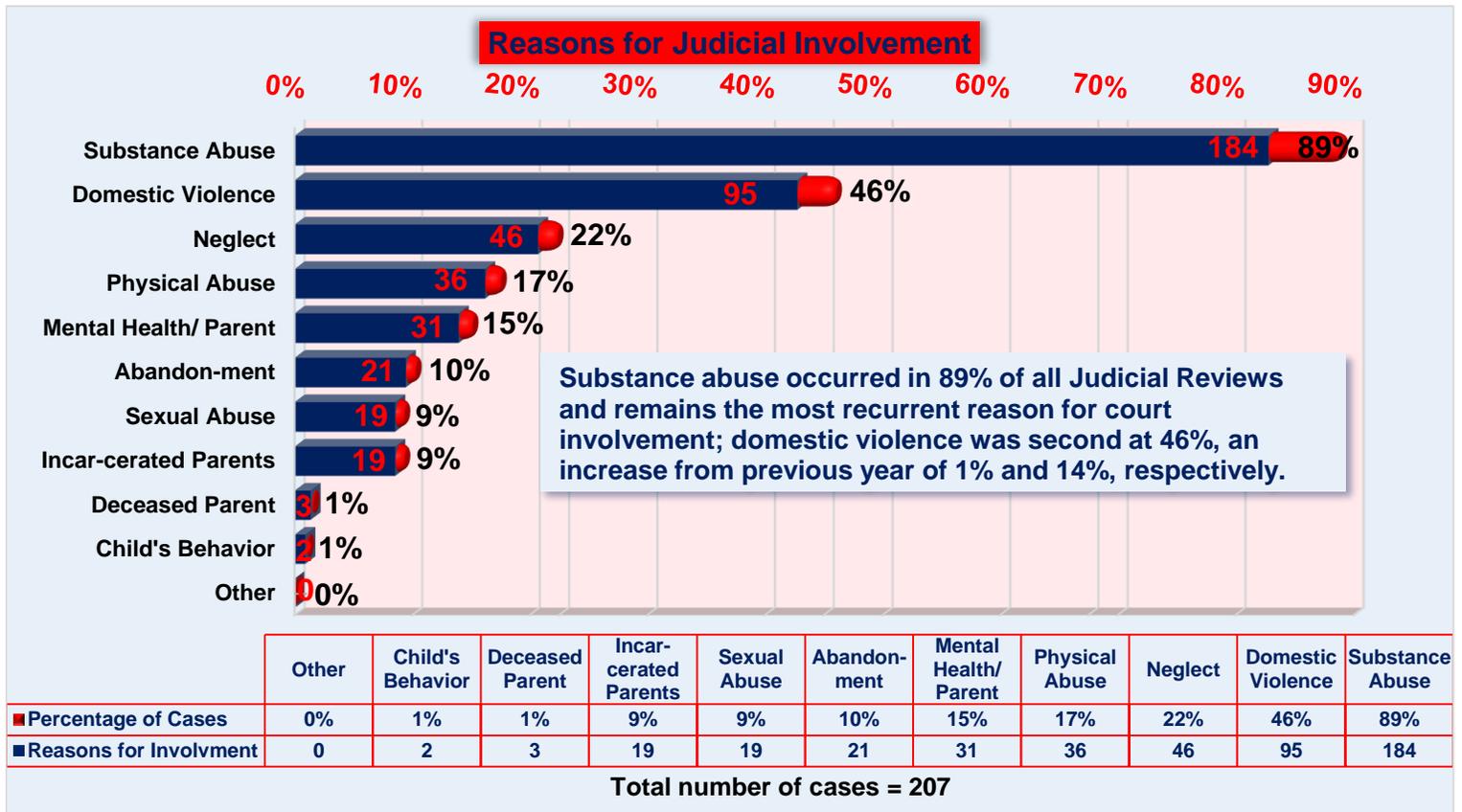


	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Increase/Decrease</u>
Adoption	23%	34%	11% increase
Concurrent	19%	27%	8% increase
Reunification	31%	25%	6% decrease
MASP (never removed)	13%	6%	7% decrease
MASP (post placement)	9%	4%	5% decrease
Permanent Guardian	4%	2%	2% decrease

OBSERVATIONS:

Of the 312 children in judicial reviews, adoption was the most frequently recommended goal (11% increase). When combined with the second goal of concurrent (reunification with adoption or permanent guardianship), a total of 61% fall into this category. Fewer children had the goal of reunification, MASP and PGDC. The panels recommended goal changes in 19 children (6%).

