

Here for families every step of the way.

Hennepin County | Children and Family Services 2024 Annual Report

Hennepin County is committed to promoting the safety, stability, healthy development and well-being of children and youth in Hennepin County. At the heart of that commitment is our vision for a future where all children and youth are thriving in safe, stable homes.

Child protection looks very different today than it did six years ago.

Our work to prevent children and families from entering our system and to reduce trauma for those involved has led to sustained improvement. We are determined to continue this path, and we remain focused on the unacceptable racial disparities and disproportionality that many children and families still experience.

This report provides a snapshot of the experiences and outcomes of children and families involved with our system in 2024. We include data from the previous three years to track our progress toward achieving our goals. Throughout, we share reflections on our successes and continue to acknowledge our challenges and where we need to improve. By prioritizing family engagement and investing in upstream support, we're taking concrete action towards making our vision a reality.

Seeing the impact of ongoing system transformation in our data is significant, but our work is truly about making a difference for individual people. Every day, we walk alongside children and families in our community. It is our responsibility to serve them to the best of our ability. Thank you for caring about our children and families.



In partnership,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kwesi Booker", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Kwesi Booker

Director, Children and Family Services

Child protection by the numbers

Child protection reports decreased in 2024, and fewer children entered foster care. The number of reports screened in also decreased. Previous annual reports included the total number of children active in out-of-home placement during the year. This year's report compares a point-in-time count of children in

out-of-home placement on June 1 each year. Point-in-time counts offer a useful snapshot of data, like the average number of children in foster care on any given day, and can be helpful for measuring progress.

Measure	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total child protection reports (intakes)	13,874	13,323	13,756	13,087
% of total child protection reports coming from mandated reporters	76.1%	77.8%	77.5%	78.4%
Reports warranting investigation (total intakes screened in)	6,265	5,782	6,045	5,952
% reports warranting investigation (total % intakes screened in)	45.2%	43.4%	43.9%	45.5%
Intakes % screened in — Family Assessment track	63.0%	62.8%	63.6%	65.0%
Intakes % screened in — Family Investigation track	34.5%	34.9%	33.9%	32.6%
Intakes % screened in — Facility track	2.6%	2.4%	2.5%	2.4%
Out-of-home placement entries	604	656	735	712
Out-of-home placement exits	941	751	683	736
Out-of-home placement, unique child count on June 1	2,113	1,833	1,812	1,065

Note: To track complete intake volume, Hennepin County child protection report counts include all reports received. State reporting methodology excludes some of these to avoid duplication of reports across counties.

Child protection reports by allegation type

Measure	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total child protection reports	13,874	13,323	13,756	13,087
Neglect allegation	47.5%	48.4%	48.9%	48.8%
Physical abuse allegation	28.6%	29.4%	30.9%	31.4%
Sexual abuse allegation	17.1%	16.9%	17.2%	17.7%
Threatened injury allegation	23.7%	21.9%	21.5%	21.1%
Mental injury allegation	5.8%	5.9%	5.5%	6.0%

Racial disparities

A child-focused look at disproportionality.

Typically, we've looked at racial disproportionality in our system by comparing the percentage of children of each race in Hennepin County's total population to the percentage of children involved at different decision points along our case continuum (reports, out-of-home placement, permanency, etc.). However, these percentages can vary based on the number and race of children reported to our system.

***Rates per 1,000 show us how many children out of every 1,000 are involved for each race and ethnicity.** This view can be helpful for measuring meaningful change and the disproportionality of smaller numbers of children, like those involved at the deeper end of our system.

System transformation, with real results for families.

Increasing access to upstream support has reduced the number of children and families encountering child protection, and we have sustained that progress for several years. While the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to a decrease in reports in 2020, they have remained lower ever since. Fewer reports has led to fewer children entering out-of-home placement, reducing trauma and keeping more families intact. The effort we've made to transform our system — focusing on child and family well-being before the need for intervention — has made a measurable, lasting difference for our community.

