



*Advocating
Permanent families for children*

Foster Care Review Board

2017—2018 Annual Report and Recommendations

2017 DATA SNAPSHOT



STATS AT-A-GLANCE

- 3,679 CHILDREN ENTERED FOSTER CARE
- 34% OF CHILDREN ENTERING CARE HAD PREVIOUS OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENTS
- 3,741 CHILDREN LEFT FOSTER CARE
- 45% OF CHILDREN RETURNED HOME
- 13% OF CHILDREN REVIEWED WERE ADOPTED

2017 REVIEWS

- 9,639 REVIEWS HELD
- 5,533 CHILDREN REVIEWED
- 425 REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS

AREAS OF CONCERN

- 29% AGENCY POLICY VIOLATIONS
- 30% LEGAL BARRIERS
- 28% CASE PLAN BARRIERS
- 6% ADOPTION SERVICE DELAYS
- 6% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD TIMELY
- 1% LEGAL HEARINGS NOT HELD

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE 17 MONTHS OR LONGER

- 1,520 CHILDREN
- 41% LEGALLY FREE FOR ADOPTION
- 21% IN CARE FIVE OR MORE YEARS

SC HEART GALLERY

- 2,629 INQUIRIES
- 240 ADOPTION EXHIBITS
- 128 CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHED AND 106 VIDEOTAPED
- 33 VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS
- 82 CHILDREN MATCHED WITH FAMILIES

ADOPTIONS

- 497 FINALIZED ADOPTIONS
- 20% WITHIN 24 MONTHS
- 14% AGE 13 AND OLDER

PEOPLE POWER

- 200 VOLUNTEERS
- 9,939 CASE REVIEW HOURS
- 13,678 TOTAL VOLUNTEER HOURS
- 29 BOARDS COMPLETED SERVICE PROJECTS

2017 REVIEW BOARD OF THE YEAR

- REVIEW BOARD 13D, GREENVILLE COUNTY

2017 REVIEW BOARD MEMBER OF THE YEAR

- DIANE HINES, REVIEW BOARD 4B, CHESTERFIELD COUNTY

Data contained in this annual report represents children reported by the South Carolina Department of Social Services, who remain in foster care at least four consecutive months and are reviewed by the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board.



RECOMMENDATION

The South Carolina Foster Care Review Board (FCRB) is supported by the South Carolina State Board of Directors appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Senate. The State Board meets quarterly and is responsible for reviewing and coordinating the activities of local review boards. It also makes recommendations in an annual report to the governor and the South Carolina General Assembly.

State Board 2018 Recommendations

Since 1974, the (FCRB) has provided an external, third-party review system for all children residing in foster care in South Carolina. This independent system of accountability has successfully utilized citizen volunteers to promote finding safe, permanent homes for children in foster care in a timely manner and has increased public awareness regarding issues faced by children and families involved with the child-welfare system.

1. The State Board recommends all child welfare partners and stakeholders collaborate to ensure timely and successful implementation of the newly created Department of Children's Advocacy to include support and advocacy for sufficient funding for the deliverables outlined in statute.
2. The State Board recommends that all child welfare partners and stakeholders collaborate to monitor and track the South Carolina Department of Social Services' (DSS) compliance with the conditions of the Michele H. lawsuit regarding children in foster care.
3. The State Board recommends the Foster Care Review Board continue monitoring and reporting on the implementation of Act No. 146, which requires DSS to inform a relative with whom a child may be placed of the opportunity to be a licensed foster parent, to include the licensing process and benefits of becoming a foster parent.

SUMMARY OF REVIEWS



9,639

FCRB analyzes ongoing, comparative data of children in foster care in order to gain a better understanding of the trends impacting the system, as well as future implications related to permanency for each child reviewed.

During calendar year 2017, 44 local review boards held 425 local review board meetings, completing 9,639 case reviews for 5,533 children in foster care. In 2017, there was a 7 percent increase in the number of reviews and the number of children reviewed.

Data regarding entry into foster care for 3,679 children was received from DSS and entered in FCRB data-management system during calendar year 2017. Local review boards held reviews for 1,933 of these children, while 1,746 children either left foster care prior to a case review or were not reviewed as of Dec. 31, 2017.

INDICATOR	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
CHILDREN REVIEWED	3,475	3,630	4,032	4,175	5,533
REVIEWS HELD	5,876	5,914	6,711	6,892	9,639
REVIEW BOARD MEETINGS	403	418	424	427	425
CHILDREN ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	1,568	1,829	1,838	1,927	1,933
CHILDREN RE-ENTERING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	403	418	915	970	1,269
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE AND REVIEWED	1,916	1,676	1,704	1,827	1,995

Areas of Concern

14,413

The monthly review process allows local review boards to identify systemic concerns that are barriers to permanence for children in foster care. These system deficiencies, or areas of concern, are items that are not in compliance with federal law, state law or DSS agency policy.

