



WHAT ARE THE OUTCOMES OF THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

Despite a 5% reduction in cases over the last 5 years, Child Welfare's goal of permanency has worsened.

As of Sept 30, 2020 AFCARS Report:

- 407,493 children and youth in foster care, with a total of 631,832 served by the foster care system in 2020, **5% reduction over 5 years** [impact of COVID on reduced removals is unclear]
- 117,470 were waiting to be adopted, **1% increase over 5 years**
- 32.7 months was the average time in care, **3% increase over 5 years**
- 20.1 months was the average time a child waited for adoption after parental rights were terminated, **70% increase over 5 years**
- 20,010 (9%) aged-out of the system without ever achieving permanency, despite emancipation being the case goal for only 4%, **0% improvement over 5 years**

Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Supports:

- Only 28 states and D.C. have enacted legislation to extend foster care beyond age 18
- Less than 50% of youth age 16 to 21 receive independent living services to help them become self-sufficient
- 33% of youth age 16-20 have had 5 or more placements
- 40% of 16-17 year olds live in group homes or institutions
- 50% receive Pell grants and 60% receive Chafee grants to help pay for college despite 100% being eligible

Outcomes for Youth Age 19 in Foster Care:

- 20% have been homeless in the last 2 years
- 22% have been incarcerated in the last 2 years
- 32% are enrolled in college
- 33% dropped out of high school
- 34% are employed part-time or full-time
- 44% read at grade level
- 84% desire to go to college

With 4 Years of Aging Out:

- 70% will be on government assistance
- 50% will be unemployed
- 50% will have experienced periods of homelessness (including couch surfing, sleeping in cars)
- 25% will be homeless
- 8% will have earned a college degree

[Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System \(AFCARS\) data for FY 2020](#)

[Chapin Hall Center for Children](#)

Transition Age Youth in Foster Care in the U.S., Child Trends, 2015

John Burton Advocates for Youth, Data on Foster Youth in College presentation, 2020

Interested?

This brief was created by iFoster's transition-age foster youth TAY Peer Ambassadors who serve to support other youth aging out of the foster care system to achieve self-sufficiency

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