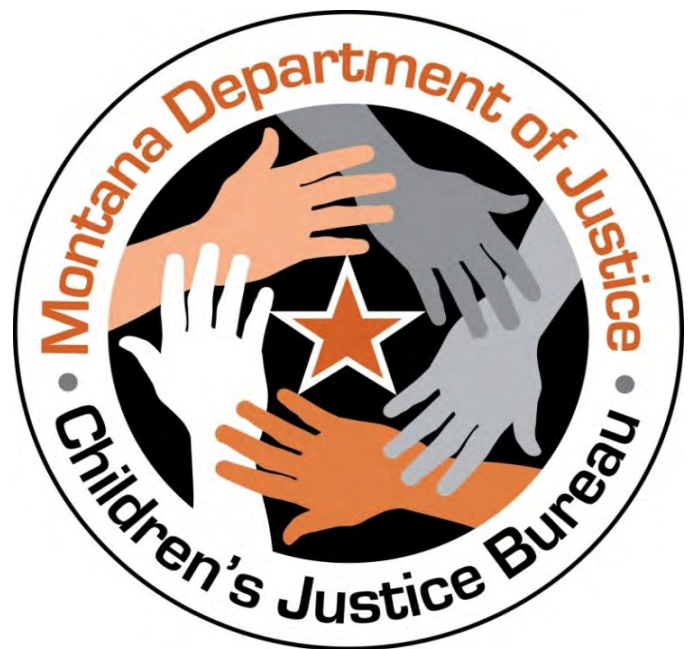


# Montana Department of Justice Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman Annual Report 2018



## Office of Child & Family Ombudsman

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## Introduction

Welcome to the 2018 annual report of the Montana Department of Justice Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman (“OCFO”). This annual report is required by Montana law 41-3-1211 and reports a summary of activities for December 16, 2017 through December 31, 2018. This report marks OCFO’s fifth year in operation.

As of last year, the 2018 annual report is organized by each duty assigned to OCFO in Montana statute. Highlights include the following:

- Citizen contacts to our office increased and 50% of contacts within OCFO jurisdiction became formal requests for assistance, resulting in a higher caseload per Ombudsman.
- Outreach is working and data shows citizens are learning about OCFO from many sources.
- Reports of drug use as a factor impacting the welfare of children in cases referred to OCFO decreased by 11%.
- Notifications involving crimes against children, high risk families, and critical incidents that require investigations by CFSD continue to increase.

## Mission

The **Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman** responds to citizen requests to protect the rights of children and families by improving case outcomes and strengthening Montana’s child welfare system. To support the mission, OCFO follows four principles, which are consistent with the standards of the United States Ombudsman Association.

OCFO is **independent** of the Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS), meaning it is separate and free from influence of the individuals whose actions OCFO reviews. We are a part of the Montana Department of Justice, Division of Criminal Investigation, managed by the Children’s Justice Bureau.

OCFO is **impartial**. OCFO treats citizens equitably and works collaboratively with all parties to improve services for the children of Montana. We may advocate certain recommendations, which benefit the individual who requested assistance; however, advocacy is always directed at improving the services offered by DPHHS, and should not be construed as supporting one individual over another.

OCFO is **confidential**. We adhere to Montana statute.

OCFO provides a **credible review process** to each citizen contacting the Ombudsmen. OCFO keeps each requestor apprised of each step of the process and takes actions that improve transparency of the child welfare system.

To request assistance, please contact our office in one of the following ways:

Telephone: 1-844-25CHILD (1-844-252-4453)

Fax: 406-444-2759

Email: [DOJOMBUDSMAN@mt.gov](mailto:DOJOMBUDSMAN@mt.gov)

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## Duty: Respond to Citizens' Requests

### 2018 Contact Data

OCFO received 317 total contacts from citizens, an average of 6 per week.

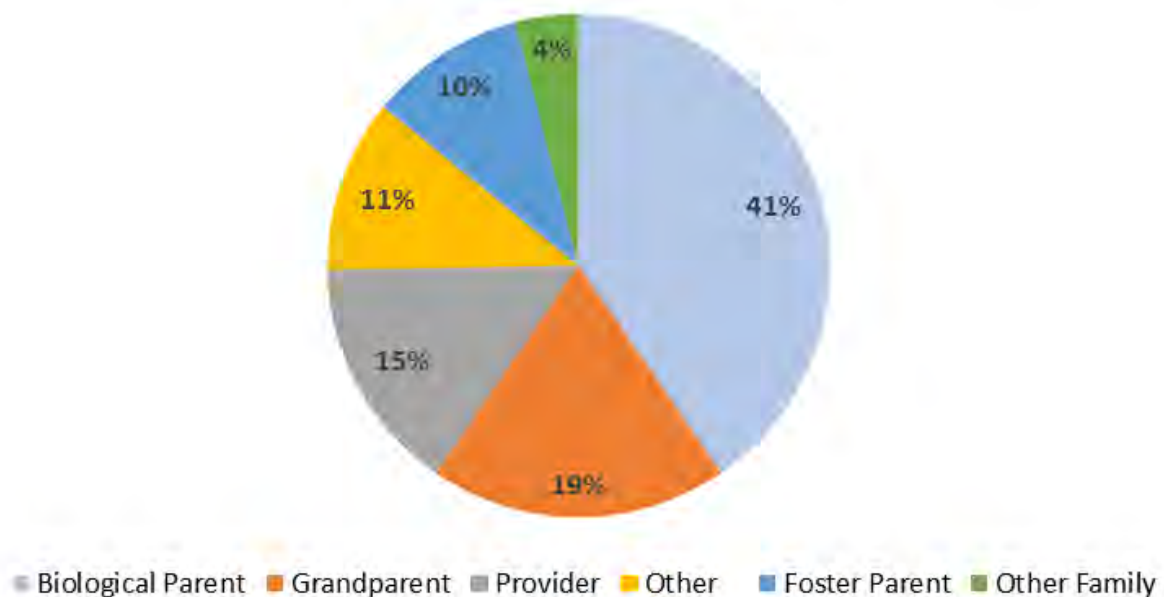
**TABLE 1: Contacts Per Year**

Year	Number of Contacts
2014	83
2015	194
2016	195
2017	290
2018	317
Total since 4/1/14	1079

Graph 1 documents the types of citizen contacts defined by the contact's relationship to the child of concern. Contacts to OCFO by providers increased from 9% in 2017 to 15% in 2018. The categories listed from most to fewest types of contacts are:

1. Biological Parent
2. Grandparent
3. Professional Service Provider
4. Other individuals not identified as family or provider
5. Foster Parent

**Graph 1: Contacts by Relationship to the Child**  
Percentage of total contacts



**2018 Contact Data (continued)**

The Child and Family Services Division statewide structure is based on county CFSD offices and each county is assigned to a regional office. The map below identifies the CFSD Regions and the percent of contacts from each Region follows:

**Region I –8%**

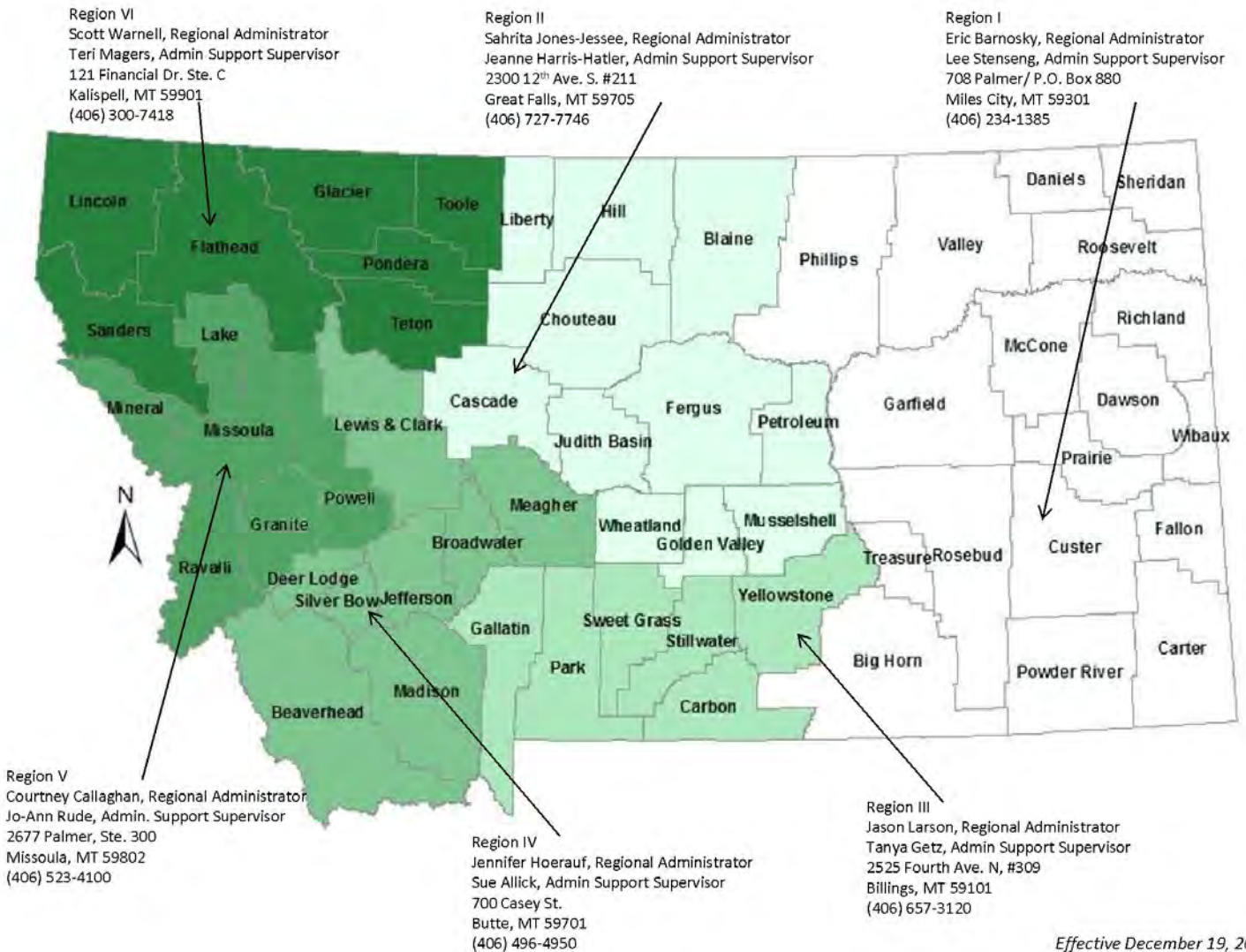
**Region II – 13%**

**Region III – 37%**

**Region IV – 26%**

**Region V – 6%**

**Region VI– 8%**

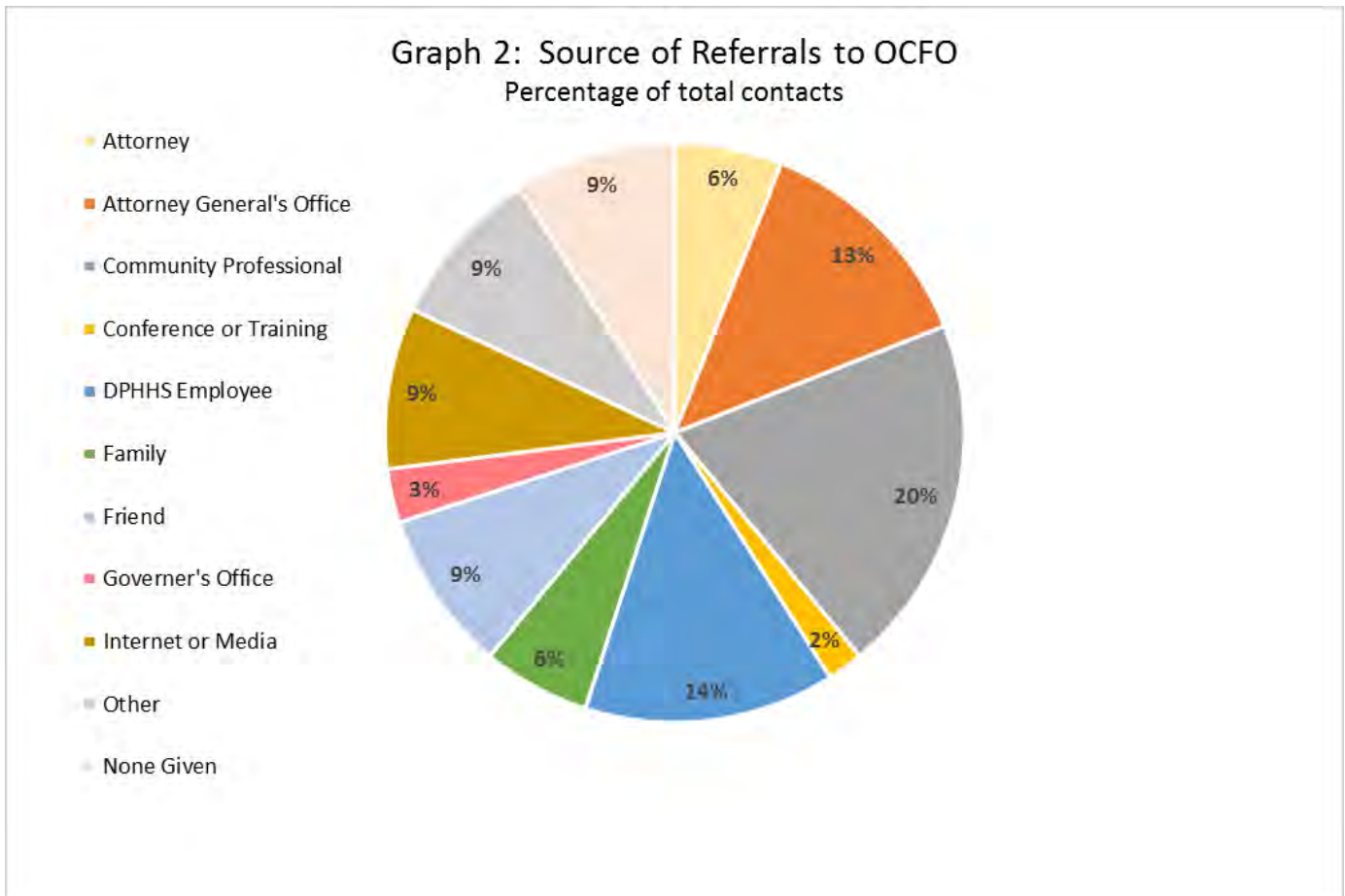


Effective December 19, 2018

**2018 Contact Data (continued)**

Graph 2 shows the source of referrals to OCFO. The primary source of referrals to OCFO were Community Professionals at 20%. In 2018, DPHHS Employees and the Attorney General's Office ranked second and third in referrals to OCFO.

The “None Given” category represents individuals who did not want to share the referrals source. While OCFO has found minimal evidence of retaliation or backlash for requesting assistance, citizens still express fear of reprisal for contacting OCFO.



