



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Presentation to the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services

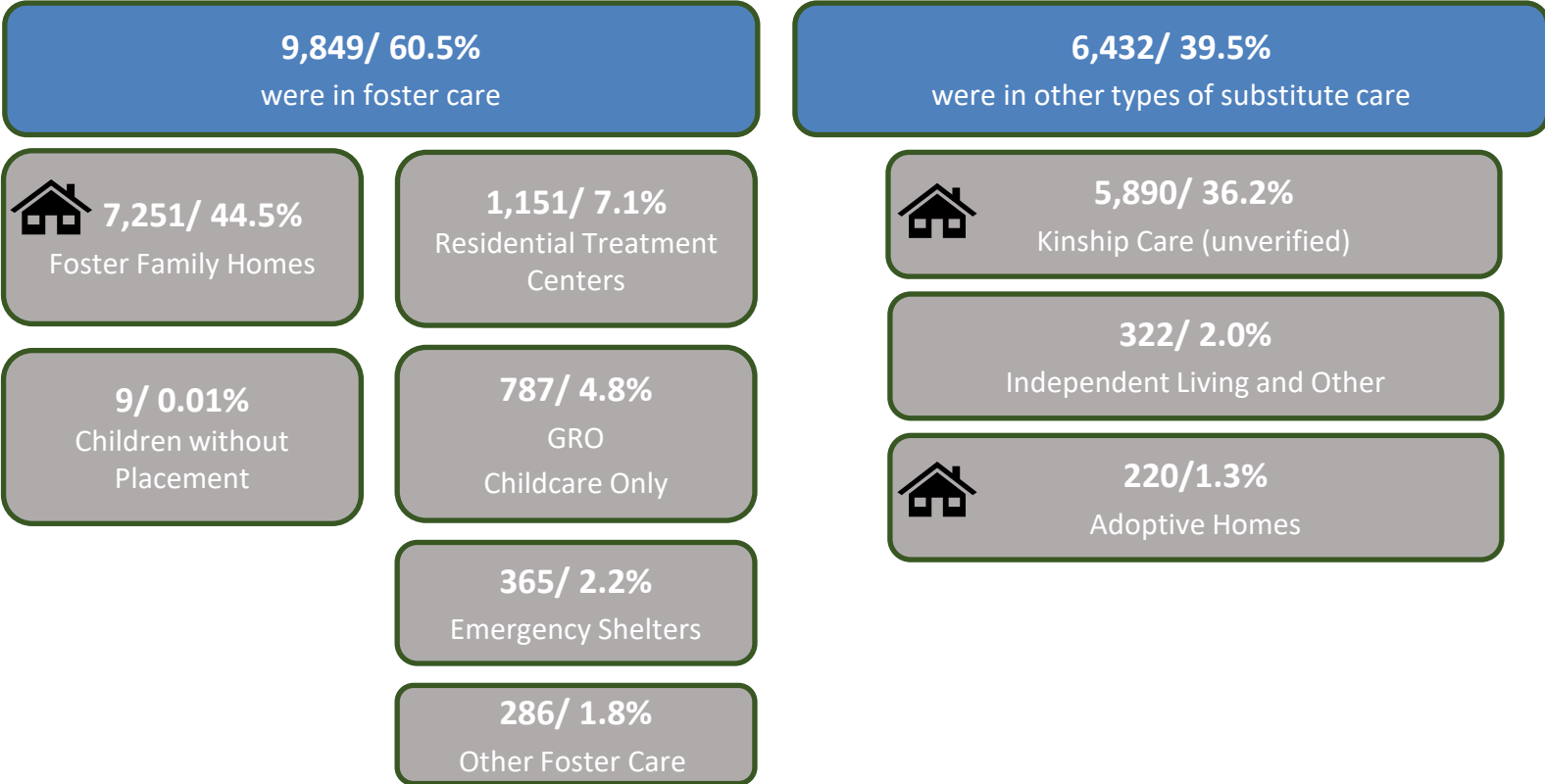
Interim Charge : Children's Mental Health

