ADMINISTRATION FOR

CHILDREN &️ FAMILIES

What is the Administration for Children & Families?

The Administration for Children and Families (ACF) is a division of the Department of Health & Human Services. We promote the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals and communities.

View our **strategic plan**.

LEARN MORE ABOUT ACF

Children in Public Foster Care on September 30th of Each Year Who Are Waiting to be Adopted
FY 2004–FY 2013

State	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Alabama	1,599	2,128	1,658	1,824	1,751	1,475	1,271	1,297	1,156	1,076
Alaska	649	520	698	766	769	720	696	720	805	866
Arizona	2,124	2,478	2,648	2,516	2,323	2,792	2,673	2,822	2,914	3,579
Arkansas	949	1,191	945	780	872	850	1,604	1,414	1,023	994
California	16,299	16,700	21,202	20,830	17,847	15,664	14,892	14,630	13,091	13,167
Colorado	1,684	1,785	2,099	1,762	1,897	1,506	1,246	1,098	917	896
Connecticut	986	1,377	945	1,122	1,389	1,355	1,261	1,344	1,385	1,158
Delaware	218	274	302	311	304	239	253	244	243	218
District of Columbia	837	620	667	560	493	486	419	357	303	268
Florida	7,691	7,379	7,480	7,927	7,942	6,364	5,022	4,994	5,129	3,458
Georgia	2,507	2,370	2,305	2,162	2,245	1,802	1,690	1,567	1,648	1,799
Hawaii	1,019	980	808	733	555	428	351	296	223	154
Idaho	310	373	555	593	576	498	389	334	278	328
Illinois	3,432	3,408	5,746	5,598	4,608	2,728	2,944	3,272	2,936	3,103
Indiana	2,550	3,194	3,345	3,210	3,090	3,224	3,192	2,886	2,451	2,437
Iowa	1,139	1,265	1,419	1,299	1,158	1,003	1,068	1,088	961	964
Kansas	1,926	1,811	2,004	1,812	1,960	1,852	1,825	1,817	1,853	1,843
Kentucky	1,969	2,125	2,091	2,153	2,101	2,048	1,951	1,918	1,999	2,224
Louisiana	1,179	1,162	1,079	1,137	1,069	1,093	1,091	1,162	1,089	961
Maine	851	787	679	614	619	571	575	511	480	564
Maryland	2,202	1,954	1,626	1,660	1,506	1,221	883	772	559	498
Massachusetts	3,006	2,925	2,705	2,868	2,846	2,839	2,758	2,675	2,469	2,489
Michigan	6,486	7,061	6,164	6,116	5,674	4,902	5,235	4,237	3,586	3,337
Minnesota	1,795	1,579	1,638	1,674	1,393	1,227	1,073	955	983	1,080
Mississippi	914	858	903	898	996	975	843	880	890	999
Missouri	3,228	3,532	2,722	2,853	1,788	2,214	1,992	2,056	2,067	2,165
Montana	713	646	606	597	521	537	495	460	403	498
Nebraska	920	916	972	805	881	831	768	831	904	705

