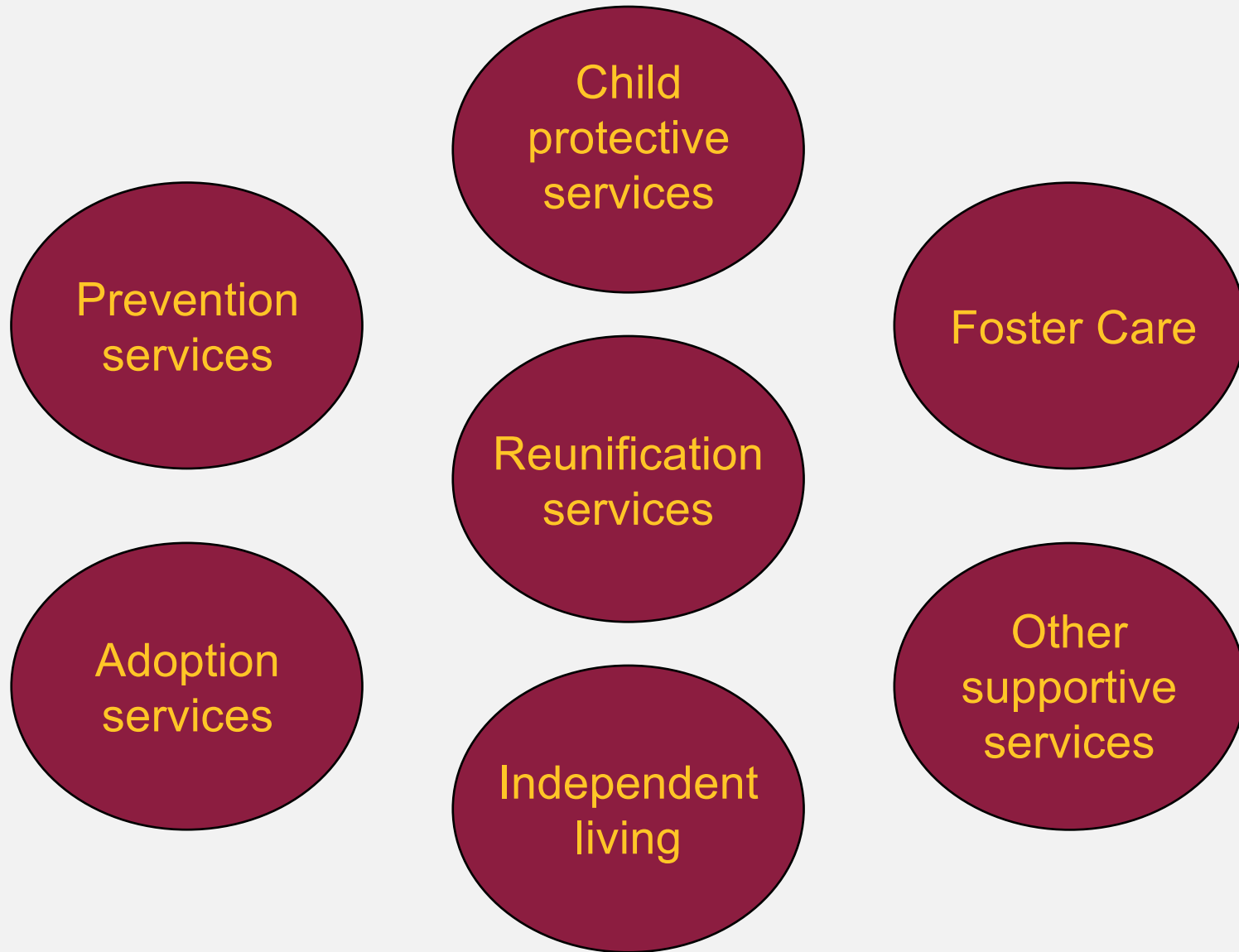


# Arizona Child Welfare System

*What you should know about  
child welfare*

January 2017

# When you think of child welfare



# Child welfare is a community effort

Schools

Law  
enforcement

Faith-  
based  
groups

Courts

Relatives

Neighbors

Federal,  
State, and  
local  
agencies

Parents

Legislators

Health care  
professionals

Businesses

Non-  
profits

# What entities comprise the child welfare system?

- A. Department of Child Safety**
- B. First Things First**
- C. Department of Economic Security**
- D. Department of Health Services**
- E. AHCCCS**
- F. Courts**
- G. Tribes**
- H. Non-profits**

