

## EXHIBIT D



### Division of Children and Family Services

Mischa Martin, Director  
P.O. Box 1437, Slot S560 · Little Rock, AR 72203-1437  
501-682-8772 · Fax: 501-682-6968 · TDD: 501-682-1442



July 25, 2016

The Honorable George B. McGill, Chair  
House Committee on Aging, Children,  
and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
315 State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

The Honorable Stephanie Flowers, Chair  
Senate Committee on Children  
and Youth  
Arkansas Legislative Council  
315 State Capitol Building  
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201

Dear Representative McGill and Senator Flowers:

Act 906 of 2001 mandates that the Division of Children and Family Services conduct an annual evaluation of family preservation services. Attached is the family preservation services report for State Fiscal Year 2016.

Forty copies are attached for your convenience.

Should you have questions regarding the enclosed materials, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mischa Martin".

Mischa Martin  
Director

MM: fs

cc: Cindy Gillespie, Director, Department of Human Services

Attachments (40)

**Arkansas  
Department  
of Human  
Services**



*Division of  
Children and  
Family  
Services*

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## **Summary of Family Preservation Services for SFY 2016**

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**Produced for:**  
*Arkansas Department of Human Services  
Division of Children and Family Services*

**Produced by:**  
*Hornby Zeller Associates, Inc.*

**June 2016**

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## BACKGROUND

Act 906 of the 2001 session of the Arkansas legislature expanded the definition of “family preservation services” to include “services for children and families that are designed to help families at risk or in crisis.” The Act specified five general types of family preservation services, including:

- 1) services designed to prevent the removal of children from their homes,
- 2) services designed to facilitate the reunification of families with children who have been removed from their homes,
- 3) services designed to help a child attain a safe and appropriate permanent living arrangement,
- 4) services to provide temporary relief for parents and other caregivers, and
- 5) services designed to improve parenting skills and other skills necessary to maintain a safe and stable family.

These five broad service types encompass virtually all the activities performed by Arkansas’s Division of Children and Family Services’ (DCFS) caseworkers in their work with families and children. In this sense, any family for whom DCFS has opened a case can be said to be in need of family preservation services.

By law DCFS must conduct an annual evaluation of the program’s effectiveness. Previous evaluations have attempted to measure the program’s effectiveness by comparing the outcomes for children and families receiving family preservation services with a comparable group who do not. The broadness of the definition has, however, made that effort increasingly problematic. This report will therefore focus on whether or not families received the specific assistance or services that their unique circumstances warranted and whether receipt of the needed services helped the families to achieve positive outcomes.

A combination of qualitative data, which was collected during the Division’s state fiscal year (SFY) 2015 Quality Services Peer Review (QSPR) process, and administrative data, which provides measurement of families’ outcomes, is used to answer three questions.

- 1) To what extent do the children and families who are involved with DCFS have a need for services, given their presenting circumstances?
- 2) To what extent do the children and families receive the services they need?
- 3) To what extent do the children and families who receive needed services achieve successful outcomes?

The first and second questions seek to identify the population of children and families who need family preservation services and the proportion of those who receive the needed services. The services needed by families differ based on their circumstances. Families whose children reside at home need to receive services that prevent entry of children into foster care; and children in foster care and their families need services to help them reunite.

The QSPR reviews conducted for state fiscal year (SFY) 2015 were used to answer the first two questions. The QSPR includes a thorough examination of the physical case files maintained within the local county offices, which often contain additional case-related information, as well as interviews with families, caseworkers, foster parents, and other relevant stakeholders. So while the QSPR is based on a sample, it accurately and fully identifies the populations who (1) needed family preservation services and (2) received those services.

The third question addresses outcomes of the families included in the SFY 2015 QSPR. Data from CHRIS<sup>1</sup> are used to track families' outcomes to determine the proportion of the families involved in in-home cases<sup>2</sup> who remained intact after six months and 12 months of receiving services as well as the proportion of foster children whose goal was reunification who achieved that goal after six months and 12 months. The data are also used to examine the differences in outcomes, if any, between in-home families and foster children who received services and those who did not. This review also examines whether or not any of these families were involved in a substantiated report of maltreatment within six and 12 months of the date of the QSPR review.

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<sup>1</sup> CHRIS is the state's computerized child welfare case management system.

<sup>2</sup> In-home protective services cases are cases in which DCFS actively monitors the risk and safety issues within the family's home but those issues are not serious enough to warrant the removal of children.

