

2021 |



# Washington Child Advocates Day of Data Report

Fall 2021

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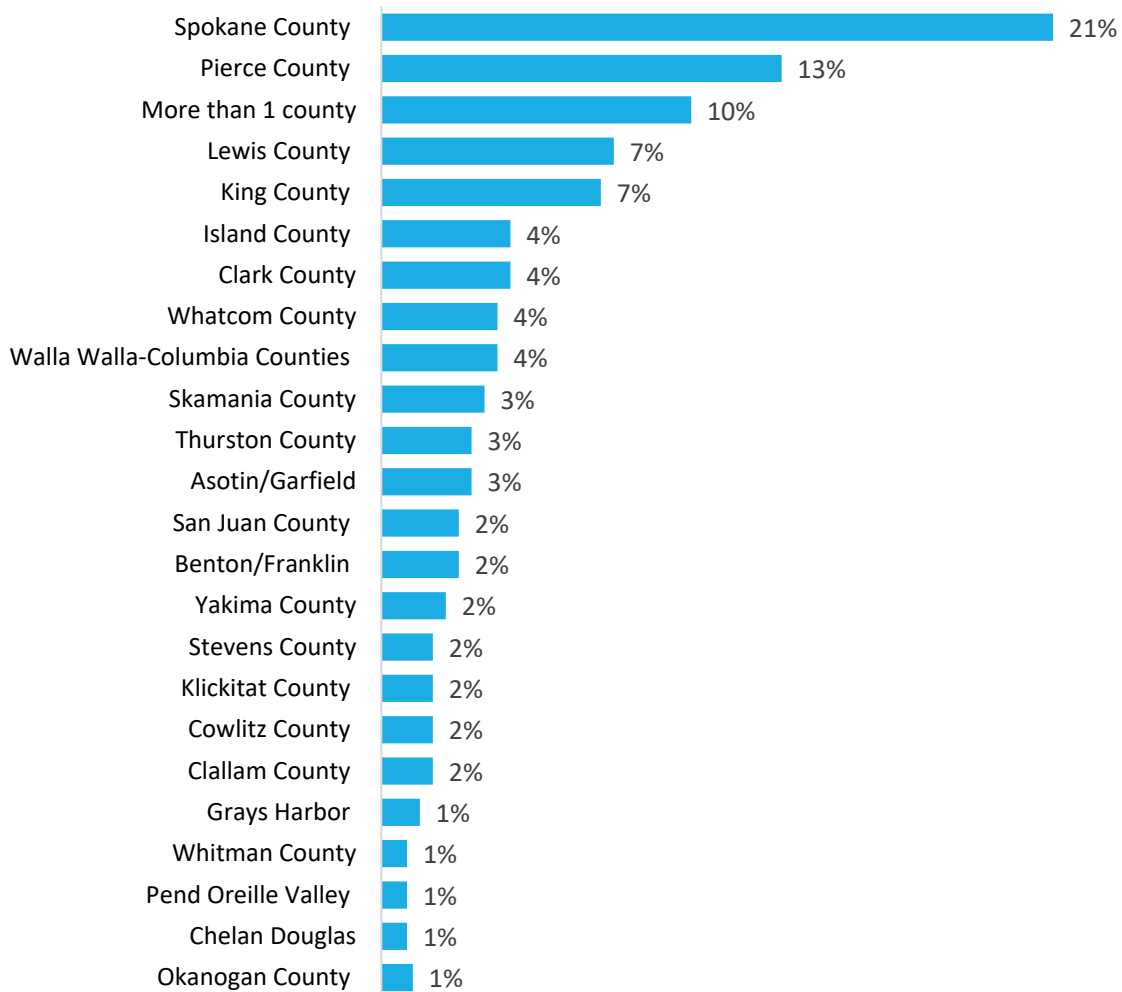
# Washington Child Advocates Data of Data Report (Fall 2021)

## Introduction

In Washington State, child advocate volunteers have been asked to complete a survey every six months, beginning in September of 2017. Data from this survey is analyzed and provided back to the Washington State child advocate programs to better understand current practice. This report includes data from Fall of 2021. The survey asks a series of questions about children the child advocates represent, including visitation, wellbeing, placement, and education related information.

A total of 245 responses representing 245 unique children involved in the foster care system were completed by child advocates across the state of Washington. Twenty-four counties were represented in the survey, with the highest percentage (21%) from Spokane County. Approximately 10% of the sample indicated more than one county.

