

Exploring Institutional Placements in the Texas Child Welfare System

Valerie Law, Katie New, James Street
8200 Data Science

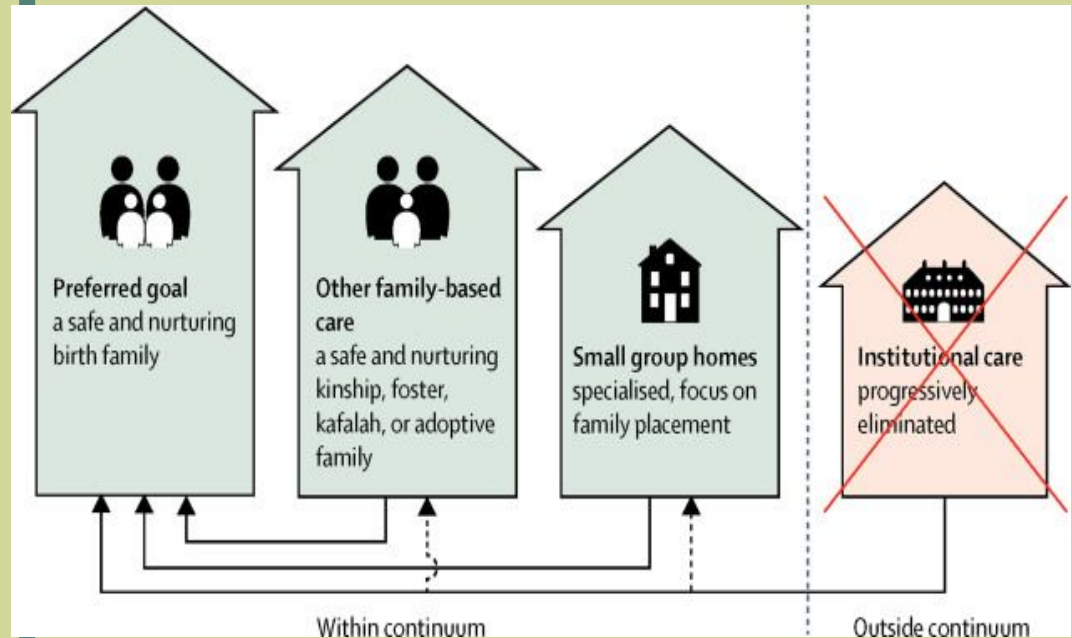
INTRODUCTION



- ❏ Problem In Practice
- ❏ Research Question
- ❏ The Data
- ❏ Potential Predictors
- ❏ Data Analysis
- ❏ Findings
- ❏ Limitations
- ❏ Next Steps

Problem in Practice

- In 2018, the Federal government passed the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA).
- The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Child Welfare System.



Research Question

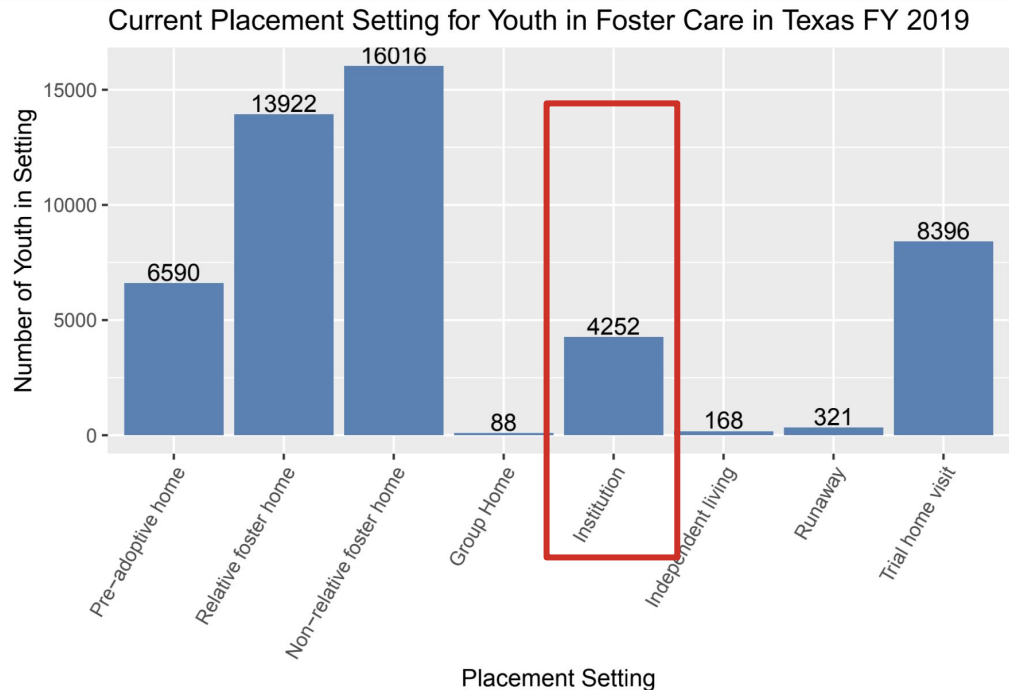
What predictors affect institutional placement within Texas' child welfare system?