Child protection report rates per 1,000 children*, 2019-2024

Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
American Indian/Alaska Native children	278.9	240.6	211.3	210.1	230.9	207.7
Asian/Pacific Islander children	18.4	12.8	12.2	12.1	13.7	12.8
Black or African American children	97.3	78.2	80.7	73.3	76.6	76.0
Caucasian children	24.0	18.2	19.1	18.1	19.3	18.1
Multiracial children	125.1	113.0	109.8	101.0	102.5	94.3

Screened-in report rates per 1,000 children*, 2019-2024

Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
American Indian/Alaska Native children	179.2	168.6	140.9	137.2	158.4	125.0
Asian/Pacific Islander children	11.4	7.9	7.2	5.9	6.6	6.9
Black or African American children	59.7	47.6	43.8	41.6	42.1	42.4
Caucasian children	13.9	10.2	10.3	9.3	10.0	9.7
Multiracial children	82.3	71.3	64.3	58.2	58.4	53.5

Racial disparities

Out-of-home placement entry rates per 1,000 children*, 2019-2024

Race	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
American Indian/Alaska Native children	54.56	44.79	33.39	31.35	51.30	39.09
Asian/Pacific Islander children	.83	.93	.88	.42	.56	.14
Black or African American children	6.33	4.45	4.16	4.25	4.52	5.43
Caucasian children	1.31	1.05	.64	.74	.73	.53
Multiracial children	14.88	11.74	8.87	9.23	9.98	9.58

Reasons for entering out-of-home placement

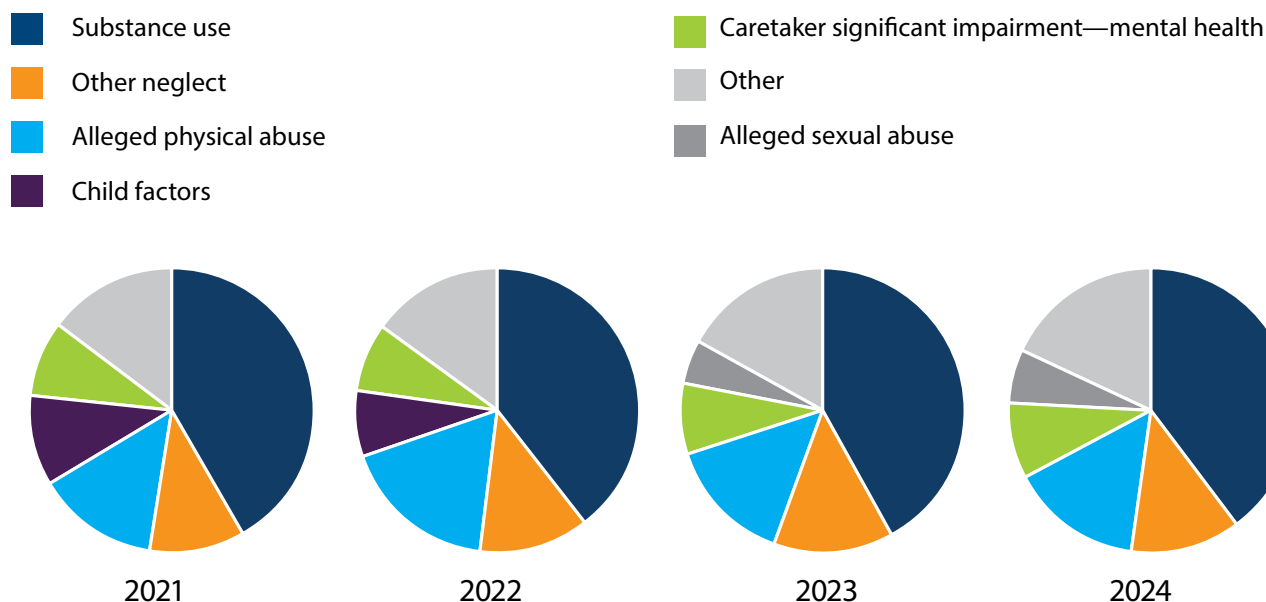
Meeting complex needs with family-focused support.

Parental substance use continues to be the most common reason children enter out-of-home placement, accounting for 39.9% of entries in 2024. At the same time, the portion of reports related to parental substance use has steadily decreased, from 16.4% in 2021 to 12.4% in 2024.

While reports may be made for other allegations like abuse or neglect, the reason a child enters out-of-home placement is based on the factor that contributes the most to their safety concerns. Parental substance use has an even greater impact on re-entry into foster care, accounting for 46.4% of re-entry episodes in 2024.