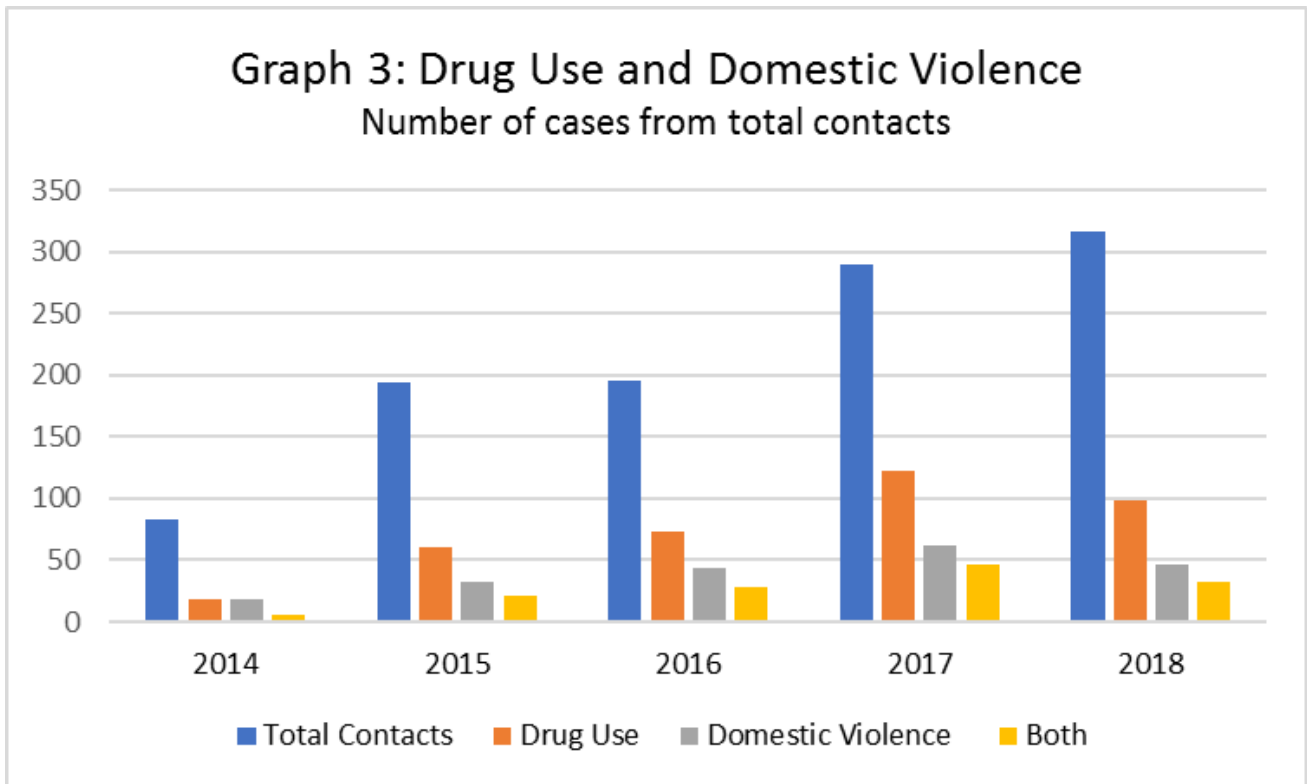
In addition to receiving more contacts from Attorneys and Community Professionals, OCFO engaged more County Attorneys, parent’s attorneys, and community professionals such as law enforcement and therapists on case specific investigations. This enhanced understanding of the needs of families and promoted collaboration. In the cases where County Attorneys were involved, more thorough information was gathered and the response to informal recommendations was faster.



2018 Contact Data (continued)

OCFO explores several types of factors and demographics to assess for trends or areas of need. Drug use and domestic violence are high risk factors for the safety of children. While OCFO saw an increase in citizen contacts, drug use and domestic violence as factors impacting child welfare in cases decreased. Reports to OCFO of drug use decreased by 11% and reports of domestic violence decreased by 6%. Methamphetamine as the drug of choice was found in 56% of the cases where OCFO confirmed drug use as a factor.

Graph 3 shows the number of cases in which drug use, domestic violence, or both were considered factors in the CFSD case over the last five years.



In 2018, OCFO added data collection of whether a child or parent on an identified case was also a person with a disability. In 2018, 17 children and 17 parents were identified as having a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act. In five cases, both a child and a parent with a disability were part of the same household.

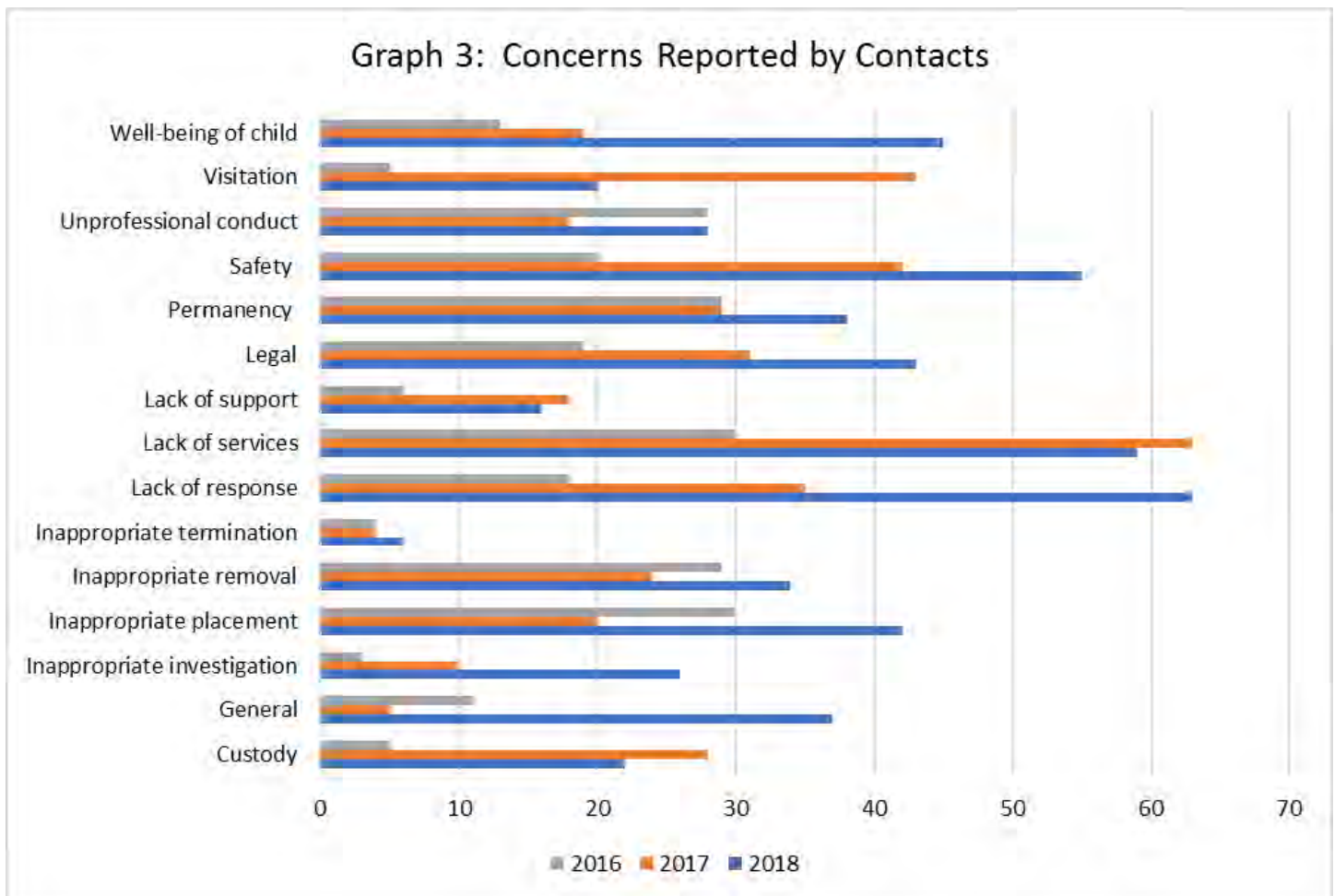
OCFO reported concerns regarding the provision of services to individuals with disabilities to DPHHS. OCFO will continue to collect and analyze the impact of being an individual involved with child protection while experiencing a disability.

## 2018 Contact Data (continued)

The most prevalent citizen concerns in 2018 about children and families were:

- 1) Lack of response.** This reflects that a citizen’s calls, emails, or other inquiries did not get a response when they contacted or made requests of the CPS, CPSS, RA or other CFSD staff person.
- 2) Lack of services.** This included concerns from parents who could not get connected to services to address their treatment needs, foster parents who needed assistance for themselves or the children in their home, and a CFSD determination not to investigate or intervene in a case where a citizen believed more action was warranted.
- 3) Safety.** This included concerns that reports to CFSD were not being fully investigated or safety plans were not sufficient.

Graph 3 shows the all concerns documented as reported by contacts.



Contacts often report more than one concern. OCFO documents up to three main concerns per contact and works with citizens to address each concern or question in the most effective manner. Intervention by OCFO could include referrals to services, meeting with CFSD to create a plan, or preparing a Findings Report.



