

# Outcomes of children with court petitions, with and without referrals to Safe and Secure Baby Court Program, ages 0-18 months, between March 2017 to March 2021, RI DCYF.

*Follow up as of 12/01/2021*

## Executive Summary

### Purpose:

The focus of the brief is to describe the outcomes among three populations of children ages 0-18 months who were removed from their home between March 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021 and followed to assess selected outcomes.

The three populations include children ages 0-18 months who

- 1) did not receive a referral to Safe and Secure Baby Court
- 2) received a referral to SSBC and did not engage and
- 3) received a referral to SSBC and engaged in SSBC program

The primary outcomes include:

- RI benchmark of time to permanency
- Time to permanency among all three populations
- Subsequent CPS investigation and subsequent removal after permanency for all three populations

### Results:

The results below reflect *out of home children* between March 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021 in a prospective cohort who were followed longitudinally for 9 months to identify those who reunified with parents. Children with a petition or SSBC referral on or after April 1, 2021 and out of home may have already reunified, however, there needs to be sufficient follow up time for each child in the cohort to measure reunification.



### Among children removed the percent and number who reunified and were followed for 9 months post removal (March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021):

Among the 586 children with no SSBC referral:	24.7% (145) reunified	Median LOT 3.8 months
Among the 96 children with SSBC referral, no SSBC enrollment:	23.8% (20) reunified	Median LOT 2.6 months
Among the 88 children with SSBC referral and engaged:	63.0% (51) reunified	Median LOT 3.7 months

The results below reflect *out of home children who reunified in 9 months* in a prospective cohort follow longitudinally for an additional 6 months to identify those who had a subsequent CPS investigation. The cohort of children reunified is shorten March 1, 2017 to September 30, 2020 to allow 9 months of follow up for reunification and 6 additional months for subsequent CPS investigation. Children with a petition or SSBC referral on or after October 1, 2021 and reunified may or may not have a subsequent CPS investigation, however, there needs to be sufficient follow up time for each child in the cohort to measure both reunification and subsequent CPS investigations. **Numbers of indicated investigations and removals are very small and should be used cautiously when drawing conclusions. Numbers of indicated investigations and removals are very small sample sizes. This analysis provides preliminary data using mechanisms which will be utilized for future analyses when a large sample size is available.**

March 1, 2017 to September 30, 2020 - Removed

9 months  
Reunified

6 months

Sub. CPS investigation  
after reunify?

**Among children who reunified and were followed for 6 months from reunification, the percent and number who had a subsequent CPS investigation and/or removed (March 1, 2017 – September 1, 2020)**

Among the 110 children with no SSBC referral: 12.7% (14) subsequent CPS investigation

Among the 19 children with SSBC referral, no SSBC enrollment: 21.1% (4) subsequent CPS investigation

Among the 36 children with SSBC referral and engaged: 8.3% (3) subsequent CPS investigation

Among the 14 children with no SSBC referral and subsequent CPS investigation: 7.1% (1) removed

Among the 4 children with SSBC referral, no SSBC enrollment and subsequent CPS investigation: 25% (1) removed

Among the 3 children with SSBC referral and engaged and subsequent CPS investigation: 33.3% (1) removed

This brief provides an analysis of children ages 0-18 months with a family court petition during the time period March 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021 who were removed from home and followed for 9 months to explore their time to permanency. This brief provides data on time to permanency among all children 0-18 months, among children referred to Safe and Secure Baby Court (SSBC) and among children who enrolled in Safe and Secure Baby Court. The length of time to achieve permanency among all children age 0-18 months within 9 months was calculated to serve as a Department benchmark for time to permanency among this age group. Children who achieved permanency were followed for an additional 6 months to evaluate any subsequent CPS investigation, CPS investigation outcome, and subsequent removal.

RI Family Court data on children and parents referred to and/or engaged with Safe and Secure Baby Court was merged with RI DCYF RICHIST data. Between March 2017 and March 2021, there were 1404 children ages 0-18 months with a court petition. Among these children, 264 matched with Safe and Secure Baby Court for a referral and/or engagement. All children were followed for 9 months to assess time to permanency.

This brief provides information on the following indicators among 0–18-month-old children:

- RI benchmark of time to permanency
- Time to permanency for children referred to SSBC and did not engage
- Time to permanency for children referred to SSBC and engaged
- Time to permanency for children not referred to SSBC
- Subsequent CPS investigation after permanency for children referred to SSBC and did not engage
- Subsequent CPS investigation after permanency for children referred to SSBC and engaged
- Subsequent CPS investigation after permanency for children not referred to SSBC

Time to permanency is the length of time from the child’s removal date to removal end date that resulted in reunification with parents or supportive reunification.