In 2017, local review boards identified 14,413 areas of concern. This is an 11 percent increase from 2016. DSS policy violations, including case plan barriers, accounted for 28 percent of all areas of concern. The most frequently identified policy area of concern was no current case plan (1,571). Legal barriers accounted for 30 percent of all areas of concern. No court order and/or complaint at review was the most frequently noted legal barrier (3,475), followed by no timely foster care review (616). Delays in adoption services accounted for 6 percent of all areas of concern.



SUMMARY OF REVIEWS

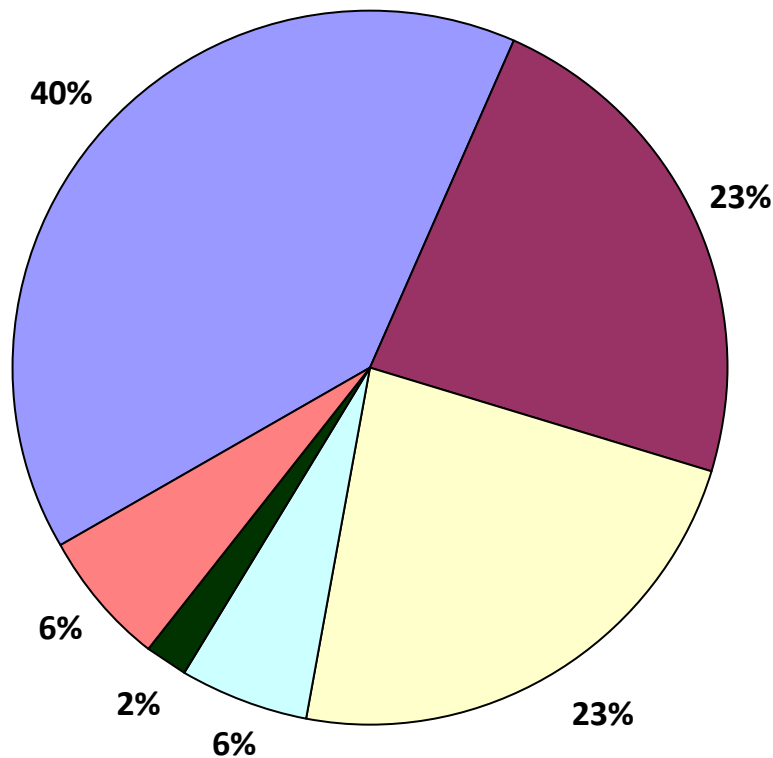
Case Decisions and Recommendations

Local review boards carefully consider input from interested parties prior to issuing a recommendation for each child's case. Interested parties are invited by DSS to attend FCRB hearings. Board members are required by statute to consider the most appropriate permanency recommendation possible for each child. Recommendations are sent to the Family Court, DSS and Guardians ad Litem.

If a required interested party is not invited or if additional information is needed for the board members to make a permanency recommendation, no recommendation is made and the review is continued. Reviews that are continued or not held are rescheduled, usually within three months of the original review date.

The graph below illustrates the percentage and type for each recommendation issued by local review boards at the most recent child specific review in 2017.

Review Board Recommendations



Termination of Parent Rights	Adoption
Reunification	Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement
Relative Placement	Review Continued/No Review

ENTERING FOSTER CARE



3,679

The number of children who entered foster care between January and December 2017 is 3,679. This is slightly less than in 2016.



Thirty-four percent of children entering foster care in 2017 entered due to physical neglect, while 30 percent entered care due to abuse. The remaining children entered foster care due to drug exposure/testing positive for drugs by either the parent or child (26 percent), for reasons not reported (6 percent), and abandonment or voluntary placement (1 percent).

