

Diakon Family Finding & Family Engagement (FF&FE) Outcomes Report

Fiscal Year 2021-2022

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Brief Overview

Diakon's Family Finding and Family Engagement (FF&FE) Program strives to explore and build the support system of families to ensure that children can safely reside within their family of origin. More specifically, Diakon's goals for families in order of priority are; having children reside with one or both of their parents, having children reside with a fictive or non-fictive kin without YCOCYF involvement, and locating a fictive or non-fictive kin for children to reside with in the future while being dependent with the court and child welfare system. Concurrently, FF&FE strives to build the general support network of a child regardless of their current or future living arrangement. In September of 2021, Diakon expanded the scope of the FF&FE program to include services for children who have been officially placed in an out of home setting rather than only assisting children who have not yet been placed. In January of 2022, Diakon FF&FE more routinely began to receive referrals for children who resided in congregate care or foster care.

To best meet the needs of children and families Diakon FF&FE has established differences in service delivery dependent upon if the child is placed outside of the home or if the child is not placed and still resides with a parent or kin without the presence of kinship care. For the purpose of this outcomes report, children and their caregivers who are not placed into congregate care and/or foster care will be referred to as "preventative cases" and children and those care givers who have their children in placement will be referred to as "placement cases". Throughout this report, statistics will often be broken down between these "preventative" and "placement" categories.

For preventative cases Diakon's goal is to work with families and then successfully discharge within 2-3 months of time. The start date is the date in which the referral is fully sent by YCOCYF to Diakon. A case manager then contacts the family within 3 business days. During at least weekly appointments either in person or through other communication, Diakon strives to join with the birth family by administering family related assessments, exploring their needs, identifying their support network, and helping the parents understand how their positive involvement with Diakon's FF&FE service will help achieve permanency within the family. In regards to cases involving a placed youth and/or an older child, efforts will be made for Diakon to meet with that child as well to explore needs and identify potential supports.

Additionally, Diakon works with the family to help identify and address areas of concern that do not necessarily impact or reflect safety but may impact the family's general sense of well-being. These safety and well-being concerns are addressed at a Diakon facilitated Family Meeting which is attended by the parents, YCOCYF caseworker, and all the connections identified by the parents and children that the family wants in attendance. At that meeting, areas of safety and well-being are addressed and a plan is generated to address those concerns.

A copy of the plan is sent to all attendees. Diakon then communicates with the parents and attendees after the meeting to assess how the plan is being utilized and to schedule a follow up meeting if necessary. Diakon discharges the case one to two weeks after the family meeting occurs although a follow up meeting can occur when necessary. Throughout the duration of services, Diakon is submitting the names, addresses, and contact information of the family's supports to the Agency so that a kin resource can be quickly identified and contacted if the identified children can no longer remain in the parents' care.

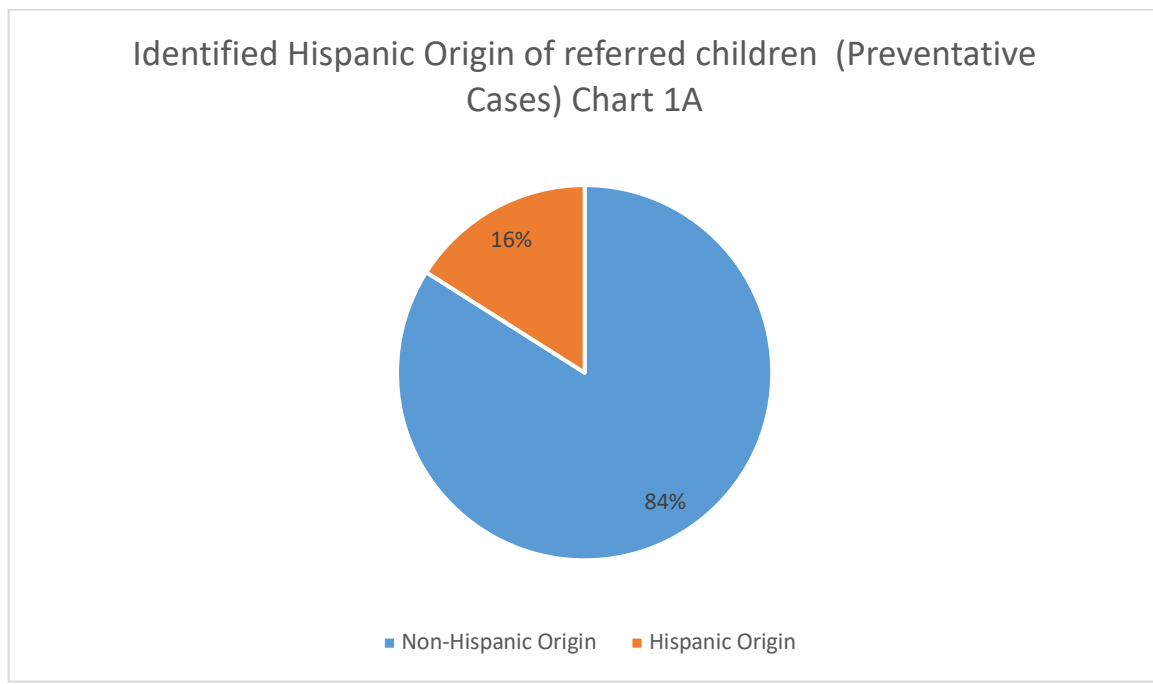
For placement cases, Diakon follows the same general guidelines, but with some key differences. The most notable of those differences is in placement cases Diakon more robustly pursues potential family resources and supports. Whereas in preventative cases, the support network is more dictated by the parents and children's preference for whom to include, in placement cases FF&FE makes an effort whenever possible to reach out to all of the identified relatives of at least the 6th degree of consanguinity of the child. FF&FE does make the utmost effort to gain the parents agreement in regards to family outreach, but that outreach is still made regardless unless permission to cease Diakon FF&FE efforts is agreed upon by YCOCYF.

