

Office of the Child Advocate

Report to

Oversight Commission on

Children's Services

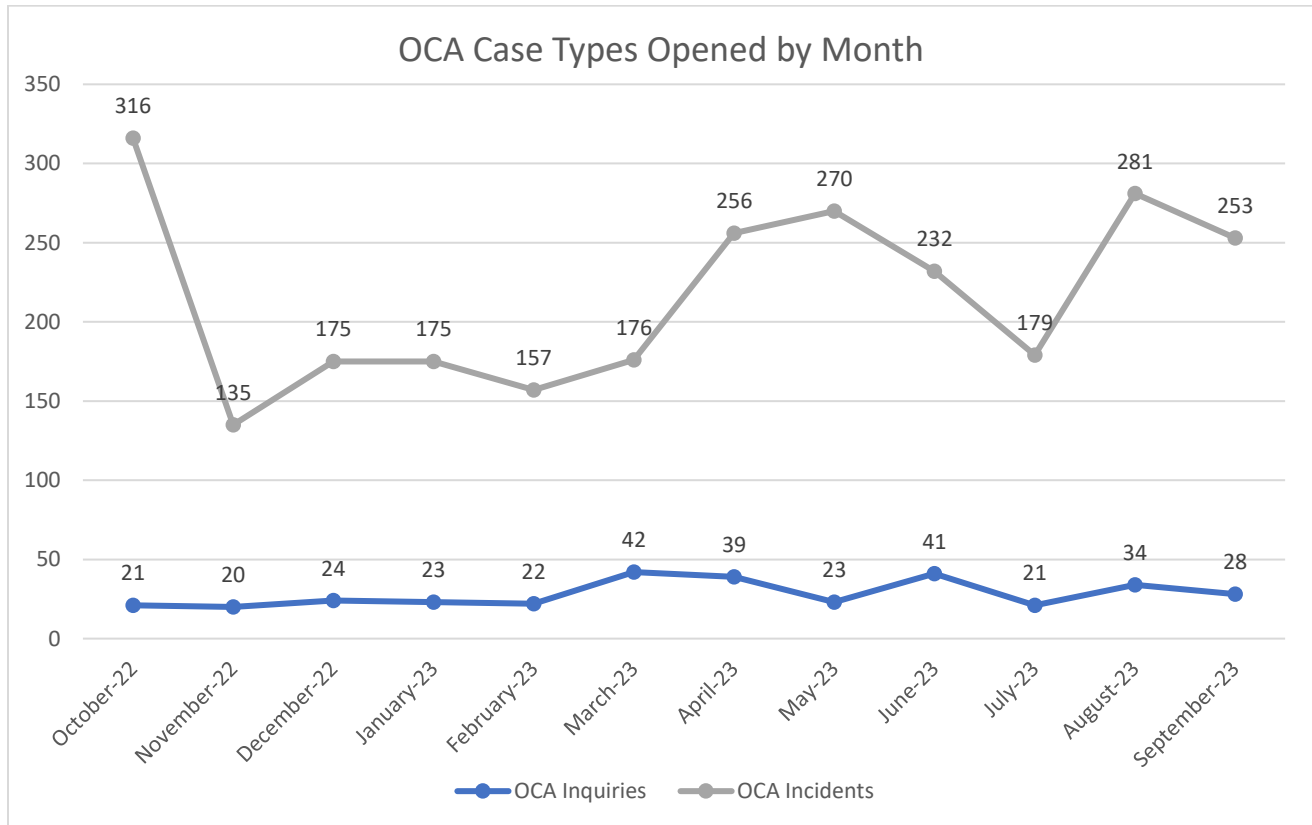
Child Advocate, Cassandra Sanchez

October 20, 2023

Total OCA Cases (Inquiries & Incidents)

Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/22 - 9/30/23

Month	OCA Inquiries	OCA Incidents
October-22	21	316
November-22	20	135
December-22	24	175
January-23	23	175
February-23	22	157
March-23	42	176
April-23	39	256
May-23	23	270
June-23	41	232
July-23	21	179
August-23	34	281
September-23	28	253
Total Inquiries:	338	2605
Total Cases:	2943	



OCA Case Explanation

- Inquiries to the OCA include phone calls, emails, and cases opened from in-person meetings with children, providers, and stakeholders.
- Incidents include all critical incident reports from DCYF (serious injury to children, child fatalities, parent fatalities, media coverage of DCYF involvement, etc.) and incidents documented by residential programs and SYSC, including restraints and seclusion, and missing children.