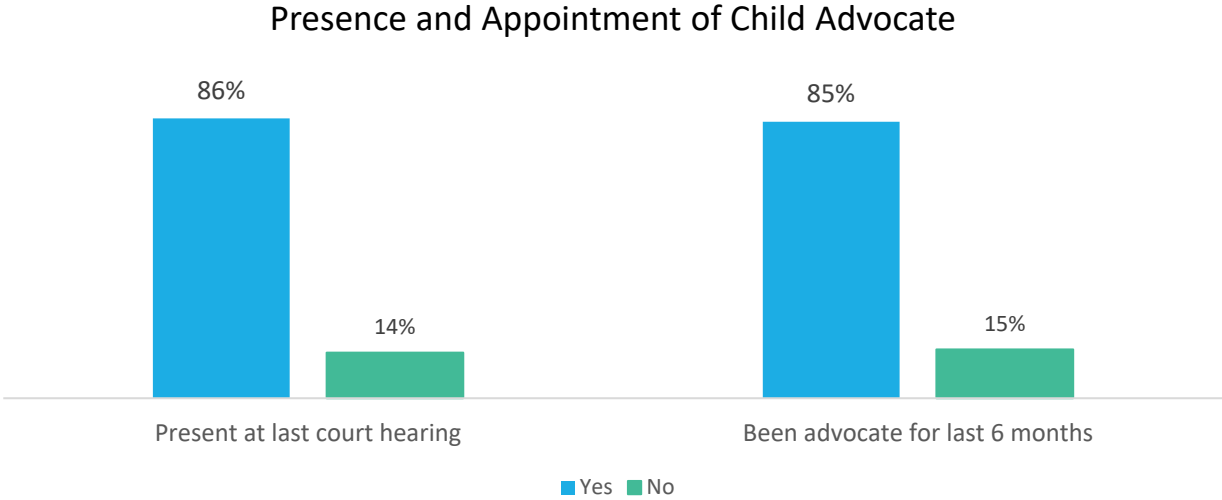
Child Advocate Volunteer County



# Findings

Child advocates reported the petition filing date and the date they were appointed in the majority of cases (87%). In the remaining 13% of cases, the date was indicated as a month and year or was left blank (either way, it was impossible to calculate time from filing to appointment). There were several data errors making it challenging to determine accurate dates. All outliers were removed from the analysis. The child advocates were appointed a median of 31 days after the case opened, with an average of 108 days after the case opened (cases ranged from one year prior to petition filing to 3.8 years after a case opened). It is important to note that some child advocates reported not being the first child advocate on the case, so numbers may reflect appointment of a later child advocate and not the original appointment (it is impossible to determine).

Child advocates were asked if they were present at the most recent court hearing and if they have been the child advocate the entire time for the last 6 months.



The survey asked child advocates how many times they checked in with the child in the last 6 months. The responses ranged from 0 to 33, with an average of **6** (or once per month).

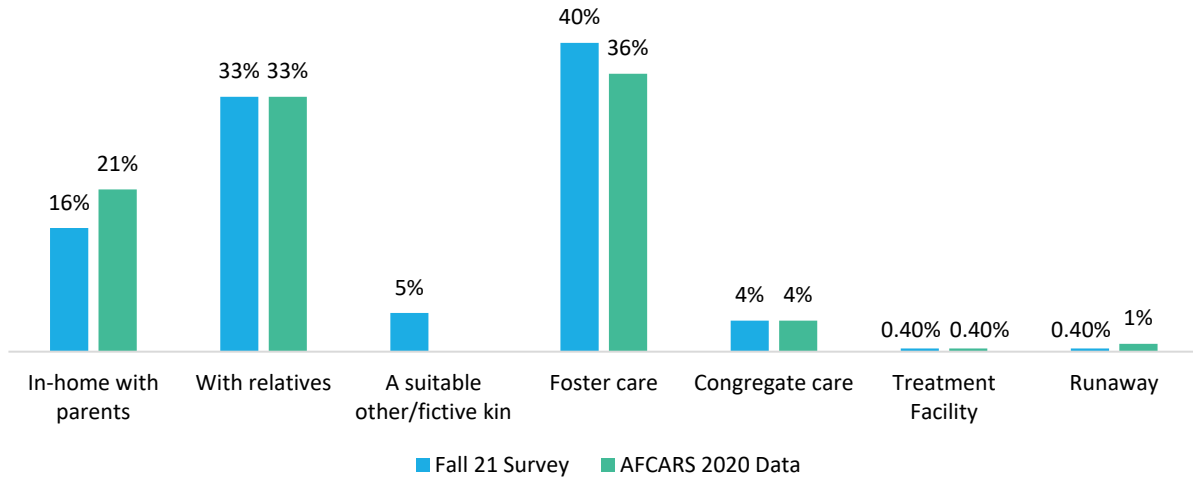
**16%** of child advocates reported the child had been reunified with their parent(s) in the last 6 months.