Goal: To understand which predictors can be used to help child welfare workers, and in effect states, determine which children are being funneled into institutions as opposed to foster homes or relative placement.



Research Focus: Why Texas?

- Highest number of children placed in institutions.
- Zero qualified residential treatment facilities (QRTF)



The Data: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)

- US Administration of Children and Families Regulation for FY 2019
- Maintained by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect
- Most comprehensive collection of foster care and adoption data
- 675,000 observations directly identifying characteristics of children in the foster care system across America

The AFCARS Report

Preliminary FY¹ 2014 Estimates as of July 2015 • No. 22

SOURCE: Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2014 data²

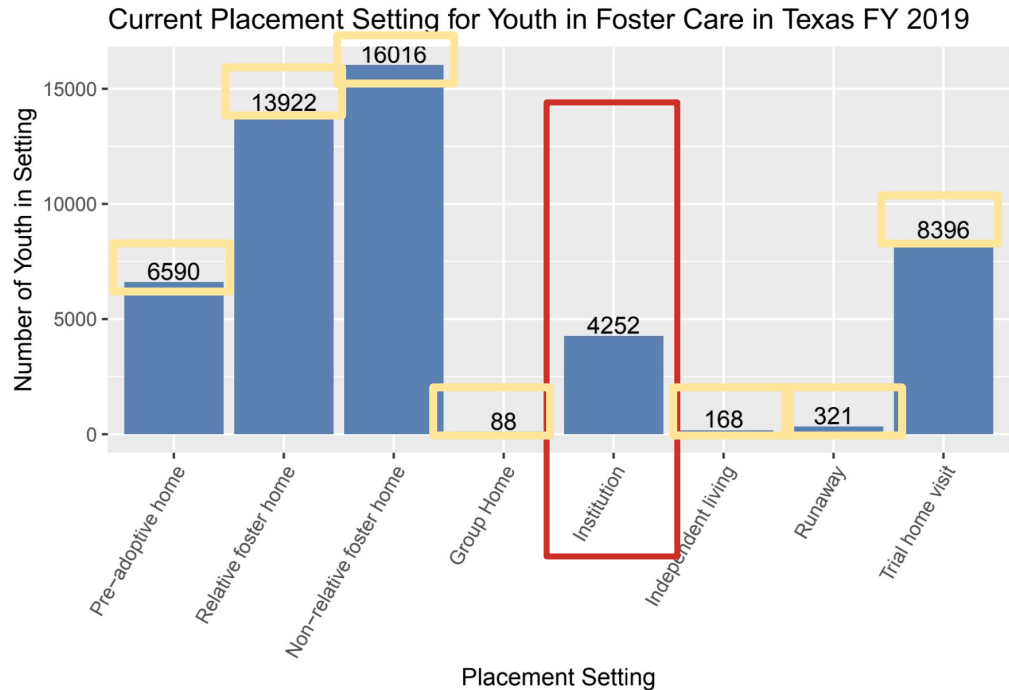
Numbers At A Glance

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	404,878	397,057	397,153	400,989	415,129
Number entered foster care during FY	256,092	251,850	255,147	264,746	
Number exited foster care during FY	256,306	240,987	240,987	238,230	
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	103,746	102,058	102,058	107,918	
Number waiting to be adopted whose parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated during FY	65,747	59,147	59,147	60,898	
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during FY	53,547	52,046	52,046	50,644	



Texas Statistics

- For FY 2019, AFCARS reported 4,252 children in institutional placements.
- Another 45,501 children were placed in other out-of-home placements throughout the state.