Another significant difference for placement cases is the variety of purposes for having a family meeting involving identified kin and supports. Whereas in traditional cases the family meeting is primarily geared on goals to prevent placement the overall goals of placement cases are more numerous including: tentatively deciding on which relative can be a resource for a child, how to help the birth parent reunify with their child, how to provide general support to a child if a placement resource has not been identified, and helping to prepare a child for an anticipated move to an identified kin resource.

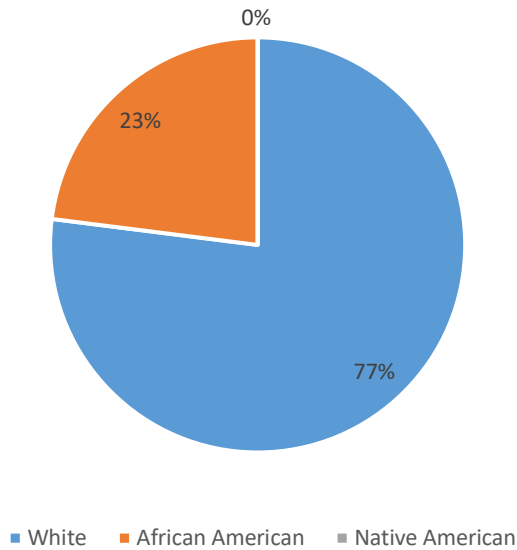
Racial Demographics and Hispanic Background

Diakon FF&FE accounts for the identified racial background of children who are referred for services. Some racial groupings are not listed in the graphs below as FF&FE did not receive a referral for a child who identifies with a certain racial background such as Asian and Pacific Islander/Hawaiian in the FY 2021-2022.

In the FY 2021-2022 Diakon FF&FE received referrals for 158 children for the preventative service delivery of FF&FE. Of those children 138 identified as being of non-Hispanic origin and 26 identified as being of Hispanic origin (Chart 1A). Among Racial background: 121 were identified as being White, 36 identified as being African American, and 2 identified as being Native American (Chart 1 B). As children are able to identify with more than one racial group the added sum of all the groupings will exceed the total number of children of 158.

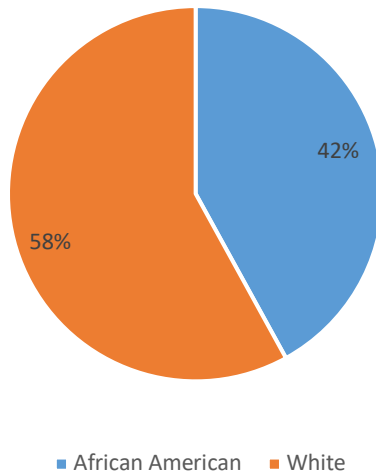


Identified Racial Background of Preventative Cases Chart 1B



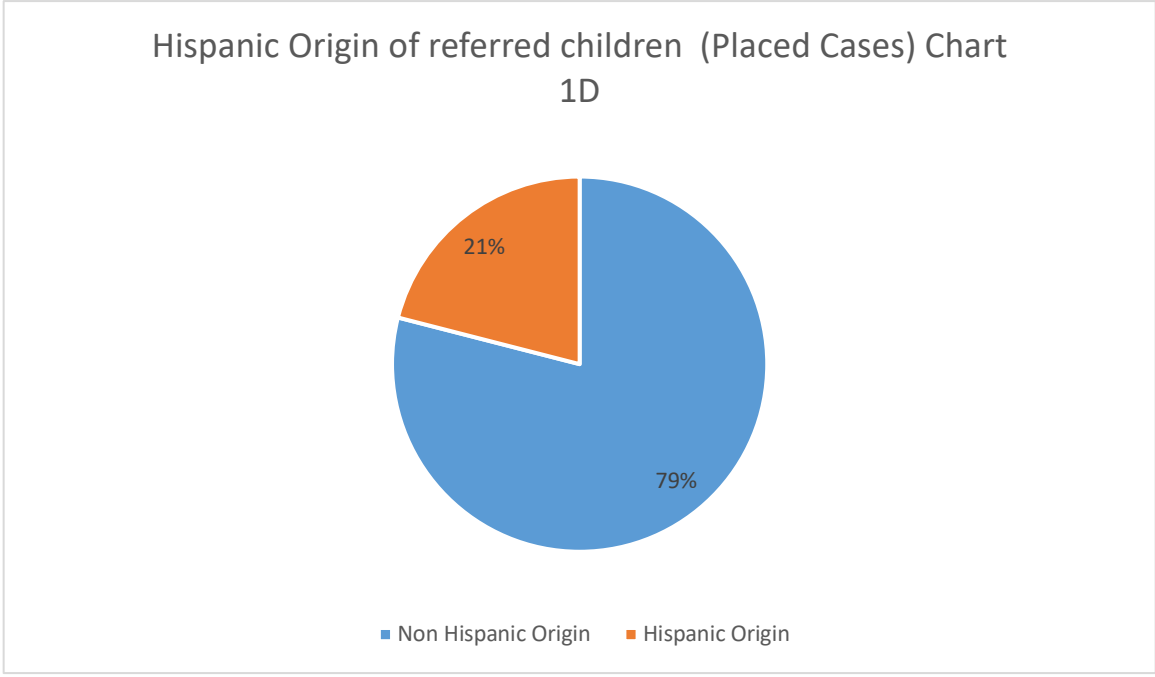
Diakon has separately categorized placement cases to better evaluate trends, differences, etc. among the two separate categorized programs within FF&FE (placement and preventative cases). In the FY 2021-2022 Diakon provided the placement service delivery to 66 children. Among those children, 38 identified as having white background and 28 identified as having African American background (Chart 1C). Among placement cases it is apparent that there is a higher likelihood of African American children being in placement (foster care, congregative care, etc.) when comparing African American children who receive the preventative service delivery of FF&FE.

