

# 2023 Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) Collaborative on Identifying and Engaging Non-Custodial Parents Project Report

From September 2023 through March 2024, seven child welfare agencies sent teams comprised of child protective services (CPS) and/or youth justice (YJ) professionals and a supervisor(s) to use the Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) model to design, test, and implement organizational changes to improve CPS and YJ practices in identifying and engaging non-custodial parents (NCPs). The PDSA Collaborative focuses change efforts by helping teams to define their goal(s), systematically plan a change, evaluate outcomes using qualitative and/or quantitative metrics, examine implementation lessons, and advance positive changes in a subsequent cycle. In addition, the collaborative format encourages idea-sharing between agency teams.

## Sponsor Team

A statewide advisory committee, the Continuous Quality Improvement Advisory (CQI) Committee examined multiple data sources including Systems Change Reviews, Initial Assessment Case Reviews, and the Child and Family Services Reviews and completed root cause analysis and a causal chain exercise to choose the topic and develop the collaborative mission and goals.

### Collaborative definition of non-custodial parent

**A parent who does not have placement of, live in the home with, or have legal physical custody of their child(ren)/youth.**

## Mission

The mission of the 2023 Plan-Do-Study-Act Collaborative is to transform agency culture and practices to prioritize early, persistent, and continual efforts to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents during the agency's involvement with the family to:

- increase natural supports and resources to children and families,
- benefit child and youth well-being in identity and moral development and cultural connections,
- provide resources for increased Child Protective Services in-home safety plans or Youth Justice evidence-based in-home services or interventions,
- increase likelihood that the child or youth remains with family through facilitating timely permanence with a custodial or non-custodial parent or placement with kin (congruent with Family First legislation),
- improve county and/or tribal agency outcomes by engaging the non-custodial parent in child(ren), youth, and/or families' lives.



# Theory of Change



## The 2023 PDSA Collaborative goals were:



### Goal 1

PDSA teams will apply consistent, realistic expectations for Access, Initial Assessment, Ongoing, and Youth Justice Intake and Ongoing professionals on how and when to identify, locate, contact, and engage non-custodial parents. Child welfare professionals will have guidance and/or tools to assist in their efforts to identify and contact NCPs. Efforts will also demonstrate the importance of incorporating NCPs in assessment and planning efforts.



### Goal 2

PDSA teams will use measurement systems to increase accountability for continual efforts to contact and engage non-custodial parents during the agency's involvement with the family. These measurements will improve child welfare professionals' communication, information-sharing, and decision-making when working with NCPs. Supervisors will consistently use data in supervision and training. Teams will gather measures that assess whether engaging NCPs improved child/family outcomes.



### Goal 3

Child welfare professionals will increase confidence in navigating conflictual and/or complicated relationships for families with non-custodial parents and their relatives. Child welfare professionals will have guidance and support from supervisors/leadership in practice skills such as setting appropriate and beneficial boundaries and communicating about the child welfare role and case progress with all family members.

# Agency Practice and Process Lessons Learned

Identifying, contacting, and engaging non-custodial parents required shared definitions, consistent efforts, and clear information-sharing strategies across all work functions. Teams had to address agency culture with multiple strategies to achieve practice changes regarding NCPs.

## All Child Protective Services (CPS) and Youth Justice (YJ) functions:

- Agencies needed to ensure that all staff had a shared definition of non-custodial parent (NCP) and to clarify that NCPs have parental rights that create statutory/standard requirements to notify, contact, and attempt to engage.
- CPS and YJ professionals must be able to identify justifiable reasons for not contacting the NCP. Supervision and team consultation should explore whether any biases might lead professionals to believe there is a justifiable reason for no contact.

**Strategies:** practice guides, child welfare cross-unit training, supervision, facilitated discussions at staff meetings.

- Most PDSA teams found at least one non-custodial parent in a moderate to high number (60-70%) of families supported in initial assessment, ongoing, and/or youth justice. This increased professionals' motivation to engage NCPs and highlighted the importance of the issue.
- Professionals felt supervision and discussion in team meetings were the best formats for brainstorming around barriers to NCP engagement and increasing accountability to focus on NCPs.

**Strategies:** tracking monthly counts of NCP parent contact and engagement in CPS and YJ using run charts, supervision, discussion at staff meetings and child welfare cross-unit trainings. Sharing materials that engage the heart (i.e., success stories) and head (i.e., agency and external data).

## ACCESS: Ask consistent questions, diligently search administrative sources, and document uniformly.

- Access aids in early identification of NCPs by asking the reporter targeted questions about who the non-custodial parent is and how to contact them. Access can also perform a diligent search of CCAP, CARES, or other search engines to identify the NCP.
- Document any NCP identity information gathered including name, phone, and address (person management in eWiSACWIS), as well as any information on NCP's engagement in child(ren)'s lives (narrative boxes of Access report).

**Strategies:** access guide on questions to ask and engines to search, child welfare cross-unit training, facilitated discussions at staff meetings.

# Agency Practice and Process Lessons Learned (CONT.)

**INITIAL ASSESSMENT (IA): Identify and contact non-custodial parents earlier. Ensure that information about NCP location, contact, and engagement during IA is shared consistently with ongoing at transfer.**

Before projects were implemented, IA professionals reported often working on identification and contact of NCPs toward the conclusion of the initial assessment. IA practice shifts included:

- Focus on asking NCP identity, location, and engagement information earlier in the IA process (for example, by day 15 identifying the NCP and by day 30 making NCP contact.
- If identity and/or contact information is incomplete, complete a diligent search using a customized list of search tools.
- Creating consistent documentation processes about NCP contact that occurred in IA and adding discussion of NCP engagement to case transfer checklist ensure that informed flows through the case process.

**Strategies:** IA checklist, case transfer checklist, search procedure/guide, training and facilitated discussions at staff meetings, and supervision.

## YOUTH JUSTICE (YJ) INTAKE:

- YJ Intake and YASI assessment processes should be used as consistent, natural information gathering junctures to ask about and document NCP identity, location, and engagement in the child(ren)'s lives.
- Job aids such as a letter template and standardized phone contact questions provide easy to use resources for YJ professionals to use to contact more NCPs.

## YOUTH JUSTICE (YJ) ONGOING:

- YJ professionals felt supervision and unit discussions were the best formats for brainstorming around barriers to NCP engagement and increasing accountability to focus on NCPs.

