



2017

TEXAS CASA CHILD WELFARE PRIMER



STRENGTHENING THE VOICES
OF CASA STATEWIDE™

FEBRUARY 15, 2017
OMNI AUSTIN HOTEL



H-E-B TOURNAMENT
OF CHAMPIONS

Overview of the Current State of Texas Child Welfare

Recent CPS Developments

- Federal Lawsuit & Preliminary Ruling (Dec 2015); Special Masters Report & Final Ruling
- Relative Placement and Challenge with Foster Home Capacity
- Caseworker Turnover / High Vacancies/High Caseloads
- Lowering educational requirements for Caseworkers
- Increase in Child Abuse & Neglect Related Fatalities
- Media Coverage
- Change of Department of Family and Protective Services Leadership
- Governor, Lt. Governor & Speaker Agency Directive

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Filed in 2011: Plaintiffs of 17 children currently in or aged out of the foster care system in Texas.

Trial in 2014. Ruling December, 2015

Alleged violations of the plaintiff children's constitutional rights:

- Right not to be harmed while in state custody
- Right to familial association.

Focus on Permanent Managing Conservatorship (PMC) of the state

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Key problems identified in the current foster care system:

- Effective immediately: PMC children not placed in homes classified as a Foster Group Home unless 24 hour awake supervision
- Not enough CPS workers for foster children; caseloads are too high
- Limited types of foster homes; limited geographic distribution.
- Sibling groups are frequently split up.

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Key problems identified in the current foster care system

- Lack of supervision in group homes; children sexually abused
- Children experience too many placement moves.
- DFPS fails to enforce compliance with licensing standards.
- Not enough workers to regulate foster homes, workloads are too high

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Implementation of Ruling

Judge determined a Special Master was needed to oversee foster care reforms, funded through state; appointed by the court

Two Special Masters were appointed in Spring 2016: Francis McGovern, Kevin Ryan

Special Masters Report released in November 2016

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Reforms include:

- Ensuring paperwork is streamlined and case files for children are up to date
- Improving PAL and outreach to those who have aged out of care
- Ensuring all children in PMC have an ad-litem AND a CASA
- Completing a workload study to determine what a safe workload is for a CVS caseworker

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Reforms include:

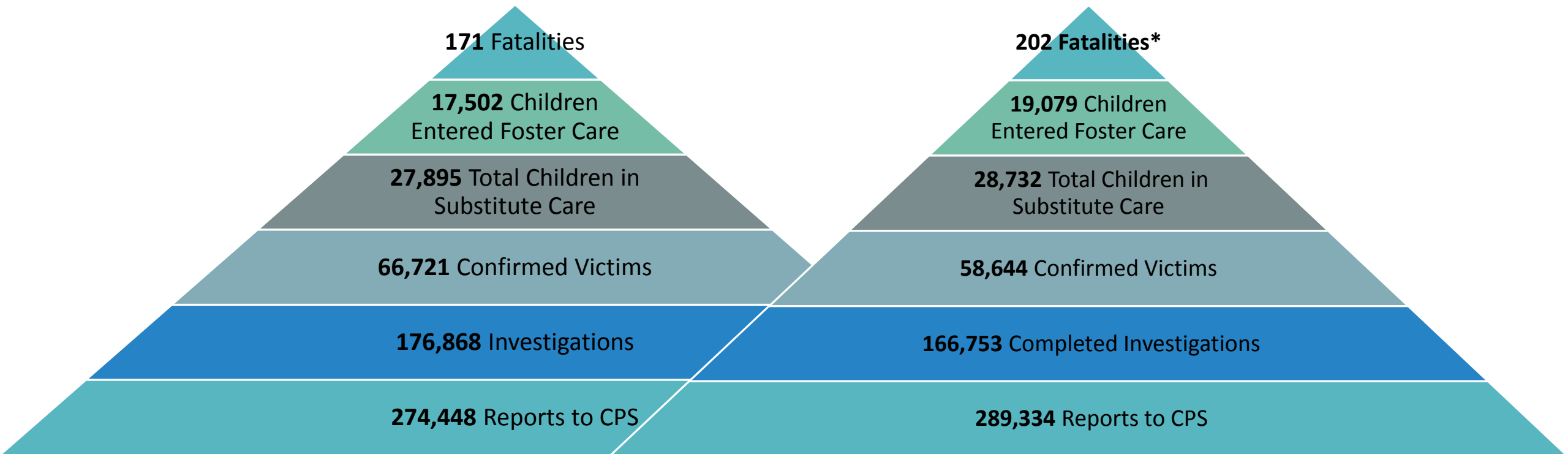
- Lower turnover rate for foster care caseworkers, ensuring enough workers are hired to keep caseloads low
- Improving process to ensure children placed out of county/region are kept safe
- Develop provisions to track child on child abuse, investigate and address this issue in the system
- Address issues with limited placement options across the state by conducting a statewide needs assessment

