

Georgia Department of Human Services

Child Welfare Updates and Monthly Data Report

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Technology Modernization

- DFCS prioritizes technology modernization efforts.
- In the past six months:
 - Phase one of **Georgia Communicare** launched in Regions 2 and 5 (September 2023)
 - **Argo Placements** launched statewide and was updated to allow placement search across all placement types (October 2023)
 - The statewide rollout of **Georgia Communicare** began (January 2024)



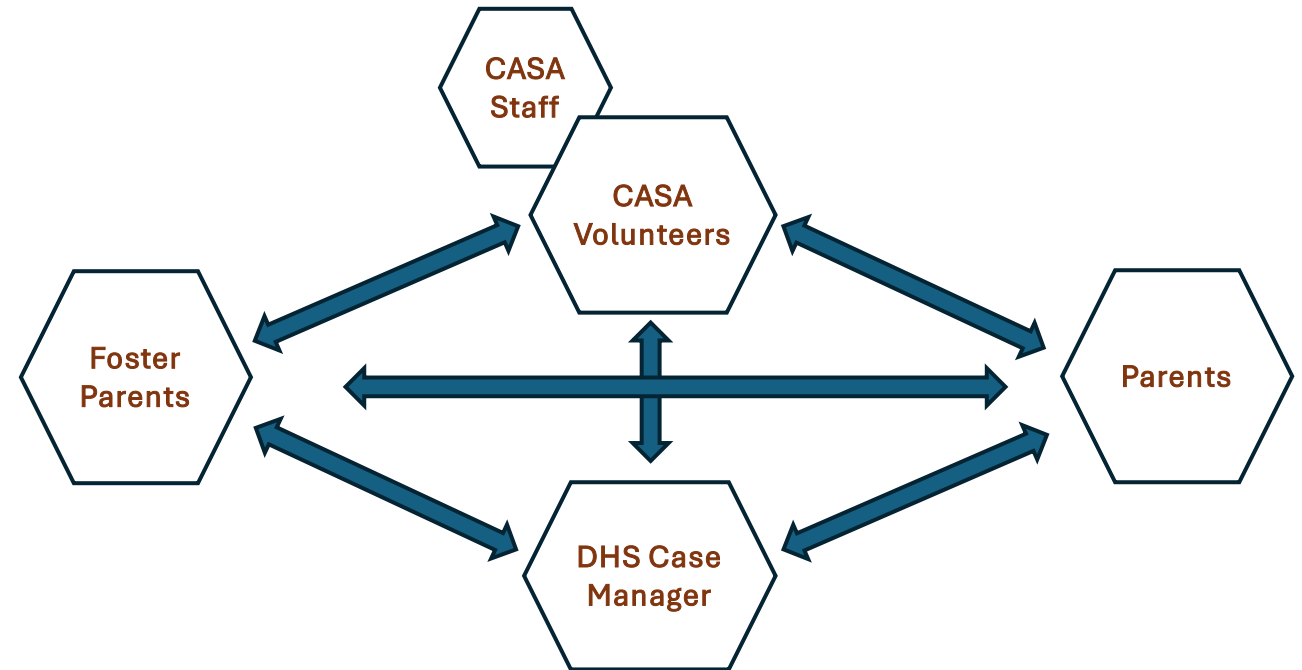
Georgia Communicare

- Georgia Communicare is a set of interconnected web portals designed to support and enhance child welfare programs.
- It serves three primary user groups – Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASAs), foster parents, and parents.
- Georgia Communicare seamlessly integrates with SHINES, our existing DHS System of Record, to ensure efficient and secure data management and communication.
- In September 2023, DFCS launched phase one of Georgia Communicare in Regions 2 and 5.
- In January 2024, we began the statewide rollout. We have completed onboarding for the North and Metro Districts and are currently onboarding our South District user groups.
- We are also preparing to launch the Georgia Communicare mobile app.



Georgia Communicare

- Before the creation of Georgia Communicare, our foster parents, parents, and CASA partners did not have direct access to data and documents. This has required them to request documents from case managers manually, usually causing an information request backlog.
- Georgia Communicare aims to enhance and streamline communication and data access between DFCS case managers and external parties to a foster care case.



