

Throughout FY25, the Children, Youth, and Families Department (CYFD) struggled to improve outcomes for children and families. After the department failed to achieve the terms of the *Kevin S.* settlement agreement—including decreasing Protective Services caseloads, increasing the number of resource (foster care) homes and community-based placements, and expanding access to children’s behavioral health services—an arbiter issued two remedial orders for compliance. Further, in the most recent Child and Family Services Review, the federal Children’s Bureau found that New Mexico was not in substantial conformity with any of the seven safety, permanency, or well-being outcomes evaluated.

New Mexico consistently ranks among the top six states for repeat maltreatment occurring within 12 months of the initial allegation, and in FY25 the state’s reported rate of repeat maltreatment remained close to 15 percent and higher than the national average. Although the state has enacted legislation and significantly increased appropriations for evidence-based approaches to reduce and prevent maltreatment, such strategies have largely not yet been implemented. In FY25, the number of children in foster care remained close to FY24 levels at over 2,000 children monthly, an increase from prior years. The department continues to face challenges recruiting and retaining a professional social-worker workforce, and turnover in Protective Services increased in FY25 after seeing some improvement in FY24. While some indicators of Protective Services performance have improved, others are trending in a negative direction. In juvenile justice services, while several indicators are trending in a positive direction, populations in secure facilities continue to be high relative to previous trends, and indicators related to safety in secure facilities raise some concern.

Protective Services

Prevention. Prevention and early intervention are key to reducing maltreatment and repeat child maltreatment, and several evidence-based options for preventing repeat maltreatment could be expanded and leveraged to garner more federal revenue and improve outcomes. In the past five years, CYFD preventive services expenditures grew significantly, though these expenditures remain a small percent of all Protective Services spending. Previous LFC reports have noted New Mexico is missing out on federal revenue to fund evidence-based programs to prevent and reduce child maltreatment because New Mexico did not have an approved Family First Prevention Services Act plan. On September 17, 2025, CYFD received approval of a revised plan submitted to the federal government at the end of August. The plan becomes effective October 1, 2025 and provision of two included services, Motivational Interviewing and SafeCare, will be eligible for federal reimbursement.

In FY25, repeat maltreatment remained close to 15 percent, well above the national benchmark of 9 percent. The repeat maltreatment measure is an indicator of how successfully CYFD is facilitating families’ engagement in secondary prevention and intervention services. The greatest opportunity to intervene and prevent repeat maltreatment exists near the initial case, and the repeat

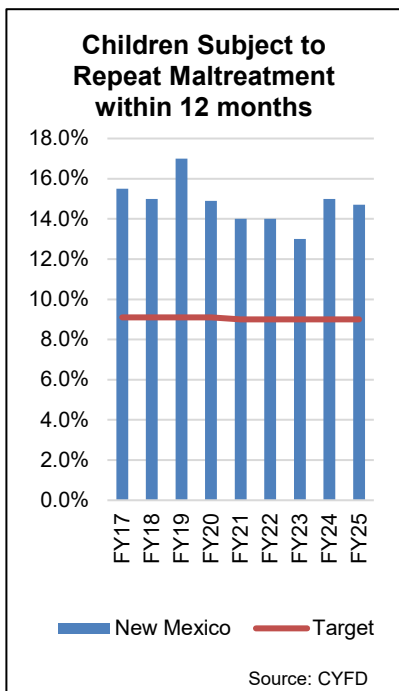
ACTION PLAN

Submitted by agency?	Yes
Timeline assigned?	Yes
Responsibility assigned?	Yes

2025 Child and Family Services Review

The federal Children’s Bureau found that NM was not in substantial conformity with the following seven outcomes:

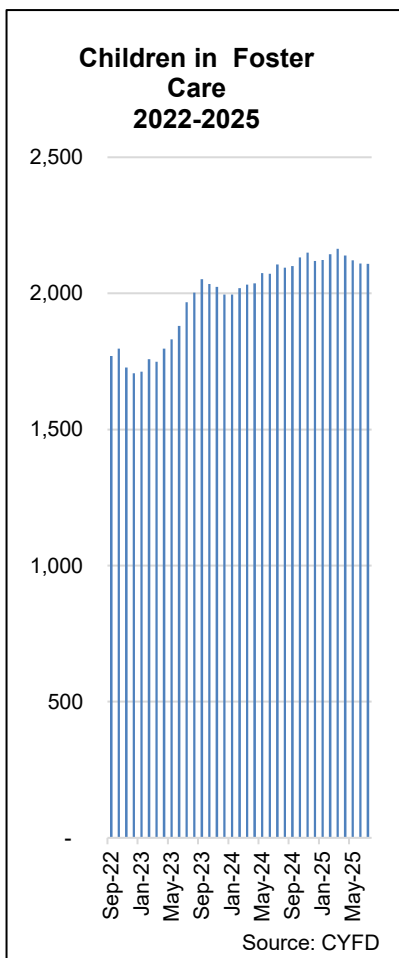
- Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.
- Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.
- Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.
- The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for families.
- Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children’s needs.
- Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.
- Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.



maltreatment data reflects organization practice roughly a year prior. Of concern, after remaining relatively stable in FY23 and FY24, maltreatment in foster care increased by over 20 percent in FY25. The department did not provide fourth quarter performance data regarding the percent of children in foster care who have at least one monthly visit with their case worker for FY25, but in the third quarter of FY25 only 75 percent of children had monthly visits.

To address maltreatment, CYFD requires a professional social worker workforce, but the department continues to struggle to recruit and retain Protective Services staff. After improving slightly in FY24, turnover in the program again increased to 37 percent in FY25.

Foster Care. The number of children in foster care in New Mexico steadily declined from FY17 to FY23, when the trend reversed. In July 2025, 2,109 children were in foster care. Throughout FY25, 764 youth entered foster care, and 564 youth exited foster care. The percentage of children who achieved permanency within 12 months has declined since FY22. In FY25, only 24 percent of children in foster care between one and two years achieved permanency within 12 months, a decrease of 10 percentage points relative to FY24. In addition, 252 youth were placed in short stays (i.e., a foster care placement of less than 30 days), a figure that, if counted with foster care entries, would constitute 25 percent of youth in foster care.



Placement of children in CYFD custody remains a significant challenge for the department. The FY25 rate of 7.9 moves per 1,000 days of foster care is almost twice the performance target, and the number of foster care (resource) homes remained relatively flat over the year. Despite legislative concerns and requirements of the *Kevin S.* settlement, CYFD opened two congregate (group) care facilities in Albuquerque in FY25.

	Budget: \$230,995.7	FTE: 1,179	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
Maltreatment							
Percent of children in foster care who have at least one monthly visit with their case worker*			92%	86%	N/A	Not reported	
Children who were victims of a substantiated maltreatment report who were victims of another substantiated maltreatment allegation within twelve months of their initial report			14%	15%	10%	15%	R
Rate of maltreatment victimizations per one hundred thousand days in foster care within a rolling twelve month period			10.2	10.0	8.5	12.4	R
Families that participated in in-home services or family support services and did not have a subsequent substantiated report within the next twelve months			70%	74%	80%	82%	G
Fatalities or near-fatalities in a rolling twelve-month period that had protective services involvement in the twelve months preceding the incident			Reported differently	57%	15%	34%	R
Average statewide central intake call center wait time, in seconds			29	76	50	78	Y
Foster Care							

Budget: \$230,995.7	FTE: 1,179	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
Turnover rate for protective services workers		37%	34%	30%	37%	R
Of the children who enter care during a 12-month period and stay for greater than 8 days, placement moves rate per 1,000 days of care		7.6	8.1	4.1	7.9	R
Children in foster care more than eight days who achieve permanency within twelve months of entry into foster care		33%	34%	41%	32%	R
Children removed during a rolling twelve-month period who were initially placed with a relative or fictive kin		New	32%	45%	36%	Y
Children in foster care for twenty-four months or more at the start of a twelve-month period who achieve permanency within twelve months		31%	25%	30%	24%	R
Foster care placements currently in kinship care settings		52%	48%	42%	47%	G
Children in foster care for twelve to twenty-three months at the start of a twelve-month period who achieve permanency within those twelve months		34%	34%	44%	24%	R
Eligible youth who enrolled in Fostering Connections upon emancipation from foster care		New	81%	95%	84%	Y
Program Rating		R	R			R

