

State of Child Welfare

2022 Georgia CASA Conference

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WHAT ARE YOU WORKING ON?

TRYING TO FIX THE PROBLEMS I
CREATED WHEN I TRIED TO FIX
THE PROBLEMS I CREATED WHEN
I TRIED TO FIX THE PROBLEMS
I CREATED WHEN...

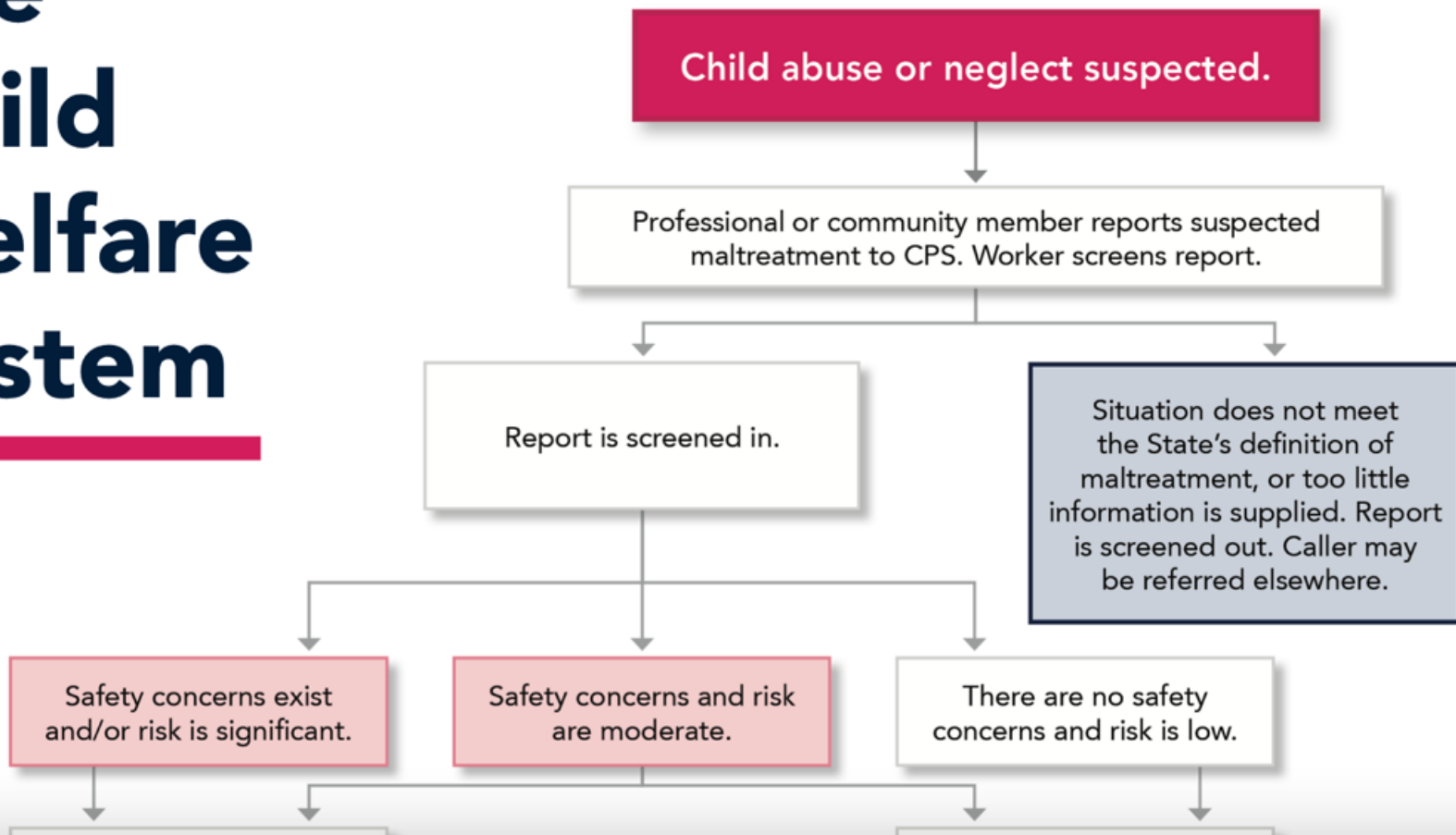


System Performance and
Outcomes: Safety,
Permanency, & Well-Being



Child Protective Services

The Child Welfare System



NDACAN DISCLAIMER



The child welfare data utilized in this presentation were made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN), Cornell University, Ithaca NY; and have been used with permission. Data from the NCANDS & AFCARS files are originally collected by the state's child welfare agency pursuant to federal reporting requirements. Fostering Court Improvement staff have analyzed the data and analyses are on file with them. Neither the collector of the original data, the funder, the Archive, Cornell University, or its agents or employees bear any responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

NATIONAL INCIDENCE STUDY (NIS)

"Although CPS investigates a substantial number of maltreated children in the nation, these children represent only the 'tip of the iceberg.'"

- NIS-4

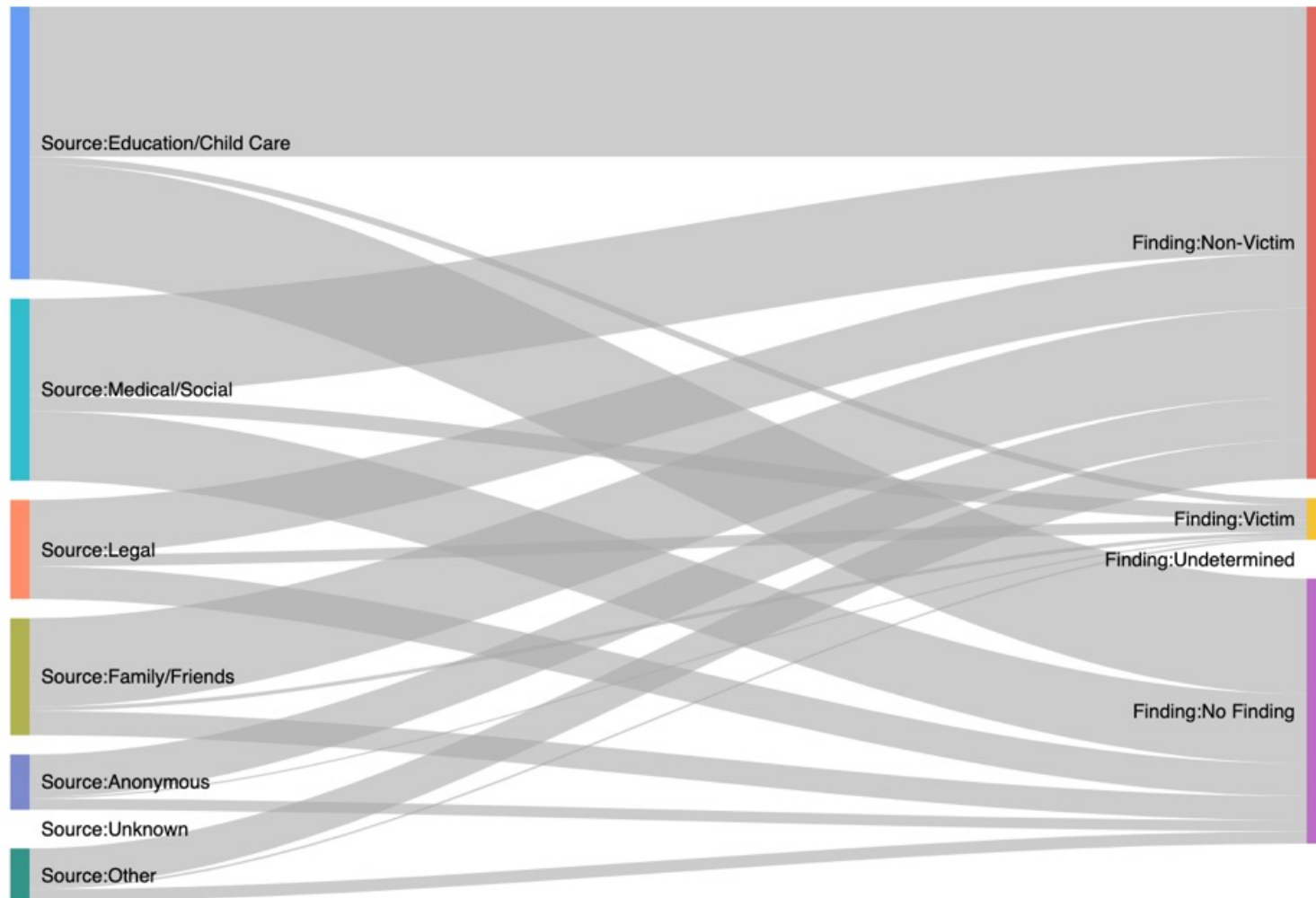


US Georgia (N~190,000) FFY2019 Click a node or path to filter. Hold Shift or Ctrl for multiple.

Stage Selections:

Child Age at Report Child Race/Ethnicity Source Allegation Track Finding Intervention 6-Months Safe?

This is a Sankey Chart. It helps display how *things* proportionally flow through *systems*.



I find it helpful to explore how *reports of abuse & neglect* flow through the *CPS system*, from intake through removal.

US Georgia (N~190,000) ▾

FFY2019 ▾

Click a node or path to filter. Hold Shift or Ctrl for multiple.

