

8/26/2022



Nebraska Children's Commission 2021- 2022 Annual Report

Recommendations to the Governor
and the Health and Human Services
Committee of the Legislature

Submitted Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4207

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COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

The Nebraska Children’s Commission (Commission) was created in 2012 by the Nebraska State Legislature. The Commission serves as a leadership forum for collaboration on child welfare and juvenile justice reform among the three branches of government and public and private stakeholders at the state, regional, and community level. The organizational model consists of 26 Commission Members including voting and non-voting members, an executive committee, a chairperson, and several statutory committees and Commission made workgroups.

The Commission votes to appoint members of the statutory Committees to ensure that each has a balanced membership representing all three branches of government, system stakeholders, community representatives, and families and youth whose lives have been impacted by the child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Over 250 stakeholders and community members across the state participate in the Commission’s initiatives, which have significant impact on child welfare and juvenile justice policy and legislation.

The Commission continued to focus on the strategic priorities identified in 2019. In addition to Committee priorities, the Commission focused on the following priority areas during the report year:

1. Prevention Continuum
2. Placement Stability
3. Racial and Ethnic Disparities
4. Truancy and Status Offense Filings

Additionally, the Commission has continued to monitor the Eastern Service Area contract transition and the Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers.

2021-2022 HIGHLIGHTS

1. The Commission approved the work products of the Statutory Committees submitted and presented over the last year and advances them to the Legislature, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and the Governor for consideration.
2. In April of 2022, legislation was passed related to the Foster Care Reimbursement Committee recommendations. DHHS and Medicaid are working to implement additional tiers for foster care as well as Treatment Family Care.

STATUTORY GROUPS

Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee

Christina Lloyd, Co-chair

This Committee was created pursuant to [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4513](#) to make recommendations to DHHS and the Commission regarding the Bridge to Independence (b2i) Program, extended guardianship assistance, and extended adoption assistance. This Committee, currently co-chaired by Vernon Davis (Young Adult Previously in Foster Care) and Christina Lloyd (Cedars), has been active since 2012.

The b2i Program, implemented in October of 2014, was created to support youth who age out of the child welfare foster care system without achieving permanency. In 2020, legislation was introduced by Senator Pansing Brooks that extends the age of eligibility for youth aging out of the tribal court system. [LB848](#) passed and the b2i eligibility extension went into effect July 1, 2021. This has been a long-standing recommendation of the Committee and members are committed to ensuring the b2i program is accessible to tribal youth.

During the 107th Legislature, 1st Session, two bills were introduced related to the work and recommendations of this Committee. [LB262](#), sponsored by Senator Vargas, would allow non-lawfully present resident youth aging out of the foster care system to be eligible for the b2i program, including all its services and supports. [LB202](#), sponsored by Senator Pansing Brooks, would expand eligibility in the b2i program to a select population of juvenile-adjudicated youth who are at risk of homelessness and lack necessary supports. These two bills did not advance in the 2nd session.

The Committee's continued to review and prioritize recommendations from the 2019 external evaluation of the program. A copy of the external evaluation can be reviewed at: <https://tinyurl.com/B2iEval2019>.

The Bridge to Independence Advisory Committee's 2020-2021 annual report is available for review at:
<https://tinyurl.com/B2iReport2021>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a path for enrollment in the current DHHS-facilitated Bridge to Independence program for youth involved in Nebraska's Juvenile Justice System utilizing the following two criteria:
 - a. A young person must be in a court-ordered out of home placement as they age out of probation on their 19th birthday; and
 - b. Prior to aging out, the court must hold a hearing and make a finding that such placement is necessary because returning to the home would be contrary to the welfare of the child.
2. Clarify in statute that youth can be eligible for the b2i program regardless of their immigration status.
3. DHHS should develop practice guidance and/or policy focused on transition periods for youth entering and exiting the program.
4. DHHS should identify and implement best practices and ongoing evaluation mechanisms for the b2i program (see pages 5-6 of the b2i Committee report for further information).

Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee

Felicia Nelsen, Co-Chair

The Foster Care Reimbursement Rate Committee (FCRRC) was codified at [Neb. Rev. Stat. §43-4217](#) to make recommendations on foster care reimbursement rates, statewide standardized level of care assessment, and adoption assistance payments. The Committee is required to submit reports to the Health and Human Services Committee of the Legislature once every four years.