Facility visits

9/27/23 Vermont Permanency Initiative (VPI) virtual office hours

10/11/23 The Wediko School

OCA Outreach/ DCYF District Office visits

9/20/23 Meeting with NHFAPA

9/26/23 Meeting with Special Education Advocate

9/29/23 Presentation at St. Anselm College Masters level course

10/17/23 Visit to Southwick School, Northfield, NH

10/19/23 Presentation at New England College



Conferences/Events Attended

10/06/23 NACC Attorney Training

10/10/23 The Granite YMCA Communities that Care Event (panelist)

10/19/23 Juvenile Justice DEI Quarterly Forum

Upcoming Visits & Events

2023 Children's Mental Health Advocacy Conference (10/27)

Transition Summit 2023 (11/16)

Sandy Pines in Florida (late November)

Other Work

10/3 – 10/4/23 NH CRG IRR and Field Test Analysis

Ongoing: Commission to Study Community Impacts of the Secured Development Center

Ongoing: Commission to Study Community Impacts of the Secured Development Center: Subcommittee on Safety

Ongoing: YDC Steering Committee

Ongoing: Collaborative Residential Strategy with DHHS, DCYF and BCBH leadership

Ongoing: Monthly meetings with DCYF leadership

Ongoing: Monthly meeting with Clinical Director at SYSC

Updates/Concerns

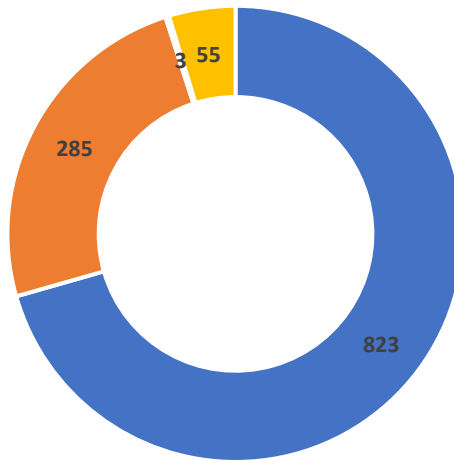
- DHHS confirmed that Bledsoe Youth Academy has been de-certified by BCBH
- Community Response Guide Update
 - Concerns have been voiced about this project moving forward
 - 2 prime concerns stand out:
 - Having an online tool instructing when to and not to report Sexual and Physical Abuse concerns
 - Not having the full history of concerns captured in Screen Outs if the tool instructs not to report
- HB 535 – Counsel for Children
 - The OCA testified at multiple hearings to discuss the importance of representation for children, specifically those in or at risk of residential placement
 - 10/18/23 Committee voted 4-0 to present on an amendment, presented by the JRPG and supported by the OCA, to the full Child and Family Law Committee
- Continued involvement with HB 499 and HB 475 relating to evidence in family court, in the working subcommittee of the Children & Family Law committee, and the Special Committee on the Family Division of the Circuit Court

New Hampshire Children in Care

As of 9/30/23

Placement Types	Total Children	Involvement Type		
		CPS	JJS	DUAL
Family-Like Setting:	823	724	4	95
Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):	285	111	43	131
Runaway:	3	0	0	3
Unknown/No Data:	55	43	0	12
Total Children in Care:	1166	878	47	241

Placement Types for Children In Care



■ Family-Like Setting:
 ■ Group Care (Group Home or Inst.):
 ■ Runaway:
 ■ Unknown/No Data:

Family-Like Settings:

Type	Total Children
Foster Home:	433
Relative Foster Home:	353
Supervised Independent Living:	37
Total:	823