Stage Selections:

Child Age at Report

Child Race/Ethnicity

Source

Allegation

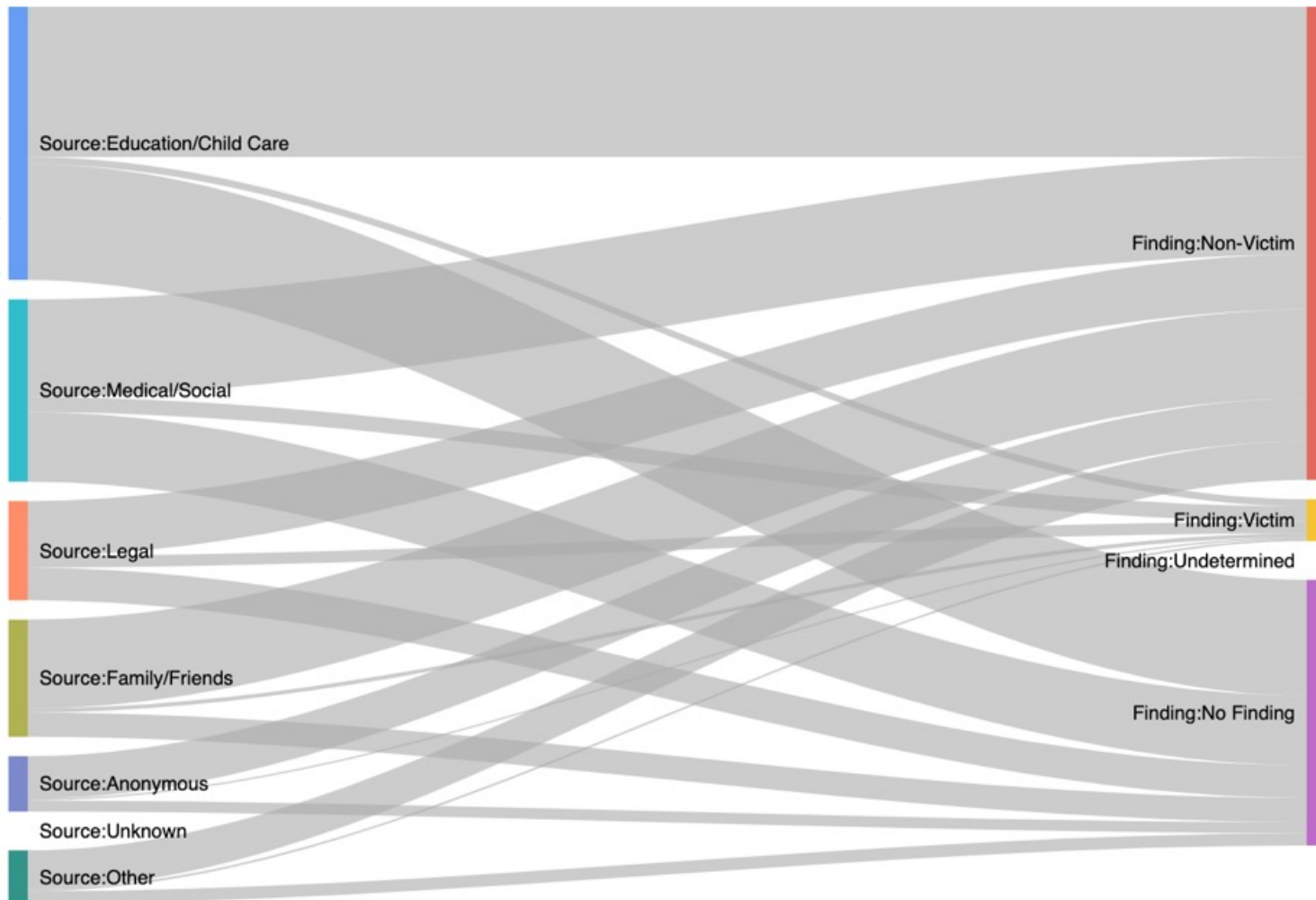
Track

Finding

Intervention

6-Months Safe?

On the left-hand side, we have the *source* of reports: Educators, Doctors, Law enforcement, Neighbors, etc.



On this side, we have the final disposition of reports: DFCS may determine the child is *not a victim*, is a *victim*, or they may not make a finding.

US Georgia (N~190,000) ▾

FFY2019 ▾

Click a node or path to filter. Hold Shift or Ctrl for multiple.

Stage Selections:

Child Age at Report

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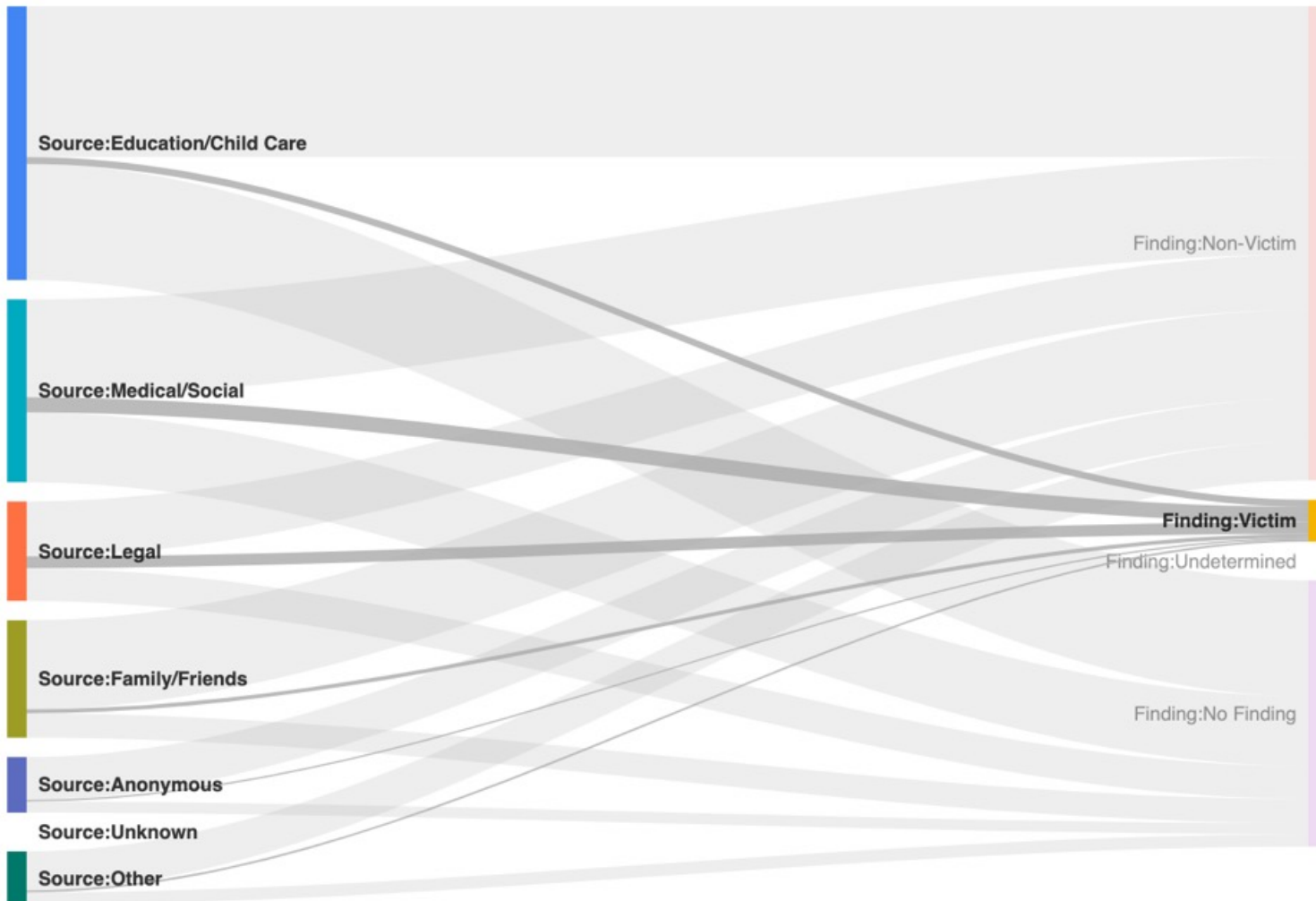
Allegation

Track

Finding

Intervention

6-Months Safe?



Only 2.6% of reports from educators identify a victim.

