

# Children in Out-of-Home Placement

## DEFINITION

*Children in out-of-home placement* is the number of children who have been removed from their families and are in the care of the Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) while awaiting permanency. Out-of-home placements include foster care homes, group homes, shelter care, residential facilities, and medical facilities. Permanency can be achieved through reunification with the family, adoption, or guardianship.

## SIGNIFICANCE

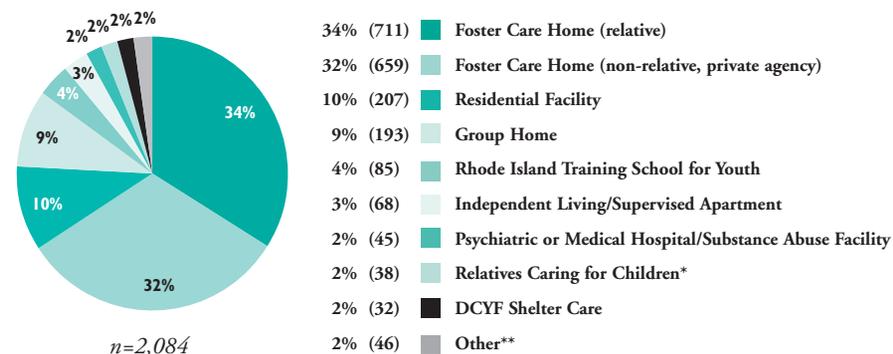
Children need stability, permanency, and safety for healthy development. Removal from the home may be necessary for the child's safety and well-being; however, critical connections and a sense of permanency may be lost when a child is placed out-of-home.<sup>1</sup> Permanency planning efforts should begin as soon as a child enters the child welfare system so that a permanent living situation can be achieved as quickly as possible.<sup>2</sup> The federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (Fostering Connections Act)* promotes permanency through supports for relative guardianship and incentives for adoption.<sup>3</sup>

Rhode Island children in out-of-home care often experience multiple placements, lose contact with family

members, and may have overlooked educational, physical, and mental health needs.<sup>4</sup> Children in out-of-home care suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than their peers.<sup>5,6</sup> Long-term stays in care can cause emotional, behavioral, or educational problems that can negatively impact children's long-term well-being and success.<sup>7</sup> Children in foster care are more likely than their peers to change schools, be suspended, qualify for special education, repeat a grade, and drop out of school.<sup>8</sup> Appropriate supports and services can help youth in care maximize their potential and ensure that they are prepared for higher education and work.<sup>9</sup>

Children of color are overrepresented at all decision points in the child welfare system, including reporting, investigation, substantiation, placement, and exit from care. Minority children in child welfare systems experience significantly worse outcomes, have more placement changes, receive fewer supports, stay in the child welfare system longer, are less likely to be adopted or reunited with their families, have fewer contacts with caseworkers, less access to mental health and substance abuse services, and are placed in detention or correctional facilities at higher rates than White children.<sup>10</sup>

**Children in Out-of-Home Placement, Rhode Island, December 31, 2015**



\*Relatives caring for children are classified as an out-of-home placement by DCYF, despite the fact that these relatives did not receive monetary payments from DCYF to care for the children and the children were never removed and never needed to be removed from the relatives' homes. In these cases, the relative caring for the child initiated contact with DCYF to receive assistance from the agency.

\*\*The placement category "Other" includes: runaway youth in DCYF care or those with unauthorized absences (35), pre-adoptive homes (8), and minors with a mother in shelter/group home/residential facility (3).

◆ As of December 31, 2015, there were 2,084 children under age 21 in the care of DCYF who were in out-of-home placements.

◆ The total caseload of DCYF on December 31, 2015 was 7,089, including 2,413 children living in their homes under DCYF supervision and 2,527 children living in adoption settings. This total caseload shows a third consecutive annual increase after years of decline, increasing from 7,078 in 2014.

◆ The total DCYF caseload also includes 54 children in out-of-state placements/other agency custody, six children receiving respite care services, one youth in Job Corps, and four children in other placements.

◆ On December 31, 2015, 400 children living in a residential facility or group home, a decline of 11% from 449 children on December 31, 2014. The percentage of children in out-of-home placement who were in a relative foster care home increased from 31% on December 31, 2014 to 34% on December 31, 2015.