Stephanie Muth
DFPS Commissioner

September 18, 2024

DFPS Census of Children in Care

Most children in DFPS care reside in family-like home settings. Of the 16,281 children in care (ages 0-17) at the end of July 2024, 13,361 (82%) resided in a family-like home setting:

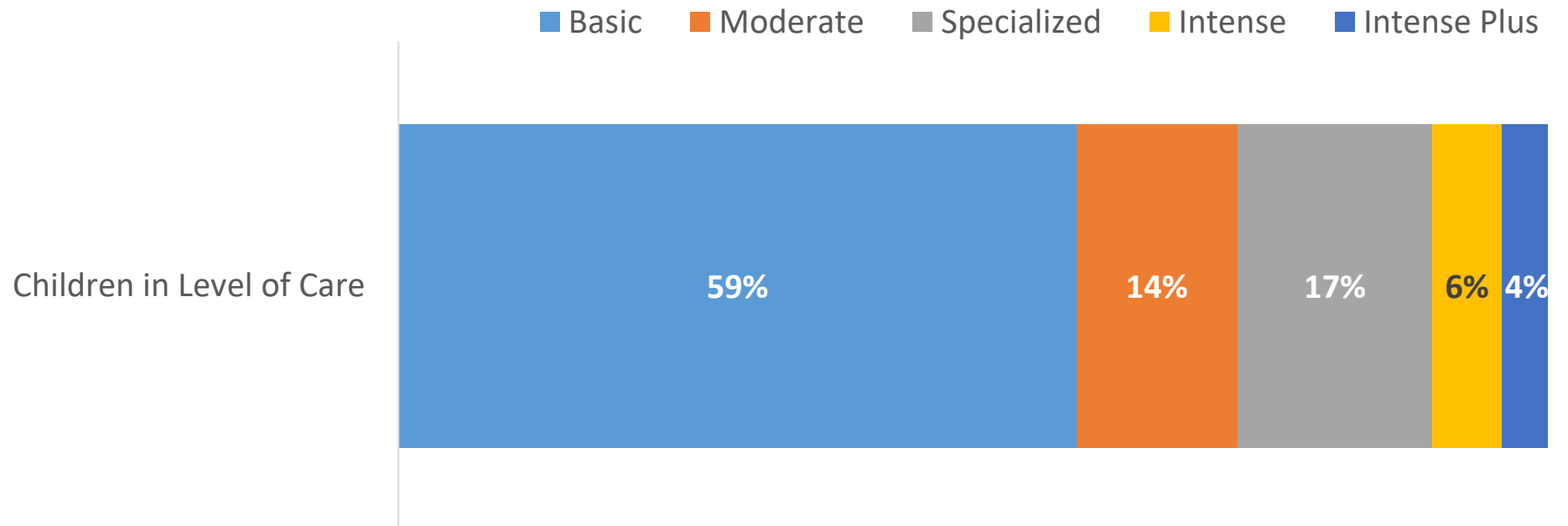


 = Family-Like Setting

Data Source: CAPS Sub/Adopt Data Warehouse SA_05s, Warehouse Data As of: 08/07/24
 Report Run Date: 8/12/2024

DFPS Census: Level of Care

Children in Foster Care on August 31, 2023



Source: DRIT 113761. DFPS Legacy Only. Excludes children in SIL and SSCC placements and those with no ALOC. Intense Plus includes Intense Plus, Psychiatric Transition, IPTP, and Child Specific Contracts