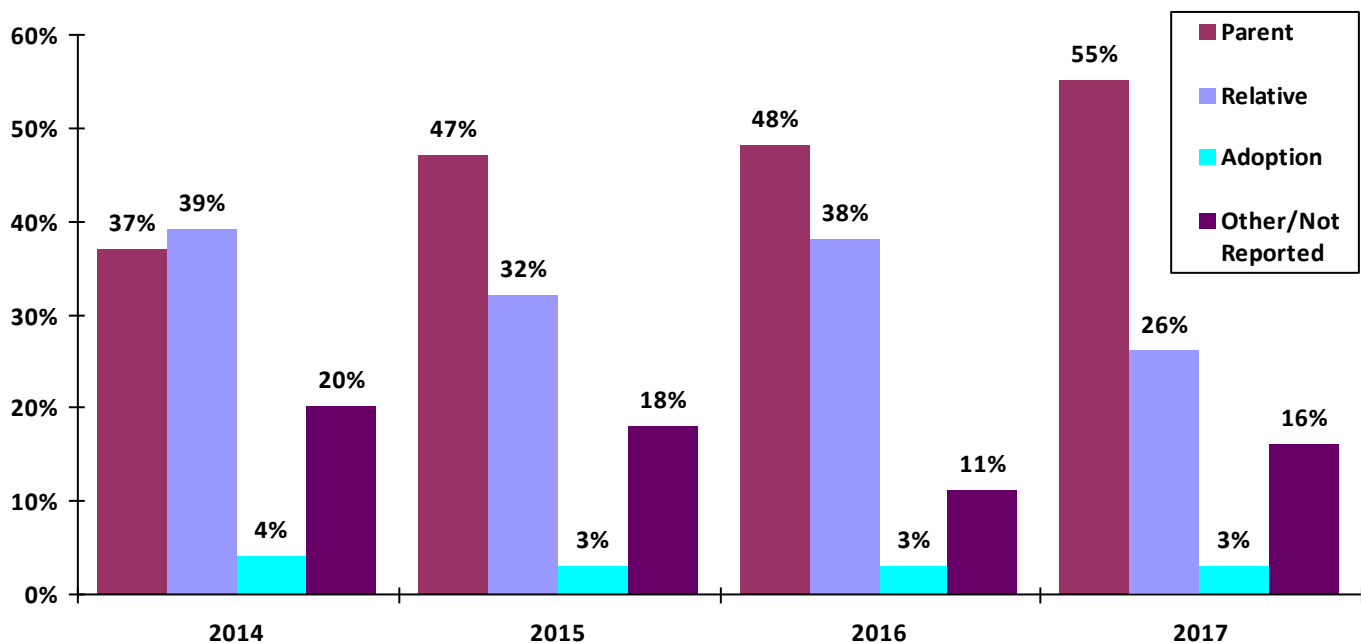
Previous Out-of-Home Placements

1,269

Of the 1,269 children reported to have entered foster care in 2017, 34 percent of (1,269) had at least one reported previous out-of-home placement. Of the 1,269, 55 percent entering foster care came from the home of a parent, 26 percent from the home of a relative, and 3 percent from an adoptive home.

FCRB reports on all out-of-home placements for children who enter foster care because moving from home to home or going in and out of foster care creates additional trauma for a child. The chart below displays prior placement data for the most recent entry to foster care by calendar year.

Placement prior to most recent entry





LEAVING FOSTER CARE

3,741

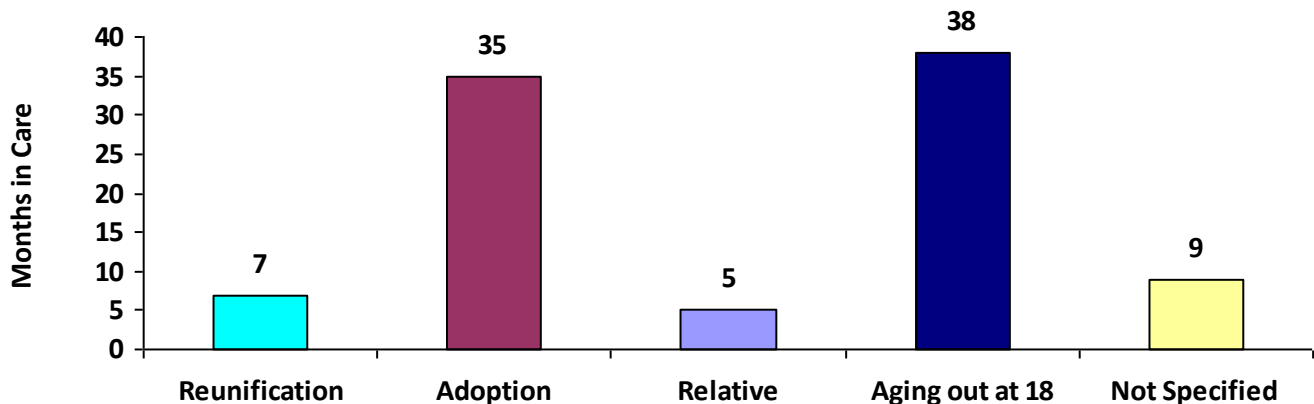
DSS reported that 3,741 children left the foster care system in 2017. Local review boards reviewed 1,995 of these children prior to them leaving foster care. The remaining 1,746 children left DSS custody before local review boards conducting a review.

