



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 Reports:

- 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**

Support for Youth Moving into Adulthood:

- 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

Within 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](#)

Interested?

This brief was created by iFoster's 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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