

New Mexico's Child Welfare System

Legislative Health and Human Services Committee
Nathan Eckberg, Rachel Garcia
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Road Map

- Current situation: key data and child welfare trends
- Overview of how the child welfare system is organized and funded
- Levers for improving the system

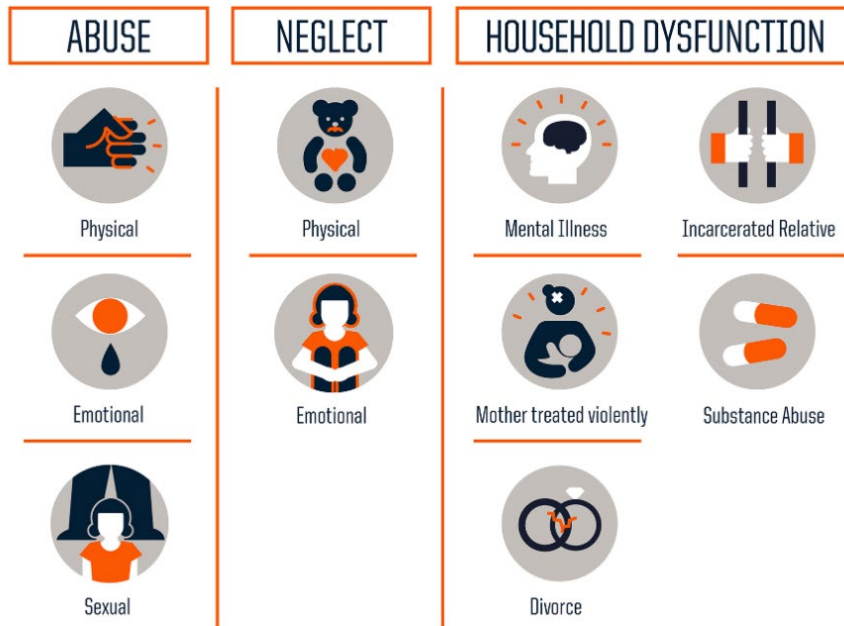


Child Welfare Trends in New Mexico



New Mexico Risk Factors and ACEs

Three Types of ACEs



New Mexico has the highest rate of adults with adverse childhood experiences; nearly 25% have experience 4 or more ACEs.

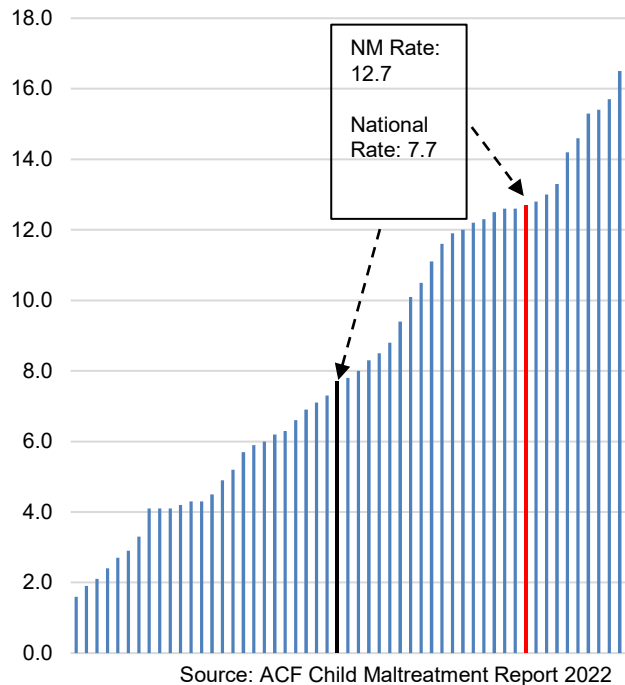
Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