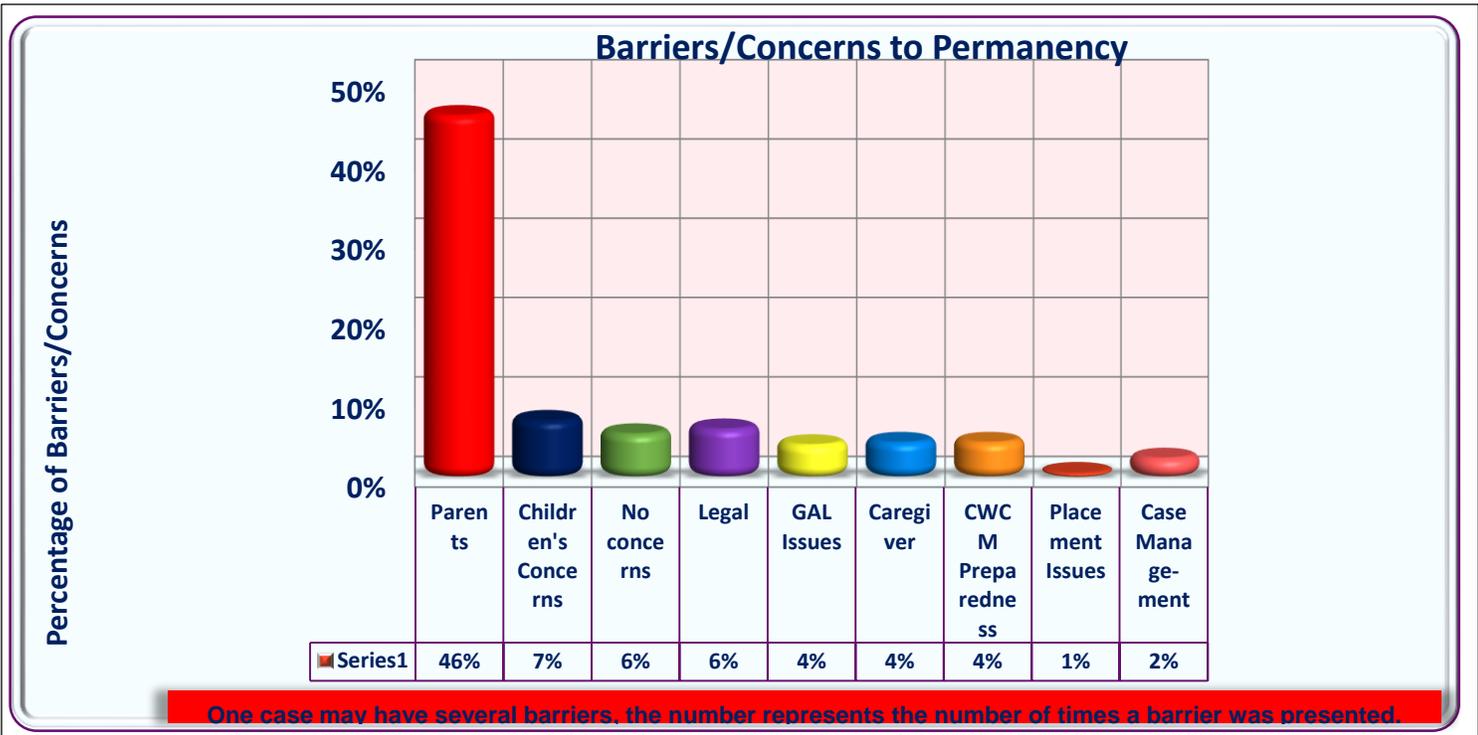
Goals at Conclusion	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Reunification	76	42	114	110	113	78
	17%	14%	26%	25%	31%	25%
Adoption	82	91	78	99	85	106
	19%	30%	18%	22%	23%	34%
Concurrent	77	64	134	110	68	85
	18%	21%	30%	25%	19%	27%
MASP (Never Removed)	91	38	58	12	46	20
	21%	12%	13%	3%	13%	6%
MASP (Post Placement)	90	51	45	81	34	12
	21%	17%	10%	18%	9%	4%
Perm. Guard.	13	10	5	12	12	1
	3%	3%	1%	3%	3%	0%
Trans to IL	0	0	3	19	4	2
	0%	0%	1%	4%	1%	1%
APPLA	10	10	7	4	3	8
	2%	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%
Yearly Totals	439	306	444	447	365	312



OBSERVATION (frequently more than one reason for involvement may be present)

Both substance abuse and domestic violence remain the primary reasons for court involvement. The largest increase was seen in Domestic Violence (14%). With substance abuse at epidemic proportions, this serious public health problem affects not only families, but also all aspects of our community. During a judicial hearing, parent's case plan tasks are carefully reviewed by the panel to ensure that appropriate support services are being provided and that all "reasonable and appropriate efforts" are made to reunify the family.



