

THE CITIZENS' REVIEW BOARD FOR CHILDREN

25 YEARS OF CHILD ADVOCACY THROUGH CITIZENS' CASE REVIEWS

In April 1980, Cecil County held the first citizens' review for Maryland's children in out-of-home placement. On November 13, 2005, the Citizens' Review Board for Children (CRBC) celebrated its 25th anniversary. The theme was "**Twenty-Five Years of Bringing Families Together.**" Three citizen volunteers from Cecil County were recognized for their twenty-five years of participating in citizen reviews. (See Program Book at www.dhr.state.md.us/crbc).

"Twenty-Five Years of Bringing Families Together"



Over 200 people gathered at Turf Valley Resort in celebration of the Citizens' Review Board for Children's (CRBC) 25th Anniversary.

Secretary McCabe of the Department of Human Resources presented a proclamation to State Board Chair Ms. Anderson-Burrs on behalf of Governor Ehrlich.

Thirty-three members who had volunteered with CRBC for at least 10 years received longevity awards.

Between 1980 and 2005, more than 2,000 volunteers conducted 175,000 case reviews for 40,000 children in out-of-home placement. As of June 30, 2005, CRBC had 250 volunteers serving on 52 boards across Maryland. Every jurisdiction has at least one review board; 20% of the boards are located in Baltimore City.

In October 2001, CRBC started conducting reviews for children under child protective services. Each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions has a panel of volunteers and agency staff that reviews a random sample of cases where there was a finding of indicated from an abuse or neglect investigation. The review is focused on system level observations and recommendations and not on advocating for the individual case. Since the program's inception, 257 reviews have been completed statewide.

OVERVIEW OF 2005 ANNUAL REPORT

As required by § 5-539(b) (5), CRBC's 2005 Annual Report summarizes the status of Maryland's child welfare system. This is CRBC's first annual report that provides a summary of both child protection and out-of-home placement. The 2005 Annual Report has two major goals.

1. To present a data-driven report on Maryland's child welfare system. Data from FY01, FY04, and FY05 are presented to show a short-term and a longer-term comparison of selected child welfare data.

Data are obtained from CRBC's database including case review findings and recommendations, The Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Foster and Adoptive Child Tracking System (FACTS), and DHR's Client Information System (CIS).

2. To promote improvement in Maryland's child welfare system through recommendations established by the Citizen's Legislative Action Committee (CLAC), which is comprised of CRBC volunteers. Each year CLAC develops legislative priorities based on an analysis of child welfare and case review data. CLAC developed five priorities for FY 2006. These priorities are listed below. Notes in blue provide the location of data and information within this report that support these priorities.

- **Improve Accountability for Child Welfare Services.**

The DHR is responding to the Report of the Task Force on Child Welfare Accountability (HB 1197 – Child Welfare Accountability Act of 2005 – passed the House but not the Senate in the 2005 session).¹ The DHR is also responding to the federal Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), which mandated improvement in the quality assurance system. DHR is negotiating with CRBC about aspects of the new accountability system, which will include:

- 1) Specifying and measuring the desired results for children and families served;
- 2) Developing an in-depth case review methodology that incorporates selected federal outcome measures;
- 3) Establishing a structured process for assessing client, stakeholder, and employee perspectives; and
- 4) Creating a method for combining the above three elements into a comprehensive periodic assessment of the State and of every local jurisdiction and implementing needed improvements.

Status report

An update on the status of these activities will be on CRBC's website by September 2006.

- ***Continue to Implement the Child Welfare Workforce Act of 1998.***

In the past year, the DHR has increased frontline staff from approximately 1,750 to over 1,900, allowing considerable progress toward the long-term goal of meeting caseload standards established by the Child Welfare League of America (CWLA). The caseload standard for out-of-home placement is 15:1. Various standards are used for the different aspects of child protection and family services.

Training, policy dissemination, and quality of supervision should be priorities for the DHR and must focus on child protection, permanency, placement reform, substance abuse treatment, and accountability. A training academy is being established with \$1.7 million in State and federal funds.

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Issues affecting permanency and placement reform have moved into an even dire posture requiring a critical evaluation of the State's policies, procedures, funding, and training priorities. There is an increase in the 12-18 year old population with a child protection investigation (Exhibit IV) and those entering out-of-home placement (Exhibit VII). This age group has traditionally been difficult to achieve permanency and typically aged out of the child welfare system. Evaluative questions on best practices for this population must be considered. Proposed questions are provided in the summary of this report.

- **Move funds toward the early intervention/prevention end of the child welfare service spectrum.**

Costs to keep children in placements have been rising by nearly \$30 million per year for the past three years, while other child welfare and family services have lost funding. Thirty-three percent of children in out-of-home placement on June 30, 2005 were with foster families (average cost: \$600 per month) and 21% of children were in group care or residential treatment (average cost: \$5,000 - \$8,000 per month). Investing in family support, family preservation, substance abuse treatment, reunification, kinship care, and family foster care could eliminate as much as half of the annual increase.

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Early intervention and prevention not only affect child welfare cost, but also the length of stay in out-of-home placement and the re-entry rate as discussed on pages 18-19.

- **Improve permanency outcomes for children in out-of-home placement.**

Maryland scored 27% on the federal Child and Family Services Review in the area entitled, "Children have permanency and stability in their living situation," compared with the federal expectation of 90%. In addition to the reforms listed above (accountability, workforce and earlier intervention), Maryland needs far-reaching reform of courts: more judges, masters, and attorneys; a one-family, one-judge policy; and strict policy and accountability measures to avoid delays in considering permanency issues.

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Exhibit XII shows the impact of program and legal policies, practices, and staffing on the adoption process.