State	FY 2004	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Nevada	1,573	1,701	1,786	1,936	2,200	2,098	2,094	1,970	1,880	1,956
New Hampshire	239	272	252	325	297	272	227	167	182	189
New Jersey	5,110	4,845	4,725	3,262	3,009	2,694	2,464	2,294	2,227	2,443
New Mexico	634	711	860	963	907	870	777	786	834	880
New York	10,650	9,238	8,039	7,659	7,014	6,890	6,603	6,417	6,061	5,843
North Carolina	3,074	3,137	3,116	3,095	2,903	2,722	2,427	2,234	2,071	2,172
North Dakota	277	344	321	337	288	298	227	230	211	237
Ohio	4,814	4,350	4,086	3,762	3,477	3,380	3,013	2,789	2,655	2,976
Oklahoma	4,471	3,504	3,657	4,022	3,766	3,429	2,872	2,956	2,803	3,241
Oregon	3,302	3,441	2,776	2,527	2,206	1,840	1,827	1,830	1,873	1,854
Pennsylvania	3,996	3,679	3,559	3,408	3,525	2,943	2,551	2,045	1,924	1,908
Rhode Island	331	407	405	400	415	333	309	267	222	250
South Carolina	1,769	1,819	1,771	1,781	1,823	1,862	1,699	1,415	1,336	1,226
South Dakota	480	472	507	452	423	380	418	376	397	354
Tennessee	1,776	1,717	1,788	1,622	1,477	1,326	1,692	2,027	2,517	2,668
Texas	9,957	10,947	12,542	13,552	13,414	12,844	13,108	13,481	13,154	12,991
Utah	437	436	475	574	553	565	553	567	567	608
Vermont	267	265	251	257	225	231	180	196	226	213
Virginia	1,611	1,823	1,783	1,834	1,769	1,617	1,562	1,372	1,519	1,503
Washington	2,317	2,168	2,360	2,837	3,035	3,147	3,089	2,783	2,860	3,101
West Virginia	976	1,312	1,204	1,277	1,300	1,220	1,241	1,474	1,407	1,364
Wisconsin	1,341	1,364	1,237	1,284	1,329	1,256	1,159	1,163	1,129	1,153
Wyoming	86	103	149	154	113	98	111	130	115	85
Puerto Rico	1,599	1,542	1,614	1,145	1,071	39	83	746	822	797
Total	130,269	130,995	135,274	133,645	125,712	113,798	108,746	106,352	101,737	101,840

NOTE: There is no federal definition for a child waiting to be adopted. For analytical purposes, the definition used in the table above includes children in foster care on the last day of the Federal Fiscal Year who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older, whose parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. The number of children waiting to be adopted reported by individual States will likely differ somewhat from those in this table because State definitions vary according to State policies and practices.

Because AFCARS data are being continuously updated and cleaned, the numbers reported here may differ from data reported elsewhere. These data reflect all AFCARS submissions received by July of 2014.

Children's Bureau
An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

NYTD

Listen

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) collects information on youth in foster care, including sex, race, ethnicity, date of birth, and foster care status. It also collects information about the outcomes of those youth who have aged out of foster care. States began collecting data in 2010, and the first data set was submitted in May 2011.

Our **Q&A (http://www.childwelfare.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/nytd/faq)** summarizes responses to questions posed by states regarding implementation of the National Youth in Transition Database.

About NYTD (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/about-nytd) - General information about NYTD

Federal Guidance on NYTD (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/nytd-guidance) - Policy issuances and other guidance related to NYTD, including questions and answers

NYTD Data Briefs (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/data-briefs) - Summarizes findings from State NYTD data submissions compiled by the Children's Bureau

NYTD Data Review Utility (NDRU) (https://nytd.acf.hhs.gov/ndru) - Desktop application available to States for checking data file compliance and quality prior to transmitting files to the federal NYTD system

Other NYTD Resources (http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/nytd-TA) - Contains technical assistance documents related to NYTD

NYTD

FY 2011 Data Snapshot

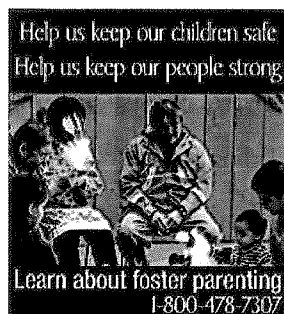## National Youth in Transition Database

Alaska

Baseline Population Highlights	Includes all youth who turned age 17 while in foster care during FY 2011

Outcomes reported by survey participants at age 17:

Financial self-sufficiency   31% reported experiences in at least one employment-related category (current part- or full-time employment or receiving employment related training

Educational attainment   98% reported being enrolled and attending school; 2% had already completed high school or had a GED

High-risk behaviors   31% reported a substance abuse referral

10% reported having been incarcerated

4% reported having children

* Homelessness   41% reported having been homeless at some point in their lives

Connection to adult   90% reported having a positive connection to an adult

Access to health insurance   90% reported having Medicaid and 47% reported having some other type of medical insurance

---

* Alaska's definition of homelessness includes youth who couch surf. National definition only includes youth had no regular or adequate place to live. This would include living in a car, or on the street, or staying in a homeless or other temporary shelter.

Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
Office of Children's Services

◉ DHSS ○ State of Alaska

Home   Divisions and Agencies   Services   News   Contact Us

Health and Social Services > Office of Children's Services > Foster Care

Help us keep our children safe
Help us keep our people strong

Learn about foster parenting
1-800-478-7307

**Become a Foster Parent
Call 1-800-478-7307**

- View Foster Care TV Ad
- Alaska Statutes & Administrative Codes
- Foster Care Rates
- Foster Care Overview
- Requirements to Become a Foster Parent
- Foster Care Application, Forms, Brochures and Handbooks
- Foster Care Websites
- More Information
- Foster Care and Adoption Payment Calendar
- Contact Information

Foster Care
Learn more about becoming a Foster Parent by calling 1-800-478-7307

Foster Care :30
from AlaskaDHSS PLUS

00:33   ‖‖ HD ∷ vimeo

Foster Care :30 from AlaskaDHSS on Vimeo.

Great resources available on the web:

Alaska's Center for Resource Families

National Foster Parent Association

Foster Parenting resources

Resources and discounts available to FP's

Each year, hundreds of Alaska's children are placed in out-of-home care. Typically, it's because a child has been determined to be unsafe or at high risk of maltreatment, in their family home. These children range from newborns to teenagers and they live in communities all over Alaska.

OCS gathers information to make an informed assessment about whether the child is unsafe or at high risk, and the extent of the family's protective capacities. OCS also provides services to families with children remaining in their home as well as to families whose children have been placed in out-of-home care.

On average, there are approximately 1,200 children each month in foster care in Alaska. Foster homes provide children in care a temporary, safe, stable and nurturing home until they can be reunited with their families. Some children stay in a foster home for days or weeks; some stay for several years. In some cases, children are placed permanently with another family.

When out-of-home placement is needed to keep a child safe, OCS will make diligent efforts to identify, evaluate and consider relatives, family friends and those culturally tied to the family as the primary placement option. When relatives cannot be a placement option for the child, OCS will make efforts to actively recruit and support families within the child's home community and in close proximity as possible to the child's parents, to assure that the child may continue to maintain important and lasting cultural, ancestral, educational and community-based connections.

Office of Children's Services
Home
About OCS
Employment Opportunities
Contact Us
Programs
Adoption and Guardianship
Alaska Early Childhood Coordinating Council
Children's Justice Act
Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grant
Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program
Family Preservation
Foster Care
  Overview
  Statutes and Regulations
  Requirements
  Application and Resources
  Links
  More Information
  Contact Us
Independent Living
Indian Child Welfare / Tribal Partnerships
Strengthening Families Through Early Care & Education

Useful Links
Adam Walsh Checks - Central Registry
Alaska Children's Trust
Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
Employment
Grants
Grievance Procedure and Appeal Information
Information for Parents
Links
Media
Newsletter - Pipeline
Publications
Quality Improvement
Report Child Abuse
Safe Surrender of Infants Act
Services We Provide
Statistics

Consider becoming a foster parent today. It may be the most rewarding thing you ever do. You will help keep children safe, strengthen your community and give your own life a meaningful new challenge. Alaska welcomes and supports all families equally. Families of every race, culture, and ethnicity are needed to help children grown with a strong sense of racial and cultural identity. Applicants are considered regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, religion or sex.

As a foster parent, you will receive training based on the child's needs and help a child cope with the challenges that life brings. You can meet and get to know other foster parents, and agency staff can give you support.

Please check the links on the upper right hand side of this page for more information on how to become a foster or adoptive parent.