Racial Background of Referred Children (Placement Cases) Chart 1C



Among placement cases it is apparent that there is a higher likelihood of African American children being in placement (foster care, congregate care, etc.) when comparing African American children who receive the preventative service delivery of FF&FE.

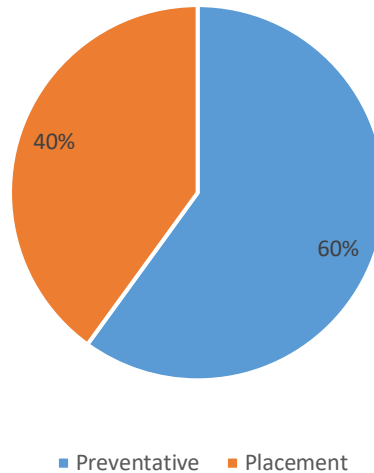
Among those 66 placed youth who received placement referrals, 52 identified as being on non-Hispanic Origin and 14 of them identified as being of Hispanic origin (Chard 1D).



Referral Statistics

Throughout the FY 2021-2022 Diakon received 85 preventative referrals and 56 placement referrals. Referrals given to Diakon are counted as per family rather than per child (Chart 2A). As Diakon’s acceptance of placement cases did not begin in earnest until 2022 it is not surprising that preventative referrals are greater than placement referrals at this time.

Placement Vs. Preventative Referrals FY 2021-2022 (Chart 2A)



During the FY 2021-2022 Diakon tracks contributing factors which lead to the referral being made. Those factors are included in the following six categories: truancy, substance abuse, mental health, child abuse or neglect and/or ongoing investigation, environmental concern and/or housing insecurity, and domestic violence. The table below (2B) details statistics from both the FY 2020-2021 along with FY 2021-2022.

Table 3A-Referral criteria Preventative Cases (2021-2022)

Table 2B

Category	Truancy	Substance Abuse	Mental Health Concerns	Environmental Concerns and/or Housing Instability	Domestic Violence	Child Abuse and/or Investigation
Total number And percent FY 2020-2021	64 Cases 32%	69 Cases 35%	24 Cases 13%	10 Cases 5%	14 Cases 7%	41 Cases 21%
Total number and percent FY 2021-2022	22 Cases 16%	43 Cases 30%	37 Cases 26%	16 Cases 11%	10 Cases 7%	49 Cases 35%

The percentages of the various referral criteria in comparison with FY 2020-2021 and FY 2021-2022 largely remain consistent with the exception of truancy and environmental concerns/domestic violence. The data matches what staff at Diakon FF&FE has been anecdotal hearing from YCOCYF and other service providers. The changes of decreased truancy referrals are attributed to the decrease of compulsory remote schooling due to covid. The increase of environmental and housing insecurity referrals are attributed to the lifting of rental protections and the general increase of rental prices.

Age Demographics

During the FY 2021-2022 Diakon was referred children through a great variety of ages. Among preventative cases there was a total of 158 children. Among placement cases there was a total of 66 children. As Diakon FF&FE has been more geared towards accepting referrals in congregate care it is not surprising that children in the placed cases category saw numbers which were higher among children 12 and greater. Please see Table 3A for a breakdown of ages in the respective category.

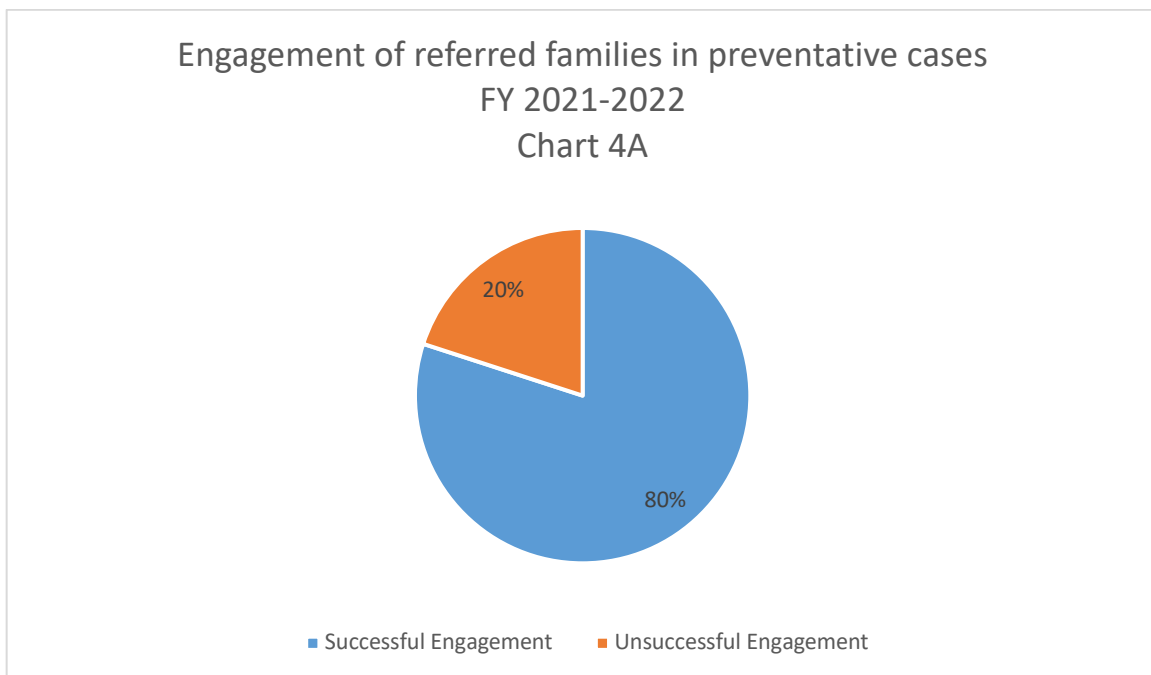
Age of children upon receipt of referral. Table 3A

