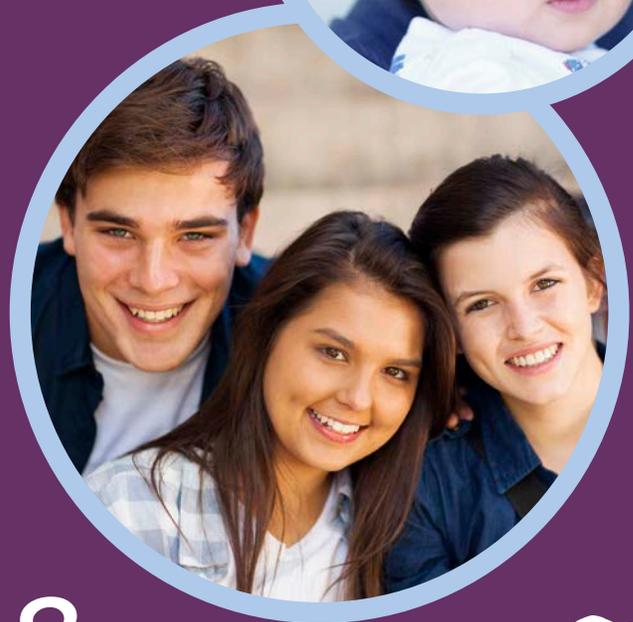




# Child Welfare Outcomes 2016

## Report to Congress



SAFETY

PERMANENCY

WELL-BEING



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau



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<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/cwo-2016>

For more information contact [info@childwelfare.gov](mailto:info@childwelfare.gov)



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# Executive Summary

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report is created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to meet requirements of Section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA).<sup>1</sup> ASFA created Section 479A of the Social Security Act (the Act) to require HHS to issue an annual report that assesses state performance in operating child protection and child welfare programs under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.<sup>2</sup> *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998* was the first Report created in the Child Welfare Outcomes series of Reports. The present Report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016*, is the 17th Report since the series' inception.

The Child Welfare Outcomes Reports provide information on national performance as well as the performance of individual states in seven outcome categories.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the first Report, the Children's Bureau within HHS' Administration for Children and Families identified these outcomes in close consultation with state and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, state legislators, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes reflect a consensus of these groups regarding important performance objectives for child welfare practice. The following are the seven national outcomes established by HHS through this consultation process:

- Outcome 1:** Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- Outcome 2:** Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- Outcome 3:** Increase permanency for children in foster care
- Outcome 4:** Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry
- Outcome 5:** Reduce time in foster care to adoption
- Outcome 6:** Increase placement stability
- Outcome 7:** Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

In addition to reporting on state performance in these outcome categories, this Report also includes findings of analyses conducted across states and across time. Data for most of the measures in this Report come from two national child welfare-related data collections—the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

## CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report presents data on child welfare-related contextual factors relevant to understanding and interpreting state performance on the outcome measures. The following is a summary of the 2016 data for these contextual factors.<sup>4</sup>

### *Foster care information overview*

- Nationally, there were approximately 437,000 children in foster care on the last day of 2016. During that year, an estimated 274,000 children entered foster care, and 250,000 children exited foster care. Among the states, the foster care entry rate ranged from 0.5 children per 1,000 in a state's population to 12.3 children per 1,000 in a state's population.<sup>5</sup>
- Between 2007 and 2016, the approximate number of children in care on the last day of the fiscal year (FY) decreased by 10.5 percent, from 488,000 to 437,000. However, the short-term trend shows a 10.1-percent increase from 397,000 in 2012 to 437,000 in 2016.<sup>6</sup>
- Of the children that exited foster care in 2016, approximately 222,000 (88.9 percent) were discharged to a permanent home (i.e., they were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship).

<sup>1</sup> See appendix A for the current specifications of Section 479A of the Social Security Act, as created by ASFA and amended by Pub. L. 112–34, Pub. L. 113–183, and Pub. L. 115–123. Pub. L. 113–183 required the reporting of data on children placed in a child care institution or other home setting outside of a foster family home to begin in FY 2016. Pub. L. 115–123 further amended these requirements, adding some elements not collected in AFCARS. *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016* was completed before the enactment of Pub. L. 115–123 and therefore, this information is not included in this Report. Beginning with *Child Welfare Outcomes 2017*, future Reports will include the limited information available in AFCARS related to children placed in a group home or institution.

<sup>2</sup> Title IV-E has been amended on several occasions. Its funds support foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance. Title IV-B provides preventative and protective services for children. For more information on policies and guidance provided to states, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/laws-policies/policy-program-issuances>.

<sup>3</sup> For the purposes of this Report, the designation of "state" in the Report includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the Report provides information on a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this Report are for federal fiscal years (October 1–September 30). Additionally, unless otherwise specified, the data used in this Report are for federal fiscal year 2016.

<sup>5</sup> The foster care entry rate is calculated by dividing the total number of children entering foster care in a state by the total child population in that state and multiplying the resulting number by 1,000.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, see *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY 2007–FY 2016* on the Children's Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>. The data used in that report were updated as of October 2017.

## Characteristics of child victims

- During 2016, approximately 672,000 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> The overall national child victim rate was 9.1 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.<sup>9</sup> State child victim rates varied dramatically, ranging from 1.6 child victims per 1,000 children to 23.3 child victims per 1,000 children.<sup>10</sup>

## STATE PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOME MEASURES

This Report includes a synopsis of key findings on the 12 measures established to assess performance on the seven national outcomes identified above. These measures are described in detail in appendix B. For all measures, national performance is determined by median performance across states that meet data-quality thresholds. Table 1 at the end of the executive summary displays these measures and their medians.<sup>11</sup>

State performances in 2016 for outcome measures referenced in this executive summary include only those states for which adequate data are available for 2016. National performance over time includes only those states for which adequate data are available for 2012–2016. Change in state performance over time is assessed by calculating a percent change in performance on the measures.<sup>12</sup> Consistent with HHS’ historical approach to the analyses in these Reports, a percent change of 5.0 or greater in either direction (i.e., positive or negative) is used as a general indicator that meaningful change in performance on the outcome measures occurred. Therefore, for the purposes of the analyses presented in this Report, if the percent change in performance from 2012 to 2016 was less than 5.0 in either direction, the determination is that there was “no change” in performance.

### Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect

- In 2016, state performance varied considerably with regard to the percentage of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period (measure 1.1, range=0.8 percent to 13.1 percent; median=5.1 percent).
- States with higher child victim rates tended to have higher maltreatment recurrence rates within a 6-month period (Pearson’s  $r=0.60$ ).<sup>13</sup> In addition, consistent with previous Reports, states with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect (as opposed to other forms of maltreatment) also had some tendency to have a moderately high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson’s  $r=0.45$ ).
- National performance with regard to the recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1) did not change in 2016 (median=5.1 percent) compared to 2012 (median=5.1 percent) and remained fairly stagnant in the years in between, fluctuating no more than 0.2 percent from this median.

### Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care

- In 2016, the national median performance with regard to the maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1) was 0.22 percent but ranged from 0.00 percent to 3.07 percent.<sup>14</sup>
- Since 2012, the percentage of children that experienced maltreatment while in foster care (measure 2.1) decreased 35.3 percent, from 0.34 percent to 0.22 percent, with nearly half of states (46 percent) demonstrating an improvement in performance.

### Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care

- In 2016, states were mostly successful in achieving permanency (i.e., discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship) for all children exiting foster care (measure 3.1), with a median performance of 89.5 percent.

<sup>7</sup> This Report uses a unique count for child victims, which tallies a child only once regardless of the number of times the child was found to be a victim during the reporting year.

<sup>8</sup> For the purposes of this Report, a “victim of child maltreatment” is defined as a child for whom an incident of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. This includes a child who died of child abuse or neglect. Prior to 2015, children with dispositions of “alternative response victim” were also included as victims. It is important to note that the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports use the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which often is reported in the Child Maltreatment reports. The total number of child victims reported in this Report is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

<sup>9</sup> The national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the total number of child victims (671,622) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS data (73,642,285) and multiplying the resulting number by 1,000. This calculation includes children under the age of 18.

<sup>10</sup> A state’s rate of child victims is defined as the number of child victims reported to NCANDS per 1,000 children in the state’s population.

<sup>11</sup> In this Report, two separate national medians were computed for each measure. In the 2016 Range of State Performance tables, national medians are calculated using data from all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds in 2016 only. However, in the Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time tables, national medians are calculated only using data from the states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds for all the relevant FYs (2012–2016). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Unless stated otherwise, comparisons of medians between years use the latter calculation. Therefore, the number of states (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may vary slightly.

<sup>12</sup> Percent change is calculated by subtracting the “old” data from the “new” data, dividing that result by the old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, median performance on measure 3.1 was 87.5 percent in 2012 and 89.6 percent in 2016, and so the resulting increase is 2.4 percent  $\{[(89.6-87.5)/87.5] \times 100=2.4\}$ .

<sup>13</sup> The strength of relationships in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is assessed using correlation coefficients, specifically Pearson’s  $r$ , which can range in value from  $-1$  to  $+1$ .

<sup>14</sup> Due to the relatively few cases of child maltreatment in foster care, performance on this measure is presented using two decimal places to improve comparability.

- States were less successful in achieving permanent homes for children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2, median=82.2 percent), but national performance has improved each year since 2012, increasing 5.5 percent overall.<sup>15</sup>
- States continue to struggle in achieving permanency for children exiting foster care who entered care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3, median=65.3 percent).
- The median percentage of children who emancipated from foster care who were age 12 or younger when they entered care (measure 3.4) has declined 28.4 percent since 2012, with 84 percent of states demonstrating improved performance on this measure.

#### ***Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry***

- The 2016 data indicate that, in many states, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. The median percentage across states for reunifications occurring in less than 12 months (measure 4.1) was 66.0 percent.
- National performance with regard to achieving timely reunifications remained fairly static between 2012 and 2016, but more states showed a decline in performance (21 states) than an improvement (11 states).
- States continued to improve on minimizing reentry into foster care (measure 4.2). Of all children who entered foster care during 2016, a median of 6.8 percent reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. A majority of states (59 percent) showed improvement on this measure from 2012–2016, and the national median decreased 13.8 percent during the same time period.

#### ***Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption***

- States continued to struggle with achieving timely adoptions, with a median of 3.6 percent of children discharged to a finalized adoption within 12 months of the latest removal (measure 5.1a). Additionally, the majority of states (63 percent) declined in performance between 2012 and 2016.
- For adoptions occurring at least 12 months but less than 24 months from entry into foster care (measure 5.1b), national performance remained stable between 2012 (30.2 percent) and 2016 (29.1 percent).

#### ***Outcome 6: Increase placement stability***

- This Report defines placement setting stability as a child having had two or fewer placement settings in a single foster care episode. In 2016, for children in foster care for less than 12 months, the majority experienced no more than two placement settings (measure 6.1a, median=84.3 percent).
- States were less successful in achieving placement stability the longer a child spent in foster care. The median across states for children who were in care between 12 and 24 months was 65.4 percent, and it was 39.3 percent for children in care at least 24 months.
- Between 2012 and 2016, states showed significant improvement in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for at least 24 months (measure 6.1c), increasing 15.0 percent from 33.9 percent to 39.0 percent. Additionally, the majority (71 percent) of states demonstrated improvement on this measure.

#### ***Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions***

- For half the states, 3.3 percent or less of children entering foster care under the age of 12 were placed in group homes or institutions in 2016 (measure 7.1). Only four states reported more than 10.0 percent of these young children being placed in group homes or institutions.
- Overall, states continued to demonstrate improvement on this measure, decreasing from 4.4 percent in 2012 to 3.3 percent in 2016—a 25.0-percent decline. During this 5-year span, 29 states (57 percent) showed an improvement in performance, compared to 18 states (35 percent) that showed a decline.