The FCRRC submitted the 2020 legislative report and recommendations, to the Legislature on June 22, 2020. In preparation for this report, the FCRRC developed recommendations derived from the FCRRC statutory charge, as well as work that has been assigned to the FCRRC through the Commission. Since 2016, the FCRRC and Children's Commission identified the need for the development of a higher level of caregiving reimbursement for children with exceptional medical, developmental and/or behavioral health needs, and the need for an in-home wraparound treatment family care model to maintain family like settings and prevent residential treatment placement.

Legislative Activity

During the 107th Legislature, 2nd session, several bills were passed related to recommendations from the FCRRC.

[LB1173](#), introduced by the HHS Committee became the child welfare omnibus bill. It contained components from LB541, introduced by Senator Walz. LB541 required DHHS to implement additional tiers of foster care by October 1, 2022 and it requires Medicaid to implement treatment family care services by October 1, 2023.

[LB1014](#), introduced by Speaker Hilgers related to Nebraska's allocation of the federal American Rescue Plan Act funds. This bill provided temporary provider rate increases for vital child welfare services, including foster care.

The 2020 report of the FCRRC is available at: <https://tinyurl.com/FCRRCReport2020>.

STATUTORY GROUPS

Juvenile Services Committee

Nick Juliano and Deb VanDyke-Ries, Co-Chairs

The Juvenile Services Committee (JSC) of the Nebraska Children’s Commission and the Nebraska Coalition for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ) present their joint report as a thoughtful contribution to the reform of juvenile justice in Nebraska and in compliance with Neb. Rev. Stat. 43-4203 and 43-2412(1) (b). In order to enhance collaboration, coordinate initiatives, and increase the impact and efficacy of juvenile justice reform in Nebraska, the JSC and NCJJ have begun collaborating in the form of joint meetings, joint reporting, and inclusive workgroups. In October of 2020, the Committee reexamined its goals and determined three new workgroups would be created: Racial and Ethnic Disparities, Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers and Needs Assessment.

Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup

A’Jamal Byndon and Stanford Bradley, Co-chairs

The R/ED Workgroup was established by the Committee to examine racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system and create a plan to address disparities within the scope of the Committee’s purpose. Initial discussion centered around data, both what is currently available and what is missing. It was determined that mapping statewide system points and matching them with race and ethnicity data would be the inaugural priority of the workgroup. A statewide systems map was created in collaboration with JJI. The map can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/JJ-System-Map> and narrative here: <https://tinyurl.com/System-Map-Narrative>.

During this report year, the R/ED Workgroup focused on the impact of our education system on youth. Youth in the juvenile justice system experience higher rates of student discipline and are often placed in alternative settings.

Recommendations for Legislators:

1. Introduce an interim study to examine the intersection between education and the juvenile justice system.
2. Introduce legislation to create an office within the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) dedicated to system involved youth.

Youth Rehabilitation and Treatment Centers (YRTC) Workgroup

Bobbi Taylor and Rico Zavala, Co-chairs

The YRTC Workgroup was established by the Committee to reexamine our statutory charge related to the YRTC’s and to assess the 5-year plan the Department of Health and Human Services submitted to the Legislature on March 15, 2021 in accordance with [§43-427](#). The Workgroup reviewed and discussed the 5-year plan and identified 3 priority areas: Youth Voice, Accreditation and Family Engagement. During the next report year the Workgroup plans to gather additional information and plan collaboratively with DHHS and other stakeholders in order to strengthen the supports and services youth receive at the YRTC’s.

The YRTC Workgroup was established by the Committee to reexamine our statutory charge related to the YRTC’s and to assess the 5-year plan the Department of Health and Human Services submitted to the Legislature on March 15, 2021 in accordance with [§43-427](#). The Workgroup reviewed and discussed the

5-year plan and identified 4 priority areas: Youth Voice, Accreditation, Family Engagement and Racial and Ethnic Disparities.