Georgia Communicare Features

- Chat capabilities
- Multi-channel notifications
- Child data and case documentation access
- Document upload and sharing
- Calendar sharing
- Appointment scheduling with opt-in reminder notifications
- Names and contact information for the case manager, supervisor, and county director for each child's case



Argo Placements

- In October 2023, DFCS launched Argo Placements statewide.
- Argo Placements is connected to SHINES, our existing DHS System of Record, and supports the placement process by allowing DFCS staff to:
 - Search for a foster home or group home for a child, by matching the child's needs to the home's attributes.
 - Create the necessary application paperwork electronically, for any placement type, by leveraging all data available within SHINES.
- Within Argo Placements case managers receive:
 - Detailed search results which show the placement locations that best fit the child's needs.
 - Contact information for the selected placement locations.
 - A shareable application to initiate the placement of the child in a home.



Technology Modernization

- DFCS is currently developing additional technology projects that will positively impact child welfare.
- These projects include:
 - The Georgia Communicare mobile app
 - A foster parent onboarding and re-evaluation portal
 - Invoice management technology



The Georgia Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment

- DFCS has contracted with an independent organization, the Butler Institute for Families at the University of Denver Graduate School of Social Work, to conduct the Georgia Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment.
- The Georgia Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment will give Georgia's foster and adoptive families, both public and private, the opportunity to share their experiences and suggest improvements to the child welfare system.
- The assessment will include: a survey for foster parents, focus groups and interviews of foster parents, and an adoptive family survey.



The Georgia Foster and Adoptive Family Assessment

- We have formed a steering committee of key partners to help co-design and guide assessment materials.
- These steering committee members have been actively meeting with the Butler Institute for Families since January of this year.
- Steering committee members include:
 - Public and private foster parents
 - Relative and non-relative foster parents
 - Public and private agency staff
 - Public and private association representatives
 - Adoptive parents



Well-Being Section

Donjai Calhoun is leading our Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable and Empowered (GARYSE) program and Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation (EPAC) staff. He received his master's in social work, with a focus on child welfare leadership, from Georgia State University. He has over 19 years of youth development and programming experience.



Educational Programming, Assessment, and Consultation (EPAC) Unit

The EPAC unit provides comprehensive academic support services focused on the educational well-being of children and youth in foster care. Services include:



Advocacy for educational stability for our youth



Review and monitoring of Individualized Education Plans (IEPs)



Support to Division staff and stakeholders



Ensuring compliance of Division and Federal policies



Connecting youth to appropriate education supports



Provide educational evaluations



Collaboration with local school systems



Building partnership with community organizations



Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable, and Empowered Program

The Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable, and Empowered (GARYSE) Program, also known as the State of Georgia Independent Living Program, provides eligible youth ages 14-21 with opportunities to prepare for adulthood through appropriate service delivery, referral, planning, and support. In collaboration with public/private partnerships and community-based partners, GARYSE creates pathways for youth to be connected, educated, healthy, employed, housed, and safe upon their transition from foster care.



GEORGIA RESILIENT. YOUTH-CENTERED. STABLE. EMPOWERED.

JOHN H. CHAFEE PROGRAM FOR SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD



Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable, and Empowered Program

In FFY 2022, 406 (78%) youth 18 or older elected to remain in, or return to, foster care in Georgia.

Extended foster care is associated with better youth outcomes, such as:

- Higher high school graduation or GED rates
- Higher employment rates
- Increased supports and connections
- Decreased rates of post-foster care homelessness
- Lower post-foster care childbirth or subsequent birth rates



Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable, and Empowered Program

To support the post-secondary education training needs of youth who have experienced foster care, DFCS utilizes Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funding.

- In 2022, 283 students in care utilized ETV (Education and Training Voucher Program) services. To be eligible for the ETV, youth must have been in foster care for at least six months (non-consecutive) and in care at 14 years of age or older. This program supplements, rather than replaces, other types of financial assistance available to older youth in care.
- The Division disbursed a total of \$1,738,724.80 for post-secondary educational expenses (tuition, books, on campus housing, computers/printers, etc.).
- At the end of the 2022 school year, nine young adults graduated with a bachelor's degree from the following colleges: Augusta University, Dalton State College, Truett McConnell University, Georgia Southern University, Savannah State University, Kennesaw State University, Georgia College and State University, Elaine Sterling Institute, and Georgia State University.



Georgia Resilient, Youth-Centered, Stable, and Empowered Program

- The Division identifies prospective high school and post-secondary graduates, and general educational development diploma (GED) recipients, by October of each academic year.
- Last year 190 students in care graduated with a high school diploma or a GED (172 confirmed high school graduates and 18 confirmed GED recipients).
- From the group of students who graduated high school or received a GED, 42% had a desire to attend college or join the armed forces.
- The Division hosts an annual Celebration of Excellence (COE) to highlight and celebrate the academic success of our youth in care.
- This year's COE will be held on June 25-27, 2024. The COE luncheon will be held on June 27, 2024. We will be sharing more information about this event soon.



