

# **The Adoption Permanency Project and Study**

**Sixth Judicial Circuit Court  
(Oakland County, Michigan)**

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We also wish to acknowledge the Honorable Martha D. Anderson, Sixth Judicial Circuit Court (Michigan), who served as the Permanency Judge for the first year and one-half of this project, the Honorable Linda S. Hallmark, Oakland County Probate Court (Michigan), for serving as successor Permanency Judge for the last portion of this project, the Honorable Joan E. Young, Sixth Judicial Circuit Court, and the Honorable Elizabeth Pezzetti, Oakland County Probate Court, who served as Presiding Judges of the Family Division and have supported this project.

We wish to also thank Martin B. Alvin, Senior Juvenile Court Referee, for adding the Permanency Docket cases to his schedule after the completion of the study and ensuring that the process continued for the children in the pilot group beyond the May 1, 2010, end date.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**William P. Bartlam** is the Manager, Judicial Support Services and Judicial Assistant for the Family Division of Circuit Court. Bill, an attorney, has been with the Family Division since its creation in 1998 and before that time served as Deputy Court Administrator for the Probate Court. He has also served as Probate Counsel, an Assistant Prosecuting Attorney, and was also in the private practice of law. He has 27 years of management experience with the Oakland County courts. He has served as an editorial advisor on several Michigan Judicial Institute bench books and as an MJI faculty member. Bill has served as non-judicial staff to the Michigan Juvenile Rules Committee. He has served twice as a state reviewer for the federal CFSR. He has lectured on many topics, including adoption law. Bill is a graduate of Cornell University, has a Master's Degree from the American University, and a Juris Doctorate from the University of Detroit School of Law.

**Lauran F. Howard** has been the Chief of Adoptions and Juvenile Support Services for Oakland County Circuit Court Family Division for the past 10 years. Before coming to the Court, she was a shareholder at the law firm of Kemp Klein Umphrey & Endelman, specializing in adoption law. She is the current chair of the adoption subcommittee of the Family Law Section of the State Bar of Michigan and is a fellow of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys. She was the recipient of the Angel in Adoption Award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute in 2002. She serves on the editorial advisory committee for the Michigan Adoption Benchbook, published by the Michigan Judicial Institute, and is a lecturer on adoption law for the Institute for Continuing Legal Education. Lauran is a graduate of Marygrove College and the University of Detroit School of Law.



## PERMANENCY JUDGES

**Martha D. Anderson** (Permanency Judge April 2008–September 2009) was elected to Oakland County Circuit Court on November 5, 2002. She served in the Family Division of the Circuit Court for seven years and currently sits on the General Civil Division. Judge Anderson was a Friend of the Court Referee in Oakland County for 23 years prior to being elected to the Oakland County Circuit Court.

Judge Anderson has lectured nationally and internationally on family law issues. She has served as a Member of the Advisory Committee of the State Court Administrator's Office, Friend of the Court Bureau, Client Orientation Program; the Michigan Supreme Court, Family Division Joint Rules Committee; as well as the State of Michigan, Safe Havens: Supervised Visitation and Safe Exchange Grant Program. She is a member of the State Bar of Michigan, the Oakland County Bar Association, a Fellow of the Oakland County Bar Association Foundation, the Italian-American Bar Association, the Women's Lawyers Association and a Michigan State Bar Foundation Fellow.

**Judge Linda S. Hallmark** (Permanency Judge October 2009–April 2010) was appointed to the Oakland County Probate Court in December of 1997. Judge Hallmark serves as Chief Judge of the Oakland County Probate Court. She is a member of the Circuit Court Family Division. She previously served as Chief Probate Judge and Presiding Judge of the Family Division from 2000-2004. She is a past chairperson of the State Bar Family Law Section Council, Oakland County Family Law Committee and Referees' Association of Michigan. Judge Hallmark is an appointee to the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect, past president of the Women Officials' Network, a fellow of the State Bar of Michigan, a fellow of the Oakland County Bar Association, a member of the MPJA, a member of the Women Lawyers Association, a member of the Board of Directors of the Michigan Inter-Professional Association and a member of the Board of the Annual Culinary Challenge.

She is a recipient of the John N. O'Brien Award, Referees Association of Michigan Service Award, Arab American Institute Service recognition, Oakland County Employee of the Year Award and the 2009 Wonder Woman Award.

Judge Hallmark has been a presenter and author for the Michigan Judicial Institute, faculty member for the New Judge's School, ICLE, the State Bar of Michigan, the Oakland County Bar Association, Women Lawyers Association, the American Bar Association, and the Governor's Task Force on Child Abuse and Neglect.

## **PROJECT TEAM**

**Julie Berz, MA, LPC**, is a Youth and Family Caseworker for the Circuit Court. Julie has 33 years' experience in casework, and has worked in prevention programming and adoption services. Julie was a leader in the Restorative Justice project in the court, providing victims of crimes the opportunity to be involved in the restitution measures of the juvenile perpetrator and training other workers in the restorative circle process. Julie has been honored as Court Employee of the Year and as Person of the Year by South Lyon Chamber of Commerce. She has a BA from Michigan State University and an MA from Oakland University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Michigan.

**Gabrielle Osooli, L.M.S.W.**, is a Youth and Family Caseworker for the Circuit Court. For the past 14 years, she has served youth and families initially through Oakland County Youth Assistance, the court's juvenile prevention program and then, for the past 6+ years, in the Adoption Services Unit, where she provides guidance, support, assessment and evaluation of relatives, stepparents and guardians navigating through the adoption process. Within the context of a Macro practice framework, Gabrielle works closely with agency workers to impart systemic change through better detailed court reporting, increased contact with foster and pre-adoptive parents, purposeful monitoring of cases and improved assessments, to ensure that appropriate and timely services are being provided to the child/family. Prior to joining the Circuit Court, Gabrielle was employed at the International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit as a family counselor with immigrant and refugee families as well as those resettled following the adjudication of political asylum petitions. Gabrielle received a B.A. from Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts and a Master of Social Work degree from the University of Michigan. She is licensed through the State of Michigan in Macro and Clinical Practice.

**Palmer Sesti** is Supervisor of the Adoption Services unit and is responsible for overseeing the daily function of the unit including the supervision of the adoption caseworkers.

This includes all step-parent, relative and adult adoption petitions and the legal and social work processing of these cases. In addition, Palmer reviews and approves all other adoption filings countywide. He has served in this capacity for the past 17 years. He has extensive knowledge with both the Michigan Juvenile Code and the Michigan Adoption Code. Palmer has 36 years' experience with the court, including 15 years as a Youth and Family Caseworker and 5 years' experience as supervisor of the Early Offender Project unit. Palmer also successfully supervised the Youth Community Service unit and was responsible for matching delinquent youth with nonprofit service agencies for volunteer work. He has B.A. from Western Michigan University in Sociology and Social Work.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This report studies two groups of children and the progress they made toward adoption after the court terminated their parents' rights and committed them to the Michigan Children's Institute. Collectively these two groups of children constitute the study. Children in the first group were on a specialized docket, initially called the "Rocket Docket" and later the "Permanency Docket." Children in the second group remained on the general docket of the judge to whom their child protective case had been assigned.

This report examines when children in each group achieved specific milestones toward adoption, compares and contrasts the attaining of these milestones, describes specific strategies used in the Permanency Docket, assesses the usefulness of these strategies, analyzes other data and makes specific recommendations on systemic changes for the court as a whole.

## 1. GENERAL

### Characteristics of Children in the Study

Between April 1, 2008, and April 1, 2010, the Circuit Court committed 349 children to the Michigan Children's Institute (MCI), a part of Michigan's Department of Human Services, with the permanency goal of adoption. All 349 children shared these characteristics:

- The MCI commitment followed the severing of parents' legal rights after the initiation of Child Protective Proceedings. This termination and commitment order marked the moment when the child became legally free for adoption.
- At the time of commitment, the Department of Human Services (DHS) had established the permanency goal as "Adoption."
- The commitment order (hereafter TPR Order) was signed on or after April 1, 2008, and on or before April 1, 2010.
- At the time of commitment, or soon thereafter, an adoption worker was assigned to facilitate adoption by an appropriate family. The adoption worker was either a DHS adoption specialist or an employee of a Child Placing Agency with whom DHS had contracted the adoption work.
- The post-termination proceedings were periodically heard by judges of the Family Division of the Circuit Court until the adoption was finalized or the permanency goal ceased to be adoption.

We measured the age at which these children became MCI wards and ceased to be Temporary Court Wards. The children are placed into specific age groups that follow statewide data DHS reports to the Federal Government through the AFCARS system.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In the period 10/1/08 – 9/30/09, DHS reported that 35.8 percent of the state ward finalized adoptions were children 0 – 3, 34.4 percent were children 4 – 8, and 29.8 percent of children were 9 and older. The percentages for children in this study were 42.2 percent, 27.2 percent, and 30.6 percent, respectively.

### CHILDREN BY AGE AT TPR

AGE AT TPR	TOTAL CHILDREN
AGES 0 – 3	154 (44%)
AGES 4 – 8	95 (27%)
AGES 9 – 17	100 (29%)
AGES 0 – 17	349 (100%)

Table 1: Age of child at TPR. A breakout of each age group is shown in Appendix A.

### Children Not Included in the Study

This study specifically excludes the 324 children who were MCI wards with adoption as their permanency goal on March 31, 2008. Their TPR order date was prior to April 1, 2008. While the adoption process continued for each of these children during the April 1, 2008–April 1, 2010 period, the progress for these children has not been included in this study. Their progress toward adoption is outside the scope of the study of the Permanency Docket. We gathered basic information on these children, but their records are limited.

This study also excludes the children who have become MCI wards after April 1, 2010, and who have a permanency goal of adoption. The study deliberately focused on the children who became MCI wards between April 2008 and April 2010.

### The Pilot and Control Groups: Growth During the Study Period

Each of the 349 children in the study was placed into one of two groups: pilot or control. Membership in the pilot group went to children whose termination proceedings were conducted by one of the referees of the court or by the Permanency Docket judge, Martha D. Anderson.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, membership in the control group went to children whose termination proceedings

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<sup>2</sup> Judge Anderson served as the Permanency Docket judge from April 1, 2008, until September 30, 2009. Her successor judge for the last months of the docket was Judge Linda S. Hallmark. Judge Hallmark heard permanency docket hearings from October 1, 2009, until April 30, 2010. Judge Hallmark's pre-October 1, 2009, cases were not transferred to the Permanency Docket, but remained in the control group.

were conducted by Judges James Alexander, Leo Bowman, Linda Hallmark<sup>3</sup>, Cheryl Matthews, Eugene Arthur Moore, Elizabeth Pezzetti, and Joan Young, or their successor judges.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2 shows the growth of the pilot and control groups in terms of children added by quarter and the total at the end of each quarter. This table does not reflect exits from either group based on finalization of the adoption or permanent change in goal.

#### **CHILDREN ADDED TO PILOT AND CONTROL GROUPS BY QUARTER**

<b>Qtr</b>	<b>Months</b>	<b>Pilot</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	April, May, June 2008	25	30	55
2	July, August, Sept 2008	16	26	42
	Cumulative	41	56	97
3	October, November, December 2008	32	34	66
	Cumulative	73	90	163
4	January, February, March 2009	9	22	31
	Cumulative	82	112	194
5	April, May, June 2009	17	24	41
	Cumulative	99	136	235
6	July, August, September 2009	18	12	30
	Cumulative	117	148	265
7	October, November, December 2009	11	30	41
	Cumulative	128	178	306
8	January, February, March 2010	18	25	43
	Cumulative	146	203	349

Table 2: Additions to the pilot and control groups, by quarter, and cumulative size of groups. This is shown graphically in Appendix B.

The 146 children in the pilot group thus represented 41.8 percent of all of the children in the study, and the 203 children in the control group represented 58.2 percent of the children in the study.

<sup>3</sup> Except as noted above. Judge Hallmark's cases post-October 1, 2009, were placed on the Permanency Docket.

<sup>4</sup> Judge Mary Ellen Brennan succeeded Judge Bowman on January 1, 2009, although Judge Bowman continued to hear a few matters. Judge Lisa Goreyca succeeded Judge Anderson on October 1, 2009, but Judge Anderson continued to hear a few matters.