Recommendations for DHHS

1. Youth voice must be centered in the development of policies and practices within the YRTC system.

In 2020, Legislators passed [LB1140](#), requiring DHHS to create a 5-year plan by March 15, 2021. At the time of its original submission, there were no youth or young adult members involved in the creation of the plan. To their credit, DHHS has since engaged one young adult to assist in the ongoing development of the YRTC plan. Although this is progress, best practice is to have multiple young adult perspectives represented. We encourage DHHS to explore ways to expand youth voice in the continued development of their plan. One way to increase young adult engagement would be to provide compensation for time spent in meetings and preparing for meetings.

Youth placed at a YRTC should also have an avenue to provide input and engage in leadership opportunities. Previously, Project Everlast facilitated groups at the Geneva campus. This program was an effective way for youth to develop connections and leadership skills. The YRTC Workgroup recommends that Project Everlast or other leadership program models be reinstated and developed for youth at each of the YRTC facilities.

Currently, the Kearney and Hastings campuses have a Youth Council where youth are giving input on practices within their facility. According to Performance Based Standards (PBS), the YRTC's conduct an exit interview with youth about their experiences during their time at the facility. YRTC compliance staff review surveys and send feedback to leadership. The Committee and Workgroup encourage DHHS to invest in strategies to expand youth engagement.

2. DHHS should ensure all YRTC staff and leadership are trained in a nationally recognized or evidenced based family engagement model.

While efforts are being made to engage families, there is no consistent model DHHS uses in working with families. YRTC staff at every level should be trained in methods of engagement for both youth and families. Theoretical framework such as Families Thrive™ or other national models should be considered for implementation.

A small group of YRTC staff was able to attend a training in December of 2021. DHHS leadership reports they are currently working on a plan to train additional staff in the future.

[Families Thrive™ Training \(nspnetwork.org\)](https://nspnetwork.org)

3. DHHS should create a plan to consistently measure and address racial and ethnic disparities.

Although the YRTC's don't have discretion when it comes to which youth who are ordered to its facilities, there remains an ability to examine and address racial and ethnic disparities for youth during their time at the YRTC's. Data must be consistently collected and aggregated by race and ethnicity. The workgroup has identified four opportunities for action:

1. Add a section focused on racial and ethnic disparity (R/ED) data/outcomes to the 5-year plan.

2. In collecting data on race and ethnicity, best practice is for youth and/or families to self-report their own demographics. If this is not currently being practiced, the workgroup recommends updating data collection methods be in line with current standards for classifying race/ethnicity.
3. Outcomes for youth at the YRTC's should be measured, aggregated by race/ethnicity, and be shared regularly with stakeholders.
4. Addressing disparities within our juvenile justice system requires authentic engagement within teams of professionals who work with youth. It is recommended that the YRTC teams consider a SWOT (Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats) Analysis centered on racial and ethnic disparities to create a culture where staff can build trust and identify any areas of need within their teams. To address disparities with youth and families, we must first create an environment among professionals where we are able to talk openly about race issues.

4. DHHS should explore alternative accreditation options for the YRTC's.

The YRTC 5-Year Plan identified accreditation and licensing as an area to address. Currently, the YRTC's are accredited through the American Correctional Association (ACA). There is question about whether the ACA best aligns with the rehabilitation and treatment focus of the YRTC model. The YRTC Workgroup explored the Council on Accreditation (COA) Juvenile Justice Residential (JJR) Services standards as an option for alternative accreditation. Workgroup leaders along with YRTC leadership met with representatives from COA to explore work being done in other states and the potential options for implementation in Nebraska. The JJR standard appears to be the most fitting accreditation currently available, but it is unclear what practical benefits would result from implementation within our YRTC system. A change in accreditation is a significant undertaking and would require additional funding, training, staffing and an overall shift in approach.

Alternative licensing options have also been explored by this Workgroup. DHHS could create a license specifically for the YRTC's. This option may be beneficial, though any license created would ultimately form a system where one division of DHHS has oversight over the other. This potential mechanism for oversight may not deliver the desired outcomes due to the dilemma of internal oversight. DHHS should continue exploring options for alternative licensure and/or accreditation with this workgroup and other stakeholders.

Acknowledgement

The YRTC Workgroup would like to acknowledge DHHS, specifically Mark LaBouchardiere for his continued partnership and commitment to improvement.