**Strategies:** revised intake and assessment forms, job aids, YJ policies, supervision, team discussion in unit meetings

# System Considerations

## Increasing Motivation

Changing culture to prioritize the importance of identifying and engaging NCPs was the most effective system strategy to change professionals' practice systemwide. The most effective strategies to increase motivation included: 1) tracking the number of families with a NCP (professionals found this was usually 60–70% of the families they are supporting); 2) experiencing success stories from engaging NCP/NCP relatives including increased engagement with children, more efficient IA due to earlier engagement, and reduced time in OHC or placement with NCP/NCP relative, and 3) increasing discussion about engaging NCPs at existing check-ins (such as supervision, unit meetings, internal trainings).

## Standards Guidance

Professionals reported they would like additional guidance in the standards on the definition of a NCP, justifiable reasons for not contacting a NCP, and best practice guidance for how professionals should search, contact, and engage NCPs.

## Informed Organizational Partners

Training external organizational partners on the reasons that child welfare professionals are seeking information on NCP and NCP relatives, particularly legal partners, schools, child support, and economic support would assist child welfare professionals in their engagement efforts.

## eWiSACWIS Challenges

Teams noted that NCP contact and engagement efforts are not easy to locate in eWiSACWIS as information is usually contained in narrative case notes. eWiSACWIS does not have a clear way of identifying non-custodial parents in person management. There is not a method of keeping track of contact information attempted by date.

## Statewide Tools & Resources

While some resources need to be agency-specific, the following tools and resources were rated by professionals as helpful and could be distributed statewide: genograms; an eWiSACWIS report identifying NCPs, NCP location, and contacts; reference sheet that included when and what questions to ask to seek information about NCP/NCP relatives at different stages such as intake, IA contact, case transfer, and ongoing contact; and an updated list of best on-line person search procedures.

## On-line Search

Professionals rated the following search strategies as most helpful (in descending order): CCAP, CARES/KIDS, eWiSACWIS historical case notes/reports, offender locator search, google search, social media (Facebook, others), economic support, Seneca, and True People.

## PDSA Team

## PDSA Activities



- Improved Access processes by asking consistent questions about NCP information on every referral and documenting in the same location.
- Ensured that mandated reporting training for schools included that Access professionals will be asking for information about NCPs/NCP relatives when educational staff report.
- Used a knowledge-check survey, conversations, and mini-training strategies to clarify definition of NCP, what locate and contact entails, and specific questions to ask to gather information.
- Developed a list of parental search resources for all child welfare functions.



- Surveyed staff on importance of NCP involvement, barriers, knowledge of policies and procedures, and current practice with NCPs.
- Used survey results to create a targeted staff training at each unit level for Access, Initial Assessment (IA), Ongoing, Youth Justice and Foster Care.
- Added NCP inquiry to Access checklist and deadline to identify and attempt engagement during IA process checklist.
- Supervisors focused on regular check-in with professionals about NCP engagement during supervision.



- Improved Youth Justice (YJ) intake process by ensuring NCP identity and involvement is on the YJ intake form, asking families to arrive early to fill out the intake form, confirming form is complete at initial meeting, and uploading the form to the shared data system. In the event of temporary physical custody or if the family did not appear at the initial intake, the YJ professional brought the form to the first court hearing.
- During the YASI assessment, YJ professionals standardized practice to always assess the contact/involvement of NCP in youth's lives. Then, YJ professionals will contact/involve the NCP when appropriate to inform and involve. Supervision consultation was used for difficult situations.
- Published an agency policy on when and how often NCP's will be contacted in YJ practice.



- Implemented a revised Initial Assessment (IA) checklist which included identifying the NCP during the first 15 days and attempting contact within 30 days.
- IA increased documentation of NCP identity when known or why NCP was not contacted during IA, when applicable.
- Revised case transfer sheet to consistently share information on NCP in case transition from IA to Ongoing. Onboarded new staff to case transfer sheet.





- Improved documentation by implementing a data tracking system that measured if CPS professionals were documenting the identity and contact information within person management in SACWIS for children and adults.
- Data tracking system of NCP documentation was made sustainable by creating a desk guide and assigning administrative support to collect data directly from CPS professionals every 3 months as part of their regular duties. The data report produced will be sent to supervisors for review and follow-up with direct service professionals to ensure NCP documentation is timely and consistent.



- Implemented a NCP data collection form for Access that travels with the Access phone used by all access professionals.
- Standardized documentation of NCP in access report amongst all staff.
- Next project focus (still underway) is to use supervision to increase the number of NCP contacts in the first 30-days of IA whenever possible.



- Created a discussion tool for supervisors to use with Youth Justice (YJ) professionals to assess NCP engagement with the families they are supporting.
- Created two jobs aids for YJ professionals: a letter template and standardized phone call questions to provide easy to use resources for YJ professionals to contact more NCPs.
- PDSA team members held conversations with YJ ongoing professionals to determine their thought processes/decisions as it relates to the justifiable reasons for lack of contact with NCPs. This has opened the door to future conversations on this topic and helped the PDSA team identify practice strengths and opportunities for improvement as it relates to justifiable reasons.

# Measuring Progress

Multiple evaluations were built into the 2023 PDSA Collaborative to measure the effectiveness of this experience on improving the identification, location, contact, and engagement of non-custodial parents. The four evaluations are described below.



## NCP Pre / Post Eval

The Non-Custodial Parent Survey measures direct practice staff and supervisor assessment of practice related to non-custodial parents.

### Example question:

In my regular practice, I attempt to engage non-custodial parents.

- On all cases
- On most cases
- On some cases
- On few to no cases

## Agency Pre / Post Eval

The Agency Evaluation measures organizational challenges, health, and culture across six domains.

### Example question:

Members of this team are able to bring up problems and tough issues.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

## Agency Pre / Post Self Assessment

The Agency Self Assessment measures practice challenges and strengths as it relates to engagement with NCPs.

### Example question:

Does your agency create an organizational environment and climate that strongly emphasizes the value of NCPs in children's lives?

## Run Charts

Run Charts collect monthly data from direct practice staff to measure the engagement of NCPs throughout the collaborative.

### Example question:

Did you (the IA professional) contact the NCP during the IA?