What Does the Research Say?



Demographics

Increased risk for males and adolescents

Slight increase in risk for African American and Hispanic youth



Medical, Physical, and Emotional

Increased risk for youth with mental health conditions

Gap in literature for other medical and physical conditions



Removal Reasons

Gap in literature regarding removal reasons as a potential predictor

Potential Predictors

Age at Removal

varname	0	1
<10 yrs	96.56976	3.43024
10-12 yrs	82.64548	17.35452
13-15 yrs	69.84456	30.15544
16-18 yrs	66.00952	33.99048

Sex and Race

0	1	varname
90.75126	9.248737	Male
92.18596	7.814037	Female
91.57199	8.428012	White
91.69685	8.303149	Black
92.04677	7.953233	Hispanic
92.35127	7.648725	Asian
90.74074	9.259259	HPI

Potential Predictors

Medical, Physical, and Emotional

0	1	varname
71.20253	28.79747 * MR	
85.05747	14.94253 VisHear	
90.21164	9.78836 PhyDis	
66.16742	33.83258 EmotDist	
84.86172	15.13828 OtherMed	

*MR (mental retardation) is the terminology/ classification label used in the AFCARS data set

Removal Reasons

0	1	varname
90.54024	9.459761	PhyAbuse
83.05041	16.949589	SexAbuse
92.56803	7.431965	Neglect
91.58907	8.410934	AAParent
95.55358	4.446415	DAParent
89.75069	10.249308	AAChild
93.21014	6.789858	DACHild
80.97807	19.021935	ChilDis
53.46985	46.530148	ChBehPrb
88.97059	11.029412	PrtsDied
92.20577	7.794232	PrtsJail
83.40009	16.599911	NoCope
69.49541	30.504587	Abandmnt
100.00000	NA	Relinqsh
91.72230	8.277704	Housing

Potential Predictors

Total Number of Removals from the Home

TotalRem	0	1
1	93.22034	6.779661
2	81.62986	18.370139
3	75.30726	24.692737
4	67.22689	32.773109
5	90.90909	9.090909

Data Analysis: Logistic Regression

Predictors: age at last removal, mental retardation, emotionally disturbed, other medical conditions, sex abuse, child disability, child behavioral problems, parents died, parental inability to cope, abandonment, total number of removals, sex

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value
(Intercept)	-4.1492671	0.1076305	-38.5510269	0.0000000
AgeAtLatRem	0.2036495	0.0060454	33.6868807	0.0000000
MR	0.4928817	0.1555837	3.1679515	0.0015352
EmotDist	1.1010541	0.0618652	17.7976198	0.0000000
OtherMed	0.5489425	0.0870657	6.3049232	0.0000000
SexAbuse	0.1736415	0.0769529	2.2564634	0.0240416
ChilDis	0.0245671	0.0781174	0.3144899	0.7531490
ChBehPrb	0.6050332	0.1179284	5.1305123	0.0000003
PrtsDied	0.0499053	0.3064883	0.1628294	0.8706528
NoCope	0.3461281	0.0755747	4.5799488	0.0000047
Abandmnt	0.6414453	0.0676747	9.4783602	0.0000000
TotalRem	0.0888033	0.0465115	1.9092769	0.0562264
Sex	-0.3209653	0.0532257	-6.0302685	0.0000000

Findings

Significant Variables

age at last removal, mental retardation, emotionally disturbed, other medical conditions, sex abuse, child behavioral problems, parental inability to cope, abandonment, and sex of the child (male/female)

Emotionally Disturbed

For youth diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, there was a 200% increase in the odds of being placed in an institutional setting holding all other variables constant

Abandonment

For youth with abandonment identified as a reason for removal from the home, there was a 90% increase in the odds of being placed in an institutional setting holding all other variables constant