Returning a child to a parent or finalizing an adoption are the most permanent options for children who leave foster care. In 2017, 47 percent of children reviewed were returned to a parent or had a finalized adoption. The following table summarizes data for all children leaving foster care in 2017.

INDICATOR	ALL CHILDREN	CHILDREN REVIEWED	CHILDREN NOT REVIEWED
CHILDREN LEAVING FOSTER CARE	3,741	1,995	1,746
PERMANENCY OUTCOMES			
REUNIFICATION	45% (1,674)	43% (873)	47% (811)
FINALIZED ADOPTION	13% (497)	24% (490)	<1% (4)
OTHER OUTCOMES			
RELATIVE CUSTODY	33% (1,222)	17% (351)	48% (825)
EMANCIPATED OR TURNED 18	7% (253)	11% (231)	1% (19)
OTHER /NOT REPORTED	2% (95)	1% (13)	4% (66)

The graph below compares the average number of months a child remains in foster care based on the indicator for leaving foster care in 2017.

Number of Months in Care by Reason Left Care



ADOPTIONS

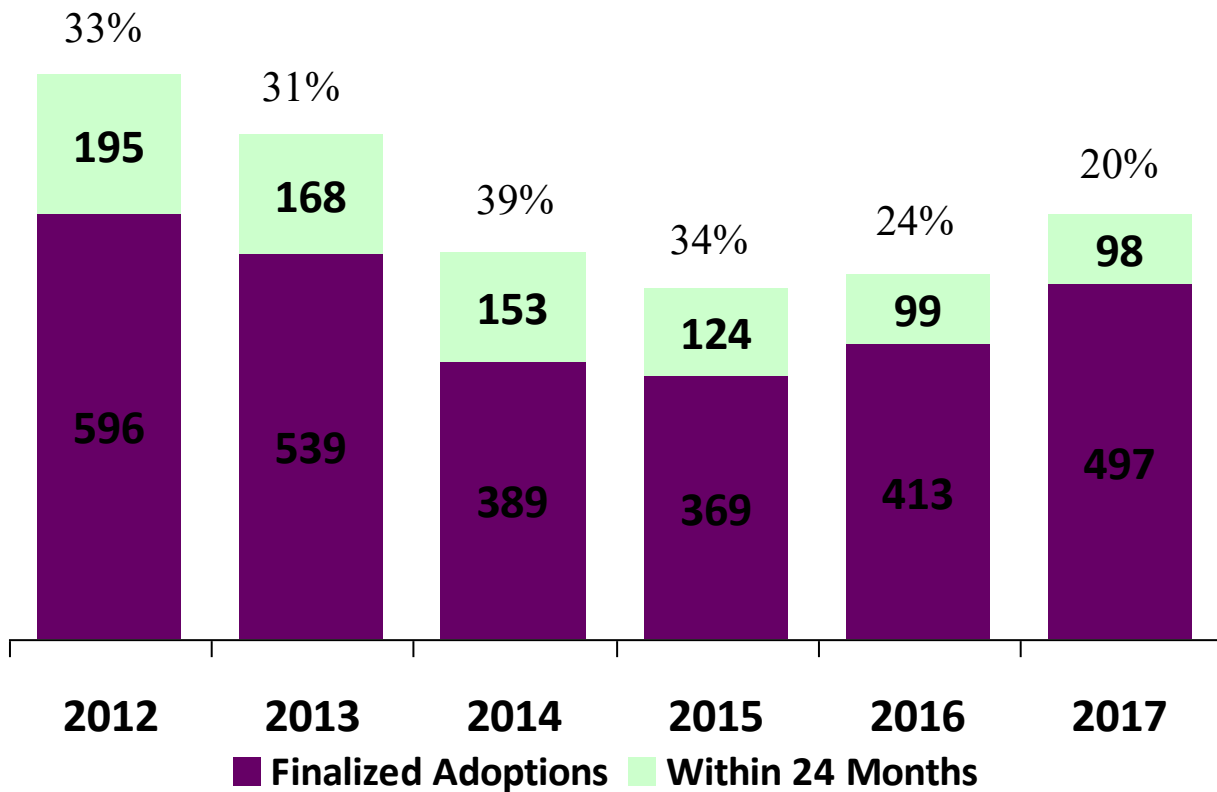


497

Of all children who left foster care in 2017, 13 percent (497) had finalized adoptions; 20 percent (98) of these adoptions were completed within the federal standard of 24 months. That is significantly lower than 2016 and the lowest percentage since 2011. The average length of time a child spends in foster care before a finalized adoption is 36 months.