Future Priority

In addition to the above recommendations, the Workgroup has been asked by the Juvenile Services Committee to explore next steps for developing recommended criteria for youth admission to the YRTC's. This recommendation has historic roots with the Committee, as it was part of the 2013 Phase I Strategic Recommendations. The report recommended tasking the Juvenile Services Committee with "developing a decision matrix to establish YRTC entrance criteria that takes into account appropriate screening and assessment scores, seriousness of the crime, and the need for more intense interventions because of previous intervention failure" (pg. 5). Additionally, the report recommended tasking the committee with

researching other states programs and information from national experts and research. There remains a need for further education to help ensure we are properly screening youth prior to admitting them to a YRTC facility. The Committee acknowledges this is a dynamic issue surrounding proper education of decision-making parties as well as examining and expanding our service array. There are clear gaps in our system of care for youth in the justice system who need out of home care.

Access to Services Workgroup

Julie Smith, Co-chairs

The Access to Treatment Services Workgroup was previously established as the “Needs Assessment” Workgroup to assess in-state residential treatment options for youth and identify gaps to be addressed. The Workgroup is reviewing data to aid in the assessment process. During the report year, The Workgroup examined the [Probation District Needs Analysis](#) from May of 2021, which identified challenges in service access and highlighted service needs in each district. The Workgroup scope is being broadened to examine the wider array of treatment services for youth. During the next report year, the group will redefine its scope and identify underlying issues contributing to treatment service access limitations and delays in our state.

The Juvenile Services Committee’s 2021-2022 Annual Report is available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/JSCReport2021>

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Normalcy should extend to youth in care in all systems, as appropriate and considering parental preference. The Committee recommends the statutory requirement for Normalcy Plans and Reports pursuant to [§43-4706](#) be amended to include facilities which provide treatment services as a component of the placement, including treatment group homes and psychiatric residential treatment facilities.
2. Stakeholders should make every effort to make decisions that enhance and maximize normalcy and avoid placements and circumstances that are inherently not normal.
3. DHHS and Saint Francis should designate Transition Youth Advocates in each service area, modeled after the ICWA Advocate structure.
4. Children, youth and foster caregivers should be given the opportunity to be present at every court hearing. When this is not possible, court information forms should be available in every jurisdiction and provided to youth and their foster caregivers.
5. The court forms must have a party responsible for ensuring youth and foster caregivers receive forms and have a user-friendly way to return those forms to the Court prior to the hearing ([§43-1314](#)).

Strengthening Families Act Committee

Misty Frasier, Co-Chair

The Nebraska Strengthening Families Act (NSFA) Committee was created as the Normalcy Task Force under the umbrella of the Nebraska Children’s Commission (Commission) to monitor and make recommendations related to Nebraska’s implementation of the Federal Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Public Law 113-183 (referred to in this document as the “Strengthening Families Act” or “SFA”). Nebraska’s Strengthening Families Act, [§43-4702](#), implements the federal SFA and initial stakeholder recommendations. Both the federal and state SFA represent a culture shift to allow children and youth to grow and thrive in less restrictive, more family-like environments and participate in age and developmentally appropriate activities. Additional legislation related to best practices in implementation was passed as [LB225 \(2017\)](#).

The Committee has met quarterly for the last year to accomplish its statutory mandates. The Committee has two active Subcommittees to fulfill the detailed work of prioritized initiatives. These include: 1) the Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA) Subcommittee and 2) Normalcy Subcommittee.

Summary of Activities 2021-2022

During FY2021, the NSFA Committee, with the help of three branch participation, and community representatives, made great progress continuing to advance culture changes within the child welfare and juvenile justice systems to ensure normalcy for youth in out-of-home placements, identifying victims of child sex and labor trafficking, and ensuring supports are in place for a successful transition to adulthood.

The need for the NSFA Committee to remain as a statutory body has been reviewed. Great progress has been made by the Committee, and further work remains.

The Normalcy Subcommittee reviewed Normalcy Plans and Reports submitted by child-caring agencies

(pursuant to [§43-4706](#)) and is working closely with agencies to strengthen normalcy opportunities for youth.

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) implemented Transition Age Youth Advocates, also referred to as Independent Living (IL) “Champions” in response to a recommendation in the SFA 2020-2021 report. A proposal for Transition Age Youth Advocates was developed by the APPLA Subcommittee and presented to DHHS in 2021. DHHS has since identified IL Champions in each service area and plans to provide specialized training along with regular meetings to focus on improving services and supports for transition age youth. We commend DHHS for acting on this recommendation to better our system for youth.