- **Adopt policies and practices that protect children from abuse and neglect.**

The legal definition of abuse should be strengthened. The State continues to tolerate disregard and defiance of the statute requiring reporting of abuse and neglect. We need to assure that persons with certain criminal histories cannot be hired to work with children. Workforce and accountability reforms should set the stage for more thorough investigations of abuse and neglect.

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Pages 9-13 have results of CRBC's child protection reviews.

PROFILE OF MARYLAND'S CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

The two major components of Maryland's child welfare system are child protective services and out-of-home placement.

"Child protective services is a specialized social service for children who are believed to be neglected or abused, and to their parents or other adults having permanent or temporary care, custody, or parental responsibility, or to household or family members, to decrease the risk of continuing physical, sexual or mental abuse or neglect. In instances where a child can be safely protected in his or her own home through the provision of services or other assistance to the child's family, such an alternative is preferable to foster care placement."²

Out-of-home placement is "the placement of a child into foster care, kinship care, group care, or residential treatment".³

A comparison of FY 01 to FY 05 shows the number of children in Maryland's welfare system decreased by 14% as shown in Exhibit I.

Exhibit I
Children in Maryland's Child Welfare System as of
June 30th for FY 2001, 2004 and 2005

	FY01 ⁴	FY04 ⁵	FY05 ⁶	% change from FY 01 and FY 05
Child protection	2,333	1836	2,128 ⁷	-9%
Out-of-home placement	12,432	10,738	10,592	-15%
Child welfare system	14,765	12,574	12,720	-14%

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

When Child Protective Services receives a complaint regarding alleged child abuse or neglect, a screener interviews the reporter to determine if the case should be investigated or screened out (not investigated). If investigated, one of three findings will be assigned:

- ruled out - finding that abuse and/or neglect did not occur;
- unsubstantiated - finding that there is an insufficient amount of evidence to support a finding of either indicated or ruled out; or
- Indicated - finding that there is credible evidence that has not been satisfactorily refuted that abuse, neglect, or sexual abuse did occur.

²www.dhr.state.md.us/ssa Child Protective Services' home page

³ Family Law Article Section 5-501(m)

⁴ Social Services Administration Monthly Management Report, December 2001, pages 11 and 13

⁵ Social Services Administration Monthly Management Report, August 2004, pages 11 and 13

⁶ Social Services Administration Monthly Management Report, August 2005, pages 11 and 13

⁷ This includes Level I and IFS, level II, Level III, and Continuing Service

Exhibit II displays the number of investigations and percentage of cases with a finding of indicated for Maryland's twenty-four jurisdictions.

**Exhibit II
CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS FOR FY01, FY04, AND FY05**

Jurisdiction	FY 01		FY 04		FY 05	
	# of Investigations	% Indicated	# of Investigations	% Indicated	# of Investigations	% Indicated
Allegany	677	28%	762	26%	663	24%
Anne Arundel	2,828	20%	2854	18%	2,965	17%
Baltimore County	2,944	24%	3051	22%	3,056	22%
Calvert	444	18%	422	15%	406	13%
Caroline	292	17%	320	26%	344	13%
Carroll	700	21%	896	19%	893	16%
Cecil	696	20%	643	22%	711	17%
Charles	755	19%	738	19%	700	16%
Dorchester	327	9%	279	16%	271	17%
Frederick	1,526	17%	1,222	28%	1,553	20%
Garrett	167	24%	201	12%	180	16%
Harford	1,284	17%	1,149	16%	1,153	16%
Howard	965	28%	1,110	14%	1,178	15%
Kent	139	13%	106	9%	113	12%
Montgomery	2,844	19%	2,590	15%	2,989	14%
Prince George's	3,278	32%	3,353	18%	3,440	16%
Queen Anne's	350	12%	236	9%	258	22%
St. Mary's	556	17%	344	17%	401	14%
Somerset	310	18%	336	19%	304	18%
Talbot	241	14%	251	20%	255	18%
Washington	1,580	22%	1,683	25%	1,719	24%
Wicomico	954	21%	1,050	22%	962	19%
Worcester	486	23%	489	20%	479	20%
Baltimore City	7,205	36%	6,152	27%	6,518	28%
Statewide	31,548	25%	30,237	21%	31,501	20%

Source: Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration

A comparison of FY 01 to FY05 shows:

- FY 01 had 47 more investigations than FY 05;
- FY 01 had a finding of indicated for 1, 587 more investigations than FY 05. Seventy-nine percent of the FY 05 decline was contributed by Baltimore City with 769 (48%) fewer cases and Prince George's County with 499 (31%) fewer cases;
- Washington, Frederick, and Talbot counties showed an increase in the number of investigations and in the number of cases with a finding of indicated; and

- Kent, Calvert, St. Mary's, and Howard, counties had indicated rates in the range of 12% – 15%.

Statewide, neglect was the primary type of investigation for the three fiscal years. The number of investigations for neglect is increasing and the number of physical abuse investigations is decreasing, as shown in Exhibit III.

**Exhibit III
STATEWIDE CHILD PROTECTION INVESTIGATIONS
BY TYPE OF ABUSE for FY01, FY04, and FY05⁸**

	FY 01		FY 04		FY 05	
	# of Investigations	% of total FY investigations	# of Investigations	% of total FY investigations	# of Investigations	% of total FY investigations
Neglect	13,366	42%	13,323	44%	14,413	46%
Physical Abuse	11, 864	38%	11,064	37%	10,751	34%
Sexual Abuse	3,961	13%	3,596	12%	3,819	12%
Referred to Agency	2,229	7%	2,140	7%	2,390	8
State-wide	31,548		30,237		31,501	

Source: Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration

Jurisdictions vary in their similarity to the statewide data. During FY05, the percentage of investigations for:

- neglect ranged from 30% (Prince George's) to 63% (Dorchester and Washington counties);
- physical abuse ranged from 20% (Dorchester County) to 45% (Baltimore County); and.
- Sexual abuse ranged from 7% (Somerset County) to 17% (Frederick County).

