



TEXAS
Department of Family
and Protective Services

Fiscal Year 2026 Report on Provider Admission Data

**As Required by the
General Appropriations Act,
Senate Bill 1, 89th Legislature,
Regular Session, 2025
(Article II, Department of Family and
Protective Services, Rider 36)**

September 30, 2025

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Executive Summary

Pursuant to Senate Bill 1, 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025 (Article II, Department of Family and Protective Services, Rider 36), the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) must submit an annual report that includes an analysis of foster care placement referrals by DFPS or a Single Source Continuum Contractor (SSCC) and the corresponding admissions information with paid foster care providers.

Methodology

DFPS staff utilized the General Placement Search (GPS) application to track placement referrals and admission information, including provider denial reasons. SSCC staff provided corresponding quarterly placement referral data to DFPS. Providers receiving foster care reimbursement payments for children in DFPS conservatorship are required to respond to all placement referrals with an acceptance or denial and, if declining a placement, a denial reason must be included. Centralized placement teams from DFPS and the SSCCs require provider responses for all referrals.

The report data includes fiscal year 2025, quarter 1, through fiscal year 2025, quarter 3. DFPS previously indicated that this report would include a full year of data (fiscal year 2024, quarter 4, through fiscal year 2025, quarter 3) but a change in how SSCCs submitted data for fiscal year 2025 revealed inconsistencies in how referrals were being categorized. The SSCCs have since provided revised and standardized data beginning in fiscal year 2025 but corrected fiscal year 2024 data is not available at this time. Fiscal year 2025, quarter 4, will be included in the fiscal year 2027 submission due to the timing of data availability and the reporting due date ¹.

Referral Outcomes

Referral and admission data support the trends reported by providers concerning referral denials due to limited capacity and a perceived inability to meet the needs of the child. An average of 2.2 percent of the total referrals made in the reporting period resulted in admission with no noted quarter-to-quarter trend about how the referrals relate to placement acceptance. Admission numbers may be impacted if a child has several referrals made during a single placement search episode, with only one placement option being secured.

¹ The fiscal year 2027 submission of this report will include data for fiscal year 2025, quarter 4, through fiscal year 2026, quarter 3.

Average Length of Placement

Of the 13,871 placements that ended for any reason during the reporting period, children spent on average 189.2 days in their placements. This is a slight change from last year's report which showed of the 14,345 placements an average of 211.3 days in placement. The numbers exclude children who were admitted during the reporting period but whose placement did not end during the reporting period.

Placement Improvement Efforts

Increasing capacity for youth with complex needs and behaviors would aid in balancing the placement acceptance rate within the provider network. This could be accomplished, in part, through:

- Establishing programs designed to stabilize, support, and assist in transitioning these youth into less restrictive environments; and
- Improving behavioral health services within current placements to increase behavioral stability and positive outcomes.

Without significant improvements to provider capacity and access to specialized treatment programs, there will be continued disparity between placement referrals and placement acceptance of all youth.

To address placement capacity shortages, DFPS has expanded existing programs and awarded capacity expansion grants to providers to meet the needs of harder to place children, thereby expanding access to potential placement options for children with higher needs.

DFPS is also implementing Texas Child-Centered Care (T3C) which represents a complete transformation of the foster care system. T3C replaces the existing Service Level System with a:

- Universal child assessment tool;
- 24 clearly defined service packages; and
- New foster care rate methodology.

Having a comprehensive array of foster care services, where providers and caregivers specialize in offering specific services tied to an assessment of strengths and needs of the child, will contribute to better matching of children to providers and improve stability and well-being outcomes.

As of the end of September 2025, 33 percent of children in Texas foster care are benefiting from T3C services. DFPS anticipates fully rolling out this new model of care statewide by August 2027.

Introduction

As required by Rider 36, providers receiving foster care reimbursement payments for children in DFPS conservatorship must submit a quarterly report to DFPS that includes:

- The number of children referred by DFPS or an SSCC;
- The percentage of referrals that resulted in admission;
- The percentage of referrals that did not result in admission, broken out by the various reasons for the denial; and
- For children admitted, the average length of time of placement.