Age of Children at the time of Referral	Number of Children within age bracket in FY 2021-2022 (preventative cases)	Number of Children within age bracket in FY 2021-2022 (Placement Cases)
0-1	17	5
1	12	1
2	14	1
3	11	1
4	8	1
5	5	1
6	6	2
7	11	2
8	7	1
9	9	1
10	8	1
11	3	3
12	9	6
13	7	4
14	6	9
15	13	8
16	5	9
17	4	7

Level of Engagement (Preventative Cases)

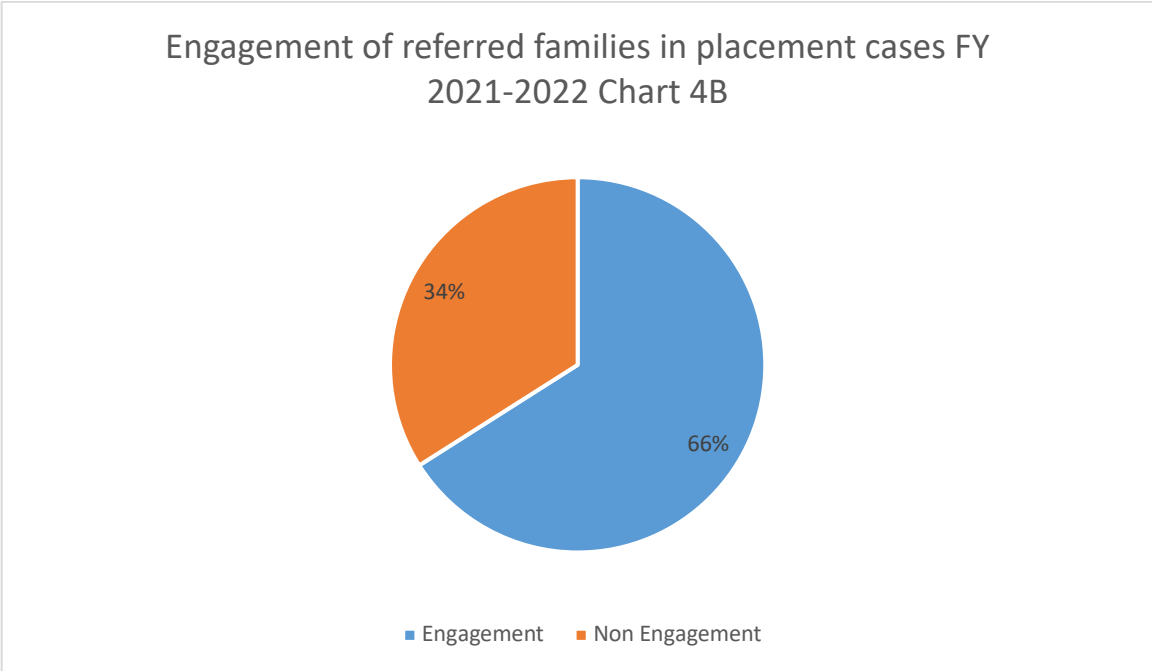
Diakon FF&FE makes a concerted effort to successfully engage the families that are referred. Methods of contact to initiate service include but are not limited to: making phone calls, sending texts, sending emails, unannounced home visits, accompanying YCOCYF to scheduled home visits, and sending Diakon FF&FE literature to the family via mail. Diakon FF&FE strives to send a message to families that is strength based, pro-family, and reassuring. Ultimately, some parents either verbally express that they will not participate in the service or they are non-communicative for such a length of time that Diakon discharges the family with the Agency approval. Diakon FF&FE considers a family to have not engaged with services if the parents clearly express that they do not wish to participate in the service or if Diakon discharges due to lack of engagement from the family. Generally speaking when a family does not engage with Diakon for a period of 4 weeks the case is discharged after approval from the County.

During the FY 2021-2022 Diakon had discharged a total of 113 preventative cases. Of those discharged cases, 91 families engaged with services and 22 families did not engage with services and/or clearly expressed that they would not participate with Diakon services. Therefore among all discharged cases throughout FY 2021-2022 Diakon FF&FE had a successful engagement rate of 80% (Chart 4A). Engagement is measured by having at least one legal parent communicate with Diakon FF&FE regarding efforts to expand and or strengthen their support system. Diakon FF&FE had strived for a successful engagement rate of 85%, but fell short of that goal.



Diakon also takes measures to successfully engage the families and youth of children when they are in a placement setting. Methods of engagement for these families is similar to that of those families whose youth are not in placement. However, due to the regulatory differences between placed youth and non-placed youth, Diakon FF&FE is able to more fully engage and pursue family finding efforts even when there is not any parental involvement or agreement among placed youth. In cases were FF&FE has been referred with a placed youth, FF&FE still delivers the service unless there is a compelling reason to discharge with the agreement of YCOCYF. As is the case of preventative cases, engagement is measured by having at least one legal parent communicate with FF&FE about efforts to expand upon or strengthen the family support system. It is important to note that even in instances in which a legal parent does not participate in services that Diakon continues to engage that youth as well as other supportive family members within that family to provide for as thorough of service deliver as possible.