Exhibit IV shows characteristics of children who had a child protection investigation during FY 01, FY 04, and FY05.

⁸ www.dhr.state.md.us/ssa Child Protective Services, Statistical Data

Exhibit IV
Characteristics of Children with an Investigation during FY01, FY04, FY05

Characteristics	FY 2001	FY 2004	FY 2005	% Difference between FY 01 and FY05
# of Investigations	29,037	28,377	30,156	4%
% Male	48%	49%	49%	3%
% Female	50%	49%	49%	3%
% Unknown Gender	1%	1%	2%	
% African-American	54%	48%	49%	-6%
% White	36%	39%	37%	5%
% Hispanic	4%	5%	5%	50%
% Under 5 Years of Age (At Investigation)	26%	28%	28%	10%
% Between 5-11 Years of Age	41%	38%	37%	-8%
% Between 12-18 Years of Age	27%	29%	30%	18%
% Age Unknown	6%	5%	5%	

Source: Maryland Department of Human Resources, Social Services Administration

A comparison of FY01 child protection investigations to FY05 shows:

- There were 1,119 more investigations conducted in FY01;
- The twelve –eighteen age group had 1,365 fewer child protection investigations in FY01 than in FY05 (18% increase);
- The number of child protection investigations for children under five years of age increased by 738 cases;
- The number of investigations for children between the ages of five and eleven decreased by 919 cases (-8%);
- The number of child protection investigation for the Hispanic population increased by 50% from 1,063 in FY01 to 1,595 in FY05;
- The number of child protection investigations for White children increased by 5% with 10,546 investigations in FY01 and 11,058 investigations in FY05; and
- Investigations for African-American children decreased 6% with 15,793 in FY01, and 14,291 investigations in FY05.

“Twenty-Five years of Bringing Families Together”



The “Champion for Children Award” is presented to CRBC’s partners who have a particularly beneficial effect on children and families or upon improving the child welfare system. Thirty child welfare partners received this award, including Stephen Berry (second from left), Manager for In-Home Services, Department of Human Resources

The award is presented by (left to right): Ted Kirk (Montgomery County), Nettie Anderson-Burrs, and Charlie Cooper, CRBC Administrator.

Baltimore City Call Center Report

In March 2005, the House Appropriations Committee requested CRBC, in consultation with Department of Human Resources and the Baltimore City Health Department, to evaluate the Baltimore City Child Protective Services Call Center’s responses to reports of alleged child maltreatment. The report was completed on September 30, 2005.⁹

The Baltimore City Department of Social Services’ (BCDSS) Call Center operates from two locations: 1900 Howard Street during business hours and 313 North Gay Street on nights, weekends, and holidays. The North Gay Street center is referred to as the Extended Hours Unit (EHU).

A committee of Baltimore City child protection panel members conducted the study. The findings and recommendations were based on reports received by the Call Center during July 2005. The Committee reviewed records, interviewed and observed screeners taking reports, and analyzed surveys sent to people who reported the alleged child maltreatment. The Committee also interviewed Call Center Staff.

During July 2005, the Call Center received 896 reports, of which approximately 600 (67%) were CPS reports. About one-third of reports received by CPS were for concerns that should be addressed by other agencies such as the Department of Juvenile Services, Adult Services, and local departments of social services in other jurisdictions.

The September 30th report summarized major strengths of the Baltimore City Call Center.

“The Call Center provides a valuable service. It is far superior to the system that exists in most of the counties in which a staff member is “on call” to respond to emergencies that are brought to their attention by law enforcement. Screeners are courteous and knowledgeable about their jobs, exerting a high level of effort to do the job correctly. The vast majority of reporters who responded to the user survey

⁹ (www.dhr.state.md.us/crbc)

were satisfied with the service provided. Especially in the EHU, there is a high level of teamwork that facilitates information retrieval, child protection, and getting families referred to the proper service resource.”

The Committee assessed screening decisions as 97% accurate, and many cases that were not investigated were referred appropriately.

The Committee recommended that the Call Center have a statewide function.

“The screening function could be performed more efficiently and more expertly on a statewide basis. The inter-jurisdiction issues would disappear, and the counties would gain coverage that is sorely lacking. Expertise and policy adherence could be improved. The Call Center function should be assumed by the Social Services Administration and operated on a statewide basis for both Child and Adult Protective Services. Consideration might even be given to including additional agencies, such as DJS, with appropriate interagency sharing of budgetary and staffing burdens. This type of collaboration could improve services to children and other vulnerable populations. Through an integrated telephone network, it would be possible for the centralized screeners to refer calls promptly and efficiently to the appropriate local authorities. Local departments of social services would continue to be responsible for response on a 24-hour-a-day basis.”

“Twenty-Five years of Bringing Families Together”



Sheila Jessup (second from left) received the Outstanding Service Plaque. Ms. Jessup, Chair of the Baltimore City Panel, was acknowledged for her role in the development of the Baltimore City Call Center report.

The Outstanding Service Plaque is awarded to those board and panel member who achieve the highest level of consistent, long-term leadership, exertion of effort above and beyond attendance at regularly scheduled meetings, and impact to improve child welfare programs. Twelve members received this award.

Findings from the Child Protection Panels

Case reviews and system reviews are the two primary methods the panels use to assess the local child protection system. From these activities the panels develop recommendations and strategies for system level improvement.

Case reviews provide useful information about how evidence and decision-making are documented, what services were provided, and how agencies work together for families and children. Case review is not a tool for improving case management for the individual case being reviewed. Each panel has a Case Review Committee composed of at least 3 members trained to conduct the reviews.

Statewide, the number of case reviews has increased each year with a 44% increase between FY 03 and FY 05.