## 2018 Notifications Data

In addition to citizen contacts, Montana code 41-3-209 requires CFSD to notify OCFO as follows:

Within 1 business day, a death of a child who, within the last 12 months:

- a) had been the subject of a report of abuse or neglect;
- b) had been the subject of an investigation of alleged abuse or neglect;
- c) was in out-of-home care at the time of the child's death; or
- d) had received services from the department under a voluntary protective services agreement;

Within 5 business days:

- a) any criminal act concerning the abuse or neglect of a child;
- b) any critical incident, including but not limited to elopement, a suicide attempt, rape, nonroutine hospitalizations, and neglect or abuse by a substitute care provider, involving a child who is receiving services from the department pursuant to this chapter; or
- c) a third report received within the last 12 months about a child at risk of or who is suspected of being abused or neglect

TABLE 2 below depicts the type of notification and number received by OCFO.

Type of Notification	Number Received 2015	Number Received 2016	Number Received 2017	Number Received 2018
Child Fatality*	6	8	14	12
Cross Reports to Law Enforcement	282	1,733	3,007	4,026
Runaways	6	46	55	44
Other critical incidents	1	32	24	30
Third report to Centralized Intake in 12 months	1,949 (Data collection began September 2015)	9,522	11,775	13,499

*\*A child fatality includes deaths by accident, medical complication, illness, and other. See the OCFO 2018 Child Fatality Report for more information.*

Cross reports to law enforcement are reports made to Centralized Intake by law enforcement officers or where the Centralized Intake Specialist contacts law enforcement to share information on a report from a citizen. In 2018, 18% of cross reports required a 24 hour response by CFSD and 42% required a 72-hour response time by CFSD.

Other critical incidents include suicide attempt, rape, nonroutine hospitalizations, neglect or abuse by a substitute care provider, and any other incident not meeting the other categories.

Each "Third report to Centralized Intake in 12 months" represents a child needing a response by CFSD. In 97% the report was categorized as a Child Protective Service (CPS) which means an investigation is required. Of the CPS reports, 19% required contact with the child within 24 hours and 63% required contact within 72 hours.

## **Duty: Resolve or Recommend**

### **2018 Outcomes**

OCFO received 317 contacts this year; 121 contacts remain open. Contacts marked “Pending Review” are citizens who indicated a plan to complete a request form but have not yet submitted one. As of December 31, 2018, 51 contacts are pending request forms.

OCFO committed to making three attempts to obtain a request form from a contact before closing it as “no further contact.” This also supported our grant goals through the Victim of Crimes Act (VOCA) grant to increase the number of requests received. The grant goal was to increase requests received to 50% of eligible contacts. This goal was met.

OCFO declines cases as appropriate per MCA 41-3-1212. Even in cases that are declined, the Ombudsmen attempts to provide other resources.

Following the completion of a Findings Report, OCFO seeks feedback from both the requestor and DPHHS. OCFO is committed to reporting fairly both on recommendations for improvement and on steps DPHHS is taking to improve services.

TABLE 3 describes in more detail the outcomes of individual contacts. The recommendations made to DPHHS through Findings Reports can be found in the Appendix of this report.

TABLE 3 : Status of contacts to OCFO for 2017 and 2018.

<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>2017 Outcomes</b>	<b>2018 Outcomes</b>
Closed, no further contact.	61	53
Declined to intervene.	8	6
Mediated– Concerns fully resolved.	5	14
Mediated– Plan established.	2	10
Mediated– Questions answered.	7	18
Referred and closed.	73	81
Findings Report.	18	15
Open from current year contacts.	74	82
Open from previous years.	21	39
Pending review.	55	51

## **Duty: Resolve or Recommend**

### **2018 Finding Reports and Recommendations**

In this reporting period, OCFO submitted 15 Findings Reports to DPHHS. Findings Reports are mailed to the Director of DPHHS, the CFSD Administrator, the Regional Administrator and copied to the Deputy Attorney General and the Children's Justice Bureau Chief. Findings Reports are also mailed to the Requestor on a case by case basis. In 2018, DPHHS responded in writing to all 15 Findings Reports. The 2018 formal recommendations made to DPHHS through Findings Reports and summaries of DPHHS' responses are provided in the Appendix of this report.

In 2018, OFCO recognized improved efforts by DPHHS to respond to recommendations, to seek feedback from OCFO about implementation of recommendations, and to communicate more frequently on trends and case specific issues. Notable steps by DPHHS include:

**Domestic Violence** OCFO recommended DPHHS revise and enhance training on policy and protocols related to cases involving domestic violence. CFSD committed to improving training to field workers and implemented training by experts in domestic violence. CFSD included OCFO in planning for topics and began to assess the relationships between CFSD field staff and victim services in each area.

**Safety Assessment** OCFO made several recommendations regarding investigation procedures, assessment models, and increasing the number and type of collateral contacts. In 2018, CFSD expanded new worker assessment training to two weeks and added trainings in the Regions on key areas of investigation and response. Regional trainings are ongoing and available to all field workers. In addition, CFSD added training specialists in each Region to better address issues as they arise in the field.

**Diligent Search** OCFO recommended streamlining processes to find a child's extended family within 30 days of removal and to create ways to assist workers in adhering to best practice. Each Region assigns diligent searches to staff according to their current resource allocation, so it was not possible to implement all recommendations at this time. CFSD did identify clear procedures in each Region which were in line with policy expectations. An increase in compliance with family finding policies was noted, and concerns from citizens decreased over the year.

**Effective Communication** OCFO provided DPHHS with recommendations on improving communication with citizens, families, legal teams, and OCFO. In January 2018, DPHHS initiated meetings with OCFO with the intent of meeting quarterly. Since July 2018, OCFO and CFSD administrators meet monthly to discuss case and system issues. In November 2018, a formalized communication plan between OCFO and CFSD was completed and distributed to all Regions. The plan outlines the expectations for adherence to statutory duties and commitment to collaboration between CFSD and OCFO. As a result, concerns are resolved more quickly and focus on system wide issues increased.

## **Duty: Procedure Review**

### **2018 Child Fatality Review**

MCA 41-3-209 requires Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman to investigate child fatalities when the child was involved with CFSD within 12 months of the date of death. The CJB Child Fatality Review team members Dana Toole, Traci Shinabarger, Gala Goodwin, and Joan Eliel met October 29, 2018 to review the fatalities reported to OCFO. In total, 12 child fatalities were reviewed, which occurred between December 16, 2016 and December 31, 2018. Like the Annual Report, all future Child Fatality Review Reports will cover the annual year of January 1-December 31. Please see the 2018 OCFO Child Fatality Review Report for more information.

<https://media.dojmt.gov/wp-content/uploads/Child-Fatality-Report-2018-FINAL-1.4.19.pdf>

### **2018 Request Trends**

OCFO monitors trends and collects information to analyze system issues. Separate reviews and reports on trends and specific system issues are underway. In addition to monitoring of trends of previous years, OCFO assessed trends from citizen contacts in 2018. Prior year trends include noncustodial parent engagement, visitation, and legal representation. Trends identified in 2018 include:

- 1) Accuracy of affidavits and reports to the court.** OCFO found affidavits in several cases under review to be incomplete, inaccurate, or erroneous. OCFO notified CFSD and County Attorneys as appropriate. In the next year, more data will be collected to assist in providing clear and helpful recommendations to improve practice.
- 2) Individualized treatment plans.** OCFO continues to see treatment plans for parents that are similar from parent to parent and in need of more individualized attention. In Yellowstone County, checklist treatment plans were implemented, further reducing the individualized intent of such plans. However, Yellowstone County may be more successful in timely orders on treatment plans. OCFO will continue to assess the practice of developing, filing, and supporting individualized treatment plan goals.
- 3) Use of Family Engagement Meeting and other team meetings.** One of the most successful areas of CFSD practice is in the use of team meetings. However, the reduction in staff available to coordinate and facilitate these meetings resulted in the backlog of referrals for Family Engagement Meetings and difficulty committing time and resources to other types of meetings. OCFO will continue to assess and work with CFSD to meet policy expectations around meetings and to utilize this efficient and effective model.

