



Editors: see chart at end showing stats regarding removals.

April 11, 2012

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DHS: Removals Down Sharply in Linn Child Welfare Cases

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa – The number of children temporarily removed from Linn County homes as the result of abuse or neglect dropped sharply last year, Iowa Department of Human Service officials said Wednesday.

“The trend was particularly noticeable among African American children, where the rate of removal was down by almost half,” said Marc Baty, the DHS service area manager for Linn and 16 other counties.

Linn County has been a focus for the agency in its partnership with the Casey Family Foundation which seeks to reduce the number of children, especially minority children, who are removed to foster homes.

“Safety is our top priority and the DHS will always recommend that the juvenile court approve out-of-home care in abuse cases if it is needed to protect the child,” Baty said.

“But we also know that removals are disruptive to families, so we’re looking for ways to protect kids without separating them from their parents. We are especially sensitive to cases involving minority children, where we are trying to reduce disparities.”

In the fiscal year ending June 2011, 47 African American children in Linn County were temporarily removed from their homes as the result of abuse or neglect. That compares to 75 the year before, and 76 and 105 in the two years before that.

There was also a noticeable drop in the number of Caucasian children who were temporarily removed, although the percentage change was much smaller. A total of 168 Caucasian children were temporarily removed in fiscal year 2011 compared to 194, 143, and 204 in the three most recent years.

The trend toward fewer removals did not lead to a higher re-abuse rate, he said.

Baty said the number of removals in Linn households claiming two or more races did not change last year and actually went up compared to prior years. A total of 22 children of more than one race were removed last year, compared to 21 in 2010, and 11 in both 2009 and 2008.

Baty said the likely reason is that more people now identify themselves as biracial than in years past.

Baty revealed the Linn County stats in a Wednesday night forum sponsored by the Cedar Rapids Gazette and KCRG-TV. He said there was also a statistically significant reduction in removals in Johnson County.

The DHS and comparable agencies around the country have struggled with the issue of race in child welfare. A disproportionate share of African American children are removed from homes in Iowa and other states as the result of abuse, and Baty said Iowa still has a long way to go to squeeze out bias in the system.

“But these new stats show we are starting to make a difference,” he said.

Baty said that most abused or neglected children are not removed from their homes, and most who are removed are later reunified.

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Here are the number of child welfare removals by county, race, and year

County / fiscal year	American Indian and Native Alaskan	Asian	Black	White	Pacific Islander/ Hawaiian	Two or More Races	Unknown	Form left blank	Total
Linn 2011	2	1	47	168	0	22	1	1	242
Linn 2010	2	5	75	194	0	21	1	0	298
Linn 2009	2	1	76	143	2	11	1	1	237
Linn 2008	1	1	105	204	3	11	13	1	339
Johnson 2011	2	0	27	43	0	3	0	0	75
Johnson 2010	0	0	40	57	0	3	3	1	104
Johnson 2009	0	0	58	68	0	1	8	1	136
Johnson 2008	1	1	71	64	0	3	11	1	152