The Children's Rights Lawsuit Against the Texas Foster Care System

Reforms include:

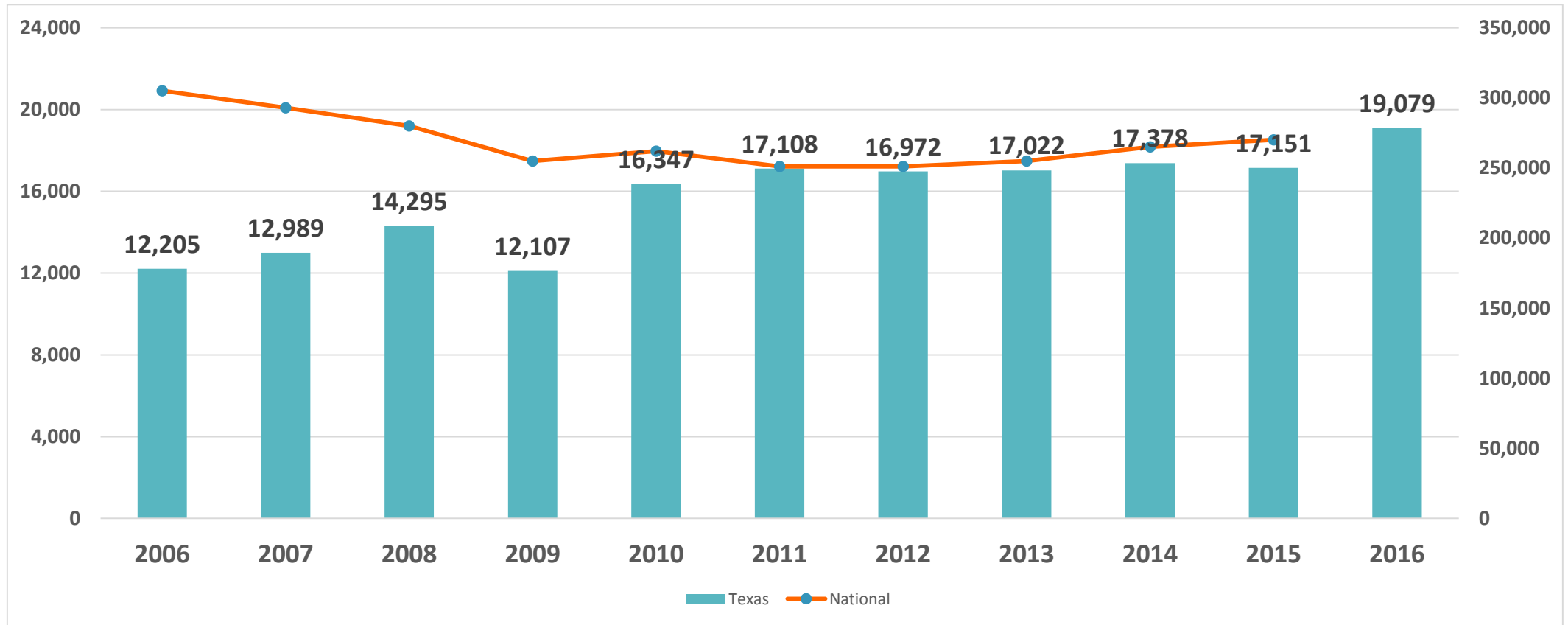
- Address what age ranges are appropriate for unrelated children to be in the same room together in any residential facility
- Recommend whether foster group homes should continue to operate and if so, how can risk of harm in these settings be reduced