<sup>15</sup> For the purpose of AFCARS, a diagnosed disability includes mental retardation, visual or hearing impairment, physical disability, emotional disturbance, or other medically diagnosed conditions requiring special care. For more information on the definitions and requirements for a disability, see *AFCARS Technical Bulletin #2: Disability Information*, revised in February 2012, at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-tb2>.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

In reviewing the key findings in all seven outcome areas, it is clear there are both areas of strength and areas in need of improvement with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children who come into contact with state child welfare systems. While AFCARS and NCANDS data provide some limited initial insight into many of these issues, all of these areas deserve additional investigation in order to gain further understanding and move the child welfare field forward. Areas needing additional attention include the following:

- The number of children in foster care has increased for the fourth consecutive year. States should review the effectiveness of current programs and policies directed toward safely reducing the number of children in care.
- States continued to be less successful in finding permanent homes for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 compared to those in the general foster care population. Additionally, the median state performance has shown minimal change since 2012. Agencies should review their data to consider what additional barriers may be preventing older youth from being placed in permanent homes.
- Between 2012 and 2016, state performance on the measure related to achieving timely reunifications remained mostly unchanged. However, nearly twice as many states demonstrated a decline in performance as opposed to an improvement. For states that continue to struggle in this area, a careful review of specific barriers would be beneficial.
- States continue to struggle with achieving timely adoptions. For children in care less than 12 months, the majority of states declined in achieving timely adoptions between 2012 and 2016, as reflected in the national median decreasing 15.9 percent during that period. Additionally, for children in care between 12 and 24 months, there was no significant change in performance over the 5-year span.
- States have been mostly successful in achieving stable placement settings for children in foster care less than 12 months. While the national performance with regards to youth in care longer than 12 months continues to be low, there are signs of significant improvement in performance over the last 5 years.
- The national percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions has significantly declined since 2012. However, over a third of states showed a decline in performance. It would be useful to determine what specific strategies may assist states that continue to struggle in this area.

Data and analyses presented throughout this Report offer additional details regarding the foster care population and overall national performance on the seven outcomes measures. Outcomes-based visuals in the Report display both single-year performance and state performance over time from 2012 to 2016.

**Table 1. Outcome Measures' Median State Performance, 2012–2016**

Outcome Measures <sup>16</sup>	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=51)*	5.1%	5.3%	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%
Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff? (N=48)*	0.34%	0.33%	0.27%	0.27%	0.22%
Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=51)	87.5%	89.3%	89.4%	89.4%	89.6%
Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=47)	77.9%	78.5%	79.0%	80.1%	82.2%
Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=51)	65.8%	65.6%	64.3%	66.2%	65.2%
Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care during the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=51)*	23.6%	22.5%	20.0%	18.9%	16.9%
Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=51)	65.5%	67.4%	66.4%	67.8%	66.1%
Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=51)*	8.0%	8.5%	7.3%	7.2%	6.9%
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from foster care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=51)	4.4%	3.2%	4.1%	3.3%	3.7%
Measure 5.1b: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care at least 12 months but less than 24 months from the date the latest removal from home? (N=51)	30.2%	31.3%	29.8%	30.8%	29.1%
Measure 6.1a: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=51)	85.1%	86.2%	86.2%	85.7%	84.0%
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=51)	64.1%	64.5%	65.4%	63.7%	65.0%
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=51)	33.9%	33.9%	35.1%	35.9%	39.0%
Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or an institution? (N=51)*	4.4%	3.9%	4.1%	3.8%	3.3%

\*For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

## CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES DATA SITE

Additional child welfare-related context data and state data regarding the seven national outcome measures are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site, which is available at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. The Child Welfare Outcomes data site allows for significantly faster release of these data than is possible via the publication of the full Report. The data site features AFCARS and NCANDS data that have been reviewed and approved by the states for inclusion in the Report and that are updated annually.

With the data site, users have the ability to conduct the following activities:

- View one state's data or simultaneously compare data for multiple states, including by Administration for Children and Families region
- Compare data for a single state across multiple years
- View state context, demographic, and outcome data in tables grouped by type of data
- View additional context and demographic data for states not included in the Report, including two distinct breakdowns of race and ethnicity data
- Choose to view data in a table or graph
- Export the data into a variety of formats, including copying or printing customized data directly from the site, exporting data into Excel, and saving data as a PDF or CSV file
- Search for data by topic of interest
- View static state data pages previously included in the full Reports

For questions or more information about the Child Welfare Outcomes data site, please contact the Children's Bureau at [CBDataTeam@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:CBDataTeam@acf.hhs.gov).

<sup>16</sup> Data for this table include all states that met the relevant data-quality criteria for all years.

# Introduction to the Child Welfare Outcomes, Data, and Analysis

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report is created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to meet the requirements of Section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA). ASFA created Section 479A of the Social Security Act (the Act), later amended by Pub. L. 112–34, Pub. L. 113–183, and Pub. L. 115–123, to require HHS to issue an annual report that assesses state performance in operating child protection and child welfare programs under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.<sup>17</sup> <sup>18</sup> The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act, Pub. L. 112–34, requires the Child Welfare Outcomes Report to include state information on monthly caseworker visits. The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act, Pub. L. 113–183, requires data on children in foster care who are pregnant or parenting or who were placed in a child care institution or other home setting outside of a foster family home. The Family First Prevention Services Act, Pub. L. 115–123, amended the requirements for reporting on children placed in a child care institution or other home setting outside of a foster family home. *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998* was the first Report created in the Child Welfare Outcomes series of Reports. The present Report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016*, is the 17th Report since the series' inception.

## OUTCOME MEASURES

The Child Welfare Outcomes Reports provide information on national performance as well as the performance of individual states in seven outcome categories.<sup>19</sup> Prior to the first Report, the Children's Bureau within the HHS Administration for Children and Families identified these outcomes in close consultation with state and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, state legislators, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes reflect a consensus of these groups regarding important performance objectives for child welfare practice. The following are the seven national outcomes established by HHS through this consultation process:

- Outcome 1:** Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- Outcome 2:** Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- Outcome 3:** Increase permanency for children in foster care
- Outcome 4:** Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry
- Outcome 5:** Reduce time in foster care to adoption
- Outcome 6:** Increase placement stability
- Outcome 7:** Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

While the measures used in this Report share some similarity with the data indicators used as part of HHS' Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process, the measures are not the same.<sup>20</sup> The CFSRs were authorized through the 1994 amendments to the Act and require HHS to review state child and family service programs to ensure conformity with federal child welfare requirements in Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act. The reviews are also used to determine the experiences of children and families as they are engaged in child welfare services and to assist states in enhancing their capacity to help children and families achieve positive outcomes. The reviews focus on outcomes for children and families in the areas of safety, permanency, and well-being, and one aspect of this review process uses a defined set of data indicators to assess performance. Additional information about the CFSRs, including information on the data indicators used, can be found on the Children's Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/monitoring/child-family-services-reviews>. Readers should exercise caution when comparing performance on the Child Welfare Outcomes Report measures and CFSR performance because the measures differ in a number of respects, including data-quality inclusion and exclusion criteria and differences in calculations.

## CONTEXT DATA

This Report presents data pertaining to state performance on the outcome measures as well as on certain child welfare-related contextual factors. These context data are relevant to understanding and interpreting performance on the outcome measures featured in these Reports. The contextual factors include the following:

<sup>17</sup> See appendix A for the current specifications in Section 479A of the Social Security Act, as created by ASFA and amended by Pub. L. 112–34, Pub. L. 113–183, and Pub. L. 115–123.

<sup>18</sup> Title IV-E has been amended on several occasions. Its funds support foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance. Title IV-B provides preventative and protective services for children. For more information on policies and guidance provided to states, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/laws-policies/policy-program-issuances>.

<sup>19</sup> For the purposes of this Report, the designation of "state" in the Report includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the Report provides information on up to a total of 52 states, depending on the number of states that submitted adequate data for a particular measure.

<sup>20</sup> See appendix B for the full list of outcomes and measures.

- Estimated child population statistics, including the total number of children under age 18 and child poverty data<sup>21</sup>
- Caseworker visits data for children in foster care, including the percentage of children in foster care visited monthly by their caseworker and the percentage of monthly visits occurring in the home of the child<sup>22</sup>
- The numbers of children in foster care at the start of the fiscal year (FY), children in care at the end of the FY, and children who entered and exited foster care during the FY
- The number of children waiting for adoption at the end of the FY
- The number of children for whom an adoption was finalized during the FY

## DATA SOURCES

Data for the original Child Welfare Outcomes measures and the majority of the context data in this Report come from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).<sup>23</sup> States submit NCANDS data voluntarily, but they are required by regulation to submit AFCARS data. The specific NCANDS and AFCARS data elements used to calculate each outcome measure are outlined in appendix D.

Data for the caseworker visits requirements are not part of NCANDS and AFCARS, but states are required submit them separately each December, per Section 479A of the Act. Some states elected to use a sampling procedure approved by the Children’s Bureau rather than reporting information on all children in foster care.

This Report also uses child population data, which are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau on an annual basis. Total child population estimates are derived by calculating expected population change from the most recent decennial census data. Child poverty data are from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, an ongoing survey that annually samples a small percentage of the population to provide communities with information relevant to their service provision and investments.<sup>24</sup>

The data used in this Report may vary slightly from other sources if a state resubmitted data after HHS prepared the data for this Report.<sup>25</sup>

### *National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System*

NCANDS is a federally sponsored effort that encourages states to collect and analyze data pertaining to children who come to the attention of public child protective services agencies as alleged victims of abuse or neglect. NCANDS was a result of a directive in the 1988 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) to establish a national data-collection and analysis program on child abuse and neglect.<sup>26</sup> The data are submitted voluntarily by the states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (referred to collectively as the states in this report). NCANDS data are published annually in the Child Maltreatment report series.<sup>27</sup> A summary of the most recent report, Child Maltreatment 2016, is presented in appendix E.

The NCANDS Child File is a data file that states submit annually that contains detailed case information about each child who is the subject of an investigation or assessment in response to a maltreatment allegation. Any child who is associated with a report and who has received a disposition during the year is included in the Child File. Although a disposition usually refers to a finding regarding the allegation, it also can include reports that were closed without a finding.

The Child File is the primary data source for the safety-related data included in this Report. While alternate safety data sources sometimes are allowed for the purposes of the CFSRs, they are not used here.

### *Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System*

Most data included in this Report come from AFCARS.<sup>28</sup> Title IV-E agencies are required to submit case-level information to AFCARS twice a year on all children who are under their care and responsibility for placement, children who are covered by an interagency agreement with another public agency that receives Title IV-E funds, and children who have been adopted with Title IV-E agency involvement. The requirements for AFCARS are codified in federal regulation at 45 CFR 1355.40.

<sup>21</sup> These data come from the U.S. Census Bureau and reflect estimates rather than actual numbers. These data are based on the calendar year and not the fiscal year.

<sup>22</sup> Section 479A(6) of the Act requires HHS to report data on caseworker visits in this Report. Requirements for caseworker visits data were revised in Pub. L. 112–34 and are currently defined under Sections 424(f)(1) and (2) of the Act. Beginning in 2012, states began using the revised methodology for reporting caseworker visits data, which is outlined in Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01, which was issued on January 6, 2012. It is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi1201>. For more information, see appendix C.

<sup>23</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this Report are for federal fiscal years (October 1–September 30). Additionally, unless otherwise specified, the data used in this Report are for federal fiscal year 2016.

<sup>24</sup> Additional information on the methodology used to calculate child population estimates can be found on the Census Bureau’s website at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/popest/technical-documentation/methodology.html>. Additional information on the methodology used to collect and calculate child poverty data can be found on the American Community Survey section of the Census Bureau’s website at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/>.

<sup>25</sup> For this Report, AFCARS data were prepared on July 5, 2017; NCANDS data were prepared on July 7, 2017; Census data were prepared on September 21, 2017; and caseworker visits data were prepared on May 15, 2017.

<sup>26</sup> More information about CAPTA can be found on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/about-capta-a-legislative-history>.

<sup>27</sup> Some results presented in this Report may not be precisely the same as those presented in the Child Maltreatment reports due to differences in data inclusion and exclusion criteria.

<sup>28</sup> See appendix F for AFCARS Report No. 24.

## DATA ANALYSES IN THE REPORT

Chapters II through V of this Report present key findings of analyses conducted across states. These findings pertain to national performance on outcome measures in 2016, variations across states in performance, changes in performance over time, and the relationships between contextual factors and state performance. In this Report, national performance on outcome measures is reported as the median performance across states, unless otherwise specified.

### Calculation of national medians

In this Report, two separate national medians were computed for each measure. In the 2016 Range of State Performance tables, national medians are calculated using data from all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds in 2016 only.<sup>29</sup> However, in the Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time tables, national medians are calculated only using data from the states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds for all the relevant FYs (2012–2016). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Unless stated otherwise, comparisons of medians between years use the latter calculation. Therefore, the number of states (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may vary slightly.