- Section 1: Demographics– Race/Ethnicity, gender, petition types; children and mothers in the SSBC program
- Section 2: SSBC Program – program engagement rates and median length of time spent in the program; children and all parents in the SSBC program
- Section 3: Removal status – removals of children, in home vs out of home, median length of time from removal begin date to referral date, median length of time from removal to enrollment date, median length of time reunify; children with a court petition and/or SSBC referral
- Section 4: Subsequent CPS investigation– among out of home children who reunified with parents or entered supportive reunification within 9 months, subsequent CPS investigation with 6 months after reunification, CPS investigation disposition (indicated or unfounded), and/or removal during CPS investigation

## Section 1: Demographics

Table 1 contains data on the race/ethnicity and gender for RI DCYF children ages 0-18 months with a court petition and referral to Safe and Secure Baby Court as well as race/ethnicity of mothers. Among children with a petition between March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, Hispanic children had the highest percentage of SSBC referrals (22.3 percent), followed by Black Non-Hispanic (21.6 percent) (Table 1). In comparing gender, female children had a higher percentage of SSBC referrals compared to male children (20.1 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively). Children with Dependency had a higher frequency of being referred to SSBC than children with a Neglect petition (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Demographics of children ages 0-18 months with a court petition, from March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, by SSBC referral, RI DCYF.

	Petition children, no SSBC referral (n=1140)	Petition children, w/ SSBC referral (n=264)
	N (%)	N (%)
<b>Race/ethnicity of children ages 0-18 months with a court petition</b>		
White Non-Hispanic	540 (83.1)	110 (16.9)
Hispanic	289 (77.7)	83 (22.3)
Black Non-Hispanic	131(78.4)	36 (21.6)
Other/multiracial	158 (84.9)	28 (15.1)
Unknown	22 (75.9)	7 (24.1)
<b>Race/ethnicity of mothers of children ages 0-18 months with a court petition*</b>		
White Non-Hispanic	649 (83.3)	130 (16.7)
Hispanic	200 (77.5)	58 (22.5)
Black Non-Hispanic	126 (77.3)	37 (22.7)
Other/multiracial	68 (80.0)	17 (20.0)
Unknown	97 (81.5)	22 (18.5)
<b>Gender of children ages 0-18 months with a court petition</b>		
Female	562 (79.9)	141 (20.1)
Male	575 (82.5)	122 (17.5)
Unknown	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)

Data note: \*value is statistically significant with a p value <0.05

**Table 2.** Petition types of children 0-18 months with a court petition, from March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, by SSBC referral, RI DCYF.

	Petition children did not receive SSBC referral	Petition children received SSBC referral
Petition type	N (%)	N (%)
Dependency* (n=214)	118 (59.6)	80 (40.4)
Neglect* (n=1174)	864 (82.8)	180 (17.2)

Data note: \*value is statistically significant with a p value <0.05.

Dependency petition types include: "Dependency", "Dependency, Neglect", "Dependency, Neglect, Abuse".

Neglect petition types include: "Neglect", "Neglect, Abuse".

N=158 children had an Other petition type (including Adoption and TPR). Other petition types are small and were excluded for analysis purposed.

## Section 2: Safe and Secure Baby Court Program

This section provides information for all RI DCYF children ages 0-18 months who were referred to SSBC between March 2017 and March 2021. During this time frame age parameters for SSBC have varied, at times receiving referrals for children older than 18 months of age. For this analysis, age at the time of referral was limited to 0-18 months of age. Among children ages 0-18 months with a SSBC referral between March 2017 and March 2021, 127 (48.1 percent) children enrolled in the program as of June 1, 2021 (See Appendix Table 1). Among these children, 91 children enrolled and successfully closed (34.5 percent) and 46 enrolled and are still open to the program (17.4 percent) at the time of this report. Among the 91 children who successfully closed, their median time spent in the SSBC program was 4.5 months. Similar rates of engagement are provided at the parent level (See Appendix Table 1).

**\*\*\*SECTION 3 refers to out of home children ONLY.\*\*\***

## Section 3: Children removal status

This section provides information for all RI DCYF children 0-18 months with a court petition and referral to Safe and Secure Baby Court and their removal status, removed from home during their case, from March 1, 2017 to March 31, 2021. Removal status was analyzed according to the child's engagement with SSBC. Among children removed from home and not referred to SSBC, removal status was determined if the child was removed before or 30 days after the petition date. Among children removed from home and referred to SSBC and did not engage, removal status was determined if the child was removed before or 30 days after the referral date. Among children removed from home and engaged with SSBC, removal status was determined if the child was removed before or 30 days after the enrollment date. This data determines which children were in home or out of home during their case.

