

Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template

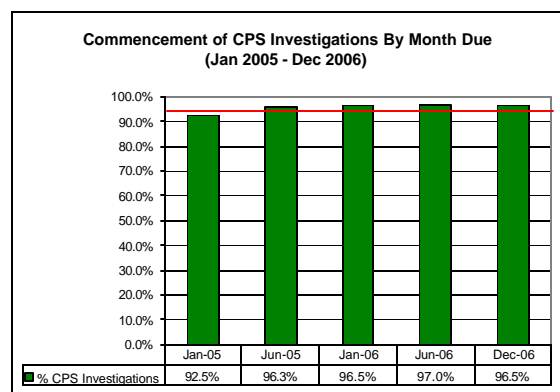
Part II, Program Accountability Summary

Program Purpose To provide for the health and safety of children at risk of abuse, neglect and /or maltreatment.

Program Child Protective Services/Department of Children and Families

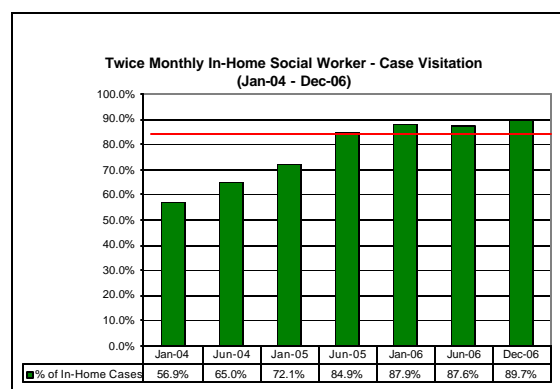
Performance Measure 1

Percent of investigations commenced in a timely manner



Performance Measure 2

Percent of families receiving two protective services visits per month while residing at home



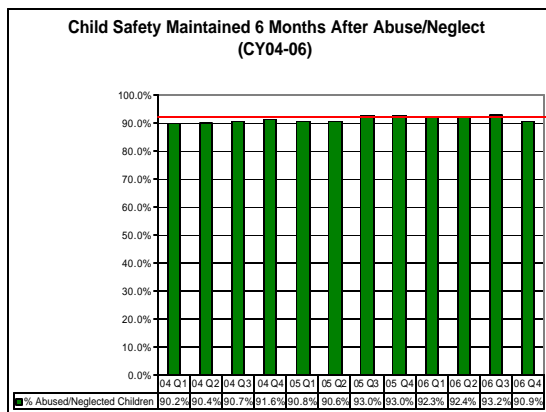
Key Budget Information	
Total Current Program Year Funding	231,666,830
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Population Result	
Program Funding As Percent of Total Agency Budget	30.75%
Funding Distribution	
Total Federal Funds	365,981
Total State Funds	231,300,849
Capital Projects Subtotal	
Other Funding	
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third Parties	30.19%

Story Behind the Baselines:

The mission of the Department of Children and Families is to protect children, improve child and family well-being and support and preserve families. These efforts are accomplished by respecting and working within individual cultures and communities in Connecticut, and in partnership with others. In an effort to accomplish this goal the DCF works to investigate all referrals in an appropriate time frame. Once allegations are noted investigators make face to face contact to substantiate allegations within 72 hours or sooner is the investigator determines immediate danger exists for the child. Cases are either substantiated and opened through Child Protective Services or Unsubstantiated and closed. Clients with substantiated cases are then assisted in developing a plan of activities that will assist them to provide safe and healthy environments for their children. Many cases are unsubstantiated. These cases are closed. In some cases a child/family referral is made to community resources.