***Answer: All of the Above***

\*The system relies on all of these but we will discuss DCS' role

# Department of Child Safety

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) is Arizona's state administered child welfare services agency

DCS provides:

- child abuse and neglect reporting hotline
- child abuse and neglect investigations
- child safety and risk assessments
- prevention services for families
- family support preservation, and reunification services
- family foster care and kinship care services
- shelter and group home placement
- services to promote the safety, permanency, and well-being of children with foster and adoptive families
- adoption promotion and support services
- health care services for children in out-of-home care
- independent living services

# Statistics

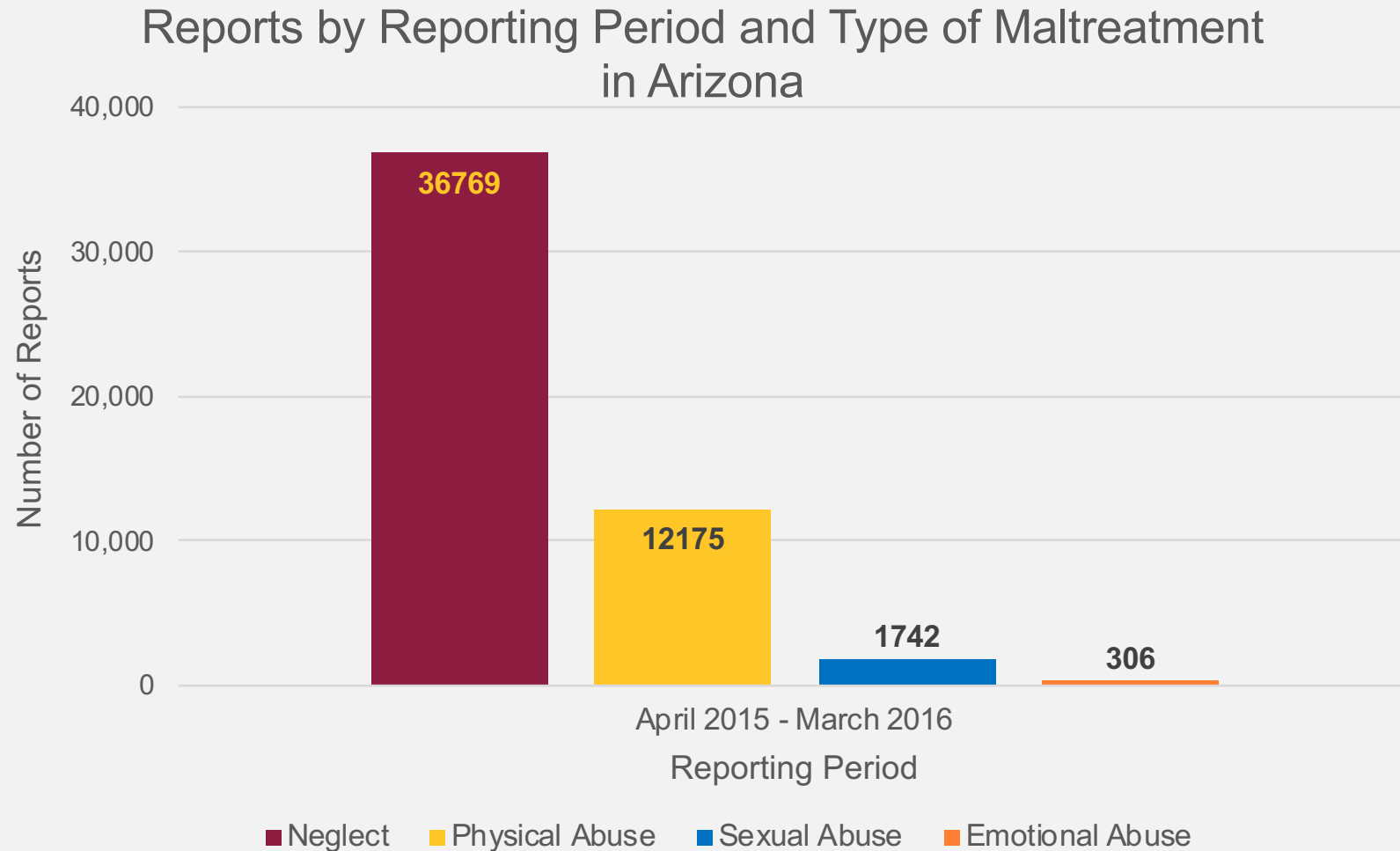
	April 2012 -- March 2013	April 2013 -- March 2014	April 2014 -- March 2015	April 2015 -- March 2016
<b>Number of Reports Received</b>	43,786	44,988	50,584	50,992
<b>Number of Reports Substantiated<sup>1</sup></b>	5,397	5,894	6,991	5,494
<b>Number of Reports Responded to</b>	40,666	42,284	49,617	50,215
<b>Number of new removals</b>	10,817	11,403	12,396	12,960
<b>Number of Children in Out-of-Home Care on the Last Day of Reporting Period</b>	14,314	15,751	17,592	18,906