**Table V
Number of Child Protection Reviews Completed by Panels**

	FY 03	FY 04	FY05
	# of reviews	# of reviews	# of reviews
Allegany	5	5	5
Anne Arundel	4	2	11
Baltimore County	1	4	4
Calvert	1	0	3
Caroline	0	0	0
Carroll	0	2	0
Cecil	2	1	0
Charles	3	6	3
Dorchester	1	0	1
Frederick	1	3	0
Garrett	3	3	2
Harford	3	1	3
Howard	0	4	3
Kent	0	0	0
Montgomery	0	1	4
Prince George's	13	10	8
Queen Anne's	1	3	4
St. Mary's	2	1	2
Somerset	2	4	5
Talbot	3	0	0
Washington	3	7	9
Wicomico	5	0	0
Worcester	4	5	9
Baltimore City	7	10	16
Statewide	64	76	92

Source: CRBC information system

The panels may have conducted more reviews than shown. A review is not counted until CRBC receives the evaluation form that the Committee records its findings. Over the last three fiscal years, every jurisdiction has completed at least one review with the exception of Caroline and Kent counties.

The Case Review Committees evaluate five functions of child protection systems:

- Reporting child abuse and neglect;
- Receiving and screening child abuse and neglect allegations;

- Investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect allegations, including gathering information, assessing children’s safety, assessing risk of future maltreatment, and making findings of whether abuse or neglect occurred as alleged;
- Responding to child abuse and neglect, including intra-agency teamwork (“staffings”), multi-disciplinary consultation, service planning and provision, placement, appeals, and several court-related functions; and
- Supervision and administration.

Each function has criteria to evaluate effectiveness. For any given child protection function, an agency is considered to have performed effectively if it has taken necessary measures to satisfy the criteria listed on the case review evaluation form and any other necessary measures to protect children. The reviewers may decide which criteria under each function are applicable in a given case. The majority vote is checked for each case function¹⁰. Table VI provides the findings for reviews conducted in FY 03, (the first full fiscal year of conducting reviews), FY04, and FY05.

**Table VI
Summary of Panels Findings**

	FY 03		FY 04		FY 05	
	# Applicable	% Rated Effective	# Applicable	% Rated Effective	# Applicable	% Rated Effective
Reporting function considers how well agencies, professionals, and other citizens fulfilled mandated reporting responsibilities or how well agencies have promoted community awareness of child abuse and neglect laws.	64	91%	72	93%	90	94%
Receiving and Screening reports includes whether reporting is accessible to agencies and the public, whether appropriate information is assembled and considered to determine if and when an investigation should begin.	64	83%	71	86%	90	87%
Information Gathering – includes contacting and questioning individuals, reviewing prior history, and assembling documents.	63	68%	72	78%	88	64%
Safety Assessment – includes the process of determining whether a child is safe, which must be completed whenever circumstances change sufficiently to create a significant new possibility of imminent maltreatment.	63	59%	71	73%	87	82%

¹⁰ For a full report on the criteria used for evaluating functions, go to CRBC’s website and select Child protection Annual Report 200

	FY 03		FY 04		FY 05	
Risk Assessment – includes estimating the possible harm to the child in the future due to exposure to various risk factors as determined by SSA.	64	66%	72	75%	87	70%
Finding/disposition – includes determining if maltreatment occurred as described in the report(s) received.	63	89%	71	87%	88	93%
Supervision and administration – includes whether agencies have sufficient resources and whether they are organized and managed to control an effective child protection process.	63	62%	70	77%	85	81%
Service planning – includes whether service planning uses best practices and addresses the factors identified in assessments and whether agencies work well together.	60	58%	61	67%	73	71%
Staffing – includes whether intra-agency written and oral communication is used, as needed, among team members and at key transition points in the service process so that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agency personnel	46	59%	52	63%	65	74%
Multi-disciplinary team – includes whether inter-agency and interdisciplinary communication is used at key decision points so that multiple perspectives are included in decision-making, information is not lost, and families are not subject to contradictory statements or directives from different agencies.	34	50%	38	50%	26	62%
Placement – includes whether children were removed from their families when and only when necessary for their protection and whether the placement process properly protects their safety.	25	60%	35	63%	44	80%
CINA/CINS – includes whether court protection for children is sought when appropriate, whether the court process operates as intended, and whether it protects children.	17	65%	26	69%	35	94%

Source: CRBC Information System

Areas noted as strengths with at least an 80% effectiveness rating during each fiscal years

- Reporting function
- Receiving and screening function
- Finding and disposition function

The sampling method may bias these results as all cases were reported, accepted and found “indicated.” These results may change dramatically if panels begin to review “unsubstantiated”, “ruled out” or “screened out” cases. The findings from the Case Review Committee show that the local departments of social services improved on this function.

Areas with consistent improvement and a rating of at least 80% for FY 05

- Safety assessment
- Supervision and administration
- Placement
- CINA/CINS

Areas that have not achieved at least an average of an 80% rating for any fiscal year

- Information gathering
Major weaknesses for this function relate to the coordination of services based low ratings for the following criteria:
 - Appropriate coordination with other agencies; and
 - Process was coordinated in the child/family’s best interests
- Risk Assessment
Two weak areas under this function were:
 - Prior maltreatment history considered in assessing risk; and
 - Risk assessment evaluated future maltreatment
- Service planning
A major weaknesses cited in this area was the lack of coordination with all providers.
- Staffing
Weaknesses under this function included staffings were not:
 - documented in the case record;
 - used to determine safety, risk, or findings; nor
 - used for service planning and coordination
- Multi-disciplinary Teams
Case Review Committees continue to cite that Multi-D teams were not used:
 - to determine safety, risk, or findings; nor
 - for service planning and coordination.

OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

Maryland had 562 (13%) fewer out-of-placement entries during FY05 as compared to FY01. The characteristics of the population showed varying degrees of change as shown in Exhibit VII.

