

Managing by Data

Using the right data to manage performance is a key driver of the Transformation. We have developed a consistent process for capturing and using data to support decision-making, improve practice quality, and promote accountability.

The work to date has led to defined outcomes based on the Transformation goal of developing lifelong family connections for children within their own community – and then created measures to track progress. Over the past year, we have built system-wide data capacity through the following initiatives:

- The development of monthly management reports to improve accountability.
 - The VDSS Division of Family Services (DFS) has achieved its lowest error rate in the past five years on the latest AFCARS submission.
 - CORE localities have worked to improve discharge and length of stay data in the state data system.
 - DFS has created an internal accountability workgroup called TOP (Translating Outcomes to Practice) to monitor programmatic outcomes on a regular basis.
- VDSS enhanced its capacity to provide oversight, accountability, and support to LDSS in the area of data management.
 - DFS has created the Outcome Based Reporting and Analysis Unit (OBRA) which oversees all reporting and data analysis for the Division.
 - DFS is contracting with the Chapin Hall Center for Children to provide in depth longitudinal analysis of Virginia's Foster Care system.
 - Through funding from Casey Family Programs, DFS has provided SafeMeasures to all local departments of social services which enable drill-down web-based reporting on selected outcomes at the local level.
- Improved results have been observed around the majority of Transformation outcomes: reducing the number of children in group care placements, increasing exits to permanency, and increasing the number of children in family based care.
 - In each of these three outcomes, both CORE and non-CORE localities are realizing positive trending data.
- The Managing by Data Workgroup serves as the local advisory team to OBRA as well as the project management team for SafeMeasures.
 - New process and outcome measures will be proposed and approved for incorporation by this workgroup – Additional training will be delivered statewide that will help make connections between the use of SafeMeasures and day to day child welfare practice.

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