2012 Annual Report

Citizen Review Board

Oregon's Foster Care Review Program

CRB Mission

We provide a citizen voice on the safety, stability, and supervision of children in foster care through impartial case review and advocacy.

CRB Vision

Citizens will shape public policy and actively promote conditions to ensure that every child lives in a safe, secure, healthy, and permanent home, preserving families whenever possible.

Every Day Counts...
in the life of a child in foster care.

Message from the Director

Leola McKenzie
Director of Juvenile Court Programs

The purpose of the CRB has always been twofold: first, to conduct impartial case reviews of children in foster care, and second, to advocate for improvements in the child welfare system. The former can be observed in the thousands of case reviews our boards conduct each year across the state. The latter, however, has been more challenging.

Since the elimination of our State Advisory Committee four year ago due to budget cuts, volunteer board members have not had a formal mechanism for identifying systemic issues affecting the safety, stability, and supervision of children in foster care and advocating for their improvement. This is why when Lois Day, Director of Child Welfare Services, offered to transfer to CRB the responsibility for ensuring Oregon's compliance with the federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) requirement to have three Citizen Review Panels, I jumped at the opportunity.

The work of the CRB is a natural complement to the requirements of CAPTA. CAPTA grant awards require states to establish three citizen review panels to evaluate state and local child welfare practices and make recommendations for improvement. The CRB already has 67 boards composed of citizen volunteers in 33 of Oregon's 36 counties. These citizen volunteers have the benefit of already having a detailed understanding of local child welfare practices from their monthly case reviews. Additionally, the CRB has access to statewide statistical data through its computer system that integrates data from Oregon's state courts and child welfare agency.

The following annual report contains the findings and recommendations of the CRB's first CAPTA citizen review panels in Deschutes, Lane, and Lincoln counties. Since September 2012 these panels met with local child welfare offices and community partners to identify areas of concern, collected data during CRB reviews, formulated recommendations, and hosted public forums for public review and comment on their findings and proposed recommendations. Also included in this annual report is information on the various projects and initiatives the CRB undertook in the 2012 calendar year.

On behalf of the CRB, I would like to thank all of the volunteer board members who served on one of the CAPTA citizen review panels as well as all the local child welfare staff and community partners who attended the panels' meetings and contributed to their work. We learned a great deal from our first experience hosting the citizen review panels, and I am very excited for our continued efforts in these counties.

Sincerely,

Leola L. McKenzie

Leola L. McKenzie
Juvenile Court Programs Director
Oregon Judicial Department

CITIZEN REVIEW BOARD • OREGON JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT
CRB

2012 at a Glance

Updates to CRB Policies and Supreme Court Operating Rules

Throughout the 2009-11 biennium, the CRB undertook a massive effort to reduce costs and make the best use of limited resources. Those efforts dramatically changed business processes and necessitated an overhaul of program policies, procedures, and operating rules. In 2012, a team of CRB staff spent three months updating the CRB Staff Policy and Procedure Manual. Those updates included new policies and procedures to support the program's transition to a paperless work environment, better coordinate court and CRB reviews to eliminate duplication, prevent cases from falling out of compliance with review requirements when a scheduled court review is set-over, and reduce delay in distributing a board's final findings and recommendations.

Also in 2012, a separate team of CRB staff updated the CRB's Supreme Court Operating Rules. Those updates included creating a one-year provisional period for new volunteer board members, clarifying who may observe CRB reviews and the procedures for notifying parties in advance, discontinuing reviews of children returned home on a trial reunification placement in order to comply with state law, and clarifying who may receive a copy of the board's final findings and recommendations.

Developing Management Reports

There are many factors that go into maintaining strong boards, but at its most basic level, boards need members and cases to review. In 2012, the CRB developed a series of reports to monitor the number of active volunteers on each board, board member attendance, and how often cases were left off a review schedule because DHS did not submit the required case material. The reports are run monthly and enable field and management staff to stay on top of developing trends that may impact overall effectiveness of local boards and direct program resources accordingly.

Technological Efficiencies

The CRB continues to reduce costs through the use of technology. All DHS offices are now submitting case files to the CRB electronically through the OJD Secure File Transfer website. Additionally, 68% of board members access those files electronically to prepare for reviews while another 12% are in a trial period of receiving paper case files through the mail as well as having access to the files electronically. New board members do not have the option of receiving paper case files. From the beginning, they are trained and expected to prepare for reviews using only the electronic files. The CRB also is electronically sending its CRB 700 Request for Case Information forms to DHS offices in 14 counties, and electronically sending its CRB Findings and Recommendations reports to DHS offices in five counties and courts in seven counties.

Improving New Employee Training

In 2012, the CRB said goodbye to a number of long-time staff due to retirements, new careers, and/or changing life circumstances. Seven new staff were hired to fill those vacancies. The influx of new staff provided the perfect opportunity to update existing practices for training new employees. A one-month curriculum was developed for new field staff (i.e., those who facilitate CRB reviews) that includes attending the 2-day board member orientation training, observing juvenile dependency proceedings in a local court, sitting down with clerical support and the volunteer coordinator to learn about those functions, observing numerous field staff and boards as they conduct reviews, spending one-on-one time with the program's lead field trainer, shadowing experienced field staff as they facilitate reviews, and facilitating reviews with an experienced staff person in the room. A two-week curriculum was developed for new clerical staff that includes one-on-one training for each task.

Collecting Data on All Findings

At each CRB review, state and federal law require boards to make ten findings about service DHS has provided to the family, parental progress towards reunifying the family, and what permanency plan (i.e., return to parent, adoption, guardianship, or some type of permanent foster care) is most appropriate for the child. The CRB has been collecting data on two of the findings for years but, in 2012, the CRB began collecting data on all the 10 findings as well as applicability of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) to each child. Collecting this data enables the program to better monitor, report, and respond to local and statewide trends in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

CRB Findings Statewide (May 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012)*			
Children Reviewed			4,292
Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)			
ICWA Eligible Children			197
ICWA Pending Children			339
No Findings			
Finding #1	33	Finding #6: Father	1,301
Finding #2	59	Finding #7	86
Finding #3	112	Finding #8	519
Finding #4	98	Finding #9	409
Finding #5	59	Finding #10	214
Finding #6: Mother	1,159		
*CRB began collecting statistics on all findings on 5/1/12.			

New Computer System Platform

Since 2003, the CRB has been using a computer system called JOIN (Juvenile OJIN Integrated Network) to assist in managing cases, scheduling reviews, and bringing together DHS, CRB, and court data. In 2012, JOIN was rewritten onto a new platform to ensure it would remain compatible with modern operating systems. The new system, called EGL JOIN, looks and feels almost identical to the old JOIN and has the same functionality.

