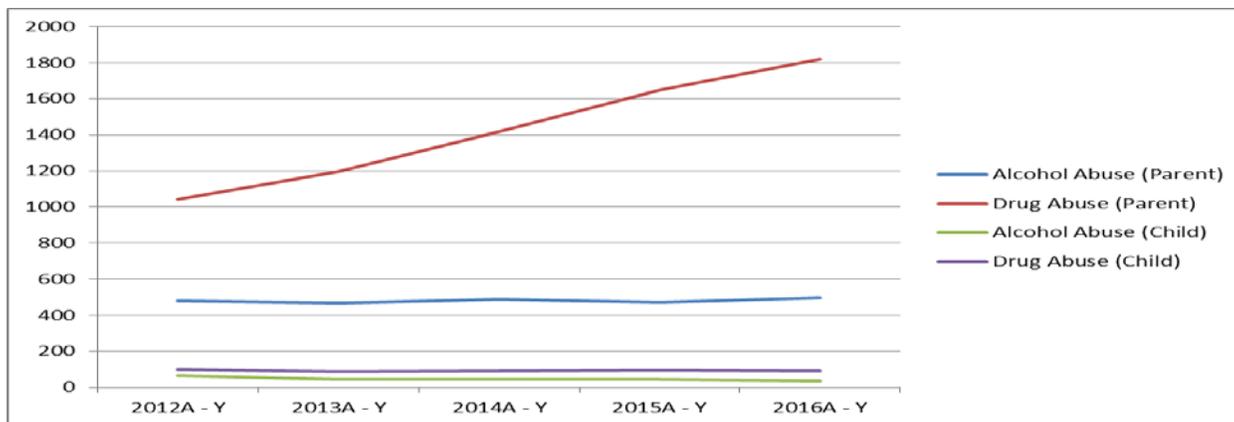


Scope of Opioid Issue within Child Welfare System

Wisconsin is a state-supervised/county-administered child welfare system, with the exception of Milwaukee County, the largest metropolitan county, which is administered by the state through the Division of Milwaukee Child Protective Services (DMCPS). Opioid abuse has had a significant impact on the child welfare system throughout the state. Wisconsin Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data from 2012-August 2016 reveal a sharp 75% increase in the removals of a child from the family home due to “drug abuse by the parent.”

Removal Reason- Parent Drug Abuse, 2012-2016



After decreasing steadily from 2007 to 2012, the number of children in out-of-home care statewide in Wisconsin has increased from 6225 in December 2012 to 7320 in September 2016, an increase of 18%. Based on the AFCARS data above and feedback from county child welfare agencies, parental opioid abuse is a major driving force behind the out-of-home care caseload increase. Parental substance abuse cases in the child welfare system are complex and require intensive case management for a number of reasons, including longer out-of-home care stays, and more frequent and intensive monitoring of in-home cases to ensure child safety. The increased volume and complexity of opioid abuse-related child welfare cases is severely straining county staff and fiscal resources.