
2025 Annual Report on Alcohol and Other Drug Use among Families, Adults, and Children Served by the Department of Children and Family Services

This report is provided by the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) pursuant to the Children and Family Services Act, 20 ILCS 505/34.6. The statute requires that the Department submit a report to the General Assembly on the incidence of alcohol and other drug use among the families, adults, and children served by the Department. Data presented in this report are derived from multiple administrative and assessment systems used by the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), formerly known as the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR). For purposes of this report, incidence reflects identified service needs and service utilization among DCFS-involved individuals, not population-level prevalence of substance use.

Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) Assessment – Substance Use Needs

Youth and caregiver substance use needs are identified using the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) assessment, which is completed at key points during the life of a DCFS case. An “actionable” rating on the CANS assessment indicates a level of need requiring service intervention and does not represent the overall prevalence of substance use among all DCFS-involved children or caregivers. Rather, it reflects those individuals whose assessed needs meet a threshold for service planning and response.

Children and family members involved with DCFS are assessed at multiple entry, transition, and other milestones within the life of a DCFS case. DCFS caseworkers, clinicians, and specialty staff primarily use the CANS tool to identify and measure service needs. The tables below indicate the number of children and adults involved with DCFS identified on a CANS assessment as having actionable substance use needs during state fiscal year (SFY) 2019-2025 for comparison. The “actionable” items in the CANS assessment tools are those needing action with a moderate degree of severity or immediate, intensive action.

Tables 1–7 present needs for youth at case opening for cases opening in SFY19–SFY25.
Tables 8–14 present needs for biological caregivers of youth whose cases opened in SFY19–SFY25.

Youth Substance Use Needs (CANS Identified)

Table 1. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY19.

| Age at Case opening-FY19 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 2044 | 11 | 0.5% |
| 6-14 | 1339 | 30 | 2.2% |
| 15-17 | 310 | 79 | 25.5% |
| Total | 3693 | 120 | 3.2% |

Table 2. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY20.

| Age at Case opening-FY20 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 2257 | 17 | 0.8% |
| 6-14 | 1421 | 25 | 1.8% |
| 15-17 | 368 | 78 | 21.2% |
| Total | 4046 | 120 | 3.0% |

Table 3. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY21.

| Age at Case opening-FY21 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 2083 | 13 | 0.6% |
| 6-14 | 1327 | 35 | 2.6% |
| 15-17 | 321 | 62 | 19.3% |
| Total | 3731 | 110 | 2.9% |

Table 4. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY22.

| Age at Case opening-FY22 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 1860 | 28 | 1.5% |
| 6-14 | 1209 | 33 | 2.7% |
| 15-17 | 271 | 37 | 13.7% |

| | | | |
|-------|------|----|------|
| Total | 3340 | 98 | 2.9% |
|-------|------|----|------|

Table 5. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY23.

| Age at Case opening-FY23 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 1874 | 34 | 1.8% |
| 6-14 | 1220 | 24 | 2.0% |
| 15-17 | 301 | 49 | 16.3% |
| Total | 3395 | 107 | 3.2% |

Table 6. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY24.

| Age at Case opening-FY24 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|--------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 1797 | 22 | 1.2% |
| 6-14 | 1287 | 18 | 1.4% |
| 15-17 | 306 | 53 | 17.3% |
| Total | 3390 | 93 | 2.7% |

Table 7. Youth with actionable substance use need based on CANS assessment by age group: SFY25.

| Age at Case Opening – SFY25 | # Cases | # with actionable substance use need | % with actionable substance use need |
|-----------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 0-5 | 1551 | 12 | 0.8% |
| 6-14 | 1166 | 31 | 2.7% |
| 15-17 | 304 | 57 | 18.8% |
| Total | 3021 | 100 | 3.3% |

Biological Caregivers' Substance Use Needs (CANS Identified)

Table 8. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY19.

| | # of Case Openings in FY19 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1756 | 1056 | 60.1% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1063 | 624 | 58.7% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 202 | 89 | 44.1% |
| Total | 3021 | 1769 | 58.6% |