Contacts   Accessibility   Public Notices   Staff   Webmaster

Alaska Pioneer Homes
Behavioral Health
Boards & Councils
Office of Children's Services

Office of the Commissioner
Finance & Management Services
Health Care Services

Juvenile Justice
Public Assistance
Public Health
Seniors & Disabilities Services

State of Alaska   myAlaska   My Government   Resident   Business in Alaska   Visiting Alaska   State Employees

State of Alaska   © 2012   Webmaster

Foster Youth in Care, 2011-14

Data source: http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/overview.aspx
Chart prepared by office of Rep. Les Gara

1,791 foster youth
December 2011
(while Workload Study
was being conducted)

1,890 foster youth
December 2012
(7 months after
Workload Study
released)

2,349 foster youth
December 2014
(most recent
datapoint)
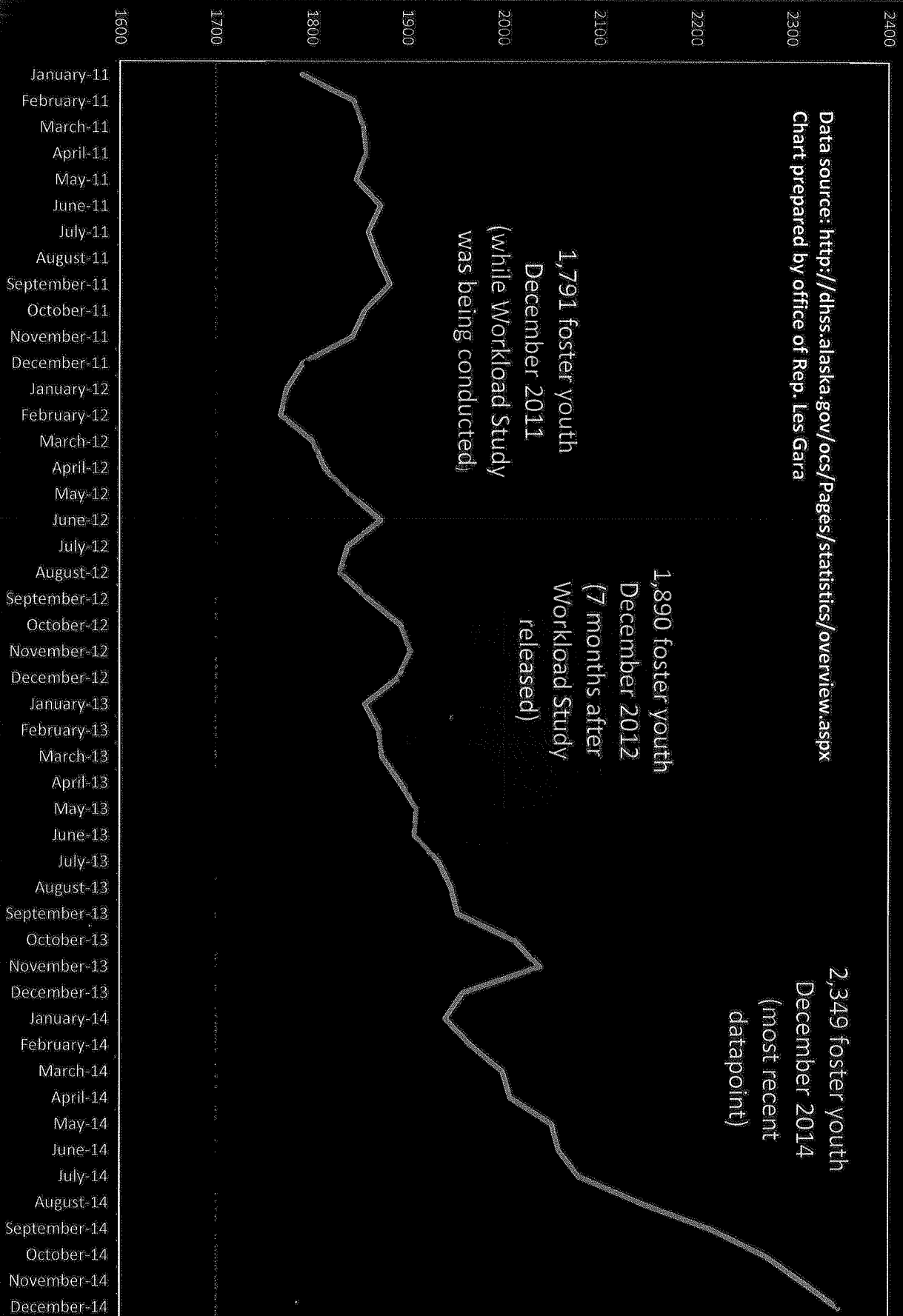
Fostering Success in Education:
National Factsheet on the Educational Outcomes of Children in Foster Care