The average age at adoption was 6.9 years. In 2017, adoptions were finalized for 72 children age 13 and older. Teen adoptions accounted for 15 percent of all finalized adoptions. Positive permanency for older youth should always be a top priority for the child-welfare system in South Carolina.

Finalized Adoptions by Calendar Year



Percentage Completed within Federal Standard of 24 months



REMAINING IN CARE

1,520

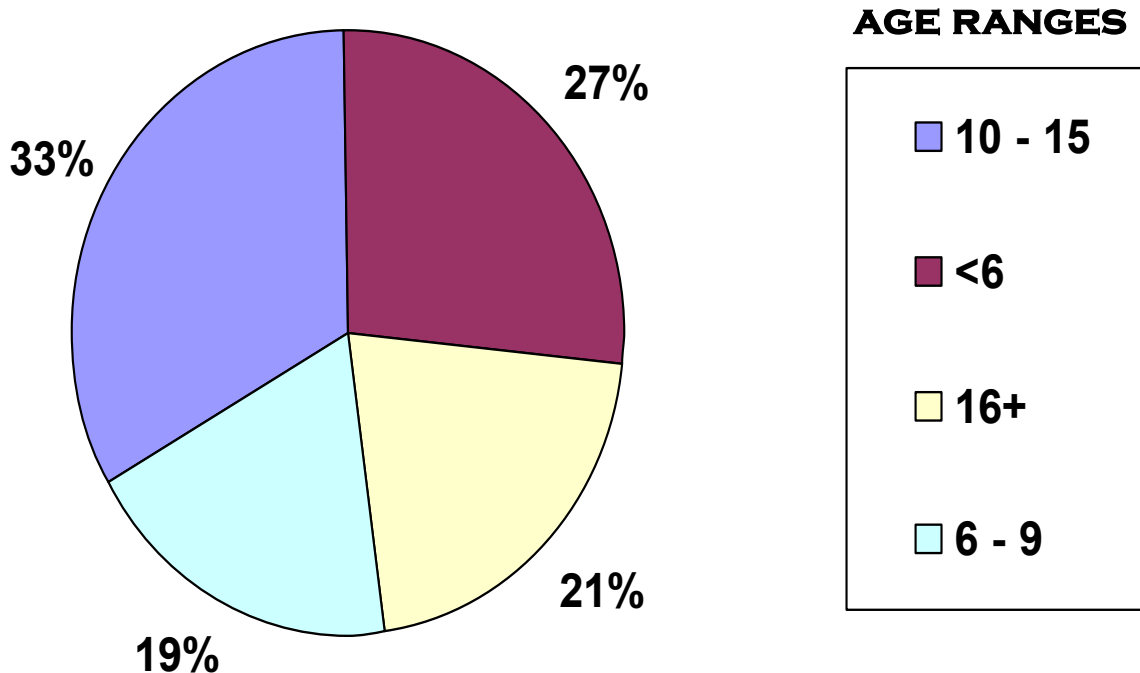
DSS reported to FCRB that there were 3,962 children in foster care as of Dec 31, 2017. Of these, 38 percent (1,520) have been in the foster care system since their most recent foster care entry for 17 continuous months or longer.

Of these children remaining in care 17 months or longer during the reporting period, 41 percent (616) were legally free for adoption. The average length of time in care for these children is 4.2 years, or 50 months. The length of time in foster care ranges from 17 months to 18 years; and 130 children (21 percent) have spent five or more years in foster care.

The graph below illustrates the age break-down for children in foster care for 17 months or longer.

Children in Foster Care for 17 Months or Longer

AGE AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2017



HEART GALLERY



A photograph captures a moment in time. For children in foster care who are waiting for adoption, a photograph can be the starting point to finding their forever family. A national network of Heart Galleries has embraced this singular mission of using the power of photography to build families for children lingering in foster care.

The South Carolina Heart Gallery (Heart Gallery) recruits local photographers who generously donate their time and talent to capture the spirit and personality of waiting children. Those portraits are displayed online and in public exhibit space offered by faith communities, libraries, restaurants and other businesses.

As part of a network of state organizations partnering with DSS, the Heart Gallery provides intensive recruitment opportunities for individual children, as well as direct services for families, helping increase the number of adoptive families for children seeking forever homes. Heart Gallery staff members assist families by guiding them through the application phase, advocating and supporting them through their journey in becoming a forever home for a child in need, and then completing adoptive home studies. During 2017, children on referral ages 16 or older also began receiving matching services. These children are one third of all referrals and are the children most in danger of aging out of foster care without a permanent home.