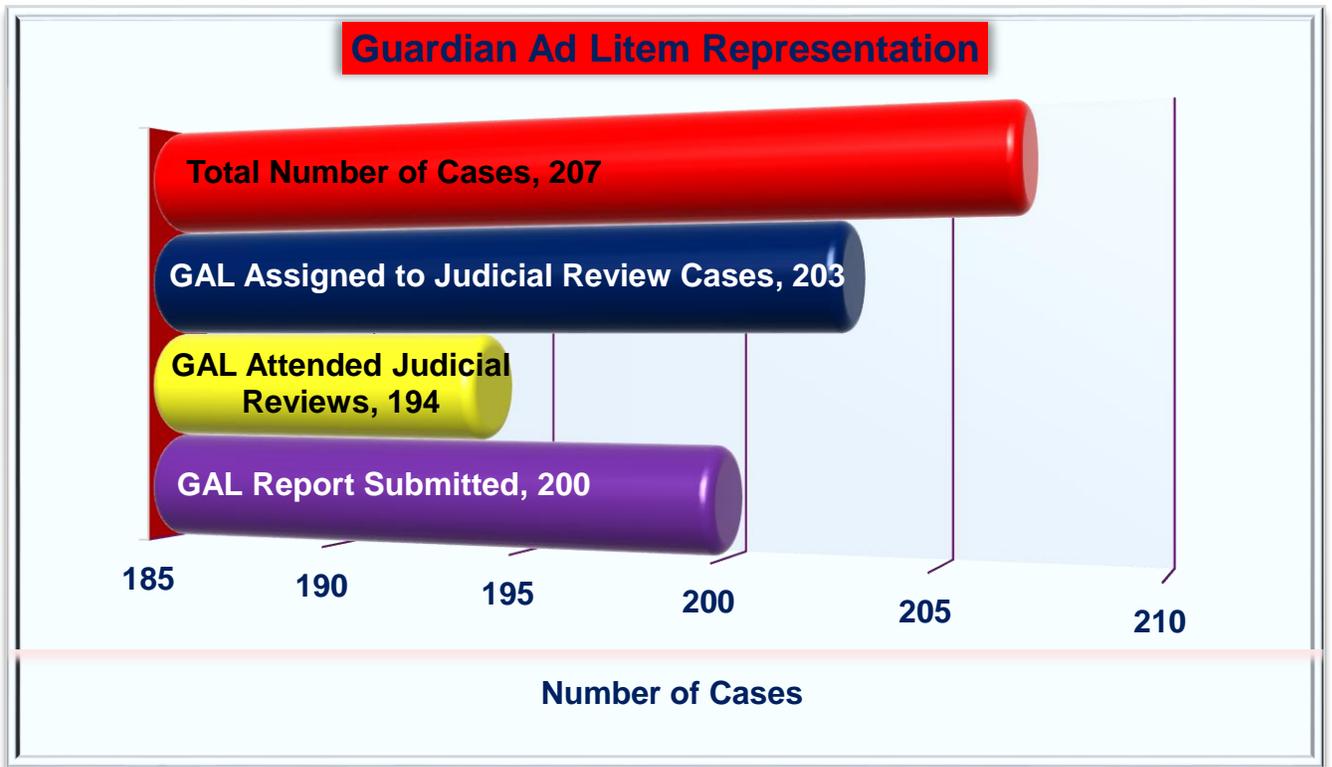


COMMENTS:

The primary barrier to obtaining permanency for children remains with the parents. Our goal in monitoring barriers to permanency is to identify ways in which, these barriers can be eliminated, so children do not linger in care, but achieve permanency quickly. Ensuring that appropriate support and services are provided to the parent is paramount to decreasing those barriers. Parents' non-compliance with case plan tasks -- *not taking ordered drug screens and not completing case plan tasks*, were the most frequently identified barriers. The concerns identified for legal, guardian ad litem, caregiver and case management were few. Approximately 6% of all judicial reviews had no concerns. The panel works closely with all parties involved in a case to seek alternatives in eliminating barriers whenever possible.