January 2014

Why Education Matters to Children in Foster Care

When supported by strong practices and policies, positive school experiences can counteract the negative effects of abuse, neglect, separation, and lack of permanency experienced by the nearly 400,000 U.S. children and youth in foster care. Education provides opportunities for improved well-being in physical, intellectual, and social domains during critical developmental periods and supports economic success in adult life. A concerted effort by child welfare agencies, education agencies, and the courts could lead to significant progress in changing the consistent and disheartening picture about educational outcomes for children in foster care the research portrays. The promising programs and interventions highlighted below represent innovative efforts to address a wide range of factors influencing the disparities in education outcomes. With cross-system collaboration, we are positioned to build on what is being learned, bring about change, and promote success for all children and youth in foster care.

Fast facts from national and multi-state studies*

Number of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2012	399,546
Average number of living arrangements during first foster care stay	2.8
Number of foster children of school age	249,107
Likelihood of being absent from school	2x that of other students
Percent of foster youth who change schools when first entering care	56%-75%
Percent of 17-18 year olds in care who have experienced 5+ school changes	34%
Likelihood of 17-18 year old foster youth having an out-of-school suspension	2x that of other students
Likelihood of 17-18 year old foster youth being expelled	3x that of other students
Average reading level of 17-18 year olds in foster care	7th grade
Likelihood of foster youth receiving special education	2.5 - 3.5x that of others
Percent of foster youth who complete high school by 18	50%
Percent of 17-18 year old foster youth who want to go to college	84%
Percent of foster youth who graduated from high school who attend college	20%
Percent of former foster youth who attain a bachelor's degree	2 - 9%

* All *Fast Facts* are referenced elsewhere in this document. These facts were compiled based on findings from multiple studies where a consistent picture is emerging that points to widespread deficits on a number of markers of educational progress or success. Data points represented here are either from national studies or multiple studies conducted in different states (in which case a range is provided for the data point).

National Foster Care Data

National data on the number of children and youth in foster care and their characteristics provide a context for the research on the educational experiences of children and youth in foster care. Table 1 provides data on the characteristics of children and youth in foster care.

Table 1.
Characteristics of Children and Youth in Foster Care

Number of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2012		399,546
Characteristics of children and youth in foster care on September 30, 2012	Number	Percentage
Age		
Young children (age 0–4)	132,845	33
School age children and youth (age 5–17)	249,107	62
Young adults (age 18–20)	17,302	4
Race/Ethnicity*		
White	166,195	42
Black	101,938	26
Hispanic (any race)	84,523	21
Other children and youth of color	34,371	9
Gender		
Male	209,131	52
Female	190,355	48

* Includes 3 percent whose race/ethnicity was unknown

School age children in foster care commonly experience a number of moves while in out-of-home care as shown in Figure 1. These changes can significantly impact their school experiences. Data from Chapin Hall's Center for State Child Welfare Data shows that among school-aged youth who entered care between 2005-2009, each experienced an average of 2.8 living arrangements by the end of 2011, including their initial out-of-home placement when removed from home.

