

OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

ADMINISTERING THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES ACT



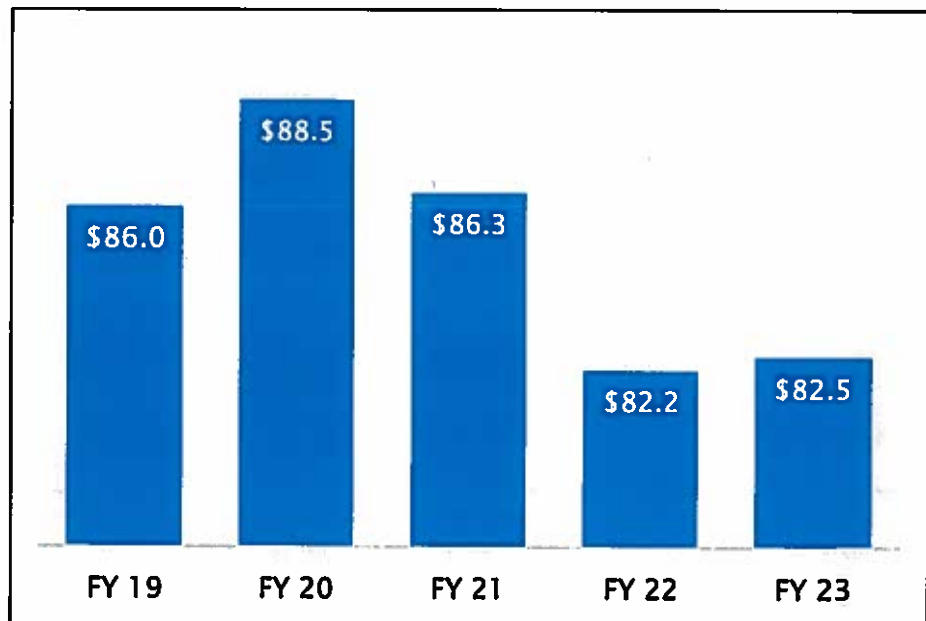
Therapeutic Foster Care Services Under the CSA

Annual Report to the General Assembly, December 1, 2023
In accordance with the Appropriation Act, Chapter 1, Item 284 (K)(1)

Item 284. K.1. The Office of Children's Services (OCS) shall report on funding for therapeutic foster care services including but not limited to the number of children served annually, average cost of care, type of service provided, length of stay, referral source, and ultimate disposition.

Therapeutic foster care (TFC)¹ is a community-based program that addresses a child's placement and service needs while the child is in the custody of a local department of social services (LDSS). Foster parents trained, supervised, and supported by a private agency (licensed child-placing agency, or LCPA) provide TFC. TFC is family-based, goal-directed, and results-oriented, emphasizing permanency planning for the child in care. All referrals for TFC are made by an LDSS. Total TFC costs may be offset partially by federal/state title IV-E revenues to cover maintenance costs (room and board) for eligible children in foster care. Title IV-E revenues and payments are handled through the Department of Social Services.

Therapeutic Foster Care
Total CSA Expenditures (Millions)
(FY2019 - FY2023)



¹ The term "therapeutic" foster care is often used interchangeably with "treatment" foster care.

The Children's Services Act (CSA, §2.2-2648 et seq.) was enacted in 1993 to create a collaborative system of services and funding for at-risk youth and families.

The CSA establishes local multidisciplinary teams responsible to work with families to plan services according to each child's unique strengths and needs and to administer the community's CSA activities.

The Office of Children's Services (OCS) is the administrative entity responsible for ensuring effective and efficient implementation of the CSA across the Commonwealth.