Education and Training

The CRB places a high value on supporting its volunteers, staff, and community partners with ongoing continuing education opportunities. In 2012, the program conducted ten two-day new board member orientation trainings throughout the state. The curriculum was updated to incorporate new reports that DHS has been using since implementation of OR-Kids, their new computer system. At the local level, CRB staff organized or assisted in providing approximately 100 regional or county level trainings for volunteer board members and community partners as well as helped facilitate the Juvenile Court Improvement Program's annual Model Court Day.

The 10 CRB Findings	
Finding #1	DHS made reasonable/active efforts to prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the home.
Finding #2	DHS has made diligent efforts to place the child with a relative or person who has a caregiver relationship.
Finding #3	DHS has ensured that appropriate services are in place to safeguard the child's safety, health, and well-being.
Finding #4	DHS made reasonable/active efforts to provide services to make it possible for the child to safely return home.
Finding #5	DHS made reasonable efforts in accordance with the case plan to place the child in a timely manner, and to complete the steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement, including an interstate placement if appropriate.
Finding #6	The parents have made sufficient progress to make it possible for the child to safely return home.
Finding #7	DHS has made sufficient efforts in developing the concurrent permanency plan.
Finding #8	DHS is in compliance with the case plan and court orders.
Finding #9	The permanency plan is the most appropriate plan for the child.
Finding #10	There is a continuing need for placement.

2012 CRB Conference Celebrates Foster Care Month

The CRB kicked off National Foster Care Month, with the 2012 CRB annual training conference, "Every Day Counts," on May 4th and 5th, 2012 at the Eugene Hilton.

Our conference opened with a welcome to Eugene by Mayor Kitty Piercy and the Honorable Eveleen Henry, Chief Juvenile Judge in Lane County. Judge Henry has been a strong supporter of the CRB program and the work of CRB volunteer board members. Mayor Piercy has been involved with children's issues as a member of the Oregon Commission on Children and Families as well as the Lane County Commission on Children and Families. Mayor Piercy is also an adoptive parent.

Highlights of the 2012 conference included a keynote on bias in decision-making by Dr. Rita Cameron Wedding, Chair of the Department of Women's Studies at Sacramento State University. She helped us understand how bias affects us all and how racism and bias look different today. Breakout sessions included a variety of topics from in-depth legal analysis, "How Do You Decide: Navigating the Legal Landscape," to sessions focusing on communicating effectively with teens during reviews, adoption, permanent foster care, and how early experiences shape the developing brain.

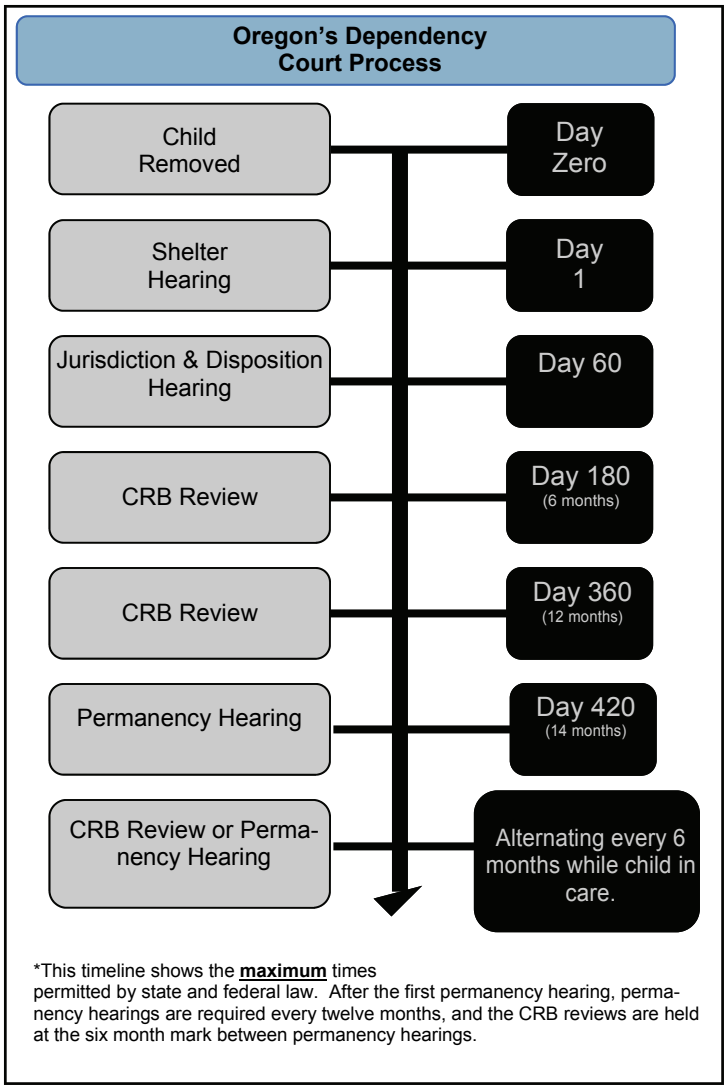
CRB Raises $2,500 for Camp To Belong

Once again, a highlight of the 2012 conference was the raffle to raise funds for scholarships to Camp To Belong. The raffle was made possible by donations from volunteer board members throughout the state. The 2012 raffle exceeded past years' raffles and raised over $2,500, which will provide scholarships for five siblings to attend Camp To Belong. Camp To Belong is an organization dedicated to reuniting brothers and sisters placed in separate foster homes or other out-of-home care for events of fun, emotional empowerment and sibling connection. You can learn more about Camp To Belong at: http://www.ctbnorthwest.org/.

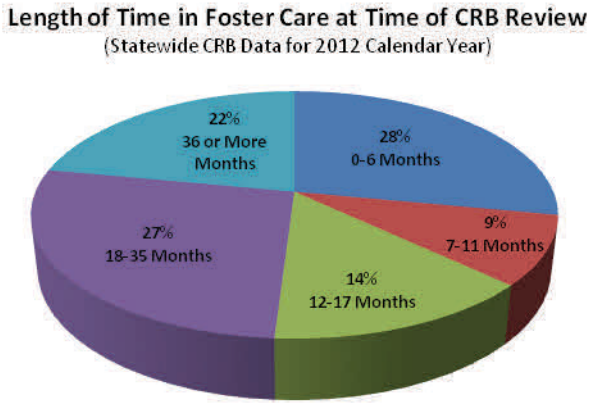
Who Are the Children the CRB Reviews?