Figure 1.
School-Age Children and Youth in Foster Care (5–17 Years) Who Entered Care Between 2005-2009:
Number of Children by Number of Living Arrangements
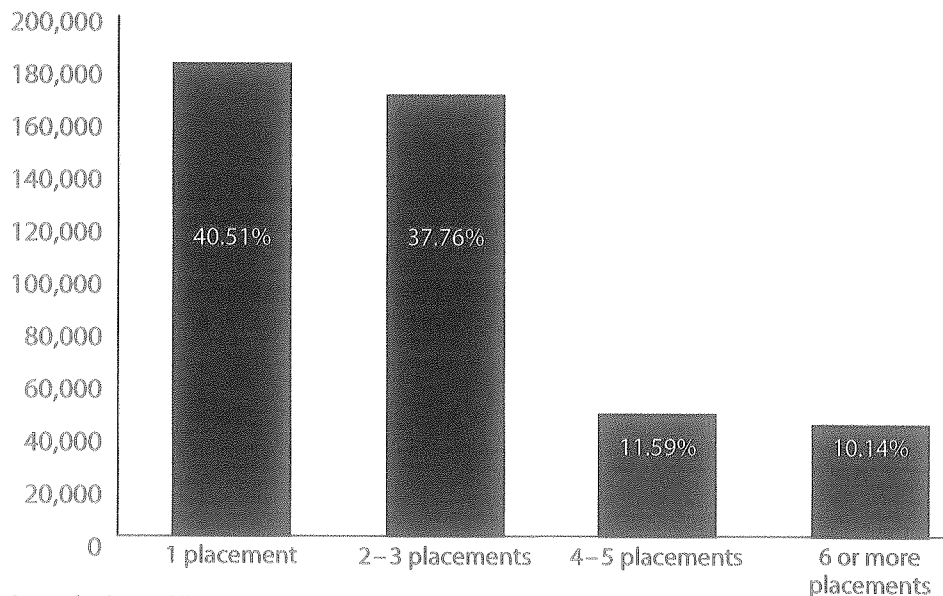
Source: The Center for State Child Welfare's 2011 data. The Center draws data from 29 states and two counties. Each youth who first entered care between 2005-2009 is represented in this data. The number of living arrangements was counted from entry date through the end of 2011.

The Research Findings

Lay the Foundation for a Strong Start for Young Children in Care

Research has consistently found a high need for early intervention and early childhood education services among young children in foster care as a result of their developmental, emotional and behavioral problems.[1,2,3,4,5] Data suggest that effective interventions exist to improve the performance of children in foster care when entering kindergarten. Yet, several studies indicate that many young children do not receive the early intervention or early childhood education services they need to address these problems.[6,7,8] Studies indicate that children in foster care as a group are less likely to be enrolled in Head Start than eligible, low income children.[9]

> **Promising Program:** The Education Equals Partnership is working to close the educational achievement gap between children in foster care and their peers in California by focusing on young children who are at early risk for school failure. For example, in Fresno County children under the age of five were not routinely accessing early intervention programs or preschool despite qualifying for services due to their high risk of developmental delays. The Fresno County child welfare agency assigned an education liaison to ensure that toddlers and preschool-age children received the assessments and services that they needed to thrive. These efforts have increased the percentage of children enrolled in preschool from 42% to 59% over the past two years. The Partnership is using data such as these to target their school readiness efforts.[10]

> **Promising Program:** A randomized control trial of the Kids in Transition to School (KITS) Program showed that children in foster care participating in this pre-kindergarten program were reported to show considerably less aggressive or oppositional classroom behavior than a comparison group.[11]

> **Promising Program:** A study from the University of Delaware evaluating the Attachment and Biobehavioral Catch-up (ABC) intervention, a 10 session parenting program that targets children's self-regulation, showed that pre-school aged children in foster care who received this intervention exhibited stronger cognitive flexibility and theory of mind skills than a comparison group of children in foster care.[12]

> **Promising Program:** In Illinois, all children between the ages of three and five receive a school readiness screening as part of the Integrated Assessment performed within 30 days of entering substitute care. Additionally, Early Childhood Procedures now require all children in care between the ages of three and five to be enrolled in an early childhood preschool program.[13]

Ensure School Stability

School changes are a significant problem for children and youth in foster care.[14,15] Numerous studies have found that children in foster care frequently experience school changes.[16,17,18,19,20,21] These school changes often occur when children are initially removed from home, or when they move from one foster care living arrangement to another.[22,23] The rate of school mobility for children in foster care is greater than for their non-foster care peers.[24,25,26] Children who change schools frequently make less academic progress than their peers, and each time they change schools, they fall farther and farther behind.[27] School mobility has negative effects on academic achievement and is associated with dropping out.[28] Children in foster care tend to score lower than their peers on standardized tests[29,30,31,32,33,34] and some of these differences predate their entry into foster care.[35] Research consistently shows that children who are highly mobile, including both children in foster care and children experiencing homelessness, perform significantly worse on standardized tests than stably housed children.[36,37]