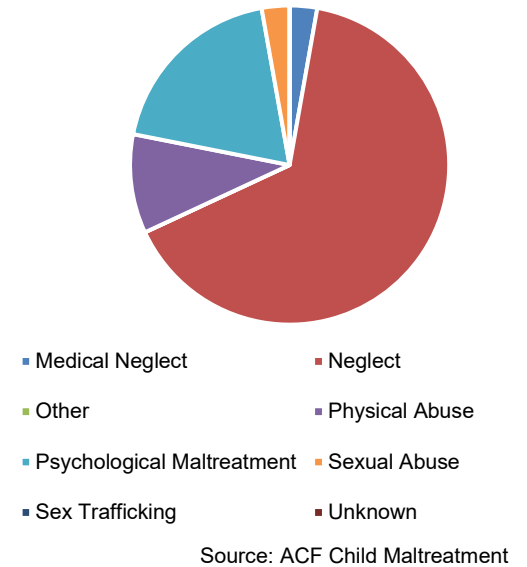
Child Maltreatment in New Mexico

The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) defines child abuse and neglect (maltreatment) as *"any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caregiver that results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation, or an act or failure to act that presents an imminent risk of serious harm."*

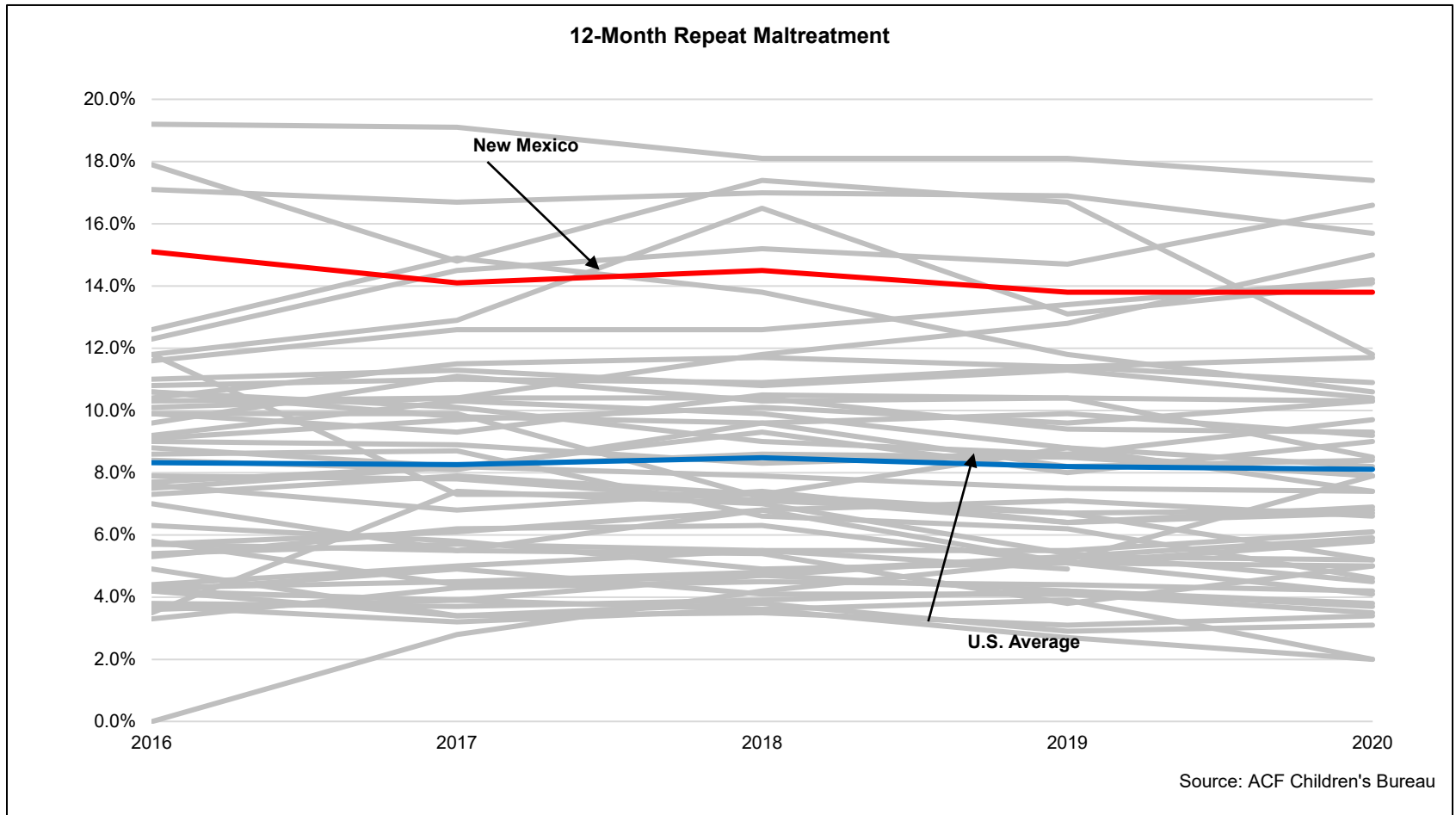
Rate of Child Maltreatment per 1,000 Children
2022