<sup>1</sup> Since the appeal's process delays the substantiation of reports, revisions to the number of substantiated reports for the prior reporting period will occur with every semi-annual report produced

\* According to the semi-annual report for April 1 – September 30, 2016 there were 17,984 children in care. This trend suggests a decline in the number of children in out-of-home care, however, data for a longer period of time is needed to conclusively establish a downward trend.

Source: DCS Semi-annual report for October 1, 2015 through March 31, 2016 reporting period

# Trends in maltreatment reports



Source: Analysis of Department of Child Safety Semi-annual Reports for periods April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2016. <https://dcs.az.gov/data/dcs-documents>

# Federal Role

Federal dollars comprise a significant amount of the DCS budget FY2016 appropriation:

General Fund	\$356.4 Million
Federal Match/Non-Appropriated Funds	\$332.1 Million
Federal TANF Block Grant	\$132.0 Million
Federal Child Care Block Grant	\$27.0 Million
Other Appropriated Funds	\$1.7 Million
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$849.2 Million</b>

Source: July 2015 JLBC Budget Overview for DCS



# Federal Role

## **Title IV-B of Social Security Act:**

- Authorizes formula grant funds to states for the provision of child welfare-related services
- Authorizes competitive grants for research, training, and other projects

## **Title IV-E of Social Security Act:**

- Entitles states with an approved plan to partial reimbursement of foster care costs, adoption assistance, or kinship guardianship assistance payments
- Provides funding for children who “age out” of foster care

## **Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment and Adoption Reform**

### **42 U.S.C chapter 67**

- Provides grants to states if the state has a child protective services system that includes a way for individuals to report suspected child abuse and neglect, procedures for safety and risk assessments and investigations of child abuse and neglect reports, procedures to immediately protect the safety of a child victim

# Indian Child Welfare Act

- ICWA was enacted in 1978 and established federal requirements related to custody proceedings involving an Indian child to protect the child's best interests and promote the stability of Indian tribes and families
- Tribal court maintains jurisdiction over child welfare proceedings if an Indian child is a member of or eligible for membership in a federally recognized tribe.
- Foster placement preferences:
  - With a member of child's extended family
  - In a licensed foster home, approved or specified by Tribe
  - In an Indian foster home licensed by an authorized non-Indian authority
  - In an institution for children approved by an Indian tribe or operated by an Indian organization that has programs suitable to meet child's needs

# When does DCS become involved?

**ARS § 8-455: DCS hotline will prepare a report if current location of child, child's family, or person suspected of abuse or neglect is known or can be found and:**

- Suspected conduct would constitute abuse or neglect
- Suspected victim is under 18
- Suspected victim is a resident or present in the state
- The person suspected of committing abuse or neglect is a guardian, custodian, or adult member of victim's household

**ARS § 8-821: A child may be taken into temporary custody because probable cause exists that the child is either:**

- A victim or will imminently become a victim or abuse or neglect
- Suffering serious physical or emotional injury that can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or psychologist
- Physically injured as a result of living on premises where dangerous drugs are being manufactured
- Reported by the department to be a missing child at risk of serious harm

# Out-of-home care basics

- Preference is for the child to remain with the family, reasonable efforts to maintain family dependency and reunify family must be made
- Once a child is removed there are certain requirements:
  - DCS must hold a court hearing within 72 hours of removal if the child is taken into temporary custody ARS § 8-821
- Placement preferences are:
  - in close proximity to the parents home (P.L. 96-272)
  - with members of the child's extended family and adult siblings (P.L.104-193)
  - with minor siblings who are in out-of-home care
  - in the least restrictive placement that will meet his/her needs (P.L. 96-272)
  - within the child's own school district
  - with caregivers who can communicate in the child's language.