Children who experience frequent school changes may also face challenges in developing and sustaining supportive relationships with teachers or with peers.[38] Supportive relationships and a positive educational experience can be powerful contributors to the development of resilience and are vital components for healthy development and overall well-being.[39] In a national study of 1,087 foster care alumni, youth who had even one fewer change in living arrangement per year were almost twice as likely to graduate from high school before leaving foster care.[40]

> **Promising Policy:** The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires child welfare agencies to have a plan for "ensuring the educational stability of the child while in foster care," including the child remaining in the school in which the child is enrolled at time of placement unless it is not in the best interests of the child.[41]

Promising Practices: Many states have enacted legislation and developed policies to support maintaining school stability. Child welfare agencies have begun to use GIS mapping or other tools to locate living arrangements that allow a child to remain at the same school. Increasingly, child welfare agencies are collaborating with schools and others to make best interest decisions about school placement. Various tools and checklists have been created to assist with these important decisions. Child welfare agencies have also developed reimbursement mechanisms to provide transportation for children to remain in the same school.[42]

Enroll Students in School Quickly and Consistently

Delays in school enrollment can occur when a child's initial entry into foster care, or a subsequent change in living arrangement while in foster care, involves changing schools.[43, 44] These delays are often caused by failure to transfer records in a timely manner.[45, 46] Delays in school enrollment can negatively impact attendance and have a number of other adverse consequences such as students having to repeat courses previously taken, schools failing to address the special education needs of students, and students being enrolled in inappropriate classes.[47]

States have been using various strategies to ensure prompt enrollment when school changes are necessary. Some states have passed legislation or issued joint policies to streamline the process, including allowing for immediate enrollment without typically required documents, and creating timelines for prompt enrollment and records transfers. Many jurisdictions are using enrollment forms designed to facilitate communication between child welfare agencies and schools. For example, some child welfare agencies and schools have designated specific staff to serve as liaisons for children in care and assist with a smooth transition to a new school.

Promising Policy: In cases when remaining in the same school is not in the best interests of the child, the Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 requires that "the State agency and local educational agencies . . . provide immediate and appropriate enrollment in a new school, with all of the educational records of the child provided to the school."[48] States are now beginning to implement practices to meet this new federal mandate. The work of quickly enrolling foster children in school and ensuring better academic support has also been advanced by a recent amendment to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). This amendment, called the Uninterrupted Scholars Act (USA), was signed into law in January of 2013, and makes it easier for child welfare professionals to access the educational records of the foster youth in their care.[49]

Promote Regular School Attendance

Studies show that children who enter foster care have often missed a substantial number of school days [50, 51] and that once in foster care, children and youth often have higher school absence rates than their non-foster care peers.[52, 53] The extent to which children experience absences from school appears to be influenced by the child's age, their pre-foster care experiences, and their experiences while in care,[54, 55] particularly when children are placed in congregate care.[56] One study found that school attendance problems increase as children in foster care enter adolescence.[75]

Promising Program: Allegheny County in Pennsylvania has established a data sharing program between the school system and the Department of Human Services that enables case workers and other child welfare staff to easily access the educational records of foster youth. This collaboration has led to the inclusion of an 'education page' in the electronic child welfare case record for each child involved in the child welfare system. One example of the benefit of access to shared data from the school district is case workers can be automatically alerted when a child has had three unexcused absences from school.[58]

Support Children to Prevent Serious Behavior Problems at School

A growing body of research documents the behavioral problems that children and youth in foster care experience – issues that impact their prospects for academic success– in the form of disciplinary infractions and other offenses.[59, 60, 61] Children and youth in foster care experience school suspensions and expulsions at higher rates than non-foster care peers.[62, 63, 64] Some educational experts believe that failure to address the needs of children in foster care leads to behavioral problems at school.[65]

In addressing behavioral problems with students in foster care, schools need to understand the impact of trauma on the lives of many children and youth in care. Research suggests that between half and two-thirds of all children are exposed to one or more adverse childhood experiences that can be trauma-inducing. Not surprisingly, children