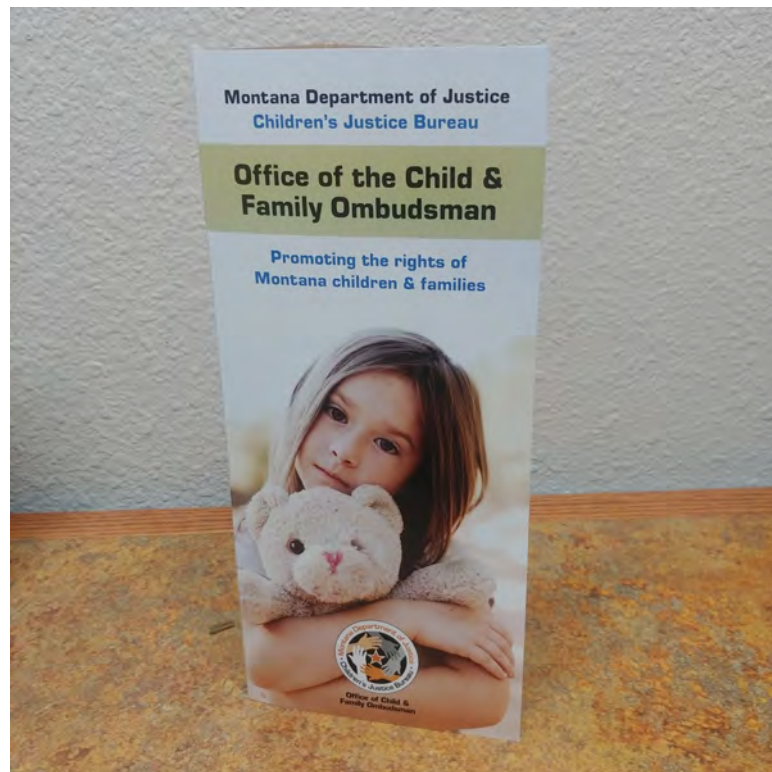
## Duty: Outreach and Education

### General Outreach

Outreach efforts by the OCFO are required by statute and included:

- Printing and distribution of brochures and keychains at outreach events across the state;
- Ongoing brochure mailings and presentations to service providers;
- Participating in Child Abuse Prevention Month efforts supported by the Children’s Trust Fund;
- Participating in the Child Abuse and Neglect Review Commission;
- “Meet the Ombudsman” presentations for new child protection specialist training classes;
- Presenting at the Montana Child Abuse and Neglect Conference;
- Presenting at the Montana County Attorney Association conference;
- Presenting at the Office of Public Instruction conference;
- Presenting to the Montana Legal Services Association Justice for Montanans AmeriCorps members;
- Presenting the annual report to the Children and Families Interim Committee;
- Attendance at monthly University of Montana Center for Children, Families, and Workforce Development;
- Attendance and presenting at the United States Ombudsman Association Annual Conference;
- Attendance at the Sharpening Your Teeth Training conducted by the Ontario Ombudsman of Canada.

In total, OCFO presented on average twice per month to various groups across the state. The outreach plan for 2019 includes presentations to CFSD Regions on working with the OCFO. OCFO continues to work on a recorded presentation for service providers and community professionals to share in their own trainings.



## **Duty: Annual Report**

The final section of this report reviews the challenges identified in the 2017 annual report and how they were addressed in 2018. Highlights from 2018, including new challenges and successes, are also below.

### **2017 Challenges Updates**

**2017 Challenge #1: Response to citizens.** Contacts to OCFO rose nearly 50% in 2017. The number of completed request forms also rose. Delays in the VOCA funding limited the time of the Deputy Ombudsman. These factors increased the response and review times.

**Update:** The VOCA award was secured and is in process for renewal. A new Justice for Montanans AmeriCorps member joined the team in September 2018. The AmeriCorps in this program can provide direct services and will assist OCFO in streamlining the intake process. Return of request forms increased and case-loads in response. OCFO will continue to seek resources to improve response times.

**2017 Challenge #2: Participation in meetings.** As of August 2017, OCFO was not permitted to attend or participate in CFSD case specific family engagement meetings. The decision frustrated citizens who invited OCFO to attend the meetings and increased the amount of time necessary for OCFO to review requests.

**Update:** Communication with DPHHS and CFSD improved significantly over the last 12 months. A communication plan is in place and clarified OCFO's participation in meetings and access to information. Response times and overall collaboration on cases and system issues is improving.

### **2018 Challenges**

**2018 Challenge #1: Procedural reviews.** While OCFO successfully collected meaningful data since the opening of the office and recognized trends in the system, time and resources for OCFO to complete a systemic investigation and report are constrained due to the priority of citizen response. OCFO's 2019 work plan includes a specific goal to investigate a system trend and publish a report.

**2018 Challenge #2: Increase in requests.** OCFO experienced an increase in contacts and a more significant increase in requests for assistance forms. Each request requires investigation, and the time necessary to respond to citizens and to complete reviews increased.

### **2018 Successes**

**2018 Success #1: Findings Reports.** OCFO completed 15 Findings Reports in 2018 and made numerous recommendations to improve outcomes for children and families. CFSD responded to each report.

**2018 Success #2: New outreach and coordination.** OCFO increased contacts with county attorneys, public defenders, visitation supervisors, and other agencies and individuals in direct contact with cases. CFSD worked with OCFO to coordinate updated trainings in each Region to begin in January 2019.

**2018 Success #3: Resource allocation.** OCFO successfully applied and become a partner with the Montana Legal Services Association's Justice for Montanans AmeriCorps program. OCFO is in the process of applying for additional VOCA funds for 2019. Both will assist the Ombudsman in serving citizens more efficiently.



## **Appendix**

### **2018 Recommendations from OCFO to DPHHS**

Recommendations are listed by quarter. Quarters are defined as :

**Winter** = January — March

**Spring** = April — June

**Summer** = July — September

**Fall** = October— December

Recommendations are listed as they are unless identifying information is redacted. Responses from DPHHS are included in the column next to the recommendation and are in summary form. Where no response is listed, OCFO was informed that a response is pending review and will be provided. Responses were received 4 to 7 months after the Finding Report was issued. Of the 15 Findings Reports issued in 2018, 15 received responses.

Acronyms found in the recommendations are defined as follows:

**ACES** Adverse Childhood Experiences

**CASA** Court Appointed Special Advocate

**CFSD** Child and Family Services Division

**CCIM** Complaints and Critical Incident Manager

**CPS** Child Protection Specialist; **CPSS** Child Protection Specialist Supervisor

**DN** Dependency and Neglect

**DPHHS** Department of Public Health and Human Services; also referred to as the Department

**FFA** Family Functioning Assessment

**FCRC** Foster Care Review Committee

**GAL** Guardian ad Litem

**ICPC** Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children

**MCAN** Montana Child Abuse and Neglect new worker training

**OCFO** Office of the Child and Family Ombudsman

**P-1** Priority one; category of a report that requires a 24 hour response

**RA** Regional Administrator

**SAMS** Safety Assessment Management System

**TLC** Temporary Legal Custody

**TPR** Termination of Parental Rights

<b>2018 Winter Recommendations (January-March)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD through policy to review parenting plans and court orders in parenting plan cases as part of their investigation and safety assessment.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will review parenting plans and court orders as part of the investigation or case plan when determining child safety.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS enhance directives in policy for CPSs working with County Attorneys to consider the evidence and most appropriate intervention.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agreed with legal action sought.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to create a training specific to writing affidavits, which are documents of fact provided under oath.</p>	<p><i>CFSD recognizes this need and will further develop training for staff and continue to work with its legal representation to monitor and ensure the affidavits meet the appropriate requirements.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to adhere to MCA 41-3-202 and purge records as directed.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will comply with Montana Code and report concerns to Northrup Grumman.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify policies and procedures in the CFSD Policy Manual on provision of documentation to parents. Consolidate and streamline policy directives where possible.</p>	<p><i>We will undertake a review of the recommendation during our review of policies and procedures.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to encourage CPSSs to contact OCFO to clarify communications and ask questions about OCFO's process.</p>	<p><i>Addressed in the communication plan.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to enhance policies on use of collateral contacts and on applying assessment protocols to each report. Clarify in which case situations the Regional Administrator would be responsible for an interview.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to use collateral contacts. The RA made the decision to assist and is capable and qualified.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS revise and enhance training on policy and protocols related to cases involving domestic violence.</p>	<p><i>CFSD coordinated with OCFO to develop training and work with advocates.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the reports to CI for this case and the response to those reports.</p>	<p><i>Reports were reviewed and properly assessed.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS review this case and direct CFSD to comply with legal requirements and tribal agreements. Clarify in policy where tribal agreements exist and the specifics of those agreements. Work with tribes to identify tribal liaisons who can be contacted to discuss and advise on the placement decisions and best interests of Native American children.</p>	<p><i>A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been developed among CFSD, Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Tribe. CFSD will continue to work within the MOU.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify policies and procedures on information that must be shared with a potential placement before the placement is made. Create clear requirements for documentation that includes the sharing of medical, developmental, mental health, and other considerations with potential foster parents for each child in the custody of the DPHHS.</p>	<p><i>We will undertake a review of the recommendation during review of policy and procedures.</i></p>