DFPS collected and analyzed fiscal year 2025, quarter 1, through fiscal year 2025, quarter 3, placement referral data from the GPS system and quarterly SSCCs data to identify trends in placement referrals, acceptance rates, and denial reasons from providers. Additionally, because the end of each fiscal year falls close to the report's submission deadline, there is not sufficient time to validate and include complete quarter 4 data. Fiscal year 2025, quarter 4, data was unavailable at the time of writing this report but will be included in the next annual report.

Background

To comply with Rider 36 reporting requirements, DFPS collaborated with its SSCC partners and providers to develop methods to best capture the necessary placement referral data. DFPS used IMPACT data to report on the average time in placements for children in the Legacy system and the SSCCs. For foster children in the Legacy system, DFPS utilized the:

- GPS application to track the number of children referred to each provider;
- Number resulting in an admission; and
- Reasons for denial in the provider contacts.

Providers are required to respond to all placement referrals with an acceptance or denial. DFPS Placement staff are required to capture the acceptance and denial responses within the GPS application. The SSCCs must maintain a log of all referrals including acceptance and denial reasons for youth in their care and report placement referral data to DFPS quarterly.

Providers receiving foster care reimbursement payments for children in DFPS conservatorship must submit a quarterly report to DFPS that includes:

- The number of children referred by DFPS or an SSCC;
- The percentage of referrals that resulted in admission;
- The percentage of referrals that did not result in an admission broken out by the distinct reasons for the denial; and
- For children admitted, the average length of time of placement.

At the end of the fiscal year, providers must submit a full year dataset to account for any lapses in data entry from previous quarters.

Understanding Trends in Admissions and Denials by Paid Foster Care Providers

Table 1 summarizes trends in admissions, denials, and length of time in placement for admissions for the reporting period including the number of children eligible for a referral by Legacy and Community-Based Care (CBC) catchment area, as well as the total number of referrals made during the reporting period.

Eligible children are those in DFPS conservatorship at any point during the timeframe. Not all children experienced a change in placement or referral to paid foster care during the period.

Table 1. Total Referrals and Eligible Children by SSCC and Legacy Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 1 to Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 3^{2,3}

Population	Total Referrals	Eligible Children	Referrals to Eligible Children Ratio	Paid Placements
Metroplex West (OCOK)	60,253	2,607	23.1	1,410
Big Country and Texoma (2INgage)	35,017	1,436	24.4	790
Panhandle (Saint Francis)	36,159	1,456	24.8	810
South Central and Hill Country (Belong)	8,724	1,028	8.5	480
Metroplex East (EMPOWER)	47,774	2,860	16.7	1,459
Piney Woods (4Kids4Families)	21,794	1,664	13.1	864
Deep East (TFCN)	7,031	1,033	6.8	432
Legacy	207,123	12,621	16.4	5,034
TOTAL	423,875	24,705	17.2	11,279

² Source: DRIT 119806

³ Source: DRIT 119808

Referral Results

Table 2 summarizes the referrals to providers by provider response. It indicates if the provider:

- Admitted the child from the referral;
- Explicitly denied the referral; or
- Did not respond or accepted the child but admission did not occur.

