

## Comparability of Data and Data Analysis

The Research and Evaluation metrics and tools will collect and report a uniform set of data and metrics for both the Children's Division and private contracted case managers. The Research and Evaluation process requires the Children's Division to evaluate all providers of case management services in a uniform, transparent, objective and consistent basis.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to compare data and performance benchmarks between the Children's Division and the contracted case management providers.

Children's Division is required by law to provide case management services to all children who enter the foster care system or under its supervision by the Courts.<sup>2</sup> This leads to higher caseloads compared to the contracted agency caseload. The caseload for contracted agencies is capped by the contract. In addition, individual cases may be returned to the Children's Division due to complexity of the case, catastrophic cost of the case, an order by the court for the public agency to manage the case or when the contracted agency has achieved permanency as defined within the contract. The goal of the Research and Evaluation Team is to determine the most effective way to aggregate cases based on complexity in order to effectively compare performance outcomes.

Determining how to aggregate the cases to control for these differences in caseloads will require further review and analysis, including an analysis of the initial data collected through the Phase I process proposed here. In addition, it will also require the implementation of additional ways to filter, analyze and report the data so that they can be accurately and fairly aggregated and analyzed. Accordingly, Children's Division and the Research and Evaluation Team have decided that it is not feasible to implement the necessary controls over the data to include analysis of these differences in the Phase I tool. This will have to wait for Phase II or Phase III.

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<sup>1</sup> §210.112.1(2) RSMo.

<sup>2</sup> §§207.020.1(17) and 211.181 RSMo.