## The Pilot and Control Groups: Exits From the Study

As children in each group achieved Adoption Permanency during the study period, they exited the study. “Adoption Permanency” is defined as the finalization of adoption through the entry of a Final Order of Adoption; the child has moved through the post-TPR period as an MCI ward and, following an Order Terminating Rights of MCI (OTR order), has moved through the adoption petition, placement, and supervision period. All of the barriers to a child’s adoption have been removed and the child has become a member of the adoptive family. Entry of the final order of adoption is the last event measured.

The exit of children from the study by finalized adoption during the period April 1, 2008, through April 30, 2010, is shown in Figure 1.

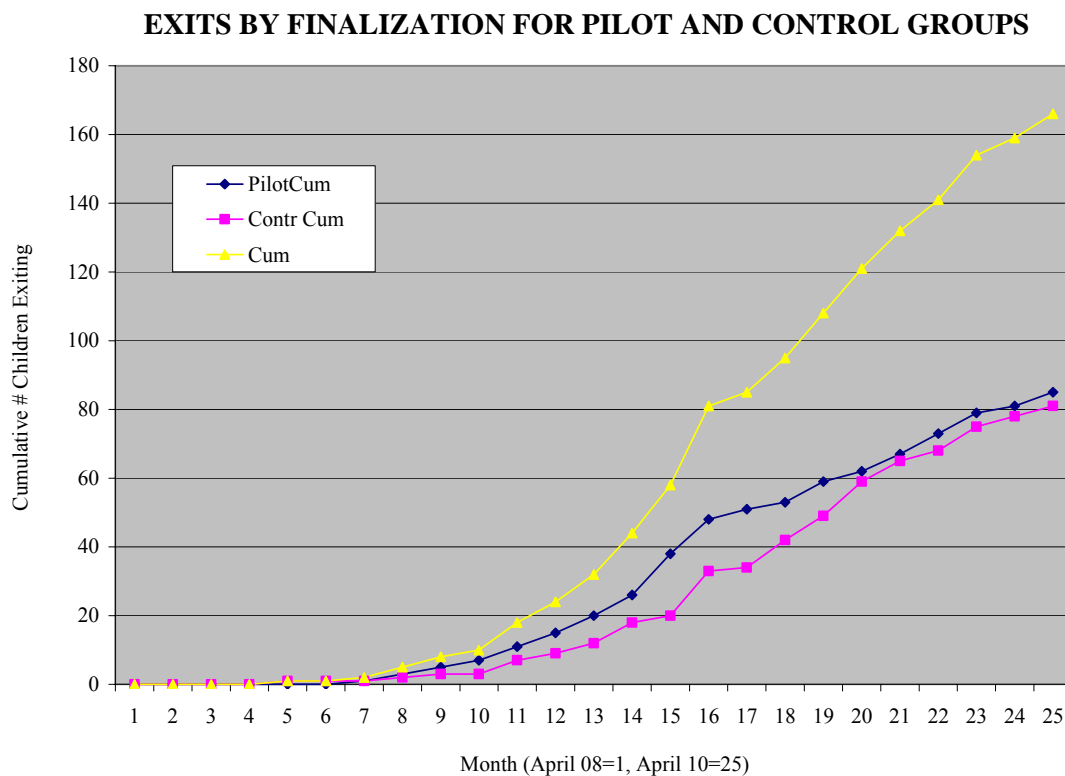


Figure 1: Cumulative exits from the pilot and control groups, and total exits, by month

During the 25 months of the Permanency Docket (April 2008 and April 2010 are counted), 166 of the 349 children achieved permanency by a finalized adoption. Eighty-five of the 146 children in the pilot group had their adoption finalized by April 30, 2010. By



comparison, 81 of the 203 children in the control group had their adoption finalized by that date.<sup>5</sup> Adoption remained the goal for all but one of the children in the pilot group whose adoptions were not finalized, but adoption ceased to be the permanency goal for fifteen children in the control group.

The children in each group who did not achieve Adoption Permanency but exited the study because their initial permanency goal (Adoption) was changed acquired a different permanency goal. The other permanency goals were Guardianship, Placement With a Fit and Willing Relative, or Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA or APPLA-E). The study of these children stopped when the court approved the change of permanency goal. As noted above, 16 of the 349 children fell into this exit category—15 in the control group, 1 in the pilot group.

### **Distribution of Children's Cases Among Adoption Agencies and DHS**

In addition to the Adoption Unit of the DHS, nineteen private agencies worked to achieve adoption permanency for the children in the study. Five of these agencies<sup>6</sup> provided services to two-thirds of the 349 children and together with DHS served three-quarters of the children in the study. Three other agencies together served ten percent of the children in the study<sup>7</sup> and the other eleven agencies together served fifteen percent of the children.<sup>8</sup> Oakland Family Services had the largest group of children – 58 – followed by Ennis Associates at 57. The DHS adoption unit serviced 28 of the children.

Figures 2 and 3 show the distribution of the children's adoption cases to the various adoption agencies. Figure 2 indicates the number of children and the percentage of children assigned each agency. Figure 3 shows that while the 349 children were in an approximate 4:3 ratio between control and pilot groups, some agencies (e.g., Methodist, Lutheran, OFS and Spectrum) had a proportionally greater number of children in the pilot group while others (e.g.,

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<sup>5</sup> Some of the charts will reflect finalizations after this date, as the case monitoring continued beyond the study period. By July 1, 2010, 192 of the 349 (55 percent) children in the study had achieved adoption permanency.

<sup>6</sup> The five are Ennis, Oakland Family Services, Orchards, St. Francis, and Lutheran Adoption Services.

<sup>7</sup> Methodist, Spectrum, and Spaulding

<sup>8</sup> Bethany, Child & Family Services, Child Help, Children's Center, Evergreen, Family Adoption Consultants, Forever Families, Homes for Black Children, Judson, Adoption Options, and Wolverine.

Ennis) had a proportionally greater number of children in the control group. Still others (e.g., DHS, Spaulding) were very close to the 4 to 3 ratio control to pilot.

### AGENCIES SERVING THE CHILDREN IN THE STUDY

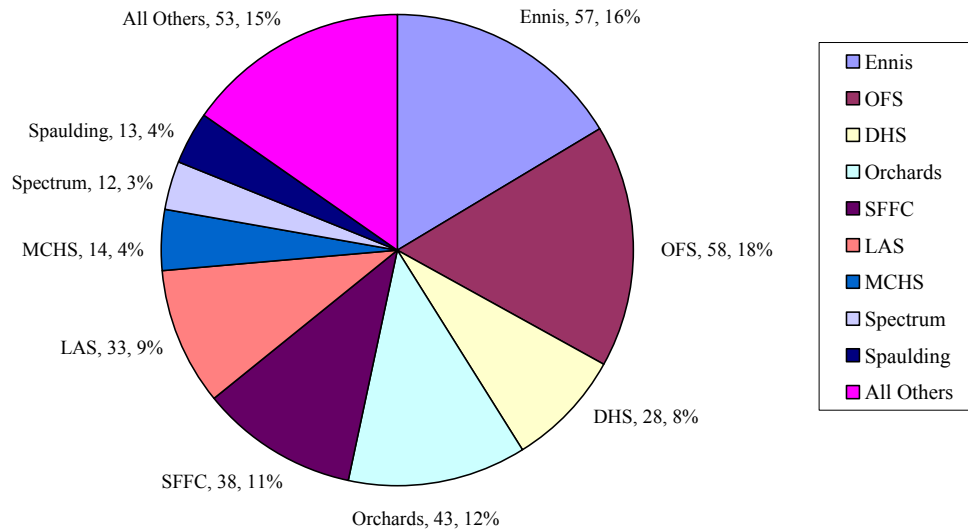


Figure 2: Agencies serving the children in the study.

### CHILDREN IN PILOT AND CONTROL GROUPS SERVED BY AGENCIES AND DHS

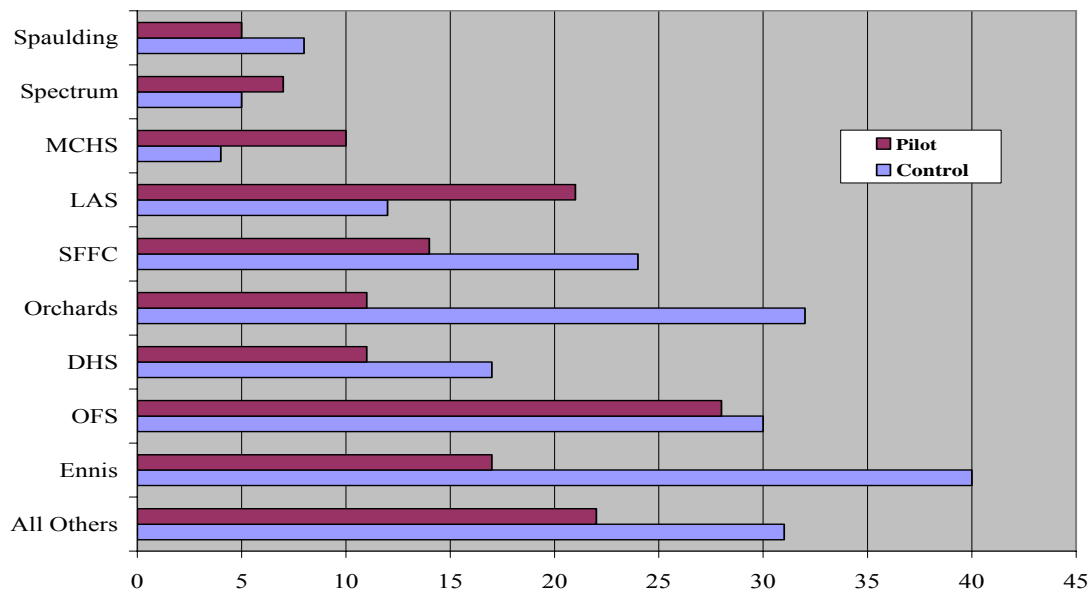


Figure 3: Children in pilot and control groups served by adoption agencies and the Department of Human Services

## Children's Placement At Termination and Afterwards

In the study of children's placement, we looked at five variables in trying to find children who were similarly situated. First, we looked at placement at termination<sup>9</sup>. We next looked at the latest placement (by type).<sup>10</sup> We then looked to see if the latest placement was the same as or was different from the placement at termination. We then looked to see if the adoptive family had been identified at the time of termination of parental rights.<sup>11</sup> Finally, we looked to see whether the adoption had been finalized by April 30, 2010.

Each child in the study would have only one set of variables that fit his or her circumstances. We listed the children in the appropriate category and then identified within the category the children in the pilot group and the children in the control group.

### NUMBERS OF CHILDREN IN VARIOUS PLACEMENT GROUPS

ORIGINAL PLACEMENT	LATEST PLACEMENT				
	Adopting Relative Home	Foster Adoptive Home	Recruited Family Home	Non-Adopt Relative or Foster Home	Residential Placement
Relative Home (131)	121	0	0	10	0
Fictive Kin (8)	0	7	1	0	0
Foster Home (182)	13	128	21	16	4
Residential (12)	7	0	2	0	3
<b>Subtotals</b>	141	135	24	26	7
16 children's goals changed post-termination and they are excluded from placement counts					
<b>TOTAL CHILDREN = 333</b>					

Table 3. The matrix of variables is shown in Appendix C (Permanency Groups).

The placement data indicates that of the 349 children in the study (less the 16 who had a change in permanency goal), there were two significant permanency groups: those in foster care who went on to be adopted by the foster parents caring for them at time of termination, and those

<sup>9</sup> The choices were: Foster Home, Relative, Fictive Kin, and Residential.

<sup>10</sup> The choices were: Relative, Non-Adopting Relative, Foster Home, Foster Adoptive Family, Recruited Family, and Residential.

<sup>11</sup> The choices were Family Identified ('FID') or No Family Identified ('NFI').

children who were placed with a relative at time of termination and went on to be adopted by that relative.

### Other Child-Specific Information

Throughout the study period, we tracked basic case data: child's name, date of birth, case number, date of termination, type of placement, and agency. We tracked judge assigned, next hearing date, and some brief comments or notes as well as the date this information was updated. We did this for all MCI wards with adoption as their goal, even though their termination date occurred before the start of the study. But as we reached the evaluation phase, we realized that we had not copied much of the information into our database that we needed for the evaluation.