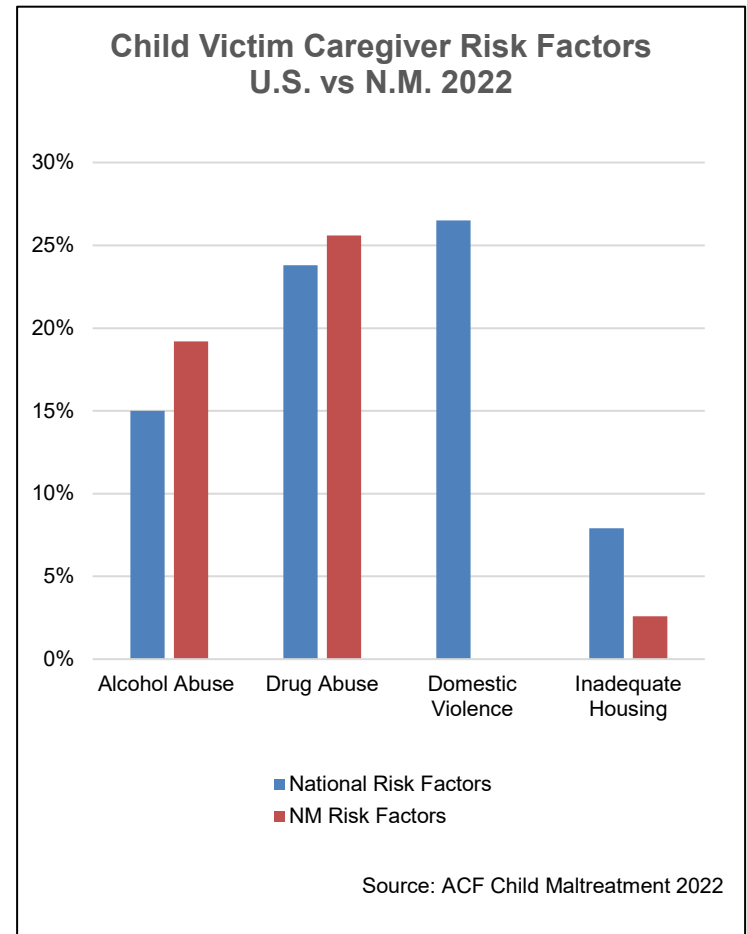
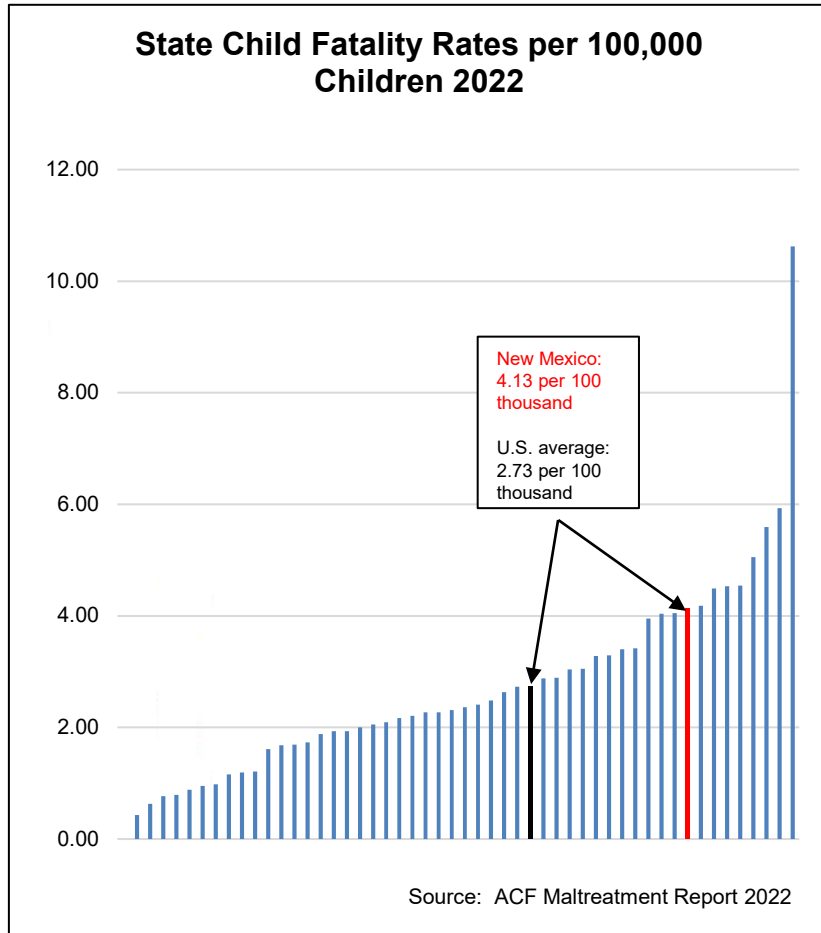
Maltreatment Types Among Child Victims
2022