# Measuring Progress: NCP Survey

The NCP Evaluation Survey was administered before the beginning of the collaborative (August 2023) and at the end (March 2024). This evaluation measured direct practice staff and supervisor thoughts and actions regarding non-custodial parents. Agencies were encouraged to solicit responses from their colleagues, including those not participating in the PDSA Collaborative, and all agencies chose to do so. A total of 103 CPS / YJ professionals and supervisors responded to the baseline survey and 48 responded to the post survey.

Questions asked respondents to assess practice items on a scale. The survey results are provided below to note areas of strength, as well as areas that may benefit from additional focus. As each agency has a small sample size, and as there is an imbalance in the count of those who responded before and after the survey, the results are not necessarily representative of all agency's practice.

**103**      **48**

Respondents in the baseline survey

Respondents in the post survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Expectations

Respondents were asked if they or their staff know what they are expected to do when it comes to identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging the NCP. Taken together, agencies experienced improvement in responses to those who know what is expected of them in identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging NCPs as the post results show 81 to 96 percent of respondents have this understanding all or most of the time. This is up from the 50 to 83 percent of respondents who stated they had this understanding in the pre survey.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	51%	38%	37%	26%	67%	50%	44%	33%
On most cases	32%	38%	30%	24%	29%	35%	38%	50%
On some cases	10%	17%	23%	36%	4%	15%	15%	8%
On few to no cases	4%	6%	5%	9%	0%	0%	2%	6%
Not applicable or blank	3%	2%	5%	5%	0%	0%	2%	2%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Expectations were best understood in identifying the NCP, and this understanding decreased through locating, contacting, and engagement. However, knowledge of expectations increased over the collaborative.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Confidence

Respondents were asked their confidence when it comes to identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging the NCP. Taken together, agencies experienced improvement in responses around being confident in one's abilities to identify, locate, contact, and engage NCPs with 79-98 percent of respondents in the post survey having this confidence across all items, all or most of the time. This is up from 53-78 percent of respondents who stated they had this confidence in the pre survey. The largest improvement was in the area of NCP engagement.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	37%	21%	26%	16%	42%	21%	29%	29%
On most cases	41%	48%	40%	38%	56%	71%	58%	50%
On some cases	17%	25%	26%	35%	0%	6%	6%	8%
On few to no cases	4%	4%	4%	7%	0%	0%	2%	6%
Not applicable or blank	2%	2%	4%	5%	2%	2%	4%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## Supervision Discussions Regarding the NCP

Respondents were asked the extent to which the CPS / YJ professional and supervisor discuss identifying, locating, contacting, and engaging with the NCP. Within the post survey, a total of 77-83 percent of respondents stated that they had these discussions with their supervisor all or most of the time, an improvement from the 60-66 percent in the pre-survey.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	45%	38%	36%	30%	54%	50%	54%	42%
On most cases	21%	25%	26%	30%	29%	27%	27%	35%
On some cases	17%	20%	22%	22%	6%	13%	6%	10%
On few to no cases	8%	7%	6%	9%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Not applicable or blank	9%	10%	10%	9%	8%	8%	10%	10%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Direct practice staff confidence, and supervision discussions around the NCP, increased over the collaborative.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Engagement of NCP in Regular Practice

Respondents were asked to respond to how they identify, locate, contact, and engage NCPs in their regular practice. This question provides important insight into how the respondents behave in their regular practice as it relates to work with NCPs. Within the post survey, between 71-88 percent of respondents state that they identify through engage with NCPs all or most of the time, an improvement from the baseline-survey results..

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	53%	43%	39%	25%	63%	56%	52%	42%
On most cases	29%	32%	31%	37%	25%	31%	27%	29%
On some cases	11%	17%	23%	23%	8%	6%	15%	19%
On few to no cases	3%	5%	2%	7%	0%	2%	0%	4%
Not applicable or blank	4%	3%	5%	8%	4%	4%	6%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CPS / YJ Professional Engagement of NCP Relatives in Regular Practice

Respondents were asked to respond to how they identify, locate, contact, and engage with NCP relatives in their regular practice. Respondents stated that they contacted NCP relatives at a lower percentage than they contacted the NCP. The chart below shows that in the post survey, 44-52 percent of respondents identified through engaged with the NCP relative all or most of the time. Respondents also spent more effort identifying the relative as compared to engaging with them.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	25%	18%	17%	14%	23%	19%	19%	15%
On most cases	19%	22%	21%	18%	29%	27%	29%	29%
On some cases	33%	34%	33%	36%	33%	29%	27%	27%
On few to no cases	16%	18%	20%	22%	13%	23%	21%	25%
Not applicable or blank	7%	7%	9%	10%	2%	2%	4%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Direct practice staff efforts to identify, locate, contact, and engage the NCP is greater than efforts to do the same for NCP relatives.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Documentation of NCP Identification, Contact, and Engagement

Respondents were asked if they know where and how to document all their efforts to identify, contact, locate, and engage NCPs. Respondents showed small improvement in this item, and between 85-90 percent reported that they know where to document information all or most of the time.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	58%	52%	57%	52%	65%	58%	63%	56%
On most cases	24%	26%	23%	24%	25%	31%	23%	29%
On some cases	9%	11%	11%	14%	2%	2%	4%	4%
On few to no cases	5%	6%	4%	4%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Not applicable or blank	4%	5%	5%	6%	2%	2%	4%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CPS / YJ Professional Determination of Appropriateness

Agencies as a whole experienced small improvement in the below measure which quantifies knowledge of how to determine if it is not appropriate to identify through engage with the NCP. Whereas the pre-survey showed two thirds of respondents stated they had this knowledge all or most of the time, the post survey shows a total of 77-79 percent of respondents stated they had this knowledge all or most of the time.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	27%	25%	25%	23%	23%	21%	21%	21%
On most cases	42%	43%	40%	45%	54%	58%	58%	58%
On some cases	13%	14%	18%	17%	8%	8%	6%	6%
On few to no cases	9%	9%	8%	8%	4%	4%	6%	6%
Not applicable or blank	10%	10%	9%	8%	10%	8%	8%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Approximately eighty percent of direct practice staff know how to determine the appropriateness of identifying through engaging the NCP all or most of the time.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Receives Support from their Supervisor