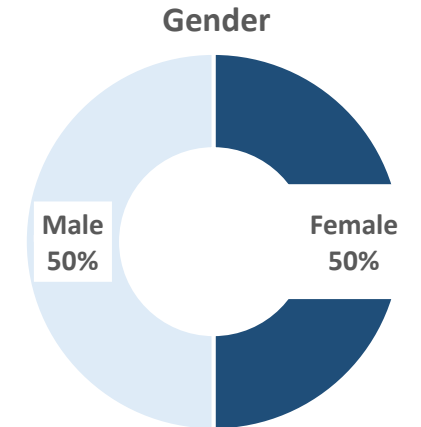
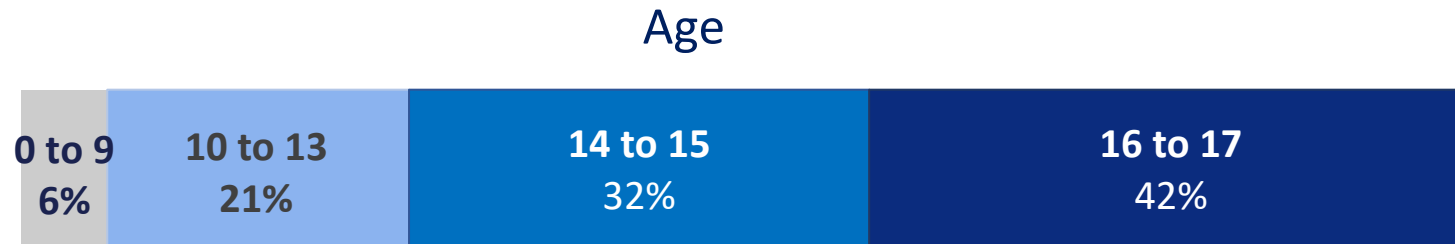
Children Without Placement

- Some youth involved with DFPS may require intensive treatment to address the impact of trauma on their mental health. Due to the complexity of their needs, it can be difficult to locate placement.
- Youth that experience gaps in placement have complex behavioral health needs and tend to be involved with multiple systems.
- While DFPS has made significant progress in reducing the number of youth without placement, the underlying behavioral health needs remain.

Children Without Placement

August 2023 to July 2024

N=632 Children



41%

Of all children who had a CWOP event in August 2023 to July 2024 (**632 children**) had been in conservatorship for less than one year

