

Facts and Statistics

In the U.S. 397,122 children are living without permanent families in the foster care system. 101,666 of these children are eligible for adoption, but nearly 32% of these children will wait over three years in foster care before being adopted.

Source: [AFCARS Report, No. 20](#)

Around the world, there are an estimated 153 million orphans who have lost one parent. There are 17,900,000 orphans who have lost both parents and are living in orphanages or on the streets and lack the care and attention required for healthy development. These children are at risk for disease, malnutrition, and death.

Source: [Childinfo](#) (UNICEF, 2011)

According to the U.S. State Department, U.S. families adopted more than 7,000 children in 2012. Last year, Americans adopted the highest number of children from China followed by Ethiopia, Ukraine, Haiti, and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Source: [United States Department of State \(FY 2013 Annual Report\)](#)

No child under three years of age should be placed in institutional care without a parent or primary caregiver, according to research from 32 European countries, including nine in-depth country studies, which considered the “risk of harm in terms of attachment disorder, developmental delay and neural atrophy in the developing brain.”

Source: [Childcentre.info \(Executive Summary\)](#)

Children raised in orphanages have an IQ 20 points lower than their peers in foster care, according to a meta-analysis of 75 studies (more than 3,800 children in 19 countries).

Source: [IQ of Children Growing Up in Children's Homes A Meta-Analysis on IQ Delays in Orphanages](#)

In 2012, 23,396 youth aged out of the U.S. foster care system without the emotional and financial support necessary to succeed. Nearly 40% had been homeless or couch surfed, nearly 60% of young men had been convicted of a crime, and only 48% were employed. 75% of women and 33% of men receive government benefits to meet basic needs. 50% of all youth who aged out were involved in substance use and 17% of the females were pregnant.

Source: [AFCARS Report, No. 20](#), [Jim Casey Youth](#)

Nearly 25% of youth aging out did not have a high school diploma or GED, and a mere 6% had finished a two- or four-year degree after aging out of foster care. One study shows 70% of all youth in foster care have the desire to attend college.

Source: [Midwest Evaluation of the Adult Functioning of Former Foster Youth](#)

As of 2012, more than 58,000 children in the U.S. foster care system were placed in institutions or group homes, not in traditional foster homes.

Source: [AFCARS Report, No. 20](#)

States spent a mere 1.2-1.3% of available federal funds on parent recruitment and training services even though 22% of children in foster care had adoption as their goal.

Source: [Adoption Advocate No. 6: Parent Recruitment and Training: A Crucial, Neglected Child](#)

Three years is the average length of time a child in foster care waits to be adopted. Roughly 55% of these children have had three or more placements. An earlier study found that 33% of children had changed elementary schools five or more times, losing relationships and falling behind educationally.

Source: [AFCARS Report, No. 20](#)

Adopted children make-up roughly 2% of the total child population under the age of 18, but 11% of all adolescents referred for therapy have been adopted. Post-adoption services are important to all types of adoption, whether foster care adoption, international adoption, or domestic infant adoption.

Source: [Behavior Problems and Mental Health Contacts in Adopted, Foster and Nonadopted Children](#)