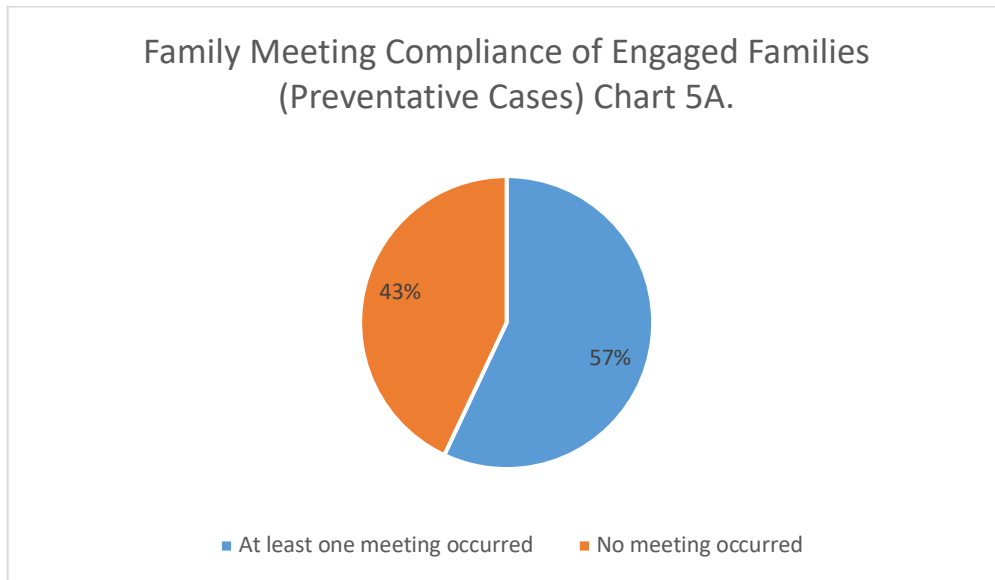
During the FY 2021-2022 Diakon discharged a total of 35 families who had a child in placement. Of those 35 cases there was engagement with 23 of them and non-engagement with 12 of those families (Chart 4B).



Family Meeting Adherence with Preventive Cases

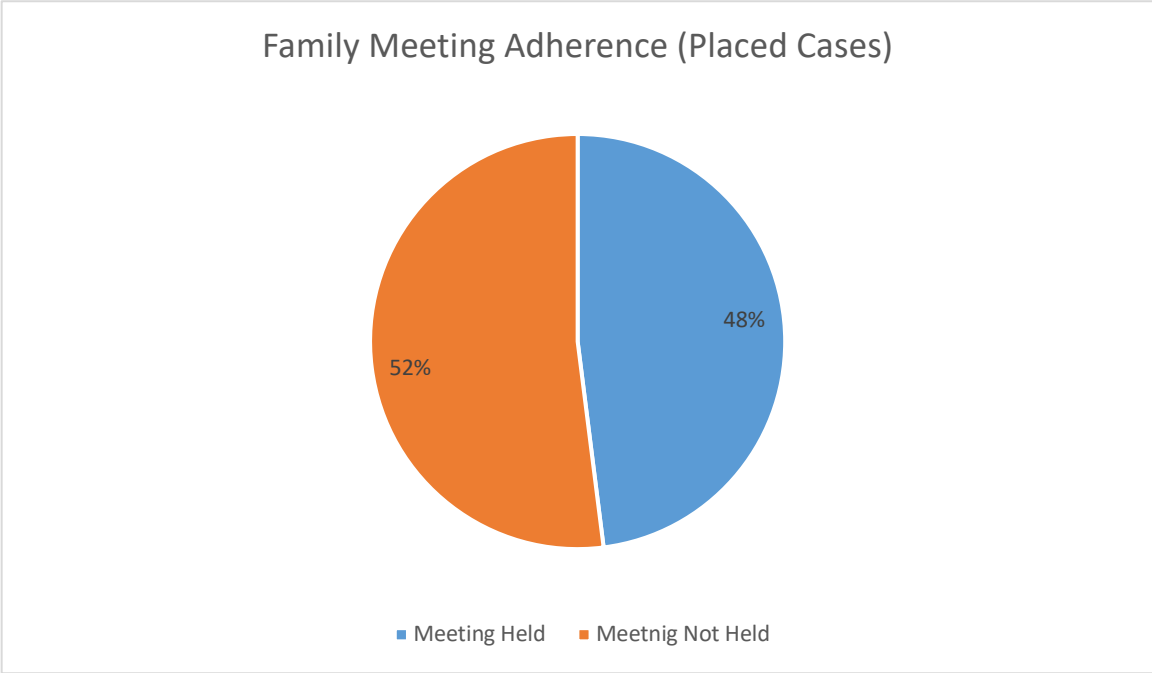
One of the more significant services delivered by Diakon’s FF&FE program is the facilitation of a family meeting which is attended by YCOCYF, the parents, youth if appropriate, and any other professional or natural supports that are identified by the family. Under optimal circumstances this meeting occurs after various assessments are completed with the family and after Diakon has connected with the family’s identified supports. Specifically, Diakon strives to facilitate meetings on or around the 45th day of service. However, when there is a crisis occurring or other urgent matter, Diakon does hold a family meeting at an earlier juncture. It is also important to note that at times a family meeting does not occur even when there is family engagement involved. Reasons for a family meeting not occurring include but are not limited to: the case positively closing with YCOCYF prior to the meeting being scheduled, the family expressing not wanting to have a meeting as they express a high level of family support already.

