

Oregon Child Welfare Program

Presentation to House Human
Services Committee

Rebecca Jones Gaston, Director

May 27, 2020



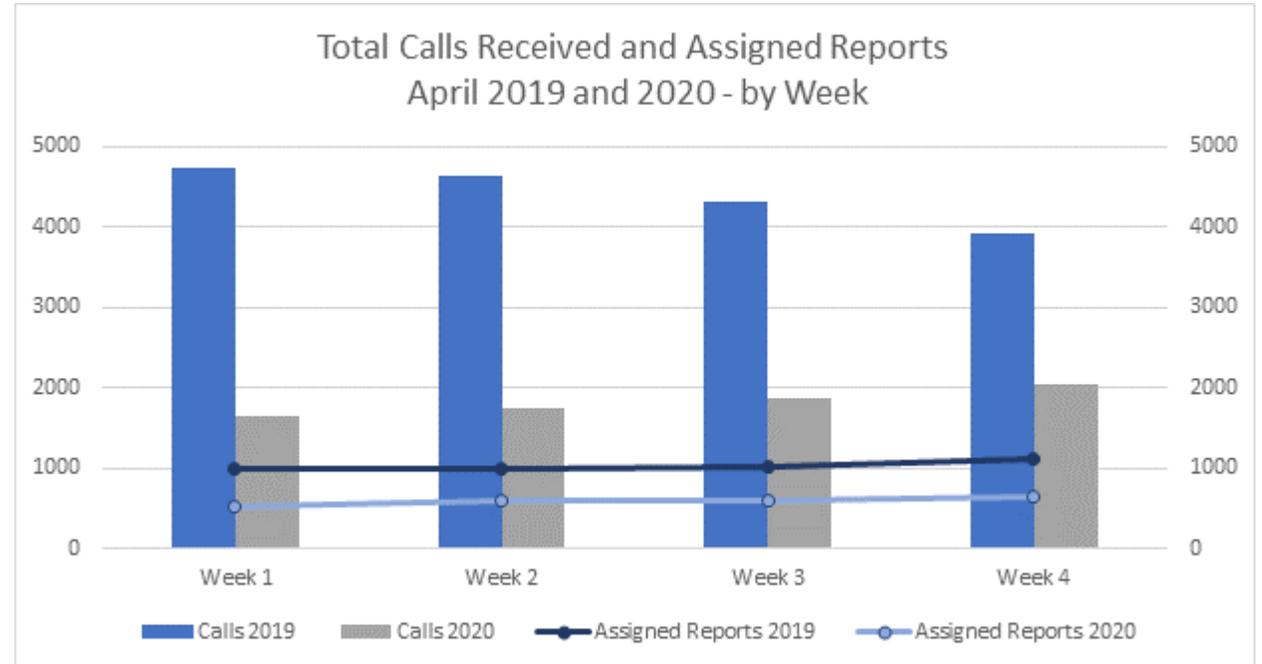
Child Abuse Hotline & Safety Response

ORCAH

- The Hotline is still operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Moved 95% of operations remote
- Calls decreased with Stay Home, Stay Safe order
- Targeted exploration of efficiencies