**Heart
Gallery**
South Carolina TM

2017 STATISTICS:

128	CHILDREN PHOTOGRAPHED
106	CHILDREN VIDEOTAPED
33	VOLUNTEER PHOTOGRAPHERS
240	PUBLIC EXHIBITS/MEDIA FEATURES
2,629	INQUIRIES RECEIVED FROM FAMILIES INTERESTED IN ADOPTING
82	CHILDREN MATCHED WITH FAMILIES
162	NEW SC FAMILIES INITIATED THE ADOPTION PROCESS
63	HOME STUDIES COMPLETED AND ACCEPTED FOR APPROVAL

The SC Heart Gallery Foundation provides video production during a photo shoot event. Video profiles are also featured on the Heart Gallery website and are important in capturing the many personalities of our waiting children.



HEART GALLERY

In South Carolina,
472 children are legally free
 for adoption.



*"A good snapshot stops a moment from running away."
 Eudora Welty (1909 - 2001)*

OUTCOMES BY COUNTY



The following table compares 2017 Review Board data in South Carolina's 46 counties for children reviewed, children entering/re-entering care, children leaving care and permanency. FCRB considers permanency as a child being returned to a parent or having a finalized adoption. For children who left care but did not achieve permanency, 42 percent (1,222) went to the custody of a relative and 9 percent (348) turned 18, or the reason they left care was not provided.

For children entering and leaving care, these numbers reflect all children reported to the FCRB by DSS to include children who were reviewed and children that DSS reported leaving care prior to a review being held.

County	Reviews Held	Children Reviewed	# Entered FC	Previous Out-of-Home Placement	# Left FC	Permanency		Other Outcomes	
						% Returned to parent	% Adopted	% Relative Custody	% Other
State Total	9,639	5,533	3,679	1,269	3,741	45% 1,674	13% 497	33% 1,222	9% 348
Abbeville	25	13	21	1	21	10	0	9	2
Aiken	218	133	101	42	80	33	10	27	10
Allendale	16	8	3	2	3	2	0	1	0
Anderson	597	331	166	88	176	67	20	66	23
Bamberg	14	11	7	4	7	7	0	0	0
Barnwell	63	37	17	3	17	5	2	7	3
Beaufort	126	70	55	13	52	15	5	19	13
Berkeley	178	123	143	39	121	77	11	24	9
Calhoun	17	10	8	1	6	0	1	5	0
Charleston	818	457	313	130	231	100	20	89	22
Cherokee	178	97	65	24	53	14	10	21	8
Chester	44	26	15	7	8	4	1	2	1
Chesterfield	148	86	49	23	62	13	22	8	19
Clarendon	76	46	34	15	25	16	3	1	5
Colleton	78	46	52	27	62	38	5	13	6
Darlington	161	91	65	24	39	20	4	11	4
Dillon	169	80	19	13	51	22	13	13	3
Dorchester	151	95	56	14	66	30	12	21	3
Edgefield	17	9	10	2	12	5	1	4	2



OUTCOMES BY COUNTY

County	Reviews Held	Children Reviewed	# Entered FC	Previous Out-of-Home Placement	# Left FC	Permanency		Other Outcomes	
						% Returned to parent	% Adopted	% Relative Custody	% Other
State Total	9,639	5,533	3,679	1,269	3,741	45% 1,674	13% 497	33% 1,222	9% 348
Fairfield	64	29	21	9	17	5	3	4	5
Florence	155	95	67	14	86	29	9	38	10
Georgetown	77	38	20	2	42	16	5	18	3
Greenville	955	557	357	78	379	185	65	89	40
Greenwood	47	24	38	2	41	12	3	22	4
Hampton	7	4	4	2	4	1	0	2	1
Horry	511	308	248	111	226	151	32	31	12
Jasper	33	25	10	3	13	1	2	10	0
Kershaw	107	54	34	15	36	13	6	14	3
Lancaster	198	113	70	25	82	34	11	32	5
Laurens	270	160	100	20	67	23	15	26	3
Lee	17	11	7	3	4	0	2	2	0
Lexington	614	344	182	64	229	95	37	81	16
Marion	100	53	26	15	33	18	0	13	2
Marlboro	30	12	4	2	10	3	6	1	0
McCormick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newberry	89	38	16	2	29	7	6	12	4
Oconee	315	174	75	47	96	48	20	14	14
Orangeburg	182	103	63	15	73	24	10	31	8
Pickens	376	220	76	33	112	38	25	42	7
Richland	719	437	503	96	459	218	17	194	30
Saluda	15	10	8	1	7	2	1	4	0
Spartanburg	1076	611	330	132	387	196	69	102	20
Sumter	205	121	113	56	101	30	1	60	10
Union	17	11	13	5	11	5	1	5	0
Williamsburg	32	17	3	3	4	0	0	2	2
York	334	195	92	42	101	42	11	32	16

BARRIERS BY COUNTY



The FCRB is statutorily mandated to report on deficiencies in the child welfare system. One tool for measuring deficiencies is areas of concern. These are defined as non-compliance with federal and state law and/or DSS policy and are identified during the review of a child's case.