**96%** reported no additional abuse or neglect in the last 6 months.

## Placement & Visitation

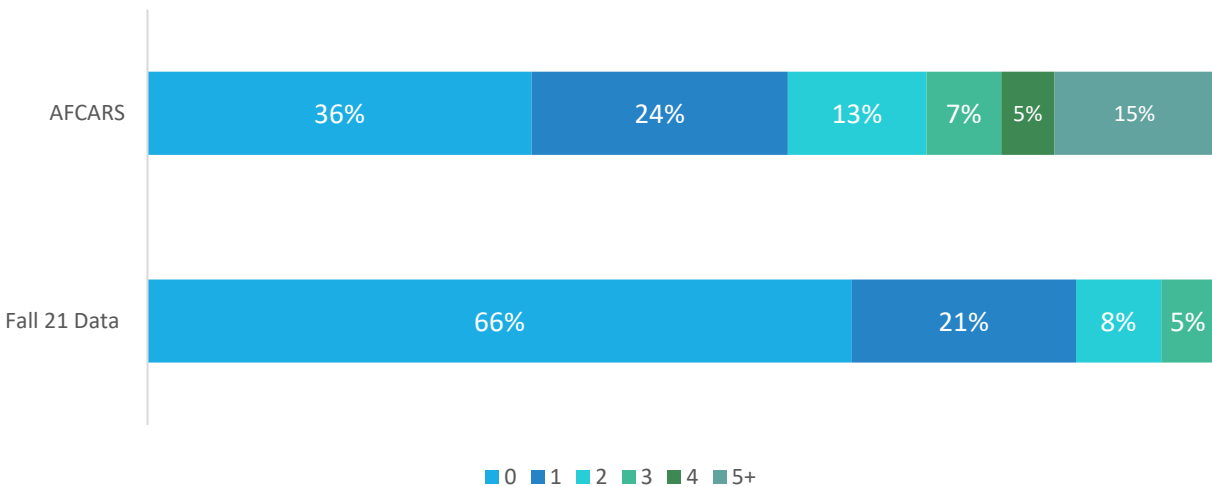
A series of questions asked about child’s placement and visitation with the mother, father, and siblings on the case. The data collected was compared to statewide data from the 2020 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. The child advocate survey data is consistent with the statewide data trends for placement type. As illustrated in the table below, the most common placement type is Foster Care with a non-relative. Most children had not had a placement move in the last 6 months.

## Placement of Youth in Washington



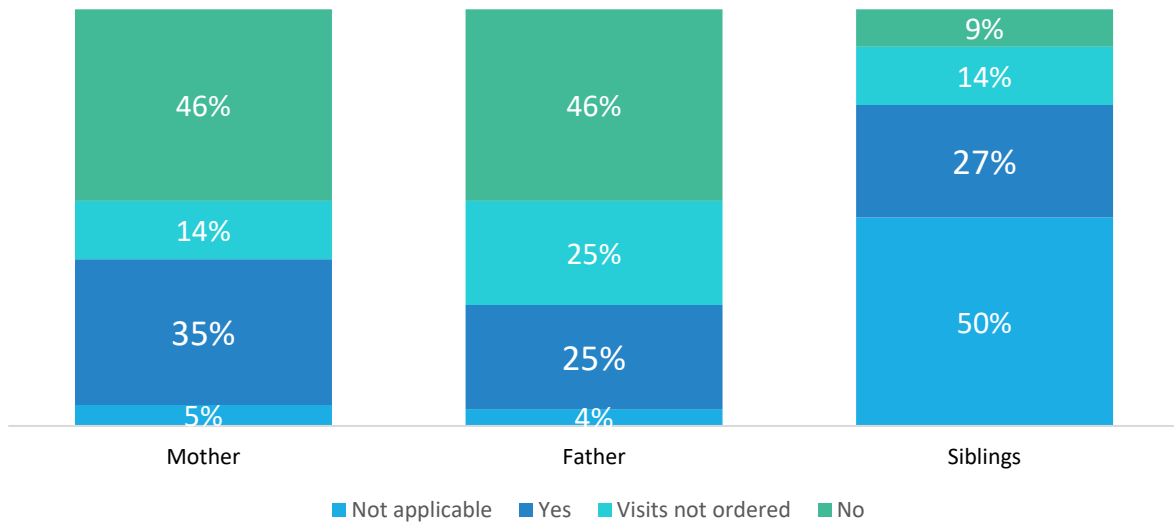
The child advocate survey asked how many placement moves the child had experienced in the last 6 months. This is compared to AFCARS 2020 (most recently available data). The AFCARS data only has the total number of placement settings for the entire foster care episode. As such, this is not an apples to apples comparison.

## Placement Moves



The survey also asked if the child has maintained consistent visits with parents and siblings in the last six months. As noted in the Visitation graph below, the most common response for maintaining visits with mothers and fathers was “No.” For sibling visits, the majority of cases indicate that this was not applicable (i.e., youth did not have siblings or were placed together). For mothers, when visitation was applicable *and* ordered by the court, youth were having consistent visits with their mothers in only **43%** of cases compared to **35%** consistent visits with their fathers. When visits were applicable for youth with their siblings, they were having consistent visits in **74%** of cases.