### Percent change calculations

Change in state performance over time is assessed by calculating a percent change in performance on the measures.<sup>30</sup> Consistent with HHS' historical approach to the analyses in these Reports, a percent change of 5.0 or greater in either direction (i.e., positive or negative) is used as a general indicator that meaningful change in performance on the outcome measures occurred. Therefore, for purposes of the analyses presented in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, if the percent change in performance from 2012 to 2016 was less than 5.0 in either direction, the determination is that there was “no change” in performance.

The concept of percent change over time is used in this Report to highlight the fact that some changes may appear small in absolute terms but represent large proportional changes.

### Correlations

The strength of relationships between measures and context variables is assessed using correlation coefficients, specifically Pearson's *r*. This coefficient can range from –1 to +1. In the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, these coefficients are interpreted in accordance with J. P. Guilford's suggested interpretations for correlation coefficient values:<sup>31</sup>

- A coefficient of 0.0 to plus or minus 0.20 indicates a very low or negligible correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus 0.20–0.40 indicates a low correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus 0.40–0.70 indicates a moderate correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus 0.70–0.90 indicates a high correlation.
- A coefficient of plus or minus 0.90–1.00 indicates a very high correlation.

## THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT DATA SITE

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report data site (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>) is a web-based tool that allows users to view Child Welfare Outcomes Report data and create customized outputs according to individual needs. Users can isolate and view the variables in which they are most interested, compare data across states and years, choose from a variety of different data-output displays, and export data reports into Excel and printer-friendly formats. The website also enables users to access data not currently available in the full Report, including the following:

- Estimated general child population statistics with regard to the race/ethnicity of children
- Characteristics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, maltreatment type) of child maltreatment victims
- Mean and median response times of child protective services (CPS) to allegations of maltreatment
- Characteristics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity, median length of stay) of children in foster care at the start of the FY, children in care at the end of the FY, and children who entered and exited foster care during the FY
- Characteristics (e.g., age, race/ethnicity) of children waiting for adoption and of children with finalized adoptions
- Alternate categorical breakdowns for all race/ethnicity data<sup>32</sup>

The website allows for the release of Report data in a timelier manner than is possible through the full-report publication process. Data updates to the site occur annually after the data have been reviewed by the states and prior to the release of the full Report. Site functionality is updated on a regular basis to provide users with new and increased capabilities for data use and reporting.

<sup>29</sup> See appendix G for more information on methodology and data-quality thresholds, including reasons state data are excluded from analyses.

<sup>30</sup> Percent change is calculated by subtracting the “old” data from the “new” data, dividing that result by the old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, median performance on measure 3.1 was 87.5 percent in 2012 and 89.6 percent in 2016, and so the resulting increase is 2.4 percent  $\{[(89.6-87.5)/87.5] \times 100 = 2.4\}$ .

<sup>31</sup> Guilford, J. P. (1956). *Fundamental statistics in psychology and education* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>32</sup> The traditional race and ethnicity breakdown displays non-Hispanic race categories and a category of Hispanic children of any race. The alternate breakdown treats race and ethnicity as two separate categories that are not mutually exclusive and displays race categories that are combined with a Hispanic or non-Hispanic designation.

# I: Child Welfare Outcomes Demographic Data

In addition to reporting on specific child welfare outcome measures, this Report also includes data and information on a range of child populations, including the overall national child population, state child populations, and subgroups within states. To provide context for the child welfare outcomes information contained in subsequent chapters, this chapter provides an overview of the child population under age 18, including those living in poverty, in foster care, waiting for adoption, and who have been adopted.

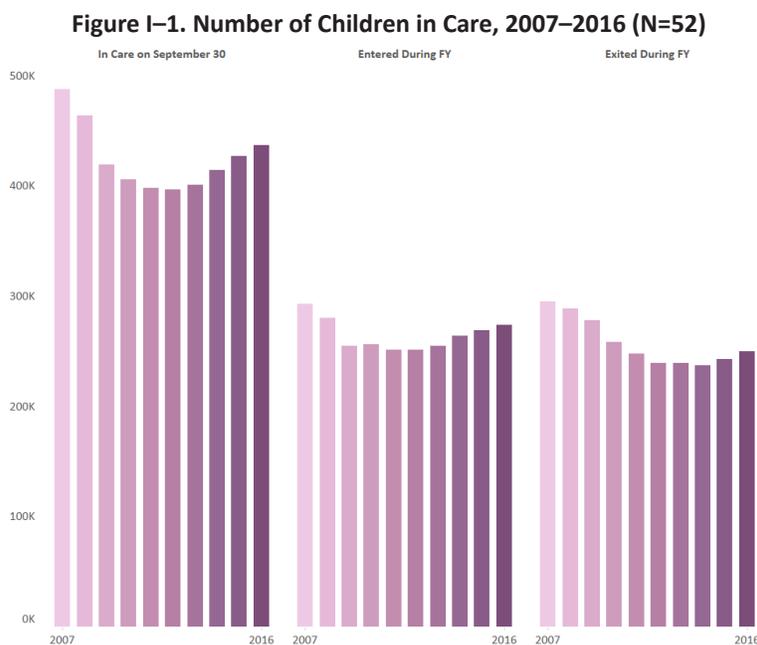
## NATIONAL CHILD POPULATION

In 2016, the total population of children under the age of 18 was estimated to be 74,338,157. The three states with the largest populations under the age of 18 were California (9,092,863), Texas (7,294,587), and New York (4,180,559). The three states with the smallest populations under the age of 18 were Vermont (118,528), the District of Columbia (120,893), and Wyoming (138,901).

Nationally, 19.5 percent of children under the age of 18 were estimated to live in poverty in 2016. Poverty rates for children varied widely across states, ranging from 7.9 percent to 56.4 percent, and 23 states (44 percent) had poverty rates above the national average. Although there is evidence of a relationship between income and child maltreatment, there was a low correlation between states' foster care entry rates and their estimated proportion of the child population living in poverty for 2016 (Pearson's  $r=-0.25$ ).<sup>33</sup>

## CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

On the last day of 2016, approximately 437,000 children were in foster care nationwide. Previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports have noted a downward trend in the number of children in foster care. However, more recent foster care data suggest that the previous decline in the number of children in foster care had leveled off by 2012 and that the number of children in foster care has been rising each year since. Figure I-1 shows an overall decline in the number of children in foster care on the last day of the FY, from 488,000 in 2007 to 437,000 in 2016—a 10.5-percent decrease. The short-term trend, however, shows a 10.1-percent increase from 397,000 in 2012 to 437,000 in 2016. As a proportion of the total child population, the percentage of children in foster care on the last day of the FY increased from 0.54 percent in 2012 to 0.59 percent in 2016. It is important to continue monitoring the recent increase in the number of children in foster care and its relationship to states' performance on the child welfare outcome measures. Note that the data displayed in the figure are from an HHS report, *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY 2007–FY 2016*, and are current as of October 2017.<sup>34</sup>



<sup>33</sup> For example, see Eckenrode, J., Smith, E. G., McCarthy, M. E., & Dineen, M. (2014). Income inequality and child maltreatment in the United States. *Pediatrics*, 133(3), 454–461. doi:10.1542/peds.2013-1707.

<sup>34</sup> The *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption: FY 2007–FY 2016* data were used for this section of the Report because they are more recent than the data used for the rest of this Report and more accurately demonstrate the significant fluctuations occurring in the foster care population over time. Due to differences in sources, these data may not be consistent with other data displayed throughout the Report. For more information, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>.

Of the children in foster care on the last day of FY 2016, about half (50.8 percent) were age 7 or younger, and 14.7 percent were age 16 or older. The national median percentages of children across states in care on the last day of FY 2016 by race/ethnicity were 0.4 percent Alaska Native/American Indian, 0.2 percent Asian, 17.5 percent Black, 0.1 percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9.1 percent Hispanic (of any race), 48.3 percent White, and 6.0 percent two or more races.<sup>35</sup> Additional data for the age and race of children in care are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. Additional information about longer term demographic trends is available in the HHS report *Recent Demographic Trends in Foster Care*.<sup>36</sup>

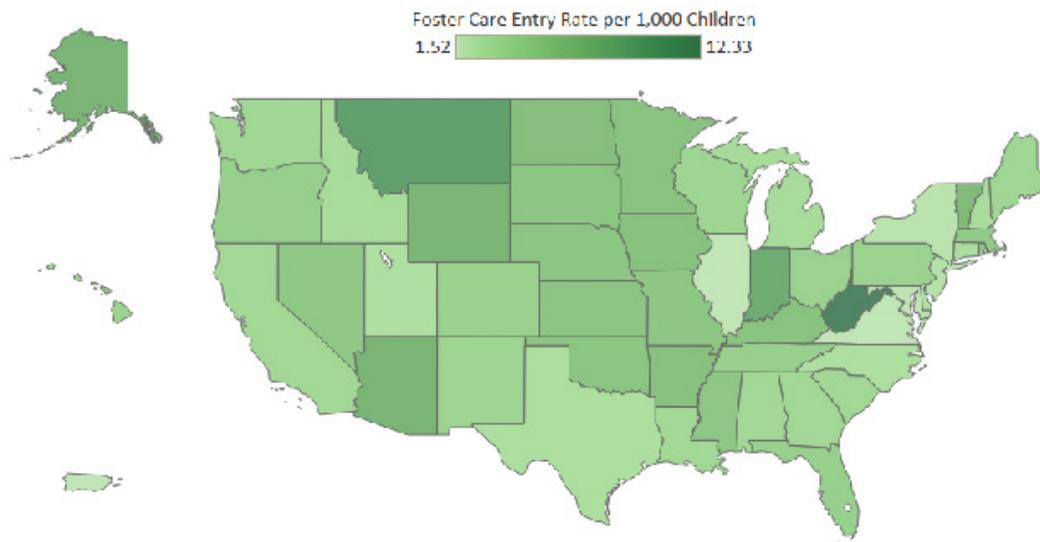
**AFCARS data show that, between 2007 and 2016, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 10.5 percent, from 488,000 to 437,000.**

## FOSTER CARE ENTRY RATES

Approximately 274,000 children entered foster care during 2016. States differed considerably with respect to both the number of children in foster care and the rate of foster care entry, defined as the number of children entering foster care per 1,000 children in the state population (figure I–2).<sup>37</sup> The foster care child entry rate ranged from 0.5 to 12.3 children per 1,000 in the population, and the median across states was 4.1 children per 1,000 children in the population—a 7.9-percent increase from the median entry rate in 2012.

The reasons for variations in the rate of foster care entry are difficult to determine. They may be due to differences across states in policies regarding under what circumstances children are removed from the home and placed in foster care. The existence and availability of services designed to support families and enable children to remain in the home also may affect the number of children who enter foster care within a state. There was a low correlation between foster care entry rates and child victim rates in 2016 (Pearson’s  $r=0.32$ ), so it is unlikely that these variations can be attributed to differences in the rates of child victims—an observation made in prior Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

**Figure I–2. Map of Foster Care Entry Rates by State, 2016 (N=52)**



## CHILDREN WAITING FOR ADOPTION AND CHILDREN ADOPTED

In 2016, approximately 118,000 children were classified as waiting for adoption.<sup>38</sup> Of those children waiting for adoption, approximately 57 percent, or 67,000 children, were from families in which the parental rights had been terminated. Approximately 57,000 children were adopted from foster care in 2016. Although the number of children waiting for adoption from 2012 to 2016 almost always exceeded the number of children adopted in all states, 12 states were able to decrease the gap by 5 percent or more over the 5-year period, as shown in table I–3 at the end of this chapter.

<sup>35</sup> Data for children with race/ethnicity listed as missing or unable to be determined are not presented.

<sup>36</sup> For more information, see *Recent Demographic Trends in Foster Care* on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-brief-trends-in-foster-care-1>.

<sup>37</sup> The foster care entry rate is calculated by dividing the total number of children entering foster care in a state by the total child population in that state and multiplying the resulting number by 1,000.

<sup>38</sup> There is no federal definition for a child “waiting for adoption.” The definition used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports includes children through age 17 who have a goal (as indicated in AFCARS) of adoption and/or whose parents’ parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents’ parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state’s own definition may differ from that used here. For the most current data, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/afcars>.