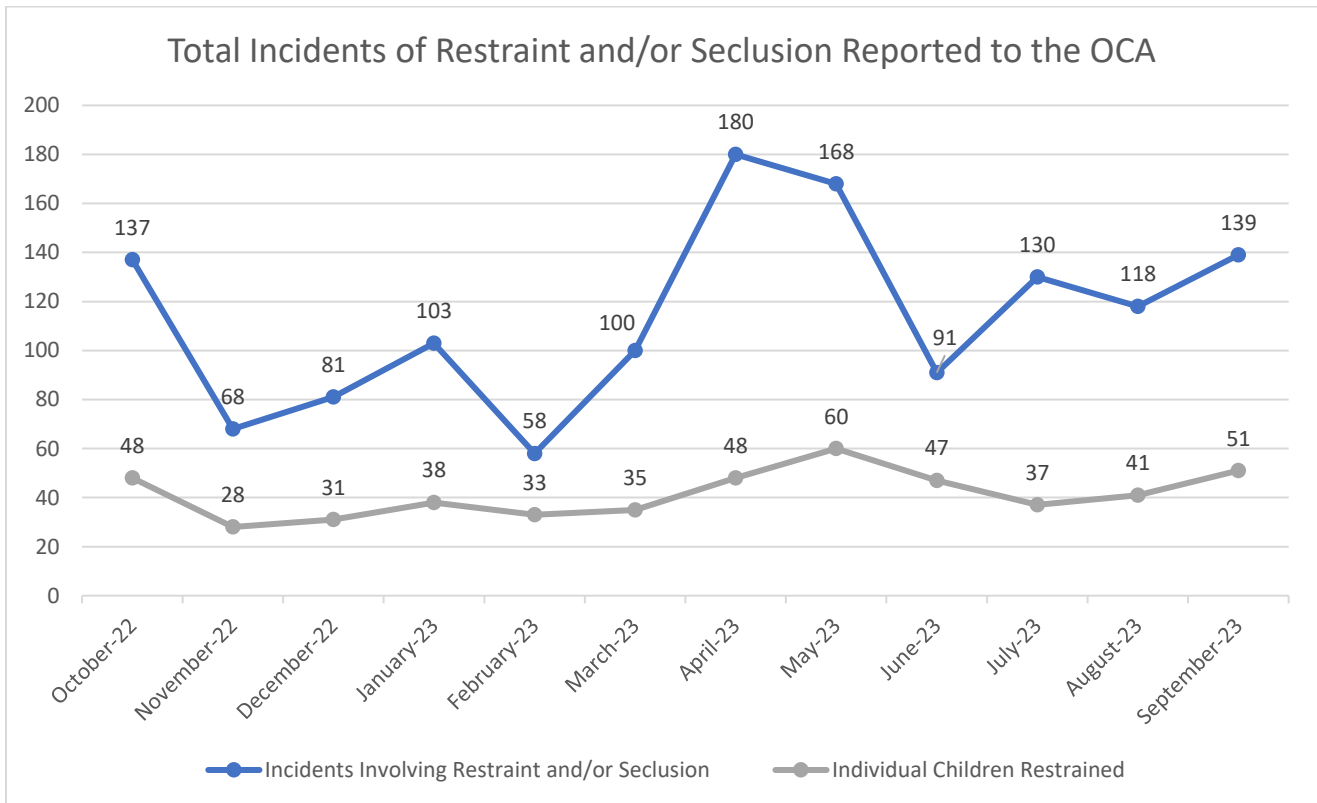
Group Care (Group Home or Institution) Locations:

Location	Total Children	Children Outside New England	
New Hampshire:	228		
New England (Outside NH):	51		
Outside of New England:	6		
Total:	285		
		Children Outside New England	
		Arkansas	1
		Florida	2
		Missouri	1
		Mississippi	1
		Tennessee	1
		Total:	6

