

# CHILD WELFARE FACT SHEET

September 2014 Update

## FOCUS ON ADOPTION

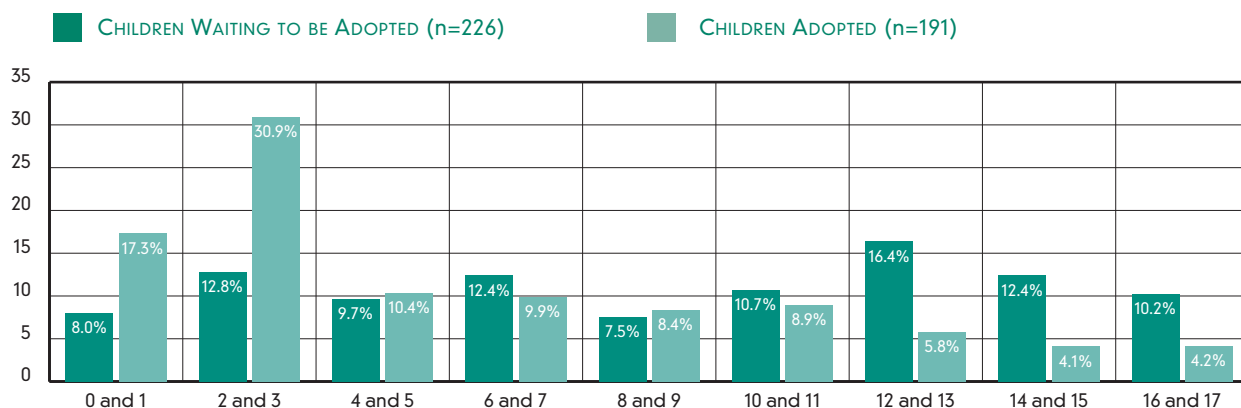
All children and youth in the foster care system deserve permanent families. When a child or youth in out-of-home care cannot safely be reunified with his or her birth family, adoption offers a permanent and legally binding relationship to an adoptive family that can provide them with care, stability, and home environments that promote healthy development.<sup>1,2</sup>

Parents who adopt children from foster care are diverse in family structure and in their relationship with their adoptive child prior to the adoption. In Rhode Island in 2012, 59% of youth adopted from foster care were adopted by married couples, 26% by single females, 12% by unmarried couples, and 4% by single males.

Nationally in 2012, over half (56%) of adoptive parents had previously been foster parents to their adoptive child, 30% were related to their adoptive child, and 14% were not related.<sup>3</sup>

Children adopted from foster care have histories of abuse and neglect and often must overcome issues of trust and attachment, identity formation, and the impacts of childhood trauma. Adoptive families can benefit from post-adoption services support the child's successful transition into his or her adoptive family. These services can include respite care, counseling, peer support groups, as well as material supports like financial, medical, and educational assistance.<sup>4</sup>

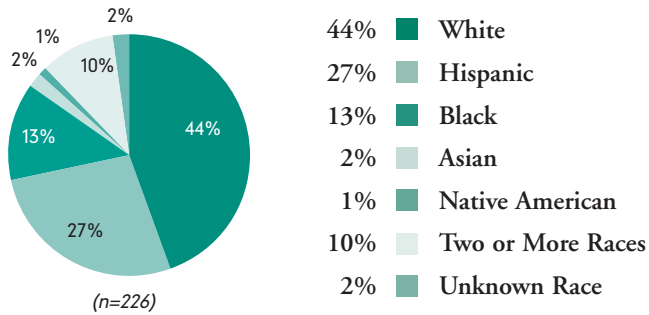
### AGES OF CHILDREN WAITING TO BE ADOPTED AND CHILDREN ADOPTED, RHODE ISLAND, FFY 2012



- On September 30, 2012 in Rhode Island, there were 226 children and youth in foster care waiting to be adopted. Of these, 132 children and youth waiting for adoption had birth parents whose parental rights had been terminated.
- Young children are more likely to be adopted from foster care than older youth. During FFY 2012, almost two-thirds (59%) of children adopted from Rhode Island's foster care system were under age six, while 14% were youth age 12 or older.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2013). *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Federal Fiscal Year 2012*. Children Waiting to be Adopted is a count of all children in foster care on September 30, 2012 whose permanency goal is adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. Children Adopted is the number of children adopted with public child welfare involvement between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2012.

## CHILDREN WAITING TO BE ADOPTED BY RACE AND ETHNICITY, RHODE ISLAND, FFY 2012

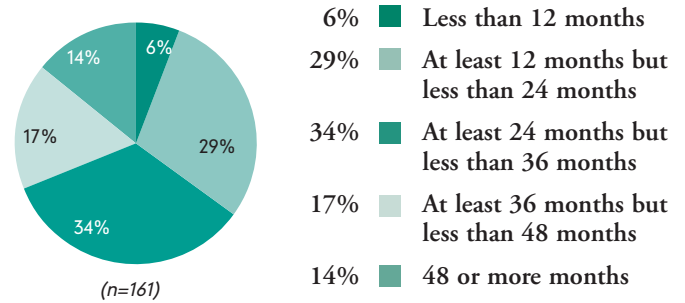


- Children waiting to be adopted in Rhode Island are diverse in racial and ethnic backgrounds, with minority children comprising more than half (54%) of waiting children.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2013). *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Federal Fiscal Year 2012*. Children Waiting to be Adopted is a count of all children in foster care on September 30, 2012 whose permanency goal is adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated.

Total may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

## TIME FROM DATE OF REMOVAL TO ADOPTION, RHODE ISLAND, 2013



- In Rhode Island, 35% of children and youth adopted during 2013 were adopted less than 24 months from the date of their removal from their birth parents.
- Rhode Island exceeds the national standard of 32% of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's removal.

Source: *Safety, permanency, and well-being in Rhode Island: Child welfare outcomes annual report for FY 2013*. (2014). New Haven, CT: Prepared by the Consultation Center, Yale University School of Medicine for the Data Analytic Center of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families.

## Recommendations:

- Support child-focused recruitment initiatives and raise public awareness of the benefits of adoption through the foster care system.
- Practice concurrent planning to simultaneously pursue permanency through adoption or guardianship should efforts at reunification fail.
- Increase financial subsidies and economic supports to families who adopt children from the foster care system.
- Enhance funding for pre- and post-adoptive services to prepare and support adoptive children, youth, and families.
- Increase the age at which youth age out of the Rhode Island child welfare system from 18 to 21 to give youth more time to form connections to a permanent family.
- Provide ongoing professional development for the child welfare workforce on clinical interventions for children and families, as well as state and federal policies relating to foster care adoption practice.

## References:

<sup>1</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *Adoption from foster care*. Retrieved August 1, 2014, from [www.childwelfare.gov/permanency/adoption](http://www.childwelfare.gov/permanency/adoption)

<sup>2</sup> Zill, N. (2011). *Adoption from foster care: Aiding children while saving public money*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Center on Children and Families.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2013). *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System, Federal Fiscal Year 2012*.

<sup>4</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2012). *Finding and using postadoption services*. Washington DC: Children's Bureau/ACYF.



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