Federal regulations require periodic reviews of children in foster care to ensure their placements and services are appropriate and timely. These reviews begin 6 months after a child enters care and continue at least every 6 months until the child leaves care. In Oregon, the courts and CRB share responsibility for conducting these reviews. Below is a diagram of Oregon's dependency court process which shows this alternating review schedule.

This report provides information about the children whose cases were reviewed by the CRB in the 2012 calendar year. It is important to remember that these are not all of the cases that are managed by DHS. According to DHS data, 20% of the children who enter foster care are returned home within three weeks; therefore these cases are not reviewed by CRB. In addition, CRB does not review cases when children are able to stay in the home while families receive services, or cases that are being investigated. Thus, unless otherwise noted, the statistics and other descriptive information in this report are limited to the cases of those children in foster care for six months or longer.



The CRB, therefore, has a unique perspective on children and families who are involved in the foster care system. A little over a quarter of the cases that are reviewed each month are "new" to the CRB, these children have actually been in foster care for six months. About half of the cases reviewed each month are of those children who have been in care between one and three years. Nearly a quarter of the cases reviewed each month involve children who have



Age		
	Children Reviewed by CRB*	Oregon Children**
Under 5 Years	37.6%	24.3%
5 – 9 Years	19.4%	24.6%
10 – 14 Years	21.5%	24.7%
15 – 19 Years	20.6%	26.4%
20 – 21 Years	0.3%	NA

*CRB data from the 2012 calendar year.
** Estimates for 2011 from US Census Bureau, 2007-11 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. Census statistics for age include persons 19 or under.

Race/Ethnicity		
	Children Reviewed by CRB*	Oregon**
African American	4.5%	1.7%
Native American	7.0%	1.0%
Asian/Pacific Islander	1.6%	4.0%
Caucasian	72.6%	78.8%
Hispanic	14.3%	11.5%
Other (including 2 or more races)	NA	3.0%

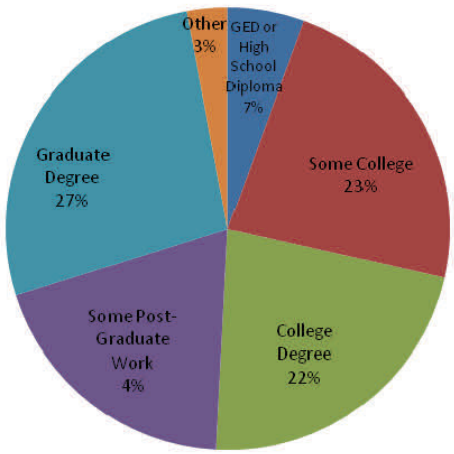
*CRB data from the 2012 calendar year.
**Estimates for 2011 from the US Census Bureau, 2007-11 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

CRB's Volunteer Board Members

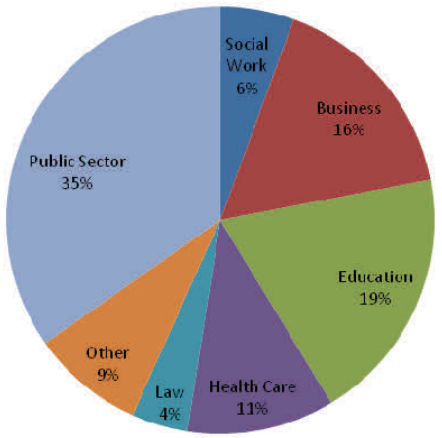
CRB's volunteer board members have a role that is more challenging than most volunteer experiences. In addition to understanding the complex legal issues related to child protection, they must comprehend the intricate social and clinical considerations that determine what is in the child's best interest.

All volunteer board members receive training on key aspects of the child welfare and juvenile dependency systems, including agency policy and rules, and federal statutes regarding child protection. They are continually trained and supported by professional staff within the Oregon Judicial Department.

In 2012, 276 volunteer board members collectively donated 38,826 hours of service to the state preparing for and conducting 4,353 reviews of children in foster care. This is a cost benefit to the state of $1,044,396.14, and underscores the value of our citizen review that provides an objective perspective on how the foster care system is working for Oregon's children, youth, and families. Additionally, during 2012, these citizen volunteers completed 4013 hours of training in order to improve the lives of children in care and to achieve successful outcomes for Oregon's children. That is an average of 13.4 hours of training per volunteer.



Education Levels



Occupation Type

The CRB would not exist without such a passionate network of volunteer board members who dedicate themselves to taking action and solving problems in their communities.

We thank you for your dedication and service ...you make a big difference in the lives of the children and families involved in Oregon's foster care system!

CAPTA Citizen Review Panels

In September 2012, Oregon's Department of Human Services (DHS) transferred responsibility for ensuring compliance with federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) grant requirements to the CRB. The grant requires states to establish at least three citizen review panels to evaluate the extent to which state and local child protection system agencies are effectively discharging their child protection responsibilities. The citizen review panels must prepare, on an annual basis, a report containing a summary of the activities of the panel and recommendations to improve the child protection services system at the state and local levels.

The CRB established three citizen review panels in Deschutes, Lane, and Lincoln counties. The CRB volunteer board members from each board in Deschutes and Lincoln counties come together as the panels in those counties. For Lane County, one or two volunteer board members from each of the nine local boards volunteered to serve as the panel for Lane County.

CRB panel members, with input from community partners, brainstormed a list of local areas of concern in child welfare. Panels considered both process and outcome matters when identifying system issues. The issue list was then turned into a systems issue survey. The systems issue survey was completed for each case reviewed in the panel counties for at least six months and statewide for three months. The results were used to identify the most prevalent statewide and local system issues.

The CRB Panels in Deschutes, Lane, and Lincoln Counties each had meetings with community stakeholders throughout the year to keep them informed of their work, progress, findings, and recommendations. The CRB Panels appreciate the time that community stakeholders dedicated to these meetings. Their questions, comments, and support for the work of the CRB Panels is greatly appreciated! Community stakeholders included:

- Local Juvenile Court Judges
- Local Trial Court Administrators and/or court staff
- Child Welfare managers and staff
- Local CASA Program representatives
- Attorneys involved in juvenile dependency cases
- Foster Parents
- Service Providers
- Educators
- Business Leaders

OR-Kids Case Plans Do Not Include Current or Sufficient Information

When DHS implemented its new case management system, OR-Kids, in August 2011, courts and Citizen Review Boards throughout the state immediately saw a decrease in the quality of information contained in the reports. All too often, case plans did not include information essential to reviews including information related to relative search, child education and medical information, face-to-face contact, department efforts to provide parents with services, parental progress, and efforts to develop or finalize the concurrent plan. The lack of medical information in particular was egregious to several of the citizen review panels.