Restraints & Seclusion Incidents Reported to the OCA from Residential Facilities

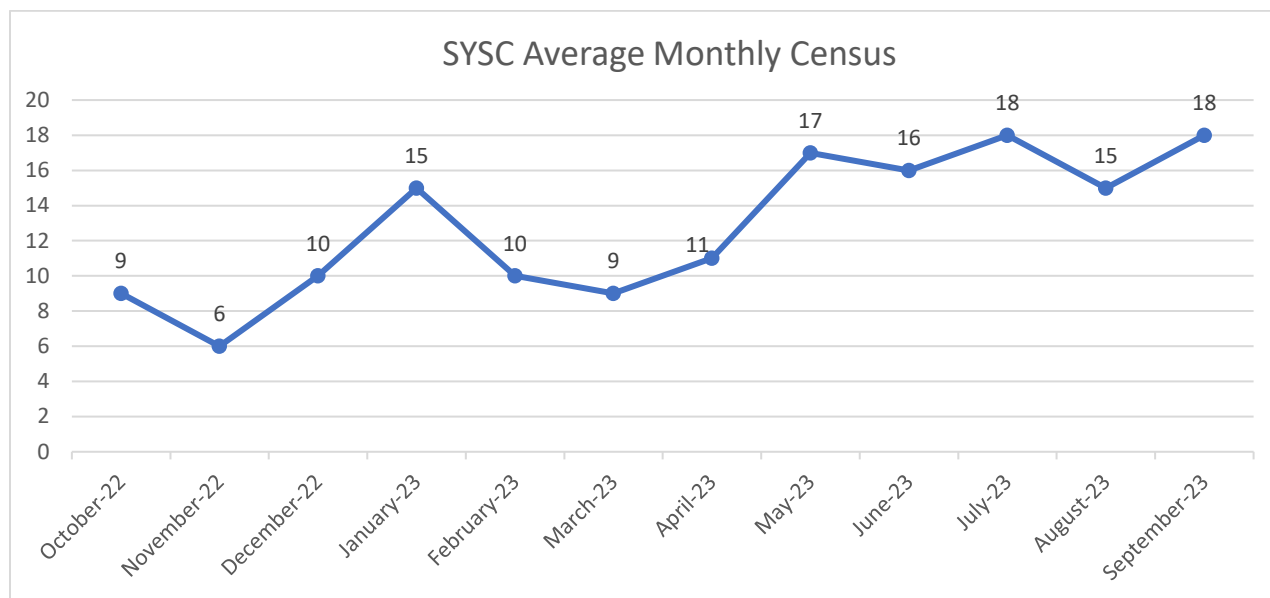
Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/22 - 9/30/23

Month	Incidents Reported to OCA Involving:			Total Incidents	Number of Children
	Restraints	Seclusions	Restraints & Seclusions		
October-22	129	1	7	137	48
November-22	67	1	0	68	28
December-22	70	6	5	81	31
January-23	92	3	8	103	38
February-23	56	1	1	58	33
March-23	91	1	8	100	35
April-23	178	0	2	180	48
May-23	144	11	13	168	60
June-23	78	6	7	91	47
July-23	126	0	4	130	37
August-23	112	1	5	118	41
September-23	127	1	11	139	51
Totals:	1270	32	71	1373	



Restraint & Seclusion Explanation

- This data includes all residential facilities in which the OCA receives restraint and seclusion reports from, rather than highlighting specific facilities.
- The OCA does not receive restraint and seclusion reports from certified facilities, which includes out-of-state facilities beyond the New England region, only for contracted facilities.