We know substance use and mental health concerns are closely related, and these challenges can be more difficult to treat when they are co-occurring. We continue to collaborate with system partners to keep families safe and together whenever possible, and have added to our continuum of in-home support for parenting and recovery.

Reasons for entering out-of-home placement, by number of entries



Note: 2023 was the first year alleged sexual abuse has appeared among the top five reasons for entering out-of-home placement. In previous years this data was included in the 'Other' category.

Reasons for entering out-of-home placement

Percent caretaker substance use vs. all other entry reasons by race and ethnicity, 2021 - 2024

Race	2021		2022		2023		2024	
Total number of entries	254	348	260	396	312	412	284	432
American Indian/Alaska Native	72.7%	27.3%	64.6%	35.4%	58.6%	41.4%	52.1%	47.9%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7.7%	92.3%	28.8%	71.4%	18.2%	81.8%	0	100%
Black or African American	30.2 %	69.8%	33.8%	66.2%	34.9%	65.1%	34.8%	65.2%
Caucasian	45.5%	54.5%	39.5%	60.5%	43.6%	56.4%	40.5%	59.5%
Multiracial	43.3%	56.7%	38.0%	62.0%	41.7%	58.3%	42.6%	57.4%
Hispanic	60.6%	39.4%	42.9%	57.1%	37.4%	62.6%	38.0%	62.0%
Not Hispanic/Unknown	39.9%	60.1%	39.4%	60.6%	43.2%	56.8%	39.9%	60.1%

☐ Caretaker substance abuse

☐ All other reasons

Reasons for leaving out-of-home-placement

An increase in reunifications and transfers of legal custody. Reunification remains the most common outcome for children in out-of-home placement in Hennepin County, and the portion of children reunified with their parents increased to 39.9% last year. Transfers of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative continue to outpace adoptions, and significantly more children were adopted by relatives (70.9%) than non-relatives (29.1%).

Nurturing family connections. In 2024, 86% of children left out-of-home placement to live with their parents, relatives or kin. When children must be separated from their parents, identifying relatives and kin who can step in and care for them is our priority. Investments in building a strong kinship practice are preserving connections to family and culture and reducing trauma for more children every year.

Exits to a relative vs. non-relative

Number (N) and percentage (%)	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Reunification with parents/ primary caretakers	412	43.8%	316	42.1%	252	37.0%	294	40.0%
Adoption or transfer of legal custody — relative	288	30.6%	245	32.6%	273	40.0%	272	37.1%
Reached age of majority or emancipated	72	7.7%	96	12.8%	69	10.1%	48	6.5%
Adoption — non-relative	77	8.2%	53	7.1%	33	4.8%	31	4.2%
Living with other relatives	47	5.0%	28	3.7%	20	2.9%	11	1.5%
Residing with non-removal parent/guardian*					28	4.1%	26	7.6%

* New category in 2023

Caseloads

The median caseload among ICWA ongoing child protection case management workers increased in 2024. We continue to intentionally vary caseload distribution among newer and more experienced workers to support retention with gradual onboarding that allows for capacity building and skill development.

We have maintained investments in staffing to bring down case load sizes and support retention and well-being with robust staff development. This investment is spread across multiple service areas to address the complexity of each individual child and family's needs to eliminate disparities within our system. The diversity of our team's race, gender and experience has increased to reflect the families we serve.

