



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE of PENNSYLVANIA COURTS

**EDITORS NOTE:** Radio actualities and an informational graphic regarding this topic are available on the Judiciary's [media resources web page](#).

## News for Immediate Release

May 2, 2013

### 7,000 Fewer Children in Pennsylvania Foster Care

**HARRISBURG**—On any given day six years ago, more than 21,000 abused and neglected children were living temporarily in foster homes throughout Pennsylvania. As a result of efforts led by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court, in cooperation with the child welfare community, today that number is 14,000, which equates to a 34 percent reduction.

“Great strides have been made in reducing the number of children in foster care,” said Justice Max Baer, who spearheads this effort on behalf of the court. “Our courts and child welfare agencies have collaborated and worked tirelessly to improve the lives of abused and neglected children and their families, but there is much more work to do.

“As we continue our efforts to safely reduce the number of children in foster care, we will focus more on the mental well-being of children and strive to minimize the level of trauma experienced by those children who, through no fault of their own, are placed under court supervision.”

More than 400 court officials, Department of Public Welfare staff, and state and local child welfare professionals from 49 counties, who represent 95 percent of the children under court supervision, convened this week at the Children’s Roundtable Summit to strengthen efforts to secure permanent, loving families for Pennsylvania’s 14,000 children still in foster care. At the summit participants gained valuable insight into how their decisions affect a child’s physical and emotional safety, heard from youth and families formerly in the child welfare system, and learned of ways to reduce the trauma for children and their families.

National experts who presented to the conference encouraged those in attendance to evaluate each dependency case individually; work to better understand why a child is in the system; and engage the child’s family and extended family in decisions that could have long-lasting effects on the child’s well-being, both physically and emotionally.

In addition to the 34 percent drop in the number of children in the dependency system, the annual number of days dependent children spent out of their homes has been reduced by 2.2 million, according to statistics provided by the Department of Public Welfare. Placing these children into permanent family settings greatly improves their chances to succeed and also significantly reduces the cost of institutional care. Pennsylvania is saving an estimated 117 million in tax dollars each year because it is no longer keeping in care the 7,000 children who have been returned home or placed into other permanent quality living arrangements.

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