For the 349 children in the study, we expanded the data elements in each child's record.<sup>12</sup> Ultimately we gathered over 70 distinct pieces of information. Some of these data elements proved very difficult to obtain, especially in control group cases. Other data elements help provide explanation for why some adoptions proved so difficult. We gathered this information on each child by reading reports provided by the agencies and by a review of the progress of each child's case.

#### DATA ELEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN PERMANENCY STUDY

<b>COURT INFORMATION</b>	<b>MILESTONES (Dates)</b>	<b>AGENCY INFORMATION</b>	<b>BARRIERS</b>	<b>PLACEMENT HISTORY</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pilot/Control group</li> <li>- Caseworker</li> <li>- Judge</li> <li>- 30-day hearing? (Y/N)</li> <li>- Scheduling Order date and type</li> <li>- Scheduling Order Amendments</li> <li>- Number of hearings TPR to exit</li> <li>- Court handling adoption (county)</li> <li>- Appeal? (Y/N)</li> <li>- Appeal affirmed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Commitment</li> <li>- Adoption worker assigned</li> <li>- MARE registration</li> <li>- Child Assessment</li> <li>- Adoptive Family Assessment</li> <li>- Subsidy submitted</li> <li>- Subsidy contract</li> <li>- Consent request</li> <li>- Consent received</li> <li>- Adoption petition filed</li> <li>- OTR date</li> <li>- Finalized</li> <li>- Non-adoption exit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Agency name</li> <li>- Change in adoption worker?</li> <li>- Number of adoption workers assigned</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recruitment</li> <li>- Family situation or background</li> <li>- Licensing</li> <li>- Training</li> <li>- Medical needs</li> <li>- Mental Health or behavior issues of child</li> <li>- Education needs</li> <li>- DOC rate</li> <li>- ICPC delays</li> <li>- Competing parties</li> <li>- Sibling group placement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Removal date (last episode)</li> <li>- Number of moves pre-TPR</li> <li>- At TPR: FID or NFI?</li> <li>- Intent to adopt signed</li> <li>- F.P. adopting?</li> <li>- Adopter/adoptee relationship</li> <li>- Placement at TPR</li> <li>- Number of moves post-TPR</li> <li>- Disruption of adoptive placement?</li> </ul>

Table 4: Data elements in each child's record in the Permanency Study database.

<sup>12</sup> The Permanency Docket Project Data Form is shown in Appendix D.

## **2. MILESTONE ATTAINMENT**

### **The Starting Point: MCI Commitment**

The starting point for measuring the time it took children in the study to move through the post-termination process was the commitment date. For all children, this was the date when DHS accepted the child as an MCI ward. That was generally the date on which the MCI commitment order was signed by the judge. This became “Day 1” on the post-termination time continuum. While we recorded the date when the child was removed from his or her home (in the latest placement episode), the child’s time as a temporary court ward pre-termination is outside the scope of this study.

### **First Milestone: Assignment of the Adoption Worker**

While the child’s foster care worker remains primarily responsible for the child until the Order Terminating Rights and Order Placing Child are entered in the child’s adoption case, the date when the adoption worker was assigned by the agency or DHS is the first milestone we measured in the child’s journey toward adoption permanency. In many cases, the adoption worker was assigned during the period when the child was a Temporary Court Ward. In some cases, the exact date was unknown because the agency had both foster care and adoption responsibilities and did not disclose the assignment date in their reports. When the agency had assigned the worker before the MCI commitment order, for purposes of our measurement we show the “Adoption Worker Assigned” date as Day 1. The Adoption Worker Assigned date is that date reported by the agency. It does not represent when DHS assigned an agency to the child’s case nor when the agency received the referral. Rather, it represents the date when a specific adoption worker received the case as his or her own. The data for the pilot and control groups are shown in Table 5. We expect the transfer of the case to be completed by Day 14. Ninety children in the pilot group (61 percent) and 111 in the control group (55 percent) met this milestone in a timely fashion.

### ADOPTION WORKER ASSIGNED

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)
Pilot Group – 146 children	4	1 day*	6 days	15 days	20 days	131 days
Control Group – 203 children	32	1 day*	2 days	28 days	38 days	291 days

Table 5: \*Note: An adoption worker was assigned on or before the date of the commitment order for 63 children in the pilot group and 87 children in the control group. These are all reported as “Day 1” assignments.

### Second Milestone: Child Adoptive Assessment Completion

By DHS policy, the adoption worker is to complete the child assessment within 45 days of case assignment. In the scheduling orders we used in the Adoption Permanency study, we set this milestone at 49 days.<sup>13</sup>

One hundred forty children—sixty-one (42 percent) in the pilot group and seventy-nine (39 percent) in the control group—attained this milestone within the 49 days. We lacked the information for 65 of the 349 children—18.6 percent, either because it had not been reported or because the milestone had not yet been attained.

### CHILD ADOPTION ASSESSMENT COMPLETION

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)
Pilot Group – 146 children	21	33 days	51 days	73 days	85 days	478 days
Control Group – 203 children	44	25 days	51 days	79 days	86 days	525 days

Table 6: Days to completion of child adoptive assessment, pilot and control groups

<sup>13</sup> These timeframes were based on the Model Scheduling order and input from the Oakland County Adoption Forum workgroup, and are more fully discussed in Part III, *infra*. The scheduling orders were generally entered at the 30-day hearing in the pilot group, but time was calculated from commitment date.

### Third Milestone: MARE Registration Completion

In the reports to the court we looked not only for the date on which the agency registered the child with the Michigan Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE), but also for the date on which the child's prospective adoptive family signed the 'Intent to Adopt' document. Unfortunately, few reports provided the Intent to Adopt date. In measuring attainment of this milestone, we looked only to see IF the child was registered. Of the 349 children, we show that 252 of the children (72 percent) were registered, 58 were not (16 percent), and we lacked information on 39 children (11 percent). Ninety-seven of the 146 children in the pilot group (66 percent) and 155 of the 203 children in the control group (76 percent) have been reported as registered on MARE.

### Fourth Milestone: Adoptive Family Assessment Completion

If an adoptive family is to be approved for the adoption of a specific child, the Adoptive Family Assessment (AFA) must be completed within 90 days of the intent to adopt. In many instances, the family has been pre-qualified through the initial Foster Home/Adoption Evaluation and only the AFA Addendum must be completed. In the scheduling orders, we expected this milestone to be attained within 56 days. Twenty-nine (20 percent) of the pilot group, and twenty-three (11 percent) of the control group met this milestone in a timely manner. Unfortunately, 26 percent of pilot group children and 46 percent of control group children did not have data on this milestone because they either had not yet attained it or because the agency did not report it.<sup>14</sup>

#### ADOPTIVE FAMILY ASSESSMENT COMPLETION

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	38*	63 days	98 days	94 days	166 days	448 days	108
Control Group – 203 children	94**	70 days	133 days	159 days	235 days	540 days	109

Table 7. Days to completion of adoptive family assessment, pilot plus control groups

\* Of the pilot group, 8 children have other milestone data but no AFA date; 30 have no post-AFA data.

\*\*Of the control group, 24 children have other milestone data but no AFA date, 70 have no post-AFA data.

<sup>14</sup> At the time of termination, 257 children had a prospective adoptive family identified, 112 in the pilot group and 145 in the control group. This represented 76.7 percent of the pilot group and 71.4 percent of the control group.

### **Fifth Milestone: Subsidy Application Submission Date**

All prospective adoptive families must be given information on the adoption subsidy programs and the opportunity to request a determination of eligibility. This is the responsibility of the agency and, in studying the reported application dates, it is quickly evident that some agencies are much more proactive than others. Indeed, some agencies submit the subsidy application within a few days of case assignment.

In the scheduling order, we expected this milestone to be attained within 56 days. The agencies met this milestone for forty-eight (33 percent) of the pilot group children and fifty-four (27 percent) of the control group children. The number of children with no or incomplete information has grown at this milestone, either because they have not yet attained it or because the information was not reported by the agency.

#### **TIME TO SUBSIDY APPLICATION**

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	34*	34 days	70 days	105 days	126 days	626 days	112
Control Group – 203 children	81**	33 days	70 days	115 days	164 days	511 days	122

Table 8: Days to submission of subsidy application, pilot plus control groups

\* Of the pilot group, 4 children have other milestone data but no subsidy application date; 30 do not. In this group, there are 3 “Day 1” children.

\*\* Of the control group, 8 children have other milestone data but no subsidy application date, 73 do not. In this group, there are 8 “Day 1” children.

### **Sixth Milestone: Subsidy Contract Receipt Date**

This milestone reflects completion of the subsidy determination. The contract receipt date indicates the adoption subsidies are no longer a barrier. For children for whom no subsidy will be awarded but application was made, the subsidy contract receipt date is the date when the agency receives the subsidy denial letter.



The scheduling order sets this milestone at 91 days, which indicates that the DHS subsidy office has at least 35 days to process a subsidy application submitted on time. Only twenty-four (7 percent) of the children in the study attained this milestone in a timely manner. These children were evenly split between the pilot and control groups, with 12 in each group attaining this milestone in a timely fashion.

Again, the number of children with no attainment of this milestone or incomplete information is sizeable: Forty-seven percent of the pilot group and sixty-one percent of the control group had no subsidy contract date reported.

#### **TIME TO SUBSIDY CONTRACT**

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	56*	117 days	174 days	180 days	229 days	444 days	90
Control Group – 203 children	118**	123 days	163 days	192 days	265 days	463 days	85

Table 9: Days to receipt of subsidy contract (or denial letter), pilot plus control groups

\* Of the pilot group, 21 children have other milestone data post-subsidy contract, 35 do not.

\*\*Of the control group, 35 children have other milestone data post-subsidy contract, 83 do not.

#### **Seventh Milestone: MCI Consent Request Submission Date**

This milestone reflects the day on which the agency requests the MCI superintendent consent to the adoption of this child by this prospective adoptive family. In the scheduling order, we expect the agency to attain this milestone by day 91.

Fifty-four children (15 percent) achieved this milestone by Day 91. Of the 54, 29 children were in the pilot group (20 percent of the pilot) and 25 children were in the control group (12 percent of the control).

### TIME TO CONSENT REQUEST TO MCI

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	49*	88 days	126 days	150 days	193 days	448 days	97
Control Group – 203 children	101**	92 days	154 days	191 days	248 days	506 days	102

Table 10: Time to request for MCI consent, pilot plus control groups

\*Of the pilot group, 12 children have other milestone data but no MCI request date; 37 do not. The shortest time is 17 days.

\*\*Of the control group, 8 children have other milestone data but no MCI request date; 93 do not. The shortest time is 23 days.

### Eighth Milestone: MCI Consent Receipt Date

This milestone is attained when the agency receives the MCI Superintendent's consent to the adoption of the child. The consent is a condition precedent to the agency's filing of the adoption petition. Timely attainment of this milestone is dependent on the agency requesting consent in a timely manner and in the MCI Superintendent promptly acting on the request. The scheduling order sets the receipt date at 119 days. Of the children in the study, 35, or 10 percent, met this milestone—14 in the pilot group and 21 in the control group.

### TIME TO RECEIPT OF CONSENT

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	62*	135 days	170 days	208 days	244 days	626 days	84
Control Group – 203 children	107**	137 days	213 days	226 days	314 days	589 days	96

Table 11: Time to receipt of consent from MCI, pilot plus control group

\* Of the pilot group, 24 have other post-consent milestone information; 38 do not.

\*\* Of the control group, 12 have other post-consent milestone information; 95 do not.

### Ninth Milestone: Filing of Adoption Petition

A prospective adoptive family and their child reach this milestone when the agency files the adoption petition with the court having jurisdiction over the adoptive process. The petition

must include the MCI superintendent's consent. Following submission of the petition, the adoption court will issue an Order Terminating Rights of the MCI superintendent (OTR) and an Order Placing Child. At that point, the court handling the adoption assumes responsibility for completing the adoption permanency process.