2015 and 2016 Statewide Snapshots

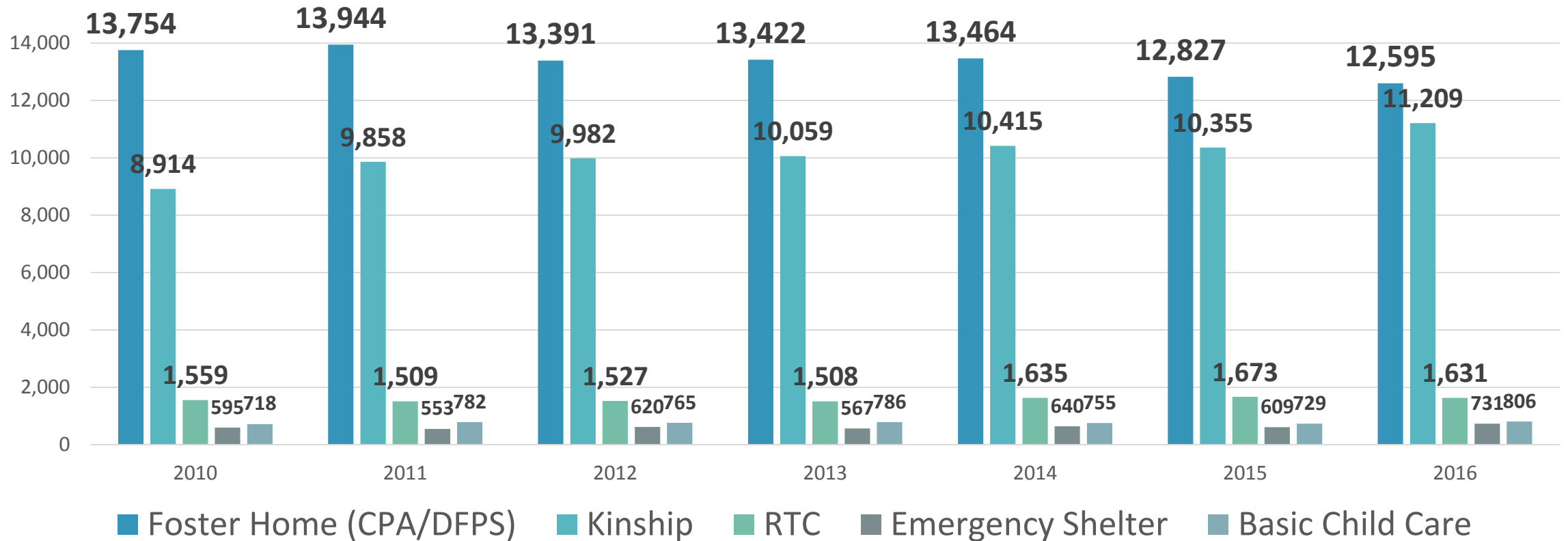


*Fatality Count as of December 2016

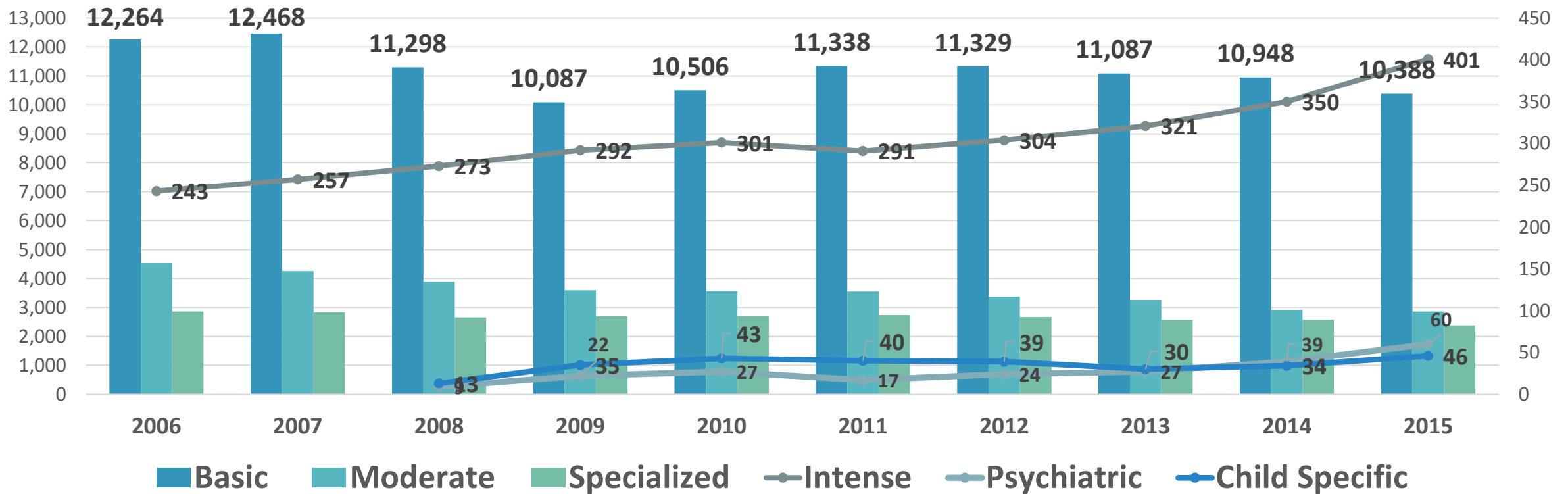
Children Entering Foster Care – State vs. National Trends