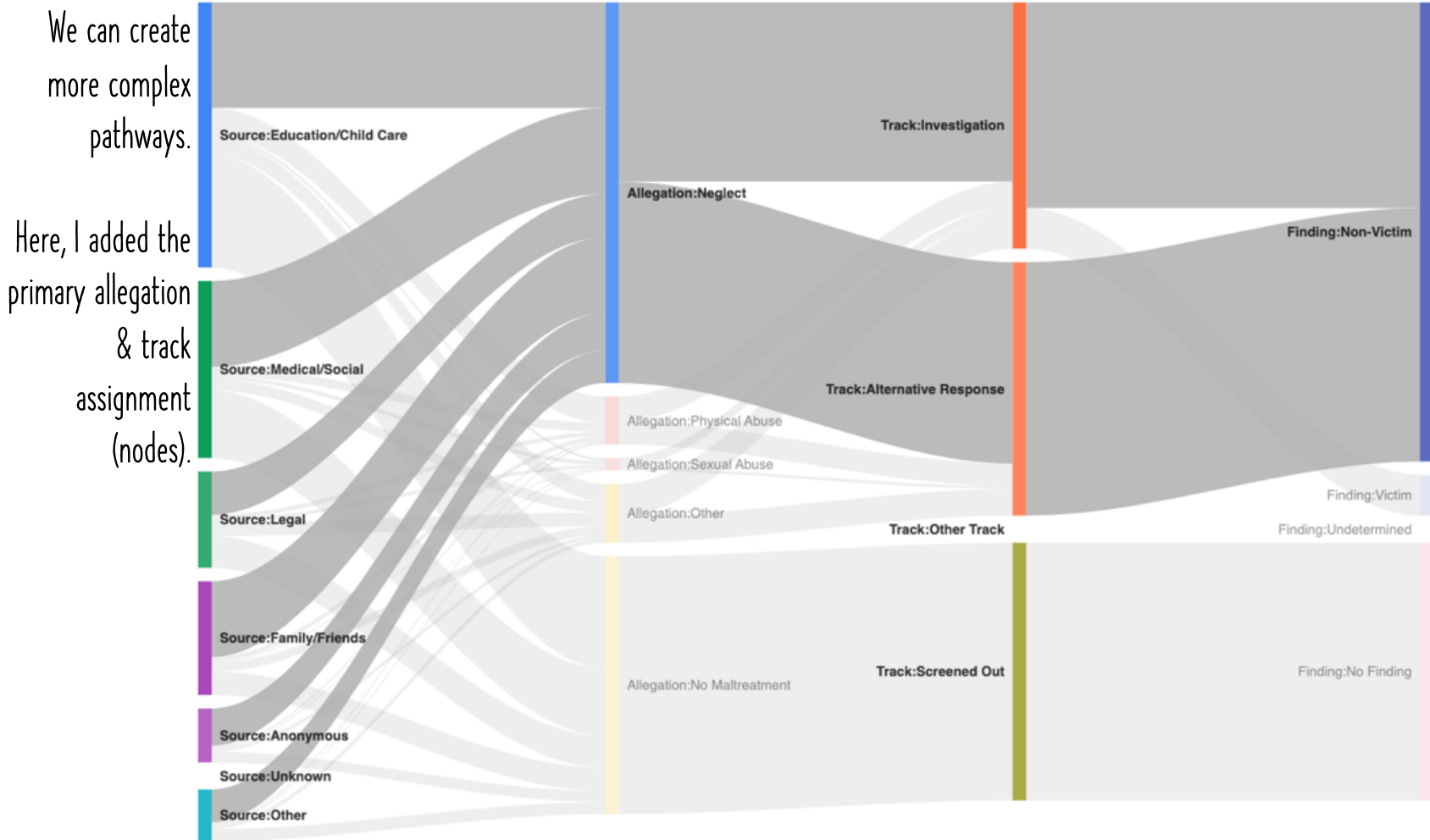
Family & Friends are more likely than teachers to identify a victim of maltreatment.

These data are relatively stable over time and across jurisdictions.

US Georgia (N~190,000) FFY2019 Click a node or path to filter. Hold Shift or Ctrl for multiple.

Stage Selections:

Child Age at Report Child Race/Ethnicity Source Allegation Track Finding Intervention 6-Months Safe?



We can create more complex pathways.

Here, I added the primary allegation & track assignment (nodes).

The *inescapable conclusion* is that CPS is overwhelmed with unsubstantiated allegations of abuse & neglect (mostly neglect).

This is what we would call an *over-reporting* problem.

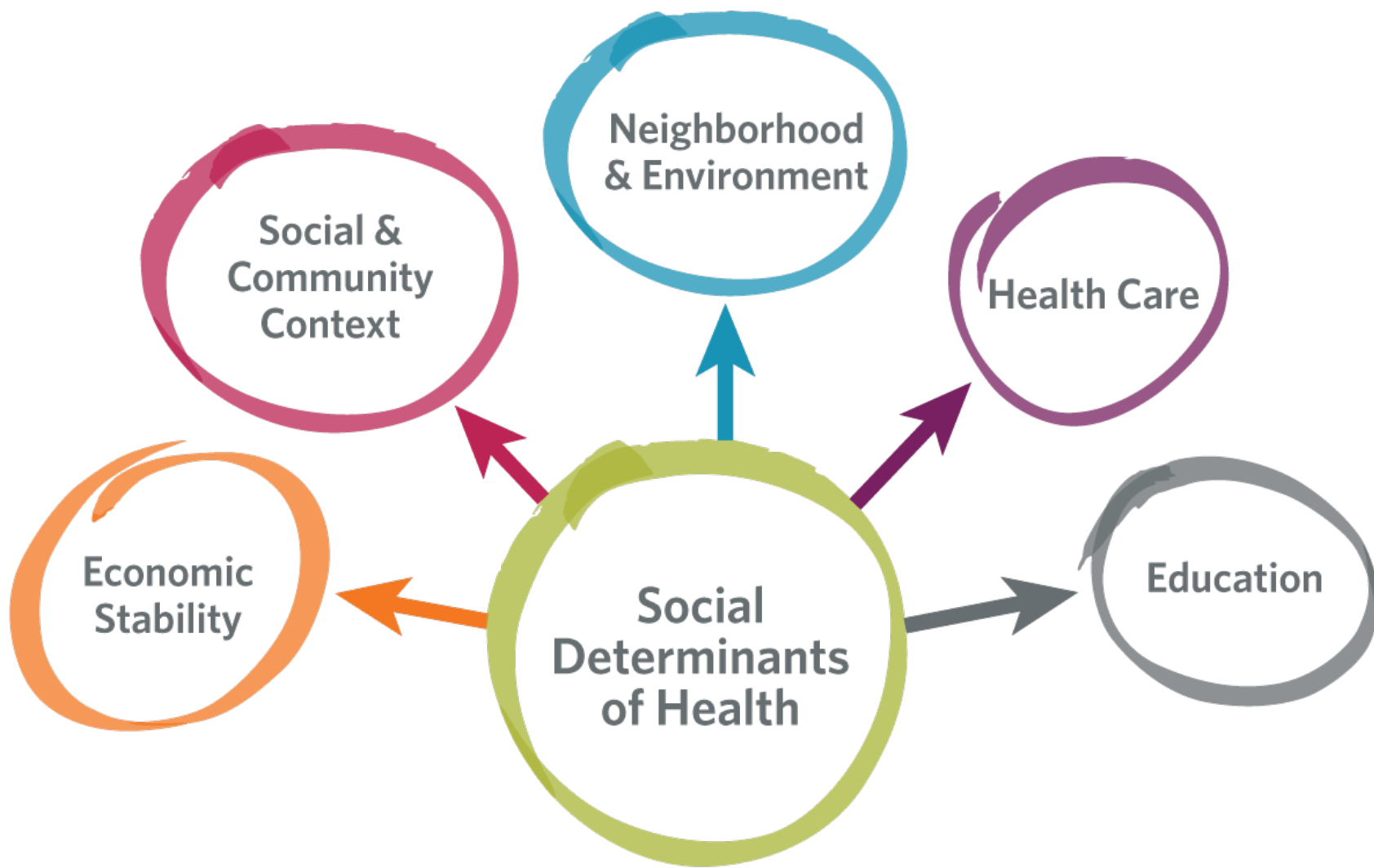
1 out of 3 children living in neighborhoods with a poverty rate greater than 20% will experience a CPS investigation

(Fong, 2019)

Nationally, over 75% of reports to CPS are for allegations of neglect. In Georgia 58% of victim reports were for neglect.

“Reporting professionals who encountered families facing adversities such as poverty, domestic violence and substance abuse framed parents not as unequivocally dangerous, but as needing additional interventions to care for their children.”
(Fong 2020)

“I felt like this was the time to get some support in for the family. I figured CPS can provide that for them or whatever it is that they’re lacking or need support in.” (Fong 2020)



