



Service Performance Indicator 10 (Time to Discharge) in Ontario Children's Aid Societies: Contextual Considerations

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Introduction

Children's Aid Societies (CASs) collect information about the families and children they serve, including population demographics, service utilization statistics, and data about the functioning of children and families. The Ontario Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (OCANDS) is the first data system in Ontario to longitudinally track families throughout their involvement with the child welfare system. OCANDS was created as a data extraction and mapping tool to provide CASs with a mechanism to develop a better understanding of the services for children and their families, to track intervention outcomes, and to ultimately improve the quality of care.

OCANDS was contracted by the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) to standardize agency-level data and to calculate service performance indicators (SPIs). This information sheet details the provincial aggregate data for service performance indicator (SPI) 10. The following results are as of February 2016 and are based on fiscal year.

Methodology

SPI #10 measures the percentage of children discharged from care at intervals within a 36 month period. That is, for a cohort of children entering care each fiscal year, this SPI tracks how long it takes for them to be discharged from care. **It should be noted that the reason for discharge are varied** and includes events like family reunification and adoption, as well as aging out of care and transfers to another child protection agency. SPI 10 measures time to *discharge*, which is currently being used as a proxy for *permanency* in the Ontario child welfare system. The basic calculations of this SPI can be simplified as $SPI\ 10 = X/Y \times 100$, where Y= total number of children admitted in the fiscal year and X= number of children discharged.

Findings

The data presented in Table 1 depicts the number of children entering care and those who are subsequently discharged in the 12 months, 24 months, and 36 month period following admission.

Table 1: SPI 10: Percentage of Children Discharged within 12, 24, and 36 months*

Time	2010/2011	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014
12 months	61.09%	62.87%	61.67%	61.75%
24 months	76.41%	76.78%	77.18%	--
36 months	85.09%	85.38%	--	--

-- Data are not yet calculable.

*Data for 31 agencies as of February 2016.

Variation

Table 1 provides aggregate data on SPI 10. There is little variation for the years reported: regardless of the fiscal year, approximately 62% of children who entered care in a given fiscal year are discharged by 12 months; approximately 76% of children are discharged by 24 months; and, by 36 months, approximately 85% of children who were entered care were discharged.

Although not shown in this table, there is substantial variation between agencies across the province. One consideration is that agencies with fewer children in care are susceptible to comparisons with agencies that have larger numbers of children in care. The reason for this, is that one or two children can substantially change the discharge rate. For example, in one small agency could have 7 out of 10 children (70%) discharged in one year compared to 6 out of 11 (55%) in the following year.

Context

Rate of Placement in Out-Of-Home Care

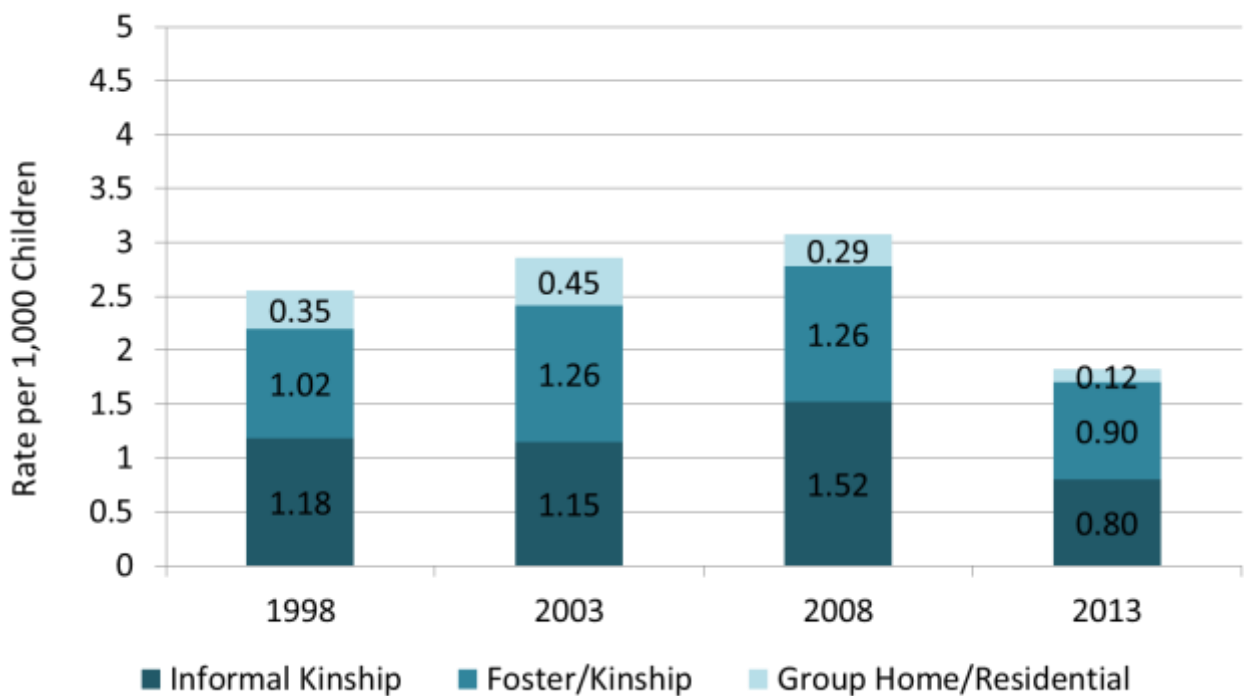
The Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect, 2013 (OIS-2013) is the fifth provincial study to examine the incidence of reported child maltreatment, and the characteristics of children and families investigated by child welfare authorities in Ontario. The OIS-2013 used a multi-stage sampling design to select a representative sample of 17 child welfare agencies in Ontario and then to select a sample of cases within these agencies. Information was collected directly from child protection workers on a representative sample of 5,265 child protection investigations conducted during a three-month sampling period in 2013. This sample was weighted to reflect provincial annual estimates. After two weighting procedures were applied to the data, the estimated number of maltreatment-related investigations (i.e., maltreatment and risk-only investigations) conducted in Ontario in 2013 was 125,281.

Information from the OIS-2013 can be used to estimate the proportion of children who are placed in out of home care at the conclusion of an investigation. In 2013, **there were no placements in 97 percent of the investigations** (an estimated 121,020 investigations). Three percent of investigations resulted in a change of residence for the child: one percent to informal

kinship care (an estimated 1,874 investigations or 0.80 investigations per 1,000 children); two percent to foster care (an estimated 2,105 investigations or 0.90 investigations per 1,000 children); and less than one percent to residential secure treatment or group homes (an estimated 282 investigations or 0.12 investigations per 1,000 children).

As shown in Figure 1, there generally has been little change in placement rates (as measured during the investigation) across four cycles of the OIS, other than a non-statistically significant increase between 2003 and 2008 in informal placements of children with relatives, and a statistically significant decrease in informal placements from 2008 to 2013.¹

Figure 1: Incidence of Primary Form of Formal & Informal Out-of-Home Placements: OIS-98, 03, 08 & 13



¹ Fallon, B., Van Wert, M., Trocmé, N., MacLaurin, B., Sinha, V., Lefebvre, R., et al. (2015). *Ontario Incidence Study of Reported Child Abuse and Neglect 2013: Major Findings*. Child Welfare Research Portal.