LEADING FOR RESULTS:
TOP 3 ROOT CAUSES OF PLACEMENT INSTABILITY

Our data shows the majority of those experiencing placement instability:
Older youth ages 13 to 18 with higher levels of disabilities/needs

Placement instability is not just a foster care problem, it is directly related to key points throughout the entire child welfare system.

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<th>FOSTER CARE PLACEMENTS</th>
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**#1**
Inadequate community-based prevention services to serve older high needs youth

**#2**
Front door into foster care is too wide due to a lack of understanding of the role of foster care

**#3**
Lack of placements for older youth with intensive behavioral health needs
### LEADING FOR RESULTS: PLACEMENT INSTABILITY

#### CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO ROOT CAUSES

#### Community Prevention
Inadequate community-based prevention services to serve older higher-needs youth

**Policy & Practice**
- Lack of community readiness for SB 367
- Lack of multidisciplinary team meetings in rural counties for high risk youth

**Community & Organizational Resources**
- Lack of access to services needed due to affordability or transportation challenges
- Lack of available resources to families struggling with other needs (not struggling with abuse or neglect), including services for mental health and parenting support (in-home services, mentoring/support networks, respite, etc.)
- Lack of available substance use disorder providers for youth (especially in rural areas)
- Inadequate discharge planning and supports from Psychiatric Residential Treatment Facilities

#### Front Door of Child Welfare
Lack of understanding of the role of foster care

**Policy & Practice**
- Lack of system readiness for SB 367
- Juvenile justice does not have out-of-home placement option other than incarceration
- Ability for non-DCFS staff to petition removal
- Policy knowledge gaps for new staff
- Steady increase in removals that are NOT related to abuse/neglect (i.e. FINA)

**External Factors**
- Misunderstanding by community providers and courts about foster care’s ability to facilitate or speed up access to services
- Court decision-making misaligned with DCF recommendation (removals due to truancy or juvenile justice) & Courts uncomfortable with TDM recommendations
- Police protective custody criteria misaligned with DCF's criteria for out-of-home placement
- Courts use foster care as punishment and/or when they do not trust parents to follow through with services

#### Foster Care Placements
Lack of placements for older youth with intensive behavioral health needs

**Policy & Practice**
- Practice of placing older youth with challenging behaviors outside of their community
- Policy does not allow placement with relatives with DCF history or past legal charges, or out of state relative to be initial placement
- Policy does not allow informal relative placements without making foster care referral
- Lack of family engagement to identify relative resources (i.e. parents assume relatives do not wish to serve as resources)

**Community & Organizational Resources**
- Lack of robust supports for relatives to care for older youth and stabilize placements
- Foster homes not designed for high-needs intensive youth with mental health and challenging behavioral problems