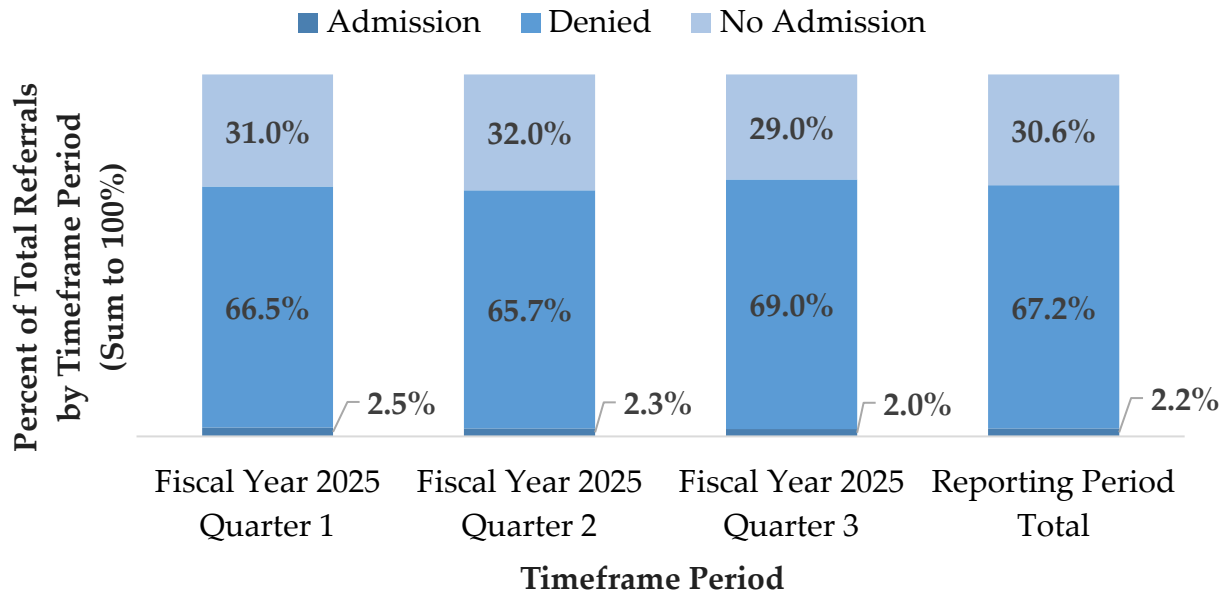
Table 2. Referral Outcomes Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 1 to Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 3⁴

Referral Result	FY 2025 Quarter 1	FY 2025 Quarter 2	FY 2025 Quarter 3	Total
Admission	3,272	2,971	3,235	9,478
Denial	87,800	86,621	110,443	284,864
No Admission (Acceptance or No Response)	40,880	42,237	46,416	129,533
TOTAL	131,952	131,829	160,094	423,875

⁴ DRIT 119025, SSCC Rider 36 Submissions, FY 2025 Q1 – FY 2025 Q3

Figure 1 shows a slight percentage of total referrals resulting in admission, as well as the appearance of no quarter-to-quarter trend on how referrals relate to admissions which is a result of the placement search process. A child may have several referrals made while searching for a possible placement, but only one of the accepted referrals will result in actual placement for the child.

Figure 1. Referral Outcomes Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 1 to Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 3⁵



