

# Top 12 User Guide

## Outcome 4: Low Re-entry into Foster Care from Reunification or Adoption

*The best measure for this indicator is the rate at which children who have final discharges to reunification or adoption return to foster care within one year of that discharge.*

### Key Notes on Source Data

The source for the data is the Child Care Review Service (CCRS)/Welfare Management System (WMS), one of New York City's data systems of record. CCRS/WMS captures data on foster care and preventive services.

- Discharges with destinations of release to natural parent, release to relative, or release to primary resource person are considered to be discharges to reunification.
- For the borough and Community District (CD) reports, the child's home borough and CD are defined by his/her case address at the time of placement as recorded in the Welfare Management System (WMS).

### Total Number and Types of Reports:

Two levels of reporting have been devised for presenting the data: summary reports and comparative reports. There is a citywide, or systemwide, summary report and three similar reports, i.e. Borough, CD, and Agency, which consider only smaller sub-populations of the citywide. In addition, two comparative reports have been designed, using the basic format of the summary reports, allowing the user to compare cross-sections of the data. Both levels of reporting present the data, using the same measures, in a similar format.

#### Summary Reports

1. Citywide – This is the overall systemwide report for the city.
2. Borough – This report mimics the citywide report, but focuses only on re-entries of children originally from a particular borough.
3. Community District (CD) Summary – This report mimics the citywide report, but focuses on re-entries of children originally from a particular CD.
4. Agency Summary – This report mimics the citywide report, but provides information for children who were discharged from facilities managed by a particular agency.

#### Comparative Reports

5. CD Comparative with City and Borough – This report compares information about the re-entry experiences of children from a particular CD in a particular borough with the re-entry experiences of children from the same borough and the city as a whole.
6. Agency Comparative with City – This report compares the re-entry experiences of children who were discharged from a facility managed by a particular agency with the re-entry experiences of children from all contract agencies/ACS direct foster care services and the city as a whole.

### Report Layout

**Reports 1, 2, 3, and 4** are *summary reports* for the City, Borough, CD, and Agency, respectively. The layout for each of these reports shows:

- 1) the three most recent months of data for the calendar year; and
- 2) calendar year-to-date (CYTD) cumulative totals for the most current year and the three years prior.

*For example*, for the September 2001 report, the three most recent months of reunification discharges are shown for July 2000, August 2000 and September 2000. The CYTD 2000 number reflects the cumulative discharges from January 2000 to September 2000. The period covered in the cumulative total for the most current year is the same period covered in the cumulative totals for the other years listed – CYTD 1999 would represent the same January to September period but for CY 1999.

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**Reports 5 and 6** are *comparative reports* for CD and Agency.

The CD comparative report allows you to compare a particular CD's performance with that of the Borough's and the City's performances. The Agency comparative report provides a comparison of a particular agency's performance with the City's performance. The layout for each of these reports shows:

- 1) the most recent month of data for the calendar year;
- 2) CYTD cumulative total for the most current year; and
- 3) the percentage change from the previous CYTD cumulative total.

*For example*, for the September 2001 report, the most recent month of discharges that is shown is September 2000. The CYTD 2000 data reflects the cumulative total from January 2000 to September 2000. The percentage change from the previous CYTD (CY 1999) data reflects the comparative change from the CYTD 2000 cumulative total and the cumulative total from CYTD 1999. The hidden comparative number for CYTD 1999 spans the same January to September period.

## Details on Performance Report

All re-entry reports describe this indicator from two perspectives: (1) discharges from foster care that lead to a re-entry and (2) admissions into foster care that represent a re-entry, i.e., where the child has prior foster care history.

When examining the re-entry rate, we are looking at the group of children who were discharged one year (365 days) ago from the current month of reporting and who re-entered care anytime during those 365 days. Specifically, we follow children with a final discharge (indicated with an M990 activity code) to see if they have any placement activity (indicated with an M910 activity code) within 365 days of the prior discharge (M990).

*For example:* For all discharges, if a child in care is discharged on June 1, 2000 and then re-enters care anytime before June 1, 2001 (within 365 days), he is counted as a re-entry.

## Perspective 1: Re-entries from Reunification Discharges from 12 Months Ago

The **first perspective** focuses on the re-entry experiences of children discharged only to reunification. While the plan is to report also on re-entries from adoption discharges, at the current time, data to complete this analysis are unavailable.