Exhibit VII
Characteristics of Children Entering Placement during FY 01, FY 04, and FY 05

Characteristics	2001	2004	2005	Relative Rate of Change between FY 01 and FY 05
# of entries	4,335	3,876	3,773	-13%
% Male	50%	50%	52%	-9%
% Female	50%	50%	48%	-16%
% African-American	68%	64%	74%	-5%
% White	28%	28%	21%	-35%
% Hispanic	1%	2%	1%	-13%
% under 5 years of age (at placement)	37%	38%	36%	-15%
% between 5-11 years of age	34%	29%	31%	-21%
% between 12-18 years of age	28%	33%	34%	+6%

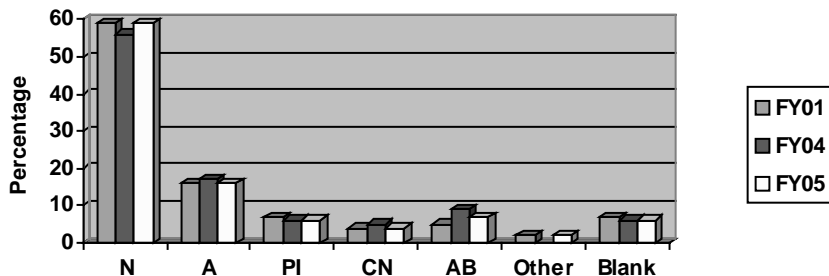
Source: CRBC's Information System

A comparison of FY01 entries with FY05 shows the:

- White youth had the largest decrease in entries for the two time periods; and
- Twelve to eighteen age group was the only category that showed an increase.

The entry reasons remain relatively stable. (Exhibit VIII).

Exhibit VIII
Primary Reasons Children Entered Care during FY 01, FY 04, and FY 05



Abbreviations

- N** – neglect
- A** – abuse including physical and sexual abuse
- PI** – parental illness
- CN** – child's special needs
Including behavior problems
- AB** – abandonment
- Other** – includes death or
Incarceration of parent or caregiver

During FY 05;

- Neglect comprised 46% of the child protection investigations (Exhibit III) and 59% of the entries into out-of-home placement; and
- Fifty-three percent of the FY 05 entries were from Baltimore City (Exhibit XIII).

Length Of Stay in Out-of-Home Placement for FY 04 and FY 05

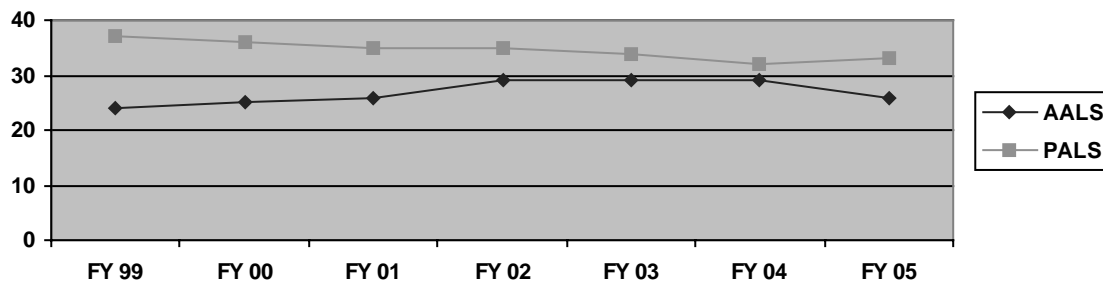
CRBC uses three methods to evaluate length of stay in out-of-home placement (for additional information on definitions and measurements see www.dhr.state.md.us/crbc).

Actual Average Length of Stay (AALS) - Measures how long children who left placement during a specified period had been in out-of-home placement. This method can provide an overly optimistic perspective if a large percentage of children exiting in a given year had short-term stays. This method does not consider children who are currently in care and may have been in care for a long period.

Projected Average Length of Stay (PALS) - Equals the average daily population during the reporting period divided by the number of exits during the reporting period. This method Include all children who were in out-of-placement for the reporting period and is less affected by children with short stays.

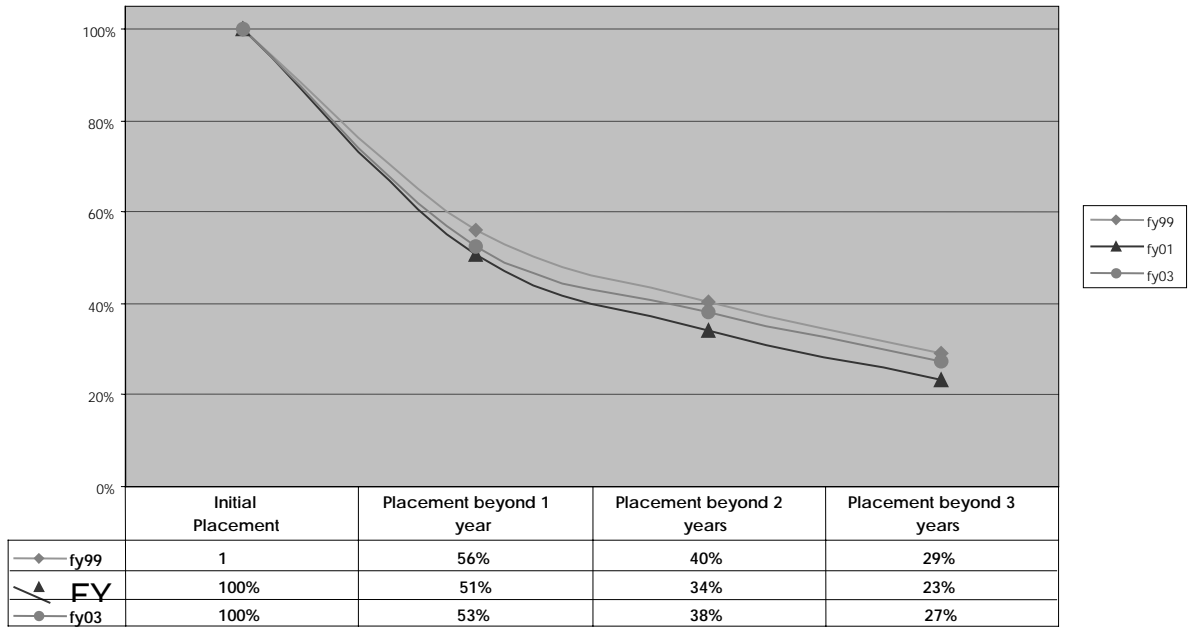
Exhibit IX shows the relationship between PALS and AALS over seven fiscal years. When the lines are close together, the child welfare system has become stable. The gap between PALS and AALS narrowed between 1999 and 2004. The gap widened in FY05 suggesting children had shorter lengths of stay.