The medical, dental, immunization, diagnoses, and medication information is currently inadequate or not available. Furthermore, narrative sections were and continue to be confusing in part due to an absence of dates. The case plan includes all information for the case, so if a child who has been in substitute care for five years went to the hospital for a broken arm four years ago, unless entries are dated and dates are included for specific events, the entry in the case plan looks like it happened in the last few months.

Unfortunately, although boards are often told that DHS is aware of the issues and working to fix them, and although there have been some improvements to the new case plans, over a year and half after implementation of OR-Kids, many of the issues related to lack of information continue. Continuing statewide difficulties with OR-Kids include errors with legacy data that was transferred from the old system, lack of training on OR-Kids, difficulty entering information, and confusion and lack of communication over the number of people responsible for entering data in the OR-Kids system.

Caseworkers continue to express frustration with the OR-Kids. They report that in this time of economic hardship with high case loads and staffing shortages, the release of OR-Kids requires them to spend an increased amount of time on the computer trying to fill out required information and hoping the information is included in the printed case plan. For example, one caseworker reported spending hours entering information into the system, only to have it fail to save and lost all her work. She spent her weekend attempting to recreate her entry and again the program would not save her work. Finally, she typed up the information in a word document and submitted it late to the CRB. There are numerous similar stories throughout the state.

Another common issue board members hear about at reviews is that caseworkers report having face-to-face contact with children as required and are surprised to hear that it is not reflected in the case plan they submitted. Caseworkers have reported that they did not get adequate training and that it takes central office a great deal of time to respond to requests for assistance with the program.

While it is expected that OR-Kids will eventually save staff time, many staff are presently still learning to use the program. Consequently, OR-Kids seems less efficient than DHS' previous case management system. Furthermore, ongoing training for caseworkers has essentially been non-funded.

Face-to-Face Contact Between Caseworkers and Children

The Lincoln County CRB found that DHS was not in compliance with the case plan and court orders in 54% of the children reviewed from May 1, 2012 to October 31, 2012. The majority of those negative findings were related to insufficient face-to-face contact between caseworkers and children.

In January 2013, DHS changed policy requirements for face-to-face contact between caseworkers and children in foster care from every 30 days to "monthly." The CRB expressed concern that this rule

change could allow a child to go up to 60 days without face-to-face contact with someone from DHS. Board members are concerned about the potential impact this will have on DHS' ability to ensure that children in foster care are safe, moving toward permanency, and have stable living arrangements that promote their well-being.

DHS Caseworker Turnover, Insufficient Supervision, and Lack of Training

Staffing levels in DHS have a direct relation to the ability to provide timely and effective case management and safety services. A 2010 Child Welfare Information Gateway Report found that essential child welfare processes, including family engagement, relationship building, assessment, and permanency planning, are time intensive and require frequent worker-client contact. Heavy workloads and caseloads reduce the amount of time available for these processes.

A 2006 Children's Bureau and 2003 Government Accountability Office report found large caseloads and worker turnover delay the timeliness of investigations and limit the frequency of worker visits with children, thereby hampering agencies' attainment of key federal safety and permanency goals" (*Oregon Department of Human Services, Child Welfare Programs, March 18-19 2013, https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2013R1/Downloads/CommitteeMeetingDocument/8756*).

A number of years ago DHS engaged McKenzie Group to review its business processes and establish a workload model. The workload model is reevaluated approximately every two years. It was last updated prior to OR-Kids release in August 2011. DHS reports being funded to operate at only about 67% of its workload need. Add to this the positions DHS was required to hold vacant, staff out on Family Medical Leave Act, and furloughs, DHS is actually operating at about 63% on the workload model.

Lincoln County caseworkers reported that caseloads should be at about 15 cases for quality casework, but the current caseload average is 18 to 23. It is not a surprise that morale among caseworkers is low and stress is high. Throughout the state, caseworkers report feeling discouraged because they know they are not performing the casework they should due to understaffing and large case loads. They are frustrated that they are spending the valuable time they should be in the field on the computer struggling with OR-Kids; and especially exasperated with the very slow response time to their OR-Kid inquiries and efforts to fix system glitches. This low morale and frustration leads to turnover.

New, inexperienced caseworkers and hiring freezes only exacerbate the existing understaffing and high caseload issues. Consequently, the CRB has witnessed a decrease in quality of casework. Examples include late or even no case plan submission for review, incomplete case plans, caseworkers late or absent from reviews, lack of knowledge of case progress at reviews, significant gaps in face-to-face contact with children, and increased negative findings on reasonable efforts.

Statewide Recommendations

1. **DHS increase efforts to address flaws in the OR - Kids program.**
2. **DHS increase OR-Kids training and support for caseworkers.**
3. **DHS work with the OJD to develop and implement a statewide Court/CRB report.**
4. **DHS provide better training and support for caseworkers and consider peer mentor program.**
5. **DHS comply with face-to-face contact requirements and discourage face to face contacts that are more than 30 days apart.**
6. **Oregon Legislature provide sufficient funding to allow caseworker staffing at the 80% level as recommended in the Governor's budget.**

Deschutes County Citizen Review Board Panel

Meeting Dates and Activities

The Deschutes County CRB reviewed 158 cases of children in foster care in the 2012 calendar year. During the time the citizen review panel was doing its work, the local CRB conducted case reviews on the following dates: October 3 and 4, November 7 and 8, and December 5, 2012; and January 9 and 10, February 6 and 7, March 6 and 7, April 3 and 4, and May 1 and 2, 2013.

November 8, 2012 - The Deschutes County panel held its initial meeting where it reviewed CAPTA requirements and the steps they would undertake to identify community issues and develop recommendations. Additionally, panel members brainstormed a list of local areas of concern in child welfare.

November 9, 2012 - The CRB Panel met with community partners and shared its role and plans to identify issues and develop recommendations. The panel asked community partners to add to their list of local areas of concern and the areas they identified were included in the issue list and ultimately the survey.

February 7, 2013 - The CRB Panel reviewed and discussed local data and top issues identified in the preliminary survey results as well as reviewed DHS policies related to ICWA and relative searches. The panel drafted recommendations and identified next steps, including scheduling a meeting with the local DHS branch to gather detailed information regarding local DHS practices.

March 11, 2013 - The CRB Panel shared preliminary survey results with representatives from DHS. Additionally, they asked DHS for detailed information on their current practices, especially as related to the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and relative search efforts, and for input on the panel's recommendations to address the top issues.