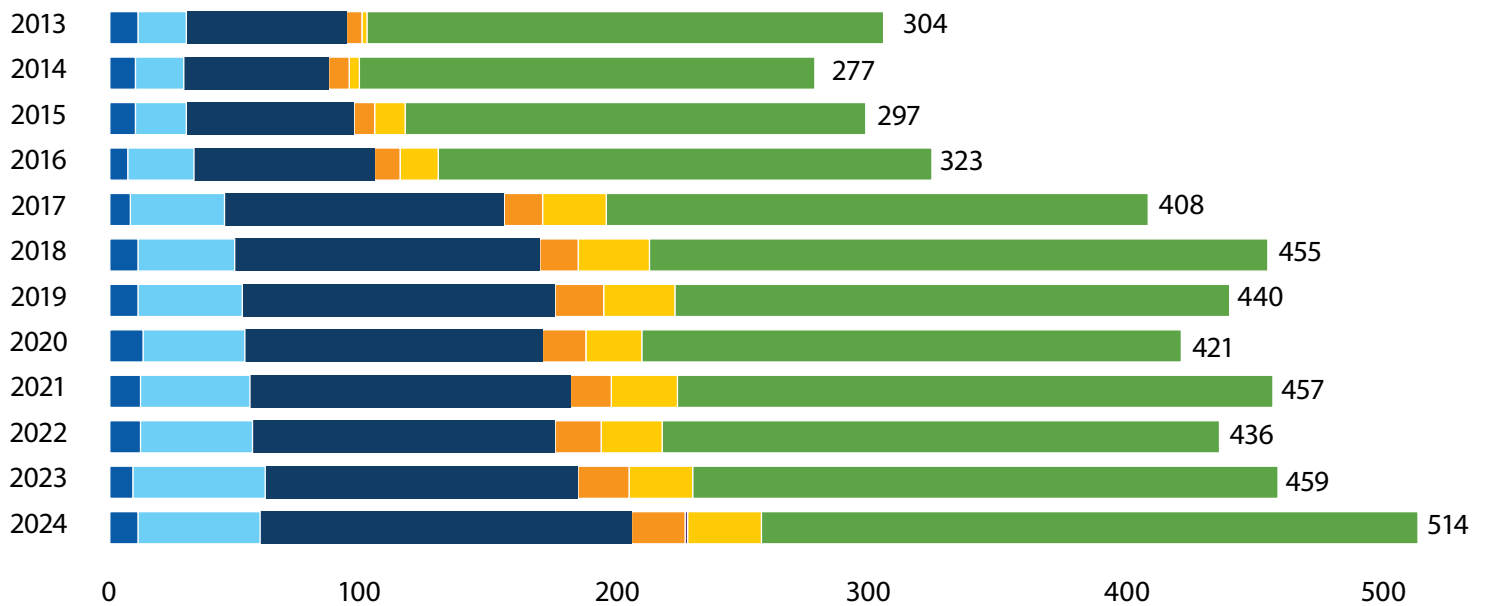
Our Staff Development area provides more than 200 hours of professional development opportunities annually to all Children and Family Services staff, including required training in anti-oppressive practices. The Alliance for Racial Equity in Children and Family Services (ARECFS), led by frontline staff, supports our team with peer coaching opportunities and a staff advisory committee.

Caseloads per worker

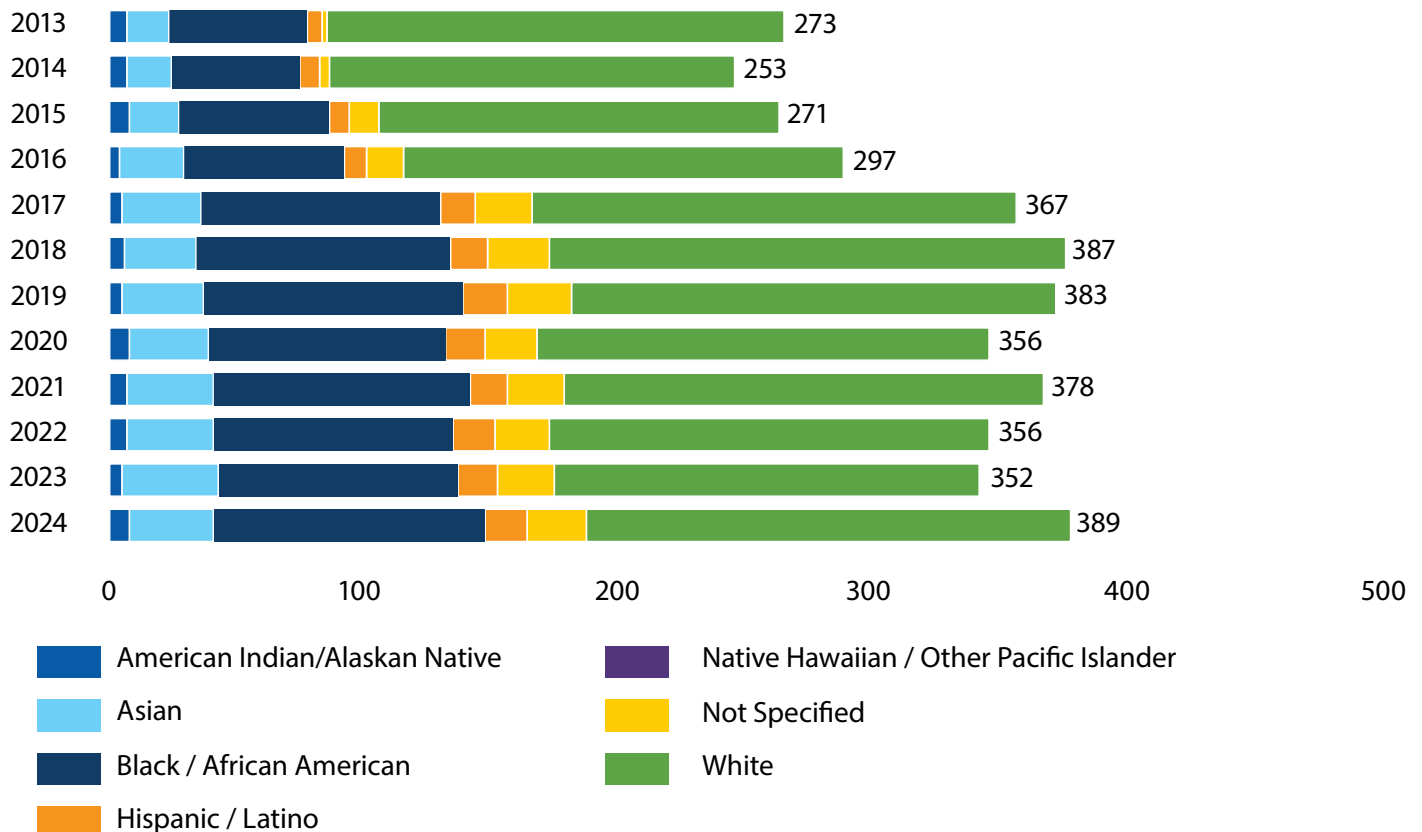
	2021	2022	2023	2024
Ongoing child protection case management	10	10	11	11
ICWA ongoing child protection case management	8	10	9	10
Child protection assessment/investigations	7	7	7	7