Table 9. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY20.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY20 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1928 | 1093 | 56.7% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1121 | 574 | 51.2% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 234 | 82 | 35.0% |
| Total | 3283 | 1749 | 53.3% |

Table 10. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY21.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY21 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1794 | 1036 | 57.7% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1066 | 602 | 56.5% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 222 | 101 | 45.5% |
| Total | 3082 | 1739 | 56.4% |

Table 11. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY22.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY22 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1602 | 888 | 55.4% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 981 | 519 | 52.9% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 173 | 67 | 38.7% |
| Total | 2756 | 1473 | 53.4% |

Table 12. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY23.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY23 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1632 | 921 | 56.4% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1011 | 552 | 54.6% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 195 | 76 | 39.0% |
| Total | 2838 | 1549 | 54.6% |

Table 13. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY24.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY24 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1552 | 826 | 53.2% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1040 | 531 | 51.1% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 202 | 82 | 40.6% |
| Total | 2794 | 1438 | 51.5% |

Table 14. Biological caregiver substance use need at case opening by child age at case opening: FY25.

| | # of Case Openings beginning in FY25 with at least one biological/natural parent entering caregiver CANS | # of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) | % of Case Openings with at least one biological/natural parent with actionable substance use (CANS item #123) |
|---|--|---|---|
| Parents of children 0-5 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 1327 | 711 | 53.6% |
| Parents of children 6-14 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 968 | 502 | 51.9% |
| Parents of children 15-17 years old when the spell began (at entry) | 205 | 76 | 37.1% |
| Total | 2500 | 1288 | 51.5% |

Key Findings

The data suggest that older adolescents have greater identified need for targeted interventions than younger children and adolescents. At the same time, the prevalence of substance use needs among caregivers highlights the importance of continued investment in treatment and recovery services for parents as a core component of child safety, family stability, and permanency within the child welfare system.

Substance Use Assessment, Treatment, and Recovery Services

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services collaborates with the Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS), Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), formerly known as the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR) to provide substance use assessment, treatment, and recovery support services to DCFS-involved families. A summary of services to DCFS-involved youth and adults during state fiscal year 2025 is provided below using the most recently available data.

Data in this report is from individual service data submitted into DARTS (Division's Automated Reporting & Tracking System). Please note that DARTS only collects data for services reimbursed through DBHR contract and Medicaid fee-for-service (FFS). Data on services reimbursed by Medicaid Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) are not reported by providers into DARTS, and

therefore, the admissions and other service information are not included. Totals reflect the unduplicated count of clients within a category and are not meant to reflect a simple sum. Some clients enter treatment more than once in the same year, but their category/demographic has changed. Therefore, the number indicated within a category reflects admissions, not unduplicated clients.

State Fiscal Year 2025 (FY-25) Services to DCFS Involved Individuals
(Source: Department of Human Services,
Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery)

| Age at Opening (group) | | | | | | |
|------------------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Gender | 0-18 | 19-25 | 26-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Grand Total |
| Female | 64 | 299 | 1,953 | 158 | 6 | 2,470 |
| Male | 74 | 151 | 936 | 244 | 14 | 1,417 |
| Grand Total | 138 | 450 | 2,881 | 402 | 20 | 3,879 |

| Age at Opening (group) | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| Referral Source | 0-18 | 19-25 | 26-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Grand Total |
| Child Welfare (DCFS/POS) | 74 | 269 | 1,509 | 203 | 11 | 2,058 |
| Criminal Justice Referral | 19 | 67 | 436 | 51 | 1 | 574 |
| DHS/SAPP Prevention Provider | 1 | 5 | 40 | 2 | | 48 |
| Early Intervention Provider | 2 | | 3 | 1 | | 6 |
| Employer/EAP | | | | 1 | | 1 |
| Individual | 8 | 62 | 587 | 89 | 6 | 751 |
| Other Community Referral | 13 | 51 | 320 | 46 | | 430 |
| Other Health Care Provider | 10 | 11 | 102 | 10 | 2 | 135 |
| School | 13 | 1 | 1 | | | 15 |
| Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Provider | | 7 | 71 | 10 | | 88 |
| Grand Total | 138 | 450 | 2,881 | 402 | 20 | 3,879 |