Respondents were asked if they receive the support they need from their supervisor in identifying, contacting, locating, and engaging NCPs. The post survey shows 79–85 percent of respondents receive the support they need from their supervisor all or most of the time. This improved slightly from the pre-survey.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All Agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	52%	50%	47%	44%	48%	44%	46%	42%
On most cases	25%	24%	30%	30%	38%	40%	35%	38%
On some cases	8%	10%	10%	13%	4%	4%	6%	6%
On few to no cases	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Not applicable or blank	8%	9%	8%	8%	4%	6%	6%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CPS / YJ Professional Knowledge of Engaging a NCP of a Different Racial or Ethnic Background

Respondents were asked if they are confident in their ability to identify, locate, contact, and engage with NCPs of a different racial or ethnic background than their own. All agencies ranks themselves high in their confidence on this measure, as 83–92 percent state their confidence on all or most cases. This is slightly larger than in the pre-survey, and was not an area that any agency focused on during their PDSA work.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	48%	40%	39%	35%	52%	48%	52%	48%
On most cases	37%	37%	37%	38%	40%	44%	33%	35%
On some cases	8%	16%	16%	15%	4%	4%	8%	8%
On few to no cases	2%	2%	2%	6%	0%	0%	0%	2%
Not applicable or blank	6%	6%	7%	7%	0%	0%	6%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Across the collaborative, respondents reported strong supervision support and strong confidence in engaging a NCP of a different racial background.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Knowledge of Engaging a NCP of a Different Gender Identity

Respondents were asked if they are confident in their ability to identify, locate, contact, and engage with NCPs of a different gender identity than their own. All agencies rank themselves high in their confidence on this measure, as 83-94 percent state their confidence on all or most cases. This is similar to the pre-survey, and was not an area that any agency focused on during their PDSA work.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	51%	44%	43%	38%	52%	46%	48%	42%
On most cases	37%	39%	38%	42%	42%	48%	42%	42%
On some cases	4%	10%	11%	8%	2%	2%	4%	8%
On few to no cases	2%	2%	2%	6%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable or blank	6%	6%	7%	7%	0%	0%	6%	8%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CPS / YJ Professional Opinion that the NCP Engagement is Important

Respondents were asked if they think it is important and in the best interest of the child / youth to identify, locate, contact, and engage with NCPs. Eighty-three to 94 percent of post-survey respondents stated that it was important to engage the NCP all or most of the time. This is largely the same as in the pre-survey response.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	66%	57%	41%	34%	60%	46%	33%	31%
On most cases	25%	29%	42%	47%	33%	48%	56%	52%
On some cases	5%	8%	12%	14%	2%	2%	6%	13%
On few to no cases	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable or blank	4%	6%	6%	6%	0%	0%	4%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Across the collaborative timeframe, CPS / YJ professional opinion of the importance of NCP identification through engagement did not change.**



# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS / YJ Professional Opinion that the NCP Relative Engagement is Important

Respondents were asked if they think it is important and in the best interest of the child / youth to identify, locate, contact, and engage with NCP relatives. Respondents in the post-survey assessed identification through engagement with NCP relatives as less important than with the NCP themselves. The post-survey shows that 79 percent of respondents thought identifying the NCP relative was important in all or most cases, and this tapered down to 71 percent considering it important to engage the NCP relative all or most of the time.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)				All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)			
	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP	Identifying the NCP	Locating the NCP	Contacting the NCP	Engaging the NCP
On all cases	49%	42%	29%	26%	33%	25%	21%	21%
On most cases	33%	34%	40%	42%	46%	48%	52%	50%
On some cases	12%	17%	23%	24%	17%	23%	23%	25%
On few to no cases	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Not applicable or blank	5%	6%	6%	6%	0%	0%	4%	4%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

## CPS / YJ Professional Confidence in the Ability to Set Boundaries with the Parents

Respondents were asked about their confidence setting boundaries with the custodial and non-custodial parents. Respondents were overall confident in their ability to set boundaries with all parents, both before and after the collaborative.

	All Agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)		All Agencies (Post-PDSA)	
	Custodial Parent	Non-Custodial Parent	Custodial Parent	Non-Custodial Parent
On all cases	51%	50%	56%	56%
On most cases	39%	38%	35%	33%
On some cases	5%	7%	2%	4%
On few to no cases	1%	1%	0%	0%
Not applicable or blank	4%	4%	6%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

**CPS / YJ professional opinion of the importance of NCP relative identification through engagement did not change, and was lower than the same measure for the NCP. Staff also had strong confidence in their ability to set boundaries with parents.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS/YJ Professional Confidence in Ability to Navigate Conflictual Relationships with the Parents

Respondents were asked about their confidence in their ability to navigate any conflictual relationships between custodial and non-custodial parents. Respondents were also overall confident in their ability to navigate conflictual relationships between the custodial and non-custodial parents, on all or most cases.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)	All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)
On all cases	20%	27%
On most cases	54%	54%
On some cases	17%	10%
On few to no cases	1%	2%
Not applicable or blank	7%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%

## CPS/YJ Professional Ability to Connect Non-Custodial Parents to Appropriate Resources

Respondents were asked about their confidence in their ability to connect NCPs to appropriate resources. Seventy-nine percent of respondents stated they were able to connect NCPs to appropriate resources all or most of the time, as compared to 62 percent in the pre-survey.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)	All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)
All of the time	16%	10%
Most of the time	47%	69%
Some of the time	28%	15%
Rarely or none of the time	2%	0%
Not applicable or blank	8%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%

**Approximately 80 percent of professionals had confidence in their ability to navigate conflictual parent relationships and connect them with resources all or most of the time.**

# Measuring Progress: NCP Evaluation Survey

## CPS/YJ Professional Confidence in their Ability to Communicate with the Custodial Parent as to Why it is Necessary to Contact and Engage the NCP

Respondents were asked about their ability to communicate with the custodial parent as to why it is necessary to contact and engage the NCP. There was an increase in confidence over the course of the collaborative, and 88 percent now state they are confident in this communication all or most of the time, up from 75 percent in the pre-survey.

	All agencies (Pre-PDSA Collaborative)	All agencies (Post-PDSA Collaborative)
All of the time	35%	38%
Most of the time	40%	50%
Some of the time	17%	6%
Rarely or none of the time	2%	0%
Not applicable or blank	7%	6%
Grand Total	100%	100%

## CPS/YJ Professional Overall Understanding of Making Sufficient Effort to Identify, Locate, Contact, and Engage the NCP.