## SUMMARY

The child populations described in this chapter provide context for understanding and interpreting information on child welfare outcomes contained in subsequent chapters. Additional visualizations of select demographics described in this chapter are displayed at the end of the chapter. Additional demographic information on child populations—such as state data on race, ethnicity, and age (including those states excluded from analyses and counts due to data-quality problems)—are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Figure I-3. Estimated Child Population Under Age 18, 2016 (N=52)

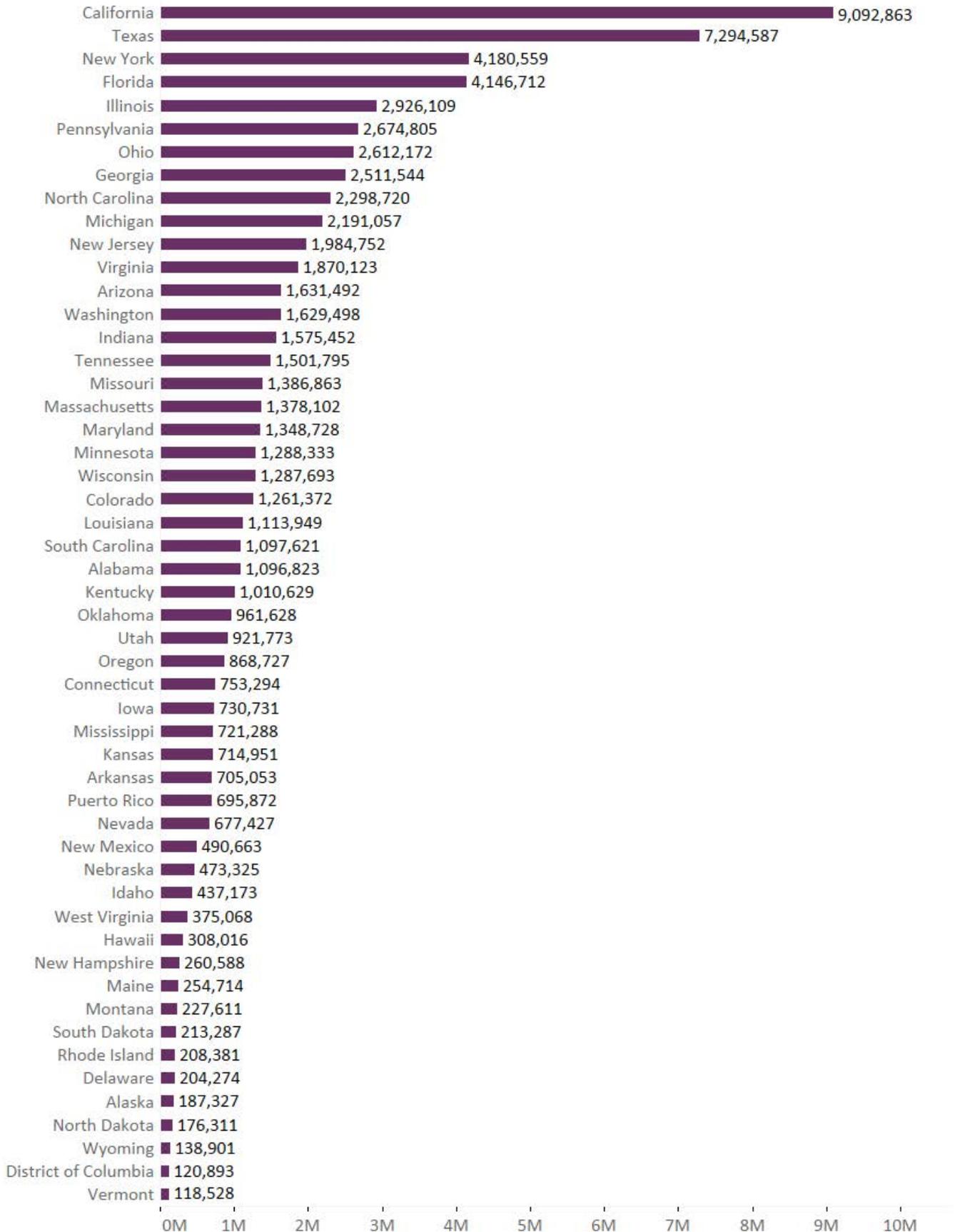
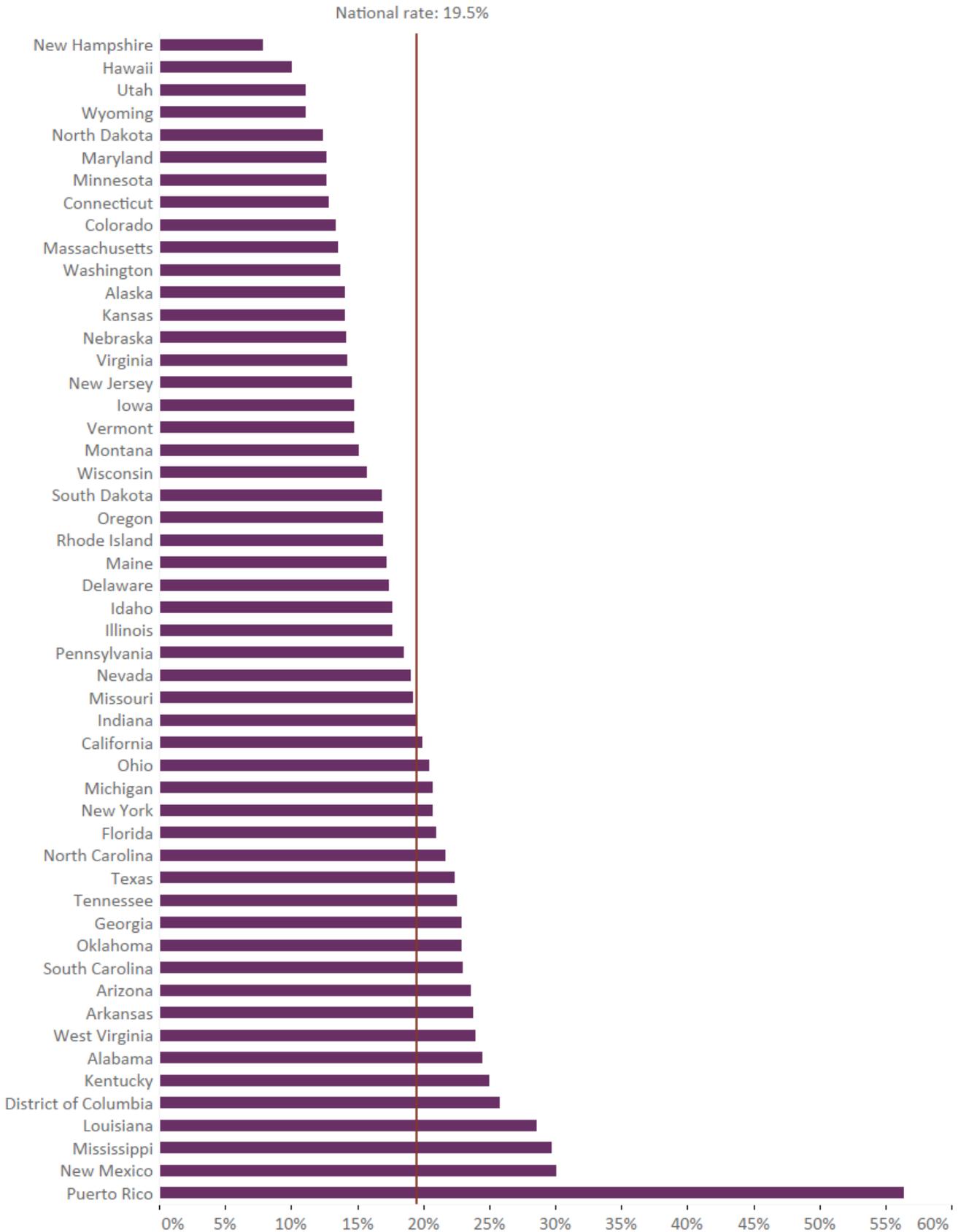
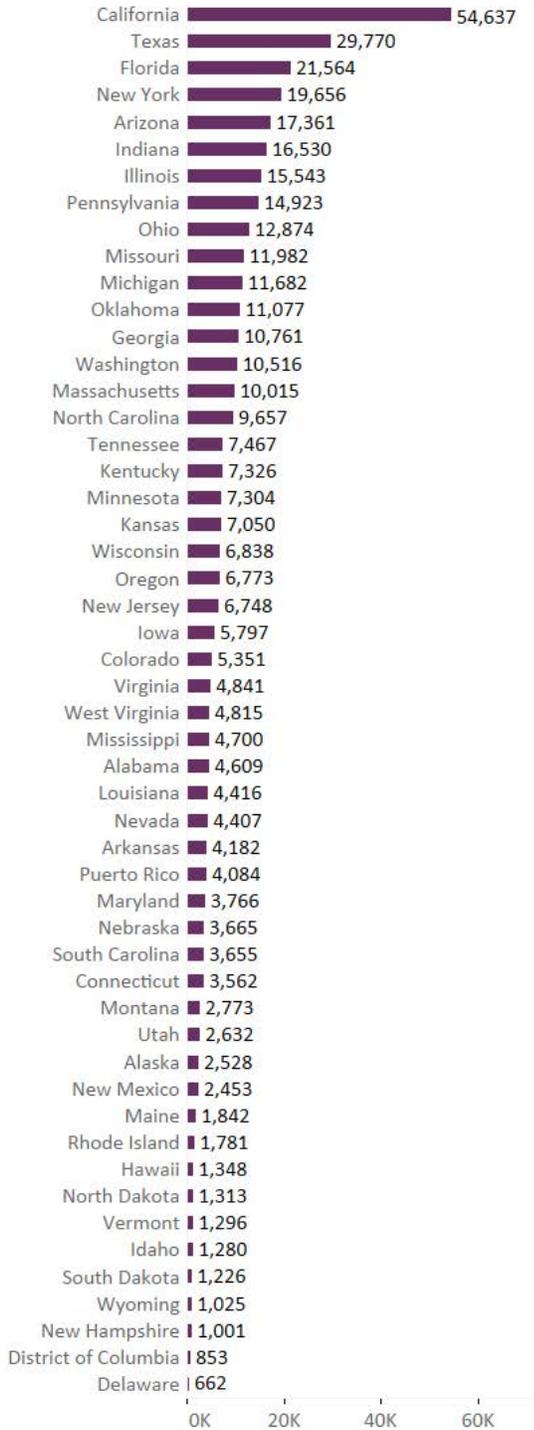


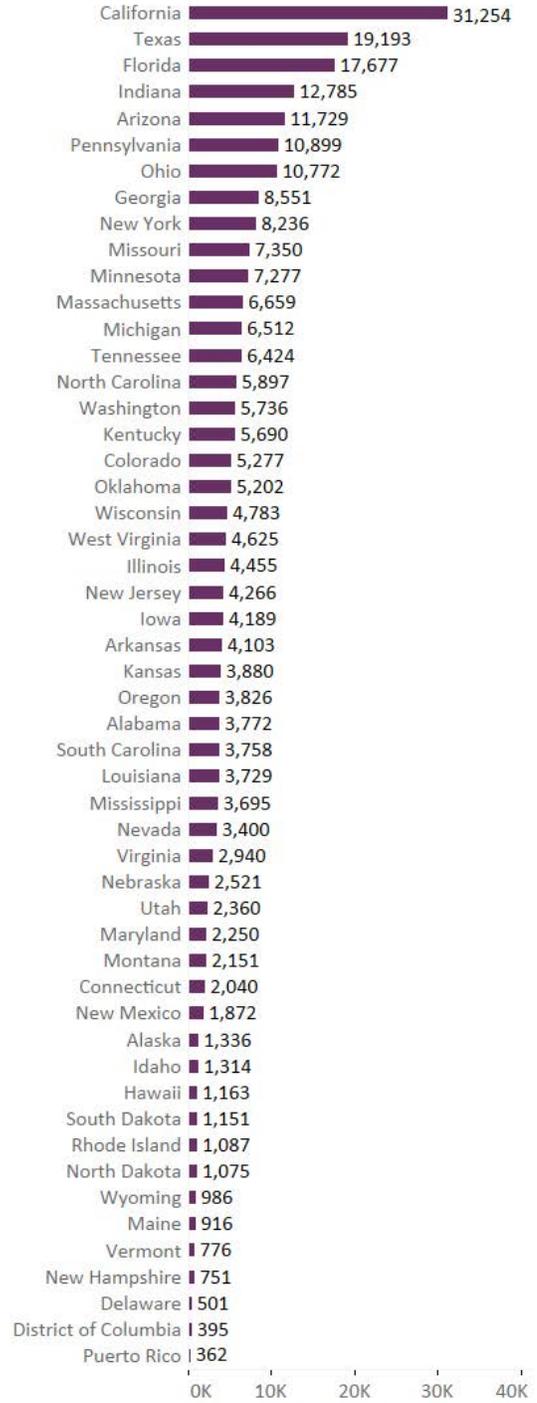
Figure I-4. Estimated Proportion of Child Population Living in Poverty, 2016 (N=52)



