

Ontario Child Welfare Service Performance Indicators

Permanency Outcome - The Time to Permanency

DEFINITION

For all children admitted to the care of a Children’s Aid Society during the fiscal year, the cumulative percentage discharged within a specific time-period (i.e., 12 months, 24 months and 36 months since admission).

WHY IS THIS MEASURE IMPORTANT?

Providing children with permanency in their care promotes healthy development, encourages continuity in relationships, a sense of community and identity. However, for some children reunification with their family of origin is not possible and stable alternatives must be pursued.

The child welfare system in Ontario has multiple options through which permanency can be achieved (e.g., reunification with parents, legal custody, and adoption). Permanency planning is a significant focus for children in care, whose permanency status, both legally and psychologically, is uncertain.

LIMITATIONS OF THE DATA

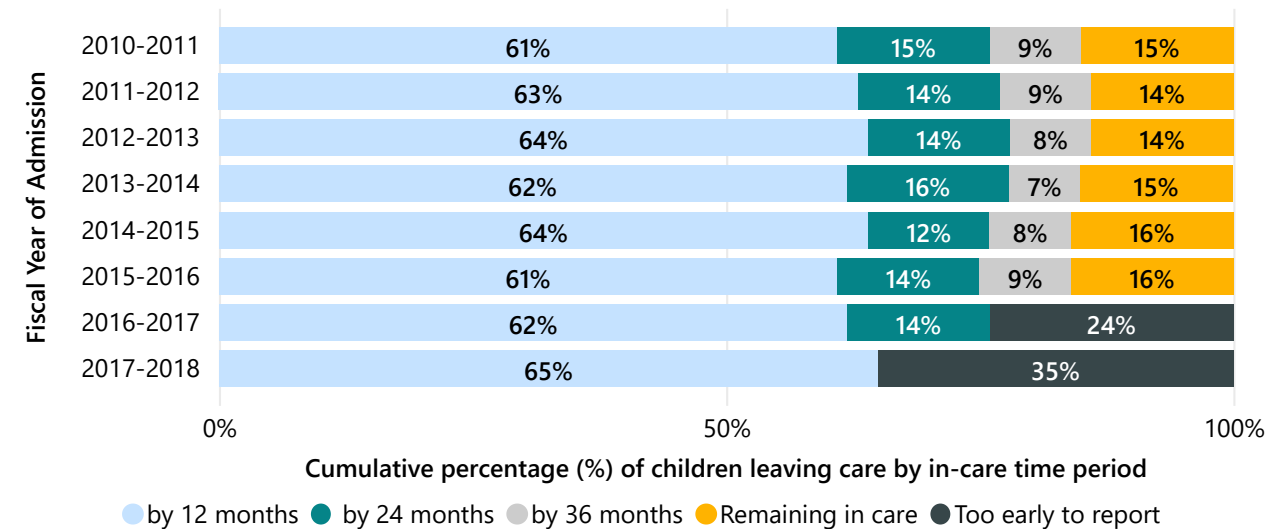
Not all discharges represent permanency achieved; however, this measure is considered a good proxy for permanency. To understand permanent versus non-permanent exits from care, data by discharge type are required. Customary care (culturally appropriate care arrangements for Indigenous children) is not included in these data at this time.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

The timing and nature of permanency may look different for every child depending on the child's needs, family circumstances, court processes, and availability of community service providers. A key factor that influences time to permanency is the child’s age at admission. Children who enter care at a young age are more likely to be discharged to certain types of permanency (e.g., adoption) compared to older children.

Young children often achieve permanency within shorter timeframes, supported by legislation that limits the allowable cumulative time in short-term care for children under 6 years of age compared to older children. An additional factor that impacts time to permanency is the needs of the child, with more complex needs associated with longer time frames to achieving permanency.

The Time to Permanency



RESULTS

Data shown above illustrate that of all children admitted in any given fiscal year, over half (61-65%) exit care within 12 months post-admission as shown by the light blue bars. By 24 months post-admission, 75-78% of children have left care as shown by the light blue and green bars. By 36 months post-admission, 84-86% of children admitted in years 2010-11 to 2015-16 have exited care, with 14-16% of children remaining in the care of a Children’s Aid Society as shown by the yellow bars.

ABOUT THE DATA

These data have been compiled and analyzed by the University of Toronto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work through the Ontario Child Abuse & Neglect Data System. Sufficient time has not yet elapsed for results to be available for the following: 36 months for children admitted in 2016-17, and 24 to 36 months for children admitted in 2017-18.

The Time to Permanency

Year	Number of children & youth admitted to care (N)
2010-11	6,771
2011-12	7,030
2012-13	6,470
2013-14	5,693
2014-15	4,757
2015-16	4,150
2016-17	3,752
2017-18	2,643