

THE DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES
Fiscal Year 2006 Annual Report

**Result
Statements:**

- Wyoming families and individuals living in a stable, safe, supportive, nurturing, healthy environment.
- Children achieving their highest potential during their early development years.
- Students successfully educated and prepared for life's opportunities

**Our Contribution to Wyoming
Quality of Life:**

- Helping families assume more responsibility for raising their own children.
- Helping communities assume more responsibility for their own families.
- Assist working parents enabling them to provide food, health care and child care for their families while they work at low wage jobs.

Department Facts:

The Department of Family Services consists of 797 employees in the following service areas: Director (2) Economic Assistance (225), Juvenile Services (260), Child Protective Services (248), Child Support Enforcement (33), and Early Childhood Development (29). DFS has 27 field offices located in all 23 counties.

Funding: The total operating budget for the department for FY 06 was \$103,646,195. Of this amount \$52,882,692 are general funds and \$45,013,307 and \$5,750,197 are other funds (central registry fees, Children's Trust Fund, heating assistance, welfare fraud and overpayment recovery, etc).

Division Budgets:

Child Support: \$10,867,369

Juvenile Services: \$31,251,598

Economic Assistance: \$28,955,116

Protective Services: \$20,395,076

Early Childhood Development: \$12,177,035

Five Primary Functions of the Department:

1. Administer programs that provide economic support to working families who are unable to earn wages that provide a livable income.
2. Conduct investigations and provide family centered services to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect.
3. Strengthen and improve state and community efforts for the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect in Wyoming.
4. Administer programs that ensure public safety by providing supervision and family centered therapeutic and educational services to children who are adjudicated delinquent or in need of supervision.
5. Administer programs that ensure children in childcare facilities have a safe and appropriate environment to meet their physical, mental, and educational needs.

Performance Measure for Function #1:

Administer programs that provide economic support to working families

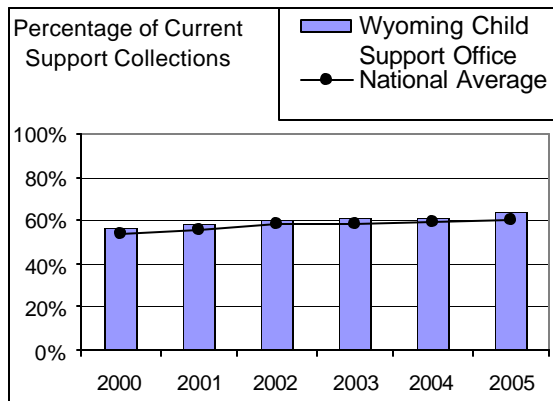


Chart 1

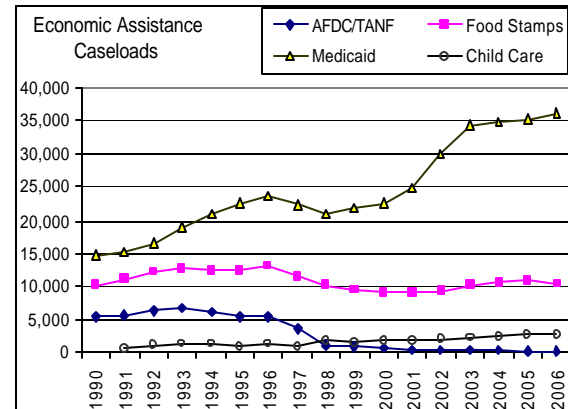


Chart 2

Story Behind The Performance:

Current Support Collections: In 2005, Wyoming exceeded national standards for assisting single parents in collecting their child support. Over the past year, the Child Support Office continued to refine the use of performance-based contracts with private enterprise districts and increased communication efforts between state and county districts to improve collection efforts. In addition, the Child Support Office reviewed cases with little or no payment activity so DFS could work with the non-custodial parent to increase the probability of payment.