Among children with no SSBC referral (n=1140), 586 (51.5 percent) were out of home during their case (See Appendix Table 2). Among children referred to SSBC and no engagement (n=127), 96 (75.6 percent) were out of home during their case. Among children referred to SSBC and engagement (n=137), 88 (64.2 percent) were out of home during their case. **The sample size of children with SSBC referrals with no enrollment and out of home (n=96) and SSBC referrals with enrollment and out of home (n=88) are small populations. This data should be used cautiously when drawing conclusions until larger populations are available for future analyses.**

**Table 3.** Frequency of children out of home who reunified with parents (including supportive reunification) and median and mean length of time to reunify *using removal begin date*, among children with a removal, March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, RI DCYF.

	Children with no SSBC referral (n=586)	Children w/ SSBC referral, no enrollment (n=96)	Children w/ SSBC referral and enrollment (n=88)
<b><i>Among all children removed, did they reunified with parents?*</i></b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
Reunified with parents	145 (24.7)	20 (23.8)	51 (63.0)
Did not reunify with parents**	441 (75.3)	64(76.2)	30(37.0)
<b><i>Time to Reunify</i></b>			
Median (Months)	3.8	2.6	3.7
Mean (Months)	4.2	2.7	3.9

Data note: \*value is statistically significant with a p value <0.001. \*\*Follow up time is 9 months after removal start date. Child did not reunify within follow up time as of 12.01.2021 and may still be open to the department. A child may have reunified with their parents after this date, but this is not reflected in the current data.

"Reunified with parents" is defined as a removal that ended with reunification with parents or supportive reunification.

RI DCYF, Data Analytic and Evaluation Unit, Division of Performance Improvement

Data source: RI DCYF RICHIST; Banner Court Data

Data note: Data is unduplicated at the child level. A child may have had more than one petition during this time frame, but only the first petition is counted. There may be multiple children in a petition.

Table 3 provides the results of time from removal to return to home. Children who were removed from home and referred to and enrolled in SSBC were more than twice as likely to reunify with parents than either children not referred to SSBC or children referred to SSBC yet did not enroll. Among the 586 children ages 0-18 months removed from home with no SSBC referral 24.7% (n=145) reunified with their parent or entered into supportive reunification, with a median length of time of 3.8 months (as of 12.01.2021). Among the 96 children ages 0-18 months removed from home with a SSBC referral, but no enrollment in the program 23.8% (n=20) reunified with parents or entered into supportive reunification, with a median length of time of 2.6 months. Among the 88 children ages 0-18 months with a referral and enrolled in SSBC 63.0% (n=51) reunified with parents or entered into supportive reunification, with a median length of time of 3.7 months.

Permanency data from previous fiscal years can be used as a benchmark on the time to permanency among children age 0-18 months. In this age group time to reunification or supportive reunification within 9 months in FY18-FY20 ranged 25.6%, 17.0% and 28.7% respectively. Children who were referred and enrolled in the SSBC program and out of home were twice as likely to reunify with parents (or achieve supportive reunification) compared to all RI DCYF children age 0-18 months removed from home in FY20.

**\*\*\*SECTION 4 refers to out of home children who reunified within 9 months (with parents or supportive reunification) and followed for 6 months post reunification ONLY.\*\*\***

#### **Section 4: Subsequent CPS investigation**

This section provides information for all RI DCYF children 0-18 months with a court petition and referral to Safe and Secure Baby Court between March 1, 2017 to September 2020 who were out of home during their case and reunified (with parents or supportive reunification) and any presence of a subsequent CPS investigation and removal within 6 months. Children who were out of home were followed for 9 months to determine reunification, and then followed for an addition 6 months to evaluate subsequent CPS investigation and removal. Among all children, subsequent CPS investigation was evaluated with 6 months of the date reunified. **Numbers of indicated investigations and removals are very small sample sizes. This analysis provides preliminary data using mechanisms which will be utilized for future analyses when a large sample size is available.**

**Table 4.** Frequency of children with subsequent CPS investigation within 6 months, CPS investigation disposition, and removal, among children out of home who reunified with parents or supportive reunification, March 1, 2017 – September 1, 2020, RI DCYF.