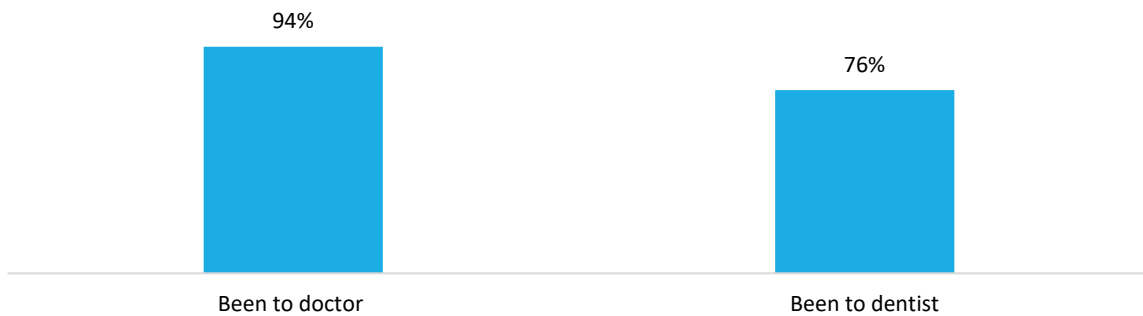
### Child Maintaining Consistent Visits



## Health & Wellbeing

The child advocate survey asked about child’s health and wellbeing. In particular, the survey asked about participation in services within the last 6 months. The majority of children had been to the dentist and to the doctor in the last 6 months.

### Percent Yes in Last 6 Months



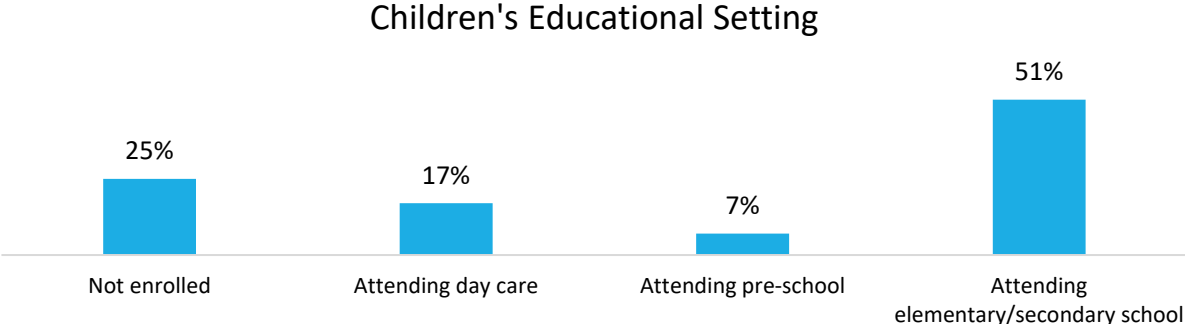
In addition to general wellbeing, the survey asked about mental health. The majority of youth were not ordered to go to mental health counseling by the court. Of those who were ordered, the majority were being provided services. The survey also asked about psychotropic medication use. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of youth were not reported to be on any psychotropic medications. Seven percent (7%) were on one psychotropic medication and 4% were on two or more.

Mental Health Services	Percent
Not Ordered	58%
If ordered, services being provided (YES)	78%
If ordered, services not being provided (NO)	22%

Child advocates reported 1% of youth have run away from placement in the last six months and 1% also were adjudicated delinquent in the last six months.

# Education

A final set of questions asked about the child’s current education setting and needs. Most youth were attending elementary or secondary school.



The survey also asked about absences and being tardy from school. Child advocates indicated that **22%** of applicable youth had missed more than 2 days of school per month for two months or more. Child advocates indicated that **5%** of applicable youth had been tardy to school on a recurrent basis. The survey also asked about school specific information, including whether the child had a reliable way to get to school, whether the child was on track to be promoted to the next grade level, whether they had current IEP/504 plans, and whether the youth participated in extracurricular activities. The table below illustrates percentage of yeses for applicable cases (e.g., if youth are not in school, these are no applicable).

Does the child/ is the child....	Percentage yes of applicable youth
Have a reliable way to get to and from school?	99%
On track to be promoted to the next grade?	92%
Have a current IEP/504 Plan?	45%
Participate in extracurricular activities?	34%

# Conclusions

The data collected for this report illustrate point-in-time snapshots of the youth that child advocates serve in Washington State. Placement reported by child advocates is consistent with AFCARS data on placements in 2020 for Washington. Dentist visits in the last six months are lower than the prior 6-month reporting period. In addition, less than half of the applicable children had an IEP or 504 plan or participate in extracurricular activities.