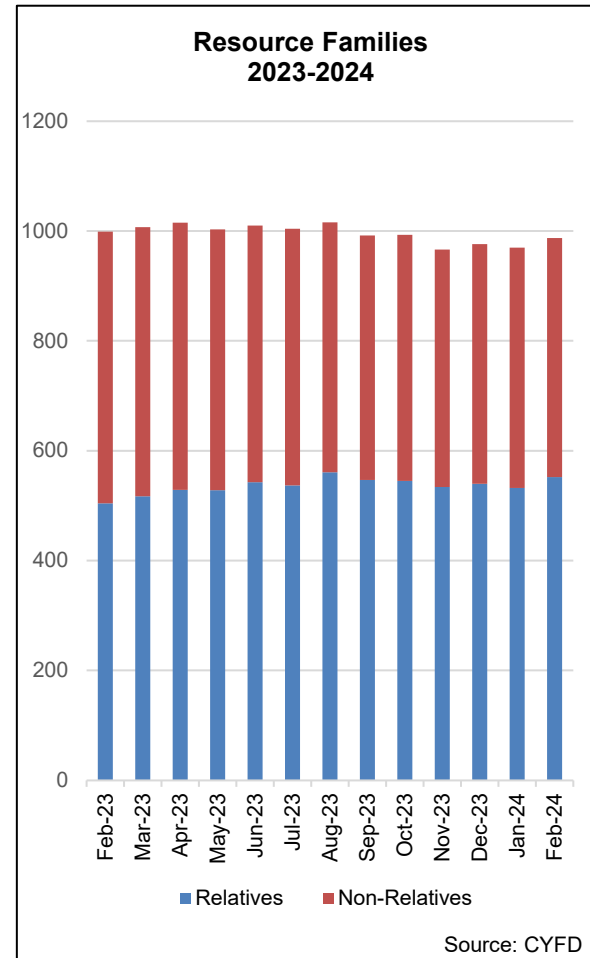
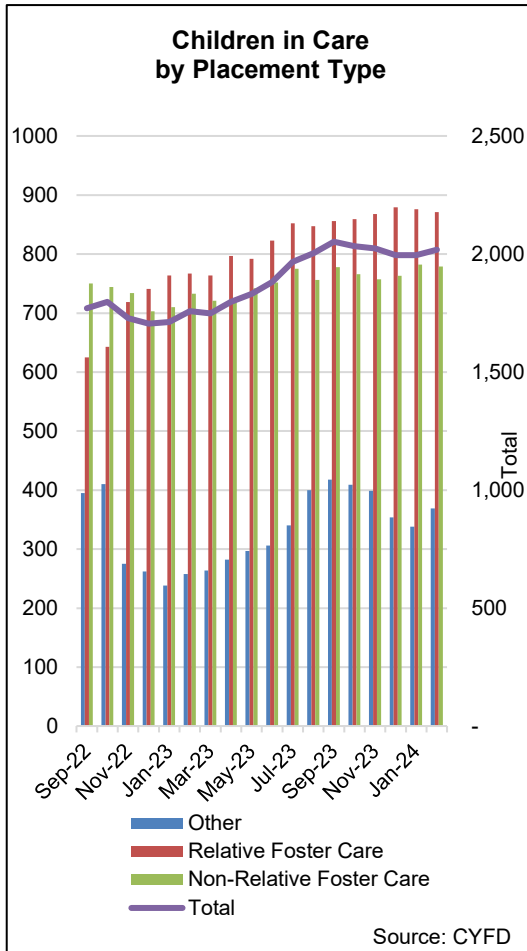
Repeat Child Maltreatment in New Mexico