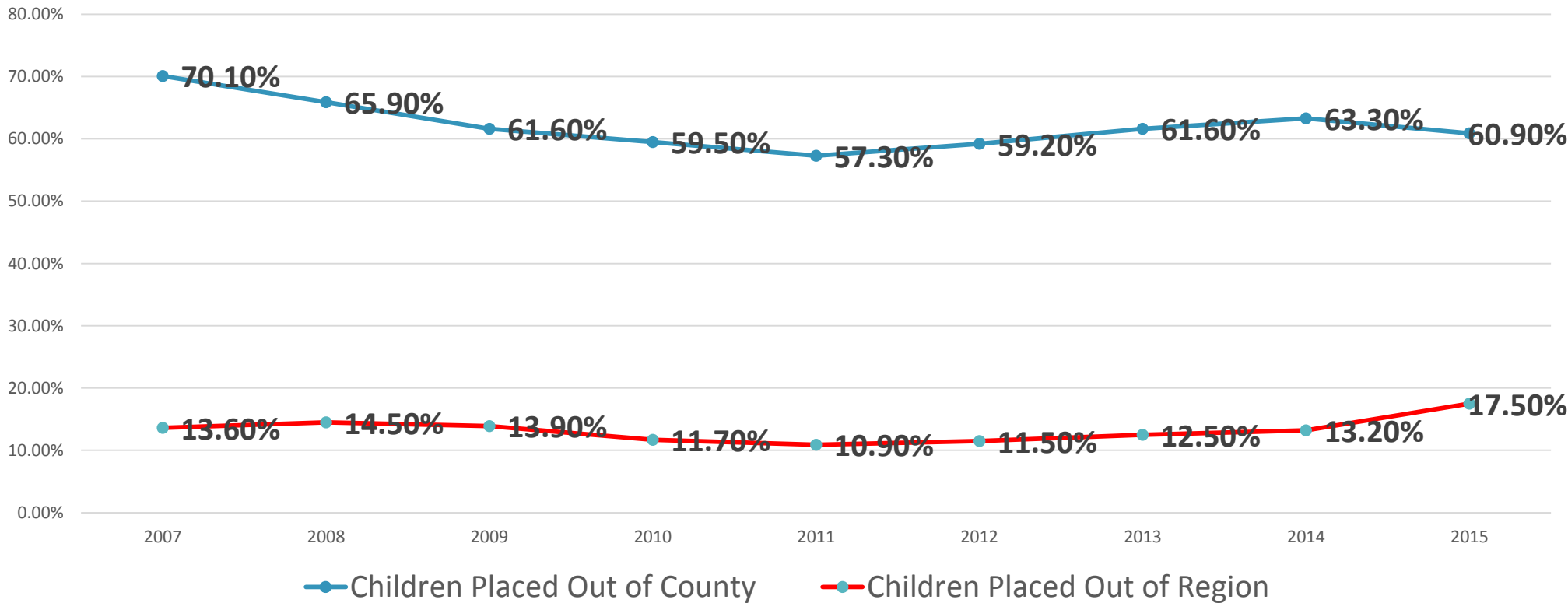
Where Children Are in Foster Care



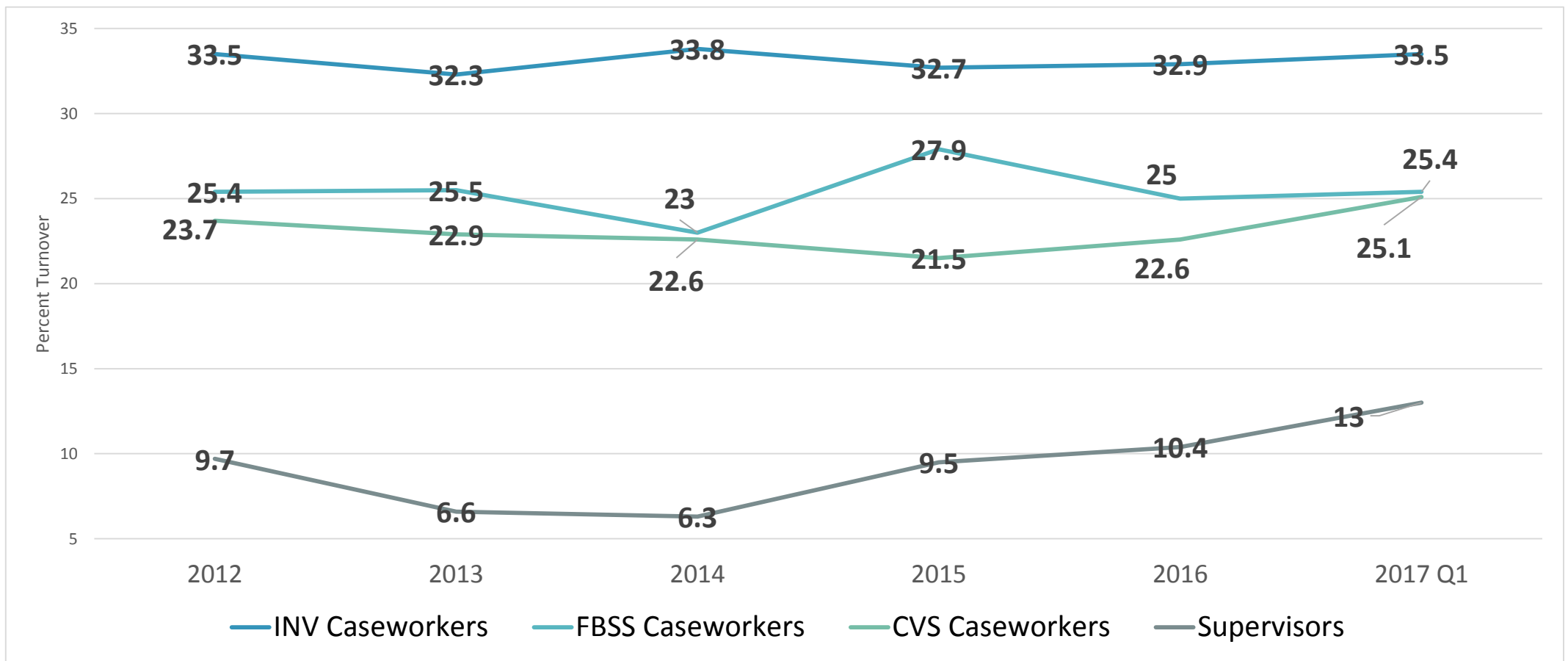