Note: Caseloads in December of each year.

Children and Family Services staff demographics, 2013-2024



Children and Family Services social worker demographics, 2013-2024



State and federal performance measures

Successes, setbacks, and responding to families' complex needs.

Maltreatment recurrence continued to decline last year, and maltreatment in foster care fell by 24.2%. This is an important improvement, directly impacting the safety and well-being of children in our system. We still have work to do to meet some state and federal benchmarks, but we are maintaining improvements that have been made in recent years.

The portion of youth aging out of foster care dropped to 66.7% in 2024, exceeding the state performance standard. Having a permanent home — and a family that will continue to support and guide youth into

adulthood — significantly improves long-term success and well-being.

Foster care reentry increased for the second year, and our data shows parental substance use plays a role. Recovery from substance use disorders is a complex journey, and recurrence of use is often part of it. Our work to support families on this path includes intensive in-home services to keep children safe at home whenever possible while parents receive treatment and support.

State measures	2021	2022	2023	2024	Statewide performance*	Performance standard
Overall timeliness	81.3%	80.4%	82.8%	82.6%	86.8%	100%
24-hour response timeliness	80.8%	81.1%	82.7%	82.6%	82.3%	100%
120-hour response: family investigation	83.3%	86.0%	86.5%	85.5%	91.3%	100%
120-hour response: family assessment	81.2%	79.6%	82.6%	82.4%	88.0%	100%
Caseworker visits	92.4%	91.4%	95.8%	95.7%	86.4%	95% or greater
Relative care	69.4%	71.1%	72.0%	71.7%	64.1%	35.7% or greater
Physical health	59.4%	59.4%	57.4%	54.9%	51.5%	70% or greater
Maltreatment re-reporting	17.0%	17.3%	18.5%	18.6%	18.4%	15.2% or less
Aging out of foster care	80.3%	84.1%	80.8%	66.7%	69.2%	70% or less

*2024. Data as of April 16, 2025.

For explanations of these measures, see the [Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Welfare Data Dashboard](#).