DHS reported that they were not surprised by the results, shared the panel's concerns, and are currently working to address those issues. Because they recognize ICWA and relative search as important areas of work, DHS has a support staff person assigned to conduct ICWA searches and a caseworker assigned as an ICWA and relative search liaison. However, because of understaffing partly caused by vacancies, the caseworker was pulled off the liaison duties and assigned cases. Now DHS has filled the vacancies and the worker will be able to spend more time on ICWA and relative search efforts.

An issue that recently came to light is that caseworkers do not know how to access the ICWA and relative information the liaison had been entering into OR-Kids because it is not always automatically appearing in case plans. Another issue that has come up with relative search efforts is that newly assigned caseworkers do not review the case plan to follow up with relative information.

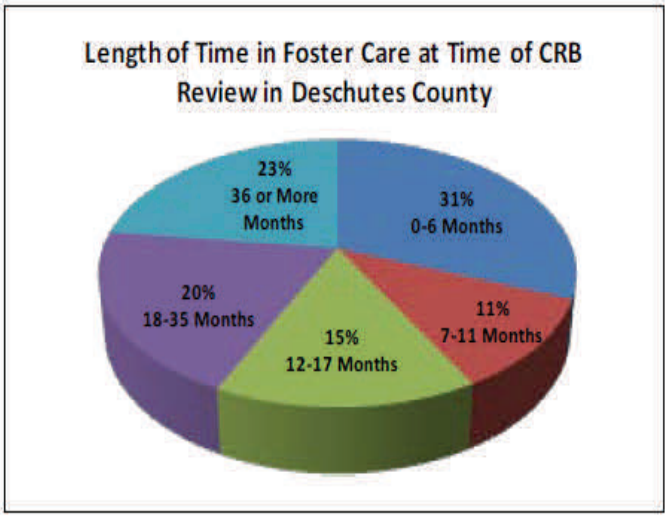
Deschutes County DHS is working to educate their workers on these issues. On a positive note, Deschutes County DHS has developed a practice of

Members of the Deschutes Citizen Review Panel (left to right):

- William Wagner (1999)
- Joan Springer-Wellman (2001)
- Kristina Knittel (2013)
- Marcia Houston (2010)

	Deschutes County	Statewide
Dependency Petitions Filed	98	5,200*
Children in Substitute Care**	131	8,882
CRB Reviews	127	4,353
Children Reviewed	158	5,782
No Reasonable Efforts Findings***	19	241

* Due to Odyssey implementation, statewide petitions filed data does not yet include Linn/Crook/Jefferson counties after December 9, 2012.
** The table is OJD data from the 2012 calendar year except for "Children in Substitute Care," which is point in time data collected by DHS on 6/30/11.
*** CRB makes 10 findings on cases reviewed, including three reasonable/active efforts findings regarding DHS efforts (as required by state and federal law) to: 1) prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the home, 2) provide services to make it possible for the child to safely return home, and 3) place the child in a timely manner, and to complete the steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement. The total reported represents "no" findings for numbers two and three above.



calling relatives even though it is more time consuming and not required by current law and policy because phone contact has been found to be more fruitful. Finally, the caseworker assigned to conduct relative searches is beginning "family finding" on long -term cases such as those with a permanency plan of Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement (APPLA). The DHS supervisor noted that cases and casework have gotten significantly more complicated and there is too much expertise required throughout the process. She believes that specialized assignments such as this one, provided there is good communication between the specialized staff and assigned caseworker, is the best system.

March 11, 2013 - The CRB Panel shared their preliminary survey results and draft recommendations with the community partners and asked for any feedback they had. Caseworker turnover, training, and supervision have been identified as a statewide concern and the community partners agreed that it is a serious issue. One way that is evident locally is that caseworkers do not have enough time to properly mentor parents. The community partners identified increasing the frequency and quality of visits between children and parents as a local priority. They discussed utilizing volunteers, and identified Jackson County's Partners in Parenting (PiP) and a mentor grandparent program in Nevada as promising models.

April 1, 2013 - The CRB Panel hosted a public forum in which CRB staff and panel members gave a brief presentation on the role of the panel in the community, the top identified statewide and local issues, and proposed recommendations. Then they asked for community feedback and input. The community members agreed that the panel's identified issues are areas of concern, especially caseworker turnover and face-to-face contact. One suggestion was to develop and implement a better communication system so that there is less disruption when a case is transitioned from one caseworker to another. Another suggestion was to prioritize visitation.

Members of the public also identified potential areas of concern to focus on in the next annual report, including a need for additional foster families, additional supports for parents, efforts to prevent removal, and more timely finalization of adoptions. A representative from Action to Advocacy, an organization dedicated to connecting foster and adoptive families with the services and resources they need to thrive, reported that they have offered to help DHS with certification efforts, but are being underutilized.

The CRB Panel was concerned that DHS is not certifying non-relatives to become foster parents. Central Oregon has a huge need for more foster parents and the community often sees children placed far away. The area is also greatly lacking in trained special needs foster parents. However, Deschutes DHS appears to put no resources into recruiting new qualified foster parents, let alone returning phone calls or completing the training and certification process with potential non-relative foster parents. This is a very dangerous problem, and is impacting the care provided to Deschutes County

Deschutes County Areas of Concern

In addition to the statewide issues identified earlier in this report, the Deschutes panel identified four areas of concern. The CRB Panel also noted that based on the local system issue survey results, basis of jurisdiction was also identified as a prevalent issue that the panel plans to address next year.

Timely ICWA Determinations

At reviews, the CRB is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating that DHS has determined whether ICWA applies. ICWA is a federal law that seeks to keep American Indian children with American Indian families. When ICWA applies, caseworkers must provide active efforts, follow ICWA placement preferences, and work to involve the tribe. Timely ICWA determinations are essential to compliance with the ICWA requirements and protecting the best interests of American Indian children.

The CRB Panel believes the lack of information is due to a combination of non-compliance with ICWA policies and insufficient documentation. Through its meeting with DHS, the panel learned that although Deschutes DHS has a specialized caseworker assigned as a ICWA and relative liaison, the position has been weakened because the staff person has most recently been removed from the position and assigned cases due to understaffing, and that there has been barriers in communication to the assigned caseworker.

Insufficient Efforts to Develop Concurrent Plan

At reviews, the CRB is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating compliance with concurrent planning requirements, such as diligent relative search efforts. Concurrent planning is an effort to reunite the family while simultaneously establishing an alternative plan that can be implemented if reunification is no longer possible. This allows children to be moved much more quickly from foster care to a stable permanent placement. In addition to better outcomes, untimely concurrent planning efforts result in delays in permanency for children. The CRB Panel believes the lack of information is due to a combination of non-compliance with concurrent planning policies and insufficient documentation.