Foster Children: Level of Care Trends



Placement Proximity for Foster Children

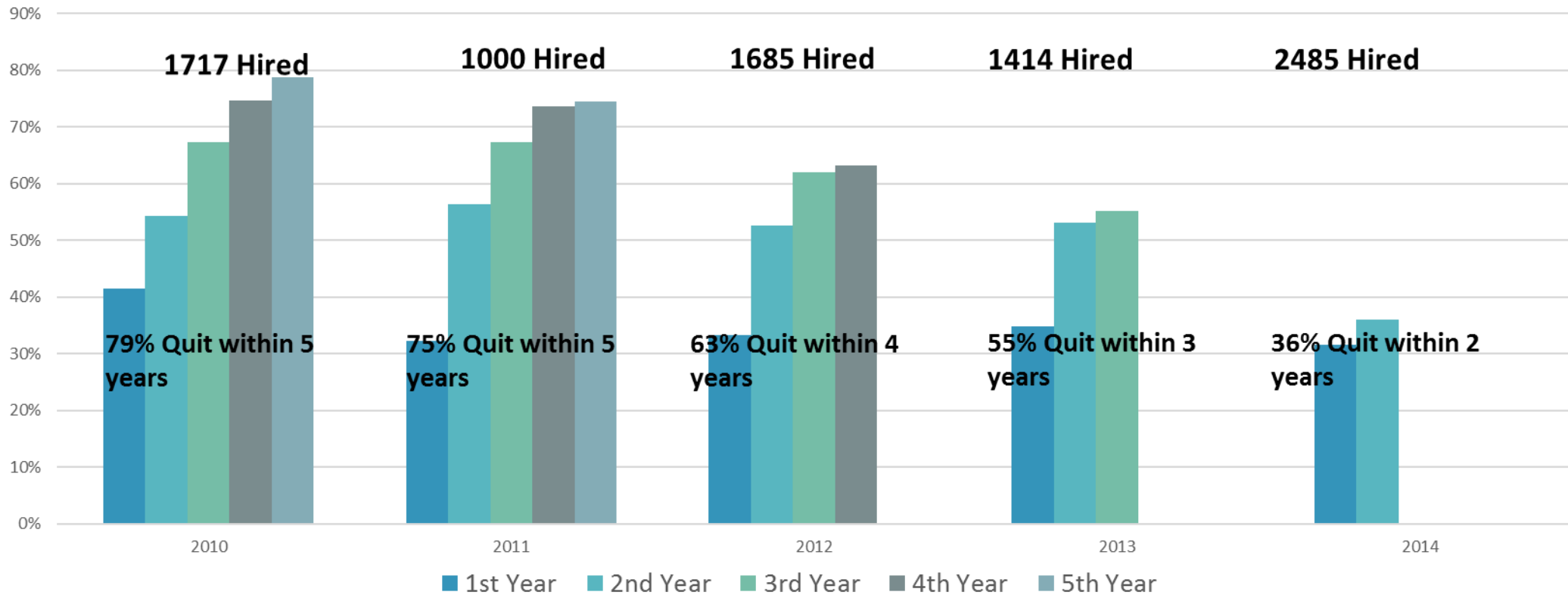