Safety

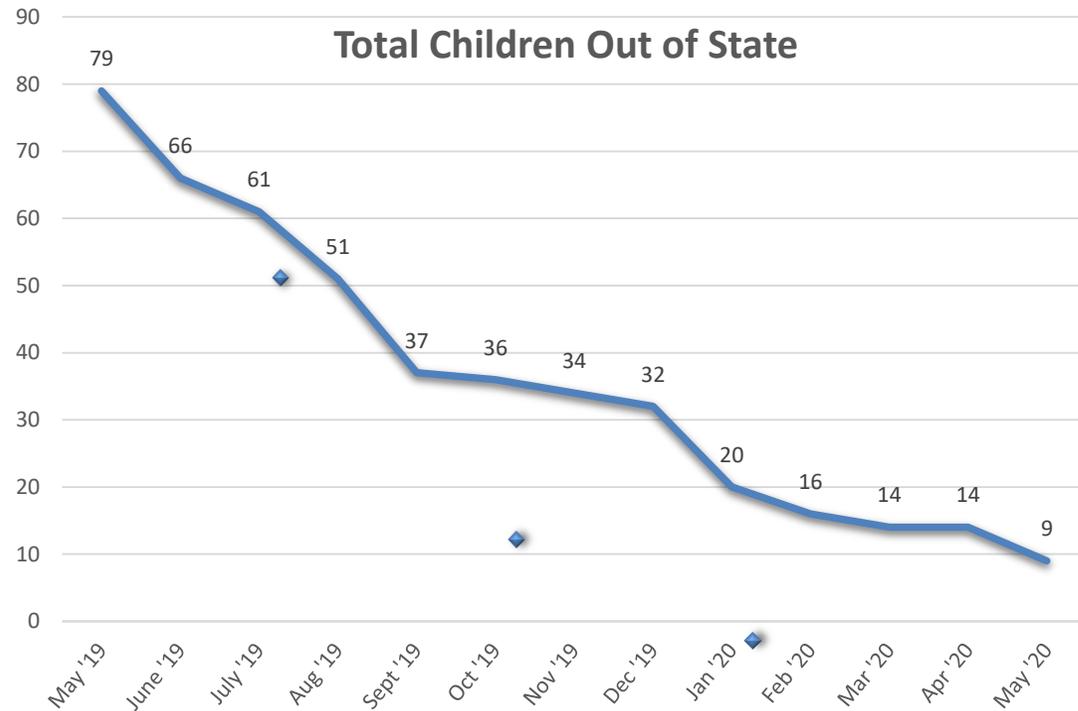
- Continue to respond to safety concerns
 - Visits to homes still occurring
 - Virtual contact when possible
- Sharing info with partners about child safety
 - Safety at forefront, opportunities to re-educate
 - Important to not create disparity
- Info shared with media and partners
- Critical Incident Reviews moved to virtual environment



Permanency – Children, Youth, & Young Adults

- Federal guidance allowing for virtual face-to-face
- Guidance for parent-child visitation created
 - No visits in DHS offices; Encourage visits in community; virtual visits and connections expected
- Permanency slowed
 - Reunifications are still occurring
 - Adoptions continue
- Supports to young adults – prevent aging out

Out-of-State Placements of Children in Foster Care



State	Oregon children
Idaho	5
Iowa	1
Utah	3

- All Oregon placements in out-of-state placements are being reviewed.
- Unannounced visits to all programs to review safety and wellness of all children placed out of state.
- Additional transition planning is being completed at this time; however there are limited appropriate placements for these youth in Oregon.
- The Department has been steadily reducing the number of kids out of state, but due to COVID-19, moving children (particularly across state lines) has become especially difficult and raises new risks to health of youth and staff.