Exhibit IX
Comparison of PALS and AALS for FY99 through FY05



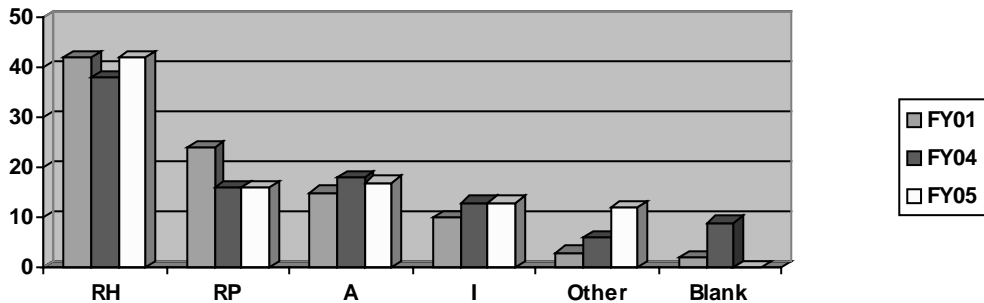
Cohort Analysis – A group of children who entered care during an interval are followed to see what percentage leave by specified times. Exhibit X shows that a child’s chances of leaving out-of-home placement drastically decline after the first year in care.

Exhibit X
Percentage of Children Remaining in OOHP After Specified Intervals



Returned home remains the major case closings reason, over 40% for the three reporting periods.

Exhibit XI
Case Closing Reasons for FY01, FY04, and FY05



One out of three children will exit placement within 6 months of entry. These children will have a higher likelihood of being reunited with family (parents or relatives) than children who had a longer length of stay.

Jointly, returned home, relative placement, and adoption, represented 82% of the case closings for FY01; 72% in FY04, and 74% in FY05. If the trend of older children entering out-of-home placement continues, the ability to have at least 70% of the cases closed for the three desired permanency outcomes may not be achievable since historically older children have been harder to place in permanent homes.

Adoption Process

On average, a child will be in out-of-home placement over a year before a plan of adoption is established. Baltimore City consistently takes about three years. The legal process will take another year. Based on data from children adopted in FY01, FY04, and FY05, the average time frame for the adoption process to conclude is 3.1 years in small counties, 3.4 years in larger counties, and 5.3 years in Baltimore City

Exhibit XII
Average Number of Months to Complete Adoption Process
for FY 01, FY04, and FY05 Exits

	Baltimore City			Baltimore County Montgomery County Prince George's County			Other Counties		
	2001	2004	2005	2001	2004	2005	2001	2004	2005
Establish plan of adoption	33	36	35	19	23	14	20	18	16
File TPR	3	5	4	5	3	7	6	5	4
Obtain TPR	13	14	14	8	11	17	10	14	9
Final Adoption (months)	60	66	68	42	41	40	38	38	37
Final Adoption (years)	5	5.5	5.7	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1
	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years	years

Source: CRBC information system

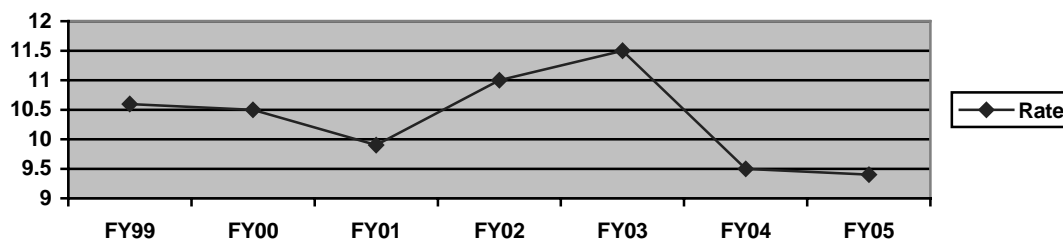
CRBC has cited in earlier annual reports that the causes of this unfortunate phenomenon include 1) general problems with permanency planning; 2) rising caseloads; and 3) specific reductions in programs and contracts that are intended to recruit, screen, train, and approve adoptive families. DHR has hired more caseworkers to reduce caseloads. DHR has also implemented an intensive recruitment plan for foster and adoptive homes.

The need for more masters and judges to expedite the legal process is critical to reducing a child's time spent waiting for permanency.

Re-entry into out-of-home placement

CRBC tracks the percentage of children who re-enter placement within one year of leaving placement in order to give a perspective on the appropriateness of permanent placements and the effectiveness of after-care services

Exhibit XIII
Re-entry Rate into Out-of-Home Placement for FY99 – FY05



The FY05 re-entry rate is the lowest recorded on Exhibit XIII after peaking at 11.5 in FY03.

Maryland's Total Out-of-Home Placement Population

Data on all children in out-of-home placement on the last day of the fiscal year (June 30th) for 2001, 2004 and 2005 are shown in Exhibit XIV.

