

# 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 while awaiting permanent placement. Out-of-home placements include foster homes, placement with a relative or friend, group home, shelter care, residential treatment, and medical facility. Permanent placement includes reunification with the family, adoption or guardianship.

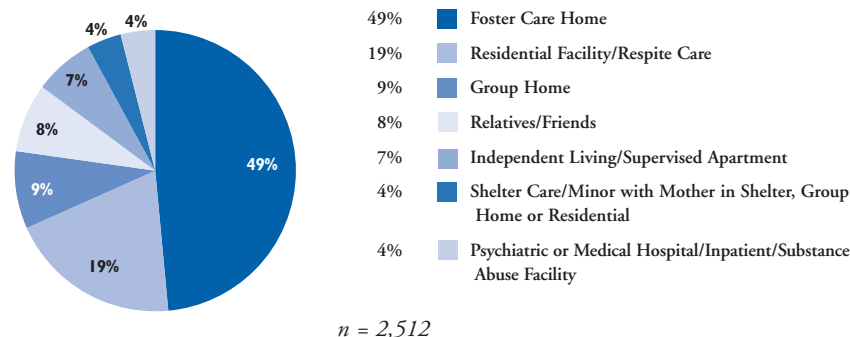
## SIGNIFICANCE

Children need stability, permanency and safety in order to develop and flourish. Removal from the home may be necessary for the child's safety and well-being; however, it is disruptive and can be traumatic for both the child and the family.<sup>1</sup> Children who have been abused or neglected are particularly vulnerable and in need of a safe, stable and permanent environment which provides for their well-being. Yet children in out-of-home care frequently remain in temporary placements for extended periods of time, experience multiple placements, lose contact with family members, friends and neighborhoods, and may experience recurrence of abuse.<sup>2</sup> Older children may linger in care until adulthood.

Long-term stays in temporary out-of-home placement can negatively affect children, causing emotional, behavioral or educational problems that adversely affect their future well-being and self-sufficiency.<sup>3</sup> Children in out-of-home care suffer more frequent and more serious medical, developmental, and mental health problems than nearly any other group of children. Effective strategies to promote the optimal development of children in out-of-home placement include: assessment on system entry; a comprehensive system of care to address identified health (physical, mental, emotional, behavioral) and educational needs immediately; family involvement; training for caregivers; coordinated services and funding strategies; and a managed care model that addresses the complex needs of children in the child welfare system.<sup>4,5,6</sup>

National research indicates that youth in state custody have high aspirations, including a college education, but experience serious educational difficulties. Adequate remedial and special education services are needed to ensure that these youth maximize their potential and are prepared for the employment market.<sup>7</sup>

**Children in Out-of Home Placement, December 2003**



◆ As of December 31, 2003, there were 2,512 children under age 21 in the care of DCYF who were in out-of-home placement.

◆ The total caseload of DCYF on December 31, 2003 was 8,245 including: 2,932 children living in their home (with a parent, guardian or step-parent) under DCYF supervision; 2,457 children in adoption placements, most receiving subsidized adoption supports; 190 children/youth in detention at the Training School or in prison; 24 children in out-of-state placement/placement with another agency; and 10 children in Job Corps or other placement.

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), 2003.

## Night-to-Night Placements

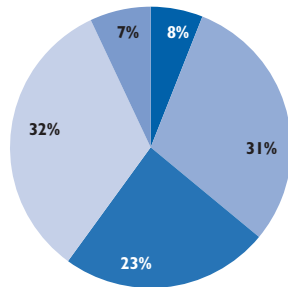
◆ Night-to-night placements refer to the temporary nightly placement of youths under the care of DCYF who are awaiting longer-term placements. Night-to-night placements are the subject of ongoing litigation between the Department of Children, Youth and Families and the Office of the Child Advocate, which seeks to minimize such placements.