Insufficient Medical and Dental Services

At reviews, the CRB is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating that the children are receiving adequate medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure their health and well-being and help them cope with the abuse and neglect they have endured. The CRB Panel believes the lack of information is due to a combination of children not getting sufficient services and a lack of documentation.

Lack of Diligent Efforts to Search for and Engage Relatives

At reviews, the CRB is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating compliance with relative search requirements. Federal and state law and DHS policy require diligent efforts to search for and engage relatives because research has demonstrated that children in relative placements have better outcomes. For example, they are as safe or safer in relative care and are more likely to be placed with siblings, maintain stability, and maintain family and community connections. The CRB Panel believes the lack of information is due to a combination of non-compliance with diligent efforts policies and insufficient documentation.

Deschutes County Recommendations

1. **DHS preserve the specialized staff position for relative searches and ICWA determinations and ensure that workload duties are not compromised due to general casework assignments. DHS develop practices to ensure the specialized staff follows up with ongoing relative search and ICWA efforts, communicate efforts to the assigned caseworker, and accurately and timely document efforts.**

2. **DHS comply with policies and provide adequate and timely medical and dental services.**

3. **DHS work with community partners to increase parent/child visitation, and continue to explore foster parents and/or foster grandparents as mentors and visit supervisors. The CRB Panel recognizes with caseworker training, supervision and turnover as a major statewide issue, a significant impact of the issue is that caseworkers don't have enough time to properly mentor parents and ensure quality visitation between parents and children. Frequent, quality visitation between children and parents is a key indicator of successful reunification.**

Lane County Citizen Review Board Panel

Meeting Dates and Activities

The Lane County CRB reviewed 1,065 cases of children in foster care in the 2012 calendar year. During the time the local citizen review panel was doing their work, the Lane County CRB conducted periodic reviews on the following dates in 2012: September 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 19, 20, 26, 27, October 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, November 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16, 28, December 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20; and the following dates in 2013: January 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 16, 17, 23, 24, February 1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28, March 1, 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28, April 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 17, 18, 24, 25, May 1, 2, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 22, 23.

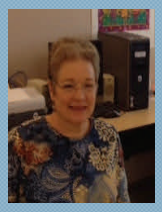
October 18, 2012 - The Lane County panel held its initial meeting where it reviewed CAPTA requirements and the steps they would undertake to identify community issues and develop recommendations. Additionally, panel members brainstormed a list of local areas of concern in child welfare.

December 3, 2012 - The panel met with community partners and shared its role and plans to identify issues and develop recommendations. The panel asked community partners to add to their list of local areas of concern and the areas they identified were included in the issue list and ultimately the survey.

February 22, 2013 - The panel reviewed and discussed local data and top issues identified in the preliminary survey results. The panel drafted recommendations and identified next steps, including scheduling a meeting with the local DHS branch to gather detailed information regarding local DHS practices.

March 22, 2013 - The panel shared the preliminary survey results with representatives from DHS and asked DHS for their perspectives on the issues. DHS agreed that OR-Kids issues are an area of concern. They reported issues with complete and accurate transfer of information from the old FACIS program to the OR-Kids system and other glitches with the system that they do not have the time or manpower to correct. Furthermore, the OR-Kids system is confusing and time consuming for the caseworkers. Additional internal training and data entry help would be beneficial to address the concerns.

DHS also reported that they are currently working with community partners to recruit volunteers to help with transportation for visits as well as working on quality foster parent recruitment and improving parent/child visits. The CRB Panel also discussed concerns about the number of children served in Independent Living Programs (ILP).

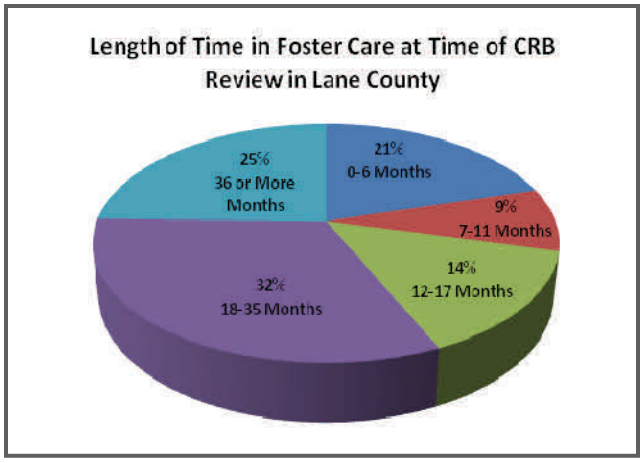


There are nine Citizen Review Boards (CRB) and thirty-five CRB volunteers in Lane County. All of the Lane County CRB volunteers make up the Lane CRB CAPTA Panel; however, at the initial Lane CAPTA meeting the volunteers indicated a desire to have a smaller committee composed of board members who would strive to consistently attend the CAPTA meetings and work to finalize efforts for the annual report. Therefore, a Lane CRB CAPTA Panel Advisory Committee was established. The members of the Lane CRB CAPTA Panel Advisory Committee include:

- Marjorie Biehler (2002)
- Ellen Hyman (1997)
- Norton Cabell (2006)
- Beverly Schenler (2003)
- Barbara Newman (2002)
- Lou Ann Martin (2003)
- Stephen John (2007)

CRB Findings in Lane County (May 1, 2012 – December 31, 2012)*	Lane County	Statewide
Dependency Petitions Filed	703	5,200*
Children in Substitute Care**	1,224	8,882
CRB Reviews	843	4,353
Children Reviewed	1,065	5,782
No Reasonable Efforts Findings***	42	241

* Due to Odyssey implementation, statewide petitions filed data does not yet include Linn/Crook/Jefferson counties after December 9, 2012.
** The table is OJD data from the 2012 calendar year except for "Children in Substitute Care," which is point in time data collected by DHS on 6/30/11.
*** CRB makes 10 findings on cases reviewed, including three reasonable/active efforts findings regarding DHS efforts (as required by state and federal law) to: 1) prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the home, 2) provide services to make it possible for the child to safely return home, and 3) place the child in a timely manner, and to complete the steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement. The total reported represents "no" findings for numbers two and three above.



