

# 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.

## SIGNIFICANCE

Children need stability, permanency, safety, and attachment to caring adults for healthy development. When possible, it is best for children and families to remain together with in-home supports. Removal from the home may be necessary for the child's safety and well-being, however, maintaining connections with family and community where possible have a positive impact on child well-being while out-of-home.<sup>1,2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> The federal *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (Fostering Connections Act)* promotes permanency through supports for relative guardianship and incentives for adoption.<sup>4</sup>

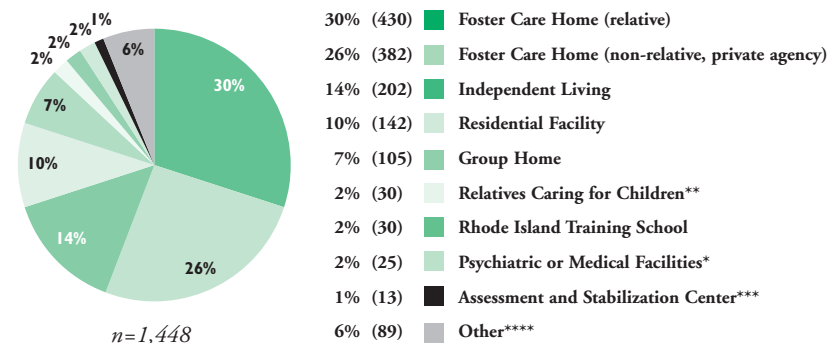
Children in out-of-home care can experience multiple placements, which is

linked to poorer educational outcomes, increased behavioral issues, and longer time in care.<sup>1,5</sup> They suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than their peers, with mental and behavioral health being the largest unmet health need.<sup>6,7</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>8</sup> Children in foster care are about twice as likely as their peers to be absent from school or be suspended and are nearly three times more likely to be expelled. Appropriate supports and services can help youth in care maximize their potential and ensure that they are prepared for higher education and work.<sup>8</sup> As of the 2017- 2018 school year in Rhode Island, data on reading and math proficiency and high school graduation is publicly available for students in foster care.<sup>9</sup>

Children of Color are overrepresented at various points in the child welfare system, including reporting, screening, investigation, and assessment, and child welfare systems often fail to find and retain foster and adoptive Families of Color. Children of Color in child welfare systems are more likely to be removed from their homes, remain in the child welfare system longer, have parental rights terminated, and are less likely to reunify with their families.<sup>10</sup>



Children in Out-of-Home Placement, Rhode Island, December 31, 2025



\*\*Medical facilities data include medical hospitals and psychiatric hospitals.

\*\*Relatives caring for children are classified as an out-of-home placement by DCYF, even though 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 contacted DCYF to receive assistance from the agency.

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

\*\*\*\*The placement category "Other" includes out-of-state/other agency (68), runaway youth in DCYF care or those with unauthorized absences (11), Job Corps (<6), military service (<6), prison (<6), and other (<6).

Source: RI Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2025. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

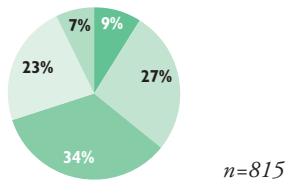
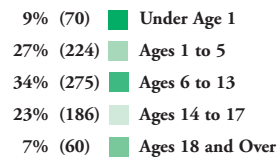
- ◆ As of December 31, 2025, there were 1,448 children and youth under age 21 in the care of DCYF who were in out-of-home placements.<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ The total DCYF caseload on December 31, 2025 was 5,683, including 1,927 children living in their homes under DCYF supervision, a decrease from 2024 (1,990), and 2,308 children living in adoption settings.<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ The total DCYF caseload on December 31, 2025 also included 68 children in out-of-state placements/other agency custody compared to 59 children in out-of-state placements/other agency custody the previous year.<sup>11</sup>
- ◆ On December 31, 2025, 247 children were living in a residential facility or group home, a slight decrease from 264 children on December 1, 2024. The percentage of children in out-of-home placement who were in a relative foster care home was 29% (434) on December 1, 2024 similar to 30% (430) on December 31, 2025.<sup>11</sup>

# Children in Out-of-Home Placement

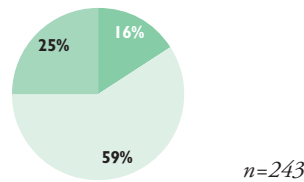
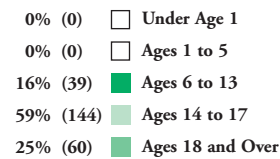


## Children in Out-of-Home Placement, by Type of Setting, Age, and Race and Ethnicity, Rhode Island

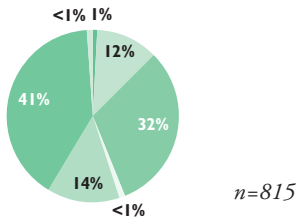
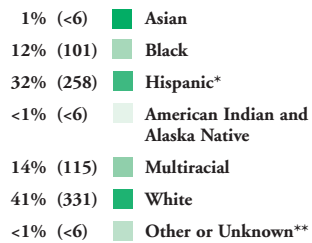
**In Foster Care Homes by Age**



