

Quick Facts About Foster Care

Children in Care

- Approximately 542,000 children were in the foster care system in the United States as of September 30, 2001.
- The number of licensed nonrelative foster homes is 155,355

Age of Children in Foster Care

According to the [2001 Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System \(AFCARS\) Report](#), the estimated average age of children in foster care was 10.1 years.

Age breakdown of children in foster care		
Age Group	Percentage	Number of Children
Younger than 1 year	4.0%	22,957
Age 1-5	24%	130,857
Age 6-10 years	24%	127,711
Age 11-15 years	30%	160,419
Age 16-18 years	17%	89,632
Over 18	2%	10,424

Race/Ethnicity

- In 1980, 47% of children in foster care were children of color. By 2000, 66% of children in foster care were children of color. Children of color are disproportionately represented in the foster care system by a margin of more than two to one. In 1990, for the first time, there were more African American children than European American children in foster care.
- Read the report, [Children of Color in the Child Welfare System](#), from CWLA's National Data Analysis System.

Ethnicity breakdown of children in foster care	
Ethnicity	Percentage
Black Non-Hispanic	38%
White Non-Hispanic	37%
Hispanic	17%
American Indian/Native Alaskan	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander, Non-Hispanic	1%
Two or More Races, Non-Hispanic	2%
Unknown	3%

Quick Facts About Foster Care (continued)

Gender breakdown of children in foster care	
Gender	Percentage
Male	52%
Female	48%

Permanency Plan of Children in Foster Care		
Permanency Plan	Percentage	Number of Children
Reunify with Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	44%	241,051
Adoption	22%	116,653
Long-term foster care	8%	45,792
Emancipation	6%	32,309
Live with other relatives	5%	26,555
Guardianship	3%	17,624
Case plan goal not yet established	11%	62,014

Older Youth

Each year, more than 20,000 young people age out of foster care.

For more information on youth leaving the foster care system, visit the National Resource Center for Youth Development website, www.nrcys.ou.edu/NRCYD.

Source

U.S. Children's Bureau. *The AFCARS Report. (2001)*. [Available online](#).

Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For more information, contact the [Director of Family Foster Care Services](#).