Exhibit XIV
Profile of Maryland's Out-of-Home Population for FY 01, FY 04, and FY 05

Characteristics	2001	2004	2005	Rel. Rate of Change
# of children	12,432	10738	10,592	-15%
% Male	52%	52%	52%	
% Female	48%	48%	48%	
% African-American	76%	76%	74%	-17%
% White	20%	20%	21%	-11%
% Hispanic	1%	1%	1%	-15%
% under 5 years of age (end of FY)	39%	18%	16%	
% between 5-11 years of age	40%	27%	28%	-40%
% between 12-18 years of age	20%	42%	42%	79%
% over 18 years of age		12%	13%	

Source: CRBC Information System

The Exhibit suggests an:

- Overall trend towards a smaller population since 1997 continues; and.
- Increase in older population;

A summary of case-flow patterns for each jurisdiction is shown below.

**Exhibit XV
Out-of Home Placement Case Flow by Jurisdiction for FY04 and FY05**

Jurisdiction	# of Cases in Care on June 30, 2004	# of Cases Entered Placement During FY05	# of Cases Left Placement During FY05	# of Cases in Care on June 30, 2005	Projected Average Length of Stay (months)	Actual Average Length of Stay (months)
Allegany	98	58	43	113	29	34
Anne Arundel	253	123	107	269	29	25
Baltimore County	677	285	273	689	30	22
Calvert	62	25	25	62	30	19
Caroline	31	26	14	43	32	20
Carroll	50	25	24	51	25	37
Cecil	65	69	62	72	13	23
Charles	128	36	42	122	36	39
Dorchester	27	16	10	33	36	30
Frederick	216	69	97	188	25	23
Garrett	43	30	34	39	14	27
Harford	210	108	131	187	18	23
Howard	114	63	56	121	25	20
Kent	15	4	2	17	96	30
Montgomery	501	298	276	523	22	24
Prince George's	648	180	234	594	32	36
Queen Anne's	19	12	8	23	32	13
St. Mary's	70	40	28	82	33	36
Somerset	62	24	29	57	25	24
Talbot	33	21	14	40	31	17
Washington	253	220	196	277	16	13
Wicomico	142	39	52	129	31	32
Worcester	45	10	13	42	40	19
Baltimore City	6842	1999	2,086	6755	39	36
Statewide	10604	3780	3,856	10528	33	26

Source: CRBC/CIS

Summary Of Findings From Board Members

Case reviews for children in out of home placement are proactive and intended to provide oversight and advocacy at the individual case level. Child protection reviews are intended to be reflective.

The following findings represent the 5909 citizen reviews that were conducted during FY 05 and not the status of all children in Maryland's out-of-home system. In rare instances, a child may have a citizen review more than once in a year.¹¹

Exhibit XVI Findings and Recommendations made during the Citizen Review Process

Votes Taken during the Citizen Review Process	FY 05 Results								
<p>Waiver of reunification services is the denial of time-limited services to parents or guardians to assist in returning the children home. The boards must decide if they agree with LDSS' decision to pursue or not to pursue a waiver of reunification services against the mother, father, or both. Generally this finding is made at the first review.</p>	<p>Boards found 55 (less than 1%) instances in which the waiver was not used and the Boards believed it should have been applied.</p>								
<p>Termination of parental rights results from court action terminating parents' legal rights and responsibilities and awarding guardianship to LDSS or a child placement agency. Eighty-one percent (81%) or 4,801 reviews qualified for consideration of TPR. If the federal requirements are applicable, the boards may nevertheless find that there is a compelling reason not to pursue TPR such as the child is with relatives who do not want to adopt, parents are making progress, or the child is a teenager and does not want to be adopted.</p>	<p><i>Boards made these recommendations:</i></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Don't file for TPR</i></td> <td><i>76%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>File TPR petition</i></td> <td><i>16%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Grant filed petition</i></td> <td><i>8%</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td><i>Deny petition</i></td> <td><i>0.15%</i></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Don't file for TPR</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>File TPR petition</i>	<i>16%</i>	<i>Grant filed petition</i>	<i>8%</i>	<i>Deny petition</i>	<i>0.15%</i>
<i>Don't file for TPR</i>	<i>76%</i>								
<i>File TPR petition</i>	<i>16%</i>								
<i>Grant filed petition</i>	<i>8%</i>								
<i>Deny petition</i>	<i>0.15%</i>								
<p>A permanency plan specifies when and with whom the child shall live and the proposed legal relationship between the child and the caregiver(s). Two votes are taken regarding the permanency plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The concurrence rate is the percentage of times the reviewers agree with the permanency plan. ▪ A vote for adequate progress indicates that the responsible agencies acted in a reasonable and timely fashion to promote permanent placement. 	<p>See Exhibit XVI</p>								
<p>The Boards must consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ the safety of the child while living in the out-of-home placement. This includes whether all applicable safety assessments and child protection protocols have been used, such as whether DSS has completed an inventory of people living in the home. ▪ whether there are indicators of risk may include, but are not limited to, parental visits that may subject the child to risk, domestic violence, and/or a household member with a history of violence, child abuse, or child neglect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ One or more safety protocols were not used in approximately 2% of the reviews. ▪ Indicators of risk were found in 4% of the reviews 								
<p>The board makes a finding about placement as to whether the current living arrangement and any planned changes of placement short of permanent placement are appropriate for the child.</p>	<p>Boards found placements inappropriate in less than 1% of reviews.</p>								

¹¹ A summary of the out-of-home placement review process is available on CRBC's website.