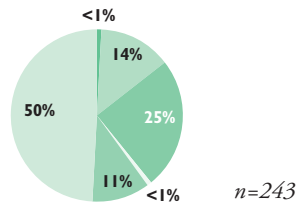
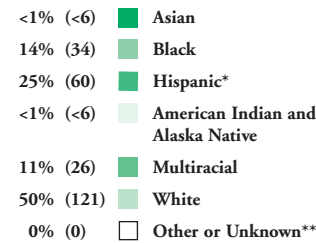
**In Group Homes and Residential Facilities by Age**



**In Foster Care Homes by Race and Ethnicity**



**In Group Homes and Residential Facilities by Race and Ethnicity**



\*Hispanic children may be of any of the race categories.

\*\*Other or Unknown also includes those who "Declined to Disclose" their race/ethnicity.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2025-2026. Pie charts show data for a single point-in-time: Foster Care Homes on January 5, 2026, and Group Homes and Residential Facilities on December 31, 2025. Data may not match chart on previous page due to different report dates. Residential facilities do not include psychiatric hospitals, medical hospitals, the Rhode Island Training School, out-of-state/other agency custody, or residential facility placements pending contract. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding.



## Ensuring Children Grow Up in Families

◆ Whenever safely possible, it is important to support families so children can remain with their parents. 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 services to prevent the use of foster care. States can spend money on services to address mental health issues, in-home parent skill-based programs, and substance use treatment for parents and relatives caring for children. Rhode Island received approval to begin implementing the *FFPSA* starting in FFY 2022. In 2023 the *FFPSA* was updated to simplify the licensing process for kinship placements, protect LGBTQ+ children in foster care (though these protections are currently under threat), and expand access to legal representation.<sup>12,13</sup>

◆ If children cannot remain safely at home with family supports, out-of-home placement with a kinship foster family may be the best option. Children in kinship foster families have been shown to have fewer mental health and behavioral issues, as well as increased educational and placement stability.<sup>14</sup> The *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>14</sup> Rhode Island defines kin broadly and includes any adult who has a close and caring relationship with the child.<sup>15</sup> On December 31, 2025, of the 812 children in foster care placements in Rhode Island, (53%) were in kinship foster families.<sup>11</sup>

◆ Children in foster families experience better outcomes related to placement stability, education, and delinquency compared to children in congregate care settings.<sup>16</sup> Some youth who require intensive services for mental health needs can benefit from the care provided in a treatment foster care home, which is often more cost effective than residential treatment homes and provides the structure and familiarity of a home environment.<sup>17</sup>

◆ Adolescents are more likely to be placed in group homes and residential facilities than younger children. In Rhode Island on December 31, 2025, of the 243 children placed in groups homes and residential facilities, 84% (204) were ages 14 and older.<sup>11</sup>

◆ In Rhode Island, Black children are three times as likely to be in foster care as white children. Multiracial children and Hispanic children are twice as likely to be in foster care as white children.<sup>11,18</sup>

(References are on page 185)

<sup>12</sup> Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2022). *2021 Annual report*. <https://ricadv.org/annual-reports/>

<sup>13</sup> Rhode Island Coalition Against Domestic Violence. (2025).

<sup>14</sup> Sojourner House. (2025).

<sup>15</sup> DeBoard-Lucas, R., Wasserman, K., McAlister Groves, B., & Bair-Merritt, M. (2013). *Promising futures: 16 trauma-informed, evidence-based recommendations for advocates working with children exposed to intimate partner violence*.

<sup>16</sup> The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. (2020). *Domestic violence and firearms*. efsy.org

<sup>17</sup> Rhode Island General Law, 8-8.3-3.

(continued from page 105)

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<sup>7</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (n.d.). *Program: Family Care Community Partnerships (FCCPs)*. Retrieved January 17, 2025, from <https://dcyf.ri.gov/services/behavioral-health/central-referral-unit>

<sup>8</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2025). *Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST)*.

<sup>9</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2024). *Guide for parents and caregivers involved with child protective services (CPS): Rights, responsibilities, and answers to frequently asked questions*. <https://dcyf.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur416/files/2024-08/A.%20%202024%20CPS%20brochure%20%20English%20%201000%20copies.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Child Protective Services Rules and Regulations, 214-RICR-20-00-1 (2022). [https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Regulations/part/214-20-00-1?reg\\_id=9168](https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Regulations/part/214-20-00-1?reg_id=9168)

<sup>11</sup> Rhode Island Department of Health. (2020-2024). *Hospital Discharge Data and Vital Records*.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Y. A. F., & Children's Bureau. (2026). *Child maltreatment 2024*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cm2024.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Monahan, E. K., Grewal-Kök, Y., Cusick, G., & Anderson, C. (2023). *Economic and concrete supports: An evidence-based service for child welfare prevention*. Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago.