Statewide Child Welfare Data Indicators



Georgia

Child and Family Services Review (CFSR 4) Data Profile

AFCARS submissions as of 10-28-23 and NCANDS submissions as of 6-16-23

August 2023

(Released January 2024)

Georgia performs better than most states in:

- Maltreatment in care
- Recurrence of maltreatment
- Placement stability

Georgia performs the same as most states in:

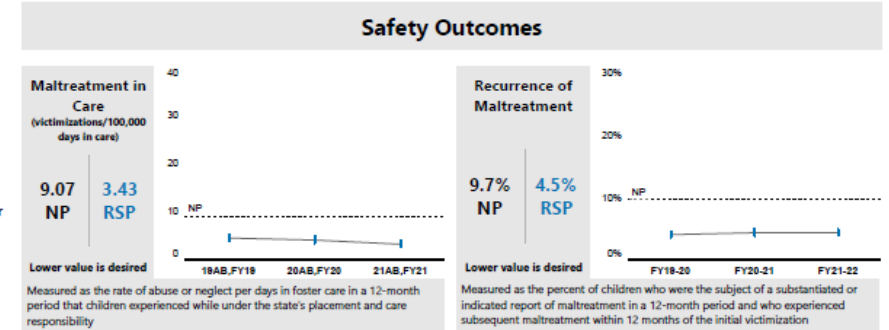
- Reentry into foster care

Georgia performs worse than most states in:

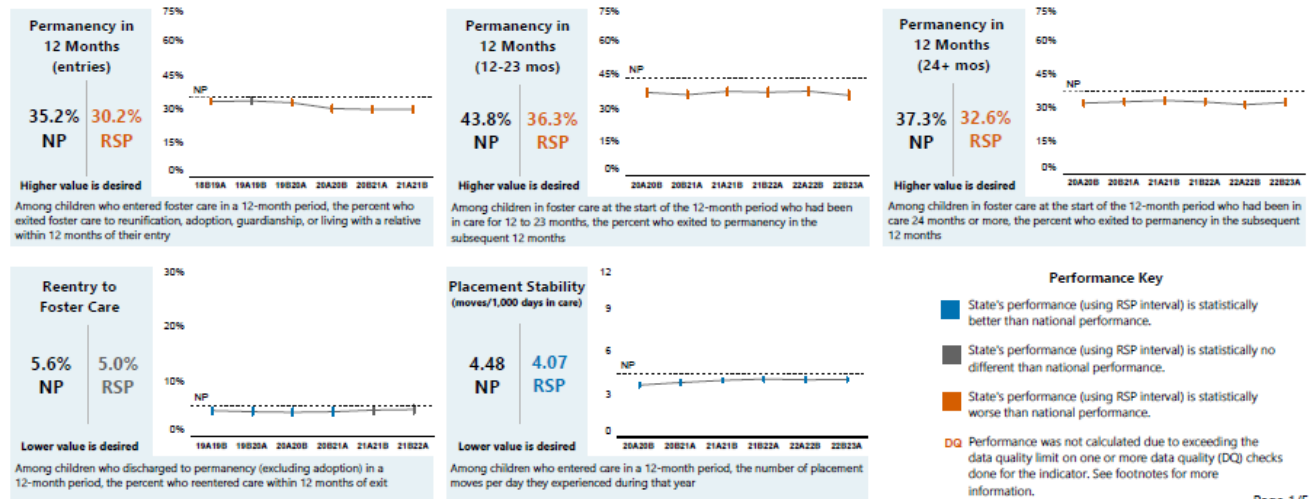
- Permanency with 12 months at entry into care, within 12-23 month stays, and 24+ month stays

Risk-Standardized Performance Visualization

Risk-Standardized Performance (RSP) is the percent or rate of children experiencing the outcome of interest, with risk adjustment. The vertical bars in the line graph represent the lower RSP and upper RSP of the 95% RSP (confidence) interval, and national performance (NP) is the dotted black line.