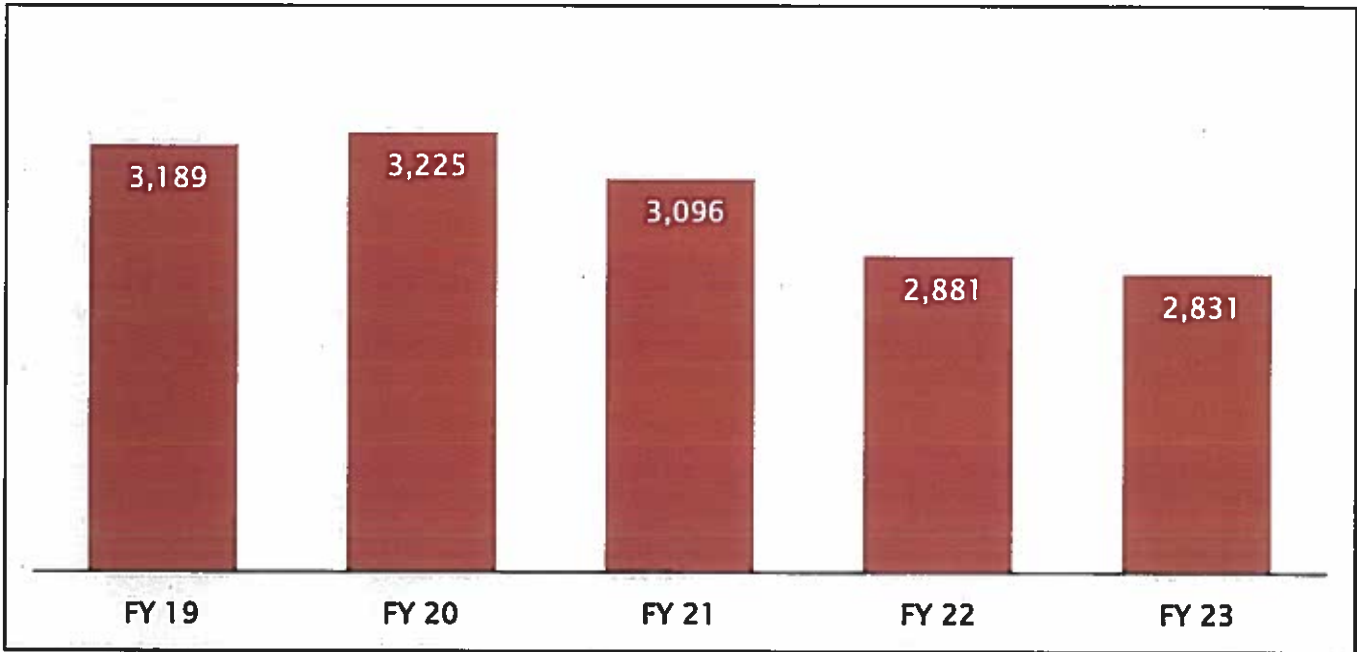
Guiding principles for OCS include:

- Child and family directed care,
- Equitable access to quality services,
- Responsible and effective use of public funds,
- Support for effective, evidence-based practices, and
- Collaborative partnerships across state, local, public, and private stakeholders.