Exhibit XVII
Summary of Permanency Plans by Concurrence Rates and Adequacy of Progress
For Fiscal Years 2004 and 2005

	July 1, 2003 – June 30, 2004				July 1, 2004 – June 30, 2005			
	# of Plans & % of Total		Concurrence Rate	Progress Adequate	# of Plans & % of Total		Concurrence Rate	Progress Adequate
	#	%			#	%		
Return Home	1952	33%	82%	89%	2144	36%	84%	90%
Relative Placement	1117	19%	90%	90%	1119	19%	89%	88%
Adoption	1187	20%	98%	83%	1052	18%	99%	88%
Independent Living	680	12%	99%	95%	723	12%	99%	95%
Long-term Foster Care	823	14%	97%	94%	737	12%	99%	97%
Permanent Foster Care	101	2%	98%	99%	96	2%	100%	100%
Guardianship	3	0%	100%	100%	2	0%	100%	100%
Missing Information	0				36			
	5863				5909			

Source: CRBC's Information System

Between FY 04 and FY 05:

- The percentage of cases reviewed with a plan of return home increased and percentage of plans for adoption decreased;
- For both return home and adoption, the board concurred more and found more cases with adequate progress;
- Relative placement was the only category where both the percentage of cases that where the board concurred with the plan and the progress towards achieving the plan declined between the two fiscal years; and
- Return home and independent living were the only plans where the numbers increased between the two fiscal years.

Board members continue to cite the following as barriers to progress:

- high caseloads
- Lack of housing
- Lack of group or residential treatment placement facilities was a frequent barrier in the counties, especially the smaller ones

The local department of social services' response to CRBC's votes

Regulations require local departments to respond in writing to reach report, indicating whether they accept the board's recommendation.

Exhibit XIII shows:

- Columns 2 - 8 show how many times the board disagreed with the specific vote;
- Column 9 shows the total times the board disagreed in a jurisdiction;
- Column 10 shows the cumulative value of the disagreements for each jurisdiction. The total number of disagreements will be larger than the number of cases since a case may have multiple disagreements.
- Column 11 shows the total number of reviews that were conducted in the jurisdiction.
- Column 12 shows the percentage of the total reviews that had at least one disagreement. These cases comprise the "advocacy caseload". In these instances a person higher than a supervisor must respond in writing to the boards recommendations.
- Column 13 shows the percentage of advocacy cases that were returned from the local departments; and
- Column 14 shows the percentage of returned advocacy cases where the local department of social services agreed with CRBC's recommendations.

Overall, problems requiring corrective action were found in 1,549 of 5901 reviews conducted, a rate of 26%, with a range from 2% (St. Mary's) to 42% (Anne Arundel County).

For FY 01, FY04, and FY05, disagreement with TPR dominated the non-concurrences with 38% of the disagreements in FY 01, 29% in FY 04, and 34% in FY 05. The recent surge may be due to the increase in teens for which TPR applies but they do not want to be adopted, are living with relatives, or are receiving APPLA services.) Adequacy of progress is the next highest category of non-concurrences followed by non-concurrences with the permanency plan.

Significant improvements have been in the local departments response to the advocacy caseload. Seventy-six percent of the recommendations were returned in FY 05, 56%, in FY04.

Of the 76% of reports that were returned to CRBC, the local departments agreed with the boards' recommendations 80% of the time with a range of 53% for Howard County to 100% for twelve counties – Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Garrett, St. Mary's, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester.

**Exhibit XI
Corrective Action Case Review Recommendations and Disposition by County**

Columns	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
Jurisdiction	Waiver of Reunific'n	TPR	Non-concur with Perm Plan	Permanency Progress	Safety Protocols	Risk Indicated	Placement Plan	# of Disagreements	# of advocacy cases	Total Reviews	% of total reviews with at least one disagreement	DSS Return Rate	DSS rate of Agreement on returned reports
Allegany	1	11	7	17	0	3	0	39	27	80	34%	52%	100%
Anne Arundel	3	39	47	19	5	9	5	127	72	171	42%	94%	59%
Baltimore	3	45	30	19	0	9	0	106	74	417	18%	95%	67%
Calvert	0	9	3	0	0	1	0	13	13	49	27%	69%	100%
Caroline	0	1	2	0	1	0	0	4	3	30	10%	100%	100%
Carroll	0	0	2	0	0	1	0	3	3	38	8%	67%	100%
Cecil	0	10	3	3	0	4	1	21	16	59	27%	81%	100%
Charles	0	19	10	7	0	3	1	40	29	115	25%	55%	100%
Dorchester	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	4	4	24	17%	100%	100%
Frederick	0	15	16	6	0	2	0	39	33	164	20%	67%	86%
Garrett	0	6	1	3	0	1	0	11	9	31	29%	22%	100%
Harford	0	14	10	5	0	7	0	36	32	195	16%	94%	90%
Howard	1	13	7	1	0	3	0	25	18	61	30%	94%	53%
Kent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0%	NA	NA%
Montgomery	1	35	33	11	4	10	1	95	78	505	15%	90%	90%
Pr. George's	4	7	4	8	10	15	5	53	43	512	8%	77%	94%
Queen Anne's	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	14	14%	100%	50%
Saint Mary's	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	56	2%	100%	100%
Somerset	0	2	1	7	0	7	0	17	16	54	30%	100%	100%
Talbot	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	24	8%	100%	100%
Washington	2	19	9	26	0	5	0	61	42	196	21%	76%	72%
Wicomico	0	5	4	8	0	12	1	30	23	144	16%	83%	95%
Worcester	0	7	2	3	0	7	0	19	19	67	28%	100%	100%
Baltimore City	40	521	302	374	111	145	32	1525	990	2881	34%	72%	79%
State	55	783	494	517	131	247	46	2273	1549	5901	26%	76%	80%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Answers to the following questions may assist in improving outcomes for older children in out-of-home placement.

1. What outcomes are measured for children who age out of the child welfare system?
2. Are there differences in expected outcomes for children who age out of the system and children who achieve permanency through reunification, relative placement, or adoption?
3. Are older children entering care having the same expected outcomes as children who came into care at a younger age?
4. What is the impact of length of stay on well-being outcomes?
5. Are there joint service plans for children co-committed to the Department of Juvenile Services and the Department of Social Services?

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