CPS Caseworker Turnover by Position



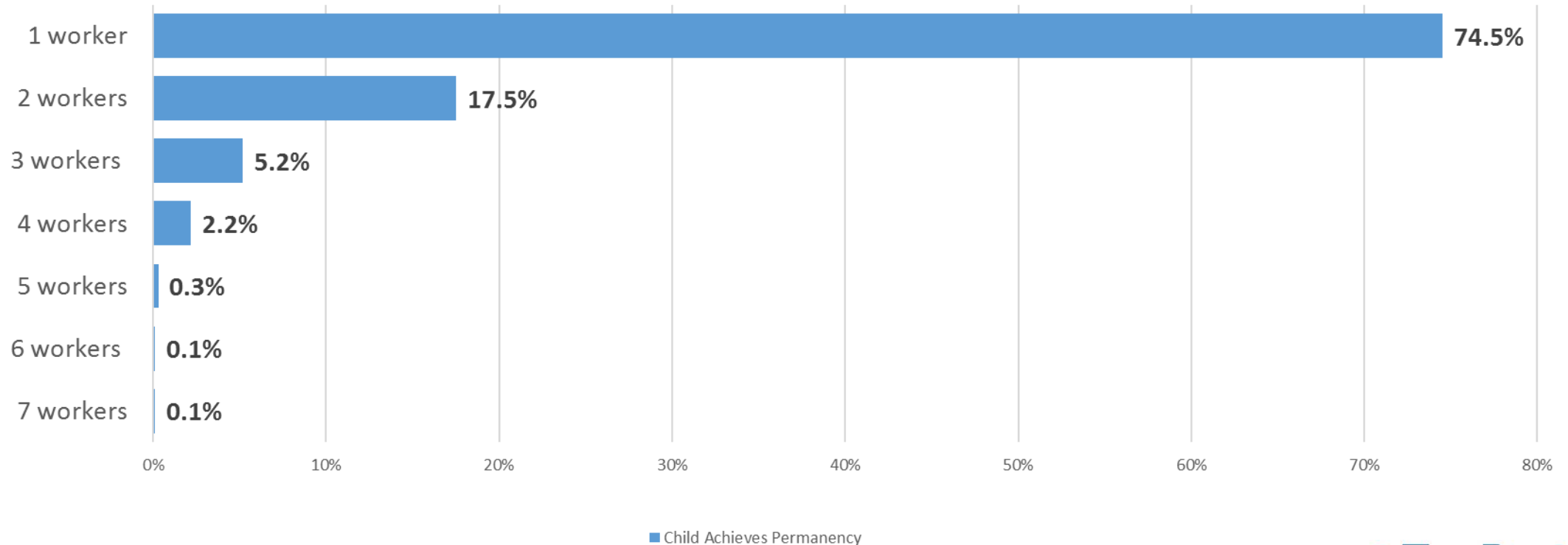
Costs of Turnover: \$70-\$80 Million Annually