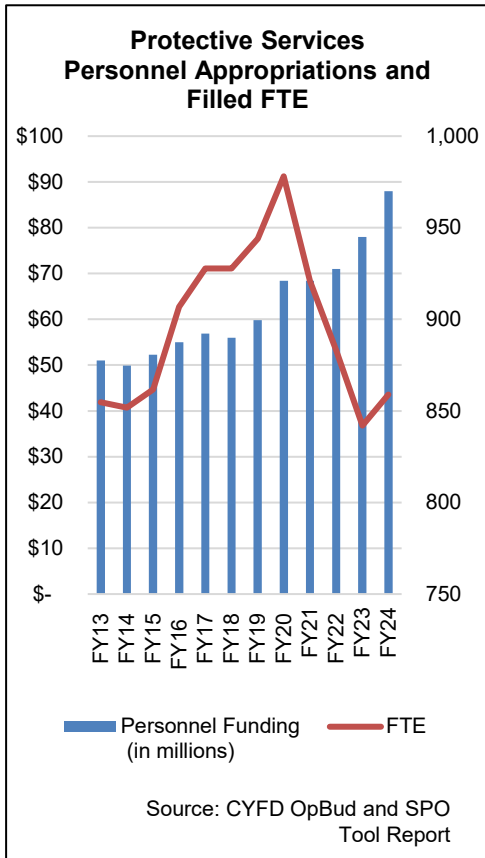
Child Maltreatment in New Mexico



Foster Care Trends



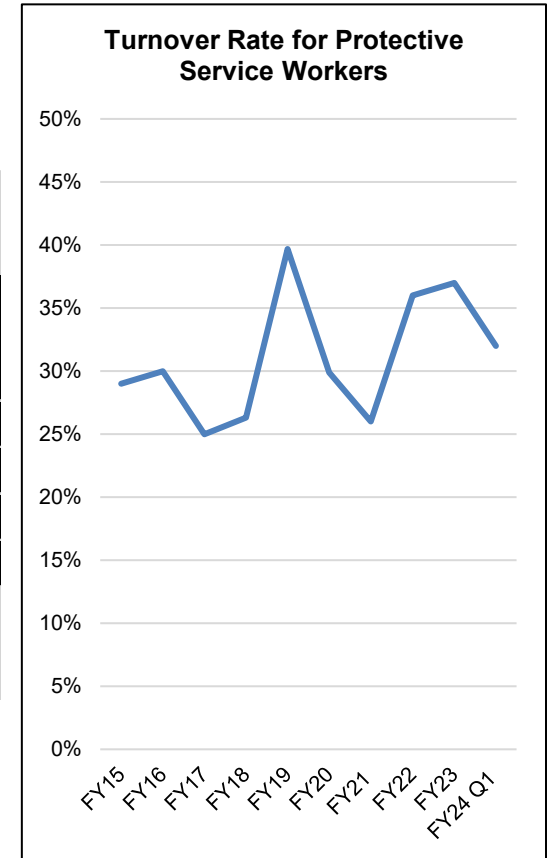
CYFD: Protective Services Workforce



Protective Services Caseload Estimates February 2024

	Benchmark	Average Caseload as of February 2024
Investigations	12 Active Cases	10
Permanency Planning	15 Children	18
Placement	25 Families	16
In-Home Services	8 Active Families	No Estimate

*Caseload estimates reported in the aggregate. Individual caseloads may vary.
Source: CYFD



How is the Child Welfare System Organized?



Child Maltreatment Prevention Framework

Primary

Serves the General Population

State Agency: ECECD, PED, DOH, HCA

Secondary

Serves Families with More Risk Factors

State Agency: ECECD, CYFD, PED, HCA

Tertiary

Serves Families Where Maltreatment Already Occurred

State Agency: CYFD



Child Welfare System: Maltreatment Has Occurred

Department of Public Safety (DPS)

Has the legal authority to take a child into protective custody

Children's Court

Judges decide if abuse and neglect has occurred and makes determinations about whether children may safely return home.