The last scheduling order date is the date by which the Oakland County court expects the agency to file the adoption petition. It is 133 days after TPR. Eighteen children (5 percent) in the study attained this milestone by Day 133—twelve in the control group (6 percent) and six in the pilot group (4 percent). Many of the children had not attained this milestone either because the earlier milestones hadn't yet been attained or because their cases had not progressed in a timely manner.

#### **FILING OF ADOPTION PETITION**

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	52*	153 days	210 days	237 days	293 days	668 days	84
Control Group – 203 children	119**	148 days	235 days	257 days	305 days	730 days	84

Table 12: Days to filing of adoption petition, pilot plus control groups

\*Of the pilot group, 16 children have other milestone data but no petition filing date; 36 children have no data.

\*\*Of the control group, 10 children have other milestone data but no petition filing date; 109 have no data.

The shortest time to filing of an adoption petition was 71 days in the pilot group and 76 days in the control group.

#### **Tenth Milestone: Finalization of the Child's Adoption**

Attainment of this milestone represents Adoption Permanency for each child. Finalization may be immediate or it may follow a period of supervision. In some instances the period of supervision may be extended.

In some circumstances, the child's adoptive placement may be disrupted. This may be due to many different factors, some involving the child and others involving the adoptive family. Of the children in the study group, twenty, or 5.7 percent, experienced a disrupted placement in the post-termination period (this may have occurred prior to the OTR). Of this number, 10 were in the

pilot group and 10 were in the control group. Nevertheless, nine of these twenty children went on to achieving adoption permanency (six in the control group and three in the pilot group).

#### TIME TO FINALIZATION

Group and Number of Children	Not Any or Incomplete Information	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Median Time (Days)	Mean Time (Days)	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Days)	Longest Time (Days)	Number of Children with Data
Pilot Group – 146 children	61	206 days	289 days	303 days	369 days	585 days	85*
Control Group – 203 children	122	234 days	310 days	332 days	370 days	661 days	81**

Table 13: Time to finalization of child's adoption, pilot and control groups

\*An additional 14 children in the pilot group had their adoptions finalized between May 1, 2010, and July 1, 2010. Their finalization statistics are not included in this table. They are part of the 61. The shortest time to finalization in the pilot group was 83 days.

\*\*An additional 12 children in the control group had their adoptions finalized between May 1, 2010, and July 1, 2010. Their finalization statistics are not included in this table. They are part of the 122. The shortest time to finalization in the control group was 98 days.

### **3. STRATEGIES USED IN PERMANENCY DOCKET AND ASSESSMENT OF USEFULNESS OF STRATEGIES**

#### **Use of Specialized Docket**

In April and May of 2008 we crafted the design of the Permanency Docket. Two caseworkers and the supervisor of the court's adoption unit would provide staff support (this was a new and added responsibility for them). The Adoption Forum group would serve as the advisory committee. This proposal was presented in June 2008 to the Family Division judges and, with slight modifications, was adopted as a pilot project with a two-year life.

At program launch, the designated judge, the Honorable Martha D. Anderson, heard all cases in the pilot program. These cases came to Judge Anderson in one of two ways: (1) she had personally heard the child protective proceeding through termination of parental rights and MCI commitment, or (2) a referee had heard the child protective proceeding through termination and the TPR occurred on or after April 1, 2008, the start date of the pilot program. Even though another judge had been supervising the case pre-termination, if a referee had been conducting the hearings, the case would be transferred to Judge Anderson's permanency docket at time of entry of the MCI commitment order.

Judge Anderson committed to hearing the cases on the Permanency Docket at a specific time each week (originally Friday afternoons at 3:00 p.m., later on Monday afternoons at 1:30 p.m. due to the larger number of hearings each week). She also agreed to acquire particular expertise in the DHS and agency adoption processes. This specialized expertise helped impart a sense of the time urgency to pilot program participants, who would know that they were appearing before a highly-knowledgeable judge who expected prompt performance, measured against an objective standard but tempered with recognition of the nuances of each child's case.

The members of this court's bench have traditionally disfavored the use of a specialized docket. It departs from this court's practice of generalized dockets.<sup>15</sup> By comparing the results attained in the pilot and control groups, we note the following:

- Children in the pilot group attained finalization at a rate that was 150 percent the rate of the children in the control group. See Appendix E.
- Older children (age 9–17) in the pilot group attained finalization at a much greater rate than did their peers in the control group: Thirty of thirty-nine (77 percent) vs nineteen of sixty-one (31 percent).
- Children in the pilot group reached their milestones at an earlier point than children in the control group.
- Children in the pilot group were much less likely to have their permanency goal changed than children in the control group.
- The docket growth of the pilot group leveled off and maintained level, while the docket growth of the control group slowly continued. See Appendix F. This docket growth was a result of children exiting the courts by attaining adoption permanency.

Early in the project's life Julie Berz, one of two Adoption Unit caseworkers personally overseeing cases on the Permanency Docket, began publishing a "P-calendar" showing each week's hearings for that docket. This P-calendar was updated weekly and looked at the scheduled hearings for the next three to four months. This permitted all of the recipients of the P-calendar to see when cases on this specialized docket were next scheduled and to make adjustments as warranted.<sup>16</sup> While children in the control group typically had their post-termination reviews once each quarter, children in the pilot group could have their case reviewed more frequently. The P-calendar helped immensely in forward planning for the judge and all involved.

Another advantage of the specialized docket was that scheduled hearings were rarely adjourned. If testimony was incomplete, the case was typically continued to the following week

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<sup>15</sup> The 6<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit Court uses a Specialized Docket for Juvenile and Adult Drug Treatment programs, and for Children Absent Without Legal Permission ('AWOLP').

<sup>16</sup> A P-Calendar for April 2009, midway into the project, is shown as Appendix G.

for additional information. In rare instances where Judge Anderson was unavailable, we provided a referee to conduct that day's hearings.

### **Expedited Post-TPR Review (30-Day Hearing) and Checklist**

We employed this strategy to monitor the delay in moving the case from the foster care TPR focus to the post-termination adoption focus. We wanted to ensure the early involvement of the adoption worker. Cases in the pilot group have their first hearing post-termination at 30 days after the hearing that led to entry of the TPR order. To ensure that this hearing is meaningful, we expedited the transfer of the case to the Permanency Docket including, as necessary, judge reassignment. Likewise, DHS expedited the transfer from foster care to the adoptions caseworker or agency adoption worker. The preparation and distribution of the TPR order has been and continues to be a priority for court staff. The court uses the services of a court-based DHS employee, the court liaison, to speed communication and help coordinate efforts with the DHS adoptions supervisor. The DHS Adoptions supervisor is responsible for case assignment following transfer from foster care. Our goal has been to have the responsible agency or a DHS adoption worker at the 30-day hearing with a report indicating that adoption efforts are underway with estimated times for completion of critical milestones. These can be used as information in crafting the Scheduling Order, discussed below.

When Judge Hallmark succeeded Judge Anderson as the Permanency Docket judge in October 2009, she and her staff requested a 30-day checklist for her use at the hearing.<sup>17</sup> This document has proved very useful to ensure that the many aspects of the Post-Termination Review are covered in the course of the hearing, barriers are identified and articulated, and that expectations are set.

### **Scheduling Orders Issued At 30-Day Hearing and Amendment**

We created two standardized scheduling orders, one for children with an identified family (the "FID" order), and one for children for whom no family has been identified (the "NFI"

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix H.

order).<sup>18</sup> As noted above, more than 70 percent of the children in the study had an identified adoptive family at time of termination. In the pilot group, these scheduling orders are used in all cases. In the control group, they are available and are used as the judge deems appropriate. Some judges in the control group have not used them at all, others have used them occasionally, and still others have used them frequently.

In the pilot group, the judge typically completed the order at the 30-day hearing. The order generating program has a feature that can populate the dates on the scheduling order based on date of TPR order or other date selected by the judge. In some instances this automatic insertion of dates is used. Best practice is to enter each of the scheduling order dates at the 30-day hearing following an on-the-record discussion between the judge, the agency worker, the L-GAL, the foster care worker and, in some instances, the adoptive family.

These orders were based on the models originally provided at Adoption Forum I and are intended to provide specific milestones in moving the case from its present status to the filing of the adoption petition. As they are court orders, they are capable of enforcement and can be used to spur otherwise recalcitrant individuals to action. The barrier the scheduling order seeks to overcome is the loss of focus and the willingness to tolerate delay at each stage of the post-termination process. The order sets the court's expectation for attaining each milestone. The order is a uniform communication device for all involved in this post-termination move toward adoption and serves as a measuring stick for progress in each case. The particular time frames in the orders were based on DHS policy and input from our Adoption Forum advisory group.<sup>19</sup> See Appendix J for performance.

The scheduling orders—and in particular the Family Identified Scheduling Order—set target completion dates for both adoption agencies and for DHS operations. The first time limit is case transfer. Although the foster care worker remains primarily responsible until the OTR and Order Placing Child are signed, the prompt assignment to an adoption worker is critical. This case

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<sup>18</sup> The sample scheduling orders are shown in Appendix I, 1-2. *See also* note 11, *supra*.

<sup>19</sup> *e.g.*, transfer of case to adoption worker, preliminary identification and recruitment of adoptive family, child assessment, family assessment, subsidy application, consent request, and filing of adoption petition.



transfer should have already occurred if the scheduling order is issued at the 30-day hearing and the transfer occurred in a timely manner.

A barrier to a child's timely adoption is change in caseworker. This occurs both with the foster care worker and with the adoption worker. The court's expectation of the adoption agencies and DHS does not change because there is a change in worker. The entity charged with facilitating the child's adoption remains responsible and accountable, and the scheduling order does not change merely because there is worker change.

Two impediments to timely adoptions that were almost universally recognized (and voiced) by this and other counties at the inception of this project were the delays at the DHS subsidy office and in obtaining the MCI superintendent's consent. The scheduling order included a date by which requested subsidy would be completed and requested consent would have been received. Thus both agency and DHS operations fell within the expectation set forth in the scheduling order.<sup>20</sup>

### **Standardized Post-TPR Adoption Worker's Court Report**

In the case reading phase in April and May 2008, we waded through literally thousands of court reports. We noted recurring themes and jargon. The barriers we noted were inconsistency from agency to agency and absence of objective measures of case progress. Moving to a standardized court report with specific milestones addresses agency accountability. For example, in many instances we read that an action (e.g., subsidy application) was "pending." We quickly deciphered that "pending" meant "undone." The court report model we chose was already in use in Wayne County. As many of the adoption agencies with whom we deal have a multi-county practice, we chose the Wayne County format for cross-county consistency. We also required the agency tell us the county in which the child was placed.<sup>21</sup> This is important information for case tracking, for the adoption petition will likely be filed in the county of placement unless there are competing petitions. Most importantly, we asked the agency for dates on which certain milestones were met (case assigned, CAA complete, AFA complete, subsidy application submitted, subsidy

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<sup>20</sup> See Recommendation 9, *infra* and Appendix K, Figures 1-3.

<sup>21</sup> The standardized court report format is shown in Appendix L.

contract received, MCI consent requested, MCI consent received, and adoption petition filed). This helped to track specific milestones in the case, as noted above.

In the evaluation phase of this project, we have once more had to examine many court reports. As was reported in Part II of this study, data on the date a milestone was achieved was unavailable for many children. This was particularly true for children in the control group. While use of the standardized court report format was enforced in the pilot group, agencies were not under this restriction in the control group and court reports often failed to provide this date-specific information. Several agencies would use two formats in reporting: the structured format for pilot group cases and a narrative format for control group cases. This is a failing that we believe can be easily corrected if the court chooses to mandate it and DHS mandates it in their agency expectations.

Some “tweaking” of the standardized format may be appropriate, but all-in-all it has shown itself to be a very effective communication tool.

### **Court Caseworker Involvement**

Throughout the study the court’s Adoption Unit supervisor, Palmer Sesti, received a copy of the TPR order for all cases. He would add the case to the specially-developed database described below. At that time, he also assigned one of two Adoptions Unit caseworkers to monitor the cases on the Permanency Docket. Each of these caseworkers is knowledgeable in the adoptions process and in child welfare generally, and will follow the child’s case while the child is on the Permanency Docket. Each caseworker monitored between 30 and 40 cases at a given moment in time. As exits by finalization came to exceed new additions to the permanency docket, their caseloads slowly lessened.