At the end of the collaborative, respondents were asked if their understanding of making sufficient effort to identify, locate, contact and/or engage the non-custodial parent has changed. Of the 48 respondents, 25 identified as being part of the collaborative, and 23 identified as not having been a part of the collaborative. Of the 25 respondents who were part of the collaborative, almost all stated that their knowledge increased somewhat or substantially. The 23 respondents not a part of the collaborative had only six state their NCP knowledge increased, and two thirds stated their knowledge did not change. This perhaps indicates that those who were a part of the collaborative received increased NCP knowledge, but that knowledge has not to-date been spread to those outside of the collaborative.

	Member of the PDSA Collaborative	Not a member of the PDSA Collaborative
Increased substantially over the PDSA Collaborative	8	2
Increased somewhat over the PDSA Collaborative	13	4
Neither increased nor decreased over the PDSA Collaborative	4	15
Decreased somewhat over the PDSA Collaborative	0	1
Decreased substantially over the PDSA Collaborative	0	0
(blank response)	0	1
Grand Total	25	23

**Members of the PDSA Collaborative had their knowledge of making sufficient effort to identify, locate, contact, and engage the NCP increased over the collaborative.**

# Measuring Progress: Agency Evaluation

The Agency Survey was administered to the 2023 PDSA Collaborative agencies before the beginning of the collaborative (August 2023) and at the end (February 2024). Eight CPS / YJ supervisors and 34 direct service professionals answered the baseline survey. Four CPS / YJ supervisors and 13 direct service professionals answered the post survey. This evaluation measured organizational challenges, health, and culture across the following six themes:

- Organizational Readiness for Change
- PDSA Team Readiness
- Learning Culture
- Organizational Climate
- Psychological Safety
- Peer relationships

The area of least strength was Organizational Readiness for Change which averaged 3.2 out of 5 on both the before and after survey. The next highest categories were Team Readiness and Learning Culture which averaged 3.6 to 3.8 in both surveys. The areas of greatest strength were Organizational Climate, Psychological Safety, and Peer Relationships. Each of these themes averaged 3.8 to 4.5 out of 5 across both the before and after surveys.

The only category that changed a sizeable amount across the before and after surveys (from 4.1 to 4.5) was Psychological Safety. This may indicate that the PDSA Collaborative had a positive influence in this area, whereas the collaborative likely did not affect the other areas of agency culture.

42

Respondents in  
the baseline  
survey

17

Respondents in  
the post survey

**Organizational culture and processes  
remained consistent, and overall positive,  
throughout the collaborative.**

# Measuring Progress: Agency Self-Assessment

The Agency Self-Assessment measures practice challenges and strengths as it relates to engagement with NCPs. Eleven items were measured on a four-point scale, and assessments were taken at the beginning and end of the PDSA Collaborative. The six items that scored at nine percent improvement or higher are seen in the chart below. These improvement results coincide with the areas that agencies focused on with their projects. The five measures without at least a nine percent improvement are largely areas that were not focused on in the PDSA projects.

**The greatest area of improvement was seen in the identification and location of the NCP from the first point of contact with the family.**

Agency Self-Assessment Question	Percent Improvement
Identifies and locates the NCP from the first point of contact with the family.	38%
Creates an organizational environment and climate that strongly emphasizes the value of NCPs in children's lives.	16%
Develops an atmosphere where the voice and active engagement of NCPs is included.	14%
Promotes the documentation of the NCP identity and/or involvement in eWISACWIS.	11%
Promotes the documentation of the NCP identity and/or involvement in consistent areas of eWISACWIS.	9%
Has provided specific professional development or learning opportunities to staff to discuss or practice how to address navigating conflictual and / or complicated relationships, including with the NCPs.	9%

"[There is a ] lack of clarity / direction on where to document in eWISACWIS."

"Prior to this project, we don't feel [our Agency] had discussions about the NCP and importance to the case."

"Since onset, the intentional info gathering of NCP data has greatly improved."

# Measuring Progress: Run Charts

Run charts are a means of collecting and presenting data over time to determine potential changes in practice. All direct practice staff involved in the PDSA Collaborative were asked to report data about their caseload's involvement with NCPs, including the extent to which they identified, located, contacted, and engaged with them every month. Individual CPS / YJ professional data collection was necessary to capture this information as eWiSACWIS does not contain a means to track non-custodial parent data. The other purpose in using run charts was as a means of encouraging accountability in focusing on NCPs in practice.

The practice areas that PDSA Collaborative members work within include Access, Initial Assessment, Ongoing, and Youth Justice. Some teams focused entirely on one practice area, whereas others sent a multidisciplinary team that included one or two individuals from each practice area. Each individual with a caseload was given an Excel spreadsheet tracking tool specific to their practice area with which they could track NCP data each month. Direct practice staff were also provided a guide that included definitions of terms, including who is considered a NCP and what constitutes contact with a NCP, as well as guidance on how to fill in the sheet.

Agencies routinely provided run chart data to allow for analysis in real time, but some caveats should be noted. First, some agencies and some staff did not send data every month. Second, as some teams sent multidisciplinary teams with one or two members per practice area, their monthly data represents a very small number of cases. When needed, the data results below include an explanation of these caveats to assist with interpreting results.

At the end of the collaborative, agencies were asked their opinions on the use of the run charts. For limitations, some felt it was not representative of their practice due to the small sample size in their county, and difficult to have staff track every week. Positives include counties who felt it did lead to greater accountability and planned to continue tracking this information after the collaborative end. One county stated that it made people more aware of documentation requirements and improved as a result of being asked for this information every month.