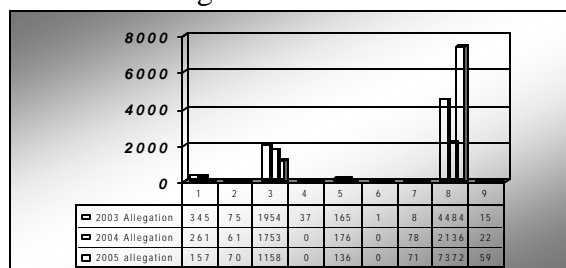
Performance Measure 3

Percent of children in protective service who remain safe for 6 months



Performance Measure 4

Number of allegations substantiated



The measures provided are intended to reflect some of the process involved in Promoting the health, safety and permanency of children.

Turning The Curves: What do you propose to do over the next two years and why?

1. Improve ability to assure children's safety by determining incidences of repeated maltreatment, abuse and/or neglect at 6 months, 1 year, and 18 months.*
2. Convene an Early Childhood Committee to review the connections between programs, policies and practices that are engaged in on behalf of children birth to 5 by the DCF.*

*Indicates, low-cost, no-cost action steps.

Connecticut Appropriations Committee RBA Template Part II, Program Accountability for

Program Purpose: To provide for the health and safety and permanency of children at risk of abuse, neglect and /or maltreatment.

Program: Child Protective Services, Department of Children and Families

Contribution to Population Result:

1. Provide for immediate safety of children through timely investigation of allegations of abuse thereby promoting long term positive developmental outcomes.
2. Promote children’s safety, health and development through frequent in-home monitoring of child safety and parental engagement.
3. Promote lasting change in families through provision of services that prevent re-occurrences of abuse, neglect and maltreatment.

Key Budget Information

Total Current Program Year Budget for Foster Care Services	\$231,666,830
Funding as Percent of All Funding for Quality of Life Result	
Program Funding as Percent of Total Agency Budget	30.75%
Federal	\$365,981
State	
General Fund	\$231,300,849
Capital Project	
Other State Funding	
Other Funds (private donations)	
Percent of Total Current Funding Spent on Direct Service	97.76%
Percent of Total Current Funding Contracted to Third parties	30.19%

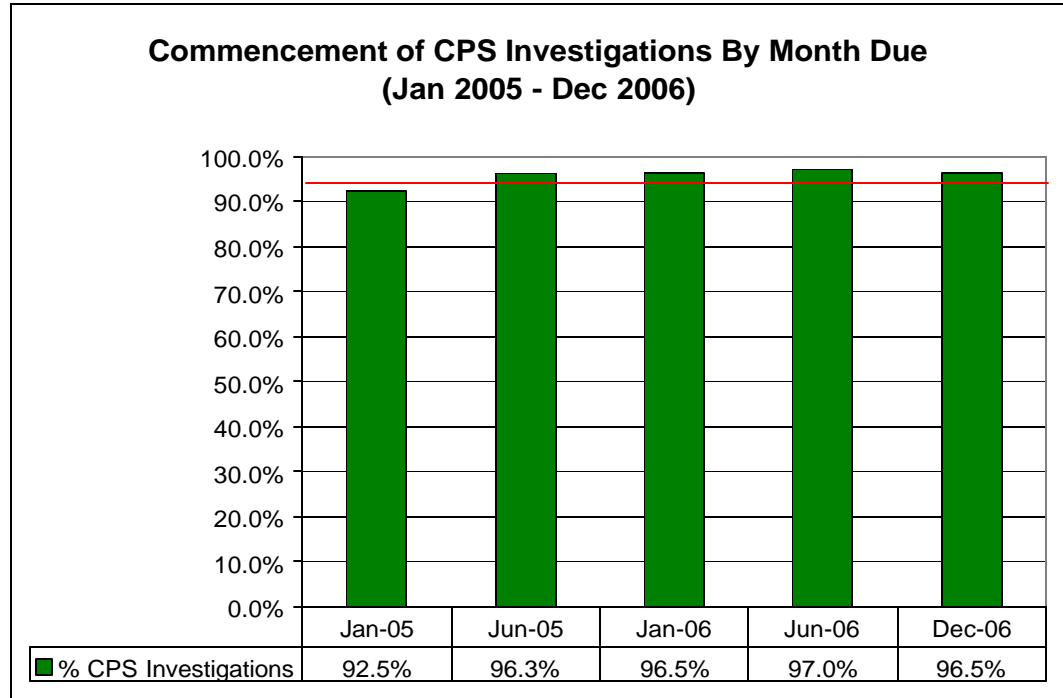
Basic Program Facts:

Every state has a public agency that is charged with the responsibility of protecting children. The Department of Children and Families is the agency within Connecticut charged with ensuring safety when a child is abused, neglected or maltreated or when a caregiver is unable or unwilling to protect his or her child. In this context, DCF asserts that all children have a basic right to grow up in safe and nurturing environments and to live free from abuse and neglect. All children are entitled to enduring relationships that create a sense of family, stability and belonging. With these principles in mind the DCF invests resources into providing for children’s immediate safety through timely investigations of allegations of abuse, neglect and maltreatment. In addition, once an incidence has been investigated and substantiated, the DCF provides a structured process which promotes the strengthening of families in an effort to maintain continuity in children’s care and attachment. Caseworkers are assigned to work with families to identify needs, provide information and support and monitor the safety of children.

Ultimately, the goal of all services is that children will be nurtured in safe, emotionally healthy environments and that there will be no episodes of continued maltreatment.

Performance Measure 1:

Percent of investigations commenced in a timely manner.



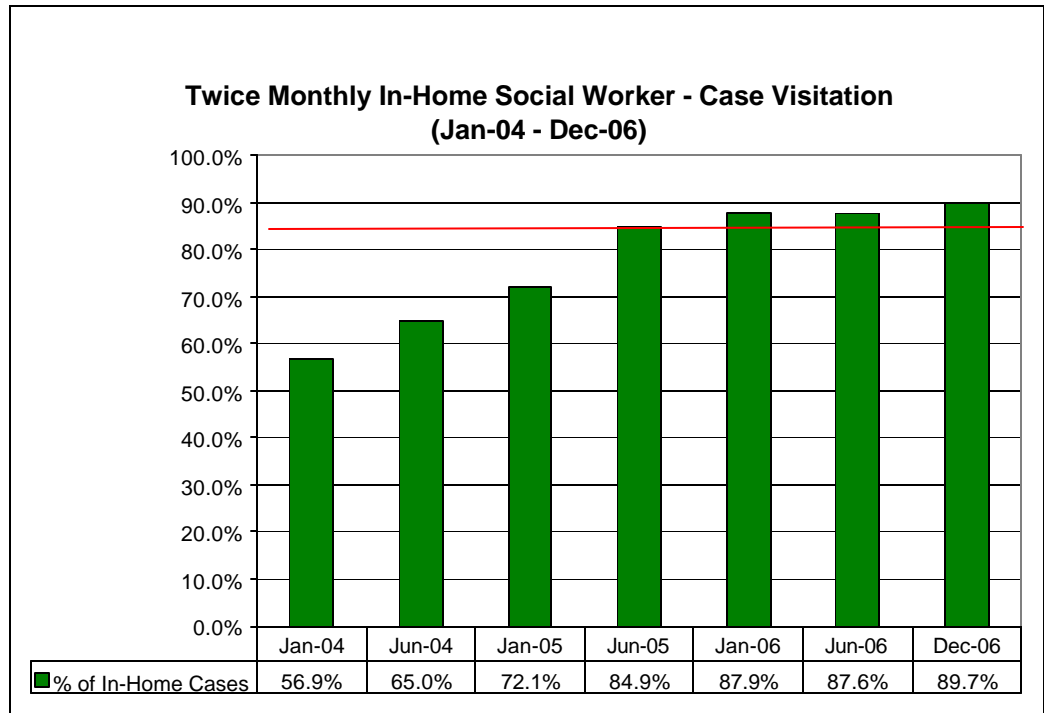
Story Behind Measure 1

“Investigation” is the fact-finding process that gathers information beginning at the report-taking phase of allegations of child abuse or neglect at the Hotline and culminates in a documented determination of substantiation, non-substantiation, or regulatory violation. The assigned investigator must acquire and analyze information to determine whether a child has been abused or neglected and is in need of protective services or