Foster Care Data

Data Assessment

This study will result in a short paper assessing the scope, quality and accessibility of the agency’s data, how it has been used by journalists and how it could be used. The paper should also identify opportunities for agencies to release or organize data of public interest. This paper constitutes 10 percent of each student’s grade.

I got my data from two different sources, the Children’s Bureau and the Medicaid Statistical Information System.

Finding the data on the number of kids in foster care was the difficult part. The Department of Health and Human Services had multiple departments within that foster kids come in contact with, depending on their specific issues,

The Children’s Bureau along with the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) produces a lot of annual and quarterly reports and reviews on child welfare in foster care, but doesn’t make the raw data readily available on their website. The ARCARS collects case-level data and produces assessment reviews for states on a rotating basis. I chose not to use that information to compare the states since the fiscal years were different.

Also, the ARCARS doesn’t have a database where you can search for national, state, or case-level information on children in foster care so it makes finding the scope a little difficult. I did (finally) find a report summarizing the stats on kids entering, exiting, and in care on the last day of the fiscal year that had data for each state in the past 10 years. It was provided in an excel file that had to be cleaned up a little, but overall it was easy to work with once I found it.

Since ARCARS doesn’t have a database to search for national, state, or case-level information on children in foster care, I found the Medicaid Statistical Information System