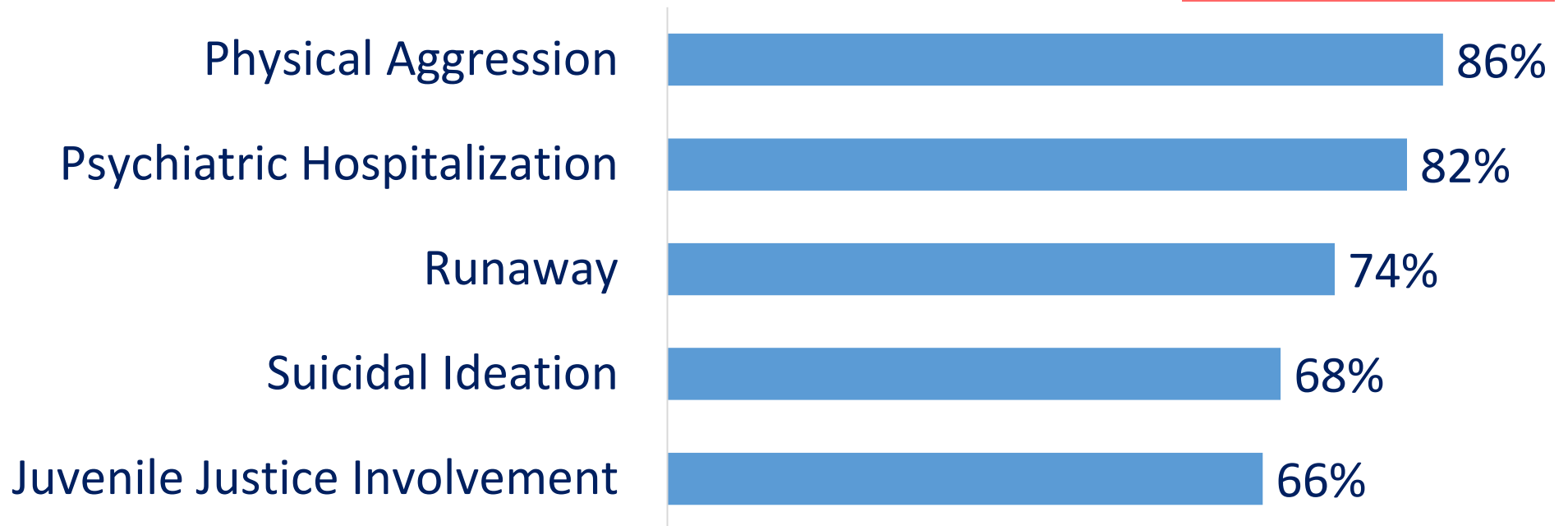
41%

Of all children who had a CWOP event in August 2023 to July 2024 (**632 children**) were removed due to Refusal to Assume Parental Responsibility

Children Without Placement

Top 5 Child Characteristics/Needs
August 2023 to July 2024
N=1248 Events

Children without placement have complex needs



