



**ARIZONA**  
**DEPARTMENT**  
*of CHILD SAFETY*

Gregory McKay, Director  
Douglas A. Ducey, Governor

# AZ Kids Thrive

**2017 Year in Review**  
**#AZKidsThrive**



**The Department of Child Safety's mission for 2017 was clear:** Successfully engage children and families to ensure safety, strengthen families, and achieve permanency.

**DCS Vision:** Children thrive in family environments free from abuse and neglect.

Below are DCS highlights from the past year.

## February 2017

DCS expanded CarePortal to include Maricopa County as well as Pima County to broaden resources that help vulnerable families stay together.

DCS presents Safety Science to the legislature, marking the department's transition from a culture of blame to a culture of safety and accountability.

## August 2017

Arizona implements **SAFE AZ** (Safety Assessment Family Evaluation) to focus on consistent child safety decisions through the promotion of family engagement and assessing caregiver capacities to manage safety threats.

Arizona is among **the first states in the nation** to launch a mobile app to better serve children and families in the field.



## December 2017

Arizona has moved from last to first place relative to year-over-year reduction in children in out-of-home care. While most states posted a **4%** average increase, Arizona experienced a **10%** decrease from Feb 2016 to Mar 2017.\*

\* Casey Family Foundation

## December 2016

Open reports reduced from **145** per case worker to **22**, an **85%** improvement.

## May 2017

Backlog of over **16,000** uninvestigated reports officially cleared from March 2015 and is **297** as of November 2017.

## July 2017

**1,300** DCS workers received tablets to connect families in crisis with services and reduce the amount of time spent on paperwork.



## September 2017

The number of children entering the foster care system was safely reduced to **11,426**, compared to more than **13,000** in FY 2015 and FY 2016. Quality placements were key in this safe reduction, as children re-entering care has not increased.



## November 2017

Number of foster children benefiting from expanded kinship stipends tripled from **708** to **2,146**.



**↑ 1.75%** increase in permanency.

11,682 Arizona children found permanency through reunification, guardianship, and adoption in FY 2017, compared to 11,480 in FY 2016 and 10,390 in FY 2015.

**↓ 20%** decrease in the foster care population.

Over the last 2 years, Arizona safely decreased its foster care population by 20%, as the national average increased by 4%.

**↓ 60%** reduction in shelter placements.

Arizona has seen a 60% reduction in the number of children placed in emergency shelters.

## Prevention Efforts

### SENSE Program Expands to All of Arizona.

The Substance Exposed Newborn Safe Environment program, which provides services after the birth of a substance exposed infant, expanded to Pima, Yavapai and Pinal Counties in 2017. The program uses a coordinated Family Service Plan and aims to keep infants safe in their home while the parents learn new skills and work to maintain sobriety. Data from Maricopa County has shown **90 percent of families** that completed the SENSE program had no DCS reports 6 months after completion of services.

### Baby Box Program

The DCS Baby Box program aims to spread the word about safe sleep practices and encourages parents of newborns to complete a safe sleep training where they learn the **ABC's** of safe sleep: baby sleeps safest **A**lone, on their **B**ack, and in a **C**rib.

The box, which can be used as a crib for by new parents, includes a health care kit and other essentials like electric outlet covers, pacifiers, hygiene products, and clothing provided by the community to help Arizona kids thrive. Nearly 400 boxes have been distributed to DCS-involved families over the past year.



## Community Engagement

- From Apache Junction to Page, volunteers help Arizona's most vulnerable children know they are loved.
- Hundreds of foster families gathered to pack over 39,000 nutritious meals for malnourished children, shining Arizona's light around the world.
- Community partners joined with DCS to provide memorable experiences for Arizona kids in foster care.