**Run charts did lead some agencies to greater accountability and NCP goal-setting.**



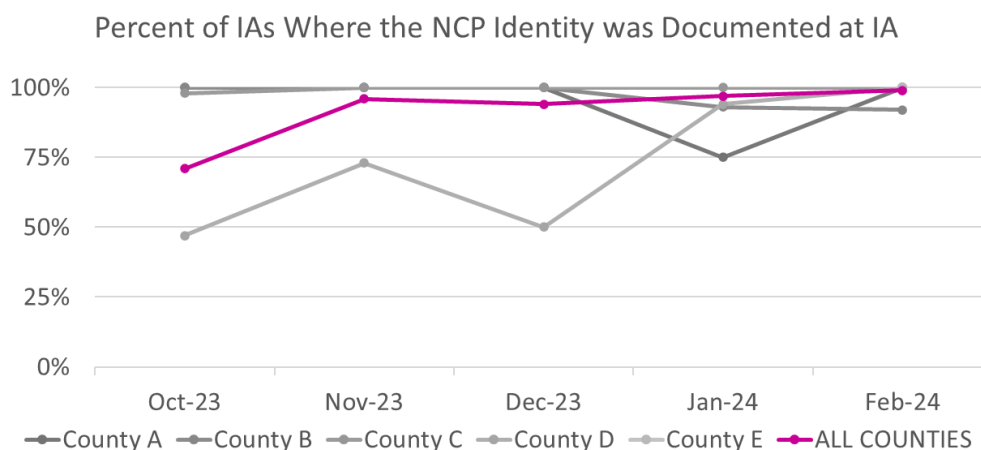
# Measuring Progress: CPS Access

One county chose to measure the extent to which Access workers taking CPS cases identified the NCP. Between October 2023 and February 2024, this agency documented between nine and 16 CPS reports per month with a potential NCP. Of these cases, the county documented the NCP identity in eWiSACWIS at the point of Access between 85 - 100 percent of the time. The agency noted that on all months reviewed, the measure would have been at 100 percent had the Access professional been able to ask follow up questions of all reporters. This agency noted that is not always possible as some reports came through the fax machine, voicemail, or from persons such as law enforcement who are unaware of NCP status.

# Measuring Progress: IA Run Charts

Initial Assessment professionals provided monthly data on their completed Initial Assessments, and the run charts evaluate those IAs that contain a NCP. Within the five months of assessment, the total number of completed Initial Assessments that contained a NCP ranged from 78 to 95 each month. It should be noted that two agencies have a small number of IAs completed and reported each month (less than 10). Therefore, the results below are best considered when looking at the purple line displaying the average of all counties as compared to individual results.

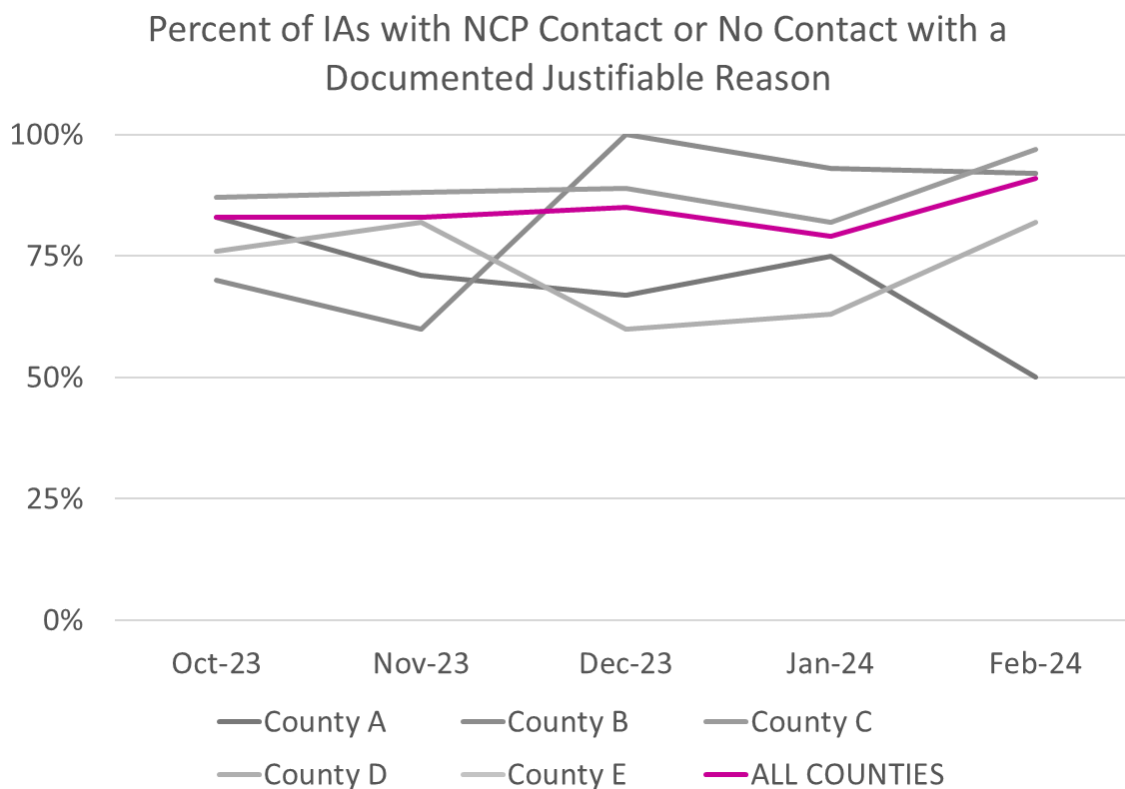
The graph below displays the percent of Initial Assessments where the NCP identity was documented at or before the Initial Assessment was completed. As can be seen here, the average percent across all completed IAs began at 71 percent in October 2023 and ended at 99 percent in February 2024. This measure shows one agency's large improvement over time, and all agencies have between 92 - 100 percent compliance as of February 2024.



**In February 2024, 99 percent of assessed IAs had the identity of the non-custodial parent documented.**

# Measuring Progress: IA Run Charts

Initial Assessment professionals were also asked to document both the extent to which IAs with NCPs had the NCP contacted during the IA, and also the extent of IAs where the NCP was not contacted due to a documented justifiable reason. These results were combined, and are seen below. Here, we see the all-county average between 79 and 91 percent. While this measure would ideally be at 100 percent, it is clear that at the point of Initial Assessment, these counties had strong practice in contacting the majority of NCPs, or not contacting them for a justifiable reason.

