

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 permanent placement. Out-of-home placements include foster homes (relative, non-relative and private agency foster homes), placements with step parents, group homes, shelter care, residential treatment facilities, and medical facilities. Permanent placement includes reunification with the family, adoption or guardianship.

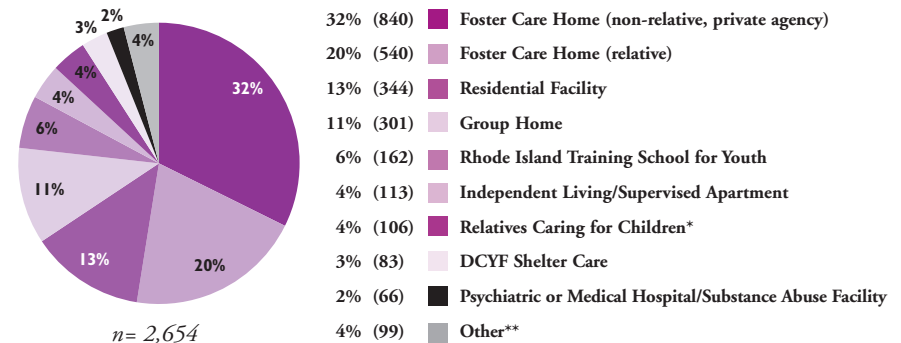
SIGNIFICANCE

Children need stability, permanency and safety in order to develop and flourish. Removal from the home may be necessary for a child's safety and well-being; however, it is disruptive and can compromise a child's developmental progress.¹ Children who have been abused or neglected are particularly in need of a safe, stable and permanent environment that provides for their well-being. Permanency planning efforts should begin as soon as the child enters the child welfare system. *The Adoption and Safe Families Act* of 1997 requires states to monitor progress on a specific set of outcomes and indicators related to children's safety, permanency and well-being.²

Rhode Island children in out-of-home care frequently experience multiple placements, lose contact with family members, and often have overlooked educational, physical, and mental health needs.³ Children in out-of-home care suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than their peers.^{4,5} Long-term stays in out-of-home placements can cause emotional, behavioral or educational problems that adversely affect their future well-being and self-sufficiency.^{6,7} Many children in foster care drop out of school, change schools multiple times and require remedial services. A full array of supports and services are needed to ensure that all youth maximize their potential, and are prepared for higher education and work.⁸

Research shows disparate treatment of children of color as they enter the foster care system and while they are in the system. Black and Hispanic families are more likely than non-Hispanic White families under similar circumstances to be reported for child abuse and neglect and to have their children removed and placed in foster care. Once in foster care, children of color are more likely than non-Hispanic White children to remain in placement for longer periods of time and to receive fewer familial visits, fewer contacts with caseworkers, fewer written case plans, and fewer developmental or psychological assessments.⁹

Children in Out-of Home Placement, December 31, 2008



* *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 (81), pre-adoptive homes (7), minors with mother in shelter/group home/residential facility (8), step parents (2) and trial home visit (1).*

- ◆ **As of December 31, 2008, there were 2,654 children under age 21 in the care of DCYF who were in out-of-home placements, a 20% decrease since 2006 (3,311).**
- ◆ **The total caseload of DCYF on December 31, 2008 was 8,203, including 2,824 children living in their homes under DCYF supervision and 2,729 children living in adoption placements. This is a 13% decrease in the DCYF caseload since 2006 (9,414).**
- ◆ **The total DCYF caseload also includes 33 children in out-of-state placements/other agency custody; eight children receiving respite care services; 11 youth in a prison other than the Rhode Island Training School; and eight children in other placements.**
- ◆ **On December 31, 2008, 113 Rhode Island youth were in an independent living arrangement or supervised apartment setting, a decline of 44% from 203 youth in 2006. Just over half (64) of the 113 youth in independent living arrangements were ages 18 and older. Older youth often transition into adulthood while still in care.**

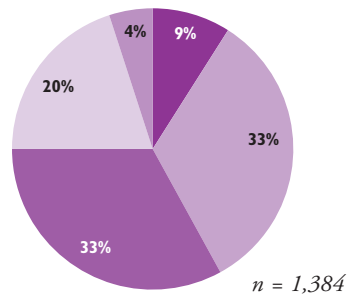
Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2006 - 2008.