**Figure I-5. Number of Children in Foster Care on the First Day of the FY (10/1), 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure I-6. Number of Children Entering Foster Care in the FY, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure I-7. Number of Children Exiting Foster Care in the FY, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure I-8. Number of Children in Foster Care on the Last Day of the FY (9/30), 2016 (N=52)**

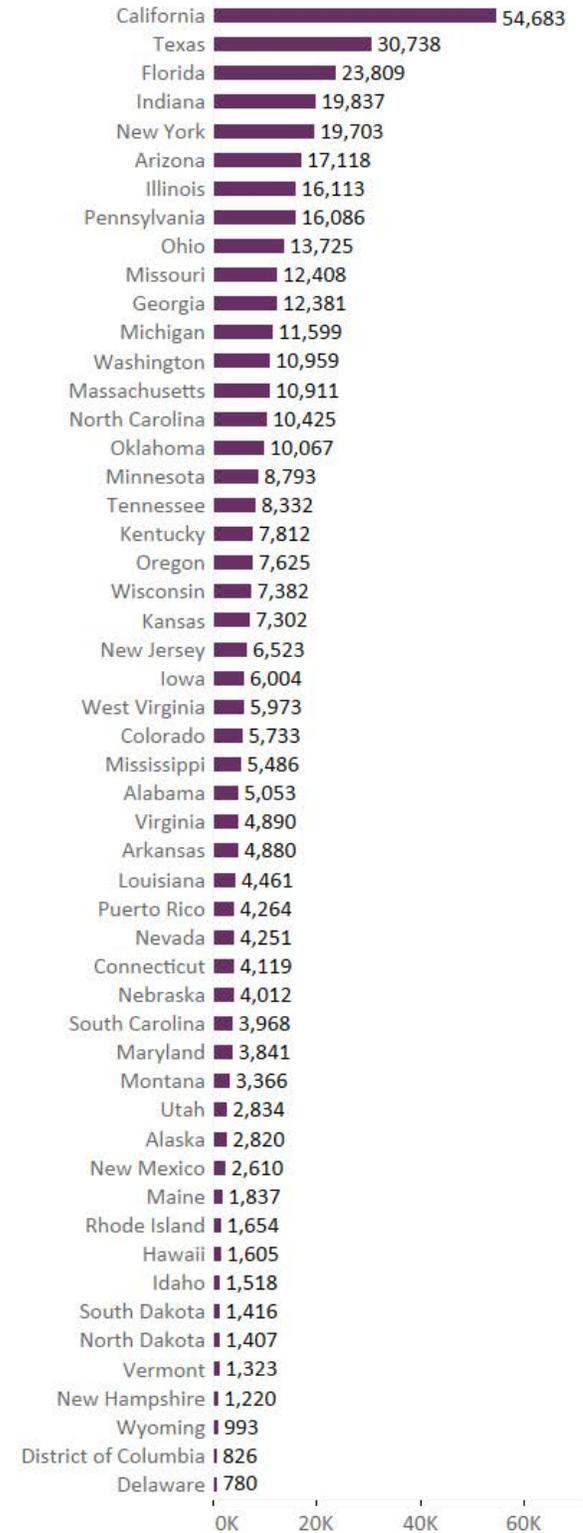
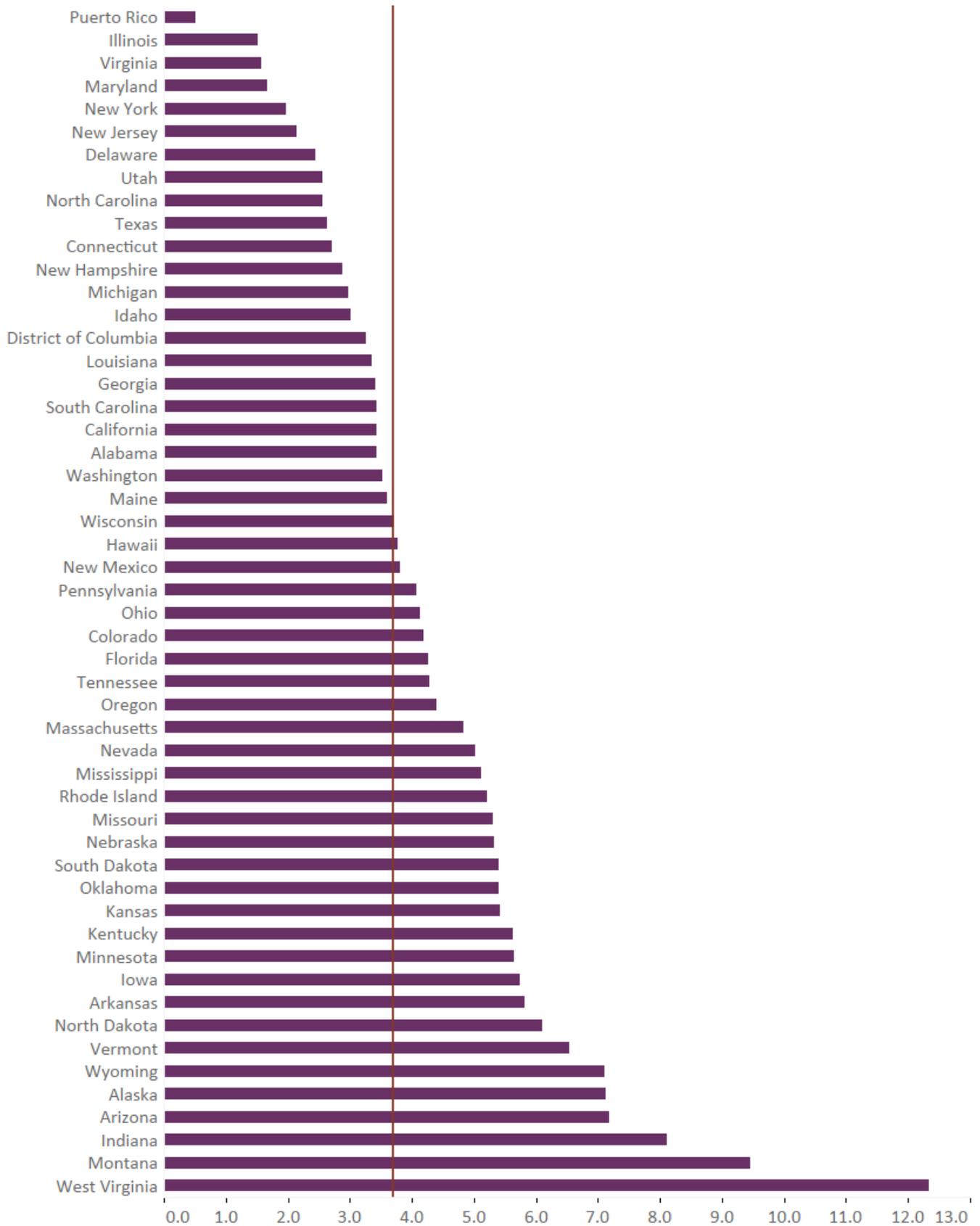


Figure I-9. Foster Care Entry Rate per 1,000 Children, 2016 (N=52)

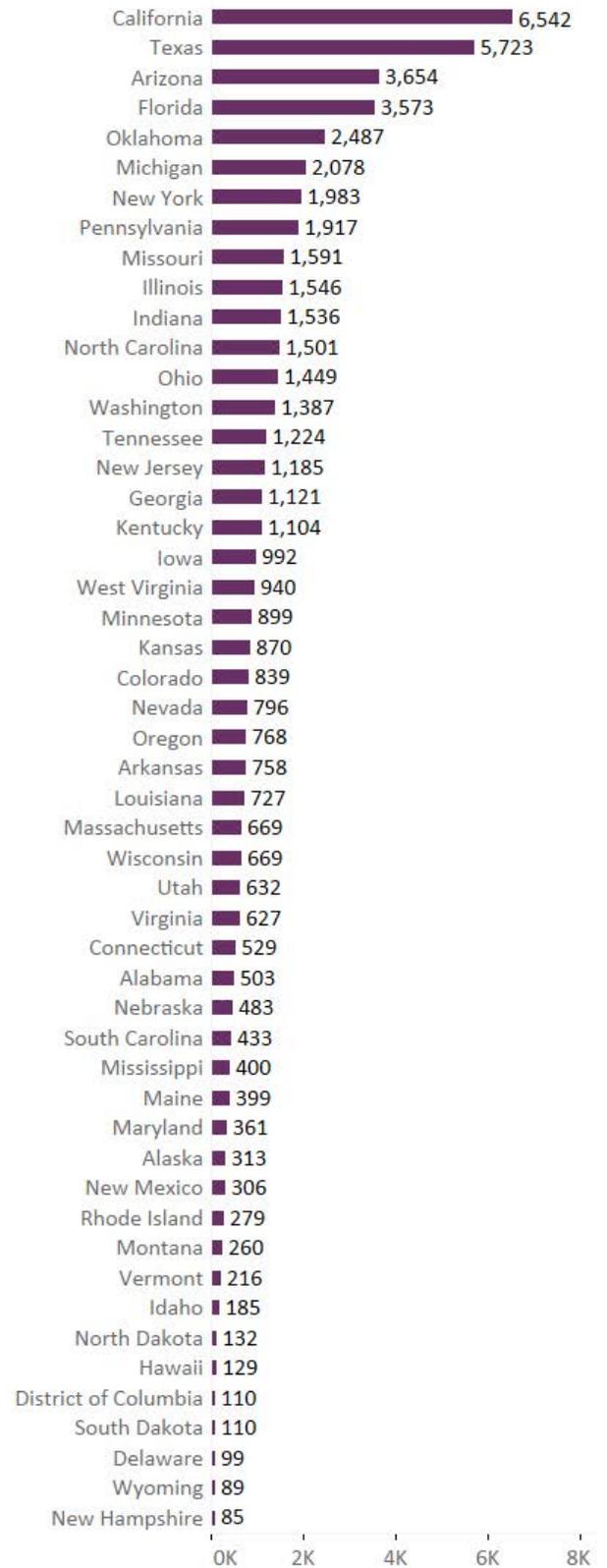
National rate: 3.7 per 1,000



**Figure I-10. Number of Children Waiting for Adoption, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure I-11. Number of Children Adopted, 2016 (N=52)**



**Table I–1. Number of Children Waiting for Adoption, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Alabama	1,156	1,077	1,028	1,020	1,075
Alaska	807	866	704	783	948
Arizona	2,915	3,581	3,642	4,062	4,714
Arkansas	1,024	994	1,034	1,125	1,199
California	13,136	15,668	14,098	14,181	14,689
Colorado	917	897	1,010	927	1,038
Connecticut	1,385	1,166	1,343	1,197	1,111
Delaware	243	218	202	223	254
District of Columbia	313	276	251	233	217
Florida	5,192	3,692	5,669	6,033	6,921
Georgia	1,648	1,799	1,984	2,546	2,998
Hawaii	223	154	187	142	177
Idaho	278	333	338	326	393
Illinois	4,861	4,749	4,197	3,225	2,969
Indiana	3,109	2,605	2,742	2,971	3,785
Iowa	964	966	1,050	1,004	1,071
Kansas	1,853	1,843	2,116	2,340	2,392
Kentucky	2,103	2,227	2,420	2,579	2,612
Louisiana	1,090	961	1,038	1,220	1,302
Maine	480	564	590	666	647
Maryland	560	498	464	510	468
Massachusetts	2,469	2,492	2,771	3,051	3,476
Michigan	3,586	3,337	4,814	5,515	3,594
Minnesota	1,191	1,219	1,190	1,285	1,543
Mississippi	955	1,000	1,184	1,437	1,553
Missouri	2,067	2,162	2,326	2,514	2,588
Montana	403	498	587	580	633
Nebraska	904	705	692	709	715
Nevada	1,888	1,963	2,071	2,006	1,679
New Hampshire	182	189	159	148	132
New Jersey	2,230	2,443	2,593	2,698	2,567
New Mexico	834	880	990	1,134	1,263
New York	6,061	5,843	5,464	5,187	4,849
North Carolina	2,071	2,172	2,416	2,745	2,937
North Dakota	212	239	266	296	355
Ohio	2,655	2,976	2,942	3,010	3,205
Oklahoma	2,803	3,242	3,975	4,288	4,368
Oregon	1,874	1,854	1,879	1,729	1,666
Pennsylvania	1,927	1,916	1,904	2,429	3,094
Rhode Island	222	250	212	303	296
South Carolina	1,336	1,226	1,211	1,213	1,344
South Dakota	407	361	338	309	361
Tennessee	2,517	2,671	2,665	2,757	2,544
Texas	13,295	13,140	13,409	12,814	12,525
Utah	570	612	629	594	631
Vermont	230	220	234	305	387
Virginia	1,520	1,503	1,532	1,708	1,886
Washington	2,861	3,101	3,213	3,075	3,278
West Virginia	1,415	1,381	1,420	1,461	2,299
Wisconsin	1,129	1,153	1,148	1,267	1,389
Wyoming	163	88	81	69	61