Of the 92 discharged families who received the preventative level of FF&FE and who agreed to and participated in the FF&FE service, family meetings occurred for 57 of the families (Chart 5A).



Throughout the FY 2021-2022 Diakon discharged a total of 40 placement cases. Of those cases a family meeting was held for 19 of those cases (Chart 5B). As is the case with preventative delivery there are a variety of reasons that meetings did not occur. Among the placed youth the decision to proceed with a meeting or not was often made in conjunction with Agency input. In many of the cases in which a meeting was not held it was felt that a meeting

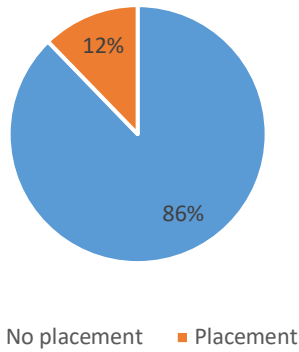
would not be beneficial as a child may already be successfully accessing their supports and/or the parents are not involved.



Permanency Outcomes with Preventative Cases

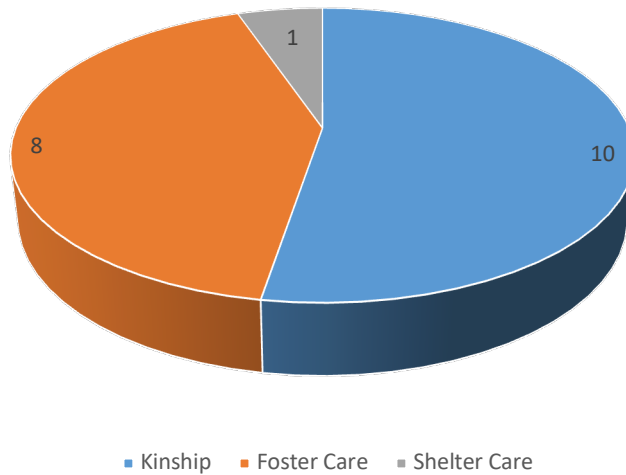
Diakon FF&FE has discharged 138 children in the preventative service delivery during the FY 2021-2022 when taking into account families that have agreed to the service. At the time of FF&FE’s discharge, 119 of those children were not placed and 19 of those children were placed (Chart 6A).

Placement Vs. Non-Placement. Engaged Preventative Families
FY 2021-2022 Chart 6A



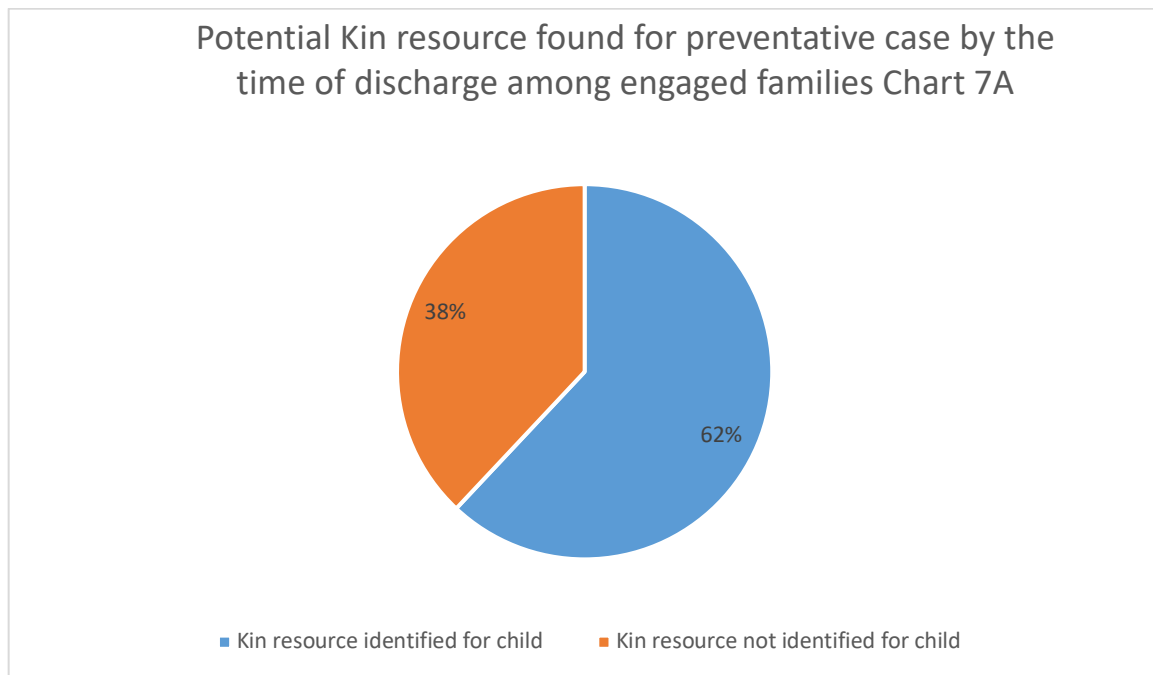
Of those 19 children who were placed while engaging with FF&FE preventative service delivery, they had gone into either kinship, traditional foster care, or shelter care. Of those children 10 had gone into kinship care, 8 had gone into foster care, and 1 went into congregate care. Refer to Chart 6B.

Placed youth who received preventative FF&FE FY 2021-2022 Chart 6B



Identified Kin & Supports with Preventative Cases

Throughout a family's involvement with Diakon FF&FE, staff are exploring the natural support system to learn which individuals would be willing to be a resource for a child in the event that the parents are unable to be a caretaker for their children. Additionally Diakon staff are helping to locate and engage other additional kin who may want to assist the family child in some way even if they are unable to be a kinship resource. There has been a total of 138 children who have been discharged from FF&FE who have also had engaged families in the preventative service delivery. For the purposes of this outcome report a resource is defined as a non-legal parent who has clearly expressed willingness for the child to live with them if needed and allowed. At the time of discharge 86 of the identified youth have had at least one non legal parent step forward to present as a resource and 52 of the identified youth have not had a non-legal parent step forwards as a potential resource. Refer to Chart 7A.