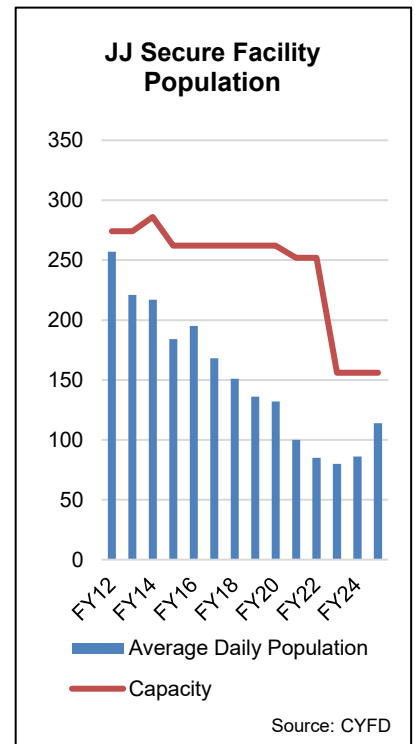
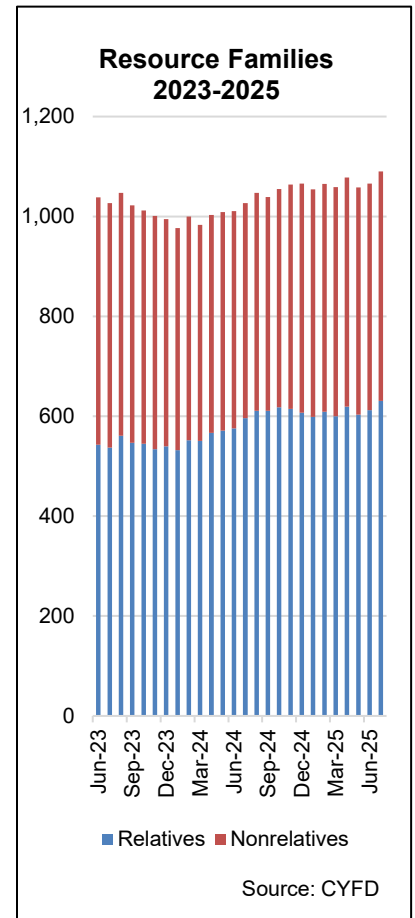
*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.

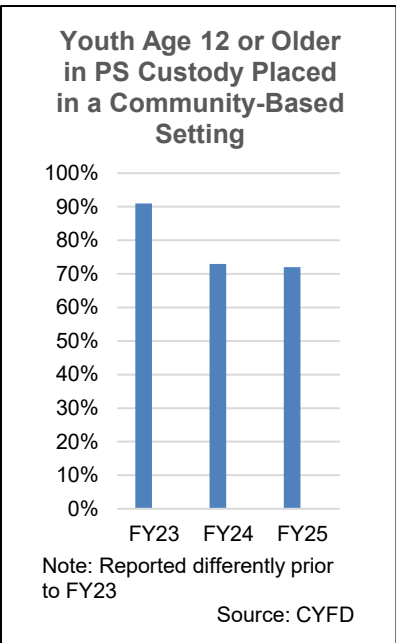
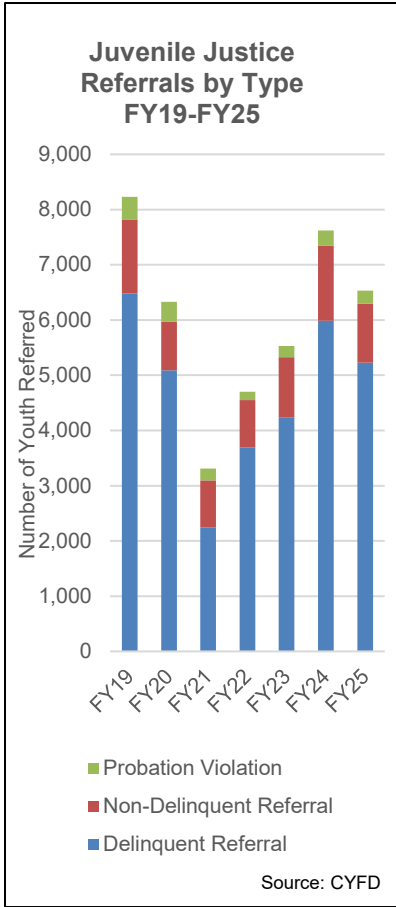
Juvenile Justice Services

