



**For Immediate Release**

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**Efforts to Keep Families Together Provide  
Immediate and Long-term Savings for the Commonwealth**

**Jeffersontown, KY** – Kentucky Youth Advocates released a report today, [Prevention of Out-of-Home Placement for Children](#). The report finds that the Commonwealth can save money in the long run and decrease the number of children neglected and abused by working with families to address their problems, instead of placing the children in foster homes or residential facilities.

According to the report, the number of children placed in out-of-home care increased in more than half of Kentucky's counties from 2003 to 2008. Some 29 counties experienced an increase of more than 50 percent during this time; 14 of those counties had increases of 100 percent or more.

"Many times, help and treatment for the family can avoid the trauma of removal for the child and family," said Bart Baldwin, President of Children's Alliance. "This approach will help children, strengthen families and allow Kentucky to be more efficient with tax dollars. Kentucky policymakers must work to make this a top priority for the upcoming state budget."

While in some cases it is unsafe for children to remain in their homes, many families can benefit from prevention and treatment efforts. Family preservation programs work to ensure that children can safely remain in their homes when at all possible and appropriate. They give children a sense of permanency and stability in their living situations and help parents improve their skills in providing for their children.

Family preservation programs can help children avoid lagging behind in school, mental health problems, homelessness and the likelihood of becoming involved with the juvenile justice system. Later in life, they are more likely to avoid welfare, maintain

employment and become productive members of society, thus increasing the return on investment once more.

In 2007, the average cost to provide family preservation services to one family was \$4,564 compared to \$21,282 for one child to be placed in out-of-home care for nine months. Family preservation programs, in 2007, helped Kentucky avoid spending at least \$17.5 million dollars on out-of-home care placements.

“Kentucky’s leaders have decided to cut funding to family preservation programs even when the number of children entering an out-of-home placement has increased,” said Terry Brooks, Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. “If family preservation programs were expanded, where appropriate, the state would save money both immediately and in the long run.”

The report proposes that three actions be taken to decrease the number of children placed in out-of home care:

- Expand access to all families who are appropriate candidates for the service;
- Increase duration of family preservation services for families that are still struggling when they case is closed; and
- Avoid budget cuts to these successful and cost effective programs.

“It is a rare opportunity when what is best for Kentucky’s children and families is also what is best for the state budget’s bottom line. This is one of those rare opportunities,” said Brooks.

Prevention of out-of-home placement is a part of the 2010 agenda for the [Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children](#). View the entire issue brief online at <http://www.kyyouth.org/documents/HomePlacement.pdf>.

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*Kentucky Youth Advocates is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*