	Children with no SSBC referral (n=110)	Children w/ SSBC referral, no enrollment (n=19)	Children w/ SSBC referral and enrolled (n=36)
<i>Among all children out of home and reunified, did they have a subsequent CPS investigation?*</i>	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Sub. CPS investigation	14 (12.7)	4 (21.1)	3 (8.3)
No sub. CPS investigation	96 (97.3)	15 (78.9)	33 (91.7)
<b>Investigation Disposition**</b>			
Indicated	13 (92.9)	2 (50.0)	1 (33.3)
Unfounded	1 (7.1)	2 (50.0)	2 (66.6)
<b>Removal During Sub. Investigation</b>			
Removed	1 (7.1)	1 (25.0)	1 (33.3)
Not removed	13 (92.9)	3 (75.0)	2 (66.6)

Data note: \*Follow up time is 6 months after SSBC closure date or reunification date. "Reunified with parents" is defined as a removal that ended with reunification with parents or supportive reunification. Children who were out of home were followed for 9 months to determine reunification, and then follow for an additional 6 months to evaluate subsequent CPS investigation and removal. \*\*Unfounded investigations are expunged from RICHIST records after 3 years. Cases older than three years may have had a subsequent unfounded investigation, but it not reflected in the data.

Table 4 provides the results of children with subsequent CPS investigation within 6 months, CPS investigation disposition, and removal among children out of home and reunified. Children with engagement in the SSBC had a lower percentage of children returning to RI DCYF with a subsequent CPS investigation (8 percent), compared to children who did not engage (21 percent) and children with no SSBC referral (13 percent). This data is also provided at the case/family level (See Appendix Table 3).

## Appendix

**Appendix Table 1.** SSBC enrollment status among children ages 0-18 months and parents of children ages 0-18 months, and median and mean time in SSBC program, from March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, RI DCYF.

	Petition children, w/ SSBC referral (n=264)	Parents of petition children, w/ SSBC referral (n=370)
<b><i>If referred to SSBC, did the child enroll in the program?</i></b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
Enrolled, successfully closed	91 (34.5)	135 (36.5)
Enrolled, still open*	46 (17.4)	62(16.8)
No engagement	127 (48.1)	173 (46.7)
<b><i>Time spent in SSBC program for children enrolled and successfully closed</i></b>		
	<b>(n=91)</b>	<b>(n=135)</b>
Median time in program (Months)	4.5	4.8
Mean time in program (Months)	6.1	6.1

\*Data note: Open to SSBC program as of June 1, 2021. A child's case can involve one or more parent. Two parents of the same child may be counted twice for program involvement of the child.

**Appendix Table 2.** Removal status of petition children with no referral, March 1, 2017 – March 31, 2021, RI DCYF.

	Children with no SSBC referral (n=1140)	Children w/ SSBC referral, no enrollment (n=127)	Children w/ SSBC referral and enrollment (n=137)
<b><i>Removal Status</i></b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>	<b>N (%)</b>
Out of home	586 (51.4)	96(75.6)	88 (64.2)
In home	554 (48.6)	31 (24.4)	49 (35.8)

Data note: Removals include are those associate with the petition. A child may have had a prior removal that closed before to the petition/referral/enrollment date, which is not counted as an out of home removal above. Removals that occurred greater than 30 days after the petition/referral/enrollment date are considered a subsequent removal, and not counted as an out of home removal above.



**Appendix Table 3.** Frequency of cases/families with subsequent CPS investigation within 6 months, CPS investigation disposition, and removal, among children out of home who reunified with parents or supportive reunification, March 1, 2017 – September 1, 2020, RI DCYF.

	Cases with no SSBC referral (n=97)	Cases w/ SSBC referral, no enrollment (n=17)	Children w/ SSBC referral and enrolled (n=35)
<i>Among all cases out of home and reunified, did they have a subsequent CPS investigation?*</i>	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Sub. CPS investigation	13 (13.4)	4 (23.5)	3 (8.6)
No sub. CPS investigation	84 (86.6)	13 (76.5)	32 (91.4)
<b>Investigation Disposition**</b>			
Indicated	12 (92.3)	2 (50.0)	1 (33.3)
Unfounded	1 (7.7)	2 (50.0)	2 (66.6)
<b>Removal During Sub. Investigation</b>			
Removed	1 (7.7)	1 (25.0)	1 (33.3)
Not removed	12 (92.3)	3 (75.0)	2 (66.6)

Data note: \*Follow up time is 6 months after SSBC closure date or reunification date. “Reunified with parents” is defined as a removal that ended with reunification with parents or supportive reunification. Children who were out of home were followed for 9 months to determine reunification, and then follow for an addition 6 months to evaluate subsequent CPS investigation and removal. \*\*Unfounded investigations are expunged from RICHIST records after 3 years. Cases older than three years may have had a subsequent unfounded investigation, but it not reflected in the data.