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

**Table I–2. Number of Children Adopted, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Alabama	587	518	548	512	503
Alaska	309	328	367	357	313
Arizona	2,275	2,522	3,090	3,236	3,654
Arkansas	703	691	743	740	758
California	5,938	5,322	5,471	6,079	6,542
Colorado	905	782	769	820	839
Connecticut	490	490	502	573	529
Delaware	91	112	84	79	99
District of Columbia	114	110	107	106	110
Florida	3,294	3,415	3,267	3,431	3,573
Georgia	915	1,031	887	912	1,121
Hawaii	187	160	121	176	129
Idaho	273	206	218	223	185
Illinois	1,845	1,395	1,655	1,788	1,546
Indiana	1,713	961	850	1,152	1,536
Iowa	1,032	917	878	1,017	992
Kansas	764	674	695	783	870
Kentucky	784	797	909	961	1,104
Louisiana	655	731	622	662	727
Maine	291	214	295	328	399
Maryland	455	355	344	294	361
Massachusetts	754	799	589	623	669
Michigan	2,559	2,374	2,137	1,765	2,078
Minnesota	520	583	642	735	899
Mississippi	425	354	314	312	400
Missouri	1,228	1,231	1,291	1,357	1,591
Montana	225	165	234	310	260
Nebraska	417	586	461	533	483
Nevada	766	721	729	799	796
New Hampshire	96	110	120	118	85
New Jersey	1,023	927	1,024	1,072	1,185
New Mexico	345	310	315	295	306
New York	2,182	2,184	1,997	1,933	1,983
North Carolina	1,329	1,222	1,164	1,311	1,501
North Dakota	155	104	96	133	132
Ohio	1,250	1,244	1,406	1,334	1,449
Oklahoma	1,533	1,286	1,382	2,159	2,487
Oregon	683	768	847	835	768
Pennsylvania	1,866	1,878	1,849	1,832	1,917
Rhode Island	191	162	202	211	279
South Carolina	776	506	449	403	433
South Dakota	126	177	159	121	110
Tennessee	813	1,159	1,161	1,113	1,224
Texas	5,039	5,443	5,221	5,457	5,723
Utah	562	586	605	695	632
Vermont	172	179	161	189	216
Virginia	639	709	632	562	627
Washington	1,227	1,328	1,362	1,484	1,387
West Virginia	632	877	852	893	940
Wisconsin	761	800	735	643	669
Wyoming	81	86	75	74	89

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

**Table I-3. Percent Change in the Difference Between the Number of Children Waiting for Adoption and the Number of Children Adopted, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	Percent Change in the Difference Between the Number of Children Waiting for Adoption and the Number of Children Adopted, 2012–2016**
Alabama	0.5%
Alaska	27.5%
Arizona	65.6%
Arkansas	37.4%
California	13.2%
Colorado	1558.3%
Connecticut	-35.0%
Delaware	2.0%
District of Columbia	-46.2%
Florida	76.4%
Georgia	156.1%
Hawaii	33.3%
Idaho	4060.0%
Illinois	-52.8%
Indiana	61.1%
Iowa	-216.2%
Kansas	39.8%
Kentucky	14.3%
Louisiana	32.2%
Maine	31.2%
Maryland	1.9%
Massachusetts	63.7%
Michigan	47.6%
Minnesota	-4.0%
Mississippi	117.5%
Missouri	18.8%
Montana	109.6%
Nebraska	-52.4%
Nevada	-21.3%
New Hampshire	-45.3%
New Jersey	14.5%
New Mexico	95.7%
New York	-26.1%
North Carolina	93.5%
North Dakota	291.2%
Ohio	25.0%
Oklahoma	48.1%
Oregon	-24.6%
Pennsylvania	1829.5%
Rhode Island	-45.2%
South Carolina	62.7%
South Dakota	-10.7%
Tennessee	-22.5%
Texas	-17.6%
Utah	-112.5%
Vermont	194.8%
Virginia	42.9%
Washington	15.7%
West Virginia	73.6%
Wisconsin	95.7%
Wyoming	-134.1%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

# II: Keeping Children Safe

Public child welfare agencies are responsible for ensuring that children who have been found to be victims of abuse or neglect are protected from further harm. Whether the child is placed in out-of-home care or maintained in the home, the child welfare agency’s first concern must be to ensure the safety of the child. Outcome 1 (reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect) and outcome 2 (reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care) encompass these safety goals for children and youth.

This chapter provides information on some contextual factors related to child safety as well as on the following two safety measures:

- Measure 1.1: The percentage of child victims who experienced a recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period
- Measure 2.1: The percentage of all children in foster care who were maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member

**Although the NCANDS submission is voluntary, it is strongly encouraged. All states submitted NCANDS data for 2016.**

## CHILD VICTIMS AND CHILD FATALITIES

HHS collects and analyzes data from NCANDS on children who come into contact with public CPS agencies as alleged victims of abuse or neglect. Although submission of data to NCANDS is voluntary for states, HHS strongly encourages participation and provides technical assistance to help with data collection and reporting. All states submitted NCANDS data for 2016.

### Child victims

During 2016, approximately 672,000 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.<sup>39 40</sup> Table II–1 shows the total number of child victims and the national child victim rate for 2012 through 2016.

**Table II–1. Child Victims, 2012–2016\***

Measures	2012 (N=52)	2013 (N=52)	2014 (N=52)	2015 (N=52)	2016 (N=51)
Total Child Victims**	656,000	656,000	675,000	683,000	672,000
National Child Victim Rate***	8.8	8.8	9.1	9.2	9.1

\*The data in this table represent unique counts of child victims (i.e., a child only may be reported as a victim once per reporting year).

\*\*The total number of child victims is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

\*\*\*The rate is calculated per 1,000 children.

As indicated in table II–1, the national child victim rate remained stable between 2012 and 2013, but increased to a 5-year high in 2015. In 2016, the national child victim rate was 9.1 per 1,000 children—an increase of 3.4 percent from 2012.<sup>41</sup> This indicator should be closely monitored to assess whether this recent change becomes a meaningful increase.

**Additional data about child victims, including age, race, and ethnicity, are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.**

Similar to previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, child victim rates varied dramatically across states. In 2016, they ranged from 1.6 child victims per 1,000 children to 23.3 child victims per 1,000 children (figures II–1 and II–2).<sup>42</sup> There are a number of possible explanations for this variation. One explanation is that states vary in their definitions of “child maltreatment.”<sup>43</sup> States with broader definitions of what constitutes child maltreatment may have higher victim rates than states with narrower definitions. Variations in the level of evidence required for substantiation also may contribute to different child victim rates among states.

<sup>39</sup> This Report uses a unique count for child victims, which tallies a child only once regardless of the number of times he or she was found to be a victim during the reporting year.

<sup>40</sup> For the purposes of this Report, a “victim of child maltreatment” is defined as a child for whom an incident of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. This includes a child who died of child abuse or neglect. Prior to 2015, children with dispositions of “alternative response victim” were also included as victims. It is important to note that the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports use the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which often is reported in the Child Maltreatment reports. The total number of child victims reported in this Report is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

<sup>41</sup> The national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the total number of child victims (671,622) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS data (73,642,285) and multiplying the resulting number by 1,000. This calculation includes children under the age of 18.

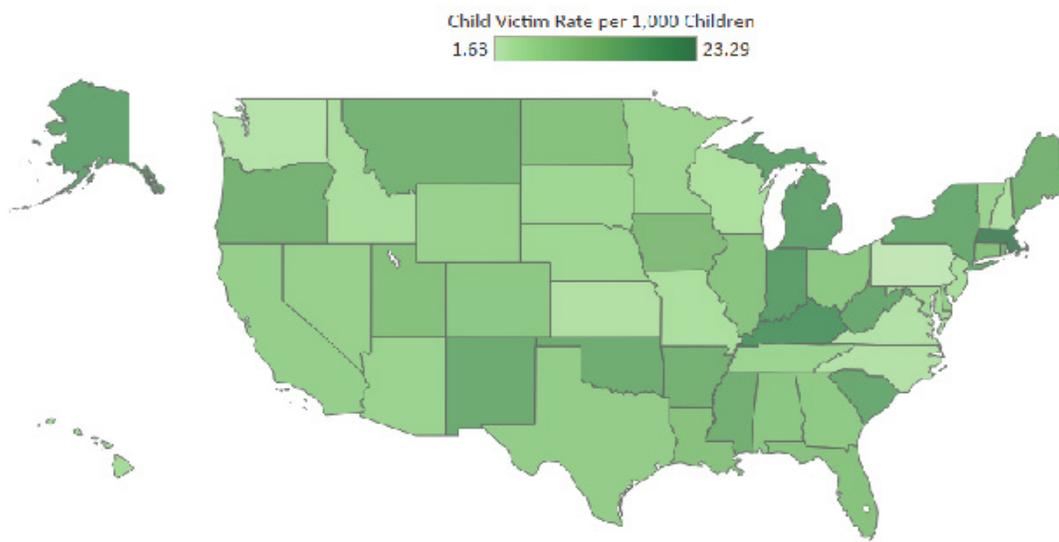
<sup>42</sup> A state’s rate of child victims is defined as the number of child victims reported to NCANDS per 1,000 children in the state’s population.

<sup>43</sup> More information about variations in state definitions of child abuse and neglect can be found on the Child Welfare Information Gateway website at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/laws-policies/statutes/define/>.

Some additional factors limit the comparability of child victim rates across states. One such factor is the use of alternative response approaches.<sup>44</sup> In alternative response approaches, child welfare agencies respond with a referral for a family assessment rather than with a formal investigation when a decision is made that there are no immediate safety concerns for the child and that the maltreatment allegation involves low or moderate risk. When a referral is made for a family assessment instead of an investigation, there is often no determination made regarding the allegations of maltreatment; therefore, the child is not classified as a victim.<sup>45</sup> Even within states that have implemented alternative response systems, comparing outcomes for children across local jurisdictions is challenging due to the varying degrees of implementation across the state. Although some states are implementing their systems statewide, others are gradually adding alternative response approaches to select jurisdictions. These methodological challenges mean that caution is warranted in comparing states that use alternative response approaches to those that are not. Similarly, when a state begins using this type of approach, examining changes in performance over time within the state may prove difficult due to the shifting responses to allegations of maltreatment.

**Consistent with findings in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, child victim rates varied dramatically across states in 2016, ranging from 1.6 victims per 1,000 children to 23.3 victims per 1,000 children.**

**Figure II–1: Map of Child Victim Rates per 1,000 Children by State, 2016 (N=51)**



### Child fatalities

During 2016, approximately 1,700 child fatalities were reported by states. The national child fatality rate was 2.36 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>46</sup> Like child victim rates, child fatality rates varied widely by state. In 2016, child fatality rates varied between 0.00 child fatalities per 100,000 children and 5.96 child fatalities per 100,000 children. Three states reported zero child fatalities in 2016: Delaware, Montana, and Vermont. Table II–2 shows the total number of child fatalities and the national child fatality rate for 2012–2016.

**Table II–2. Child Fatalities, 2012–2016**

Measures	2012 (N=51)	2013 (N=51)	2014 (N=51)	2015 (N=49)	2016 (N=49)
Total Child Fatalities	1,621	1,551	1,558	1,589	1,700
National Child Fatality Rate*	2.18	2.09	2.14	2.26	2.36

\*This rate is per 100,000 children.

