

# Child Welfare

Prevention, Protection,  
Permanency

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# The Complexity of Child Welfare



**Verbal  
abuse**



**Sexual  
abuse**



**Physical  
abuse**



**Emotional  
neglect**



**Physical  
neglect**



**Mental  
illness**



**Domestic  
violence**



**Problem drug  
and alcohol use**



**Parental  
incarceration**



**Parental  
separation**

# Partners

- **NCDHHS**
- **Wake County Attorneys**
- **Guardian Ad Litem**
- **Safe Child**
- **Alliance and Blue Cross Blue Shields (Health and Placement Agencies)**
- **Police and Sheriff Departments**
- **Clerk of Court (Adoptions)**
- **Juvenile Justice**
- **LabCorp (DNA, Substance Use Testing)**
- **LexisNexis (Background Checks)**
- **UNC School of Social Work**

# Mandated Reporting

- Any person with cause to suspect abuse, neglect, or dependency must report immediately (NCGS § 7B-301)
  - All citizens of NC are mandated reporters

# Definitions

- Juvenile: A person who has not reached their eighteenth birthday and is not married, emancipated , or a member of the Armed Forces of the United States.
- Caretaker: Any person other than a parent, guardian or custodian who has responsibility for the health and wellbeing of a juvenile in a residential setting
- Abuse: Inflicting or allowing physical injury, sexual abuse, or serious emotional damage.
- Neglect: Failure to provide proper care, supervision, medical care, or creating injurious environment.
- Dependency: Child needs assistance because parent/guardian cannot provide care and lacks alternative arrangements.



# Child Welfare Continuum

# Prevention

*Providing up to 12 months of prevention services for at-risk families to decrease entry and re-entry into the child welfare system*

## Family Support



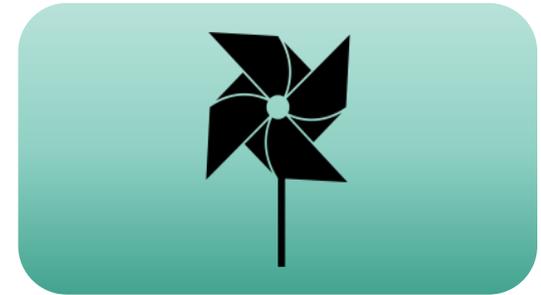
- Assists family in identifying and accessing appropriate services and benefits
- Provides respite services for caregivers

## Education



- Parent Education Classes and support groups for parents
- Facilitates support groups for youth aging out of services

## Community Response



- Community events that promote awareness of child safety
- Fatherhood Initiative series promoting positive relationships between fathers and their children

# Five Protective Factors

- The 5 protective factors, often known as the Strengthening Families framework, are research-informed conditions that reduce child abuse and neglect risk while enhancing family resilience.



# Child Protective Services (CPS)

*Ensuring safe, permanent, nurturing families for children by protecting them from abuse and neglect while attempting to preserve the family unit*

## Intake



- Receive reports of suspected child abuse, neglect, or dependency
- Staff reports with supervisor to determine whether to screen in or screen out

## Assessment



- Determine if maltreatment has occurred or if there is future risk
- “Front-load” services to keep the child safe in the home when possible

## In-Home Services



- Engage family to reduce the risk of maltreatment and keep the child safe in the home
- Act as the parents’ resource, model, coach, and mentor

# Child Protective Services Reports and Screened In Reports

Fiscal Year	All Reports	Screened In Reports	Screened In %
FY22	7488	4615	62%
FY23	8185	4992	61%
FY23	8466	5117	60%
FY25	8023	4390	55%

# Permanency

*Providing services to safely reunify families whenever possible and reducing the length of time in our care by achieving permanent homes for children.*

## Placement Services



- Provides & supervises temporary homes for children in our care
- Recruits, screens, and trains potential foster parents

## Adoption Services



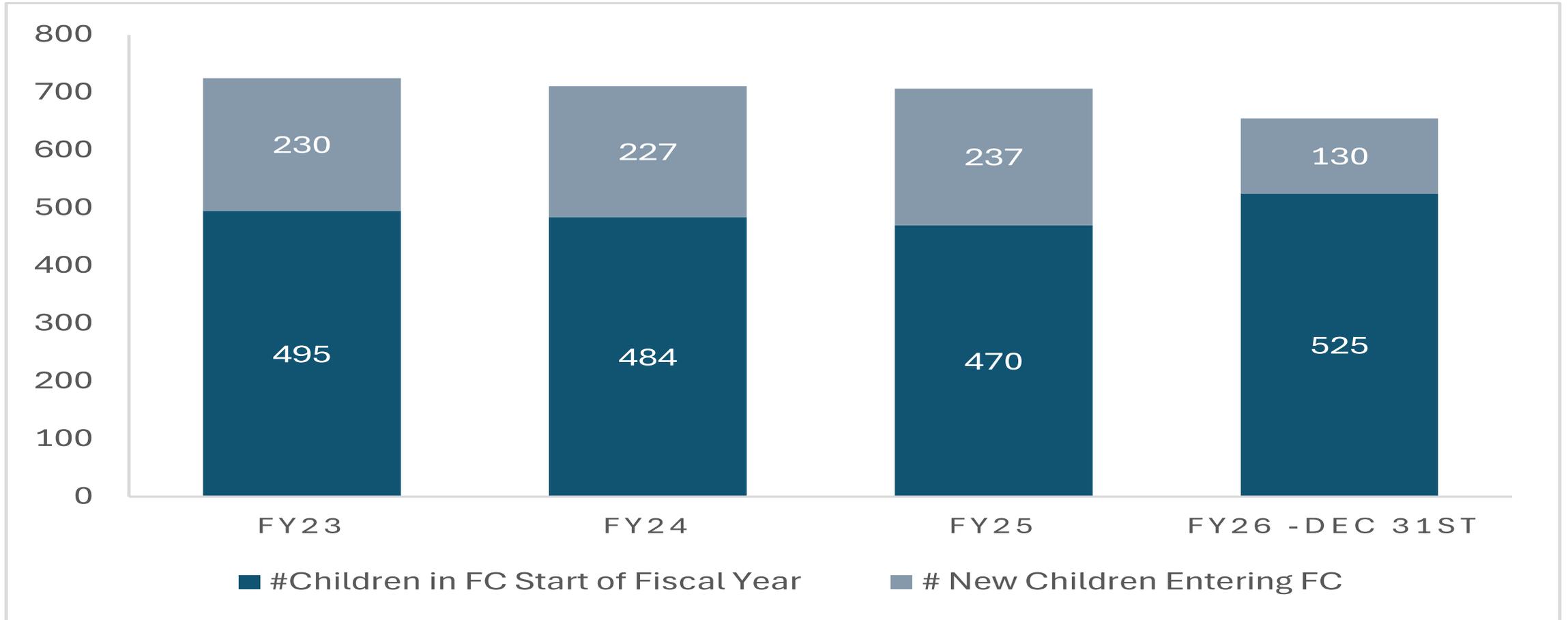
- Petitions the court for legal termination of parental rights.
- Makes adoption recommendations for children unable to return home

## Reunification Services



- Provides ongoing coaching and support services to help families and children reunite and stay together

# Foster Care Yearly Stats



# Challenges

- **Placement Capacity**
- **Child and Family Services Plan**
- **Mental Health Services**
  - Targeted Mental Health Counseling Services
- **NC PATH**
- **Child Welfare Manual and Revisions**
- **Substance Use and Treatment**
  - Meaningful Time Frames



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