Economic Assistance Caseloads: Economic Assistance caseloads grew during 2005/2006, as low-income Wyoming families continued to rely on federal and state funded assistance programs in order to meet their needs. The Economic Assistance unit continues to use performance-based contracts, where applicable, to ensure programs are moving people towards self-sufficiency. In addition, DFS continued efforts to build upon existing public and private partnerships to improve outreach efforts.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Current Support Collections: In 2005, the legislature funded the Father Factor program, which is designed to increase non-custodial parents' involvement with their children. By encouraging fatherhood initiatives, we believe child support collections will increase as fathers accept more responsibility for their children. Father Factor will begin to provide services in the fall of 2006. The computerized collection system upgrades designed to improve collections, paternity establishment, etc., are proceeding as scheduled.

Economic Assistance Caseloads: DFS moved closer to the completion of the IRIS eligibility computer system in 2005. In addition, the legislature funded self-sufficiency programs designed to help low-income single parents receive job-training skills relevant to Wyoming's economy to help train them for immediate employment in jobs that pay wages above 185% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines.

Performance Measure for Function #2:

Conduct investigations and provide family centered services to ensure safety, permanency, and well-being of children and adults who are at risk of abuse and neglect

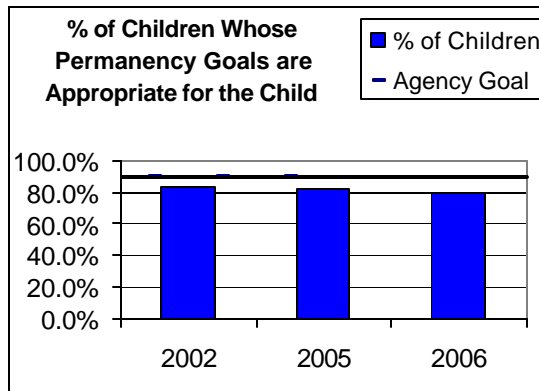


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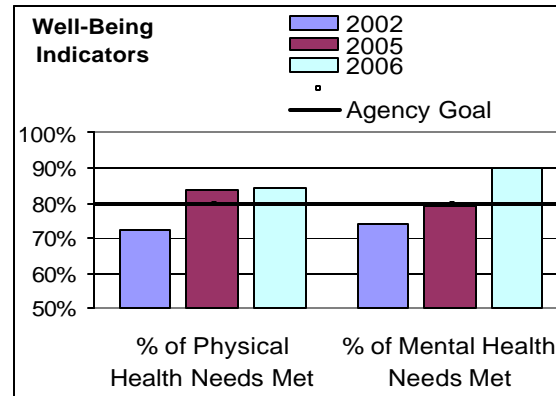


Chart 2

Story Behind the Performance:

Permanency: During state fiscal year (SFY) 2006, 80% of children in DFS care had what reviewers considered an achievable goal for the child as the team worked towards permanency. While this is still short of our goal of 90%, DFS continued implementation of a Program Improvement Plan (PIP) that included training for staff on family partnerships and facilitating family centered practices and meetings. Family centered meetings bring together all family and foster family representatives with service providers to make a unified plan for the child and their family.

Well Being: DFS uses this term to describe the overall physical and emotional health of the child while in our care. A Child and Family Service Review in SFY 2006 shows children in DFS care are receiving better care due to family centered meetings where the child's case planning team discusses the physical and mental health needs of the child and provides for needed medical services in the case plan.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Permanency: We have yet to meet our Program Improvement Plan goal of 90% for all children in DFS care having an achievable permanency goal. A lack of substance abuse treatment programs and the high rate of out-of-home placements for children, because of a lack of community-based services to serve children in their community, create challenges for both DFS and their partners in meeting permanency goals for children.

Well Being: We have exceeded our Program Improvement Plan goal of meeting at least 80% of physical and mental health needs for children in our care. DFS accomplished this as a result of a number of actions including improved collaboration with the Department of Health's programs, improved staff training, improved staff-to-case ratios, better use of face-to-face visits with children in care to identify health needs, and when possible, use of the child's usual care provider.