Children in Out-of-Home Placement

Children and Youth in Out-of-Home Placement, by Type of Setting and Age, Rhode Island, January 2009

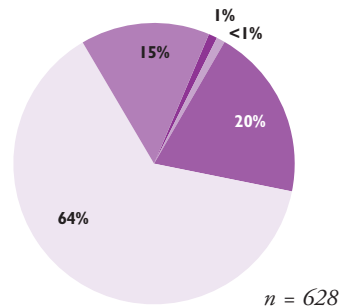
In Foster Care Homes

9% (129)	Under Age 1
33% (463)	Ages 1 to 5
33% (458)	Ages 6 to 13
20% (282)	Ages 14 to 17
4% (52)	Ages 18 and over



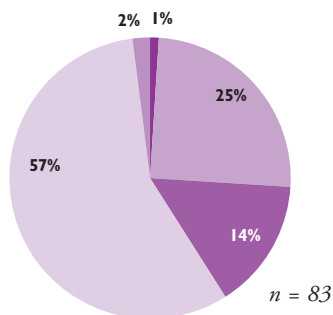
In Group Homes and Residential Facilities*

1% (5)	Under Age 1
<1% (3)	Ages 1 to 5
20% (126)	Ages 6 to 13
64% (399)	Ages 14 to 17
15% (95)	Ages 18 and over



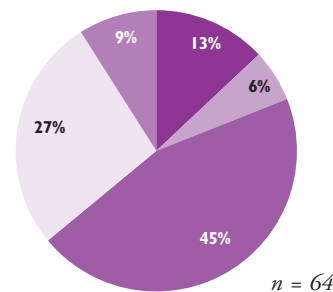
In Shelter Care

1% (1)	Under Age 1
25% (21)	Ages 1 to 5
14% (12)	Ages 6 to 13
57% (47)	Ages 14 to 17
2% (2)	Ages 18 and over



In Medical Facilities**

13% (8)	Under Age 1
6% (4)	Ages 1 to 5
45% (29)	Ages 6 to 13
27% (17)	Ages 14 to 17
9% (6)	Ages 18 and over



*Residential facilities do not include psychiatric hospitals, medical hospitals, or the Rhode Island Training School.
 **Medical facilities include medical hospitals (18), psychiatric hospitals (42) and substance abuse treatment facilities (4).

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RIC HIST), January 5, 2009. Percentages may not sum to 100% due to rounding. Data do not match table on previous page due to different report dates.

Safety, Permanency and Well-Being

Placement Stability

◆ In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2008, 16.9% of the 1,733 children who had been in out-of-home care for less than one year had experienced three or more placements, up from 13.4% in FFY 2004. The national standard is 13.3%. Three or more placements were experienced by 36% of the 990 children who were in care between 12 and 24 months, compared to 37% in FFY 2004. Almost two-thirds (65%) of the 1,309 children who had been in care for 24 or more months experienced three or more placements (compared with 68% in FFY 2004).¹⁰

Recurrence of Abuse While in Foster Care

◆ Of the 1,466 Rhode Island children who were victims of abuse or neglect during FFY 2008 (whether or not they were removed from the home), 9.6% experienced one or more recurrences of abuse or neglect within six months, up from 7.8% in FFY 2004 but down from 13.3% in FFY 2007. The national standard is 6.1% or fewer.¹¹

Night-to-Night Placements

◆ Night-to-night placements refer to the temporary nightly placement of children in the care of DCYF who are awaiting longer-term placements. In 2007 (excluding September and October) there were 163 children placed in night-to-night placements for a total of 179 bed nights. There were no night-to-night placements in 2008.¹²

Shelter Care

◆ The number of children in the care and custody of the state who were in shelter care decreased from 106 on December 31, 2007 to 83 on December 31, 2008. Of the 83 children in DCYF shelter care on January 5, 2009, 22 were young children under age six; 12 were ages six to 13; and 49 were ages 14 and older.¹³

References

¹ Harden, B. J. (2004). Safety and stability for foster children: A developmental perspective. *The Future of Children*, 14(1), 31-47.
² Lutz, L. (2003). *Achieving Permanence for Children in the Child Welfare System: Pioneering Possibilities Amidst Daunting Challenges*. Retrieved March 3, 2009 from www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcppl/downloads/achieving-permanence.pdf

³ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2004). *Final report: Rhode Island child and family services review*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

(continued on page 159)