

Ontario Child Welfare Service Performance Indicators Permanency Outcome – The Time to Permanency

Definition:

For all children admitted to the care of a Children's Aid Society during the fiscal year, the cumulative percentage discharged within a specific time period (i.e., 12 months, 24 months and 36 months since admission).

Why is this Measure Important?

Providing children with permanency in their care promotes healthy development, encourages continuity in relationships, a sense of community and identity. However, for some children reunification with their family of origin is not possible and stable alternatives must be pursued. The child welfare system in Ontario has multiple options through which permanency can be achieved (e.g., reunification with parents, legal custody, and adoption). Permanency planning is a significant focus for children in care, whose permanency status, both legally and psychologically, is uncertain.

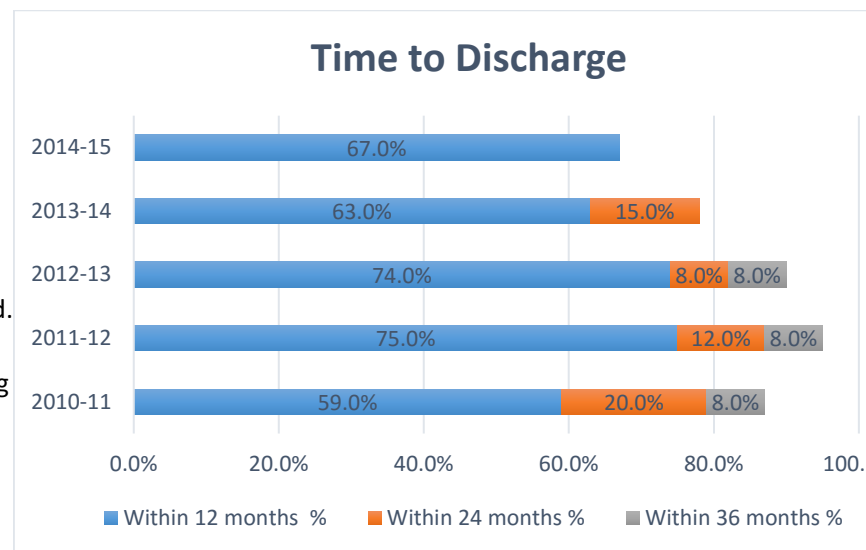
Limitations of the Data:

Not all discharges represent permanency achieved; however, this measure is considered a good proxy * for permanency. To understand permanent versus non-permanent exits from care, data by discharge type are required. Customary care (culturally appropriate care arrangements for Aboriginal children) is not included in these data at this time.

Key Considerations:

The timing and nature of permanency may look different for every child depending on the child's needs, family circumstances, court processes, and availability of community service providers. A key factor that influences time to permanency is the child's age at admission. Children who enter care at a young age are more likely to be discharged to certain types of permanency (e.g., adoption) compared to older children. Young children often achieve permanency within shorter timeframes, supported by legislation that limits the allowable cumulative time in short-term care for children under 6 years of age compared to older children. An additional factor that impacts time to permanency is the needs of the child, with more complex needs associated with longer timeframes to achieving permanency.

*A proxy measure is an indirect measure that approximates or represents a phenomenon in the absence of a direct measure.



Results:

Data shown above illustrate that of all children admitted in any given fiscal year, over half (59-75%) exit care within 12 months post-admission as shown by the blue bars. By 24 months post-admission 80-86% of children that came into care have been discharged from care as shown by the orange bars. Data for children admitted in 2010-11 show that by 36 months post-admission, 87% had been discharged, with 13% of children remaining in care in 2010-11. In 2011-12 95% of children were discharged with only 5% remaining in care by 36 months post-admission.