Profile of a Youth Who Experienced Gaps in Placement

This is a profile of “John”, a youth who experienced 422 nights without placement over the past few years.

17-year-old youth in DFPS care for several years.

Intense Level of Care.

Multiple Diagnoses.

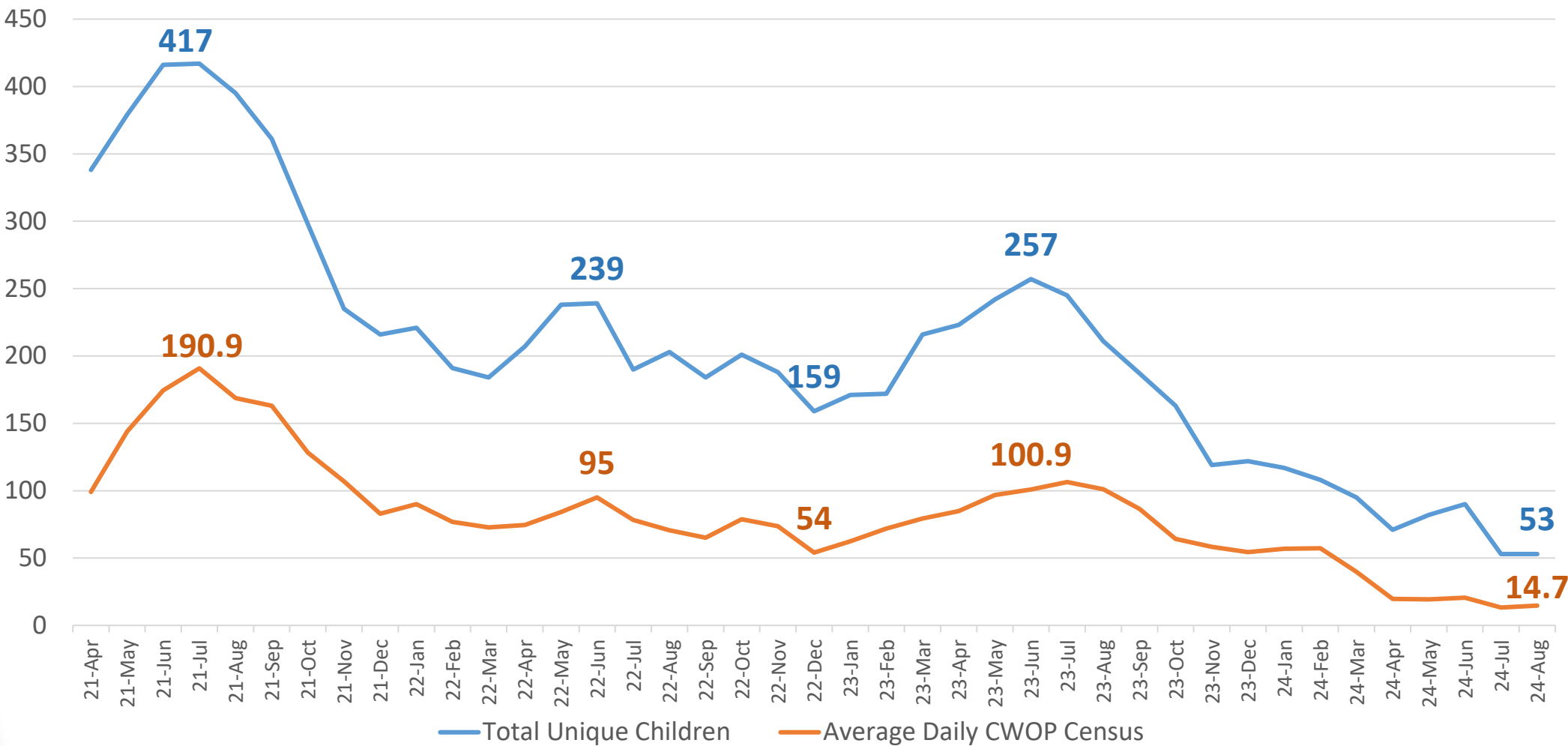
Experienced 41 placements.