<sup>44</sup> The term “alternative response” is sometimes used interchangeably with terms such as “differential response,” “dual track response,” and “multitrack response.” These terms tend to refer to the provision of a response other than an investigation when there is an allegation of maltreatment. Throughout this Report, the term “alternative response” is used. For more information on alternative response, see *Differential Response to Reports of Child Abuse and Neglect* at <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/issue-briefs/differential-response/>.

<sup>45</sup> Some states make a distinction between those referrals for which services were required or mandated and those referrals for which services were not needed or were voluntary. In these cases, some states have chosen to report the referrals to NCANDS as either “alternative response victim” for those in which services were mandated or “alternative response nonvictim” for those in which services were voluntary or not needed.

<sup>46</sup> The national child fatality rate is calculated by dividing the number of child fatalities reported by states (1,700) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS child fatality data (72,009,469) and multiplying by 100,000. Due to the relatively few cases of child fatalities, rates of child fatalities are presented using two decimal places to improve comparability.

As indicated in table II–2, the child fatality rate has increased each year since 2013. However, given the relatively low reported number of child fatalities each year, the national rate is sensitive to which states report data and to changes in the national population estimates produced by the Census Bureau. Additionally, changes in policy, such as the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (Pub. L. 112–34) in 2010, may have led to increasingly better reporting over time and may account for possible increases in child fatality rates.<sup>47</sup> As a result, a clear directional trend cannot be established for this period; future years’ data will be required for that analysis.

### RANGE OF STATE PERFORMANCE ON SAFETY-RELATED OUTCOME MEASURES

State performance with regard to children’s safety is addressed through outcome 1 (reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect) and outcome 2 (reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care). Table II–3 summarizes state performance in 2016 on the measures pertaining to these outcomes. Cases identified as “alternative response victim” are not included in the calculation of these two safety outcome measures; only substantiated and indicated cases are included.

**Table II–3. Range of State Performance, 2016  
Outcomes 1 and 2: Keeping Children Safe**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range
Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=51)**	3.1%	5.1%	6.7%	0.8–13.1%
Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff? (N=50)**	0.11%	0.22%	0.54%	0.00–3.07%

\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.  
\*\*For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

#### Recurrence of maltreatment

The national median for maltreatment recurrence (measure 1.1) in 2016 was 5.1 percent. Individual state performance ranged from 0.8 percent to 13.1 percent. A number of variables may have impacted this range in performance across states, including variations in child victim rates across states. In general, states with higher child victim rates tended to have higher rates of recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson’s  $r=0.60$ ). This moderate correlation has been reported in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports. Additionally, the variation across states in performance may also be related to differences across states with regard to the types of child maltreatment reported. Most notably, states with a higher percentage of victims due to neglect, as opposed to sexual abuse or physical abuse, tended to have a higher percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson’s  $r=0.45$ ).

**States with higher child victim rates also tended to have higher recurrence rates.**

#### Maltreatment of children in foster care

The 2016 data shown in table II–3 indicate a very low occurrence of maltreatment of children while in foster care. The national median performance was 0.22 percent, but the range of performance across states varied from 0.00 percent to 3.07 percent.<sup>48</sup> Five states reported more than 1.00 percent of children in foster care were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster care parent or facility staff: Massachusetts (1.63 percent), Mississippi (1.18 percent), New York (3.07 percent), Oklahoma (1.28 percent), and Rhode Island (1.60 percent). The variation among states may be influenced by a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the extent to which training and services are offered to support foster families and facility staff members, variations in casework practices, and the level of interaction the caseworker has with the family.

<sup>47</sup> For additional information, refer to *Child Maltreatment 2016*, which is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2016>.

<sup>48</sup> Due to the relatively few cases of child maltreatment in foster care, performance on this measure is presented using two decimal places to improve comparability.

## CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF MALTREATMENT RECURRENCE AND MALTREATMENT OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Table II–4 presents the median performance across states for 2012–2016 on these safety outcome measures, including the number of states that demonstrated an improvement or decline in performance, as determined by a percent-change calculation.

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					Improved in Performance	Declined in Performance
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Measure 1.1: Percentage of child victims who experienced a recurrence of maltreatment within a 6-month period (N=51)****	5.1%	5.3%	4.9%	5.0%	5.1%	20 states (39%)	22 states (43%)
Measure 2.1: Percentage of all children in foster care who were maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member (N=48)****	0.34%	0.33%	0.27%	0.27%	0.22%	22 states (46%)	17 states (35%)

\*In accordance with standard procedure in conducting analyses for this Report, when there was a percent change less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

\*\*Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table II–3 and appendix B.

\*\*\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years and may be different from the data included in table II–3 due to differences in the numbers of states included for each analysis.

\*\*\*\*For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

As shown in table II–4, the median 5-year performance across states with regard to recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1) fluctuated slightly but did not change significantly between 2012 and 2016. Furthermore, a slightly higher proportion of states demonstrated a decline in performance on this measure (43 percent) than showed an improvement in performance (39 percent).

In contrast, national performance with regard to the maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1) demonstrated significant improvement. Between 2012 and 2016, the national median rate decreased from 0.34 percent to 0.22 percent—a 35.3-percent decline (a lower percentage is desirable for this measure). Additionally, 46 percent of states showed an improvement in performance, 35 percent experienced a decline, and 19 percent showed no meaningful change.

**The percentage of all children in foster care that experienced maltreatment while in care has decreased 35.3 percent since 2012.**

Individual state performances between 2012 and 2016 on measures of maltreatment recurrence (measure 1.1) and maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1) are displayed in tables II–5 and II–6 (presented at the end of the chapter).

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

National performance on the two safety-related outcome measures, recurrence of maltreatment and maltreatment of children in foster care, was generally positive between 2012 and 2016. National performance on measure 1.1 (maltreatment recurrence) has remained relatively stable over time, with a median performance of 5.1 percent in both 2012 and 2016. Because of the relatively small number of child victims each year, individual state performance over time is highly sensitive to small changes in performance. This is reflected in the majority of states demonstrating a significant change in performance, in both directions, despite stagnant national performance.

Notably, states have continued showing progress in reducing the percentage of children experiencing maltreatment while in foster care. Similar to measure 1.1, individual state performance is sensitive to changes in the relatively low number of child maltreatment victims each year. However, more states have consistently demonstrated an improvement in performance compared to a decline—a trend present in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

For both of these safety measures, it is important to keep in mind that, while the percentages of maltreatment may be numerically small, these events have serious implications for the safety and well-being of children. Children who are maltreated, either at home or in care, can experience a wide variety of consequences, ranging from physical and mental health problems to issues with cognitive development and academic achievement.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, maltreatment recurrence is associated with an increase in trauma symptoms in children.<sup>50</sup>

The end of this chapter displays outcomes-based visuals related to keeping children safe, including child victim and fatality rates and state performance on outcomes 1 and 2. The Child Welfare Outcomes data site (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>) includes additional context data related to child maltreatment and child safety, including the following: age, race, ethnicity, and maltreatment type of child victims; mean and median CPS response times; and individual state data, including those states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data.

<sup>49</sup> Goldman, J., Salus, M. K., Wolcott, D., & Kennedy, K. Y. (2003). *A coordinated response to child abuse and neglect: The foundation for practice*. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/usermanuals/foundation/>

<sup>50</sup> Adams, Z. W., Moreland, A., Cohen, J. R., Lee, R. C., Hanson, R. F., Danielson, C. K., . . . Briggs, E. C. (2016). Polyvictimization: Latent profiles and mental health outcomes in a clinical sample of adolescents. *Psychology of Violence, 6*(1), 145–155. doi: 10.1037/a0039713

Figure II-2. Child Victim Rate per 1,000 Children, 2016 (N=51)\*

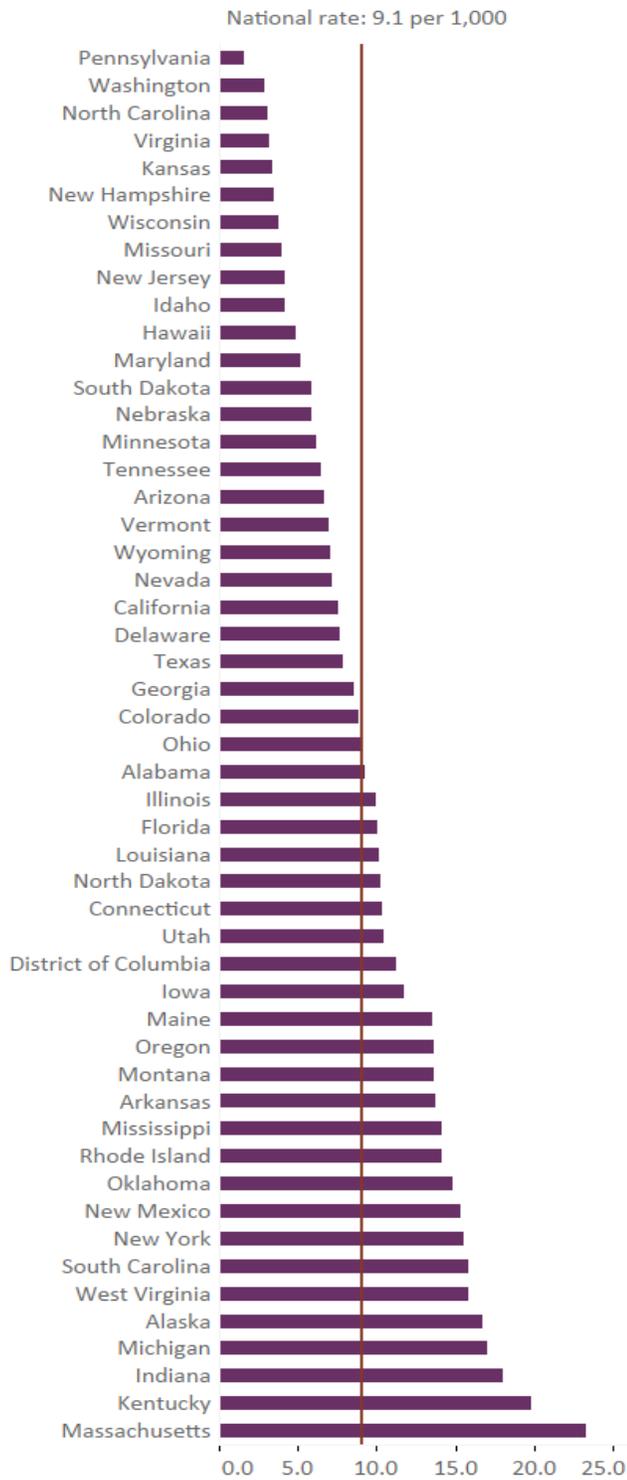
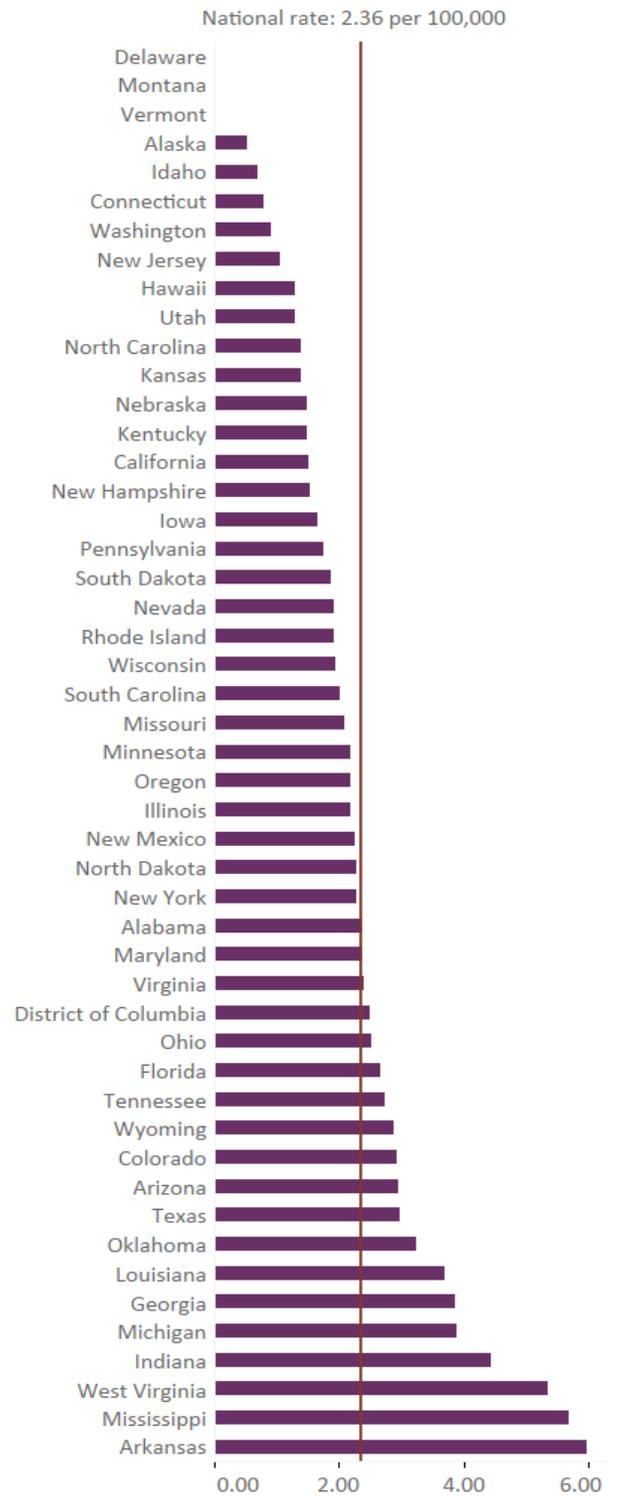
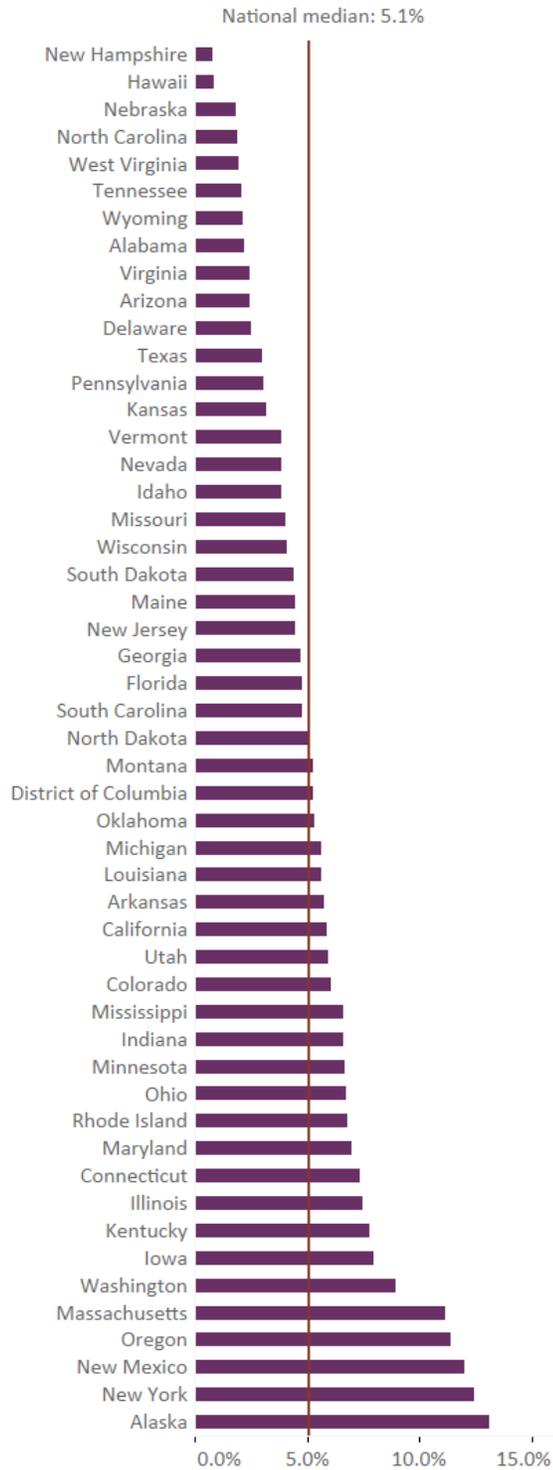