The APPLA Subcommittee reviewed a recommendation from the Bridge to Independence (b2i) Advisory Committee, also under the Nebraska Children’s Commission. The b2i Committee recommended that DHHS implement an evidence-informed, strengths-based, youth led intervention for case management that includes older youth and young adult best practices. Due to the connection between transition age youth and the b2i program, the APPLA Subcommittee reviewed this recommendation and found it to be relevant to youth in foster care as well.

The Trafficking Subcommittee is currently inactive but remains a point of contact and collaboration for youth related trafficking services, data and resources. Nebraska Children and Families Foundation (NCF) received a grant in 2021 to address Trafficking in Nebraska. The NSFA Committee will continue to monitor developments in Nebraska’s trafficking response system.

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STATUTORY GROUPS

The following recommendations were discussed with DHHS in 2021 to help strengthen outcomes for youth ages 14-18. DHHS has implemented some of the APPLA recommendations and continues to develop specialized skills in their workforce to help support older youth.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DHHS

1. DHHS should Designate “Transition Age Youth Advocates” in each Service Area:
 - a. Youth Advocates should be supervisory level staff to help ensure continuity and impact with CFSS on their teams.
 - b. Youth Advocates should work to build relationships with community service providers and Connected Youth Initiative “CYI” in their area.
 - c. Youth Advocates should receive pay differential to compensate for their additional duties and specialized skills.
 - d. Youth Advocates should have a reduced caseload if they are not supervisory level.
 - e. ESA should designate Youth Advocates for their area as well and should participate in meetings with Youth Advocates across the state.
2. The designated DHHS Program Specialist should conduct regular meetings with Transition Age Youth Advocates to share successes, discuss process improvement, address challenges in the field, review CQI data and coordinate specialized training.
3. Specialized training in youth engagement and/or positive youth development should be made available to all staff who work with youth ages 14-18.
4. Foster parents should receive specialized training on youth engagement and resources available for transition age youth.

The Strengthening Families Act Committee 2021-2022 Annual Report is available at:
<https://tinyurl.com/SFARReport2021>

STATUTORY GROUPS

Alternative Response Advisory Committee

Monika Gross and Susan Thomas, Co-Chairs

The Alternative Response Advisory (AR) Committee was created by [LB1061](#) in 2020 under the umbrella of the Nebraska Children’s Commission (Commission) to examine the department’s alternative response to reports of child abuse and neglect to make recommendations to the Legislature, the department, and the Commission regarding four key areas. The four statutory responsibilities include: 1) the receipt and screening of reports of child abuse or neglect by the department, 2) the ongoing use of alternative response, 3) the ongoing use of traditional response, and 4) the provision of services within alternative response and non-court-involved cases to ensure child safety, [§28-712](#).

The Committee convened on January 22, 2021 and meets quarterly on an ongoing basis. The Committee identified the following strategic priorities:

1. Expand access to legal resources for families
2. Promote the equitable provision of child welfare services within Alternative Response and Non-Court cases.
3. Examine oversight mechanisms for Alternative Response and Non-Court cases.
4. Promote stabilization of the child welfare workforce.

History of Alternative Response in Nebraska

AR is a response to allegations of child abuse or neglect that focuses on partnering with families to safely care for children in their homes. Safety, risk and well-being are assessed, and services are provided through voluntary involvement. No official findings are made and as a result, parents involved are not placed on the central registry. The target populations served by AR are allegations driven by stressors related to poverty, lack of supervision, compromised or limited coping skills and conditions with low or moderate future risk of maltreatment.

In 2012 ([LB820](#)), the Legislature created the IV-E Demonstration Committee under the Nebraska Children’s Commission. Alternative Response was a primary strategy DHHS identified in the Title IV-E Waiver Demonstration Project, which was granted by the federal government in September 2013. The five-year program allowed DHHS the flexibility to use certain federal and state funds to develop programs to avoid out-of-home placement of children at low risk for abuse and neglect. Legislation was passed in 2013, enabling DHHS to use Alternative Response to address the needs of these families and children in Nebraska. In 2014, DHHS piloted Alternative Response in 5 counties: Lancaster, Dodge, Sarpy, Hall and Scottsbluff. Then in 2018, the program was implemented statewide. As part of the IV-E demonstration project, DHHS was required to evaluate the Alternative Response Program.