Child Behavioral Problems

For youth with child behavioral problems identified as a reason for removal from the home, there was an 83% increase in the odds of being placed in an institutional setting holding all other variables constant

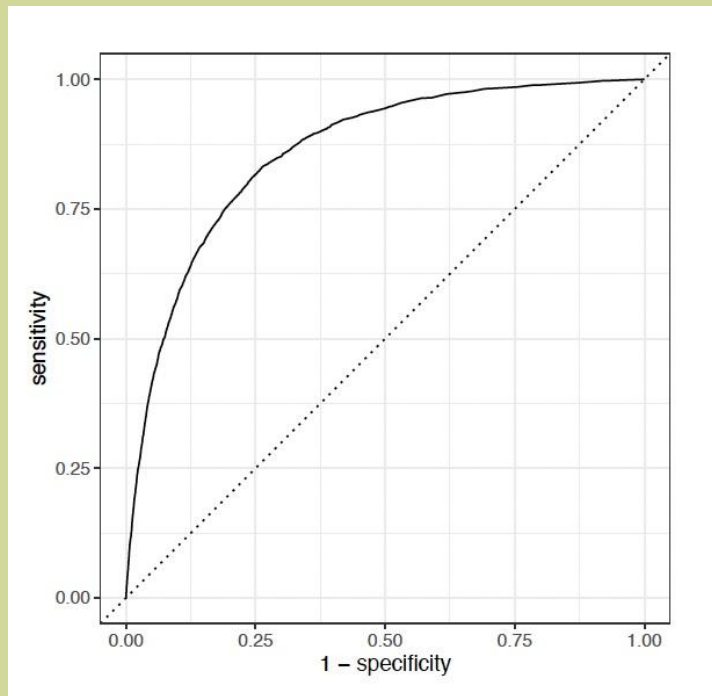
Model Validation

Monte Carlo - 1000 Simulations

Sensitivity	16.8%
Specificity	98.6%
roc_auc	85.9%

Test / Retest

Sensitivity	16.9%
Specificity	98.6%
roc_auc	85.9%



Limitations

Analysis applies to Texas only. State by state needs will vary.

Inform needs prior to Covid, landscape may have been altered by global pandemic.

Helpful in analyzing previous trends, rule changes would alter variables.

Only 4,252 children in Texas institutions.



Next Steps

Complete analysis on a state-by-state basis to identify policies, procedures leading to inequalities.

Close analysis of current practices to identify gaps in services leading to unequal outcomes.

Individualization of case plans, taking into consideration identified risk-factors.

Provide for more robust support networks that emphasize other, less extreme placements.

Recruiting foster parents specifically trained in therapeutic and trauma-informed care.

Resources

Casey Family Programs. (2021, November 4). Retrieved November 13, 2021, from <https://www.casey.org/>

Legislative News, studies, and analysis: National conference of state legislatures. Legislative News, Studies and Analysis | National Conference of State Legislatures. (2021). Retrieved October 15, 2021, from <https://www.ncsl.org/>

National Conference of State Legislatures. (2020). *Family First Prevention Services Act*. Retrieved from <https://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/family-first-prevention-services-act-ffpsa.aspx>

The Texas response to the Family First Prevention Services Act. Texas Public Policy Foundation. (2020, November 8). Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <https://www.texaspolicy.com/legeffpsa/>

United States. Children's Bureau. *The AFCARS report #27.* U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau.

Wai-ying,C., Mettrick,J., Stephan,S., & Von Waldner,C.(2014, October). Youth in group home care: Youth characteristics and predictors of later functioning. *The Journal of Behavioral Health Services & Research*, 41(4).

Welch, M., & Haskins, R. (2020, April 30). *What covid-19 means for America's child welfare system.* Brookings. Retrieved November 14, 2021, from <https://www.brookings.edu/research/what-covid-19-means-for-americas-child-welfare-system/>

Zhou, Xiaomeng., McClanahan,J., Huhr,Scott., & Wulczyn,F. (2021, July). *Using congregate care: What the evidence tells us.* The Center for State Child Welfare Data. Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/resources/using-congregate-care>