The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal
Depression

Physical &
Emotional Neglect

Emotional &
Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Substance
Abuse

Mental Illness

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

Incarceration

Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Discrimination

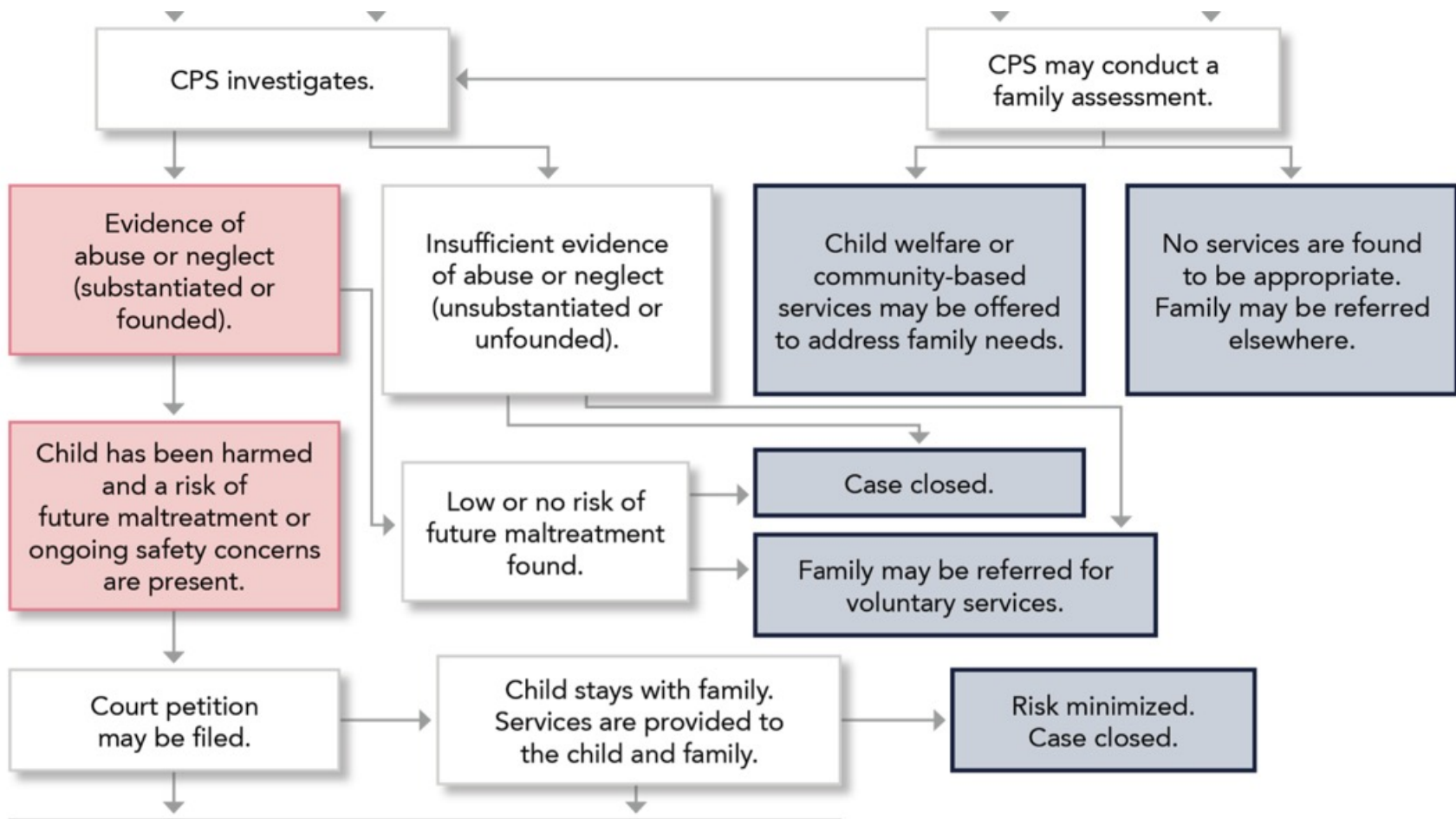
Community
Disruption

Lack of Opportunity, Economic
Mobility & Social Capital

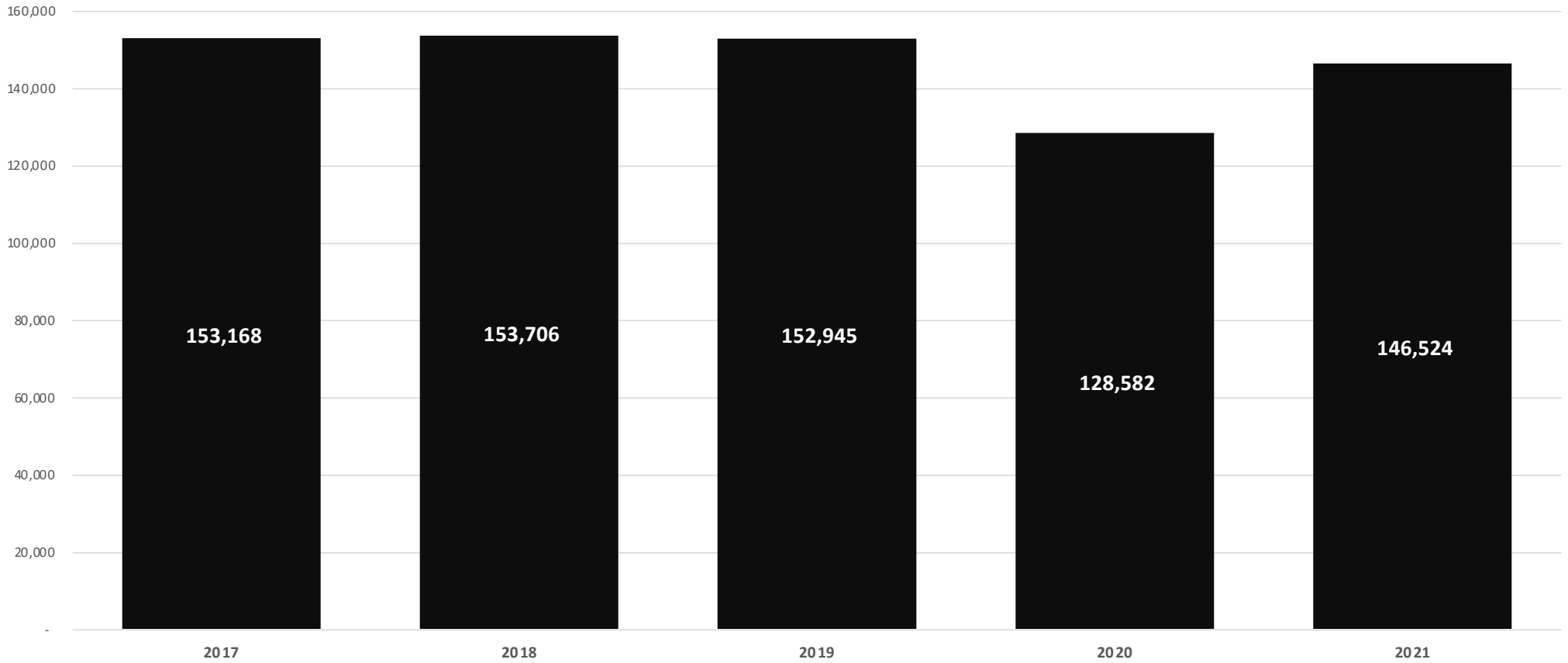
Poor Housing
Quality &
Affordability

Violence



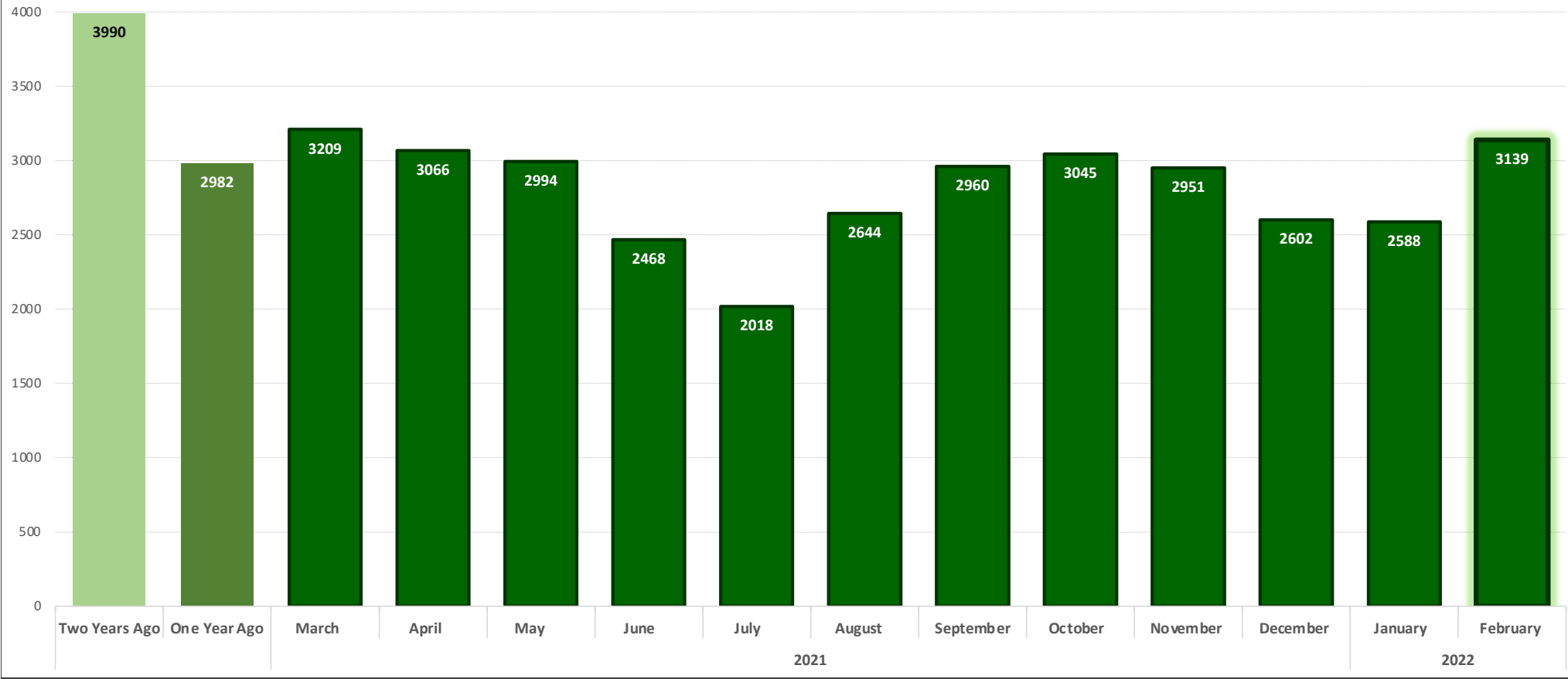


Intakes Received By Year



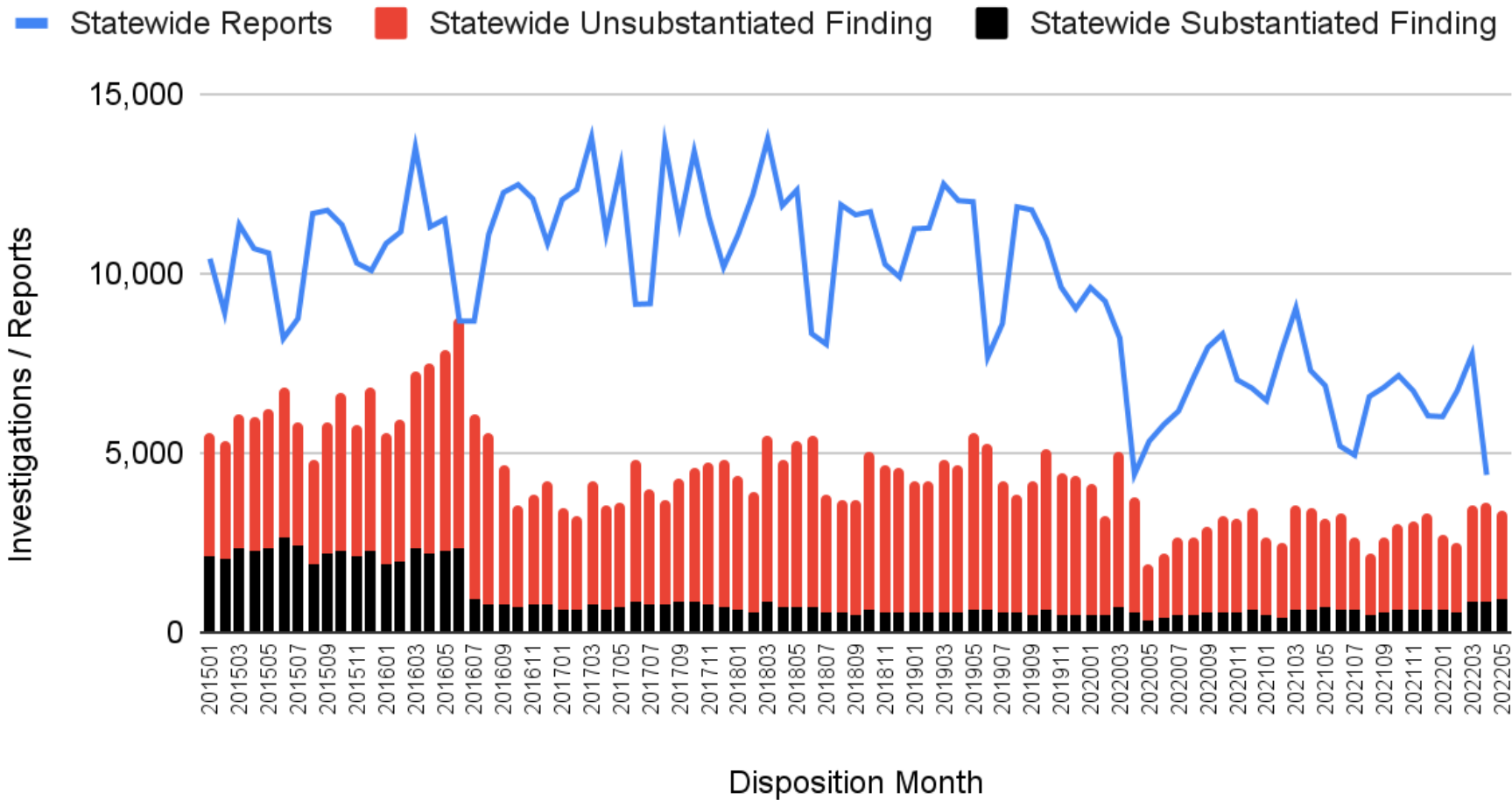