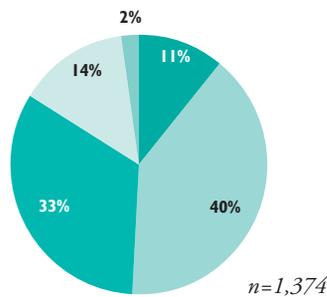
Source: RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, RICHIST, 2006-2015.

# Children in Out-of-Home Placement

## Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Placement by Type of Setting and Age, Rhode Island\*

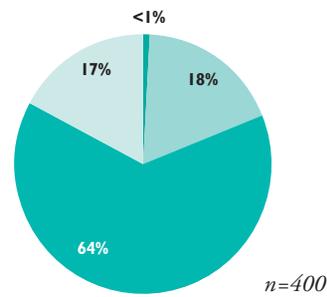
### In Foster Care Homes

11%	(157)	Under Age 1
40%	(553)	Ages 1 to 5
33%	(451)	Ages 6 to 13
14%	(186)	Ages 14 to 17
2%	(27)	Ages 18 and Over



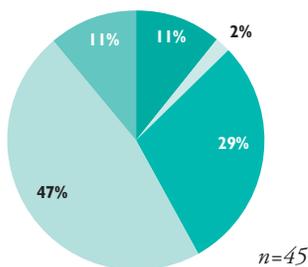
### In Group Homes and Residential Facilities\*\*

0%	(0)	Under Age 1
<1%	(1)	Ages 1 to 5
18%	(73)	Ages 6 to 13
64%	(257)	Ages 14 to 17
17%	(69)	Ages 18 and Over



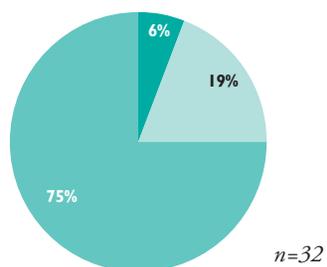
### In Medical Facilities\*\*\*

11%	(5)	Under Age 1
2%	(1)	Ages 1 to 5
29%	(13)	Ages 6 to 13
47%	(21)	Ages 14 to 17
11%	(5)	Ages 18 and Over



### In Shelter Care

0%	(0)	Under Age 1
6%	(2)	Ages 1 to 5
19%	(6)	Ages 6 to 13
75%	(24)	Ages 14 to 17
0%	(0)	Ages 18 and Over



\*Pie charts show data for a single point-in-time (Foster Care Homes-January 4, 2016; Group Homes and Residential Facilities, Medical Facilities, and Shelter Care-December 31, 2015.)

\*\*Residential facilities do not include psychiatric hospitals, medical hospitals, or the Rhode Island Training School.

\*\*\*Medical facilities data includes medical hospitals (10), psychiatric hospitals (33), and substance abuse treatment facilities (2).

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), January 2016. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Data do not match chart on previous page due to different report dates.

## Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being

### Fostering Connections

◆ The federal *Fostering Connections Act* promotes kinship care and family connections by requiring states to notify relatives when a child is placed in foster care and providing funding for states offering kinship guardianship assistance payments.<sup>11</sup> Rhode Island's guardianship assistance program defines kin broadly and includes any adult who has a close and caring relationship with the child, including godparents, caretakers, close family friends, neighbors, and clergy.<sup>12</sup>

### Placement Stability

◆ In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015, 10.9% of the 1,274 children who had been in out-of-home care for less than one year had experienced three or more placements, down from 12.4% in FFY 2014. Three or more placements were experienced by 24.7% of the 728 children who were in care between 12 and 24 months, down from 25.1% in FFY 2014. Fifty-five percent of the 582 children who had been in care for 24 months or more experienced three or more placements.<sup>13</sup>

### Recurrence of Abuse and Neglect

◆ Of the 1,649 Rhode Island children who were victims of abuse or neglect during FFY 2015 (whether or not they were removed from the home), 9.3% experienced one or more recurrences of abuse or neglect within six months, up from 8.8% in FFY 2014. The national standard is 6.1% or fewer.<sup>14</sup>

### Shelter Care

◆ The number of children in shelter care (facilities providing emergency care to eight children or less for no more than 90 days each) decreased from 40 on December 31, 2014 to 32 on December 31, 2015. Two of these Rhode Island children in shelter care were under age six, six were ages six to 13, and 24 were age 14 and older.<sup>15</sup>

### References

<sup>1</sup> Williams-Mbengue, N. (2008). *Moving children out of foster care - The legislative role in finding permanent homes for children. Permanency: A key concept for children in foster care.* Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. 1998. *Program instruction: Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997.* Retrieved February 11, 2016, from [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)

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