CYFD

Health Care Authority

Administers the Medicaid program- a primary funding source for children's behavioral health, treatment foster care, and health care for youth in custody

Office of Family Representation and Advocacy (OFRA)

Provides legal representation for children and families whose children are in the custody of CYFD



CYFD Over Time

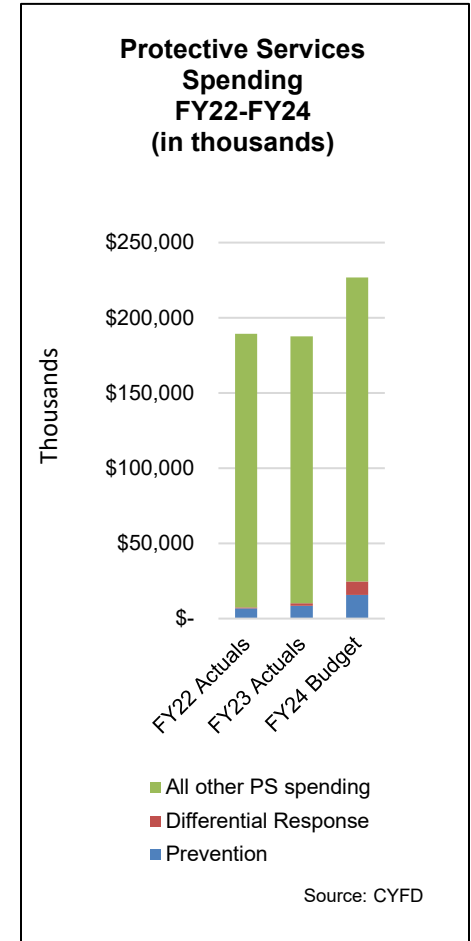
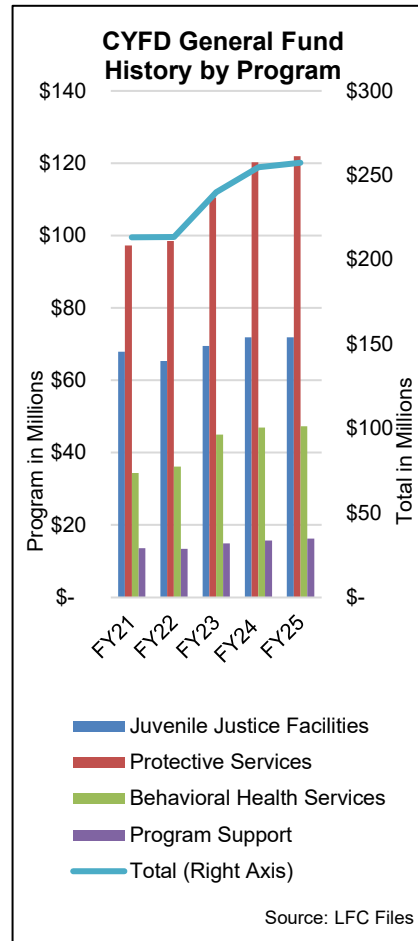
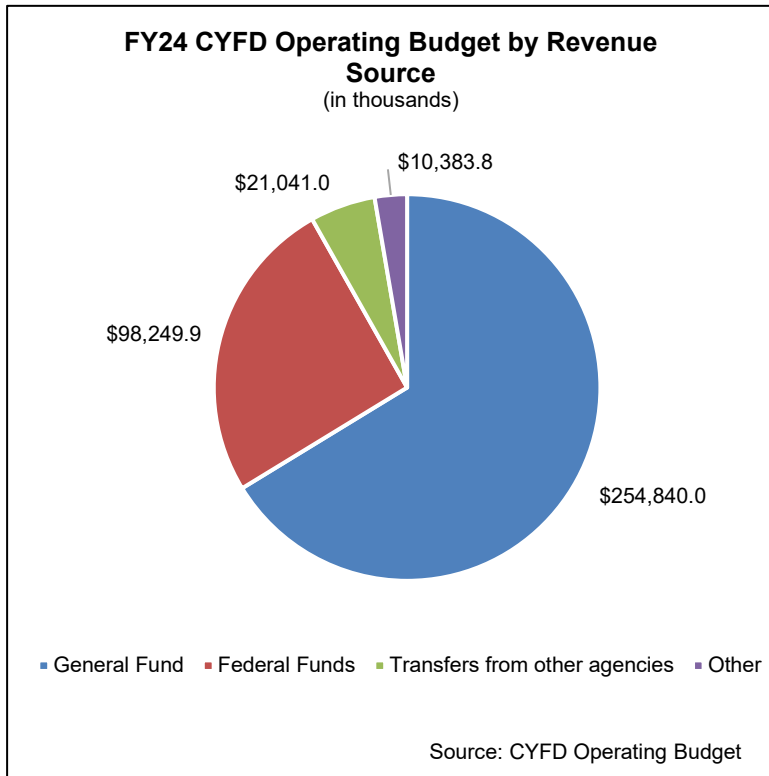
1991	Governor convened task force to create CYFD, emphasized prevention and early intervention.
1992	Child and adult protective services were transferred from HSD to CYFD
1994	Seven divisions were established- six divisions currently exist in statute: Protective Services, Juvenile Justice, Prevention and Intervention, Financial Services, Employee Support, and IT
2005	Legislation transferred adult protective services to the Aging and Long-Term Services Department and consolidated the seven divisions into four programs, dropping prevention as a focus area
2020	Early childhood programs (child care assistance, home visiting, etc) moved to the newly created Early Childhood Care and Education Department
Today	Current CYFD program and budget structure includes four service areas (programs: Juvenile Justice Facilities, Protective Services, Behavioral Health, and Program Support