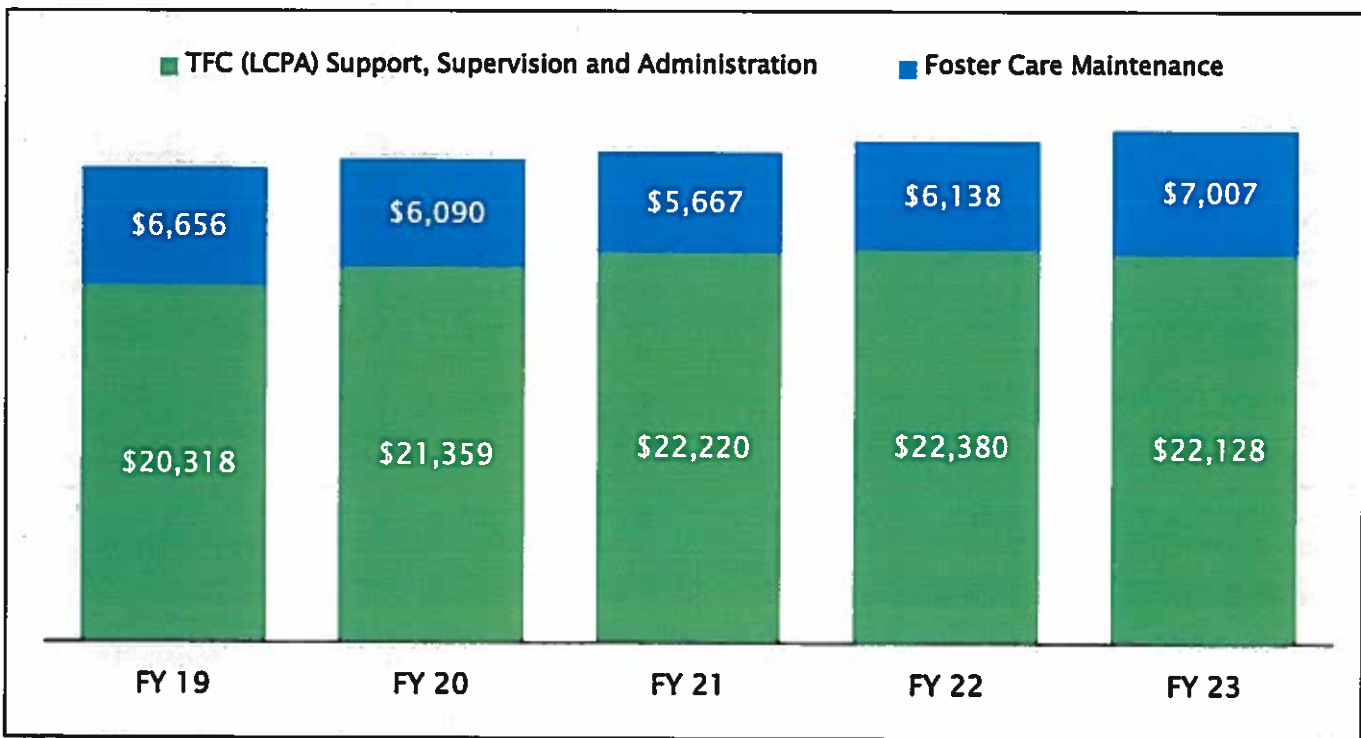


Office of Children's Services
Empowering communities to serve youth

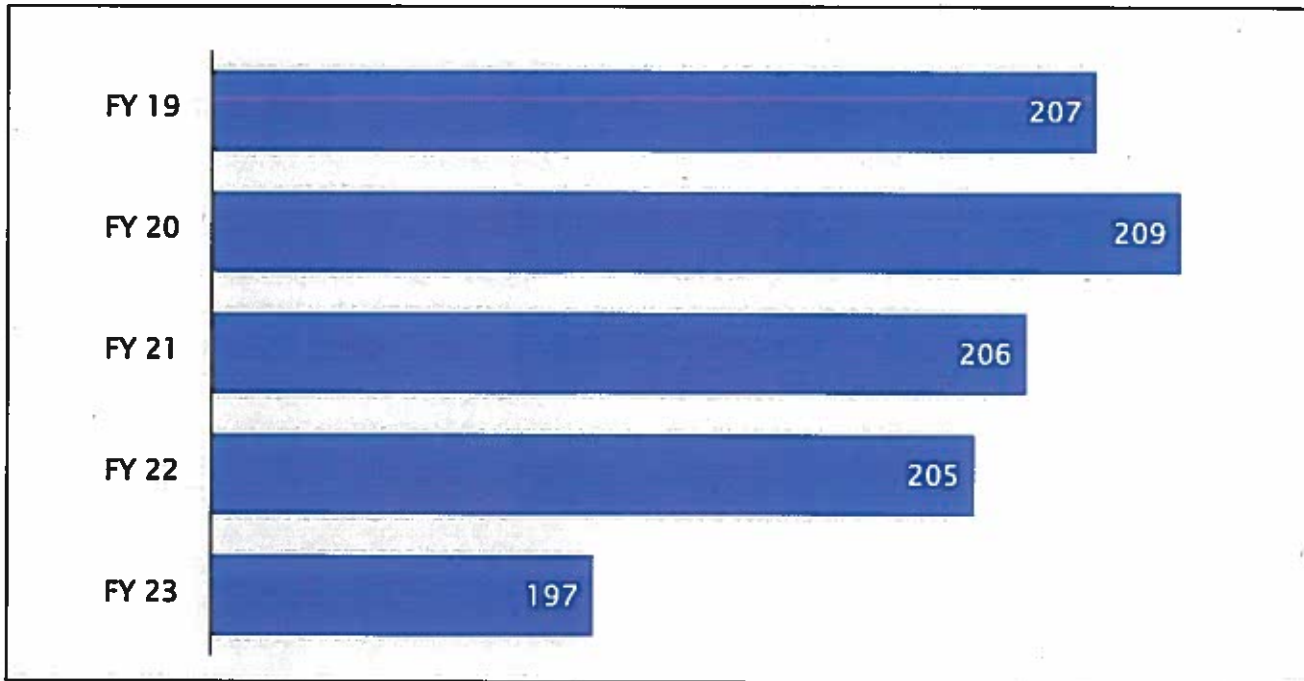
**Therapeutic Foster Care
Number of Youth Served
(FY2019 - FY2023)**



**Therapeutic Foster Care
Average Annual CSA Expenditure per Child
(FY2019 - FY2023)**



**Therapeutic Foster Care
Average Length of Stay (Number of Days/Year)
(FY2019 - FY2023)**



Discussion

In FY2023, utilization of therapeutic foster care (TFC) continued a decrease in youth served over the past three years (12% since FY2020). TFC remains a primary resource to local departments of social services (LDSS) for foster care placements in Virginia. Approximately 44% of children in foster care were served through a TFC program (LCPA) this year. LCPAs are private agencies that, among other services, provide foster home placements through referrals from the local departments of social services. This utilization level reflects ongoing challenges in LDSS's ability to establish "agency foster homes" (foster families recruited and supported by the local department) and the needs of children in foster care and their foster families for higher support than typically provided in agency foster homes.

In FY2023, a TFC placement (excluding monthly maintenance and enhanced maintenance payments) averaged \$115 per day or approximately \$22,128 annually. While the foster care maintenance costs (e.g., room and board and daily supervision) are supported by CSA pool funds or the federal title IV-E program, TFC-specific costs (CSA Service Name = "Private Foster Care, Support, Supervision, and Administration") are paid exclusively from the CSA state pool and local matching funds.

Children remained in a TFC setting for an average of 197 days during FY2023, with an overall length of stay crossing multiple fiscal years (from entry to discharge) of 474 days.