Intakes, or reports of child maltreatment, may be directed to investigation, family support, screened out, or screened out and referred to services. Other intakes, such as Information and Referrals, are not included in these counts. Data Source: SHINES.

Open Investigations

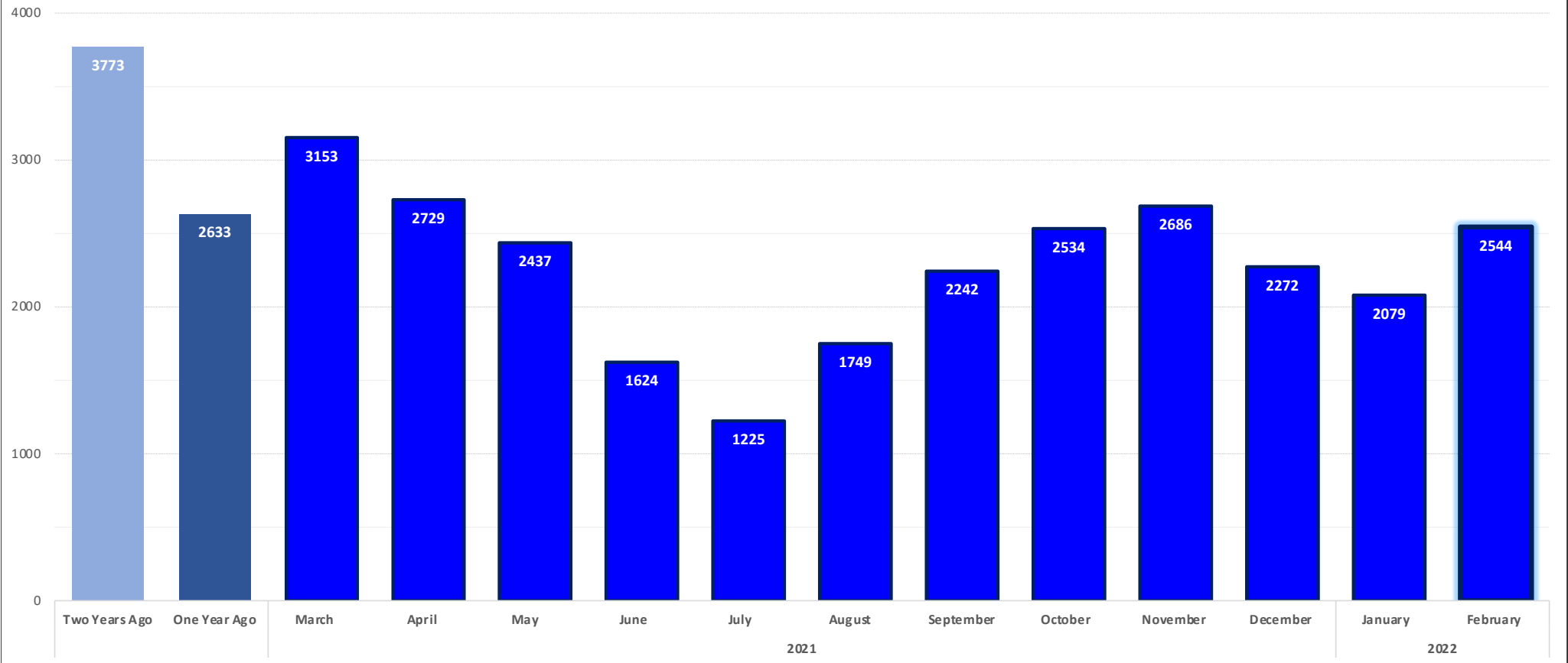


Investigations seek to determine the safety of children where an allegation of abuse or neglect has been received by DFCS. This measure helps DFCS to measure workloads. **Data Source: Shines**

GA CY2015-2022: Investigations by Disposition Month



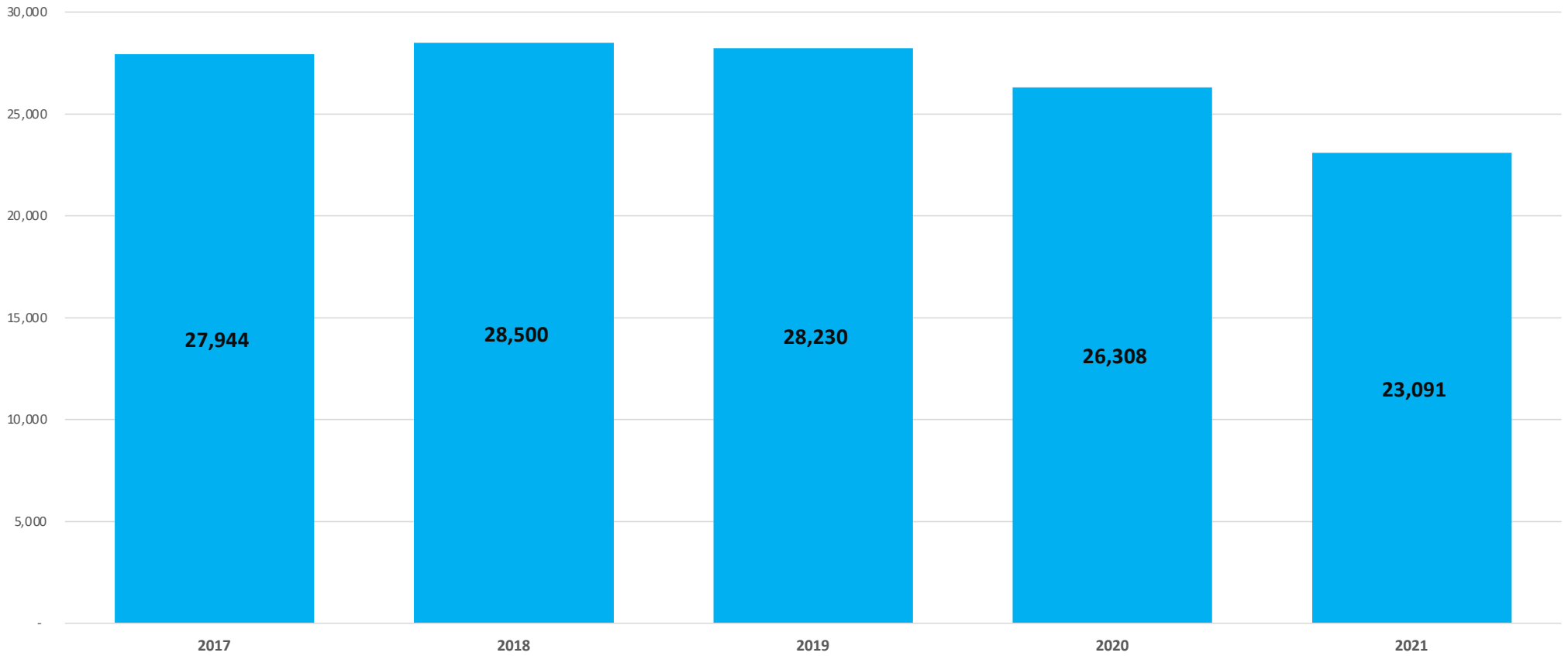
Open Family Support Stages



Family Support Cases are opportunities to assist families where concerns exist but can be managed with only minimal DFCS involvement, usually through referrals to community services.