Performance Measure for Function #3:

Strengthen and improve state and community efforts towards the prevention, identification, and treatment of child abuse and neglect in Wyoming

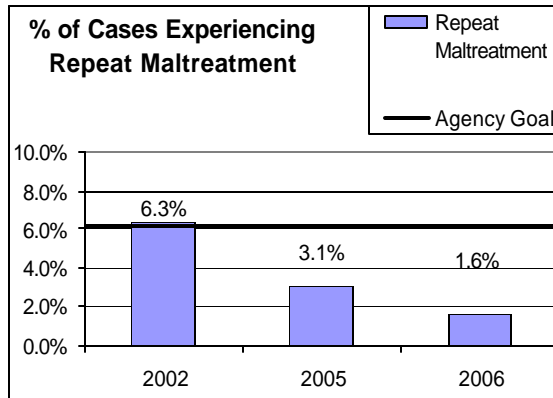


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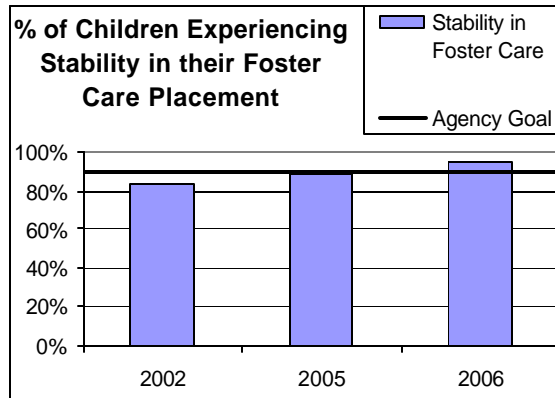


Chart 2

Story Behind the Performance:

Repeat Maltreatment: A critical measure of how well the agency is performing this fundamental function are the extents to which children who have been the subject of abuse and neglect allegations are subjects of additional allegations at a later date. During SFY 2006, DFS began to see improved results as a result of the development of the Program Improvement Plan (PIP), where DFS established a goal of increasing trainings on risk and safety assessments and to increase the monitoring of in-home service cases.

Foster Care Stability: In recent years, the agency has been able to increase foster care stability for children who are receiving services through DFS. During State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2006, Wyoming exceeded our goal of helping children experience stability in their foster care placement by facilitating unified permanency plans for the child with all stakeholders in the child’s life. By creating a network of shared responsibilities for everyone involved with the child’s permanency goals, short-term objectives become more manageable for the family and child resulting in better outcomes for the child.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Repeat Maltreatment: During the 2006 session, the legislature approved a rate increase to adequately compensate foster care parents for the cost of raising a child. Even with increased stipends, DFS still faces a challenge of finding and training qualified foster care parents.

Foster Care Stability: DFS met our Program Improvement Plan goal of 90% stability of foster care placements. In addition, DFS implemented a training academy whereby caseworkers receive intensive core training and continuing professional education in best practices.

Performance Measure for Function #4:

Ensure public safety by providing supervision and family centered therapeutic services

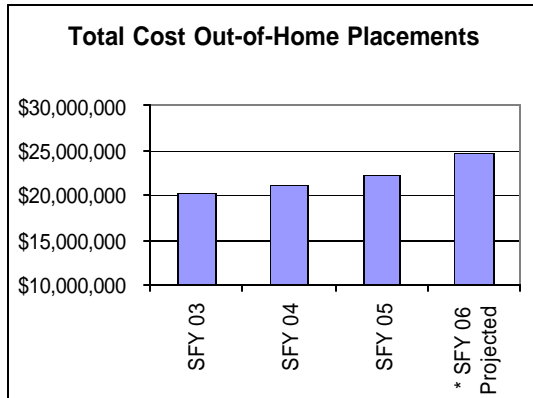


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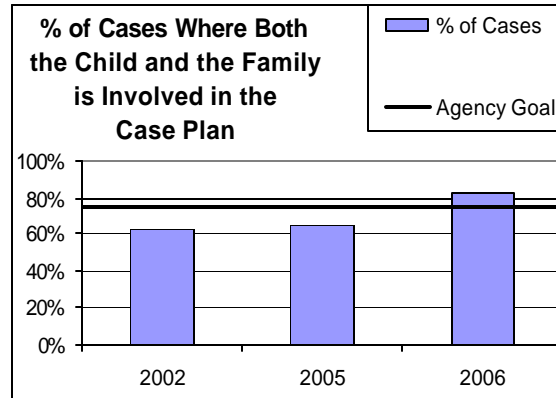


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Story Behind the Performance:

Out of Home Costs: Over the past several years, treatment costs have risen at a rate of 4.6%, roughly keeping pace with the overall rate of inflation in Wyoming. During the past year, DFS worked with treatment providers to develop a pay-for-performance contract designed primarily to pay for results, not just services, and improve children’s transitions from placement back to their families.