This caseworker involvement strategy attacks the communications disconnect between the court and the agency. Before this project, and in the control group during this project, case status would be unknown during the interval between hearings. Essential tasks in the process might well remain undone until they re-emerged in the testimony elicited at the court hearing. The caseworker’s role was to communicate with the agency or DHS worker assigned, obtain

information on case progress, receive the court report for a staffing prior to the hearing, compare it to the prior reports (calling the agency worker if tasks are unfinished or information is unclear), ensure that answers to questions posed at the last hearing have been addressed, and independently assess the progress being made (or not made) on the case. The court caseworker also acted as a resource to the adoption worker by being knowledgeable in community services. At the casework staffing, the court caseworker briefed her peers and obtained their perspective. The court caseworker would attend the hearing that occurred several days later. On occasion, as the court adoption caseworkers were following a child's case for its duration on the Permanency Docket, they would attend the DHS permanency planning conferences and voice their concerns.

### **Weekly Pre-Hearing Casework Staffing**

Each week, in advance of the hearings for the following week, the Adoptions Unit supervisor conducted a casework staffing with the Adoptions Unit worker and the DHS court liaison. The staffing is based on the social work model and has the objectives of reviewing the court report, the case status, previously identified questions and concerns, and possible approaches to overcoming the identified barriers. At the staffing, the group identified the questions to be answered in the course of the hearing from the perspective of the Adoptions Unit. After the staffing, the caseworkers would frequently notify the agency worker of the concerns raised in the staffing. This process has been shown to help the hearing process itself go more smoothly and help the case progress. The barrier addressed by the staffing is the agency not bringing all of the available resources to bear on individual case situations, or failing to give appropriate attention to prior commitments. The staffing not only must consider the adoption worker's report, but also the foster care worker's report on the child. Receipt of the reports has been an issue, especially where the agency worker must obtain approvals from agency management and from DHS.

In the latter stages of the project, the court caseworker's summary following staffing was used to help draft language for provisions needed in the order after hearing, which would assist the judge. This is discussed below.

## **Pre-Hearing Summary Data Sheet and Draft Order**

When Judge Hallmark succeeded Judge Anderson as Permanency Docket judge, she and her staff recommended specific changes to the (previously verbal) report from the court's adoption unit caseworker monitoring the case. A pre-hearing summary data sheet was developed and put into use.<sup>22</sup> In addition, a draft order with specific provisions based on the needs identified in the casework staffing was also generated. This now can be used to generate court orders that are distributed at the conclusion of the hearing. The judge can add to or strike particular provisions in the draft order based on the testimony elicited at the hearing, or on the reports received at the hearing.

The pre-hearing data sheet and the draft order process have proven to be very useful.

## **Specialized Database**

The court tracks Child Protective Proceedings on two different computer systems. The court's Mainframe system, which contains the register of actions, is not JIS-based, but is a county-designed legacy system.<sup>23</sup> It did not have the architecture needed for this project. The county's EDMS or OAKDOCS application system provides scanned images of documents and a listing of the documents as filed with the Oakland County Clerk. It, too, did not capture the information needed in the monitoring of this project.<sup>24</sup> Given the scope of the project and the number of data elements for each child, as set forth in Table 4, the Data Technology Unit at the court helped build and populate the Adoption Forum database. This database was built using Microsoft Access®. The Data Technology Unit also built a "switchboard" for the database. The switchboard permits us to add and edit records, run reports, and pose specific queries. It is a powerful tool for managing the information on all of the children within this study as well as for the MCI adoption wards outside of this study. However, it requires a high level of attention to keep the data current and accurate. Data integrity has been and remains a concern.

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<sup>22</sup> A sample pre-hearing data sheet is shown in Appendix M.

<sup>23</sup> JIS is the Judicial Information System developed and maintained by the State of Michigan and used by many courts.

<sup>24</sup> Many of the data elements are gleaned from non-public and/or confidential reports.

As we have worked on the evaluation, we have found certain of the data elements very useful and informative and other data elements less useful. We believe the database should be maintained, but that we may wish to eliminate certain of the data elements that are of marginal value. This is discussed in the recommendations section which follows.

## 4. PRINCIPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### Use a Specialized Permanency Docket

We believe the Permanency Docket pilot has shown that a specialized docket will achieve the objective of timely adoption permanency for children in an efficient and effective manner. We urge the court to use it. These reasons include:

- Permanency – Children in the pilot group attained finalization at a rate that was 150 percent the rate of the children in the control group.
- Permanency for Older Children – Older children (age 9 – 17) in the pilot group attained finalization at a much greater rate than did their peers in the control group.
- Case Progress – Children in the pilot group reached their milestones at an earlier point than children in the control group.
- Adoption Focus – Children in the pilot group were much less likely to have their permanency goal changed than children in the control group.
- Docket Efficiency – The docket growth of the pilot group leveled off and was maintained, while the docket growth of the control group slowly continued. This docket growth was a result of children exiting the docket by attaining adoption permanency.
- Judicial Attention – The judge hearing the Permanency Docket focused her attention on this case type each week. The cases were not intermingled with the many other tasks the judge would do in overseeing a generalized docket.

### Use the 30-Day Hearing Court-Wide

Whether or not the court chooses to keep a specialized permanency docket, the 30-day hearing has proven its usefulness in launching the post-termination phase of these children's cases

and in turning the focus to the goal of the child's adoption and the specific barriers to achieving that goal. The 30-day hearing should be used court-wide.

### **Use the Scheduling Order in All Cases**

The court should issue the appropriate scheduling order ("FID" or "NFI") at the conclusion of the 30-day hearing. As circumstances warrant, the scheduling order should be amended. When an NFI scheduling order has issued, and a family has been identified and signed the intent to adopt, the FID scheduling order should issue. At each hearing, compliance/noncompliance with the scheduling order should be addressed.

### **Use the Standardized Format Adoption Worker Reports**

Adoption workers should report objective data in a consistent and uniform manner. The court report should be a vehicle for specifically reporting what has been accomplished and when specifically it was accomplished.

### **In-Service Training for Judges, Court Personnel, and Lawyer-Guardians Ad Litem**

The participants in the Permanency Docket study have gained valued experience in this process and can serve as trainers to judges, court personnel, and lawyers-guardian *ad litem*. This expertise can aid in moving this particular class of cases to permanency in a more expedient and efficient manner. We believe that the insight gained can be imparted to others through an in-service training program. Best practices and effective strategies to overcoming barriers to adoption are key elements of this training.

### **Replicate the Caseworker/Casework Supervisor Function for All Cases**

The use of the adoption unit caseworkers has proved invaluable to the pre-screening of cases in the Permanency Docket project. What has generally proven to be a manageable task for two individuals with a limited number of cases on one docket is not, however, a realistic assignment given the number of MCI adoption wards presently being reviewed on at least eight dockets at different times of the work week, together with the attendant scheduling conflicts.

We recommend that the casework monitoring and staffing functions be provided for all wards. This would come from newly obtained personnel resources or redeployment of existing resources.

### **Refine the Database and Assign Specific Individuals for Database Maintenance**

The Microsoft Access® database has proven to be a powerful tool in managing this project. The significant number of children involved (study children and children whose TPR date preceded the start of the study or followed the end date of the study), as well as the large number of data elements in each child's record, has made a database imperative. Our analysis has shown, however, that some data elements are simply not needed. Our experience has shown that data integrity is important and assuring data integrity is a not insignificant task. Data entry lag is also a concern. In short, our database experience is probably not unusual in that data currency, integrity, and ease of access are all critical.

For this study, we loaded some data elements that are in other systems used in the court and gleaned data from reports submitted from agencies. In some cases, the data simply was not provided from any source, although we knew it resided somewhere in someone's records.

We recommend the following:

- The data structure be reexamined in light of our experience and surplus data elements be stripped from it.
- We develop mechanisms to import data already existing on other systems and avoid data input redundancy.
- The database be accessible to all participants, provided adequate data security measures can be designed in and access measures can be put in place.
- Data maintenance responsibilities be assigned to specific individuals.
- Ad hoc reporting capability be developed.



### **In Appropriate Instances, Use a Specialized Lawyer-Guardian Ad Litem (L-GAL) Group Skilled in Post-TPR Case Review**

Some cases moved swiftly through the post-termination process, almost without problems. Other children's cases seemed to be very troubled and lurched along from month to month without real progress. Still others encountered real setbacks but progressed nevertheless.

One of the constants for the child could be the L-GAL. Some L-GALs were very knowledgeable and involved, others barely involved. Some had a facility for understanding the post-termination process, while others really struggled with it.

Our evaluation group spent considerable time discussing this recommendation. It is a highly subjective one. We did not all agree on it. But we did agree that a highly- knowledgeable and involved L-GAL did make the difference in problematic cases and helped keep them moving forward. The post-termination proceeding *is* different from the proceedings leading up to termination and different knowledge and skills are required.

We recommend that in cases where many barriers to permanency are identified early on, the judge decide whether to utilize a lawyer-guardian ad litem with proficiency in post-termination proceedings and adoption and, if so, release the original L-GAL so the specialist L-GAL may be utilized.

### **Resolve Subsidy Office Processing Delays With DHS Executive Management**

Our experience indicated that the greatest barrier to timely permanency was the delay that agencies reported while their subsidy applications were being processed in the DHS Subsidy Office in Lansing.<sup>25</sup> This appeared to be a statewide problem, based on many comments we heard at the various Adoption Forums we attended as well as from admissions by DHS representatives made at those convocations. From our viewpoint, it appeared that the process was not systematized, but rather archaic and chaotic.

Our recommendation was that we present our findings to DHS Executive Level management and work collaboratively to resolve this impediment to timely permanency.

---

<sup>25</sup> See Appendix K, Figures 1-2. This delay did not appear to impact timeliness of consent, as shown in Appendix K, Figure 3.

### **Appropriately Vet Foster Parents and Relatives During the Period the Child Is a Temporary Court Ward to Expedite the Post-TPR Process**

Our study shows that in most cases we know the identity of the adopting parents at the moment the child becomes legally free. It further shows that the prospective adopting parent is usually either the child's foster parent or relative with whom the child is living at moment of termination.<sup>26</sup> We further note that relative placements are predominantly with grandparents.

Notwithstanding this fact, in many cases the relative search and adoptive family assessment begins only after the child is legally free. Furthermore, in a not insignificant number of cases, the current caregiver cannot be generally considered for adoption of the ward due to prior criminality or legal status, great age difference, or physical infirmity. In addition, some caregivers vacillate when the subject of adoption is broached. All of this comes to light in the recruitment and Adoptive Family Assessment process. This process is unnecessarily extended due to the failure to address foster parent/relative suitability for adoption during the time the child is a temporary ward.

We recommend that the DHS (as part of implementing concurrent permanency planning for all temporary court wards) appropriately identify and screen all unlicensed applicants for adoption by the point in time when DHS requests the court initiate termination proceedings, and be able to utilize only the Adoptive Family Assessment Addendum for licensed applicants. We believe that having the Initial Foster Home/Adoption Evaluation completed as close to the time the child becomes legally free will expedite the post-termination pre-adoption process, and will work to eliminate post-termination replacements of children where the current caregiver cannot adopt the child due to health/safety/age limitations.

---

<sup>26</sup> See Sec. I(G) and Table 3, *supra*. As has been noted, more than 70 percent of the children in the study were with identified prospective adoptive families when they became legally free.

## APPENDIX A

### ANALYSIS OF PERMANENCY DATA FOR PILOT AND CONTROL GROUPS BASED ON AGE OF CHILD<sup>27</sup>

All Children n = 349

Age	Total Children	Finalized Adoptions	Open Matters
0–3 Years	153	100	53
4–8 Years	96	43	53
9+ Years	100	49	51
Totals	349	192	157

Pilot Group n = 146

Age	Total Children	Finalized Adoptions	Open Matters
0–3 Years	68	45	23
4–8 Years	39	24	15
9+ Years	39	30	9
Totals	146	99	47

Control Group n = 203

Age	Total Children	Finalized Adoptions	Open Matters
0–3 Years	85	55	30
4–8 Years	57	19	38
9+ Years	61	19	42
Totals	203	93	110

Table 14: Analysis of Permanency Data for pilot and control groups based on age of child

<sup>27</sup> Statewide, 35.8 percent of finalized adoptions were age 0-3, 34.4 percent age 4-8, and 29.8 percent age 9+. For Oakland, the percentages were 52.8 percent of finalized adoptions for 0-3, 22.4 percent for age 4-8, and 25.5 percent age 9+. (AFCARS-reported data for statewide adoptions.)