Data Source: Shines

Family Preservation Stages Open By Year



Family Preservation is a program designed to continue working with a family where safety concerns have been identified with the children remaining in the home.

Data Source: Shines

Removals to Foster Care

	April 2019 – March 2020 (n = 6,145)	April 2020 – March 2021 (n = 4,431)	April 2021 – March 2022 (n = 4,965)
Neglect	48% (2,964)	48% (2,131)	47% (2,343)
Caretaker Drug / Alcohol Use	42% (2,570)	46% (2,020)	44% (2,206)
Physical Abuse	10% (594)	11% (467)	10% (500)
Caretaker Inability to Cope	12% (727)	11% (504)	11% (549)
Inadequate Housing	21% (1,314)	21% (934)	19% (968)
Incarceration	12% (717)	9% (416)	11% (538)
Child Behavior	11% (648)	9% (415)	10% (490)
Abandonment	8% (511)	9% (386)	9% (438)
Sexual Abuse	3% (211)	4% (157)	3% (151)



Foster Care

Child is placed in out-of-home care, and services are provided to the child and family.

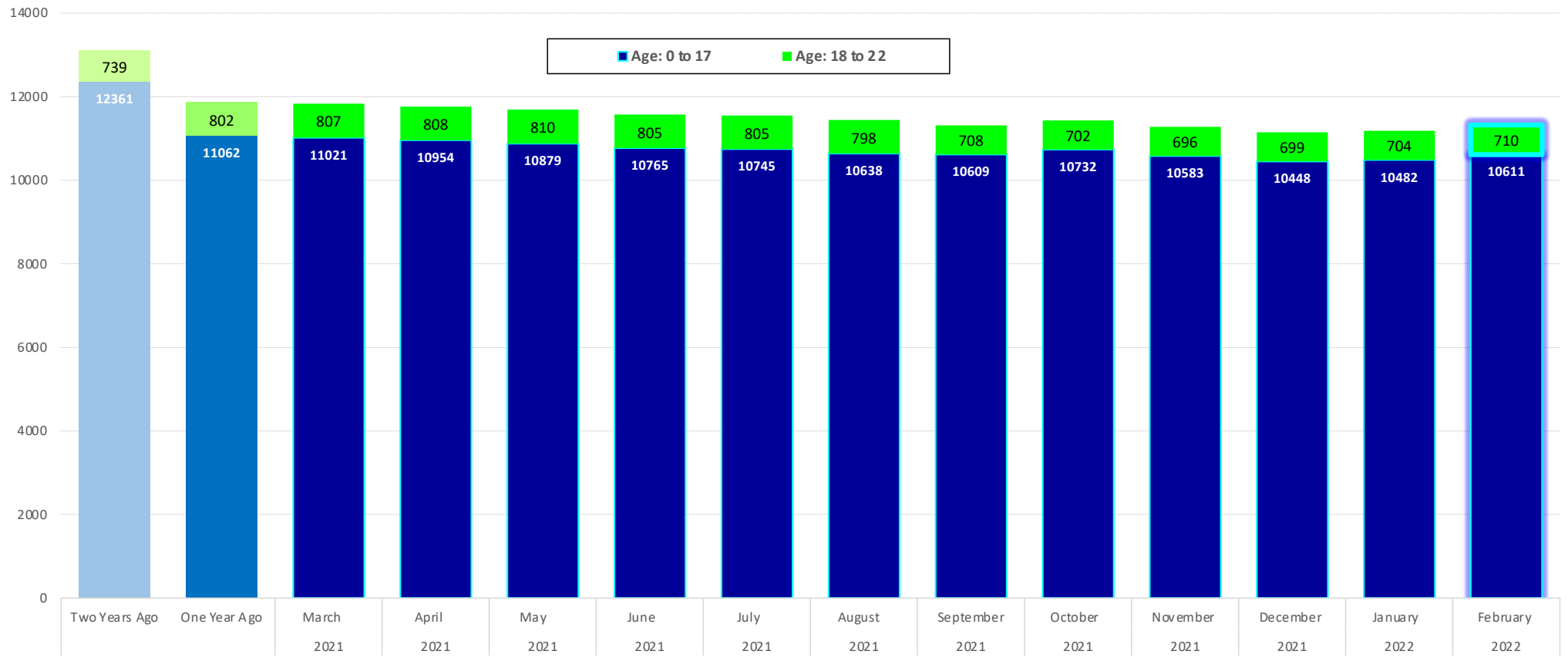
Child is reunified with the family.

Custody granted to a relative.

Parental rights are terminated, and case proceeds to adoption or permanent legal guardianship.

Older youth leave care for independent living, ideally with permanent family connections.

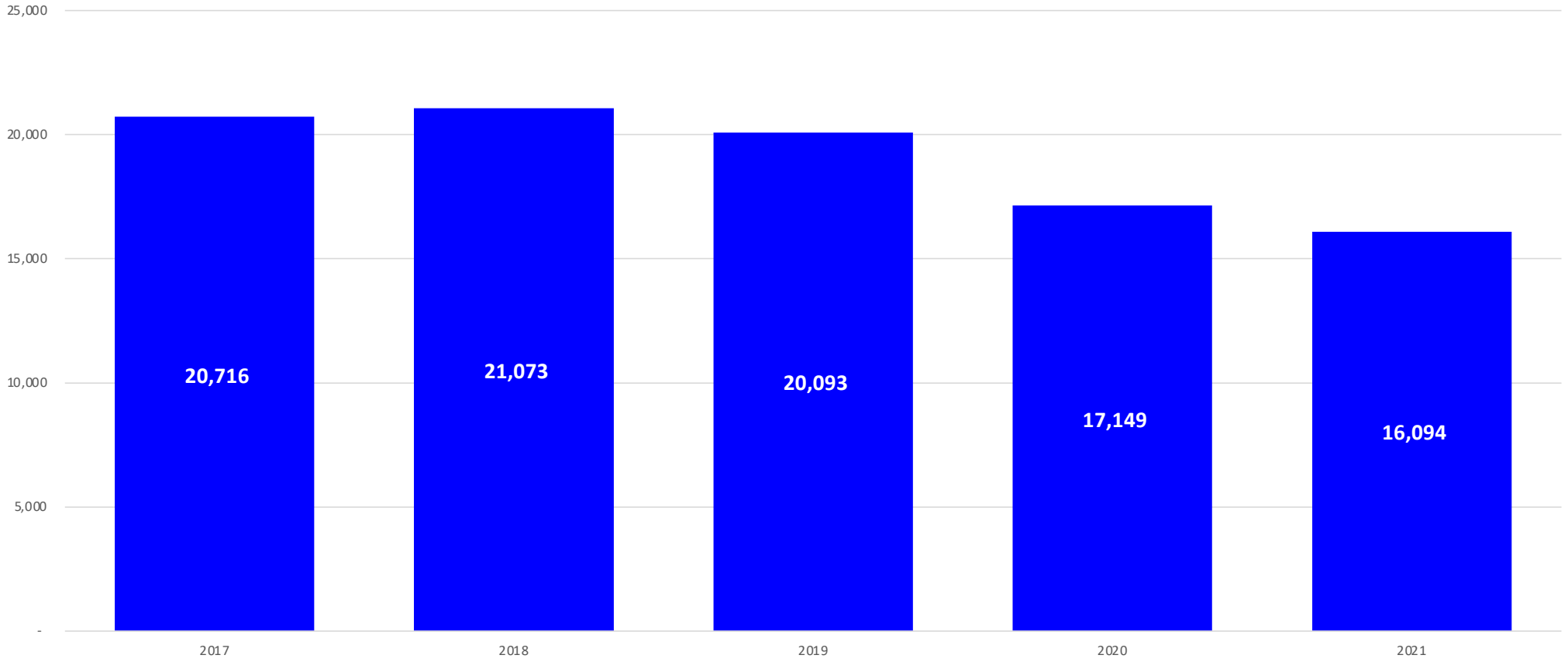
Foster Children/Youth in Custody on Last Day of Month



This chart shows the number of children in foster care on the last day of each month. Efforts are made immediately upon entry to pursue reunification when possible. A portion of the decline in the number of foster children over the past two years is due to the efforts by DFCS to exhaust all possible alternatives to entry.