As part of Nebraska’s IV-E waiver terms and conditions, the AR program was evaluated through a randomized control trial by the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. The evaluation highlighted several areas of success for AR families:

- 97% of AR families that were assessed for safety, were found to be safe.
- AR families were more than twice as likely to receive services compared to families receiving a Traditional Response (TR).

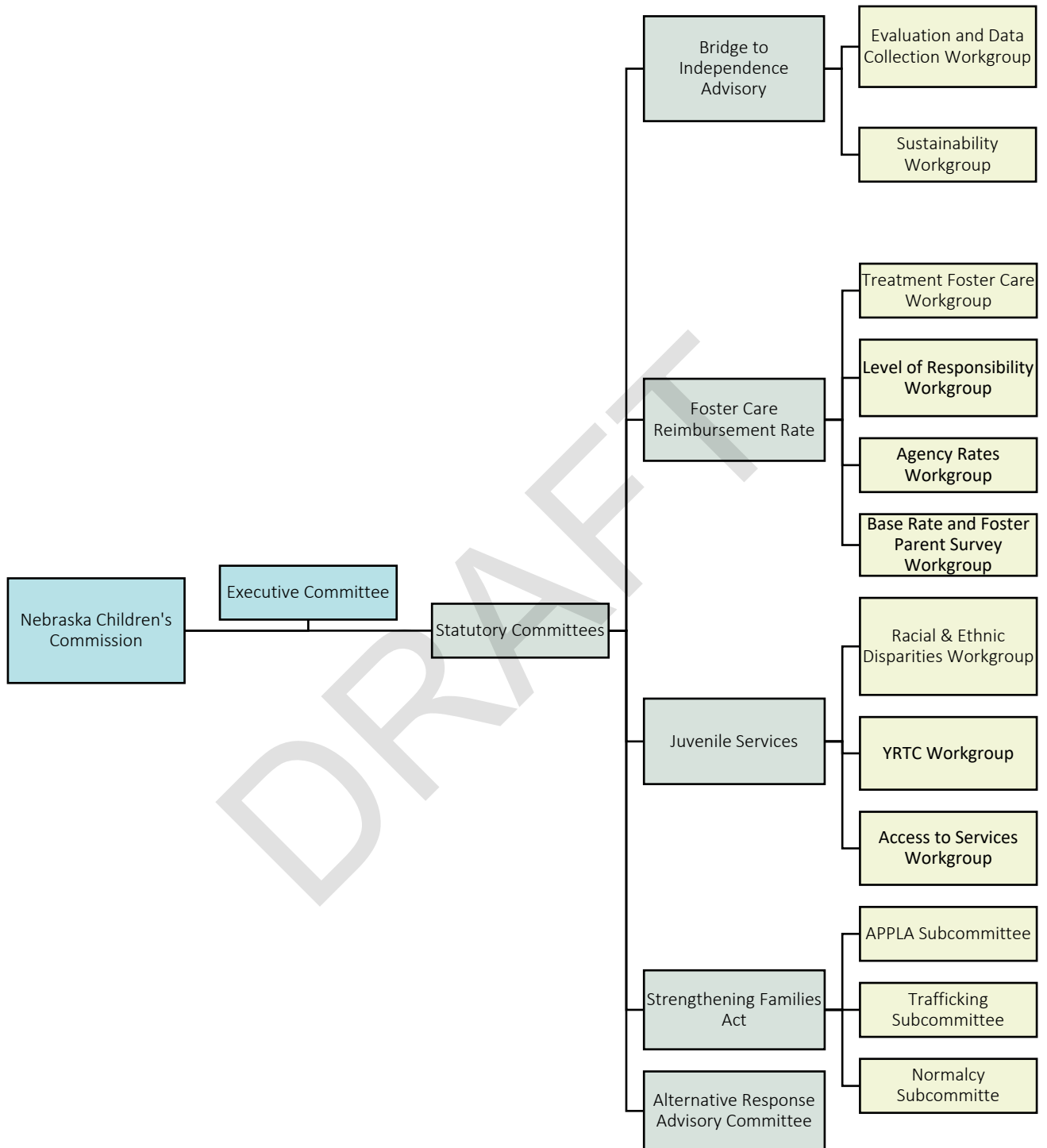
- AR families were significantly more likely to report that the support and services they received were the kind of help they needed.
- AR families reported they were more satisfied with their experience with DHHS than TR families.
- AR families have a decreased probability of repeated accepted reports, when controlling for risk level.