Experienced 422 nights without a licensed placement, In more than 20 occurrences.

Pattern of unsafe behaviors toward self and others.

Ongoing juvenile justice involvement.

Children Without Placement Per Month

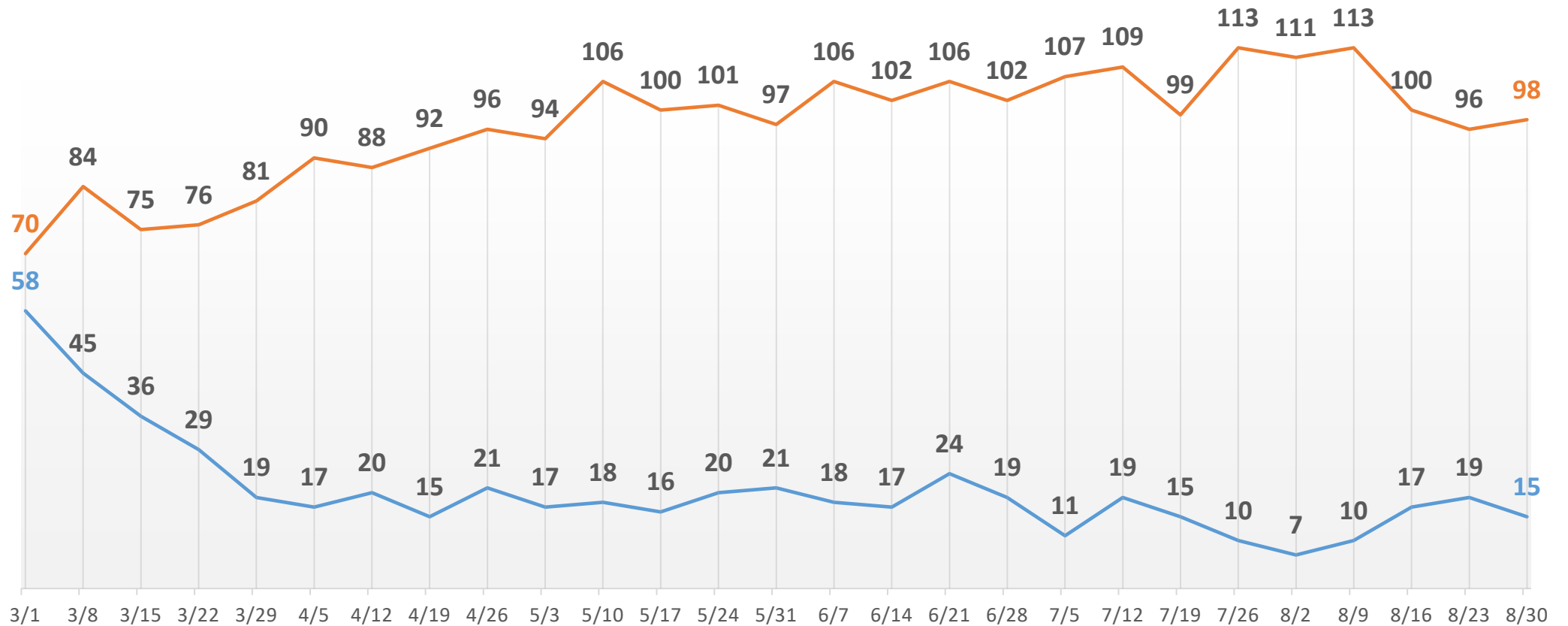


A child without placement event refers to when a child or youth was without placement for at least two consecutive, uninterrupted nights. If a youth goes missing during a child without placement event, the youth will be in a missing status rather than a child without placement event to ensure protocols are followed to ensure the safe of a youth. If the youth returns from the missing event, a new event starts after at least two consecutive, uninterrupted nights.

data source: CWOP Placement Tracker as of 9/3/24

Children Without Placement

Number of CWOP Per Day – (March to August – 2023 v. 2024)



A child without placement event refers to when a child or youth was without placement for at least two consecutive, uninterrupted nights. If a youth goes missing during a child without placement event, the youth will be in a missing status rather than a child without placement event to ensure protocols are followed to ensure the safe return of a youth. If the youth returns from the missing event, a new event starts after at least two consecutive, uninterrupted nights.

data source: CWOP Placement Tracker as of 9/3/24

Children Without Placement

Drivers of Success

Strategic System Wide Efforts

By collaborating with internal subject matter experts to understand barriers and limitations, DFPS has improved system concerns by centralizing functions essential to finding placement solutions, surveying providers to understand limits to capacity expansion, developed a community resource guide to help families in need of behavioral health support, and received funding to expand monitoring to more youth in Texas.

Individual Child Intensive Focus

- This initiative involves an intensive daily meeting process that fosters accountability and commitment among all participants to ensure the safety and well-being of youth.
- Utilizing child specific programs to identify and address mental and behavioral health.
 - Intensive Psychiatric Stabilization Programs
 - Partnering youth with mentors
 - Individualized Therapies

Interagency Collaboration

- Convening representatives from relevant state agencies and partners use collective resources, knowledge, and expertise to understand state gaps.
- The anticipated outcomes are a reduced number of children and youth in unlicensed placements; enhanced safety, stability, and well-being of affected children; and improved collaboration and communication among state and partnering agencies.

Dedicated Staffing and Supports

- In April 2024, DFPS began using an unused RTC as a CWOP location for boys ages 14-17.
- The dedicated staff are able to develop trust with the youth and help to prepare the youth to successfully move to placement through
 - establishing a pattern of positive behavior and
 - encouraging youth who previously rejected placement be active in identifying and expressing their placement priorities.

“John”, Update

Through intensive collaboration with partners,
DFPS connected John to therapeutic services.

- DFPS and other agency partners have spent hundreds of hours discussing John’s unique needs through interagency staffings.
- Progress is not linear, and is unique to John and his challenges and experiences.
- Connection is key. For John, connection was most successful through music.
- Support is robust and flexible. In each setting, DFPS staff continue to work closely with John’s caregivers to support them in meeting his needs.

Refusal to Assume Parental Responsibility (RAPR)

When the person responsible for a child's care, custody, or welfare fails to permit the child to return home without arranging for the necessary care after the child has been absent for any reason.