⁵ DRIT 119025, SSCC Rider 36 Submissions, FY 2025 Q1 – FY 2025 Q3

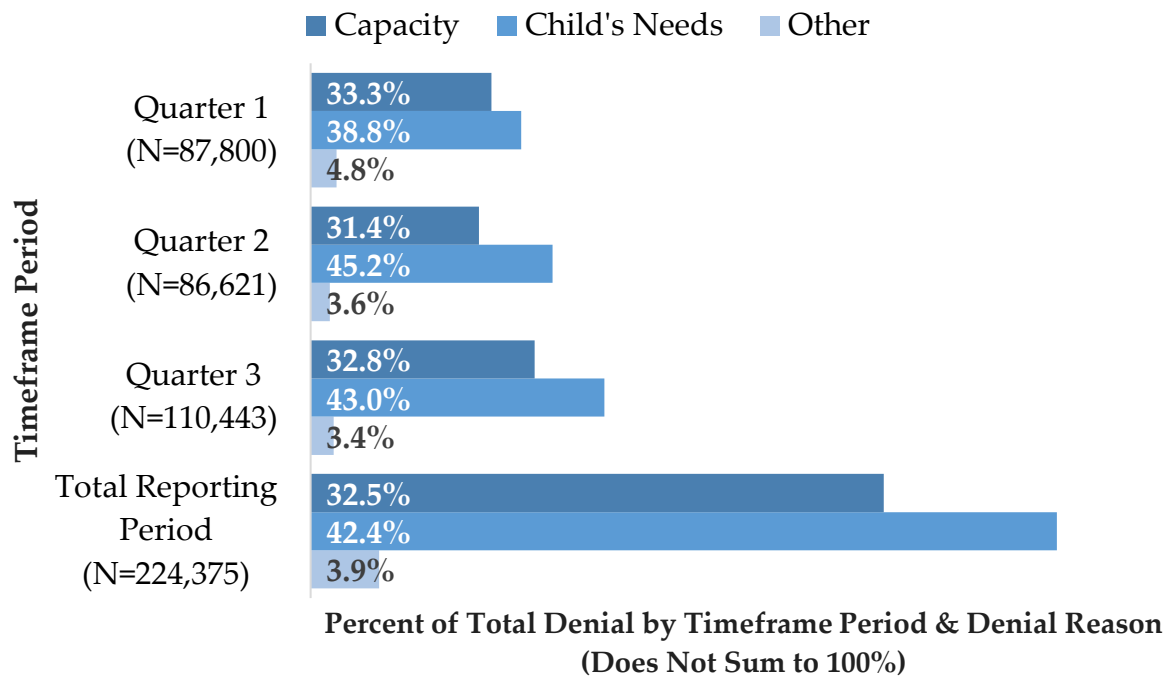
Denial Results

Figure 2 summarizes the referral denial reasons given by providers, such as a lack of available bed space (capacity), an inability to meet the needs of the child (child's needs), or some other reason like assaultive behavior or a history of running away (other).

Providers also denied referrals without providing a reason, which is represented in the other category. A total of 50,916, or 17.9 percent, of the denials counted as Other were denials for Legacy referrals where the provider did not provide a denial reason.

A referral may be denied for more than one reason, including a referral sent to a provider that does not have the service programming needed to adequately serve the child. As such, the total of referrals denied each quarter as listed above will not match the total of reasons cited for denial as listed below. This data indicates that most denials are due to provider capacity or the provider's inability to meet the child's needs.

Figure 2. Denial Reasons Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 1 to Fiscal Year 2025 Quarter 3 ⁶⁷



⁶ DRIT 119025, SSCC Rider 36 Submissions, FY25 Q1 – FY25 Q3

⁷ Percent of Total Denial by Timeframe Period & Denial Reason (Does Not Sum to 100%)

Days in Placement

Of the 13,871 placements that ended during the reporting period, children spent on average 189.2 days in their placements.⁸ This is a slight change from last year's report which showed of the 14,345 placements an average of 211.3 days in placement.⁹ These numbers exclude children who were admitted during the reporting period but whose placement did not end during the reporting period.

⁸ Source: DRIT 118379

⁹ Source: DRIT 113178

Conclusion

The trends identified regarding provider denials continue to be consistent with previous reporting, and provider feedback collected by DFPS and SSCC partners indicates denials were mostly attributed to a lack of provider capacity or a provider inability to meet the needs of the child for whom the referral was issued. The number of referrals drastically outnumbers the total number of admissions, demonstrating the ongoing effort of DFPS and SSCC placement staff to find appropriate placement for children but also emphasizes a lack of capacity that matches the needs of the children and youth in care.

To address placement capacity shortages, DFPS has expanded existing programs, such as Treatment Family Foster Care and increasing the age of admission. DFPS has also awarded capacity expansion grants to providers throughout the state to meet the needs of harder to place children. Additionally, DFPS is in the process of implementing T3C to better match children to providers. Through these initiatives, DFPS has expanded access to potential placement options for children with higher needs. However, more work is needed to address gaps shown in the data.

Technology enhancements used by DFPS and the SSCCs have assisted in better data collection capabilities. Further improvements in technology and placement processes could be warranted to reduce unnecessary referrals to providers and increase acceptance rates. Additionally, ongoing technical assistance may be needed to ensure providers meet the obligation to provide responses to all placement referrals, minimizing the amount of other and no response data points. These changes would improve data accuracy.

Increasing capacity for youth with complex needs and behaviors would aid in balancing the placement acceptance rate within the provider network. This could be accomplished, in part, through establishing programs designed to stabilize, support, and assist in transitioning these youth into less restrictive environments. These youth would also benefit from improved behavioral health services within current placements to increase behavioral stability and positive outcomes for youth. Without significant improvements to provider capacity and access to specialized treatment programs, there will be continued disparity between placement referrals and placement acceptance of all youth.

List of Acronyms

Acronym	Full Name
CBC	Community-Based Care
DFPS	Department of Family and Protective Services
FY	Fiscal Year
GPS	General Placement Search
IMPACT	Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas
SSCC	Single Source Continuum Contractor
T3C	Texas Child-Centered Care