The following table summarizes data collected during reviews held in calendar year 2017. The data compares areas of concern in individual counties. All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Areas of Concern

County	Total Areas of Concern	Areas of Concern per Child	Case Plan Barriers	Agency Policy Violations	Legal Barriers	Hearings Not Held	Hearings Not Held Timely	Adoption Service Delays
State Total	14,413	2.6	28% (4,031)	29% (4,215)	30% (4,348)	1% (180)	6% (873)	6% (760)
Abbeville	35	2.7	10	10	8	1	4	2
Aiken	330	2.5	111	134	54	10	2	19
Allendale	7	.9	0	2	4	0	0	1
Anderson	1063	3.2	266	289	279	4	167	58
Bamberg	39	3.5	12	11	13	0	0	3
Barnwell	28	.8	9	3	14	0	0	2
Beaufort	239	3.4	83	77	53	1	3	22
Berkeley	338	2.7	76	99	95	1	41	26
Calhoun	39	3.9	18	9	10	0	0	2
Charleston	1,521	3.3	367	411	502	33	98	110
Cherokee	227	2.3	66	62	79	2	13	5
Chester	77	3.0	18	27	17	0	1	14
Chesterfield	206	2.4	36	93	50	0	15	12
Clarendon	47	1.0	11	9	16	0	8	3
Colleton	111	2.4	15	56	16	0	13	11
Darlington	168	1.8	25	45	79	0	15	4
Dillon	170	2.1	31	65	60	0	5	9
Dorchester	107	1.1	22	27	39	4	9	6
Edgefield	24	2.7	13	5	4	1	0	1



BARRIERS BY COUNTY

Areas of Concern

County	Total Areas of Concern	Areas of Concern per Child	Case Plan Barriers	Agency Policy Violations	Legal Barriers	Hearings Not Held	Hearings Not Held Timely	Adoption Service Delays
State Total	14,413	2.6	28% (4,031)	29% (4,215)	30% (4,348)	1% (180)	6% (873)	6% (760)
Fairfield	137	4.7	27	57	45	0	4	4
Florence	150	1.6	29	40	73	1	4	3
Georgetown	90	2.4	41	16	23	0	0	10
Greenville	1,204	2.2	281	447	320	1	74	81
Greenwood	102	4.3	28	22	38	2	8	4
Hampton	14	3.5	1	8	2	0	0	3
Horry	616	2.0	137	281	153	9	21	15
Jasper	51	2.0	16	12	20	0	0	3
Kershaw	108	2.0	33	50	23	0	1	1
Lancaster	440	3.9	93	127	162	1	33	24
Laurens	343	2.1	98	113	102	1	6	23
Lee	18	1.6	3	4	11	0	0	0
Lexington	992	2.9	314	175	368	16	66	52
Marion	199	3.8	76	64	33	0	7	19
Marlboro	3	.25	2	1	0	0	0	0
McCormick	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newberry	111	2.9	30	38	30	1	3	9
Oconee	326	1.9	113	35	119	6	45	8
Orangeburg	196	1.9	61	48	57	1	24	5
Pickens	570	2.6	169	209	166	1	7	18
Richland	1,550	3.5	489	393	504	59	57	48
Saluda	17	1.7	5	6	3	1	2	0
Spartanburg	1,454	2.4	466	392	422	7	96	66
Sumter	342	2.8	125	101	76	8	4	28
Union	51	4.6	18	15	13	1	1	3
Williamsburg	16	.9	1	4	10	0	1	0
York	537	2.8	186	123	183	7	15	23

AWARDS



The State Board of Directors selects a Review Board and Review Board Member of the Year. Community partners, staff, and Review Board members nominate boards and individual members. The Professional Development and Awards Committee of the State Board reviews all nominations and makes recommendations to the State Board.

Local Review Board 13D Greenville County, was selected as the 2017 Review Board of the Year. Review Board 13D Members include **Traci Brookie, Dianne Delsol, Brenda Holmes, Tommy Rice and Jerry Shore**. This board's commitment and dedication to the youth in foster care in Greenville County is evident. They completed a service project to meet the physical needs of children in foster care. Partnering with 11 organizations, businesses and individuals within the community, the board was able to:



- Fill five backpacks with school supplies for preschool and elementary school children, as well as provide school clothing and shoes for the recipients.
- Fill 26 backpacks with grade specific supplies for middle school and high school students.
- Create 50 bundles of personal hygiene and toiletry items for middle school and high school youth.