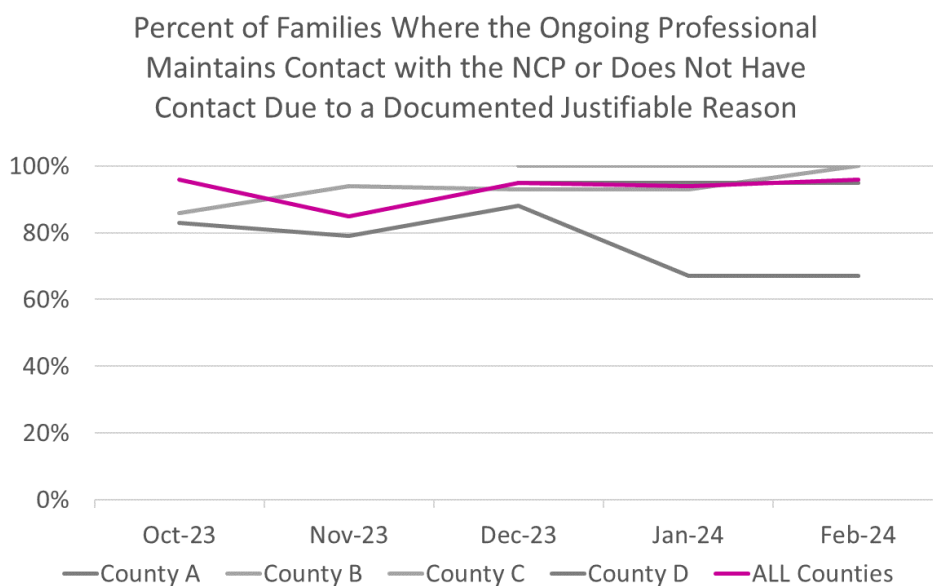


**In February 2024, 91 percent of assessed IAs contacted the non-custodial parent, or did not contact due to a justified reason.**

# Measuring Progress: Ongoing Run Charts

Ongoing professionals provided monthly data on their open ongoing caseload. Within the five months of assessment, the total number of cases open in ongoing that contained a NCP ranged from 63 to 69 each month with full reporting, within four agencies. Within these agencies, only some workers submitted data and two counties did not send data for the month of November 2023. Therefore, the results below are best considered when looking at the purple line displaying the average of all counties as compared to individual results. Please also note that as many professionals maintain their caseload across multiple months, many cases are counted in multiple months.

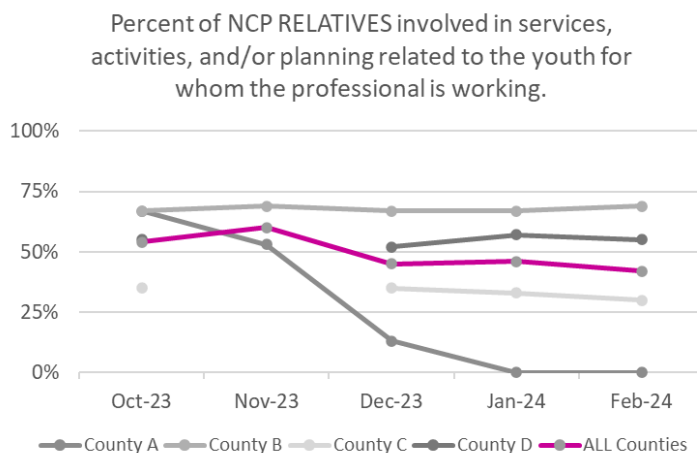
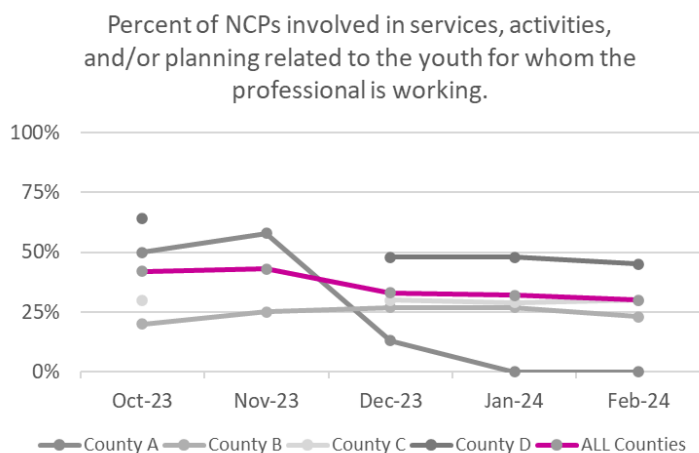
The chart below displays the percent of families where the Ongoing Professional maintains contact with the NCP or does not have contact due to a documented justifiable reason. As seen here, there were modest fluctuations across the months, again likely due to cases remaining fairly constant over time. As of February 2024, 96 percent of tracked cases had an ongoing professional contact the NCP, or not contact them due to a documented justifiable reason.



**Almost all Ongoing cases showed that the Ongoing Professional is in contact with the NCP, or not in contact due to a documented justifiable reason.**

# Measuring Progress: Ongoing Run Charts

Ongoing professionals also tracked the extent to which NCPs and NCP relatives may be involved in services, activities, and/or planning related to the child(ren). As seen in the graphs below, as of February 2024, 30 percent of families with an NCP have the NCP involved in their child(ren)'s services or activities and 42 percent of NCP relatives are involved in the child(ren)'s services or activities.



Finally, Ongoing professionals also tracked the number of unique cases where a child or children exited ongoing out-of-home care into the home of either a NCP or a NCP relative. Over the five months, the four agencies reported that there were 7 unique cases of a child or children exiting ongoing OHC into a NCP or NCP relative home.