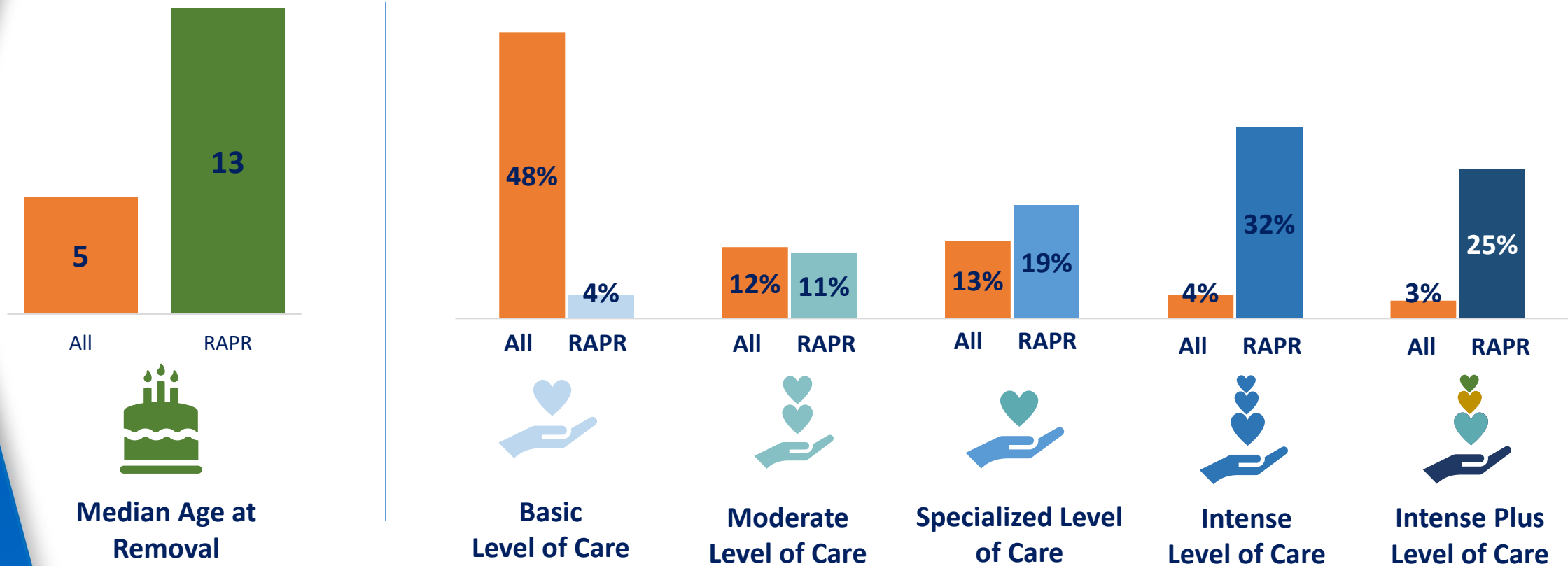
Reasons can include:

1. Lack of Mental Health/ Intellectual and Developmental Disability (IDD) Services
2. Lack of Medical Services
3. Solely to Obtain Mental Health Services

When a parent of a child with a diagnosed Severe Emotional Disturbance has exhausted all available resources and relinquishes custody to DFPS for the purposes of accessing mental health services, it is not considered abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code.

Children with RAPR Removal Reasons have a *higher average age* and higher percentages of *higher, specialized levels of care*

Children in Care on December 31, 2023



Source: DFPS "CVS Big Data" *Note: Child Specific Contracts are included in Intense Plus Level of Care. Authorized Service Level of Care excludes children in SSCC's.

RAPR: Key Takeaways

RAPR Allegations make up a **small** percentage of all allegations

Confirmed RAPR Allegations have **high** rates of removals

Children with RAPR Removal Reasons have higher, more **specific** needs

Children with RAPR Removal Reasons make up a high percentage of children in **CWOP**

Gaps in Addressing High Acuity Youth Needs

Ensure youth and families have access to a full continuum of behavioral health services before they feel the need to relinquish custody to DFPS.

- Post-psychiatric hospitalization step down services
 - Inpatient Services
 - Outpatient Services Access to intensive home-based care
- Provider availability
- Access to crisis and respite services
- Relinquishment prevention programs
- Behavioral health services for youth with dual IDD and behavioral health diagnoses
- System / Service navigation



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Thank You

Please contact
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