<b>Winter Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to enhance directives and training on changes in placement and developmentally appropriate language to explain changes.</p>	<p><i>DPHHS will pursue opportunities to enhance our training on changes in placement for youth.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the process taken in this case from initial concern of child neglect or abuse to report to Centralized Intake. Assess whether appropriate steps were taken.</p>	<p><i>CFSD has already taken the initiative to review the process.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to create clear policies and procedures for investigating allegations against foster parents. Include who conducts the investigation and when it is possible that the Critical Incident and Complaints Manager will conduct child protection services investigations.</p>	<p><i>We will undertake a review of the recommendation during review of policy and procedures. A neutral party was assigned to conduct the investigation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review this case and review services the child needed throughout his placement. Assign the Intensive Services Unit or other specifically trained staff to create a case plan to address the service and permanency needs of the child.</p>	<p><i>The Intensive Service Unit was not intended to handle cases of this nature.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to convene a review by the Foster Care Review Committee or provide legal rationale and authority for FCRC reviews are not being required in this case.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to review this case through Tribal Court, status hearings, and supervisor staffing. The Tribe currently holds status hearings on approximately a six month basis. CFSD will continue to work with the Tribe.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS create a policy to address compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and burnout for all CFSD staff. Enhance the supervisory support for ensuring that difficult decisions in cases are staffed and documented as what steps will be taken to ensure all parties in a case are treated fairly and based on their needs.</p>	<p><i>We will undertake this recommendation during review of policies and procedures.</i></p>
<p>In January 2018, the children will be in foster care for five years. DPHHS direct CFSD to follow all statutory requirements and make all efforts to finalize the adoption of the younger child by the current pre-adoptive placement resource.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to work with the Tribal Court to address the permanency needs of the children.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to utilize all legal remedies to locate and place the older child immediately. Ensure the child is receiving all medical, emotional, and financial resources. Work with the child to understand her interests. Prioritize her safety. Should the child continue to run away, direct CFSD to follow all policies and procedures, including notifying providers, law enforcement, and Youth Court.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation. CFSD continually sought appropriate placements. The Department will continue all efforts to engage the youth.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to fully assess and document all kin adoptive resources and hold a Selection Committee if more than one resource is available. Follow all statutory requirements and make all efforts to finalize the adoption of the younger child by the selected family.</p>	<p><i>CFSD has worked with both families and determined it would continue to be in the youth's best interest to remain in the current placement.</i></p>

<b>Winter Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendation</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to convene a Foster Care Review Committee as soon as possible to assess the case plans for both youth and make recommendations for achieving permanency.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to ensure the older child is represented by her attorney at every meeting and hearing where her treatment plan or ability to parent is being discussed. Assign a different CPS to the case involving the baby to maintain clarity in role and responsibility. Consult with the GAL as to best practices for ethically managing a case where the child is also a parent with an open DN matter.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to enhance training to staff working with older youth in care. Include how to communicate with older youth and refer for appropriate services, specifically when youth are a danger to themselves or others.</p> <p>DPHHS assess the allegation that drop-in centers and couch surfing is being approved by CFSD. Specify steps in policy CPSs are required to take to ensure the safety of older youth in care and youth with running behaviors.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to allow OCFO to participate in the next Family Engagement Meeting.</p>	<p><i>Both youth have had regular re-viewed conducted by the Foster Care Review Committee.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD will notify the attorney of scheduled appointments with the youth. CFSD will continue to work with the GAL and consider any/all recommendations.</i></p> <p><i>As an ongoing effort to improve our practice and training, DPHHS will pursue opportunities to enhance our training in working with older youth in care.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD will continue to assess child safety on an individual basis and promote a placement that is in the best interest of the youth.</i></p> <p><i>Addressed in communication plan.</i></p>
<b>Spring Recommendations (April– June)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendation</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review information collected from medical personnel in this case. Replicate procedures across counties. Assist local teams in training medical personnel on child abuse and neglect as needed.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review procedures for notifying foster parents of court hearings. Replicate procedures across counties. Review communication of the process with foster parents and improve timely delivery of updates.</p> <p>DPHHS review the legal timeline in this case. Communicate concerns of avoidable delays to county attorneys representing CFSD on DN matters. Assist field staff in advocating for movement on cases in which the delays are avoidable.</p> <p>DPHHS review the communication between CFSD and law enforcement in this case. Revise procedures to include complete documentation on whether a criminal case is closed or pending review and how to request a review. Include sharing information back to law enforcement in the event new information is known to CFSD.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will pursue opportunities to enhance policy and procedure and work with Multi-Disciplinary Teams.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD will follow Montana Code 41-3-422(3) .</i></p> <p><i>CFSD agrees and will meet with county attorneys and Multi– Disciplinary Teams to improve oversight and review.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD is working with Multi-Disciplinary Teams which includes law enforcement.</i></p>

<b>Spring Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the assertion that a former user of methamphetamine can test positive even when clean of the substance for months. Obtain medical information and share it with field staff.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue current and available training. CFSD is implementing Addiction &amp; Recovery Teams to provide an expert in the field.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to work with field staff in how to effectively communicate safety issues to the court through written documents and testimony.</p>	<p><i>CFSD recognizes this need and will further develop training for staff regarding the court process and affidavit writing.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS commend the field staff in this case for adherence to policy and procedure even when they disagreed with the decisions of the court.</p>	<p><i>CFSD leadership will praise staff and share the positive feedback.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS review the legal timeline and delays in this case for opportunities to improve communication between County Attorneys and CFSD staff. Include a review of steps required for publication and service. Assist as needed to avoid further delays in this case.</p>	<p><i>CFSD's leadership is working to enhance the Multi-Disciplinary Team. CFSD will re-educate staff on the publication process. DPHHS will speak at the statewide County Attorney meeting.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS clarify in policy and procedure documentation required to provide a clear understanding of a child's tribal enrollment status.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will respect each Tribe's process...and make sure confirmation or denial or enrollment is reflected in the case record.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to prioritize adherence to the Diligent Search policy and procedures. Assess how each Region conducts and documents searches to establish best practice recommendations.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will evaluate methods to enhance the current process of Diligent Searches.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify documentation requirements for children placed out of state. Set expectations to coincide with contact expectations for children in state.</p>	<p><i>CFSD currently refers to the national standard set forth by the Association of Administrators of the Interstate Compact of Placement of Children.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS review the status of the adoption subsidy and needs of this family. In accordance with CFSD Policy 305-1 and in continuing active efforts, work with the state where the children are placed to ensure resources are sufficient for the needs of the children to create a plan for post-adoption success.</p>	<p><i>An adoption subsidy is based on the needs of the child as opposed to the needs of the family. CFSD will continue efforts to assist both the child and the placement with their needs.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the policies and procedures regarding the investigation of an anonymous reporter, completion of reports, and dissemination of reports. Retrain staff on these procedures.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will pursue opportunities to enhance understanding of policy and procedures regarding anonymous reporters, completion of reports and dissemination of reports.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to enter the corrected information regarding the report in CAPS. This could be added to RRD3 and noted on RRRL.</p>	<p><i>CFSD tracked information in the FFA and utilized this recommendation and modified the RRD3 screen.</i></p>