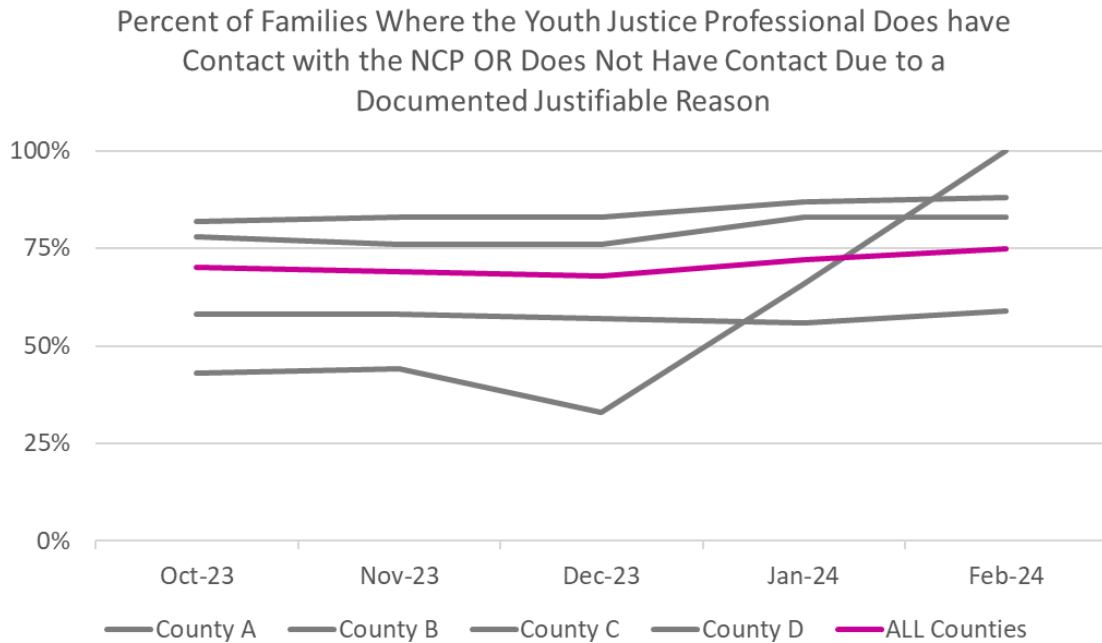
7

Unique cases where the child(ren) exited OHC into the NCP or NCP Relative Home.

# Measuring Progress: Youth Justice Run Charts

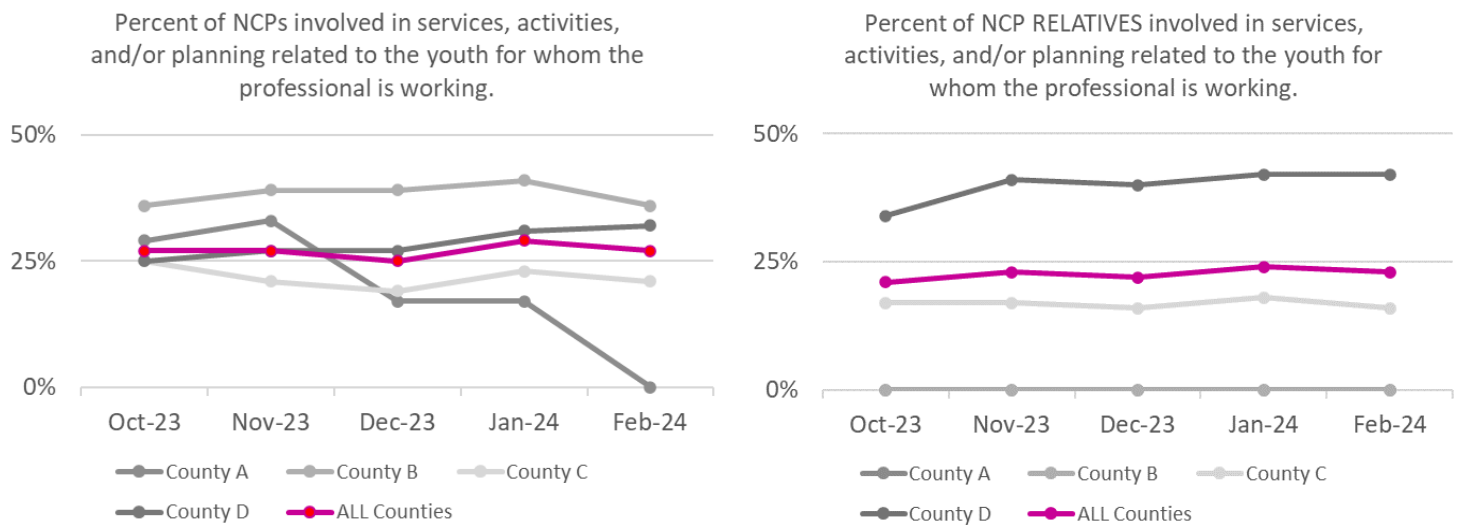
Youth Justice professionals provided monthly data on their open YJ caseload. Within the five months of assessment, the total number of reported cases open in YJ that contained a NCP ranged from 144 to 149 each month, across the four agencies that tracked YJ data. As with the IA and Ongoing caseload, it is best to consider the YJ data as a whole and review the purple line displaying the average of all counties as compared to individual results. Please also note that as many professionals maintain their caseload across multiple months, most cases are counted in multiple months.

As seen in the chart below, there were modest fluctuations across the months, again likely due to cases remaining fairly constant over time. This chart displays the percent of YJ Professionals who maintain contact with the NCP or who do not maintain contact due to a documented justifiable reason. Here we see that as of February 2024, 75 percent of professionals maintained contact with the NCP or did not due to a documented justifiable reason, up from 70 percent in October 2023.



# Measuring Progress: Youth Justice Run Charts

Youth Justice professionals also tracked the extent to which NCPs and NCP relatives may be involved in services, activities, and/or planning related to the youth. As seen in the graphs below, as of February 2024, 27 percent of families with an NCP have the NCP involved in their youth's services or activities and 23 percent of NCP relatives are involved in the youth's services or activities.



Finally, Youth Justice professionals also tracked the number of unique cases where a youth exited youth justice out-of-home care into the home of either a NCP or a NCP relative. Over the five months, the four agencies that tracked youth justice results reported that there were three unique cases of a youth exiting youth justice OHC into a NCP or NCP relative home. Of these three instances, two youth went into the NCP relative home, and one youth went into the NCP home.

**3**

Unique cases where the youth exited youth justice OHC into the NCP or NCP relative home.



# Resources

## Want to try these changes at your agency?

Resources, tools, and examples from PDSA Collaborative teams are available to encourage statewide sharing of practice ideas.

## Looking for state & national resources on best practices for engaging non-custodial parents/relatives?

The PDSA Collaborative Change Package contains a list of best practice resources and ideas based on a literature search of national and state child welfare resources.

Find more tools, ideas, and resources (including those linked above) at:

PDSA Collaborative homepage: <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/>

PDSA Toolkit homepage: <https://wcpds.wisc.edu/organizational-development/organizational-process-improvement/plan-do-study-act-pdsa-collaborative/pdsa-toolkit-welcome/>

## Want to implement organizational improvement methods at your agency?

WCWPDS hosts a website called the PDSA toolkit with videos, worksheets, and resources to learn and apply organizational improvement methods including plan, do, study, act cycles at your agency.



## Acknowledgements

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- The Wisconsin Child Welfare Professional Development system

## Contact

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