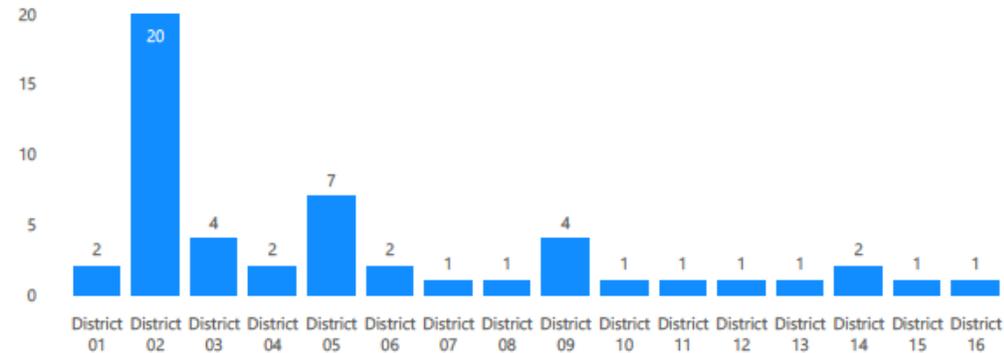
COVID – 19 Testing

DHS Child Welfare COVID 19 Tracking - Testing for Children in DHS Custody

51
Number Tested*

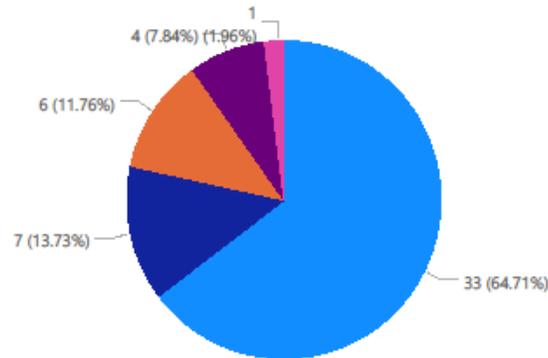
Negative
48
Positive
2
Waiting Results
1

Tests by Location



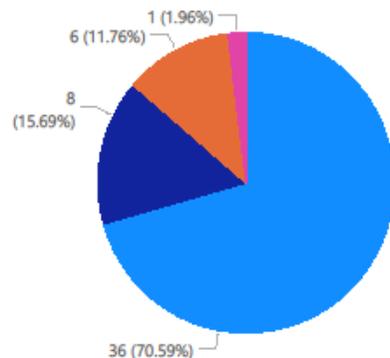
Race

- White
- Black or African A...
- (Blank)
- American Indian ...
- Unable to Det...



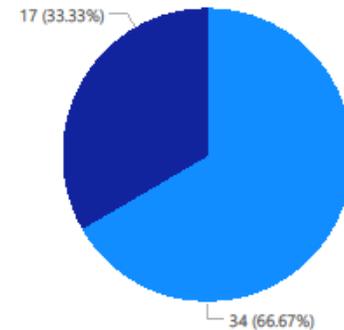
Ethnicity

- Non-Latinx
- No Response
- Latinx
- Undetermined



Gender

- Male
- Female



*Data indicates unique number of children tested - if child tested multiple times, data reflects most recent results

As of the morning of 5/26/2020:

- 51 youth in care have been tested for COVID-19.
- Of those:
- 48 have tested negative,
- 2 tested positive and
- 1 is awaiting results.

Resources For Foster Parents

- 6,768 children and youth in foster care as of end of April 2020
- Certifications continue
 - Slowed completion of certifications
 - Increase in inquiries since pandemic began
- Foundations training and trainings through KEEP are being done virtually
- Additional \$375 per month is available to foster parents based on need related to COVID-19 related to respite and child care
- Additional rate for foster homes able to provide care for COVID-19 positive or exposed youth, when needed

Workforce

- Most staff are now telecommuting
- CPS assessments are still happening in person, with appropriate physical distancing guidelines being followed when possible.
- Safety and wellbeing of children and families is still a priority.
- Hiring continues but have shifted to developing virtual options for interviews and onboarding
- Moved Essential Elements training to virtual
- Creating venues to address trauma and needs of the workforce.

Partnerships

- Implementing Child Welfare communication strategies
 - Courts, tribes, health care providers, education, providers, parents, youth and foster parents
- Regular and frequent virtual meetings with our partners
- Sharing commitment to children, youth and families
 - Innovation, creativity, compassion



Every Child, in direct partnership with DHS Child Welfare, has launched a comprehensive statewide emergency response to the fast-growing needs of children and families in Oregon's foster care system. The initiative is called My NeighbOR.

- If you are an Oregon child or young adult in foster care or foster family share your need at everychildoregon.org/need/
- If you can step up to meet the needs of Oregon's foster children and foster families, visit everychildoregon.org/myneighbor/

Other important information

- Building and implementing data dashboards to increase capacity for being data informed.
- 6768 - Lowest number of children and youth in foster care in recent history
- Child welfare using vision for transformation and lessons learned to shape our way forward

Debunking Child Welfare myths during COVID-19

- **Fact:** In-person visits between children in foster care and the biological parents are still happening, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Fact:** Oregon Child Welfare will not place children in foster care because their parents or caregivers are diagnosed with COVID-19.
- **Fact:** Not following Governor Brown's Stay Home, Save Lives executive order or not following physical distancing guidelines is not a reason for a Child Protective Services (CPS) assessment.

Questions?