<sup>14</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2024). *About child sexual abuse*. Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/child-abuse-neglect/about/about-child-sexual-abuse.html>

<sup>15</sup> Prenatal to 3 Policy Impact Center. (n.d.). *What are Early Intervention services and why are they important?* Retrieved March 7, 2024, from [www.pn3policy.org](http://www.pn3policy.org)

<sup>16</sup> Rhode Island Executive Office of Health and Human Services. (2018). *Rhode Island Early Intervention certification standards policies and procedures: IV. Eligibility determination*.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2026). *Interagency data, State Fiscal Year 2025*.

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<sup>1</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2023). *What impacts placement stability?* <https://www.casey.org/media/23.07-QFF-SF-Placement-Stability-Impacts.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Children's Bureau. (2021). *In-home services to strengthen children and families*. [https://cwig-prod-prod-drupal-s3fs-us-east-1.s3.amazonaws.com/public/documents/inhome\\_services.pdf](https://cwig-prod-prod-drupal-s3fs-us-east-1.s3.amazonaws.com/public/documents/inhome_services.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (1998). *Program instruction: Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997*. <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/pi9814.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2009). *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act: Improving lives and opportunities for children in foster care*. <https://www.casey.org/media/FosteringConnectionsSummary.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2021). *Child welfare outcomes 2021*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://acf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cwo-report-to-congress-2021.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2022). *Health-care coverage for children and youth in foster care—and after*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

<sup>7</sup> The American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021). *Mental and behavioral health needs of children in foster care*. <https://www.aap.org/en/patient-care/foster-care/mental-and-behavioral-health-needs-of-children-in-foster-care/?srsltid=AfmBOoqD-rfmjV GawDmSu-GSP1T-rs3kXjIy47Oe5nuBmjigYyohkzK4>

<sup>8</sup> Somers, C. L., Goutman, R. L., Day, A., Enright, O., Crosby, S., & Taussig, H. (2020). Academic achievement among a sample of youth in foster care: The role of school connectedness. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(12), 1845–1863.

<sup>9</sup> Rhode Island Department of Education. (2025). *Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS), 2024-2025*. <https://www3.ride.ri.gov/ADP>

<sup>10</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2021). *Child welfare practice to address racial disproportionality and disparity*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Children's Bureau.

<sup>11</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2024-2025). *RICHIST*.

<sup>12</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (n.d.). *Family First Prevention Service Act (FFPSA)*. Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://dcyf.ri.gov/programs/initiatives/family-first-ffpsa>

<sup>13</sup> Rivera, M., Cooper, N., Steiger, D., & Tatum, L. (2023). *Brief: Reducing foster care placement through equity-focused implementation of family first. . . Center on Poverty and Inequality, Georgetown Law*.

<sup>14</sup> Washington, T., & Mihalec-Adkins, B. P. (2023). *Kinship care supports the academic performance of children*. Child Trends, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.56417/6688s365k>

<sup>15</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (2012). *Legal guardianship and kinship guardianship assistance (Policy 700.0245)*.

<sup>16</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2022). *Strong Families information packet: What are the outcomes for youth placed in group and institutional settings?* [https://www.casey.org/media/22.07-QFF-SF-Group-placements\\_fnl-1.pdf](https://www.casey.org/media/22.07-QFF-SF-Group-placements_fnl-1.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Family Focused Treatment Association. (n.d.). *What is treatment foster care?* Retrieved March 4, 2025, from <https://www.ffa.org/page/DefiningTFC>

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Census. (2020). *Table P2 and Table P4*.

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#### References for Outcomes for Children in DCYF Care

<sup>3</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2018). *Strong Families strategy brief: What are some effective strategies for achieving permanency?* <https://www.casey.org/effective-strategies-achieving-permanency/>

<sup>4</sup> Casey Family Programs. (2023). *Strong Families strategy brief: How can we improve placement stability for children in foster care?* <https://www.casey.org/strategies-improve-placement-stability/>

<sup>5</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2020). *Reasonable efforts to preserve or reunify families and achieve permanency for children*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.

<sup>6</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (n.d.). *Achieving and maintaining permanency*. Retrieved February 20, 2025, from [www.childwelfare.gov](http://www.childwelfare.gov)

<sup>7</sup> Children's Bureau. (2024). *What does it mean to be a legal guardian; where can I find information?* <https://lacf.gov/cb/faq/custody3>

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<sup>9</sup> Children's Defense Fund. (2010). *Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act (H.R. 6893) summary*. <https://www.childrensdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FCSIAA-detailed-summary.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Rosenberg, R., & Abbott, S. (n.d.). *Supporting older youth beyond age 18: Examining data and trends in extended foster care*. Child Trends.

<sup>11</sup> Brewsaugh, K., Richardson, A., & Loveless, A. (2021). *State approaches to extending Chafee services to age 23*. <https://lacf.gov/opre/report/state-approaches-extending-chafee-services-age-23-insights-inform-learning-agenda>

<sup>12</sup> Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families. (n.d.). *Data Analytics and Evaluation, Permanency Achieved in 12-Months of Entry, FFY24 Entry Cohort, from Permanency Analytic Report*.

<sup>13</sup> Capacity Building Center for States. (2021). *What factors support family reunification?* (Vol. 22, Issue 6).