March 22, 2013 - The panel shared their preliminary survey results and draft recommendations with community partners and asked for any feedback they may had. The community stakeholders shared concerns regarding case plans. They pointed out that improved case plans are important for parents, who are confused by the current inaccurate plans, and for caseworkers transitioning cases to other workers. Community stakeholders agreed that visitation and ILP services are also a concern within the county, because there are not sufficient services to meet the needs. Stakeholders would like to see DHS be more creative regarding locations for visitation services, especially when older children are involved. Community stakeholders suggested the following areas for future study: services for children and families when the child is on a "Trial Home Visits" and attorneys for children who are in foster care that can handle legal issues in the civil area, for example immigration, probate trust funds, and name changes..

April 9, 2013 - The panel hosted a public forum in which CRB staff and panel members gave a brief presentation on the role of the panel in the community, the top identified statewide and local issues, and proposed recommendations. Then they asked for community feedback and input.

Community members voiced concern regarding an adequate number of foster homes and respite providers, especially for teens and in Florence. Additionally, there was concern regarding a lack of other services in Florence such as adequate parenting classes and counseling. Furthermore, community members questioned whether the space DHS provides for sibling visits is appropriate, especially for older children. Finally, the community members advocated for DHS to provide more upfront services to prevent removal of children.

Lane County Areas of Concern

Insufficient Medical and Dental Services

At reviews, the board is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating that the children are receiving adequate medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure their health and well-being and help them cope with the abuse and neglect they have endured. The panel believes the lack of information is due to a combination of children not getting sufficient services and a lack of documentation.

DHS policy requires that all children who come into foster care have a mental health assessment within 60 days. Sometimes assessments are not completed in a timely fashion and thus the initiation of appropriate services does not happen timely.

DHS is responsible to ensure that children are receiving appropriate medical, dental, and mental health services while kids are in care. There are problems with the OR-Kids reporting system and there are CRB concerns that kids are not being seen by doctors and dentists regularly while they are in care. There is a lack of services and service providers in a county as large and spread out as Lane County. Add in transportation issues and provider turnover rates, and the negative impacts on children in foster care are even more concerning.

Insufficient Psychotropic Medication Information

The case plan does not always list a current summary of medication, the specific medication prescribed, or if a psychiatrist is overseeing the medication. Sometimes the foster parents report medication changes at the reviews that the caseworker is not aware of. With the new OR-Kids form, information about medication is often not reported. When it is, the language is very generic and often not clear who is managing the medications, a psychiatrist or a pediatrician. The CRB Panel is concerned with the number of medications children are prescribed, their side effects, who is authorizing the medications and any changes made in doses or medications, amount of time children are on a particular medication, and contradictions in information they hear about children's medications.

Insufficient Visitation Between Parents and Children

The CRB Panel is supportive of DHS efforts to increase supervised parent child visits for some families. Lane County DHS has made positive strides with new programs like the baby bonding groups and the visitation house that improve the quality of visitation. Additionally the CRB Panel acknowledges DHS efforts to increase the quantity of visitation by splitting a visitation supervisor position so there are more opportunities available for visitation between 3:00 PM and 7:00 PM for school age children and their parents. Visits are a key indicator in the success of a return home plan yet many parents and children still only have visits for one hour a week. DHS has indicated that this is a resource issue. Other concerns include that visit locations can be stressful and caseworkers use visits as a time to gather information.

Insufficient ILP Services

The Independent Living Program (ILP) has a long wait list. DHS needs to make sure children are receiving the required services and work more actively with the teens to get them in the program and ensure the required documentation is completed. DHS should also address transportation issues.

Lane County Recommendations

1. **DHS comply with policies and provide adequate and timely medical, dental and mental health services.**
2. **DHS increase both the quantity and quality of visitation services.**
3. **DHS increase efforts to identify and engage community resources that may be able to supplement DHS services (e.g. churches who are will to develop programs to supervise visits).**

Lincoln County Citizen Review Board Panel

Meeting Dates and Activities

The Lincoln County CRB reviewed 125 cases of children in foster care in the 2012 calendar year. During the time the local CRB Panel was doing their work, the Lincoln County CRB conducted periodic reviews on the following dates: September 26 and 27, October 24 and 25, November 14 and 15, December 19 and 20, 2012; and January 23 and 24, February 27 and 28, March 27 and 28, April 24, May 22 and 23, 2013.

September 26, 2012 - The Lincoln County CRB Panel held its initial meeting where it reviewed CAPTA requirements and the steps they would undertake to identify community issues and develop recommendations. Additionally, panel members brainstormed a list of local areas of concern in child welfare.

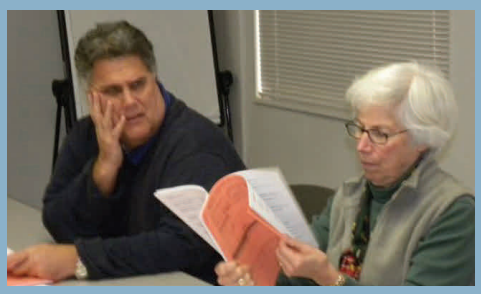
October 24, 2012 - The CRB Panel met with community partners and shared its role and plans to identify issues and develop recommendations. The panel asked community partners to add to their list of local areas of concern and the areas they identified were included in the issue list and ultimately the survey.

January 24, 2013 - The CRB Panel reviewed and discussed local data and top issues identified in the preliminary survey results. The panel drafted recommendations and identified next steps, including scheduling a meeting with the local DHS branch to gather detailed information regarding local DHS practices.

February 12, 2013 - The CRB Panel shared the preliminary survey results with local DHS staff, including both caseworkers and supervisors, and asked them their feedback on the identified issues and for input on recommendations to address those issues.

DHS staff agreed that both caseworker turnover and training and insufficient medical and dental services are indeed local issues. They shared that errors with the OR-Kids systems have been very time consuming and agreed that additional mandatory OR-Kids training is essential. DHS staff also shared that they are operating at approximately 65% staffing and the office has not been able to hire support staff. Therefore, caseworkers are carrying heavy loads and responsible for support staff tasks such as copying, filing, and discovery. Consequently, they have not prioritized some important issues, such as gathering medical and dental service information. They suggested that a productive recommendation would be to establish a specialized support staff person to ensure that DHS is provided with regularly updated provider information, as well as a support staff person assigned for relative searches and ICWA determinations.