Until FY24, the number of youths incarcerated in secure juvenile justice facilities in New Mexico steadily decreased for about a decade from the state’s peak as CYFD implemented evidence-based practices. In FY25, the number of youths in secure juvenile justice facilities continue to increase, from an average census of 80 in FY23 to an average census of 114 in the first half of FY25. However, the average daily census remains below capacity in the state’s two secure juvenile justice facilities, the Youth Diagnostic and Development Center in Albuquerque and the J. Paul Taylor Center in Las Cruces. And, although referrals to JJS have increased since reaching a low point during the pandemic, referrals remain below pre-pandemic levels. Within secured facilities, the number of substantiated complaints of abuse or neglect increased in FY25 and the rate of physical assaults remained above targets.

The department continues to perform well with regard to recidivism. In FY25, 85 percent of youth discharged from active field supervision did not recidivate within two years and 72 percent of those discharged from secure facilities did not recidivate within two years. Consistent with recent trends, about 90 percent of youth successfully completed formal and informal probation.

Budget: \$82,322.6	FTE: 736.5	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
Turnover rate for youth care specialists		42%	34%	21%	27%	Y
Percent of clients who successfully complete formal probation		93%	90%	93%	91%	Y





	Budget: \$82,322.6	FTE: 736.5	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
Percent of clients who successfully complete informal probation			Not reported	91%	80%	91%	G
Percent of clients successfully completing term of supervised release			Not reported	Not reported	78%	73%	Y
Number of substantiated complaints by clients of abuse or neglect in juvenile justice facilities			4	0	3	5	R
Percent of youth discharged from active field supervision who did NOT recidivate within two years			Reported differently	87%	80%	85%	G
Rate of physical assaults per one thousand days youth spent in facilities			Reported differently	5.5	3.8	5.1	Y
Percent of discharged from a secure facility who did NOT recidivate in the following two-year period			Reported differently	66%	55%	72%	G
Youth served by juvenile justice who are placed in a less-restrictive, community-based setting			New	94%	93%	94%	G
Percent of clients reviewed at 40 days			0%	Not reported	92%	95%	G
Youth aged seventeen and older at time of discharge from a secure facility who obtained a diploma or GED while at the facility			73%	74%	50%	74%	G
							Program Rating: R Y Y

*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.

Behavioral Health Services

Within the Behavioral Health Program, performance on key measures related to supporting children's to access care fell below performance targets. Most notably, in FY25, only 48 percent of Protective Services-involved youth received consultation from a community behavioral health clinician. In 2022, the Legislature appropriated \$20 million for start-up costs for behavioral health providers to establish evidence-based services that would be eligible for Medicaid or federal Title IV-E (foster care) funding. After being unspent for several years and reauthorized for FY25, less than \$5 million of the appropriation was ultimately spent for the intended purpose.

	Budget: \$53,109.2	FTE: 123	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
Children with at least one electronic benefit transfer service need identified in their CANS assessment who have accessed that service, to include placements that correspond with the recommended level of care			103%	Not reported	65%	Not reported	N/A
Infant mental health program participants showing improvement developmentally through clinical assessment and observation			N/A	93%	90%	89%	Y
Domestic violence program participants who agree or strongly agree that because of their participation in the program as a parent, they have a better understanding of the impact that domestic abuse or violence can have on children			94%	96%	95%	94%	G
Youth age twelve or older in protective services custody who are placed in a less restrictive, community-based setting			91%	85%	73%	72%	Y
Domestic violence program participants who agree or strongly agree that staff and advocates regularly discuss their safety needs, including			90%	92%	95%	93%	Y

Budget: \$53,109.2

FTE: 123

	FY23 Actual	FY24 Actual	FY25 Target	FY25 Actual	Rating
specific things they can do to keep themselves safe					
Clients enrolled in multisystemic therapy who demonstrate improvement in one or more behavioral health outcomes	80%	92%	90%	93%	G
Percent of protective services-involved youth in the target population who receive consultation from a community behavioral health clinician	66%	15%	75%	48%	R
Percent of juvenile-justice involved youth in the estimated target population who have received consultation from a community behavioral health clinician	Reported differently	63%	75%	72%	Y
Program Rating	Y	Y			Y

*Measure is classified as explanatory and does not have a target.