Data Source: Shines

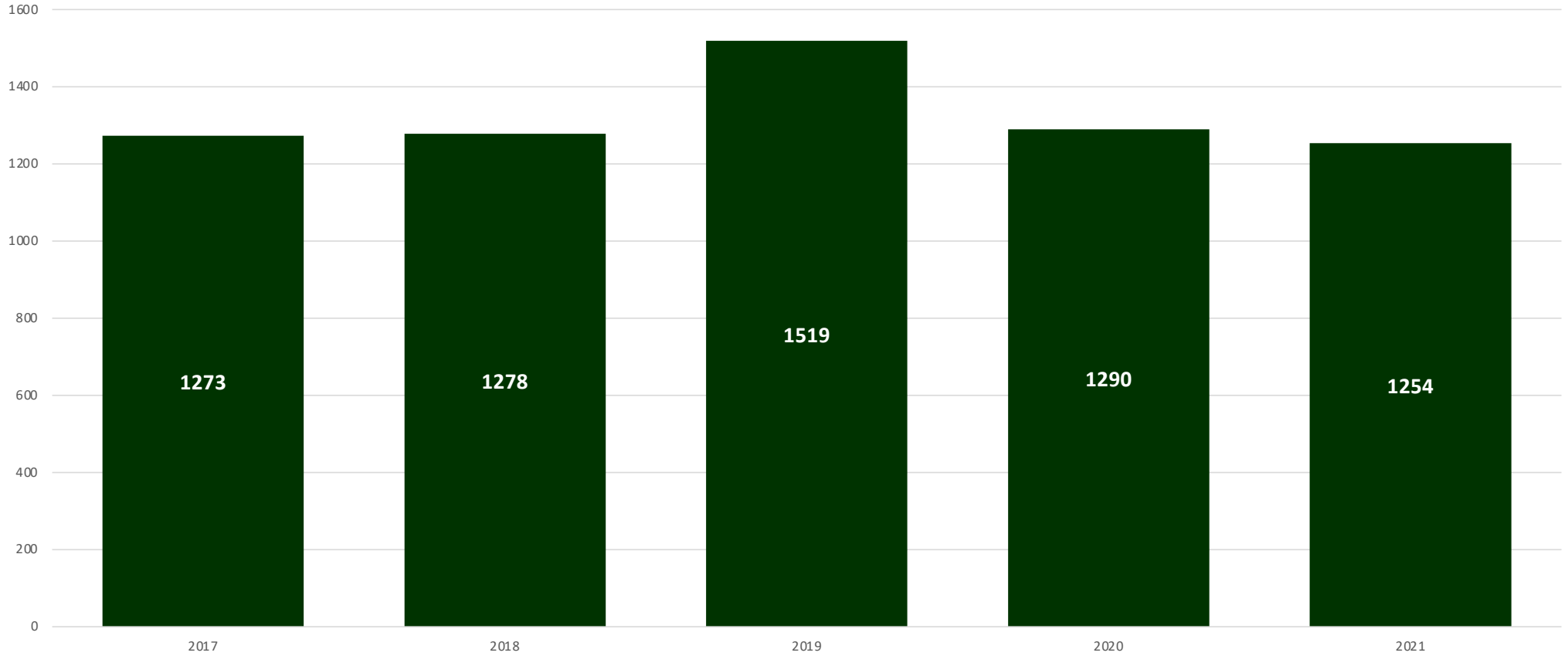
Children in Custody By Year



Children may have been in foster care for only part of the year. Each child is counted only once in a year, regardless of the number of foster episodes. Individual children may be counted in more than one year.

Data Source: Shines

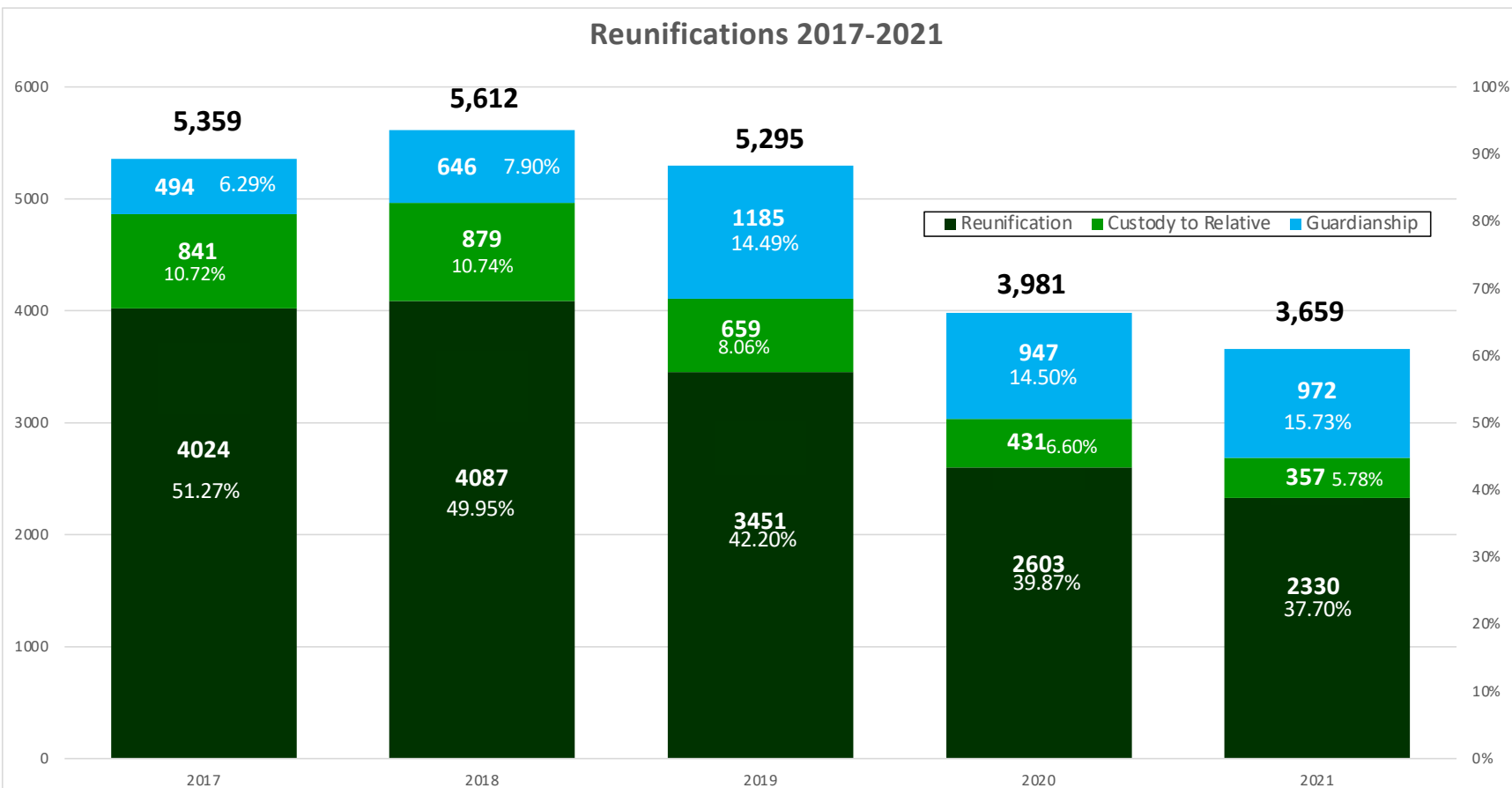
Adoptions by Year



Finding a forever family for each child is the goal of DFCS when it is clear that reunification will not be in the best interest of the child. These adoption counts show the continuous effort undertaken to help foster children achieve this goal.

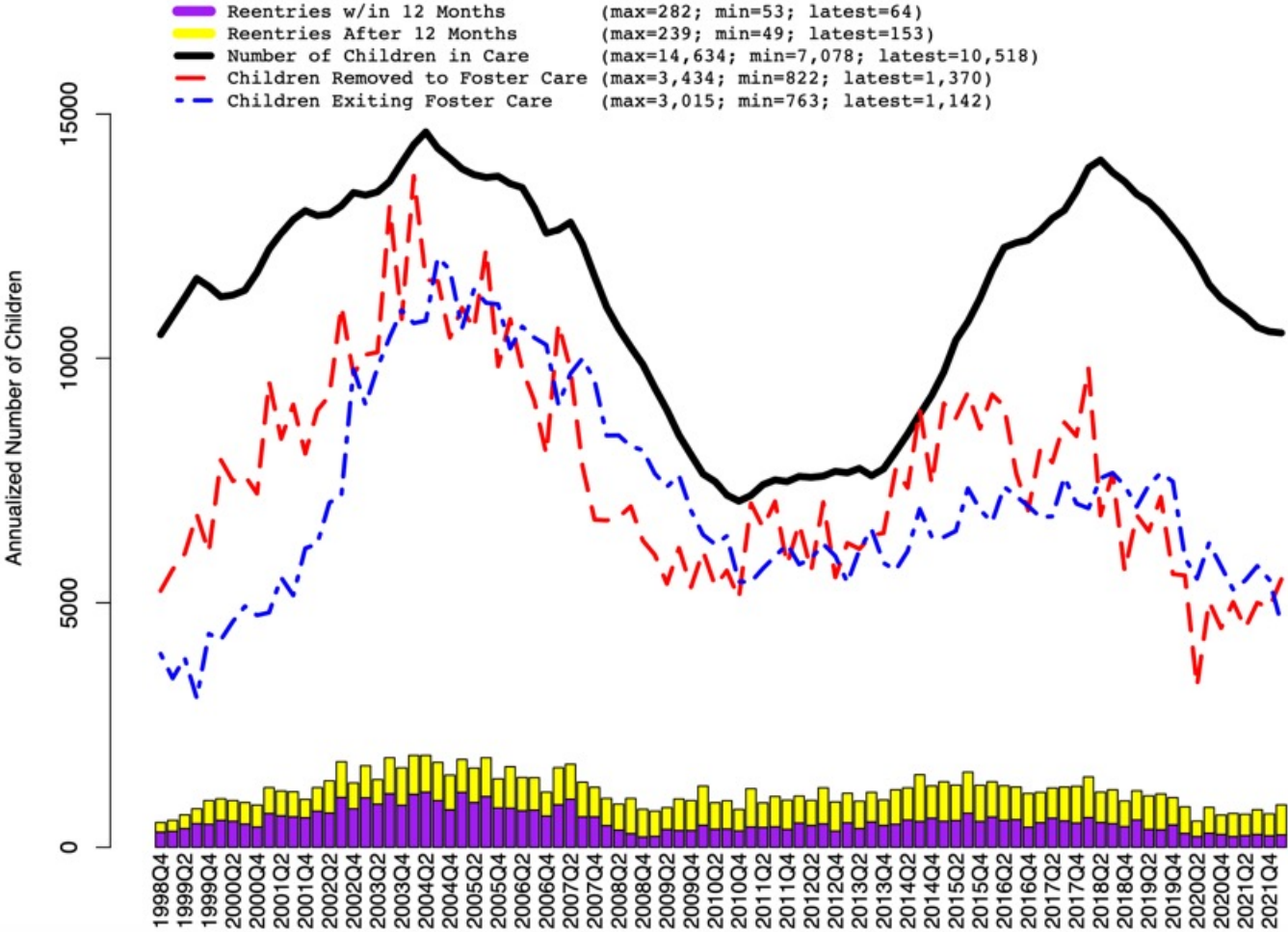
Data Source: Shines

Reunifications 2017-2021



This chart shows the counts and percentages of reunifications that have occurred each of the past five years. By policy, a reunification is, *“The return of a child in the temporary custody of DFCS to the legal and physical custody of the parent, guardian or legal custodian. Custody to a non-custodial parent is also deemed reunification.”* Data Source: Shines