# Five-Year DCS Strategic Plan

- Improve objective decision making at the Hotline and Investigations
- Improve performance and quality of services through employee retention
- Reduce length of stay for children in out-of-home care
- Improve capacity to place children in family environments
- Reduce recurrence of maltreatment by improving service delivery

# Best practices in child welfare

- Implementing primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention programs to reduce child abuse and neglect
- Implementing a family-centered practice by working with families to enhance their capacity to care for and protect children. Addressing child's needs within the context of their family by empowering family to meet needs.
- Implementing continuous assessments of risk, safety, child and family functioning, and trauma
- Focusing on child safety, permanency, and well-being of children in foster care
- Engaging in inter-agency collaboration between stakeholders involved with family, because the welfare of children is and should be a collaborative effort

# 2016 Legislatively Established Benchmarks

## **HB 2695 – General Appropriations Act of 2016 requires:**

- Backlog of overdue investigations be reduced to under 1,000 by June 30 , 2017 and maintained below 1,000 thereafter
- A reduction of 2% per quarter of the number of children in care beginning January 1, 2017 with a cumulative reduction of 11.4% and a population of children in care of below 17,500 by July 1, 2018

# Helpful Resources for State Legislators



# Mandatory Reporters

- Duty is NOT to investigate, but to report suspected maltreatment
- Arizona Revised Statutes § 13-3620 mandatory reporters:
  - Any physician, physical assistant, optometrist, dentist, osteopath, chiropractor, podiatrist, behavioral health professional, nurse, psychologist, social worker who develops the reasonable belief during course of treating patient
  - Any peace officer, child welfare investigator, child safety worker, member of the clergy, priest or Christian Science practitioner
  - The parent, stepparent or guardian of the minor
  - School personnel or domestic violence victim advocates who develop the reasonable belief in the course of their employment
  - Any other person who has responsibility for the care or treatment of the minor

# How To Report Child Maltreatment

If a child is in present danger, call 911

If the child is not in present danger, call either the local Police Department or Arizona Child Abuse Hotline

## Hotline Information

1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)

TDD 602-530-1831/Toll Free 1-800-530-1831

Online Reporting Service:

[https://www.azdes.gov/dcyf/cps/mandated\\_reporters/](https://www.azdes.gov/dcyf/cps/mandated_reporters/)

# Constituent Complaints

- DCS internal grievance process:
  - Attempt to resolve disputes with DCS child safety specialists
  - Elevate concern to DCS supervisor
  - Contact DCS ombudsman's office, may result in:
    - Referral to appropriate DCS management staff
    - A response by DCS Family Advocacy Office
    - A formal Client Grievance

For issues or concerns with a DCS case contact DCS family Advocate 1-877-527-0765 or (602) 364-0777

For Resource Families contact Foster Care and Adoptive Family Liasion at (877) KIDS-NEED-U

# Confidential Legislative Briefings

- Legislative members entitled to confidential briefings on the specifics of any DCS case
- Legislators may request a briefing by contacting Kathryn Blades at [Kathrynblades@azdes.gov](mailto:Kathrynblades@azdes.gov)
- Useful to know the mom's name and date of birth (cases based on mom).
- DCS requires about three weeks turn around time
- Mention interest in any case-specific questions when briefing is requested(e.g., mom says she isn't getting visits)
- Case information must stay confidential once it is given and legislators cannot re-disclose anything, even to the parent
- Legislator required to sign confidentiality form along with respective chamber's Presiding Officer
- Legislator may bring a staffer to the confidential briefing
- DCS can provide tips on what to say to the constituent (e.g., stay in touch with your attorney, don't miss drug screens)

# Independent Resources

## Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University

- Independent research and analysis
- Ability to convene stakeholders and provide access to national experts
- Thom Reilly, Executive Director of the Morrison Institute for Public Policy – 602-496-0200, [thom.reilly@asu.edu](mailto:thom.reilly@asu.edu)
- Erica Quintana, policy analyst – 602-496-2372, [erica.quintana@asu.edu](mailto:erica.quintana@asu.edu)

## Casey Family Programs – an Independent Operating Foundation

- Information on National Best Practices & Data
- Information on Statutes & Policies in other states
- Janet Garcia, Senior Director for Arizona – 602-794-8414, [jgarcia@casey.org](mailto:jgarcia@casey.org)
- Maria Fuentes, Public Policy Advisor – 202-728-2002, [mfuentes@casey.org](mailto:mfuentes@casey.org)

# Morrison Institute Child Welfare Project

In partnership with the Arizona Community Foundation, and the Arizona Department of Child Safety (DCS), the Morrison Institute is embarking on a 2-3 year child welfare project.