## APPENDIX B

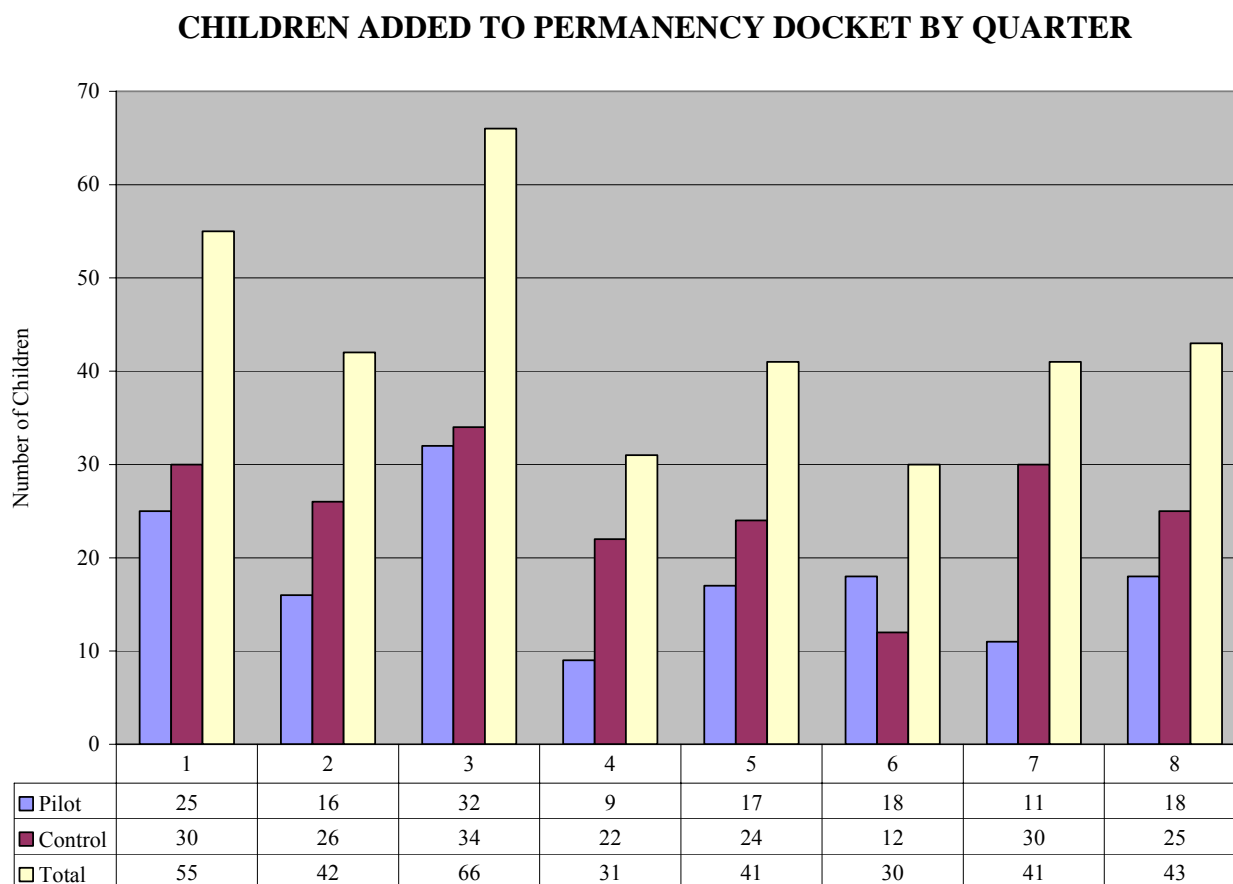


Figure 4: Children Added to Permanency Docket By Quarter

## APPENDIX C

## PERMANENCY GROUPS

<b>GROUP 1</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Same Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 2</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Same Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 3</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 4</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 5</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Different Home FID@TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 6</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 7</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 8</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 9</b> Foster Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 10</b> Foster Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 11</b> Foster Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 12</b> Foster Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 13</b> Foster Home TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 14</b> Foster Home TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 15</b> Foster Home TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 16</b> Foster Home TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 17</b> Foster Home TPR Non-Adoptive Relative Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 18</b> Foster Home TPR Residential Different Placement NFI @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 19</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Same Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 20</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Same Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 21</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 22</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 23</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 24</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 25</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 26</b> Relative Home TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 27</b> Relative Home TPR Non-Adopt Rel Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 28</b> Relative Home TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 29</b> Relative Home TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 30</b> Relative Home TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized
<b>GROUP 31</b> Relative Home TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 32</b> Relative Home TPR Foster Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 33</b> Relative Home TPR Foster Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 34</b> Relative Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 35</b> Relative Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 36</b> Relative Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized
<b>GROUP 37</b> Relative Home TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 38</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Same Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 39</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Same Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 40</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 41</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Same Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 42</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized
<b>GROUP 43</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 44</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 45</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Fam Adoptive Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 46</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Residential Different Placement NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 47</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 48</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 49</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 50</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 51</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 52</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 53</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 54</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized
<b>GROUP 55</b> Fictive Kin H TPR Non-Adoptive Relative Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 56</b> Residential TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 57</b> Residential TPR Relative Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 58</b> Residential TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 59</b> Residential TPR Relative Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 60</b> Residential TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Finalized
<b>GROUP 61</b> Residential TPR Recruited Home Different Home FID @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 62</b> Residential TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Finalized	<b>GROUP 63</b> Residential TPR Recruited Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 64</b> Residential TPR Foster Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 65</b> Residential TPR Residential N/A NFI @ TPR Not Finalized	<b>GROUP 66</b> Foster Home TPR Foster Home Different Home NFI @ TPR Not Finalized

Table 15: Permanency Groups Matrix of Variables

## APPENDIX D

## PERMANENCY DOCKET PROJECT DATA FORM

Primary Key #:			<u>Barriers to Adoption</u> ___ Recruitment ___ Family Background/situation ___ Licensing ___ Training ___ Child's Medical Needs ___ Child's Mental Health/Behavior Issues ___ Child's Educational needs ___ DOC rate ___ ICPC delays ___ Competing parties ___ Sibling group placed together ___ Unavailability of services _____
Case #:			
Child's Name:			
DOB:			
Judge:			
Pilot/Control #:			
Caseworker (Pilot Group): JB <input type="checkbox"/> GO <input type="checkbox"/>			
220 Date (TPR):			<u>Placement History</u> Date of Removal (last episode) _____ Number of Moves Pre-TPR _____ Placement at TPR: FH <input type="checkbox"/> Relative <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Was TPR Placement Adoptive Home? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Number of Moves Post-TPR _____ Was Adoptive Placement disrupted? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Situation at TPR: FID <input type="checkbox"/> NFI <input type="checkbox"/>			
Situation Change? (When):			
Adoption Worker Assigned Date:			
Agency:			
AD Worker Change? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Number of Workers:			Number of Court Hearings TPR to Exit:
30-Day Hearing? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			TPR Appeal? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Scheduling Order Type:			TPR Affirmed (date):
Scheduling Order Date:			Foster Parent Adopting? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Amended Scheduling Order Number:			Relationship of Adoptee and Adopter:
Child Assessment Date:	Due	Done	Application to Adopt Date:
MARE Registration Date:	Due	Done	Goal Changed? (Date/New Goal):
Adoptive Family Assessment Date:	Due	Done	<b>EXIT FROM SYSTEM</b>
Subsidy Application Submission Date:	Due	Done	Adoption Finalized Date:
Subsidy Contract Receipt Date:	Due	Done	Goal Permanently Changed Date:
Consent Request to MCI Superintendent:	Due	Done	Child Aged Out Date:
Consent Received From MCI:	Due	Done	Case Still Open on 4/1/2010: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
AD Petition Filed:	Due	Done	Other (specify):
County of Filing:			<b>Notes:</b>
OTR Date:			