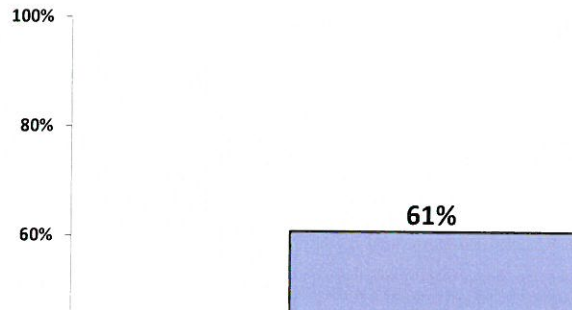
# DELIVERY OF FAMILY PRESERVATION SERVICES

## POPULATION WITH AN IDENTIFIED NEED FOR SERVICES

Children who reside with their families need services to keep them safe and prevent their removal from the home. For children who reside in foster care, family preservation services are needed to help them achieve permanency such as reunification with their families, permanent placement with other relatives, or guardianship with another legally established custodian.

Referring to the data collected from the SFY 2015 Quality Services Peer Review, 61 percent of the families with in-home cases were in need of family preservation services to help them remain intact while all of the families involved in foster care cases whose goal was reunification<sup>3</sup> needed such services to achieve that goal (see Chart 1).

Chart 1:  
Percentage (%) of In-Home Families and Foster Children with an Ident



The services needed by these families and children varied. The most common types of assistance needed were parenting classes, homemaking skills, psychological evaluations, counseling, drug screenings, and transportation. In some instances, children's caregivers needed to receive more specialized services such as substance abuse treatment.

<sup>3</sup> This also includes children with a goal of relative placement and guardianship.

**POPULATION IN NEED WHO RECEIVED SERVICES**

Among the in-home cases where needs were identified to safely maintain children at home, DCFS provided appropriate services to the families in 69 percent of the cases reviewed. DCFS performed better at delivering services to families involved in foster care cases with a goal of reunification,<sup>4</sup> with the agency delivering appropriate services designed to achieve that goal in 86 percent of such cases.

Table 1 displays the demographics of the children identified in the reviewed in-home and foster care cases, broken down by whether or not they received needed services. While there are some variations among the demographic categories, the primary observation is that children and families involved in foster care cases are more likely to receive needed services than those involved in in-home cases, regardless of the children’s age, gender or race and ethnicity.

**Table 1:  
Likelihood of Receiving Services, by Case Type and Demographics**

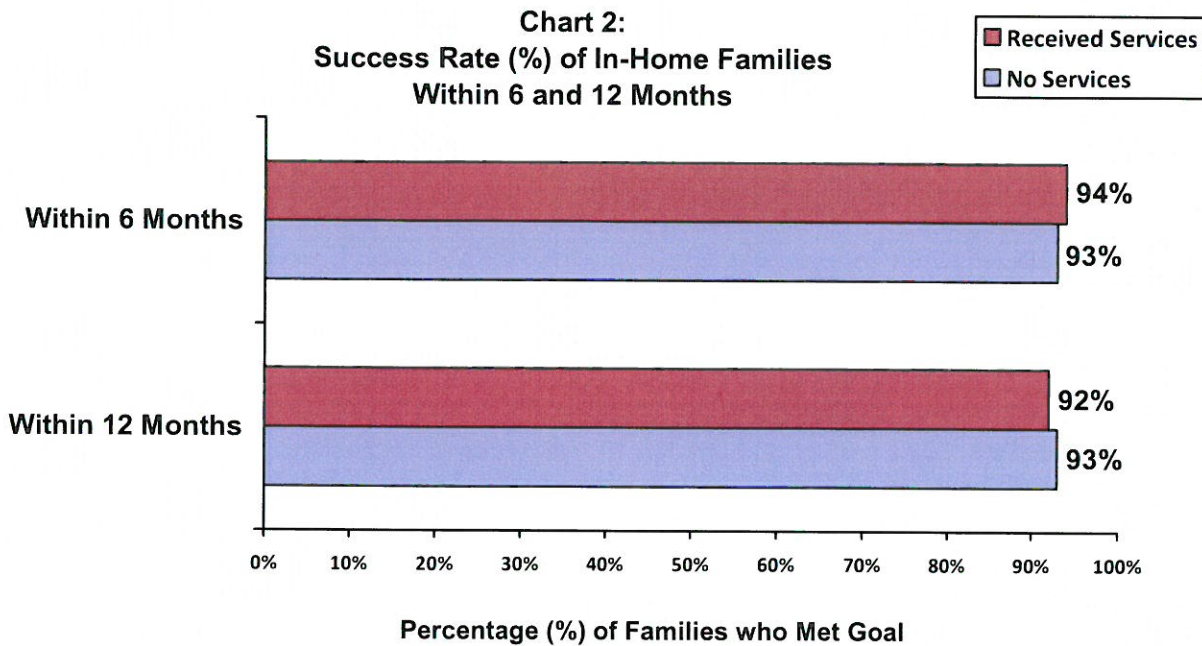
<b>Ages</b>	<b><i>Children in In-Home Cases</i></b>		<b><i>Children in Foster Care</i></b>	
	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>
0 to 1	73.3	26.7	100.0	0.0
2 to 5	56.9	43.1	100.0	0.0
6 to 9	68.4	31.6	71.4	28.6
10 to 13	78.2	21.8	87.5	12.5
14 and Older	66.7	33.3	81.8	18.2
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>
Female	63.6	36.4	92.9	7.1
Male	72.7	27.3	81.6	18.4
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>	<b>Received All Needed Services</b>	<b>Did Not Receive All Needed Services</b>
White	69.0	31.0	84.8	15.2
Black	62.9	37.1	91.7	8.3
All Other	73.7	26.3	87.5	12.5