## Goals of the project:

- help the state of Arizona develop a common understanding of prevention
  - provide information on the types of neglect occurring reported to DCS
  - evaluate prevention programs and statewide spending across agencies
- develop policy options for effective prevention strategies in the state

# Flow of a DCS case

**1. Receipt of information to the Child Abuse Hotline.** Reporting source contacts the Child Abuse Hotline to report suspected child abuse.

**2. Making the decision to take a report.** Information from the reporting source is gathered and assessed by the Hotline Specialist.

**3a. Report taken.** If the information meets report criteria, a report is taken and assigned a response time.

**3b. Hotline Communication.** If the information does not meet report criteria, the information is kept in a database at the Hotline.

**4. Disposition of the report.** Reports are assigned to a CPS Specialist for an investigation to determine if child maltreatment occurred.

# Flow of a DCS case continued

**5. Investigation & Child Safety Assessment.** The CPS Specialist investigates allegations of abuse or neglect and gathers information to make a decision about child safety and the need for CPS involvement. If the report alleges criminal conduct, the report is investigated jointly with law enforcement.

**6a. Child Safe/Case Closed.**

Circumstances do not warrant continued CPS intervention.

**6b. Child Safe/Case Open.**

Circumstances warrant CPS services, but do not require the child's removal from the home.

**6c. Child Unsafe.**

If the investigation determines the child is unsafe, a Safety Plan is developed with the parent.

**7a. In-Home Services.** CPS provides in-home services and supports to the parents and children through contracted or community providers to address existing critical risk factors. If services are successful and child is safe, case is closed (7b). If services are unsuccessful and child cannot remain safely in the home, Safety Planning (7c) is required.

**7c. Safety Planning.**

Safety Plan (In-Home, Out-of-Home or Combination) is finalized and implemented. An Out-of-Home Safety Plan may include a 90-day voluntary foster care placement.

**7b. Case Closed.** Critical risk factors addressed: child safe, family referred to community resources/services (after care plan), and case closed.



# Flow of a DCS case continued

**8. Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting.** If a child is removed or may be removed, a TDM Meeting is held with the family to make decisions about the child's safety and placement.

**9. Temporary Custody.** If no plan can ensure child safety or safety plan fails, the child is removed and a Temporary Custody Notice is served.

**10. Petition Filed.** A Dependency Petition is filed with the Juvenile Court.

**11a. In-Home Intervention** The Court does not make a finding of dependency & the child remains in the home with supervision & services.

**11b. In-Home Dependency** The Court makes a finding of Dependency & the child remains in the home with supervision & services.

**11c. Out-of-Home Dependency** The Court makes a finding of Dependency & the child remains out-of-home.

**12a. Remain with Family.** A case plan is developed. Services and interventions are provided to the family to ensure child safety and maintain the family unit.

**12b. Reunification Services.** A case plan is developed. Reunification services and interventions are provided to the child and family.

# Flow of a DCS case continued

**13. Case Review.** Court reviews Dependency cases every six months and reviews In-Home Intervention cases every twelve months. Foster Care Review Board reviews Out-of-Home Dependency cases every six months.

**14. Team Decision Making (TDM) Meeting.** A TDM Meeting is held to make decisions about an unplanned change of placement for a child, the transition of a child to his/her family or a change in the permanency goal.

**15a. Successful Reunification/In-Home Services.**

The child is reunified with their family or remains in the home and services are complete.

**16a. Case Closed.**

The safety threats are resolved. Court dismisses Dependency Petition. Family is referred to community resources/services (after care plan) & case closed.

**15b. In-Home Services Unsuccessful.**

In-Home services fail to keep the child safe at home. Child is removed resulting in foster care placement (Out-of-Home Dependency – see step 11c).

**15c. Permanency Planning.**

If reunification services are unsuccessful and the child is not returned home within 12 months, other permanency options are considered. For children under the age of 3, permanency options are considered within 6 months of removal.

# Flow of a DCS case continued