The basic cut of the data is determined by foster care spells. Discharges are grouped together either as discharges from 1<sup>st</sup> spells or discharges from 2<sup>nd</sup>+ spells.

- A spell is the time between a foster care entry and discharge. A child's first spell is his/her first episode in which he/she is placed into a foster home setting. Subsequent episodes in foster care are higher-ordered spells (2<sup>nd</sup> spell, 3<sup>rd</sup> spell...).

In addition, further detail is provided for the discharge groups based on length of stay at time of discharge, comparing the re-entry rates of discharges within 90 days of care to the re-entry rate of discharges after 90 days of care.

- Children that are discharged **WITHIN** 90 days of placement into care are considered to have had a short stay in care.
- Children that are discharged **AFTER** 90 days of placement into care are considered to have had a longer stay in care.
  - *For example:* For discharges categorized by length of stay, if a child enters care on May 25, 2000 and is then discharged from care on June 1, 2000, he is considered to be discharged **WITHIN** 90 days of placement, falling into the short-stay group. His discharge is counted as a June 2000 discharge. If this same child re-enters care within 365 days (by June 1, 2001), that placement into care is counted toward the re-entry rate.

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## Reunification discharges from 1<sup>st</sup> spell

This reported number reflects the group discharged to reunification from their first-ever episode into foster care.

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from 1<sup>st</sup> spells, the re-entry rate is the percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from date of discharge).
- In addition, we plan to report the percent of the total number of reunification discharged from the 1<sup>st</sup> spell that had a State Central Register (SCR) report within one year, but currently the data to complete this analysis are unavailable.

## Discharges within 90 days of placement

This sub-group is the short-stay assessment of those discharged to reunification from their 1<sup>st</sup> spell in foster care. This number combined with the longer stay discharges totals the overall number of discharges to reunification from the 1<sup>st</sup> spell.

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from 1<sup>st</sup> spells within 90 days, the re-entry rate is percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from date of discharge).

## Discharges after 90+ days of placement

This sub-group is the length of stay assessment of those discharged after 90+ days to reunification from their 1<sup>st</sup> spell in foster care. This number combined with the short stay discharges totals the overall number of discharges to reunification from the 1<sup>st</sup> spell.

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from 1<sup>st</sup> spells after 90+ days, the re-entry rate is percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from date of discharge).

## Reunification discharges from 2<sup>nd</sup> or greater spell

This reported number reflects the group discharged to reunification from a higher-order foster care spell (2<sup>nd</sup> or greater spell).

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from a 2<sup>nd</sup> or greater spell, the re-entry rate is percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from the date of discharge).

## Discharges within 90 days of placement

This sub-group is the short-stay assessment of those discharged to reunification from a higher-order spell in foster care. This number combined with the longer stay discharges totals the overall number of discharges to reunification from higher-order spells.

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from higher-order spells within 90 days, the re-entry rate is percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from date of discharge).

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## Discharges after 90+ days of placement

This sub-group is the length of stay assessment of those discharged after 90+ days to reunification from a higher-order spell in foster care. This number combined with the short stay discharges totals the overall number of discharges to reunification from higher-order spells.

- Of the total number of reunification discharges from higher-order spells after 90+ days, the re-entry rate is percent of the total number of reunification discharges that re-entered within one year (365 days from date of discharge).

## Adoption discharges

While we plan to report re-entry rates for those discharged to adoption, currently we are unable to as the data are unavailable.

## Perspective 2: Summary of Admissions

The **second perspective** focuses on the total number of placements from home (admissions) and provides information on foster care history for those children. Unlike the 1<sup>st</sup> perspective examining discharges one year ago, the 2<sup>nd</sup> perspective examines admissions in the current time frame.

## Number of Admissions

This last section on the page provides a summary of admissions into care. Total admissions into care are provided. The following information is shown for the admissions:

- 1) percent that are admitted as a re-entry – i.e., children entering care with any foster care history;
- 2) percent of those re-entries in which the most recent discharge was to a reunification destination regardless of time between that discharge and this entry into care (i.e., it is also counted if one year or more have elapsed); and
- 3) percent of those re-entries from a reunification discharge that have occurred within one year of that discharge.