## APPENDIX E

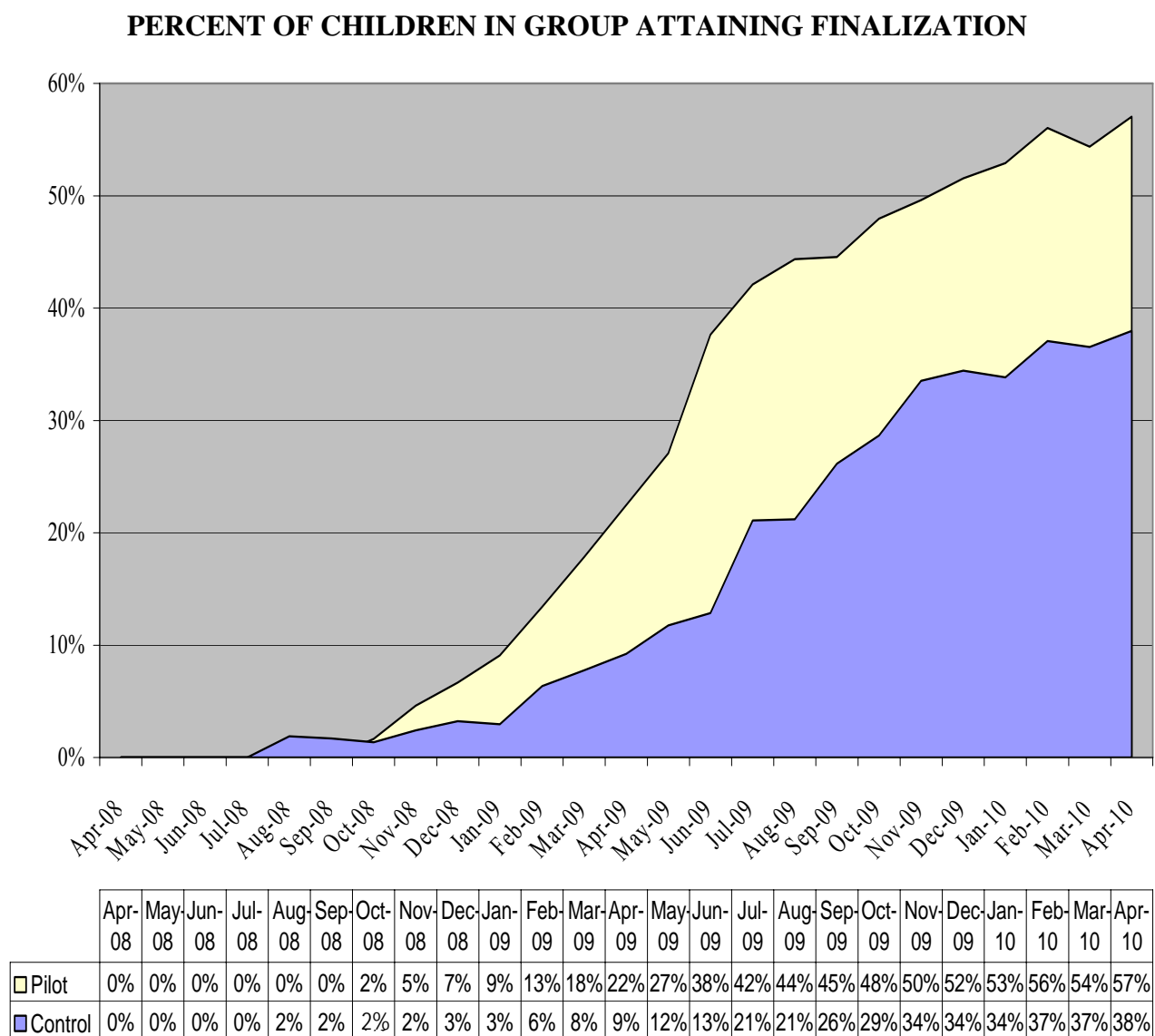


Figure 5: Percent of Children in Group Attaining Finalization

## APPENDIX F

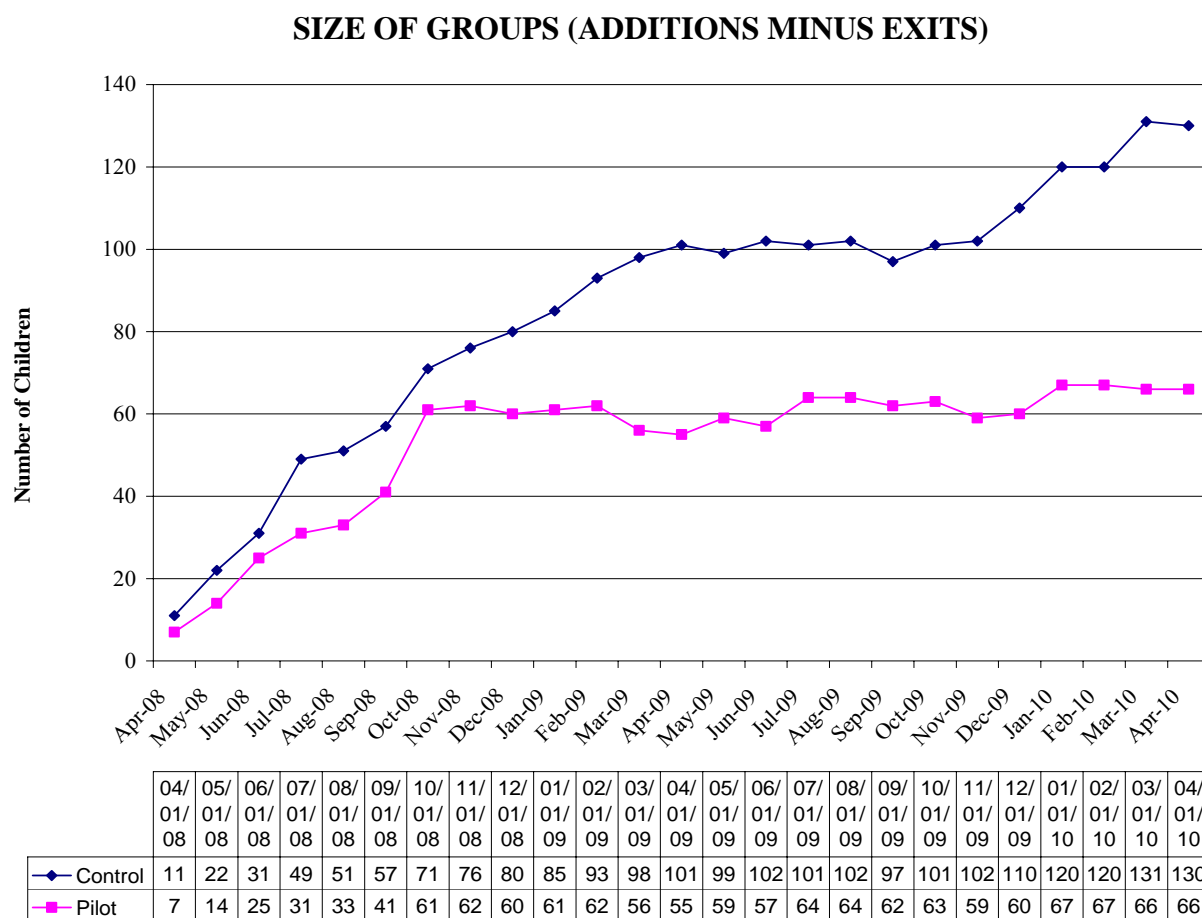


Figure 6: Size of Control and Pilot Groups (Additions Minus Exits)



## APPENDIX G

## P-CALENDAR

<div>April</div>						
<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> <u>1:30 pm</u> Walker 07-731,815-NA(JB) Papacharolombous 07-731,707-NA(GO) Bailey 08-745,006-NA(GO) Harvey 07-729,467-NA (JB) Plascencia 07-733,576-NA(JB) Carr 04-696,208-NA(GO) Phillips/Logan 07-730,904-NA(JB) Collar 08-751,752-NA(JB) Barnard 05-714,700-NA (JB) Washington 04-700,004-NA(GO)	<b>7</b> Updated 4/21/09 <b>Permanency  Docket</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> <b>Adoption Forum</b> <u>1:30 pm</u> Rayburn 06-724,135-NA(JB) Saunders/Jones/Scott/Moore 07-732,309-NA(JB) Greer 08-751,721-NA(JB) Mester 06-722,593-NA(GO) Rollocks 07-739,708-NA(GO) Hamilton 08-751,508-NA(JB) Hogan 07-731,670-NA(GO)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <u>1:30 pm</u> Dixon/McGee/Thomas 06-716,877-NA(GO) McClain 08-750,935-NA(GO) Kay 06-728,503-NA(JB) Coleman 06-728,474-NA(JB) Brown 05-709,176-NA(JB) Kyewski 08-752,486-NA(JB) Hoag 05-711,594-NA(JB) Oliver 07-740,465-NA(JB)	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> <u>1:30 pm</u> Busch 08-742,880-NA(JB) Avery 06-727,651-NA(JB) Meehan 08-746,286-NA(GO) Harris 06-717,324-NA Jamison(Ja'Quis) 01-660,186-NA(GO) Donald 08-746,083-NA(GO) Weeden 05-703,870-NA(JB) Watkins/Thames 07-730,045-NA(JB)	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		
						<div>2009</div>

Figure 7: P-Calendar

**APPENDIX H****30-DAY POST TERMINATION HEARING – Placement of Child(ren)**

Child(ren) Names: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of OTR: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

County in Which the Child Resides: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Permanency Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

DHS Foster Care Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Purchase of Service (POS) Agency Foster Care Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Report by Foster Care Worker should include:

Location of child's placement: \_\_\_\_\_

Any changes in placement since last court hearing? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the placement a foster home or the home of a relative? \_\_\_\_\_

Are all siblings, if any, placed together? \_\_\_\_\_

If not, is the agency facilitating sibling visitation? \_\_\_\_\_

Has the child been consulted in an age appropriate manner regarding the hearing and placement plan? \_\_\_\_\_

Mental health services needed/provided? \_\_\_\_\_

Physical health services needed/provided? \_\_\_\_\_

Early On Assessment? \_\_\_\_\_

Is the child attending school with regularity? \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Services provided? \_\_\_\_\_

Special Ed. Services? \_\_\_\_\_

Tutoring? \_\_\_\_\_

When was the child's case transferred from Foster Care to Adoption, or from DHS to the POS Agency? \_\_\_\_\_

Adoption Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Assessment completed? ☐ Yes ☐ No When was last LGAL visit? \_\_\_\_\_

Child's Present Status: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation/Concerns from Family Court Adoption Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended Next Hearing Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX I.1

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
6TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT-FAMILY DIVISION  
OAKLAND COUNTY

IN THE INTEREST OF: \_\_\_\_\_

CASE NO.: \_\_\_\_\_

MINOR CHILD(REN) / \_\_\_\_\_

STANDING SCHEDULING ORDER ON ADOPTION  
WHEN A FAMILY HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED TO ADOPT

**THESE MATTERS** having come before the Court and parental rights having been terminated on \_\_\_\_\_  
The Court having found the permanency plan for the Child(ren) is adoption, and upon review of Court files, evidence, testimony  
and the Court finding that for the Child(ren) to languish in foster care is not in the Child(ren)'s best interest.

**IT IS ORDERED** that the following Scheduling Order shall govern preparation of the Petition for Adoption:

**ITEM:**

**SHALL BE COMPLETED BY:**

- |  |                       |       |
|--|-----------------------|-------|
| • Transfer of the Case from Foster Care to Adoption Agency or Adoption Worker  | (14 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Preliminary Identification of Adoption Family:   | (28 days from today)  | _____ |
| - Identify candidates and barriers   |                       | Date  |
| - Alternate goals  |                       |       |
| - Adoption process explained   |                       |       |
| - Family is apprised of background checks and other documentation required before a Family Assessment can be completed |                       |       |
| - Orientation/Training to be scheduled   |                       |       |
| • Child Assessment   | (49 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Subsidy Application submitted, if applicable   | (56 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Family Assessment/Home Study   | (56 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Subsidy Approval   | (91 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Consent requested  | (91 days from today)  | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Consent from MCI received  | (119 days from today) | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |
| • Adoption Petition Filed  | (133 days from today) | _____ |
|  |                       | Date  |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Select Judge From List



**APPENDIX I.2**

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
6TH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT-FAMILY DIVISION  
OAKLAND COUNTY

IN THE INTEREST OF: \_\_\_\_\_ CASE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

MINOR CHILD(REN) / \_\_\_\_\_

STANDING SCHEDULING ORDER ON ADOPTION  
WHEN NO FAMILY HAS BEEN IDENTIFIED

**THESE MATTERS** having come before the Court and parental rights having been terminated on \_\_\_\_\_  
The Court having found the permanency plan for the Child(ren) is adoption, and upon review of Court files,  
evidence, testimony and the Court finding that for the Child(ren) to languish in foster care is not in the  
Child(ren)'s best interest:

**IT IS ORDERED** that the following Scheduling Order shall govern preparation of the Petition for Adoption:

**ITEM:****SHALL BE COMPLETED BY:**

- |  |                      |               |
|--|----------------------|---------------|
| ● Transfer of the Case from Foster Care<br>to Adoption Agency or Adoption Worker | (14 days from today) | _____<br>Date |
| ● Child Assessment   | (49 days from today) | _____<br>Date |
| ● Preliminary Identification and Recruitment<br>of Adoption Family               | (91 days from today) | _____<br>Date |
| ● MARE Referral:   | (91 days from today) | _____<br>Date |
| ● Michigan Heart Gallery   |                      |               |
| ● Photo listing form completed   |                      |               |

