

Iowa: **Leading the way in Family First**

January 19, 2022

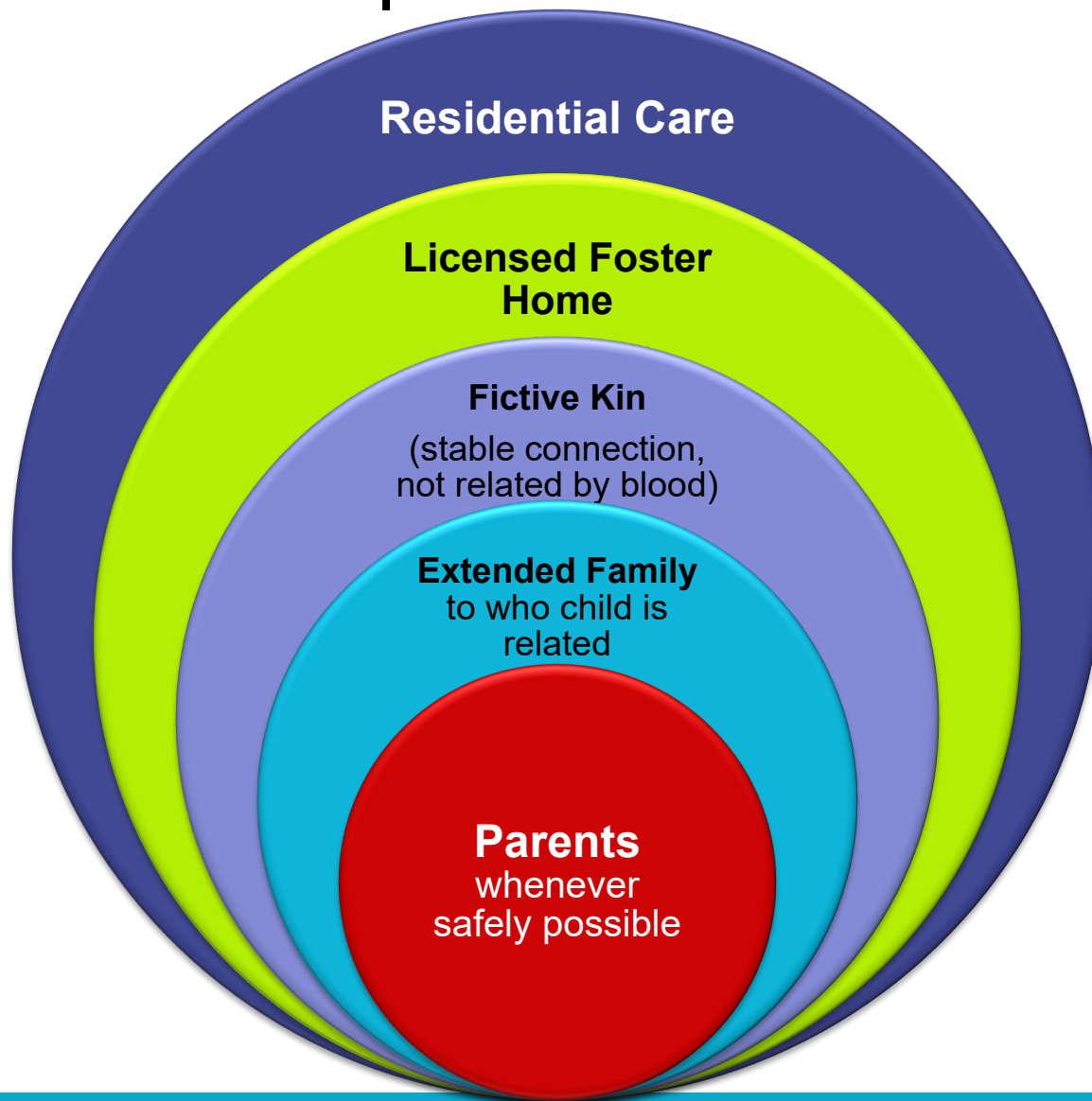
Overview

Children do best in families!

Family First restructures how the federal government spends money on child welfare to improve outcomes for children:

- Prevent the need for removal through evidence-based family preservation services
- If removal is necessary, placement in this order:
 - Relative or fictive kin
 - Licensed Foster Family
 - Institutional care (for treatment only)
- All possible strategies for keeping children with their families, or in family settings, must be explored.