How much do we spend on the
child welfare system?



CYFD Budget



CYFD Special Appropriations 2024

House Bill 2 appropriated a relatively flat operating budget for CYFD, while making targeted investments (one time funding) for three-year pilot projects, totaling \$18.6 million (GRO appropriations):

- \$1.69 million to **incentivize masters-level social work licensure** to develop and retain caseworkers
- \$4.2 million to expand **differential response** statewide, in alignment with research and existing statute
- \$9 million to implement evidence-based community-based **prevention and intervention (CBPIR)**
- \$3.75 million to recruit, support, and retain **resource families** and treatment foster care providers

HB2 also reauthorized unused prior year appropriations, including \$3 million to support **workforce** development and \$20 million to increase **behavioral health** provider capacity.



Title IV-E : Families First Prevention Services Act

FFSA of 2018 (Families First) allows states and tribes with approved prevention plans to claim federal reimbursement for certain prevention services for eligible populations.

Eligible Populations:

1. A child who is “**a candidate for foster care**” but can remain safely at home with receipt of evidence-based services or programs (identified in FFSA clearinghouse)
2. A child in foster care who is **pregnant or parenting**

To date, 46 states and tribal governments have submitted plans.

New Mexico is one of 5 states without an approved plan.



How could the system be improved?



2024 Senate Memorial 5

Bill names following key topics:

- Agency mission values and organization, compared to national best practices
- Implementation of differential or alternative response (to investigations and removals)
- Availability, needs, and gaps in existing services
- Best practices in permanency and well-being, including hard-to-place children
- Workforce
- Leveraging federal funding
- Juvenile justice, including trauma-informed programming and behavioral health
- Equity considerations

The task force [will] make recommendations to the legislature and the governor by November 15, 2024 for consideration during the legislative session.



Recent Evaluation Findings and Recommendations



Though steps taken by the Legislature and CYFD to **promote preventive measures** are promising, prevention should be expanded by continued investments and enhanced piloting efforts and the state may wish to make increased **investments in proven early intervention programs**.



Early childhood services can lead to positive outcomes, and investments have increased over 50 percent since FY23; however, **challenges with program implementation and oversight remain**.



LFC Framework for Child Welfare System Improvement



1. Implement **evidence-based prevention** and **early intervention programs** to support families and divert formal system involvement
2. Recruit, retain, support and develop a professional social work **workforce**
3. Expand **access to behavioral health and other services** for children and adults, particularly evidence-based approaches
4. Strengthen **oversight** and **accountability** mechanisms



Thank you

Legislative Finance Committee
325 Don Gaspar Ave STE 101, Santa Fe, NM 87501
(505) 986-4550

More LFC Budget and Policy Documents can be found at:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Entity/LFC/Default>