SYSC Incidents Reported to the OCA

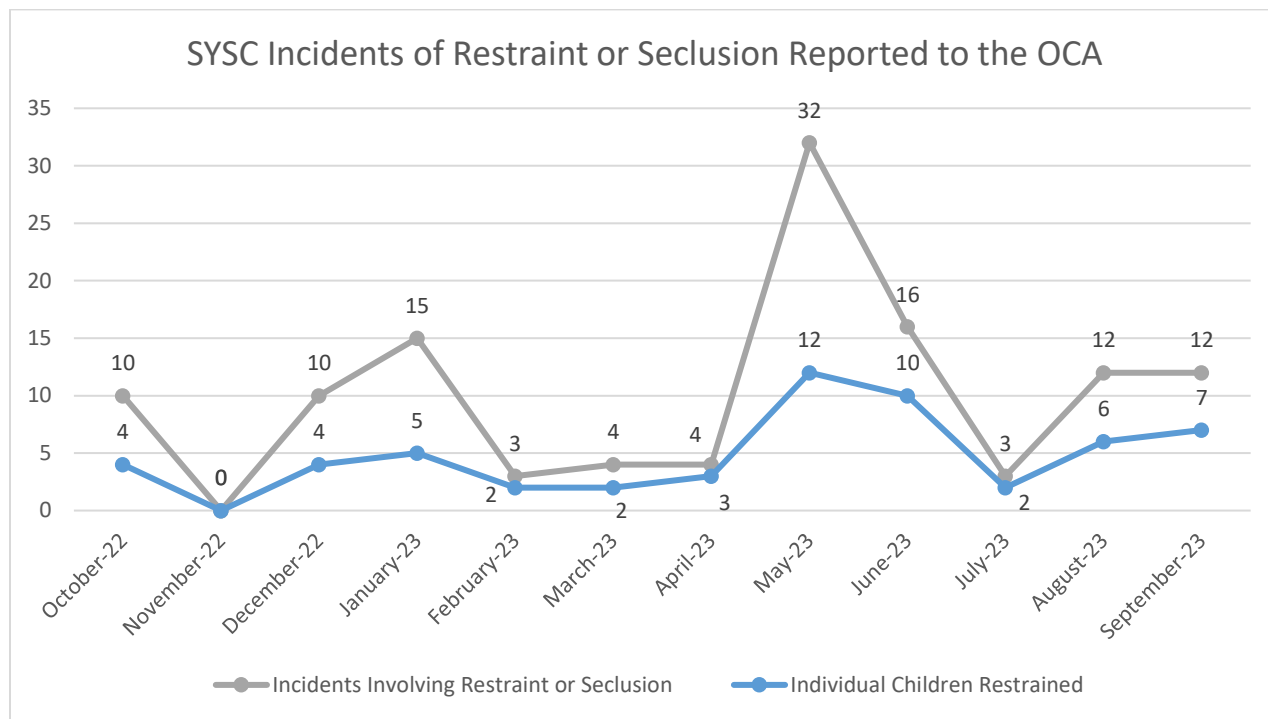
Rolling 12 Month: 10/01/22 - 9/30/23

Month	Major Incidents	Mod Incidents	Minor Incidents	Other Incidents	Total
October-22	37	16	3	4	60
November-22	5	2	3	1	11
December-22	24	10	7	6	47
January-23	46	17	6	7	76
February-23	25	18	2	3	48
March-23	23	8	13	4	48
April-23	25	13	4	5	47
May-23	66	19	6	11	102
June-23	40	11	8	12	71
July-23	24	20	4	13	61
August-23	45	12	2	18	77
September-23	50	22	4	19	95
Totals:	410	168	62	103	743

SYSC Incidents Involving Restraints or Seclusions by Month

10/01/22 - 9/30/23

Month	Incidents Inv. Restraint or Seclusion	Individual Children
October-22	10	4
November-22	0	0
December-22	10	4
January-23	15	5
February-23	3	2
March-23	4	2
April-23	4	3
May-23	32	12
June-23	16	10
July-23	3	2
August-23	12	6
September-23	12	7
Totals:	121	



SYSC Explanation

- Although the census can fluctuate day to day, the average monthly census data has been added to this report for additional context.
- SYSC has implemented a response team to assist in reducing restraint and seclusion during high activity hours such as evenings. The team is trained in de-escalation and attempts to work with the children to settle a crisis.

Hampstead Hospital & East Acres Explanation

- The OCA does not receive consistent data from HHRTF. We have previously requested data which they shared with the office. As of more recently they are using an encrypted email process that is not accessible. This concern has been shared with HHRTF and DHHS and they are looking into how to resolve this issue.