Serving children is clearly at the heart of everything FCRB 13D does.





AWARDS

Diane Hines of Review Board 4B: Chesterfield County, is the 2017 Review Board Member of the Year. Serving children and families has been Diane's life mission. Prior to joining FCRB, she worked for DSS. Since her appointment on FCRB 4B in December 2006, Diane has been a vital and respected member of her board. She shares her knowledge and passion with all those around her. Diane faithfully attends training opportunities, as well as the reviews of Review Board 4B. Additionally, Diane willingly serves as a substitute for other boards. In 2017, she attended a total of 24 review days, more than half of those being opportunities when she subbed on other boards across the Pee Dee. The nomination letter for Diane says: "She is always willing to lend a helping hand, commute to boards to serve and diligently discuss cases during deliberation to determine the best recommendation for the children being reviewed in reference to safety, permanency and stability."

**Review Board
Member of the
Year
Diane Hines**



A hundred years from now it will not matter what kind of house you lived in . . . what kind of car you drove . . . what your bank account balance was . . . but what will matter is that you were important in the life of a child.

Adapted from a quote by Forest Witcraft

Left to right: Diane Hines, FCRB Program Director Lisa Vosburgh and State Board Chairperson Monica Hill

VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS



13,678 Volunteer Hours

In 2017, nearly 200 volunteers contributed 13,678 hours to serve the state of South Carolina. The hours spent reviewing cases and providing additional services to board members' individual communities is highly appreciated by the FCRB volunteers and the State Board of Directors.

FCRB volunteers are objective, independent reviewers of cases of children in foster care. Local review boards held 436 meetings and spent 9,939 hours reviewing cases for 5,533 children in foster care. The review boards issued Advisory Recommendations to DSS and the Family Court for permanent case plans for each child reviewed and identified areas of non-compliance with DSS policy or statute(s) in each case. Review Board members also generously donated an additional 3,739 hours supporting and strengthening services to expedite safe, permanent families for children. Local review boards contributed the following in 2017:

- **29** review boards completed service projects to support programs and events for children in foster care and those who serve them.
- **26** review boards sponsored Heart Gallery exhibits, or donated refreshments and assisted at photo shoots where children who are legally free for adoption had professional photographs taken for adoptive recruitment.
- **11** review boards participated in quarterly meetings with child-welfare partners to discuss trends and issues impacting children in foster care.
- **7** review boards provided quarterly reports or presented the Annual Report to legislators on local review board activities and



Review Board 15B and 15C members Kathleen Hamilton, Monica Albright, Norma Jeanne Browder and Helen Bowden



SCDSS case manager Latesia Jenkins, 5D board members Bob Amundson, Thewanda Cooper and Barbara Weston



STATE BOARD AND STAFF

STATE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2nd Congressional District, Richland County
1st Congressional District, Berkeley County
3rd Congressional District, Greenville County
4th Congressional District, Spartanburg County
5th Congressional District, Cherokee County
6th Congressional District, Richland County
7th Congressional District

Jo Hecker
Charles (Chuck) Koches
Dan Bracken
Monica Hill, Chairperson
Martha (Sissy) Brock
Andrea McCoy
Vacant

STATE OFFICE STAFF

Program Director
Program Manager
Program Supervisors

Lisa Armstrong
Stephanie Spink
Laurie Davidson
Doretta Crosson-Irby

Review Board Coordinators

Shallia Belton
Melissa Burroughs
Vacant
Christina Grant
Jessica Haygood
Malory Hogg
Rachel Johnson
Kristin McGill
Corlette Minor
Chloe Taylor

Heart Gallery Coordinator
Heart Gallery Program Support Specialist
Heart Gallery Recruitment Specialists

Latavia Williams
Millie Qualls
Latrice Williams
Amanda Blackmon
Hayley Salley

Staff Attorney
Statistical/Research Analyst
Administrative Coordinator
Administrative Assistants

Vacant
Lola Robertson
Joy Manning
Heather Valentine
Ashley Wilson

FOSTER CARE REVIEW BOARD

Advocating Permanent Families for Children



MAILING ADDRESS:

Foster Care Review Board
1205 Pendleton Street, Suite 436
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

E-mail: fcrb@admin.sc.gov

Phone: 803.734.0480

Fax: 803.734.1223

Website: <http://fcrb.sc.gov>

VISION

South Carolina will make child well being a top priority by assuring safe, permanent families for all children in foster care.

MISSION

The mission of the South Carolina Foster Care Review Board is to provide external accountability for the foster care system and to advocate on behalf of children in foster care.