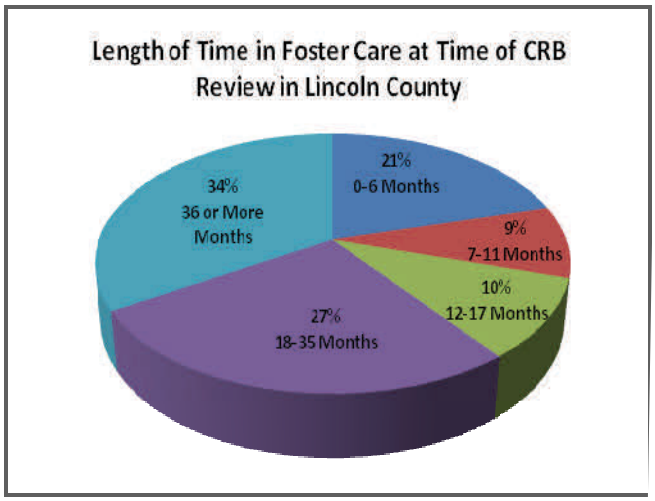
February 27, 2013 - The CRB Panel shared their preliminary survey results and draft recommendations with community partners and asked for any feedback they had.



Members of the Lincoln County Citizen Review Panel (left to right): Diane Flansburgg (2008), Edward Brittain (2007), Steve Waterman (2006), Fawn Hewitt (2006), Sener Otrugman (2012). Not pictured, Sandra Allen (2012).

	Lincoln County	Statewide
Dependency Petitions Filed	64	5,200*
Children in Substitute Care**	141	8,882
CRB Reviews	94	4,353
Children Reviewed	125	5,782
No Reasonable Efforts Findings***	10	241

*Due to Odyssey implementation, statewide petitions filed data does not yet include Linn, Crook, and Jefferson counties after December 9, 2012.
**The table is OJD data from the 2012 calendar year except for "Children in Substitute Care," which is point in time data collected by DHS on 6/30/11.
*** CRB makes 10 findings on cases reviewed, including three reasonable/active efforts findings regarding DHS efforts (as required by state and federal law) to: 1) prevent or eliminate the need for removal of the child from the home, 2) provide services to make it possible for the child to safely return home, and 3) place the child in a timely manner, and to complete the steps necessary to finalize the permanent placement. The total reported represents "no" findings for numbers two and three above.



April 4, 2013 - The panel hosted a public forum in which CRB staff and panel members gave a brief presentation on the role of the panel in the community, the top identified statewide and local issues, and proposed recommendations. Then they asked for community feedback and input.

The community members agreed that the currently identified issues are areas of concern. They also identified potential areas of concern to focus on in the next annual report. One area of concern is addressing a need for more foster families in Lincoln County including recruitment, training, and continuing support; the second area of concern is focusing on increasing the quality and quantity of visitation between children and parents.

Lincoln County Area of Concern

Insufficient Medical and Dental Services

At reviews, the CRB is frequently not provided with information (either in the case plan or by the caseworker) indicating that the children are receiving adequate medical, dental, and mental health services to ensure children's health and well-being and to help them cope with the abuse and neglect they have endured.

For example, all too often the case plan provided to the board does not include any record of the child having had a dental exam, wellness check, an initial mental health evaluation, or developmental assessments. Furthermore, information regarding immunizations, prescribed medication, and regular mental health services, if any, is not included in the packet. Unfortunately, this is exacerbated at reviews because the caseworker does not know when or if the children have had these required appointments.

Another frequent occurrence is that the case plan states that the child had a recent appointment, but because the entry is not dated and the date of the appointment is not provided, it is impossible to decipher if the appointment occurred three months or three years ago. With the lack of information, it is very difficult for the CRB to determine whether the children are receiving adequate medical, dental, and mental health services. Furthermore it is virtually impossible to determine if there were provider recommendations made, such as follow-up appointments or specialist referrals, and if so, if they were followed.

There is concern that these services are falling through the cracks and children are doing without basic services as well as services recommended for them, such as eyeglasses, orthodontia work, or regular counseling, that are essential for their health and wellbeing. The CRB Panel believes this is both because children are not getting sufficient services and because there is a lack of documentation.

The CRB Panel noted that lack of sufficient medical and dental services likely relates to the two major statewide issues of adequate case plans and DHS caseworker support. Historically, the board had been provided with more complete and adequate medical and dental information. However, the information drastically decreased with statewide budget cuts and the implementation of OR-Kids. Furthermore, the local DHS office has indicated that the current workload responsibilities have limited their ability to regularly follow-up with providers and gather medical and dental service information.

Lincoln County Recommendations

1. **DHS comply with policies and provide adequate and timely medical, dental services, and developmental assessments and services.**
2. **DHS develop a specialized staff position to follow up with providers children and parents may be involved with to ensure parents and children are receiving regular appointments, DHS timely follows up with recommendations, and DHS obtains school and treatment progress reports. DHS ensure that workload duties are not compromised due to general casework assignments.**
3. **DHS develop practices to ensure the specialized staff track services and progress for parents and children, communicate efforts to the assigned caseworker, and accurately and timely document efforts.**

CRB Statewide Statistics 2012 Calendar Year

COUNTY	CRB REVIEWS	CHILDREN REVIEWED*	INTERESTED PARTIES IN ATTENDANCE	BOARD DAYS	AVERAGE MINUTES PER CRB REVIEW	NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS**
Baker	21	26	98	11	45	4
Benton	37	52	210	6	37	4
Clackamas	166	217	535	43	35	16
Clatsop	71	80	254	12	27	3
Columbia	113	153	447	15	33	4
Coos	138	181	443	24	31	6
Crook/Jefferson	63	73	259	12	47	4
Curry***	36	39	71	11	29	4
Deschutes	127	158	529	22	43	4
Douglas	210	308	998	36	37	17
Grant/Harney	24	25	124	6	49	4
Hood River	23	26	89	6	32	3
Jackson	282	368	1,321	50	35	20
Josephine	188	272	794	31	36	12
Klamath	230	281	1,049	36	34	12
Lake	17	24	58	5	40	4
Lane	843	1,065	3,811	108	19	36
Lincoln	94	125	558	20	36	7
Linn	227	335	976	32	33	4
Malheur	66	91	300	12	47	2
Marion	531	756	2,486	96	37	30
Multnomah	118	126	220	42	35	21
Polk	135	156	410	24	37	10
Tillamook	31	42	128	6	32	4
Umatilla/Morrow	121	162	613	23	35	9
Union/Wallowa	35	39	154	10	34	3
Wasco	66	88	317	13	34	4
Washington	249	379	1,097	55	39	20
Yamhill	91	135	472	12	31	5
STATEWIDE	4,353	5,782	18,821	779	35	276

*Children reviewed multiple times in the same year are only counted once.
**Number of volunteers is point in time data collected on 12/5/12.
***The Curry board was combined with Coos 1 until July 2012. In the above statistics, they are treated as separate boards for the entire year.