Additional information on the evaluation can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/UNLWaiverEval>

In 2021, LB1061 eliminated the sunset date for the Alternative Response pilot program, establishing it as a permanent part of Nebraska's response to child abuse and neglect reports. LB1061 also created additional exclusionary and RED team criteria. Appendix A demonstrates current exclusionary criteria. DHHS is in the process of updating regulations according to the provisions in LB1061. Exclusionary criteria in the proposed regulations reflect language from the bill.

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NEBRASKA CHILDREN'S COMMISSION ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



NEBRASKA CHILDREN'S COMMISSION MEMBERS

Member Name	Member Type	Title and Organization	Representation
Misty Flowers (Chair)	Voting	Executive Director , Nebraska Indian Child Welfare Coalition	Representative of a federally recognized Indian tribe residing within the State of Nebraska
Melissa Nance (Vice Chair)	Voting	Vice President of Service Delivery , CEDARS Youth Services	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Jarren Breeling	Voting	Program Manager , Nebraska Family Support Network	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
A'Jamal Byndon	Voting		Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Vernon Davis	Voting	Young Adult , Young Adult Previously in Foster Care	Young Adult previously in Foster Care
Kathy Dinkel	Voting	Adoptive Parent	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Rachel Folds	Voting	Foster Parent	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Ron Giesselmann	Voting	Executive Director , Masonic-Eastern Star Home for Children	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Richard Hasty	Voting	Superintendent and Special Education Director , Plattsmouth Community Schools	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Sara Hoyle	Voting	Human Services Director , Lancaster County	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Terri Knutson	Voting	Parent	Biological Parent currently or previously involved with the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Felicia Nelsen	Voting	Executive Director , Nebraska Foster and Adoptive Parent Association	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Lana Temple-Plotz	Voting	Chief Executive Officer , Nebraska Children's Home Society	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Susan Thomas	Voting	Court Appointed Special Advocate , Nebraska CASA Association	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
LaShawn Young	Voting	Attorney , Young & Young Attorneys at Law	Stakeholder of the Child Welfare or Juvenile Justice System
Stephanie Beasley	Ex-Officio	Director, Division of Children & Family Services , DHHS, Division of Children and Family Services	Director of Children and Family Services Division of DHHS
Jeanne Brandner	Ex-Officio	Deputy Administrator of the Division of Juvenile Services , Administrative Office of Probation	Appointed by the State Court Administrator
Jennifer Carter	Ex-Officio	Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare , Office of Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare	Inspector General of Nebraska Child Welfare
Sheri Dawson	Ex-Officio	Director , DHHS, Division of Behavioral Health	Director of Behavioral Health Division of DHHS.
Sen. Jen Day	Ex-Officio	Senator, District 49 , Nebraska Legislative Council	Designee of the Chairperson of the HHS Committee of the Legislature
Sen. Myron Dorn	Ex-Officio	Senator, District 30 , Nebraska Legislative Council, District 30	Designee of the Chairperson of the Appropriations Committee of the Legislature
Monika Gross	Ex-Officio	Executive Director , Foster Care Review Office	Executive Director of the Foster Care Review Office
Judge Roger Heideman	Ex-Officio	Separate Juvenile Court Judge , Lancaster County Separate Juvenile Court	Appointed by the State Court Administrator
LaDonna Jones-Dunlap	Ex-Officio	Systems Involved Youth Specialist , Nebraska Department of Education/Nebraska Children and Families Foundation	Designee of the Commissioner of the Department of Education
Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks	Ex-Officio	Senator, District 28 , Nebraska Legislative Council, District 28	Designee of the Chairperson of the Judiciary Committee of the Legislature
Deb VanDyke-Ries	Ex-Officio	Director , Nebraska Court Improvement Project	Appointed by the State Court Administrator

Effective August 2022