<sup>4</sup> This also includes children with a goal of relative placement and guardianship.

## OUTCOMES OF SERVICE RECIPIENTS

### SUCCESS RATES AT PRESERVING OR REUNITING FAMILIES

For in-home families who received needed family preservation services, 94 percent remained intact within six months of receiving services and 92 percent stayed intact within 12 months. Among in-home families who did not receive such needed services, a similar proportion of families stayed intact within both six and 12 months (see Chart 2).



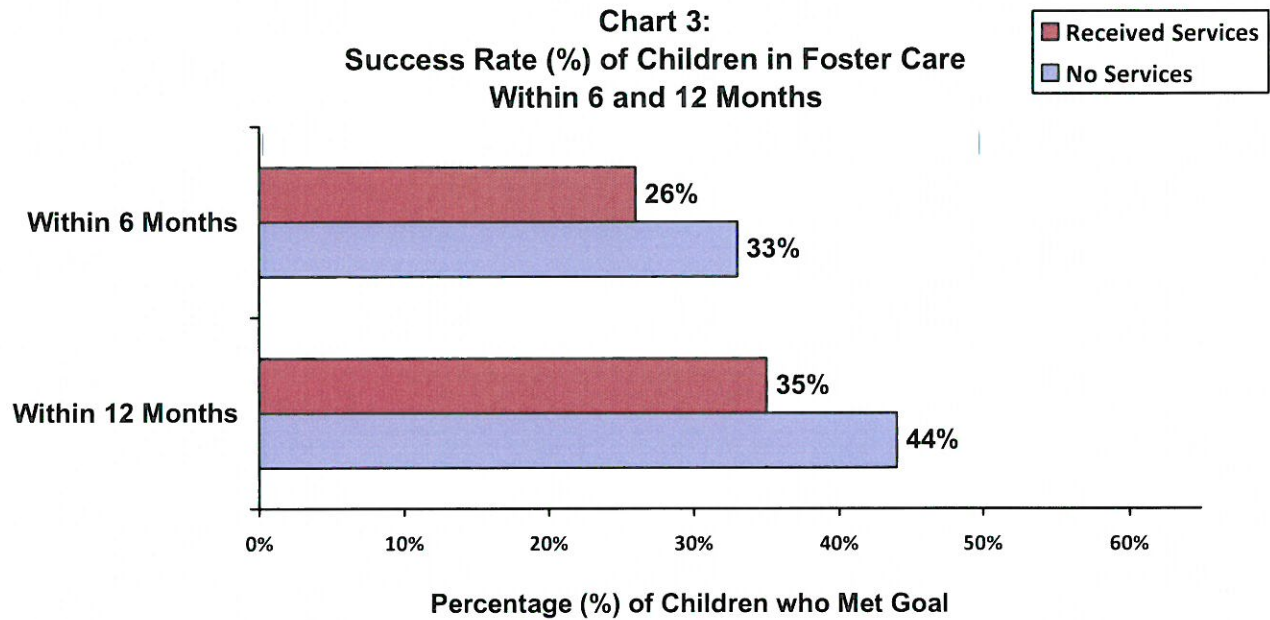
For families involved in foster care cases who received family preservation services, 26 percent achieved reunification<sup>5</sup> within six months; by the 12-month mark, that figure had climbed to 35 percent. In comparison, 33 percent of the families who did not receive services achieved reunification within six months and 44 percent did so at 12 months (see Chart 3).<sup>6</sup>

It is possible that the children and families who ultimately received services had a higher degree of issues and needs than those who did not receive them; and, in turn, their increased risk levels necessitated a lengthier engagement with DCFS. At the same time, agency practice is generally to close cases and end its involvement with families when they do not or no longer need or receive services.