Federal measures	2021	2022	2023	2024	Statewide performance*	Performance standard
Maltreatment recurrence	4.4%	4.8%	4.6%	3.8%	5.5%	9.1% or less
Maltreatment in foster care	10.6	12.2	12.8	9.7	7.6	8.5 victimizations or less per 100,000 days in care
Foster care reentry	10.6%	10.4%	11.9%	14.9%	16.0%	8.3% or less
Permanency: 12 months	39.4%	37.2%	34.6%	33.6%	50.5%	40.5% or greater
Permanency: 12–23 months	57.7%	63.6%	64.3%	58.6%	57.0%	43.6% or greater
Permanency: 24 months	42.1%	40.0%	42.1%	41.7%	34.3%	30.3% or greater
Placement stability	2.89	3.10	3.10	3.70	3.80	4.12 moves or less per 1,000 days in care

*2024. Data as of August 16, 2025.

For explanations of these measures, see the [Minnesota Department of Human Services Child Welfare Data Dashboard](#).

Hennepin County priorities

Reducing trauma and preventing system involvement.

We continue to invest in our prevention service area to mitigate life stressors and support families with the basic needs and resources they need to thrive. To meet families where they are with the support they need most, we initiated work to open two Family Resource Centers in collaboration with residents and community-based providers. Family Resource Centers are community-based hubs designed to offer families voice and choice in accessing the support they need before their needs rise to the level of child welfare intervention.

Our Parent Support Outreach (PSOP) and Youth Support Outreach (YSOP) programs expanded in 2024 to increase access for families with older children and youth. PSOP served more than 2,500 individual residents last year, and our data shows that prevention services consistently reduce maltreatment and system involvement: 87.6% of families who completed services did not experience a future screened-in child protection report, and 99% did not have a future child maltreatment determination.

Families served in PSOP, by race

Number (N) and percentage (%)	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
American Indian/Alaska Native	70	2.9%	121	4.8%	81	2.9%	53	2.1%
Asian/Pacific Islander	173	7.1%	101	4.0%	45	1.6%	21	0.8%
Black or African American	1,295	53.1%	1,336	52.6%	1,558	56.1%	1,317	52.3%
White	457	18.8%	460	18.1%	512	18.4%	669	26.6%
Multiracial	280	11.5%	372	14.6%	395	14.2%	351	14.0%
Unknown	162	6.6%	151	5.9%	186	6.7%	105	4.2%
Total	2,437	100%	2,541	100%	2,777	100%	2516	100%

Committed to increased family involvement.

Making decisions in the best interests of children is enhanced when we infuse their families' voices, value their strengths and honor their experiences. Work is underway to further integrate Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) as a key disparity elimination strategy in our practice. Before any transition for children, FGDM gathers family members and support networks to

thoughtfully plan for the child's safety, care and well-being. Families are empowered to create solutions involving people they know and trust rather than the system, allowing children to safely remain in the care of their parents and identifying systemic barriers that may be addressed through connection to resources.

Family meetings and father involvement

	2021	2022	2023	2024
Total meetings that took place	539	483	490	470
Father/paternal relatives invited	60%	62%	60%	60%
Father/paternal relatives attended	54%	55%	51%	55%

Increased use of relative care.

Kinship care plays a vital role in strengthening families and communities by keeping children connected to their roots. When children are cared for by family members or close family friends, they experience less trauma, more stability, and greater permanency. We have been above the state performance standard for relative care each year since at least 2017 for children of every race, and the overall trend we are seeing is a steady increase in days spent in relative care. Our

efforts have also resulted in a shift in permanency, with transfers of permanent legal and physical custody to a relative now occurring more frequently than adoption. We hear from many families and relatives that they prefer this path because transfers of custody can happen without terminating parental rights, which is an important connection for a child's identity and emotional well-being.

Youth in relative placements

Number (N) and percentage (%)	2021		2022		2023		2024	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
In relative placements	753	53.1%	723	54.7%	617	56.7%	688	64.6%

Note: Youth in relative placements on June 1.

An ongoing commitment to child well-being.

This report focuses on child protection system data, trends, and analysis, but Hennepin County's work to transform county services and supports for children and families extends beyond the child protection system. Each year, the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners receives an annual report on the county's progress to achieve our vision for child and family well-being.

Presented to the county board in December each year, the Child Well-Being Annual Report covers major strategic and programmatic work underway across Hennepin County and within Human Services:

- Trauma-informed system transformation
- Disparity elimination efforts in education, health, and justice
- Engaging the community and families with lived experience
- Services for parental substance use disorder and child protection involvement

[Read the 2024 Child Well-Being Annual Report \(PDF\).](#)



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