Spring Recommendations (continued)	Response to Recommendation
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to follow the statute for maintaining confidentiality of the reporter. Review the procedure for securing reports and retrain on this procedure.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to follow the statute governing the purging of records. Train workers to follow the statute even when information may be found in the system.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will comply with Montana Code and will address any concerns with Northrup Grumman, the agency which oversees the process.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to accurately document the date, time, person, and conversation details for each contact in all investigations.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with the exception of including the specific time.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to create a procedure for documenting when a family member will be excluded from consideration as a resource. Include in documentation reasons for the exclusion and any steps the family member can take to address reasons and pursue reconsideration. Share with the family member and document all steps.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will evaluate methods to enhance the current process.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS review the interactions and communication with the parents and family members in this case. Assess how CFSD may enhance MCAN and in the field training to increase strength-based practice and positive responses to individuals in contact with CFSD.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation and will review.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the licensing process and reasons for excluding individuals from foster parent training. Include legal review of whether foster parent trainings must be open to any interested citizen. Assess time it takes from expression of interest to receiving license.</p>	<p><i>Refer to Administrative Rule 37-51-216. Participation is based on capacity. A completed application or serving as a kinship placement are the avenues to participate in training.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the timeline in the case and relinquishment procedures applied. Assess communication between the field office and the county attorney. Assess procedures for addressing multiple continuances of legal proceedings.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the Region's procedure for reporting on expectations to filing for TPR. Duplicate procedures throughout the state.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to have staff work with their assigned counsel in determining legal action.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the Region's procedure for notetaking of permanency staffing. Duplicate procedures throughout the state.</p>	<p><i>CFSD leadership will review for consistency and thoroughness.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to move forward in a timely manner on guardianship or adoption of the children by the Requestor.</p>	<p><i>The Regional Administrator and Complaint and Critical Incident Manager will work together regarding permanency needs.</i></p>



Spring Recommendations (continued)	Response to Recommendation
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to schedule a Family Engagement Meeting as soon as possible to address outstanding concerns, services, and case plan. Invite OCFO, all service providers, and attorneys.</p>	<p><i>The case was closed prior to receiving this recommendation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to revise interview protocols to include considerations for interviews taking place with mother directly after the birth of a child.</p>	<p><i>Interview considerations may be made on an individual case basis based on the safety needs.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to revise visitation policies and procedures to actively work with parents of newborns and young children to access as much time as possible given safety considerations.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue efforts to allow as much contact based on safety needs and resources.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD revise and enhance training on policy and protocols related to cases involving domestic violence. Partner with domestic violence advocates or the Montana Victim Advocate Academy to provide training. Include county attorneys and public defenders in trainings on protocols. Encourage use of available tools to set clear expectations for both parents while not disclosing information that may endanger the victim(s) further.</p>	<p><i>This recommendation was implemented by DPHHS and CFSD in 2018.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the use of substance abuse evaluations and drug screening in the determination of safety issues and of treatment needs. Evaluate best practices in screening and treatment options. Provide field offices with procedures to ensure safety and apply resources appropriately.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation and is reviewing practices.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to improve trainings to field staff of the legal process and in protecting individual's rights. Assist field staff in building collaborative relationships with attorneys representing parents.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will further develop training and encourage collaborative relationships with all professionals.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to ensure parents are invited and encouraged to attend all Foster Care Review Committee meetings. Restate in supervision and training the importance of case reviews and adherence to federal expectations of case reviews for compliance monitoring.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation and the importance of the FCRCs.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to develop procedures for documenting that conditions of return are met and steps to facilitate the physical reunification of the child with the parent immediately upon that determination.</p>	<p><i>CFSD is exploring the most efficient method to provide documentation when conditions are met and agrees that effective and immediate communication is necessary.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to develop a plan for identifying and assisting workers who may be experiencing burnout, compassion fatigue, and/or vicarious trauma. Teach workers how to identify signs and symptoms, offer options for support, and train supervisors to intervene to assist workers and prevent harm to children and families.</p>	<p><i>CFSD leadership recognizes the importance of supporting staff and will pursue options to best meet the needs of the workforce.</i></p>

<b>Summer Recommendations (July– September)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the reports made in this case and whether the appropriate category was assigned.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to outline in policy directives exploring use of MCA 41-3-423. Address in training and in supervisory reviews the importance of history and how it guides decision making and treatment.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the treatment plan in this case and develop a Phase II plan that clearly addresses the safety issues. Consider OCFO’s prior recommendations. In addition, DPHHS direct CFSD to revise policy to reflect the statutory timelines provided for in MCA 41 -3-433.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to develop Parent Child Interaction Plans as required by policy and to work with providers and family members to increase visitation to meet reasonable efforts in this area. If an increase in visitation is not safe or supported by providers, CFSD follow recommendation and review best interests of the children in terms of permanency.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to create a policy on identifying cognitive or developmental delays and making appropriate referrals. Outline in writing who conducts what types of evaluations and what information evaluations provide. This could be in conjunction with prior recommendation for the creation of a policy on defining and working with individuals with disabilities.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to provide written directives to field staff regarding the use of recommendations from providers. If the CPS disagrees with a recommendation provide steps for the CPS to address this disagreement.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to provide written directives to field staff regarding the use of medications and how to properly explore whether a parent is using according to a documented need. Work with substance abuse counselors to improve the understanding of how psychotropic medications, pain medication, and regulated substances such as marijuana are monitored and assessed as appropriate for use by individuals with substance use disorders.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to explore MCA guiding interested parties seeking intervenor status. Work with County Attorneys to apply legal responses consistently across regions.</p>	<p><i>CFSD reviewed the reports and found that they were properly assigned for risk and category.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD agrees that a thorough review of history must be captured in every investigation conducted.</i></p> <p><i>The current treatment plan will be reviewed to determine if safety concerns are adequately addressed. A review of policies and procedures will include review of this recommendation.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD will continue to work within the available resources to provide visitation that is safe and in the best interests of the children.</i></p> <p><i>As an ongoing effort to improve our practice and training, DPHHS will pursue opportunities to enhance our practice and protocols on working with individuals with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD staff will continue to evaluate the individual needs of cases. CFSD leadership will promote treatment team meetings when there are varying recommendations which will allow for dialogue to make informed decisions.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD will continue to work with substance abuse providers, verify prescriptions, and determine whether the use of those prescriptions impacts child safety.</i></p> <p><i>CFSD staff will continue to work with the Department Attorney to apply legal responses on an individual case basis.</i></p>

<b>Summer Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review face to face contact requirements and courtesy supervision policies. Assess current use of courtesy supervision and whether requests for courtesy supervision should be required based on distance or other factors impacting monthly face to face contacts.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will review the policy/procedure to ensure it best meets the needs of children, family and staff.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to provide a statewide directive to follow policy regarding case notes and maintenance of case records. Specify that all actions taken require documentation in CAPS within 14 days of the action.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to rely on current policy and procedure regarding documentation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to create a policy with directives to field staff on how best to approach cases involving parenting plan actions or use of parenting plans to mitigate safety risks. Confer with legal entities to clarify roles and responsibilities.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will review parenting plans and court orders as part of the investigation or case plan when determining child safety.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS provide OCFO with current MCAN training schedule, agenda, and training collaborations. Include whether recommendations to provide specific training for court report writing, testimony to court, unconscious bias, and supervisory oversight is being provided or is scheduled for the future.</p>	<p><i>DPHHS provided the 2019 MCAN schedule and agenda with topics of trainings.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS review of codes of ethics for child welfare professionals and consider inclusion of a code of ethics for Montana child welfare professionals in CFSD policy and procedures.</p>	<p><i>DPHHS employees follow the Montana Operations Manual Policy– State Ethics Policy.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the licensing process for the foster family in this case. Make necessary revisions to policy and procedure to proactively prevent bias and discrimination throughout recruitment, training, licensing, and support of all foster families. Replicate the use of the CPS/Criminal Background Checklist found in the kin placement documentation in each licensure file.</p>	<p><i>CFSD recognizes the need for allegations of bias and discrimination to be reviewed seriously. The Human Rights Bureau found no discrimination therefore no revisions were necessary. The background checklist is used only in emergency placements.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS contact the foster family through counsel to mediate a resolution to any outstanding concerns and repair trust with the system.</p>	<p><i>Internal staff reached out to this family to address their distress and need in an attempt to help resolve any concerns regarding our agency.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify face to face contact expectations. Work to enhance training for field staff to comply with expectations and to explain to foster families during contacts the status of the case and the potential for a change in placement.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the diligent search, transition process from the foster placement to the kin placement, and permanency process in this case. Encourage field staff to move with similar timing and efforts that support both efforts at reunification and efforts to find family and keep children with family.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will commend the field staff for their efforts and encourage field staff to work diligently on their cases.</i></p>