Statewide: Foster Care Dynamics October 1998 through March 2022 by Quarter



Permanency outcomes

Georgia Children Discharged During April 2019 through March 2020	Count	Rate	National Rate	Rank (high=1 to low=51)
Total Discharges	7,062/2,503,333	28.2 per 10K	32.9 per 10K	41
Children Discharged for Reunification	3,056/7,062	43%	48%	38.5
Children Discharged for Relative	576/7,062	8%	6%	13
Children Discharged for Adoption	1,476/7,062	21%	26%	36.5
Children Discharged for Transfer	104/7,062	1%	1%	21.5
Children Discharged for Emancipation	694/7,062	10%	9%	14
Children Discharged for Guardianship	1,129/7,062	16%	10%	7.5

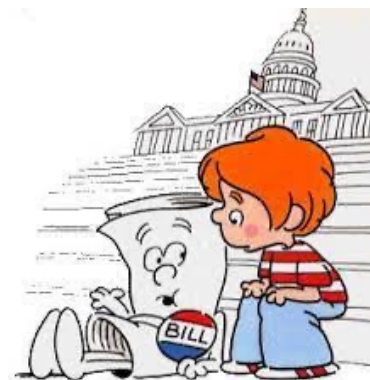


2022 Legislative Update

[HB 272](#) was introduced by Mandi Ballinger (R-Canton). The bill raises the age of adult criminal responsibility and juvenile court jurisdiction from 17-years-old to 18-years-old with provisions for the creation of an implementation committee to oversee the transition and make any necessary changes to rules or regulations. HB 272 passed out of the full House of Representatives last year on Crossover Day by a 113-51 vote. A substitute version unanimously passed out of the Senate Judiciary Committee but did not make it out of Rules and **did not become law**.

[HB 1452](#) was introduced by Houston Gaines (R-Athens). The bill revises the definition of dating violence from those who have dated within the past 6 months to those who have dated in the past 12 months to broaden eligibility for protective orders. HB 1452 passed both chambers with unanimous support and became law on July 1.

SB 370 was introduced by Bill Cowser (R-Athens) as the "Fostering Success Act." The bill creates a new tax credit for contributions made to qualifying child support organizations, as well as provides for its implementation and regulation. Following a brief discussion on the floor, the bill unanimously passed out of the Senate and crossed over to the House. In the lead up to Crossover Day, the House Ways and Means Committee introduced a committee substitute for **HB 424** that replaced the bill's existing language with that of SB 370. Ultimately, this substitute passed both chambers unanimously and became law. The bill now goes to the Governor and became law on July 1.





House Bill 1013: Mental Health Parity Act

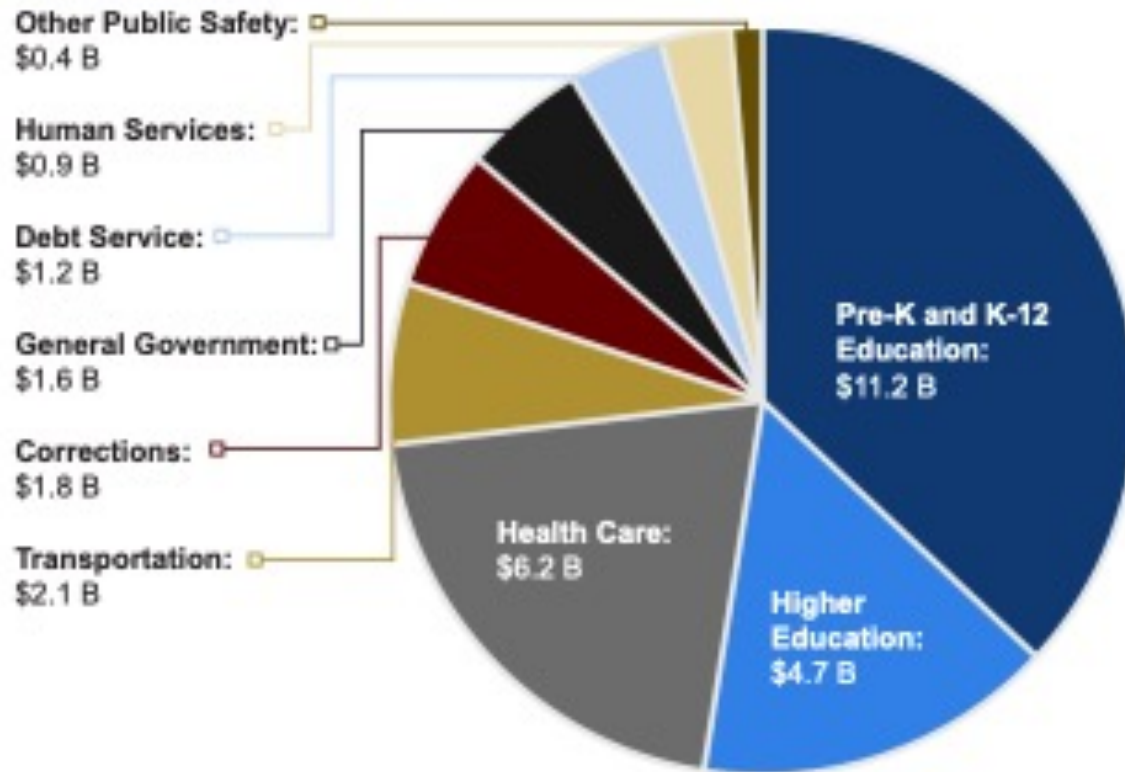
- Requires Medicaid care management organizations and private insurance plans that are regulated by the state to follow the federal parity law;
- Directs the Department of Community Health and Department of Insurance to monitor parity compliance and take action when violations occur;
- Institutes process for families to file parity complaints with the state;
- Requires transparency in parity compliance data;
- Ensures medical necessity determinations are based on generally accepted standards of care.

Other Notable Child Welfare Bills

- [HB 1508](#) proposed to expand the definition of “aggravated circumstances” whereby reasonable efforts by DFCS to preserve and reunify families are not required, establish a rebuttable presumption that reasonable efforts are not required where specified findings exist, and dramatically expand the list of individuals eligible to file a petition for termination of parental rights.

*Note: This bill did not pass.

Education and Health Care Make Up 73 Percent of State Budget



Source: Georgia's 2023 Fiscal Year Budget (HB 911), signed by the governor.

GBPI Budget Primer:
<https://gbpi.org/georgiabudgetprimer/>

FY 2023 Budget Summary: Child Welfare

- \$5,000 COLA for all full-time, benefits-eligible state employees, increased flexibility on annual leave policies, and increase in employer contribution to state retirement system
- \$1,500,000 - Provide funds for a community action team pilot program to address children who are in, or are at risk of entering, foster care. (CC: Provide funds for two community action team pilot programs to address children who are in, or are at risk of entering, foster care.)
- \$451,978 - Provide funds for an autism recognition pilot program in Region 12.
- \$1,000,000 - Provide funds for autism respite care.
- \$200,000 - Increase funds to the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) to enhance statewide capacity.

FY 2023 Budget Summary : Child Welfare

- \$6,000,000 - Increase to adjust special assistant attorneys general (SAAGs) hourly rate from \$57.50 to \$77.50 per hour. (CC: Increase funds to adjust special assistant attorneys general (SAAGs) hourly rate from \$57.50 to \$77.50 per hour by case based on dependency case backlog less than 180 days as certified by the executive director of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and the commissioner of the Department of Human Services.)
- \$250,000 - Increase to adjust special assistant attorneys general (SAAGs) paralegal hourly rate from \$25 to \$40. (CC: Increase funds to adjust special assistant attorneys general (SAAGs) paralegal hourly rate from \$25 to \$40 by case based on dependency case backlog less than 180 days as certified by the executive director of the Council of Juvenile Court Judges and the commissioner of the Department of Human Services.)
- \$100,000 - Increase funds for contracts for vocational training services.

FY 2023 Budget Summary: Child Welfare

- \$27,810,584 - Provide funds for a 10% provider rate increase for Child Caring Institutions, Child Placing Agencies, foster parents, and relative caregivers.
- Redirect \$6,700,000 in existing funds to provide alternatives to the hoteling of children.
- \$3,025,000 - Provide funds to increase the annual foster care clothing allowance by \$275 per child.
- \$4,000,000 - Increase funds for out-of-school programs with locations in communities serving at-risk youth.
- \$915,500 - Provide funds to Family Connection Partnership to increase operational support and each county's allocation to \$52,500.



QUESTIONS? CONTACT US:

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