other services offered by the Department or the community to ameliorate identified risks. (See DCF Policy 34-4-2) The “commencement of an investigation” occurs when the DCF investigator attempts to make face-to-face contact with the parent or person responsible for the child’s care, and/or with the child (ren). An “attempt” at face-to-face contact is made when the investigator visits the home, school or other setting, in an effort to interview the child (ren) and family members regarding the allegations of abuse or neglect. (See DCF Policy 34-4). At that time the intake interview will focus on specific events and circumstances related to the alleged maltreatment. The investigation will consider child vulnerability, caregiver functioning and the presence of danger or family conditions that could represent foreseeable danger. A report is “prioritized” by the DCF Hotline when it designates a response time of the same calendar day, 24, or 72 hours for the commencement of the investigation. The crucial step in protecting children is the initial assessment of danger to the child; therefore, timely response to allegations is imperative. The above data represents a measure of child safety indicated by commencement of investigations. The DCF currently does

not disaggregate reports by the age of the child; however, this data may be considered a proxy measure of the population of children birth-5 since the above measure represents referrals of cases involving all children birth to 17. Six month data points from January, 2005 indicate that DCF has developed a timely reporting system to address the immediate need to investigate and intervene for the benefit of child safety.

Performance Measure 2:

Percent of families receiving two protective services visits per month while residing at home



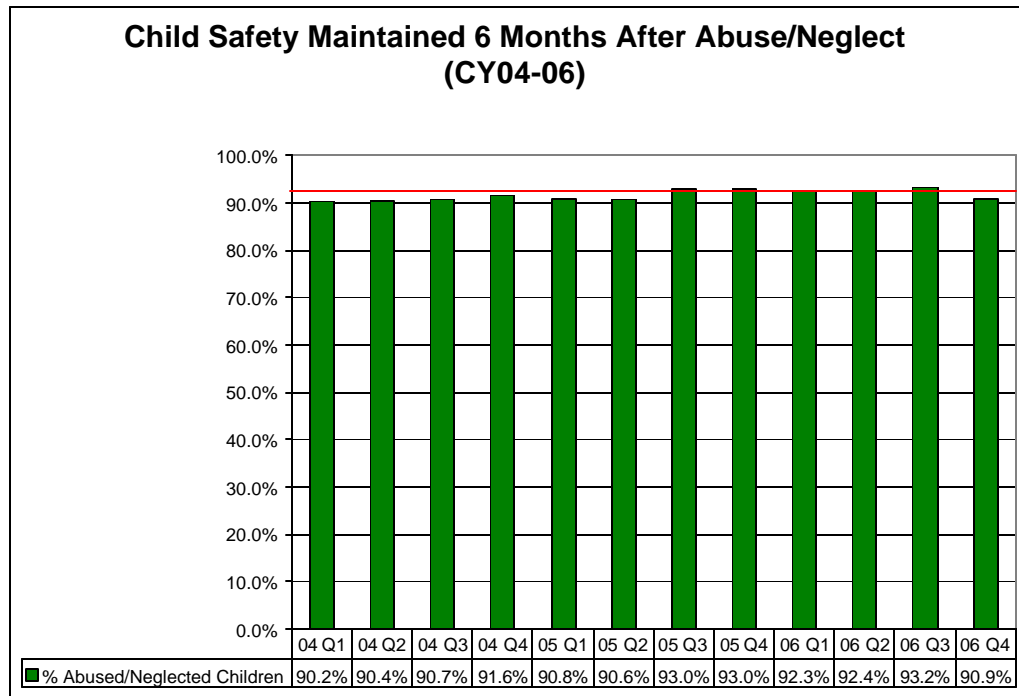
Story Behind Measure 2:

DCF is guided by the belief that each individual family member should be respected. The importance of the attachments between family members is accepted and acknowledged as critical to the development of each young child. All families have strengths and the goal is to build on these strengths. Family involvement and self-determination in the planning and service delivery process is essential. Case worker visits are a critical component of strengthening families and promoting the health, safety and development of young children. Because home visitation provides such valuable information about families, DCF utilizes the caseworker visit to promote family participation in services. As part of this process, caseworkers monitor children’s safety and well-being; assess the ongoing service needs of children, families and foster parents; engage biological and foster parents in developing case plans; assess permanency options; monitor parent’s progress toward established goals; and provide families information, support and referral to community programs. The Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through their Child and Family Service Reviews (2001-2004) show that when child welfare agencies have caseworkers who visit frequently (2 or more times per month) they are better positioned to assess children’s risk for harm. Further they

are better able to work with families and their changing needs, and to determine the effectiveness of goals and outcomes. Prior to January 2004, DCF caseworkers did not routinely visit with families on a routine basis, nor did they incorporate into the visit a structure. During the Juan F. Case it was determined that more frequent in-home services might have prevented some of the negative outcomes. As a result an agency-wide policy was instituted requiring caseworkers to provide in-home visitation at least twice monthly for families involved in Child Protective Services. While DCF currently does not disaggregate reports by the age of the child the above data may be considered a proxy measure of the population of children birth -5 since the above measure represents referrals of cases involving all children birth to 17. Data indicates a steady increase in percentage of families receiving twice per month home visitation. While the nature of the services provided is not assessed, the frequency of visits does provide some assurance that families remain “visible” and that their service needs and progress are monitored frequently.

Performance Measure 3:

Percent of children in protective service who remain safe for 6 months



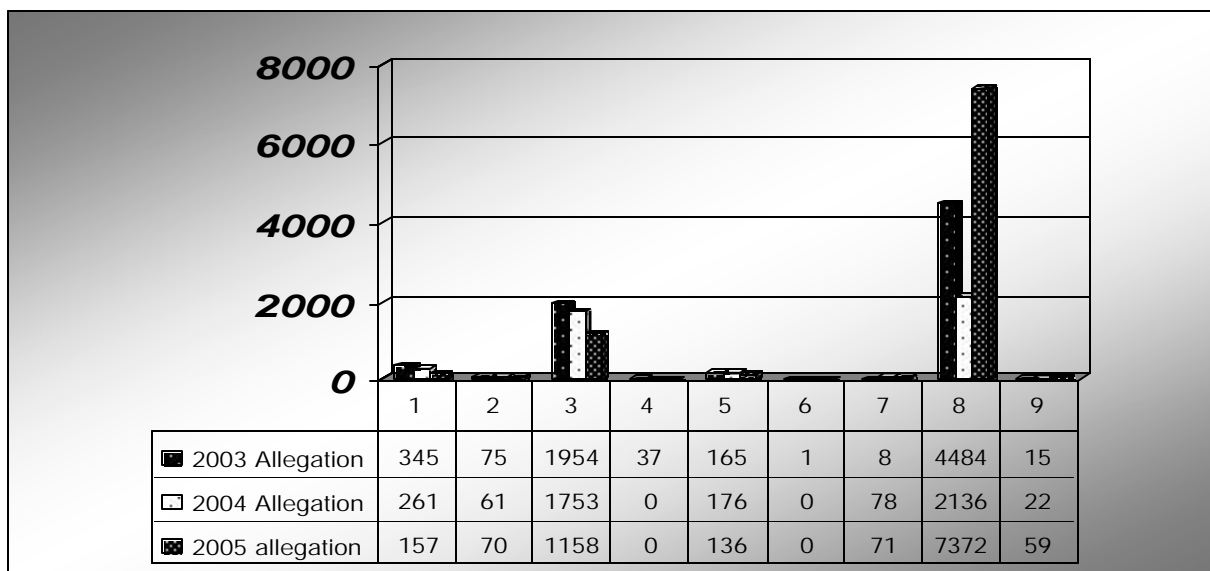
Story Behind Measure 3:

The ultimate goal of all services provided by DCF is to assure that children are provided healthy, safe and nurturing environments which will promote their growth and development. Children who have a history of abuse, neglect or maltreatment have experienced traumas which may make it difficult for them to form healthy social relationships, express themselves in acceptable ways and learn to trust and attach emotionally to adults in the world. Regardless of whether the child remains with his biological family or transitions to a foster family, there will be concerns about the residual effects of early experiences. Behaviors may be internalized but are also frequently externalized as noncompliance, aggression or anger. This presents challenges to any biological or foster care parent, and can compromise their coping ability and parenting style. The true test

of the supports, education or re-education of parents is their ability to provide appropriate nurturance and guidance. One measure of successful DCF interventions is that child safety is maintained and there are no new allegations of neglect, abuse or maltreatment. The measure above indicates the percentage of children maintained safely in their biological or foster homes. Once again, birth to 5 data has not been disaggregated. Considering that children birth-5 are represented among these children from ages 0-17, the above measure can be considered as a proxy. It is critical that data for children birth to 5 be separated from data for the general population of children served. In addition, because of their ongoing needs for supportive and responsive nurturance during early childhood it is not sufficient to provide only a limited six month follow-up. Children have changing needs during early childhood. This is also the time when other siblings enter families. Families with young children experience high degrees of stress therefore in order to ensure that the benefits of DCF supportive interventions, follow-up data should be extended for a period of longer than six months.

Performance Measure 4:

Number of allegations substantiated



Allegation Codes:

- 1. Physical Abuse
- 2. Educational Neglect
- 3. Emotional Neglect
- 4. High Risk Newborn,
- 5. Medical Neglect
- 6. At Risk
- 7. Sexual Abuse
- 8. Physical Neglect
- 9. Emotional Neglect

Story Behind Measure 4

The Department of Children and Families must respond to each referral call received by staff at the Hotline. All referrals are given a code and are investigated. The timing of the initial investigation is dependent on the assessment of immediate danger to the child. The allegation is then either investigated immediately, within 24 hours or within 72 hours. The allegation noted in the referral may be of one nature (e.g. physical abuse code 3) or may involve three or four allegations. In addition, several individuals may report their suspicions of neglect or abuse regarding the same child. The above table indicates the actual number of allegations substantiated for the years 2003-2005. It is not an exact count of children. In the future it would

be very useful to break the information into numbers of children with one allegation, more than one allegation, and the type of allegation. This can currently be accomplished on an individual basis but would not result in an exact count of children due to the multiplicity of allegations.

Partners and Their Roles:

1. DCF is responsible for providing a comprehensive structure for services to families, policies and practices that support families, technical assistance and training to staff working with families to assist with assessment, identification of goals, development of plan with timelines, parent/foster parent training, community referral and resources and re-evaluation
2. Family is responsible for participating in identifying their needs, developing a family plan, participating in informative/ educational assistance provided; cooperating with service providers, communicating their needs.
3. Legislature partners with the DCF to provide funding for programs and services.

What steps are needed to improve performance in the next 3-5 years?

No-cost/low-cost action steps:

1. Improve ability to assure children's safety determining incidences of repeated maltreatment, abuse and/or neglect at 6 months, 1 year, and 18 months.
2. Convene an Early Childhood Committee to review the connections between programs, policies and practices that are engaged in on behalf of children birth to 5 by the DCF.

Appendix A, Data Development Agenda

1. Develop process for disaggregating birth to 5 data from other data in all fields of information collected.
2. Improve data collection to include outcome based data from all early childhood programs providing services to children birth-5.
3. Disaggregate birth to 6 data from larger data sets.
4. Provide a manner in which state agencies collaborating with DCF and serving the same clients can share non-identifying information.