| Age at Opening (group) | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-------------|
| Discharge Primary Substance | 0-18 | 19-25 | 26-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | Grand Total |
| Alcohol | 17 | 82 | 715 | 130 | 3 | 945 |
| Barbiturates | | | 4 | | | 4 |
| Benzodiazepines | | 5 | 18 | | | 22 |



| | | | | | | |
|--|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Cocaine/Crack | 1 | 34 | 279 | 35 | 2 | 350 |
| Ecstasy | | 1 | 7 | | | 8 |
| Heroin | 1 | 11 | 189 | 33 | 1 | 235 |
| Inhalants | | 1 | | | | 1 |
| Marijuana/Hashish | 79 | 117 | 328 | 26 | 1 | 551 |
| Methamphetamine | 4 | 73 | 568 | 52 | | 695 |
| Nicotine | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| Non-Prescription Methadone | | | 1 | | | 1 |
| None | 35 | 137 | 892 | 129 | 12 | 1205 |
| Other | | | 5 | | | 5 |
| Other Amphetamines | 1 | 3 | 31 | 4 | | 39 |
| Other Hallucinogens | 1 | | 3 | | | 4 |
| Other Non-Barbiturate Sedatives or Hypnotics | | | 1 | 1 | | 2 |
| Other Non-Benzodiazepine Tranquilizers | | | 6 | | | 6 |
| Other Opiates and Synthetics | | 13 | 108 | 8 | 1 | 130 |
| Other Stimulants | | 3 | 12 | 3 | | 18 |
| PCP | | | 11 | | | 11 |
| Steroids | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| Grand Total | 138 | 450 | 2881 | 402 | 20 | 3879 |

| Primary Route Administration | Age at Opening (group) | | | | | Grand Total |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|------------|--------------|------------|-----------|--------------|
| | 0-18 | 19-25 | 26-44 | 45-64 | 65+ | |
| Inhalation | 2 | 58 | 429 | 97 | 6 | 592 |
| Injection IV or intramuscular | 1 | 22 | 265 | 17 | | 305 |
| Not Applicable | 9 | 28 | 99 | 16 | 2 | 154 |
| Oral | 26 | 143 | 1,120 | 184 | 8 | 1,475 |
| Smoking | 101 | 213 | 1,090 | 97 | 4 | 1,501 |
| Grand Total | 138 | 450 | 2,881 | 402 | 20 | 3,879 |

Service Utilization Overview

In State Fiscal Year 2025, the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery (DBHR), formerly known as the Division of Substance Use Prevention and Recovery (SUPR), provided substance

use assessment, treatment, and recovery services to 3,879 DCFS-involved individuals. Most individuals served were adults ages 26–44, and females comprised most admissions. The data demonstrates that DCFS-linked substance use services primarily support adult caregivers. Continued cross-agency collaboration between DCFS and DHS, coupled with improved data integration and family-centered service models, is key to advancing child safety, permanency, and family well-being outcomes.

Conclusion

This report provides a comprehensive overview of alcohol and other drug use related service needs and service utilization among children, caregivers, and families involved with the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. Findings indicate that older adolescents demonstrate greater need for targeted interventions. Substance use needs among biological caregivers are prevalent across cases and continue to represent a significant factor in child welfare involvement. Service utilization data further demonstrate that substance use assessment, treatment, and recovery services primarily support adult caregivers, highlighting the critical role of coordinated, family-centered treatment approaches in promoting child safety, family stability, and permanency. Ongoing collaboration between DCFS and the Illinois Department of Human Services remains essential to ensuring access to timely, effective services and to supporting continuous improvement in outcomes for children and families served by the child welfare system.