Permanency Outcomes



Performance Key

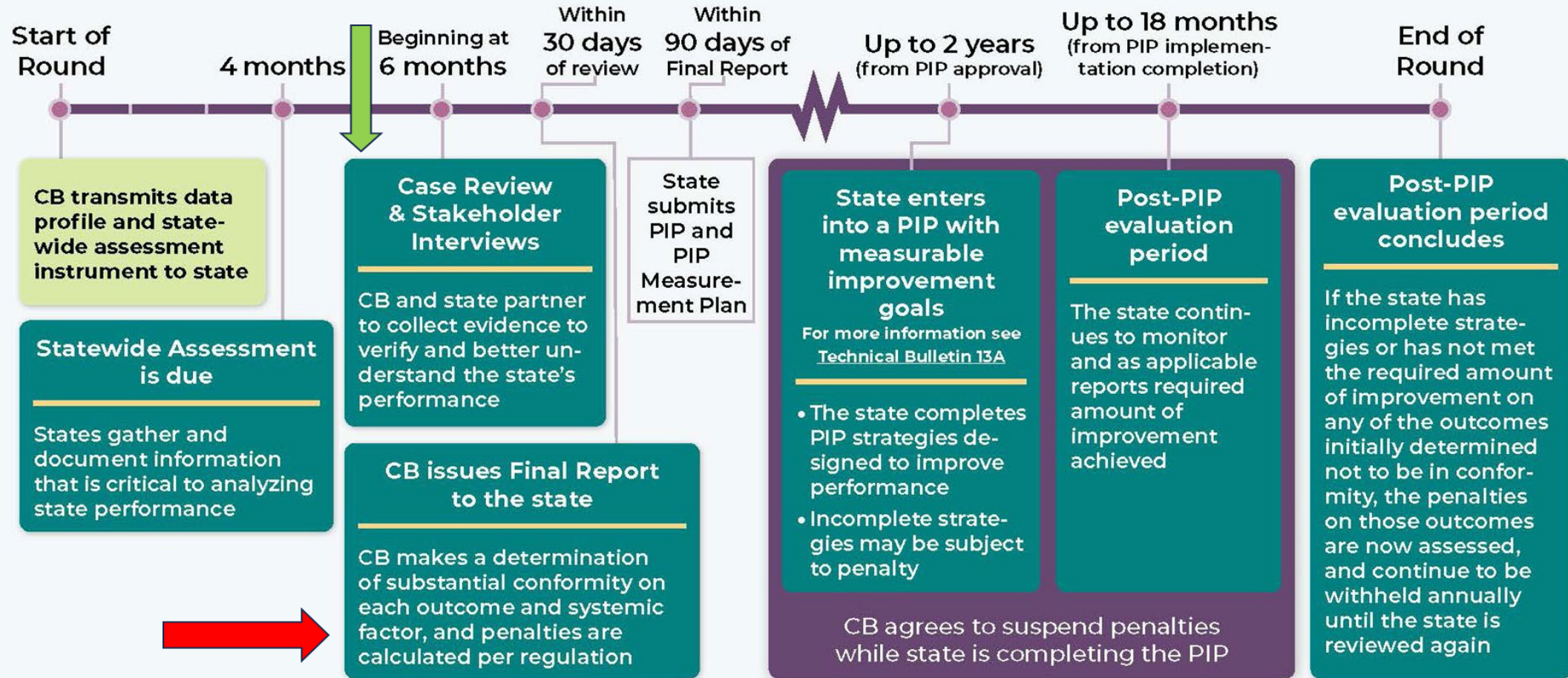
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically better than national performance.
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically no different than national performance.
- State's performance (using RSP interval) is statistically worse than national performance.
- Performance was not calculated due to exceeding the data quality limit on one or more data quality (DQ) checks done for the indicator. See footnotes for more information.

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Children and Family Services Review Data

CFSR Process As Defined By Regulation (45 CFR 1355.31-37)



Children and Family Services Review Data

The Children's Bureau team sat for 20 stakeholder interviews with staff across various sections and system stakeholders. Through conducting these interviews, the Children's Bureau noted:

- The knowledge and experience of the regional directors and C3 coordinators
- The knowledge and enthusiasm of case managers and supervisors
- The energy and dedication of the foster parents, many who have been fostering for over 10 years
- System needs, such as: autism services, additional placement types, treatment programs for men/fathers of adolescents, transportation in rural areas, affordable housing, and more behavior aides
- System strengths, such as: frequent and timely court hearings, quality on-demand foster parent training, positive outcomes for youth based on caregiver trainings, field practice coaches, and legal training for case managers.



Questions?

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