<sup>5</sup> Reunification is defined here as reunification with parents, permanent placement with relatives, or guardianship.

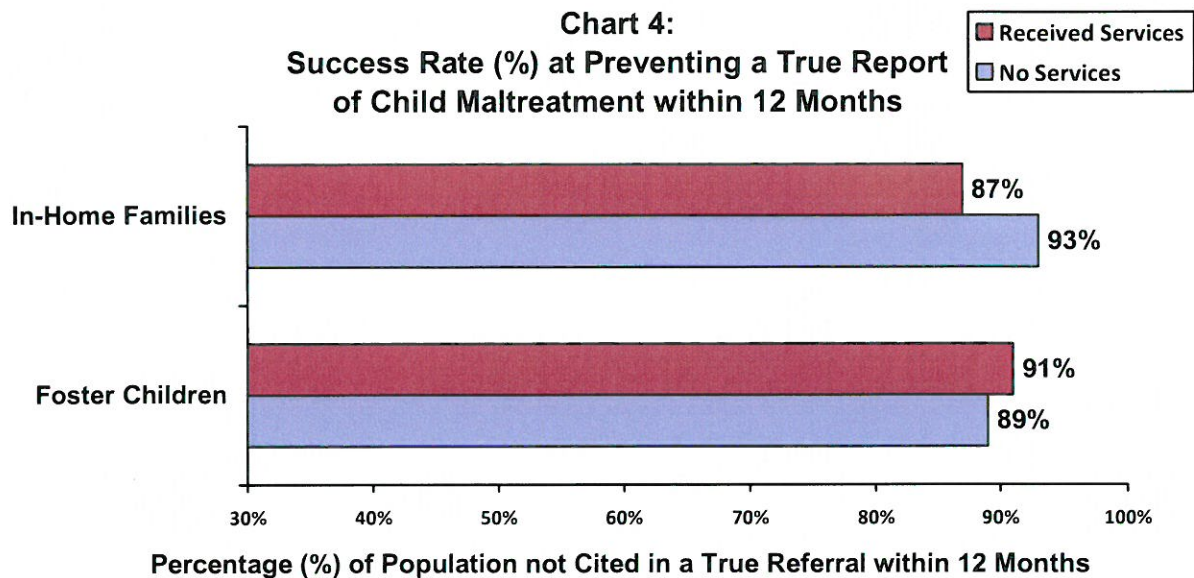
<sup>6</sup> The difference in the success rate between families who had a child in foster care and received services and those who did not was not statistically significant.





**SUCCESS RATES AT PREVENTING A TRUE REPORT OF MALTREATMENT**

Regardless of whether or not children remain at home or reside in foster care, another measure of the efficacy of family preservation services is whether or not they can prevent the recurrence of maltreatment, i.e., a subsequent true report of child maltreatment. Chart 4 illustrates the likelihood that the populations of in-home families and foster children who received services would be involved in a true report within 12 months in comparison to those populations who did not receive services.



Approximately one out of every ten families who received in-home services was involved in another true report of child maltreatment within 12 months, regardless of whether or not they received family preservation services. This pattern holds true for children in foster care as well.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The slight differences displayed in Chart 4 in success rates among DCFS clients who did and did not receive services were not statistically significant.

This report summarizes the percentages of families who had an identified need for family preservation services as well as the percentages who ultimately received them, while also considering those families' outcomes six months and 12 months after the point that they were receiving said services.

The highlights of this review are presented below.

- All families involved in foster care cases (with a goal of reunification, relative placement, or guardianship) and 61 percent of those involved in in-home cases had an identified need for services to help them achieve permanency or remain intact.
- Among in-home families for whom the need for family preservation services had been identified, DCFS delivered adequate services in 69 percent of the cases reviewed. DCFS performed better at delivering such services to families involved in foster care cases, doing so in 86 percent of reviewed cases.
- Based on the cases reviewed, the provision of family preservation services did not necessarily lead to more advantageous outcomes in terms of preserving or achieving permanency. The children and families involved in foster care cases who received such services actually achieved reunification with less frequency than those who did not receive family preservation services. Additionally, a similar percentage of the in-home families who received family preservation services remained intact within 12 months as those who did not receive such services.

The provision of services was likewise not a strong predictor of future true reports among in-home families and those whose children were placed into foster care.

- It is possible, and in many cases even likely, that the families who received family preservation services had a higher degree of issues and needs than those who did not, which necessitated either a lengthier or subsequent engagement with DCFS in some instances.