It is important to note that Diakon suspects that in a great many of the Kinship Resource Not Identified category that there is indeed many more resources available. However for a variety of reasons Diakon was not able to clearly obtain a message from a kin resource that they would be a long term resource. Reasons for that not occurring include but are not limited to: Diakon not inquiring so as to avoid distressing the family in cases where YCOCYF is planning on imminently closing the case, a parent blocking Diakon from reaching out to a support who is suspected of wanting to be a resource, YCOCYF discharging a case prior to FF&FE services being completed,

and the family not being motivated to locate additional resource as there is one parent is willing to be a resource and not under investigation.

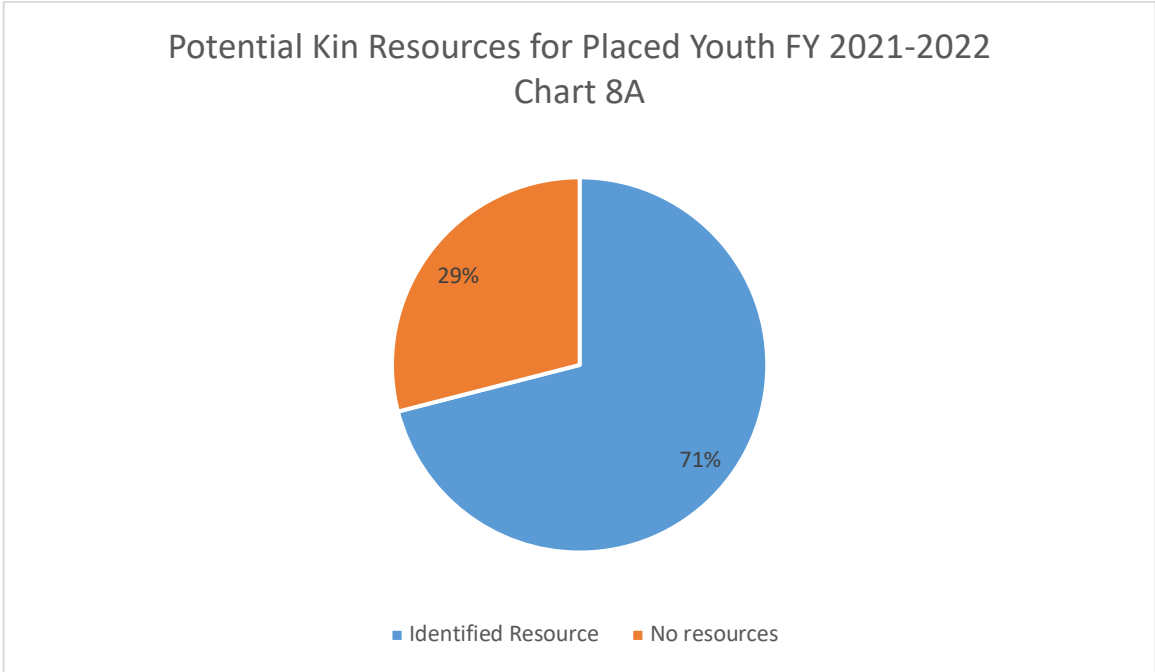
Of those youth who have had a potential identified resource 42 of them have 1 identified resource, 29 of them have 2 identified resources, 9 of them have 3 resources, 4 of them have 4 resources, and 2 of them have in excess of 4 resources. Please see table 7B below.

Number of potential identified resoruces among youth receiving preventative services. (Table 7B)

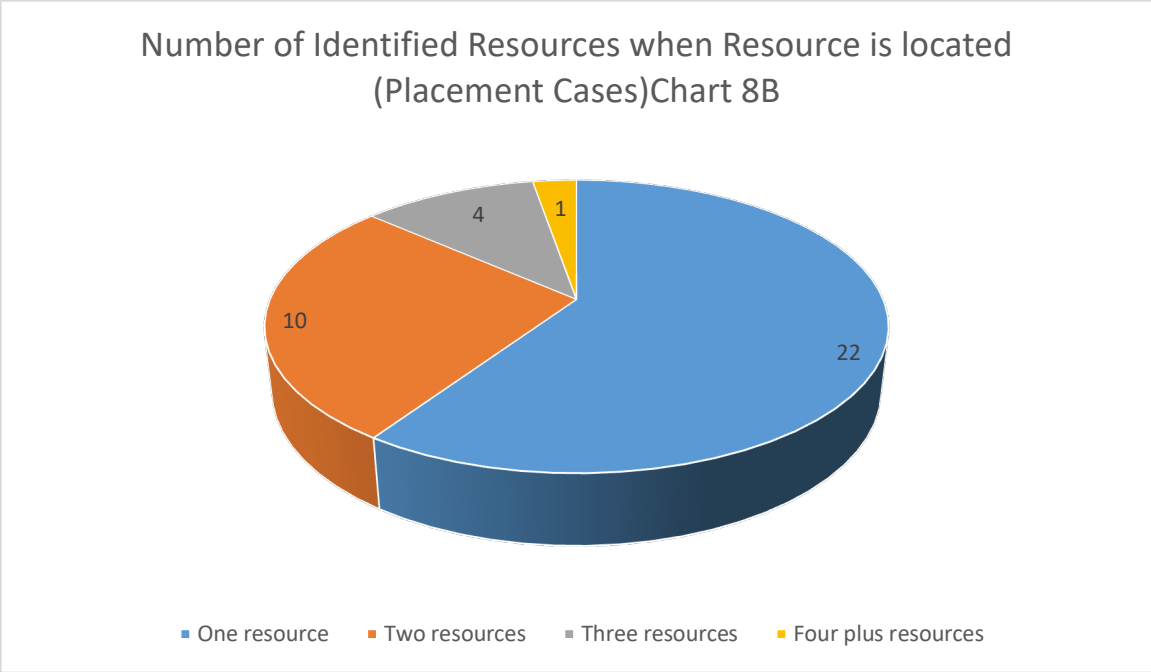
1 Potential Resource located	2 Potential Resources located	3 Potential Resources located	4 Potential Resources located	4 + Potential Resources located
42 (youth)	29 (youth)	9 (youth)	4 (youth)	2 (youth)

