

Foster Care Statistics Tell a Story¹

<p><u>Basic Stats</u></p> <p>428,000 Children in foster care in the United States</p> <p>112,000 Children waiting to be adopted from care</p> <p>8 Median age of children in care (“median”: half older, half younger)</p>	<p>Since 2012, trend is upwards.</p>
<p><u>In Care</u></p> <p>13 Median months in care (“median”: half in care under 13 months)</p> <p>48% Children in care for less than 1 year</p> <p>37% Children in care for 1–2 years with 3 or more foster care placements²</p> <p>26% Children in care for 2 or more years</p> <p>14% Children in group home instead of foster home (majority are ages 11-18)</p>	<p>Focus on safety and permanency.</p> <p>Anxiety increases as time ticks.</p> <p>Who wants me?</p>
<p><u>Leaving Care</u></p> <p>52% Reunification with primary caregiver</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12% re-enter care within 12 months of reunification² <p>24% Adoption / Guardianship with relative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40% of foster homes are relatives of the child in care <p>15% Adoption with non-relative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 78% of these adoptions are by the child’s foster parent <p>9% Aged out or ran away.... 5 years later stats:³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 54% had one or more emotional disorders • 25% had PTSD diagnosis 5 years later (4% for general pop.) • 20% had major depressive disorder (10% for general pop.) • 22% had been homeless at least 1 day in last 5 years 	<p>Why do reunifications not always work out?</p> <p>These stats are sobering. How to resolve?</p>

What do these numbers mean?

A quarter of children in foster care are waiting to be adopted. Many are pre-teens and teens. Many children do go back to family. The family has met the “treatment plan” requirements, often centered upon addiction counseling, housing and job issues, parenting classes, and domestic violence classes, if needed. Going to classes is not enough, however. A change in behavior is required.

In care, placement stability is challenging, especially if a child stays in care over one year. Leaving care – without a family – can be devastating. A final statistic... of those young adults leaving care without a family, 63% had a child within 5 years and 8% of *their* children entered foster care. Sobering?

Learn visually by watching a 12 minute video called “Removed”. <https://vimeo.com/73172036>

¹ DHHS, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, 2015.

² DHHS, Child Welfare Outcomes report to Congress, 2011.

³ The Northwest Alumni Study. (From Pecora PJ, Kessler RC, Williams J, et al. Improving family foster care: findings from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni Study. Seattle (WA): Casey Family Programs; 2005.