Placement Options in Child Welfare



Demonstrated Success

- ▶ Iowa was the 11th state with an approved Family First Prevention Plan.
- ▶ Over the past 5 years, Iowa has reduced the number of youth in group care by 48%.
- ▶ 55% of all children and youth in foster care are living with relatives or fictive kin.
- ▶ 20% reduction on the number of children and youth entering foster care.
- ▶ Iowa is receiving more federal money than any other state to support high quality legal representation for parents.

State of Iowa

Family First: Implementation Strategies



Our Commitment to Family

Home

Data Reference



Removal Rates Per 1000

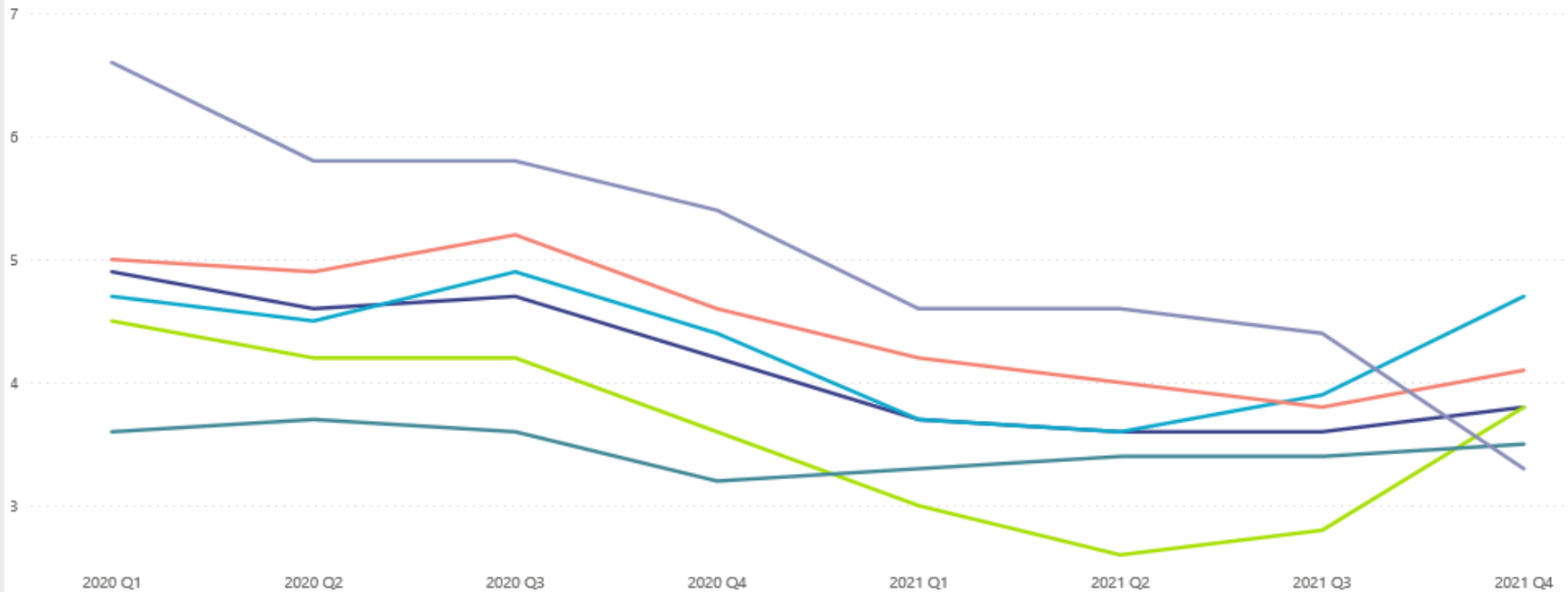
Data From
ROM

Data Last Updated
8/31/2021

Report Fiscal Year
2020 - 2021

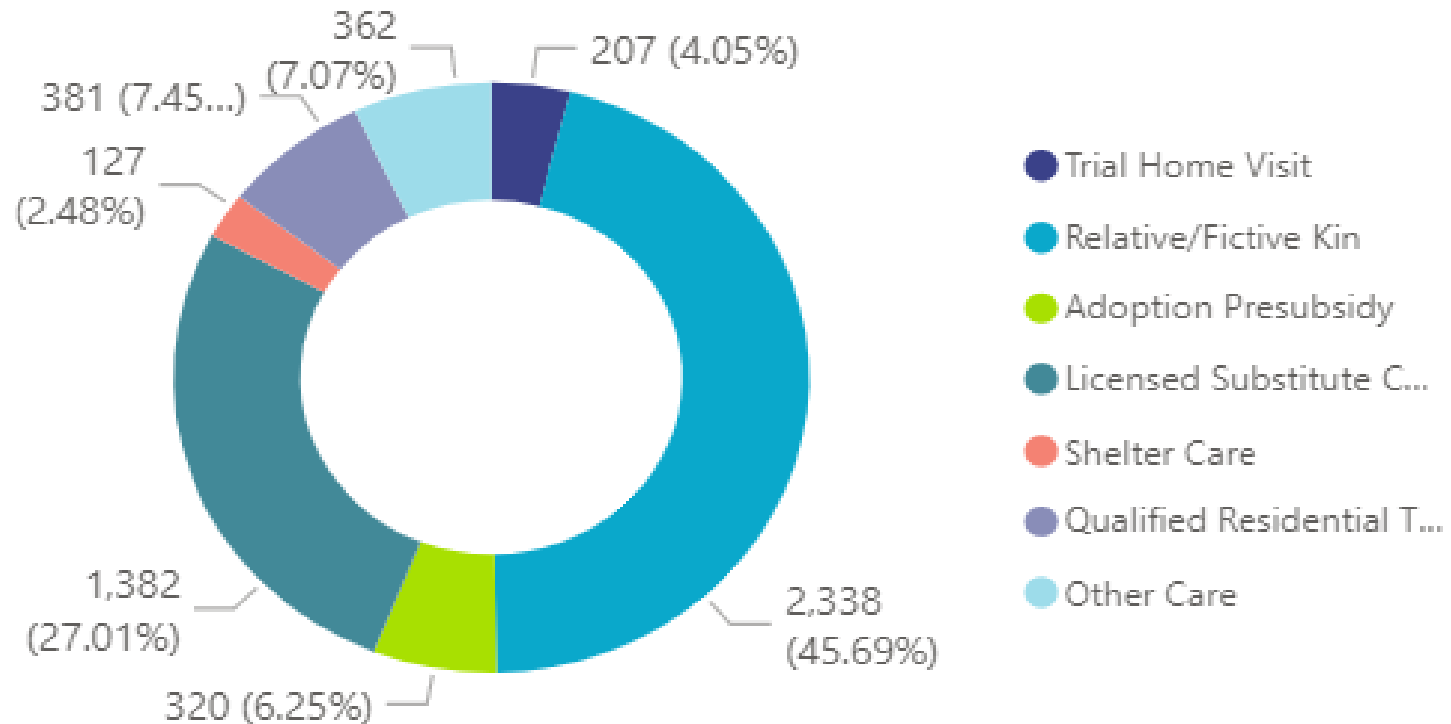
Removal Rate by State Fiscal Year and Quarter

● State ● Cedar Rapids ● Des Moines ● Eastern ● Northern ● Western



Our Commitment to Natural Supports

Cases by Placement Type



State of Iowa Family First: Limiting Placements in Residential Care



A Success Story:

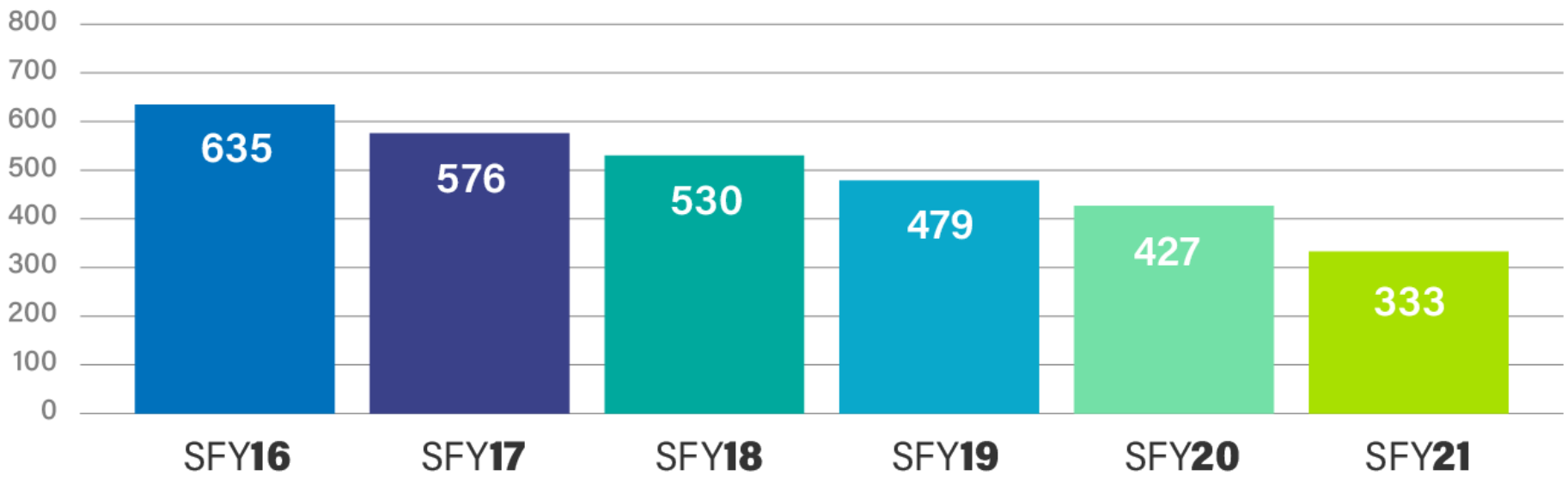
“Thought I'd pass along that your efforts to reduce placements in congregate care are working. For the last 15 or so years I've sent a Christmas card every year to the kids I've placed in group care. There have been years when I've sent upwards of two dozen cards. **This year I sent four.** So - your data is showing some real world impact.”

-William Owens, Associate Juvenile Judge, Wapello County Courthouse

Our Commitment to Rightsizing Residential

Number of youth in group care on average from 2016 to now.

Census Numbers SFY16 - SFY21



State of Iowa

Family First: Maintaining Momentum

Key Opportunities:

- ▶ Evaluate existing pilot programs
- ▶ Invest in Primary Prevention
- ▶ JCS establish post-discharge services for QRTP
- ▶ Modifications to Iowa Code Chapter 232

State of Iowa

Family First: Maintaining Momentum

Modifications to 232

▶ Technical Concerns

- *Reasonable Efforts* should be its own section **(232.102A)**
- Change to how summons/notices are provided **(232.37)**
- Add standards for when a guardian is removed **(232.118)**

▶ Family First Aligned

- Require court to secure the least restrictive care for placement **(232.1)**
- Definition of “foster care” to include unlicensed relative and fictive kin **(232.2(6))**
- Defines “Fictive Kin” and “Relative” **(232.2(20A) and 232.2(46A))**
- Require the court to explicitly weigh the harm of removal with the harm avoided by removing the child **(232.67)**
- Sequence ordering of placement. Relatives are given preferred placement **(232.78(8))**
- Require reasonable efforts to place a child with siblings **232.108(1)**
- Allow for Relative Notices even when custody is not with DHS **(232.84(2))**

State of Iowa

Family First: Maintaining Momentum

Modifications to 232

► Other Substantive Changes

- **Shelter rate increase** is limited by existing Code language
- **Clarify responsibilities of Guardian ad Litem** who are tasked with representing the interests of children in care
- **Remove written requirement** for mandatory reporters
- **Allow multidisciplinary teams for ongoing services** beyond the assessment phase
- **Include the reportable child abuse incident** to have occurred within the previous 5 years for allegations of Denial of Critical Care and Dangerous Substance (**232.68**), but continue to accept allegations from all other categories of abuse (sexual abuse, physical abuse, human trafficking, etc.)
- **Align responsibility for Graduated Sanctions and Juvenile Detention Home Fund** to the Director of Juvenile Court Services and CJJP due to both serving solely adjudicated delinquent youth.

State of Iowa

Family First: Maintaining Momentum

Modifications to 234 and 600

► Substantive Changes

- **Extends Foster Care to the age of 21 years old**, as long as the youth is engaged in case planning, wants to remain in foster care and is limited to licensed family foster care or supervised apartment living. **(234.1)**
- **Reduce barriers to accessing information about siblings** and other records to adult adoptees when a parent's rights are terminated pursuant to Chapter 232. **(600.816A)**

Questions and Comments