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Select Judge From List



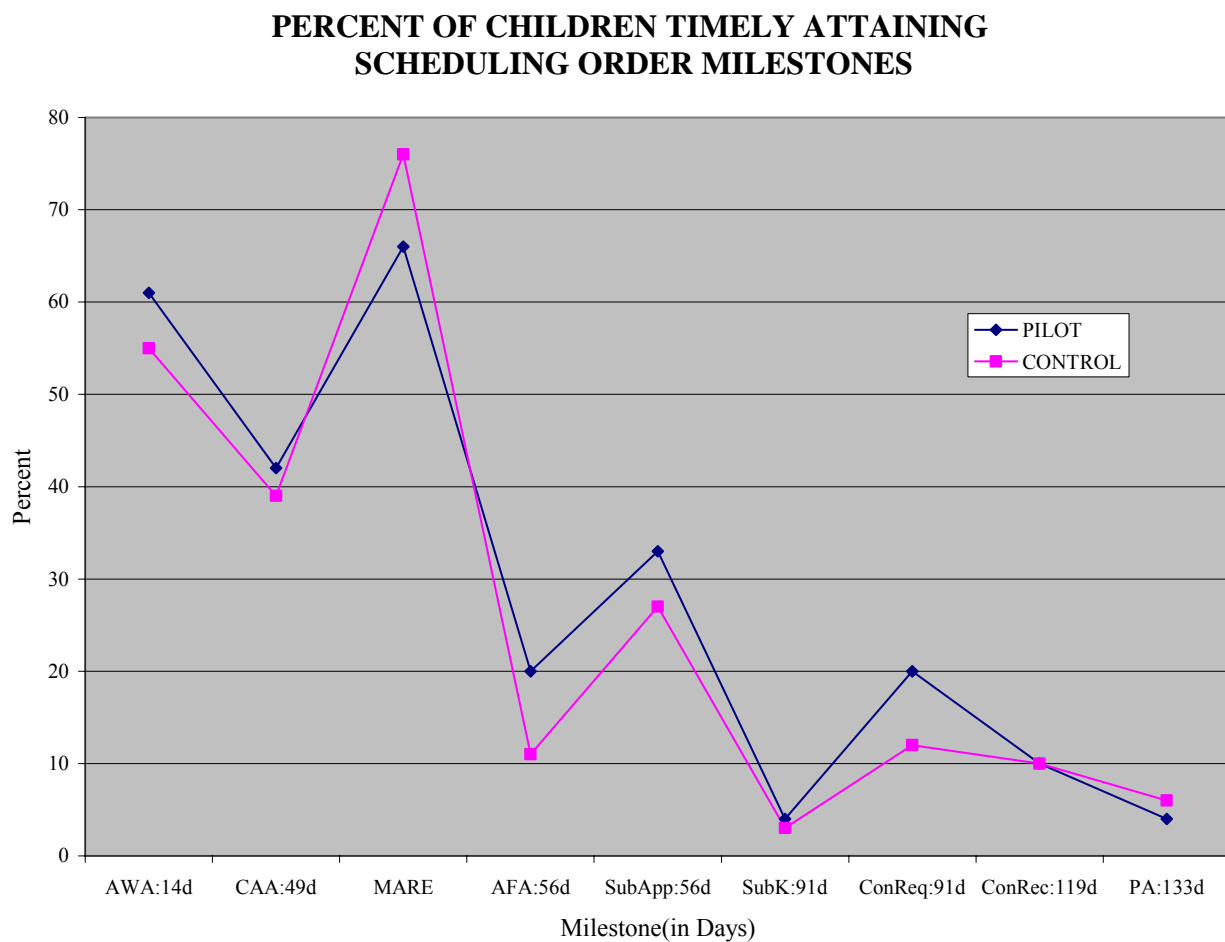
**APPENDIX J**

Figure 8: Percent of Children Timely Attaining Scheduling Order Milestones

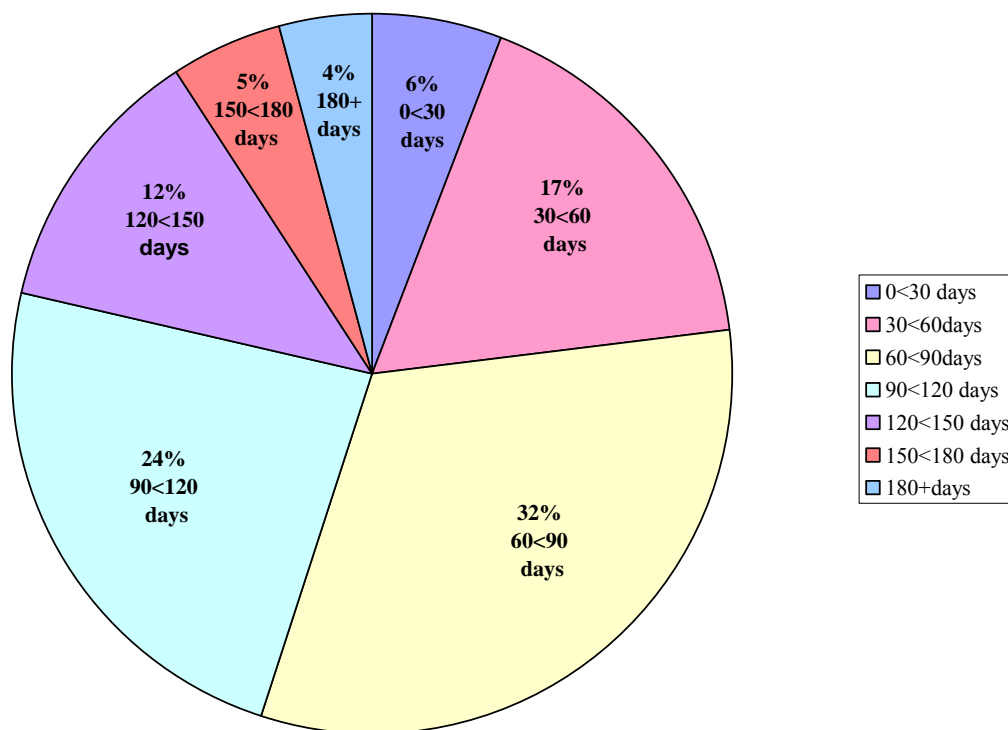
**APPENDIX K.1****SUBSIDY APPLICATION PROCESSING TIME (Application to Contract)  
173 children in study group with subsidy contracts**

Figure 9: Subsidy Application Processing Time (Application to Contract)

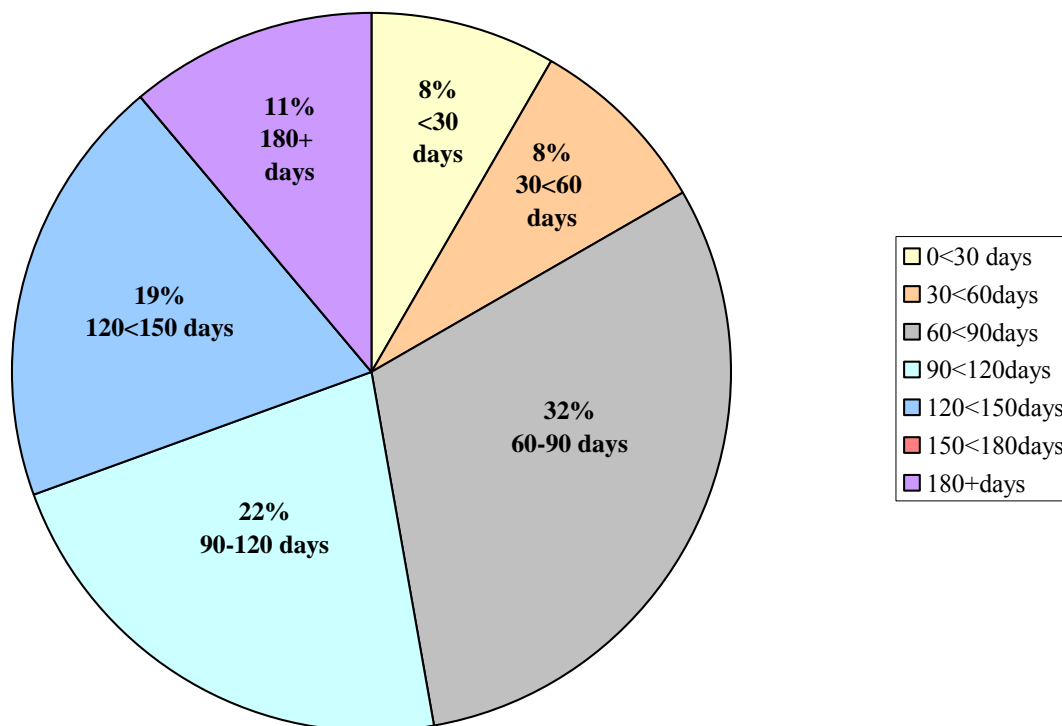
**APPENDIX K.2****AGE OF PENDING SUBSIDY REQUESTS ON 4/30/2010  
(36 children)**

Figure 10: Age of Pending Subsidy Requests On 4/30/2010

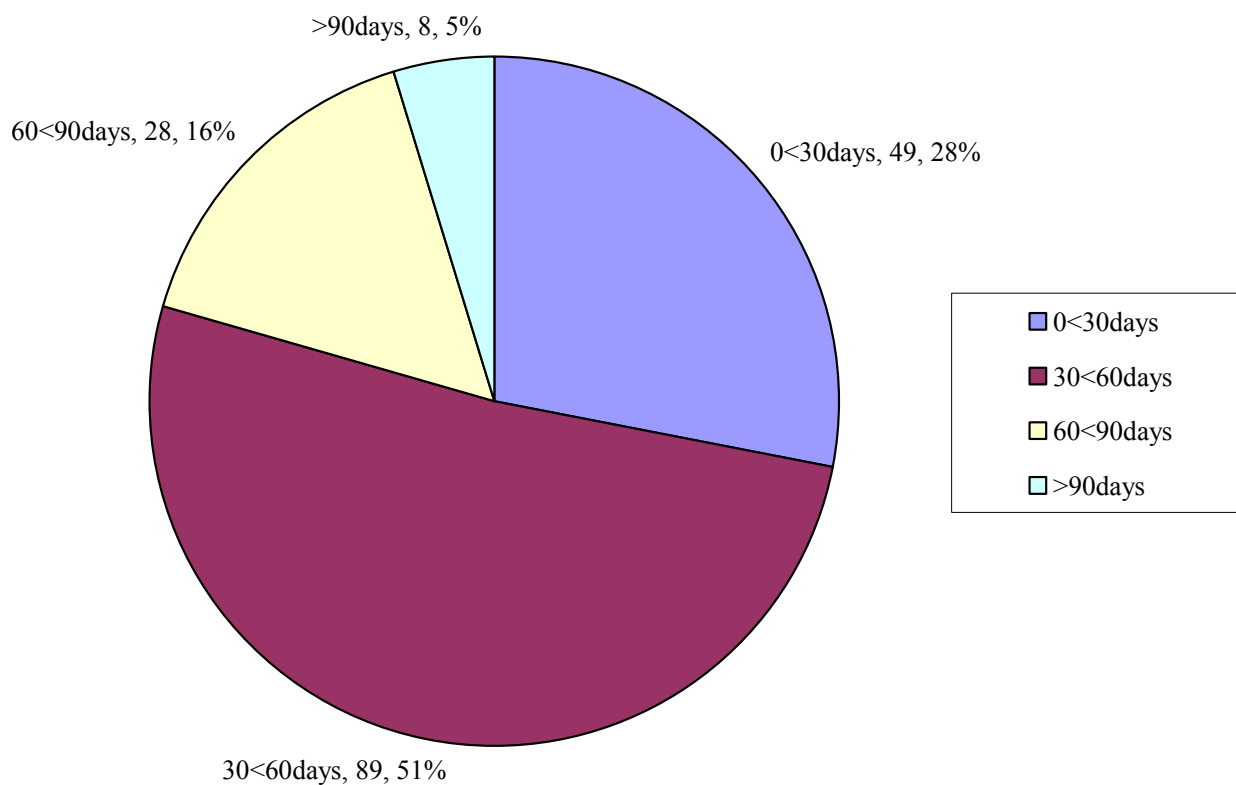
**APPENDIX K.3****TIME TO OBTAIN CONSENT (Days From Request to Receipt)  
n = 174 children**

Figure 11: Time to Obtain Consent (Days From Request to Receipt)



## APPENDIX L

### QUARTERLY REPORT FOR POST TERMINATION REVIEW HEARING

Date of Hearing:	Judge/Referee:
Child's Name:	D.O.B.:
DHS No:	Court File No.:
Date of PCW:	County Of Commitment:
Adoption Worker:	Report Period:
Foster Care Worker:	Referring Agency:
County In Which Child Resides:	

Dates of Contact:		
<u>Date</u>	<u>With Whom</u>	<u>Type of Contact</u>

#### Recruitment Activities:

##### Reasonable Efforts Taken Towards Adoption:

Adoption Worker Assigned:	Subsidy Application Date:
CAA Completed:	Subsidy Contract Received:
MARE Registration Date:	Date Consent Requested:
AFA Completed:	Date Consent Received:
Describe Additional Efforts:	

#### Status of Child (Educational, Emotional, Medical, and Behavioral):

#### Barriers to Achieving Adoption:

#### Action Steps to Overcome Barriers:

#### Projected Date for Achieving Goal of Adoption:

#### Recommendations:

Respectfully Submitted:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoption Worker                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Adoption Supervisor                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
DHS Worker                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faxed to DHS

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date Sent to Foster Care Worker

**APPENDIX M**

**POST TERMINATION REVIEW HEARING  
By Placement of Child**

Date of Hearing: \_\_\_\_\_ Judge: \_\_\_\_\_

Child(ren) Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

County in Which the Child Resides: \_\_\_\_\_

What is the Permanency Plan? \_\_\_\_\_

DHS Foster Care Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

POS Agency Foster Care Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

The report of the Foster Care Worker should include the child's present status

Adoption Worker: \_\_\_\_\_ Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Reasonable Efforts Toward Adoption</u>	<u>Scheduling Order dates</u>	<u>When Completed</u>
Child Assessment	_____	_____
Family Assessment /Home study	_____	_____
Subsidy Application Submitted	_____	_____
Subsidy Approval	_____	_____
Consent Requested	_____	_____
Consent Received from MCI	_____	_____
Adoption Petition Filed	_____	_____

When was the last LGAL visit? \_\_\_\_\_

Barriers/Obstacles to Achieving Adoption: \_\_\_\_\_

Recommendation/Concerns from Family Court Adoption Worker: \_\_\_\_\_

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Recommended next hearing date: \_\_\_\_\_