Involvement in Treatment Planning: Family-centered practice is an approach to case management that involves not only the youth, but also his or her parents, treatment providers, local schools, the courts, and DFS in developing long-term plans to help the youth and the family stay together. During the past year, DFS helped foster home parents, residential-treatment centers, and some group homes understand the language and science of family-centered practices that resulted in more families participating in their children’s treatment plan.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Out-of-Home Costs: During the past year, DFS completed the first performance-based contract with a residential treatment provider. DFS is evaluating the results of that contract and working to improve the outcome measures in all performance-based treatment contracts.

Involvement in Treatment Planning: As DFS moves forward with performance based contracting with residential treatment services, DFS will train contractors in family-centered practices. DFS will continue facilitation efforts to help courts, families, and communities develop long-term plans to help families stay together.

Performance Measure for Function #5:

Ensure children in childcare facilities have a safe and appropriate environment

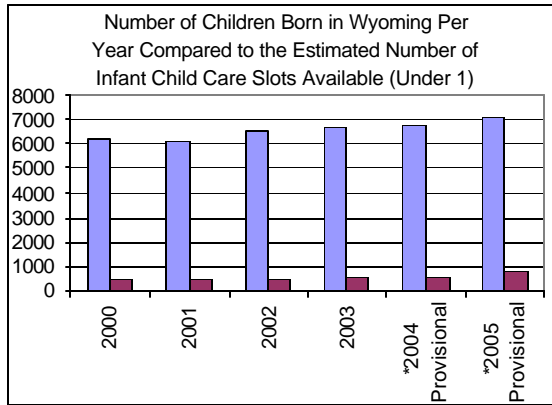


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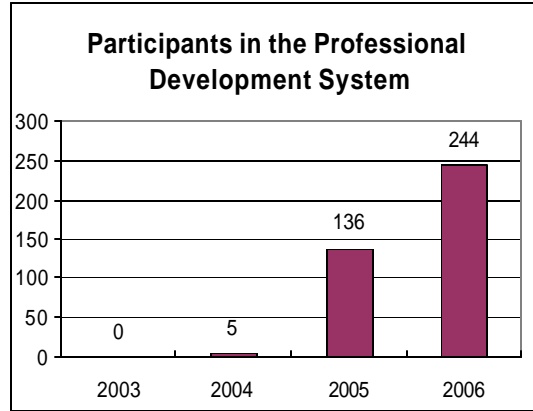


Chart 2

Story Behind the Performance:

Help increase quality and availability of child care: With a high rate of new employment in Wyoming, the agency recognizes the need to help provide high quality, affordable childcare for infants of working parents. The department estimates that there are only 800 licensed infant childcare slots throughout the state available for new parents. In the 2005 session, the legislature passed Enrolled Act No. 53 to create the Quality Child Care System. This legislation has the ability to increase the number of licensed infant childcare slots by providing financial support and incentives to expand the availability of infant care.

Professional Development System: In 2003, DFS started a program designed to increase the quality of care by increasing the provider’s knowledge of early childhood education standards and principles, called the Professional Development Career Ladder. During the past year, DFS was able to expand participation in the program through increased outreach efforts.

What Has Been Accomplished?

Help increase quality and availability of child care: Although the Department of Workforce Services (DWS) is the responsible agency, DFS works closely with DWS to develop the Quality Child Care System created by Enrolled Act No. 53. In addition, to increase infant care slots, DFS will continue to work with licensed providers to help them identify opportunities which will increase daycare slots for children under the age of one.

Professional Development System: DFS will continue its collaboration with the Departments of Workforce Services, Education, Health, and the private sector to ensure that the Professional Development System meets the needs of the Quality Child Care System and childcare providers. Through its work on the Quality Child Care System, the

Department of Family Services

department has been able to identify areas in which it can provide technical assistance to childcare providers to help them improve safety and quality for children in care. These resources will be provided through the Early Childhood Division's website and through partnerships with other agencies and organizations.