Turnover by Year Hired

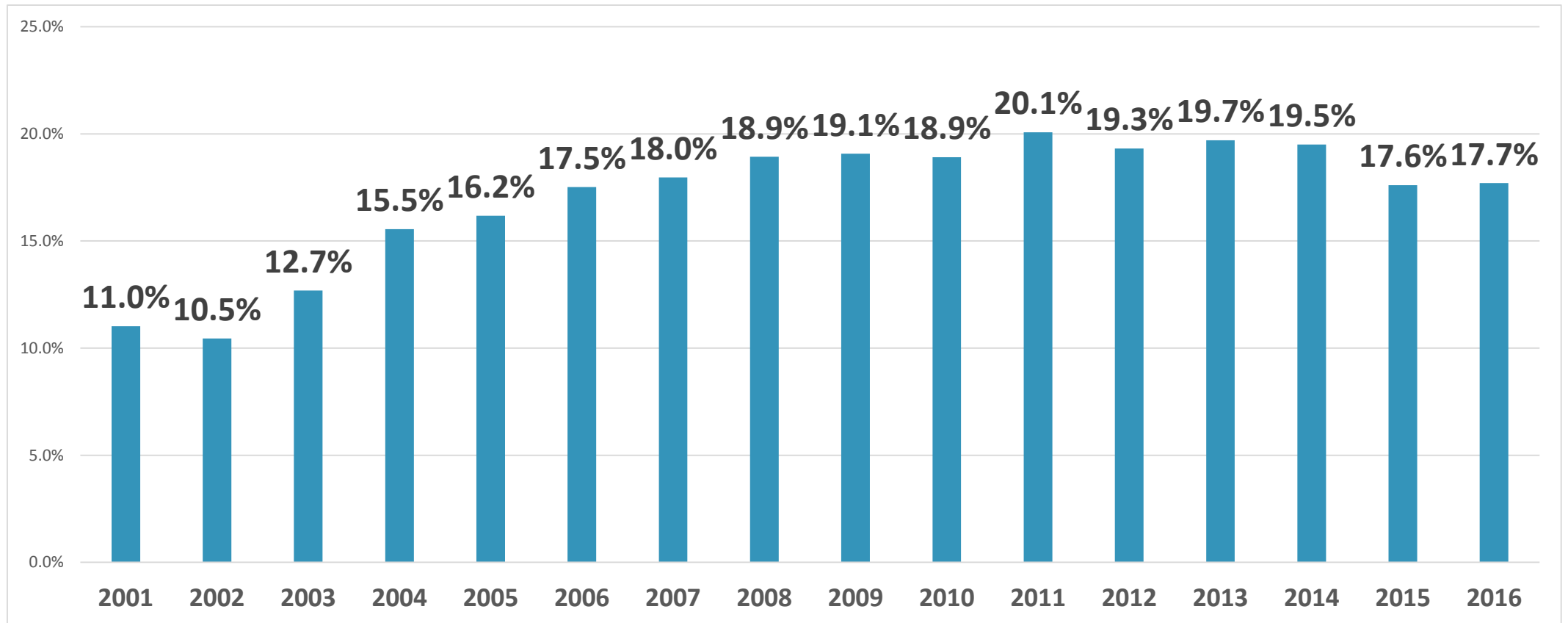


Caseworker Turnover Impacts Children

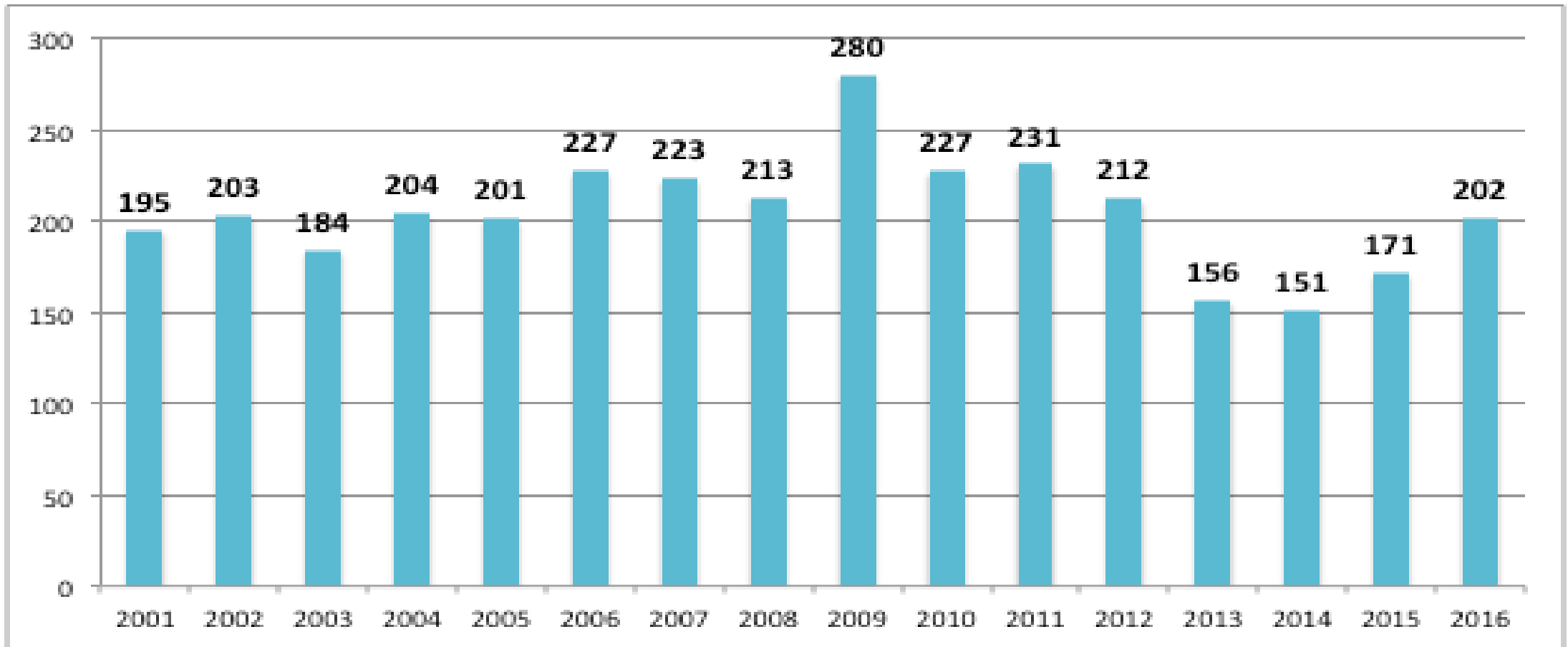
Permanency Outcomes due to Caseworker Turnover Within One Year



Children Re-Confirmed within 5 Years of FBSS or CVS Case Closure



Confirmed Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities



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TexProtects, The Texas Association for the Protection of Children is a research and advocacy non-profit organization created to tackle issues of Child Protective Services (CPS) reform, prevention and public awareness to bring a collective, organized voice representing the needs of children at risk of abuse and survivors of child abuse and neglect. The organization is autonomous, nonpartisan and nonpolitical, designed to educate decision makers, private funders and the public at large. To date, it is the only Texas organization that has a dedicated focus on the main issues of protection, prevention, and healing of abused and neglected children. For more information, please visit www.TexProtects.org.