Identified Kin and Support (Placement Cases)

In the FY 2021-2022 Diakon discharged 52 youth who had received FF&FE service delivery while in placement. Of those youth 37 had an identified potential kinship resource and 15 did not (Chart 8A).



Of those 37 placed youths who had identified a resource 22 of them had one identified resource, 10 of them had 2 identified resources, 4 of them had 3 identified resources and, 1 of them had 4+ resources (Chart 8B).



Supports of placed youth

Diakon has taken special effort to increase the support system of youth in care. For the purpose of this report a support is any individual identified by the youth as being supportive of them or any individual that Diakon FF&FE directly communicates with whom expresses a desire to assist the child in some way outside of a professional capacity. Efforts are made to not statically count individuals who are not supports in a meaningful way to a child. For example, if a youth’s uncle explains that 33 members of their family are a support for that youth, Diakon is still only counting those individuals identified by that youth or who directly speak to Diakon. FF&FE makes every effort to reach out to all identified kin and supports. Among the 52 discharged youth FY 2021-2022 who had experienced placement during services please refer to the chart below for a raw data breakdown of identified supports (Table 9A).

Number of Supports/Placed Youth

Table 9A

Maximum Number of Supports	Number of Youth who have that maximum number of supports
1	7
2	5

3	5
4	1
5	2
6	3
7	8
8	3
9	3
10	1
11	5
12	2
13	1
14	2
15	2
20	2

Overview and Summary of Outcome Report

Throughout this FY 2021-2022 Diakon FF&FE has undergone some significant changes. Most notably, as indicated Diakon FF&FE is more routinely working with children who have been placed, especially youth residing in congregate care. Diakon is pleased to be working with this population and feels that we are well positioned to serve these youth in an increasingly effective manner. At the outset of working with placed youth, Diakon utilized many of the strategies used when working with youth who were receiving the preventative service delivery. However, as placed youth have different needs and urgencies, FF&FE has utilized increasingly more robust and assertive measures to locate potential supports and kin. Some although not all methods utilized to locate kin include: interviewing parents and family members, interviewing youth, researching family obituaries, utilizing kin and accurint searches performed by YCOCYF, targeted social media outreach, conducting Seneca searches, and utilizing various online search engines to find relative contact information. Due to these ongoing efforts, Diakon FF&FE anticipates improved outcomes for placed youth in the FY 2022-2023 in terms of potential kin and supports being located.

Diakon’s preventative service delivery model has largely remained the same this fiscal year as it had during the onset of this program in July of 2020. One of FF&FE’s advantages in working with parents and youth is there is a large degree of flexibility in how parents are engaged. Additionally, as FF&FE provides all of the various follow up with kin and supports to plan and facilitate a meeting, a busy parent who may already be working with another service provider does not necessarily need to invest a great amount of time in FF&FE’s service for it to be effective. Diakon plans on continuing to provide the preventative service delivery as normal, while certainly taking any direction and/or recommendations made by the Agency in the future.

In an effort to provide children and youth with the best possible service, FF&FE has engaged in several practices which have not yet been clearly recorded for statistics. For example, for some youth in placement FF&FE has been facilitating professionals meetings. At times, a youth is not feel ready to have a family meeting and/or speak with identified kin and supports. Diakon will in some circumstances then facilitate a meeting involving YCOCYF, service providers, youth, and/or their guardian ad litem so that Diakon's efforts can be summarized and other professionals involved are able to potentially follow up on some tasks or discussions past the point of FF&FE discharge. Additionally, Diakon FF&FE will sometimes in lieu of a family meeting will communicate with various supports for that youth and essentially help coordinate tasks and next steps rather than have all parties involved meeting at one time.

In terms of engagement of preventative cases, Diakon has an engagement rate of 80%, with engagement being defined as at least one parent involved with FF&FE efforts. Diakon is making efforts to at least maintain this level of engagement and to increase to 85% during the FY 2022-2023.

Upon a family's discharge of engaged preventative cases 86% of those youth do not enter into placement which met the internally established goal of 85% of engaged preventative cases not ending in placement upon discharge. This is a 6 % increase from the FY 2020-2021. Diakon will strive to maintain a level of 85% of children receiving the FF&FE preventative service from not going into placement.

Among placement cases there was a finding of 71% of youth having had at least one potential kinship resource. During the FY 2022-2023 Diakon FF&FE has set a goal of identifying at least one potential kinship resource in 80% of those cases.

Another area of improvement will be having a family meeting, particularly with placed youth. During the FY 2022-2023, Diakon aims to have a family meeting with 75% of engaged families and have a family meeting with 70% of placed families.

If the Agency has any questions regarding this report or Diakon's FF&FE program in general, please reach out to program manager, Justin Carroll, at 717-350-2052 or carrollj@diakon.org