

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, assessment and stabilization centers, residential facilities, and medical facilities. Permanency can be achieved through reunification with the family, adoption, or guardianship.

SIGNIFICANCE

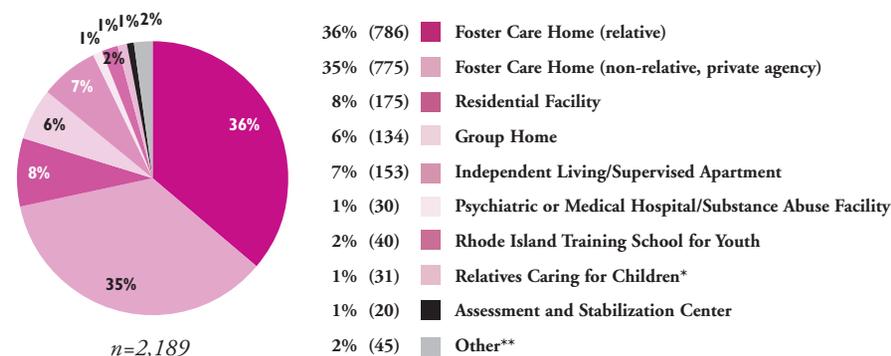
Children need stability, permanency, and safety for healthy development. Removal from the home may be necessary for the child's safety and well-being; however, critical connections and a sense of permanency may be lost when a child is placed out-of-home.¹ Permanency planning efforts should begin as soon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

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.⁴ Children in out-of-home care suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than their peers.^{5,6} Long-term stays in care can cause emotional, behavioral, or educational problems that can negatively impact children's long-term well-being and success.⁷ Children in foster care are about twice as likely as their peers to be absent from school or to be suspended, and are nearly three times more likely than their peers to be expelled from school.⁸ Appropriate supports and services can help youth in care maximize their potential and ensure that they are prepared for higher education and work.⁹

Children of color are overrepresented at various points in the child welfare system, including reporting, screening, investigation, assessment, and child welfare systems often have difficulty finding and retaining resource and adoptive families of color.¹⁰ Children of color in child welfare systems are more likely to be removed from their homes, are less likely to receive preservation services, stay in the child welfare system longer, are less likely to be adopted, and are more likely to age out of care.¹¹

◆ ■■■■■◆
Children in Out-of-Home Placement, Rhode Island, December 31, 2019



*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 (37), pre-adoptive homes (2), and minors with their mother in shelter/group home/residential facility (6).

Source: RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2019. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

◆ As of December 31, 2019, there were 2,189 children under age 21 in the care of DCYF who were in out-of-home placements.¹²

◆ The total DCYF caseload on December 31, 2019 was 6,836, including 2,016 children living in their homes under DCYF supervision and 2,556 children living in adoption settings.¹³

◆ The total DCYF caseload also included 63 children in out-of-state placements/other agency custody, two children receiving respite care services, one youth in Job Corps, and nine children in other placements.¹⁴

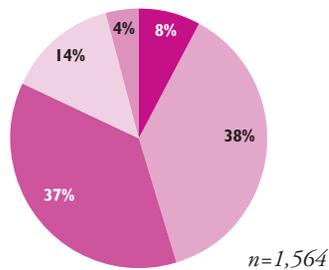
◆ On December 31, 2019, 309 children were living in a residential facility or group home, an increase from 303 children on December 31, 2018. The percentage of children in out-of-home placement who were in a relative foster care home decreased from 40% (872) on December 31, 2018 to 36% (786) on December 31, 2019.^{15,16}

Children in Out-of-Home Placement

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

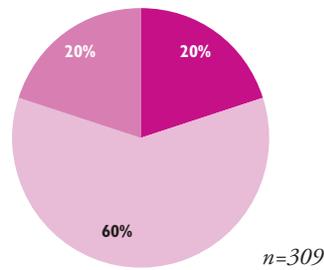
In Foster Care Homes

8% (121)	■	Under Age 1
38% (587)	■	Ages 1 to 5
37% (577)	■	Ages 6 to 13
14% (221)	■	Ages 14 to 17
4% (58)	■	Ages 18 and Over



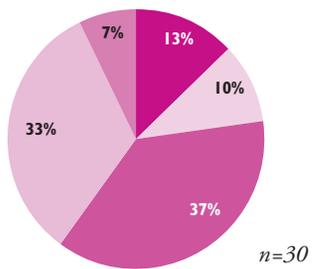
In Group Homes and Residential Facilities**

0% (0)	□	Under Age 1
0% (0)	□	Ages 1 to 5
20% (62)	■	Ages 6 to 13
60% (185)	■	Ages 14 to 17
20% (62)	■	Ages 18 and Over



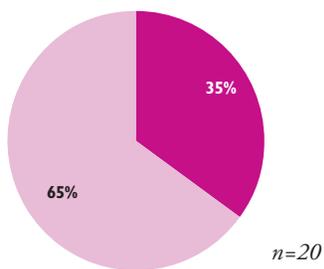
In Medical Facilities***

13% (4)	■	Under Age 1
10% (3)	■	Ages 1 to 5
37% (11)	■	Ages 6 to 13
33% (10)	■	Ages 14 to 17
7% (2)	■	Ages 18 and Over



In Assessment and Stabilization Centers****

0% (0)	□	Under Age 1
0% (0)	□	Ages 1 to 5
35% (7)	■	Ages 6 to 13
65% (13)	■	Ages 14 to 17
0% (0)	□	Ages 18 and Over



*Pie charts show data for a single point-in-time (Foster Care Homes-January 2, 2020; Group Homes and Residential Facilities, Medical Facilities, and Assessment and Stabilization Centers-December 31, 2019.)

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

***Medical facilities data include medical hospitals (11), psychiatric hospitals (19), and substance abuse treatment facilities (0).

****Assessment and Stabilization Centers are described as an emergency placement.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2019-2020. 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.¹⁷ 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.¹⁸

Family First Prevention Services Act

◆ The *Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) of 2018* enables states to use funds from the entitlement of Title IV-E of the Social Security Act that pays for child welfare, for "time-limited" services aimed at preventing the use of foster care in cases of maltreatment. States can spend money on services to address mental health issues, in-home parent skill-based programs, and substance abuse treatment. Parents or relatives caring for children who are at risk of entering foster care and youth in foster care who are pregnant or parenting are eligible for services through *FFPSA*.¹⁹

Pivot to Prevention

◆ In April of 2018, DCYF launched Pivot to Prevention, the Department's new operational direction to focus on child safety as a public health issue. DCYF will work with state partners to address poverty, substance abuse and serious mental health issues, and family violence in the community, whether or not families become involved with the Department.²⁰

Congregate Care

◆ Older youth are more likely to be placed in congregate care settings (e.g., group homes, residential facilities) than young children. In Rhode Island on December 31, 2019, 309 of the children and youth in out-of-home placement were in group homes or residential facilities. Of those, 80% (247) were age 14 and older.²¹

Racial and Ethnic Disparities

◆ In Rhode Island in SFY 2017, Black, Multiracial, and Hispanic youth ages 10 to 17 were overrepresented in entering into an out-of-home placement compared to their Rhode Island census population. Twenty-six percent of Black Non-Hispanic children, 22% of Hispanic children, and 17% of White children were placed in congregate care as their first out-of-home placement.²²

(References are on page 184)