◆ In 2003, an average of 13 children per week were placed in night-to-night placements for a total of 1,547 bed nights i.e., instances when a night-to-night bed is occupied by a child and paid for by DCYF. In 2002, an average of 18 children per week were placed in night-to-night placements for a total of 2,322 bed nights.<sup>8</sup>

## Children in Foster Care Homes, Rhode Island, 2004

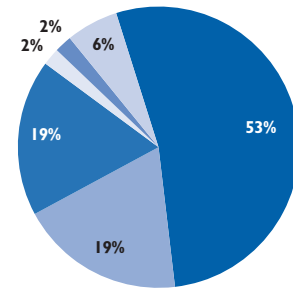
### By Age

8%	Under Age 1
31%	Ages 1 to 5
23%	Ages 6 to 11
32%	Ages 12 to 17
7%	Over Age 18



### By Race and Ethnicity

53%	White
19%	Black
19%	Hispanic
2%	Asian
2%	American Indian/Alaskan/ Pacific Islander
6%	Unknown/Multiracial/Other



*n* = 1,246

◆ As of January 2, 2004, there were 1,246 children in foster care homes. Of these, 531 (43%) were in non-relative foster homes, 575 (41%) were in relative foster homes, 132 (11%) were in the care of private agencies and eleven (1%) were in respite care. In Rhode Island and nationally there is an ongoing shortage of foster parents.<sup>9,10</sup>

Source: Rhode Island Department of Children, Youth and Families, Rhode Island Children's Information System (RICHIST), January 2004.

### References for Indicator

<sup>1</sup> Protecting Children from Abuse and Neglect. (Spring 1998). *The Future of Children*, Vol. 8, No.1 (Spring 1998). Los Altos, CA: Center for the Future of Children, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation.

<sup>2</sup> *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998, Annual Report*. (2000). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>3</sup> Lovejoy, Anna (October 2000). *A Place to Call Home: State Efforts to Increase Adoptions and Improve Foster Care Placements*. Washington, DC: National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices.

<sup>4</sup> *Meeting the Health Care Needs of Children in the Foster Care System*. (2002). Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Child Development Center.

<sup>5</sup> Knitzer, J. et al. (2001). *Improving the Odds for Healthy Development of Young Children in Foster Care*. New York, NY: National Center for Children in Poverty.

<sup>6</sup> Vandivere, S. et al. (December 2003). *Children in Foster Homes: How Are They Faring?* (Research Brief). Washington, DC: Child Trends.

◆ The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA) recognizes that the broad goals of child protection systems are child safety, permanency and well-being. Preventing the recurrence of abuse or neglect, ensuring the safety of children in out-of-home placement, and maximizing stability of placements are the paramount concerns which the Act seeks to address.

◆ Of the 1,532 Rhode Island children who were victims of abuse or neglect during the first six months of federal fiscal year 2002 (whether or not they were removed from the home), 10.2% (156) experienced one or more recurrences of abuse or neglect within 6 months, down from 12.6% in 1998.<sup>11</sup>

◆ In FY 2002, 18% of the 1,797 children who had been in out-of-home care for less than one year had experienced 3 or more placements, down from 27% in FY 1998. Three or more placements were experienced by 40% of children who had been in care between 12 and 23 months, down from 47% in 1998; 53% of children who had been in care for 24-35 months experienced three or more placements (compared with 54% in 1998).<sup>12</sup>

◆ 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 child removed and placed in foster care. Once in foster care, children of color are more likely than non-Hispanic White children to remain there for longer periods of time, to receive fewer familial visits, fewer contacts with caseworkers, fewer written case plans, and fewer developmental assessments.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> McMillen, C. et al. (July/August 2003). *Educational Experiences and Aspirations of Older Youth in Foster Care in Child Welfare*, Vol. LXXXII, # 4.

<sup>8</sup> Office of the Child Advocate, January 2004.

<sup>9</sup> *Recruiting Foster Parents*. (May 2002). Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General.

<sup>10</sup> *Retaining Foster Parents*. (May 2002). Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Inspector General.

<sup>11,12</sup> *Safety, Permanency and Well-being in Rhode Island: Child Welfare Outcomes Annual Report for 2002*. (NCANDS, DCDC, AFCARS Annual Foster Care Database, FY 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002). The Consultation Center, Yale University School of Medicine, for the U.S. Department of Human Services.

<sup>13</sup> Stukes Chipungu, S. and T .B. Bent-Goodley. (Winter 2004). Meeting the Challenges of Contemporary Foster Care. *The Future of Children*, Vol. 14, No. 1.