HISTORICAL DATA:

Barriers	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Parents	249	313	306	180	276	328	339	298
	38%	48%	47%	28%	42%	50%	52%	46%
Childrens	36	97	99	105	130	143	94	47
	4%	8%	6%	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%
No Concerns	29	50	36	40	44	52	52	36
	4%	8%	6%	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%
Legal	112	113	65	43	72	73	51	40
	17%	17%	10%	7%	11%	11%	8%	6%
GAL	107	81	44	19	29	27	50	27
	16%	12%	7%	3%	4%	4%	8%	4%
Caregiver	48	58	44	40	34	25	41	29
	7%	9%	7%	6%	5%	4%	6%	4%
Preparedness	62	64	40	19	56	51	29	29
	9%	10%	6%	3%	9%	8%	4%	4%
Placement	45	10	17	15	19	25	29	4
	7%	2%	3%	2%	3%	4%	4%	1%
Case Management	31	53	43	28	55	51	25	16
	5%	8%	7%	4%	8%	8%	4%	2%
Yearly Totals	719	839	694	489	715	775	710	526



OBSERVATIONS:

The Guardian Ad Litem representation of our children is essential in the judicial review process. In 2017, 98% representation across the board has been reflective of the commitment of the Guardian Ad Litem office and their volunteers..

We are pleased that the reporting structure has improved significantly. More descriptive and detailed narratives are being provided to the panels. It has also been very helpful when a note on the report indicates that a child wishes to speak with the panel.

HISTORICAL DATA:

GAL REPRESENTATION					
Years	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Total JR Cases	202	268	281	236	207
GAL Assigned	164	225	247	223	203
% of Assigned GAL	81%	84%	88%	94%	98%
GAL Reports	163	225	246	219	200
% of GAL Reports Submitted	99%	100%	100%	98%	99%
GAL Attendance	102	194	205	216	194
% of GAL Attended	62%	86%	83%	97%	96%

The CFCRB gives special thanks and acknowledgement to . . .

20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT UNIFIED FAMILY COURT COLLIER COUNTY JUDGES:

The Honorable Judge Mary C. Evans

The Honorable Judge Joseph G. Foster

The Honorable Judge Geoffrey H. Gentile

The Honorable Judge Christine H. Greider

For their continued support and guidance. Each judge has supported us in many ways; chairing meetings, attending in-service trainings/meetings, offering constructive criticism and general encouragement. Administrative Judge Greider was instrumental in assigning bailiffs and providing a deliberation room during our proceedings, which provides a safer and professional environment for panel deliberations.

20TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT COURT DEPENDENCY COURT CASE MANAGER FOR COLLIER COUNTY:

Judicial reviews could not run without the additional support and dedication of Dependency Court Case Manager, Judy Groos. Mrs. Groos oversees the CFCRB scheduling of cases, distribution of court files and documents to panel members and communications liaison between the judges, the board and steering committee. She provides a vital link between the dependency court and the service the CFCRB provides.

THE COLLIER COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION

THANK YOU FOR PRESENTING THE CFCRB WITH A 2016 GRANT AND YOUR CONTINUAL SUPPORT AND DEDICATION.



2017 PANEL MEMBERS

TO ALL OUR PANEL VOLUNTEERS, *THANK YOU* FOR YOUR PASSION, TIME, HARD WORK AND FOR CARING ABOUT OUR COLLIER COUNTY CHILDREN.

Terry Abraham-Whalley	Lynn Drexler	Cheryl Payne
Tom Becker	Newton Hoilette	David Pfaff
Michael Baumohl	Raymond Hrovat	Don Rauch
Bob Bogle	Joe Jaffe	Jim Schoenwetter
Steve Brazina	Cheri Kooiker	Ken Shevin
Sandy Bruce	Roger Mann	Fran Shipman
Ann Campbell	Elaine Moorin	Harold Weeks
Lisa Cannon	Judi Mudarri	Willie West
Lori Cohen	Rob Nossen	Charles White
John D'Alimonte	Al Noto	Carmen Wise
Jennifer DeVries	Pattye Ormsby	

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Ann Campbell	Joe Jaffe
Lisa Cannon (Chair)	David Pfaff
Elaine Moorin	Fran Shipman
Jim Schoenwetter	

WANT TO GIVE A DONATION?

Give a contribution including, in honor or in memoriam of a child, friend or family member.

As a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization, we are independent of the 20th Judicial Circuit Court and rely on contributions and grants from the community and businesses.

**YOUR SUPPORT WILL HELP US TO CONTINUE OUR WORK.
PLEASE MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:**

**CFCRB INC.
P O BOX 10746
NAPLES, FL 34104**

“You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving.”

— Amy Carmichael