<b>Summer Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to finalize the adoption of the child by the current foster parents as soon as possible.</p>	<p><i>The child's adoption was finalized.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review procedures for determining when an exception to filing for TPR applies, is compelling and case specific, and is appropriately documented. Review CFSD forms used in this Region in other cases to document exceptions and provide documentation to Foster Care Review Committees.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will work with the court improvement project to improve documentation of exceptions. Leadership will work to ensure a statewide consistent and thorough process.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review procedures in drug treatment courts to ensure legal timelines are met and exceptions are properly applied. Ensure each case is assessed for its specific needs. Review processes for providing notices of drug treatment court proceedings to foster parents. Encourage attendance of foster parents at court proceedings.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to work closely with drug courts and support attendance of foster parents at court proceedings.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to assess the use of collateral contacts throughout the case. Develop procedures for documenting when decisions made in a case are contrary to professional recommendations. Ensure that all service providers working with children in foster care, particularly in supervised visitation arrangements, are trained and equipped to respond to emergency situations.</p>	<p><i>CFSD staff will continue to evaluate individual needs and develop a child's case plan based on individually assessed needs. CFSD will work to implement CPR and First Aid training.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to assess the increase of foster parents retaining attorneys in cases and the costs both financial and interpersonal to the process and outcomes in the cases.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to encourage those provided for under MCA 41-3-422 to intervene as they deem necessary and is allowed by court. CFSD looks forward to further discussing OCFO concerns.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to assess the use of GALs, CASAs, and attorneys for children across the state. Review conflicts and/or overlap in statute, including those referencing best interests of the child, and provide direction to the field on expectations for each role on a DN case. Provide procedures for field staff to assess the need for appointment of an additional representative as needed on case by case basis.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with instituting collaborative training for staff. The Director of Montana CASA praises this local program. CFSD staff recommends and encourages routine meetings and/or exchange of information with the child's CASA.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS commend the CPS for quick and forthright responses to OCFO inquires and a willingness to improve communication.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will praise staff for their work in this case and inform the of the positive commentary.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to outline in policy directives exploring use of MCA 41-3-423. Address in training and in supervisory reviews the importance of history and how it guides decision making and treatment.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees that a thorough review of history must be captured in every investigation conducted by this agency.</i></p>

<b>Summer Recommendations (continued)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the procedures for assessing visitation. Clarify types of visitation and best practices for reviewing a change in visitation in policy. Assess resources, particularly in Region III, and explore opportunities for expanding contracts with providers.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to assess the use of the SAMS model tools for exploring reunification and conditions for return. Promote the use of the tools to support strong casework and clear documentation.</p> <p>DPHHS review the use of mediation in this case and provide OCFO with information on the challenges and benefits to this type of intervention.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review training for field staff on making reasonable efforts following a challenge to a termination petition.</p> <p>CFSD commend the new CPS and CPSS for reviewing the case fully and advancing the plan for reunification. Ensure all appropriate steps are taken to support and effectuate the plan.</p>	<p>CFSD is committed to individualized review of each visitation plan. CFSD is actively obtaining new providers to assist with visitation.</p> <p>CFSD agrees with the importance of conditions for return in the reunification process. CFSD is currently exploring the most efficient method to provide documentation to families when conditions are not met.</p> <p>CFSD will work with U of M partners to review challenges to mediation and how it impacts CFSD cases. CFSD looks forward to continuing the conversation with OCFO.</p> <p>CFSD agrees with this recommendation and the importance of making reasonable efforts in all cases.</p> <p>CFSD will commend staff for their work on this case and convey this positive feedback. (OCFO added note: Reunification did occur.)</p>
<b>Fall Recommendations (October-December)</b>	<b>Response to Recommendations</b>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the legal timeline and service provision in this case.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify procedures in policy and training for placement with a noncustodial parent and when the use of a background check is required and when use of a background check is useful to address allegations of safety issues.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to discuss with field staff interview procedures and requirements for collateral contacts. Specify the importance of collaterals when trying to determine if a noncustodial parent is safe and filing for temporary legal custody is not warranted.</p>	<p>CFSD will review the legal timeline and service provision in this case.</p> <p>Purpose Code X can only be used if a child is removed from the child's parental or custodial home for protective care and an emergency placement is in effect. A birth parent is not considered an emergency placement. Training was developed and will be provided in 2019.</p> <p>CFSD agrees with this recommendation. We will continue to use collateral contacts to corroborate, support, and/or reconcile relevant case information to assess child safety.</p>

Fall Recommendations (October-December)	Response to Recommendations
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify in policy use of “nonoffending” to describe a parent. Explain why CFSD would use this definition even when CFSD seeks adjudication and custody of that parent’s child (ren) or redefine and eliminate the confusion.</p>	<p><i>In this case the term “nonoffending” referred to the birth father as he was not a subject of the investigation received by CFSD. CFSD leadership will review the use of this term within the agency.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to develop a policy on working with parents with disabilities. Include procedures for identification, referral, and follow-up. Adhere to all federal and state laws requiring accommodations and train the field in utilizing all applicable services.</p>	<p><i>As an ongoing effort to improve our practice and training, DPHHS will pursue opportunities to enhance our practice and protocols on working with individuals with disabilities.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to review the treatment plan in this case, procedure in this Region, and develop a Phase II plan that clearly addresses the safety issues. In addition, DPHHS direct CFSD to revise policy to reflect the statutory timelines provided for in MCA 41-3-433.</p>	<p><i>The Department’s legal case was dismissed in October of 2018, and for that reason a court ordered treatment plan is no longer applicable.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to adhere to policies on Family Engagement Meetings and document in the case file all offers of meetings. Review resources needed to hold Family Engagement Meetings in every case and staff accordingly.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendations and will continue to review resources to ensure the most efficient service delivery for child safety.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to develop Parent Child Interaction Plans as required by policy and to work with providers to increase visitation to meet reasonable efforts in this area. Consider the addition of family therapy and specialized visits to support the individual needs of the children.</p>	<p><i>CFSD will continue to work within the available resources to provide visitation that is safe and in the best interests of children. Specialized visitation and family therapy would be considered based on the individual needs of the children.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to ensure all field staff are trained in visitation policies and best practices. Provide training by professionals in the field on services and interventions for children with behavior concerns as related to trauma, attachment, or other social emotional challenges. Encourage field staff to individualize visitation needs based on the needs of the child and their developmental level.</p>	<p><i>CFSD agrees with this recommendation and will continue efforts to provide training on visitation practices to field staff.</i></p>
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to include training on implicit bias for all field staff. Train CPSS’ to recognize and address unprofessional behavior and communication that may be motivated by bias.</p>	<p><i>CFSD recognizes this need and will further develop training for staff regarding implicit bias.</i></p>



Fall Recommendations (October-December)	Response to Recommendations
<p>DPHHS direct CFSD to reissue in writing the importance of adhering to face to face contact with children in care. Establish a mechanism for CPSS' to review contact is occurring and to assist field staff in prioritizing contact.</p> <p>DPHHS direct CFSD to clarify in writing the expectations of the CPS in maintaining contact with the parent(s). Include what reasonable efforts look like in practice and in documentation.</p> <p>CFSD amend the case record to reflect the case notes that are in error and add information to accurately reflect the events that occurred on the date of the placement change.</p> <p>Specifically change or add the following:</p> <p>REDACTED FOR PRIVACY.</p>	<p><i>CFSD leadership recognizes the importance of face-to-face contact with children in care. CFSD already has a mechanism in place to alert staff on a monthly basis regarding the necessary face-to-face contact.</i></p> <p><i>The frequency of contact with the parents will be based on the individual needs to support permanency for the child/children. This process is supported during supervisor consultation.</i></p> <p><i>Based on the totality of the case and needs of the children, CFSD supports the change in placement and is not in agreement with changing the case record.</i></p>