Figure II-3. Child Fatality Rate per 100,000 Children, 2016 (N=49)\*

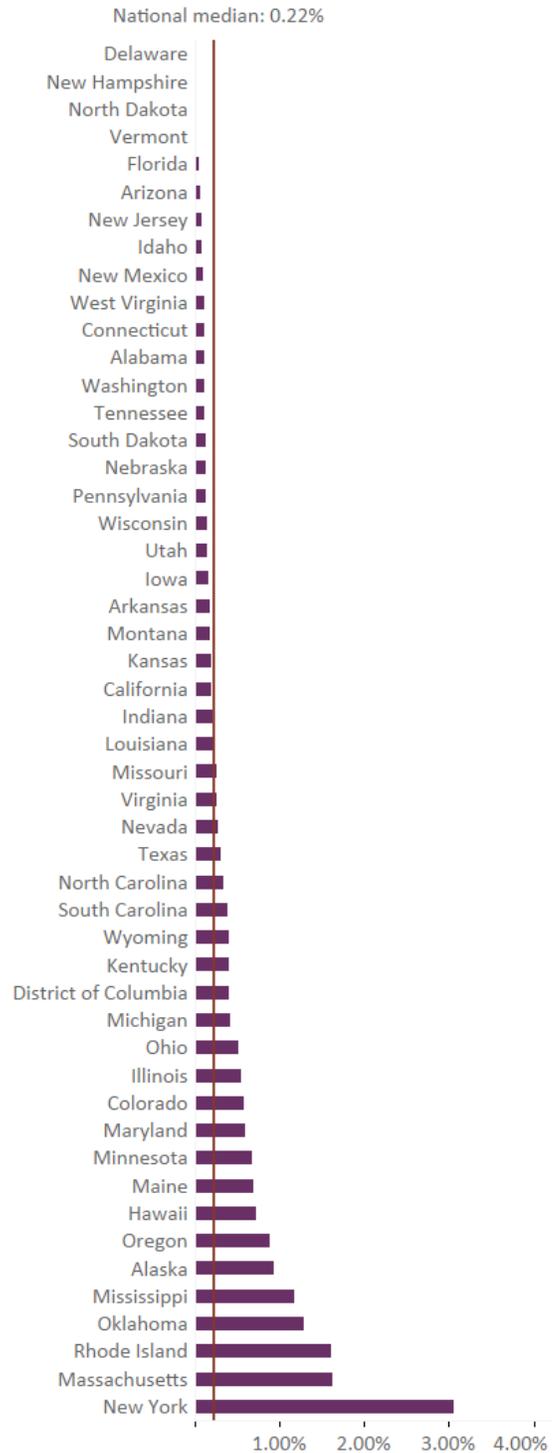


\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

**Figure II-4. Percentage of Children Experiencing a Recurrence of Maltreatment Within 6 Months, 2016 (N=51)\***



**Figure II-5. Percentage of Children Experiencing Maltreatment in Foster Care, 2016 (N=50)\***



\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

**Table II–5. Percentage of Children Experiencing a Recurrence of Maltreatment Within 6 Months, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	1.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.5%	2.2%	38.0%
Alaska	12.2%	12.9%	13.9%	13.2%	13.1%	7.2%
Arizona	4.6%	5.4%	3.8%	4.2%	2.5%	-47.1%
Arkansas	6.4%	5.7%	5.5%	5.2%	5.7%	-10.1%
California	6.7%	6.3%	6.4%	6.4%	5.9%	-12.2%
Colorado	4.4%	4.5%	4.9%	5.0%	6.0%	38.2%
Connecticut	5.6%	6.1%	6.3%	6.3%	7.4%	32.6%
Delaware	2.5%	3.1%	2.1%	1.5%	2.5%	-2.0%
District of Columbia	4.5%	5.3%	5.5%	6.0%	5.3%	18.3%
Florida	7.2%	5.9%	4.9%	5.2%	4.8%	-34.0%
Georgia	3.3%	4.2%	4.9%	4.5%	4.7%	41.6%
Hawaii	1.9%	1.1%	2.1%	1.2%	0.8%	-56.0%
Idaho	3.8%	2.9%	3.1%	4.3%	3.9%	2.5%
Illinois	6.2%	5.1%	7.1%	7.4%	7.5%	21.5%
Indiana	6.8%	7.1%	7.6%	6.5%	6.6%	-2.1%
Iowa	7.3%	8.0%	7.4%	7.7%	8.0%	9.2%
Kansas	3.4%	2.9%	2.7%	6.0%	3.2%	-4.7%
Kentucky	6.2%	5.9%	8.2%	8.6%	7.8%	24.6%
Louisiana	5.3%	6.5%	5.8%	5.8%	5.7%	6.7%
Maine	6.3%	6.3%	6.1%	4.7%	4.5%	-29.6%
Maryland	7.1%	7.2%	7.0%	7.1%	7.0%	-1.6%
Massachusetts	8.5%	9.0%	12.9%	11.4%	11.2%	31.8%
Michigan	7.2%	6.7%	6.5%	5.7%	5.7%	-21.9%
Minnesota	3.8%	3.5%	3.9%	4.7%	6.7%	73.2%
Mississippi	6.8%	6.5%	6.2%	6.6%	6.6%	-2.9%
Missouri	2.1%	3.4%	3.6%	3.0%	4.0%	94.0%
Montana	3.4%	4.3%	1.5%	4.6%	5.2%	53.4%
Nebraska	7.4%	6.2%	4.9%	4.9%	1.8%	-75.4%
Nevada	4.8%	3.8%	4.8%	5.1%	3.9%	-19.7%
New Hampshire	1.7%	1.8%	0.7%	0.8%	0.8%	-55.0%
New Jersey	5.1%	5.8%	5.4%	5.0%	4.5%	-12.2%
New Mexico	9.0%	11.5%	12.7%	10.7%	12.0%	33.8%
New York	12.4%	11.7%	11.6%	11.9%	12.4%	-0.1%
North Carolina	2.1%	1.9%	2.9%	2.8%	1.9%	-11.5%
North Dakota	2.6%	4.6%	2.8%	3.5%	5.1%	94.1%
Ohio	7.6%	6.9%	7.2%	7.5%	6.7%	-11.5%
Oklahoma	6.2%	8.5%	6.9%	5.3%	5.3%	-14.3%
Oregon	7.1%	3.6%	4.0%	5.1%	11.4%	61.0%
Pennsylvania	2.6%	1.9%	2.1%	3.4%	3.0%	18.9%
Rhode Island	6.9%	8.2%	8.8%	9.3%	6.8%	-0.9%
South Carolina	2.8%	2.5%	2.9%	3.8%	4.8%	69.9%
South Dakota	5.6%	4.5%	3.7%	2.1%	4.4%	-20.8%
Tennessee	2.7%	2.4%	2.8%	3.7%	2.1%	-23.0%
Texas	2.9%	3.0%	2.8%	2.4%	3.0%	4.1%
Utah	4.6%	6.3%	6.3%	6.0%	5.9%	29.4%
Vermont	6.3%	8.2%	5.8%	4.0%	3.8%	-38.7%
Virginia	2.7%	3.1%	2.0%	2.6%	2.5%	-9.2%
Washington	7.5%	7.9%	9.7%	8.2%	8.9%	19.5%
West Virginia	2.4%	2.3%	1.6%	1.9%	2.0%	-18.3%
Wisconsin	4.4%	4.0%	4.9%	3.8%	4.1%	-6.0%
Wyoming	1.4%	0.8%	3.4%	3.3%	2.1%	53.9%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table II–6. Percentage of Children Experiencing Maltreatment in Foster Care, 2012–2016 (N=48)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	0.18%	0.09%	0.17%	0.06%	0.11%	-39.4%
Alaska	0.92%	0.99%	0.39%	0.38%	0.93%	1.6%
Arizona	0.08%	0.21%	0.11%	0.06%	0.06%	-22.6%
Arkansas	0.13%	0.16%	0.18%	0.24%	0.18%	36.0%
California	0.23%	0.25%	0.26%	0.20%	0.19%	-15.1%
Colorado	0.41%	0.74%	1.43%	0.56%	0.58%	41.8%
Connecticut	0.51%	0.96%	0.96%	0.80%	0.11%	-79.0%
Delaware	0.16%	0.43%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	-100.0%
District of Columbia	0.42%	0.62%	0.50%	0.23%	0.40%	-4.7%
Florida	0.61%	0.98%	0.06%	0.04%	0.05%	-92.0%
Hawaii	0.14%	0.34%	0.56%	0.90%	0.72%	420.4%
Illinois	0.37%	0.40%	0.50%	0.57%	0.54%	47.8%
Indiana	0.14%	0.13%	0.08%	0.15%	0.20%	49.7%
Iowa	0.34%	0.35%	0.25%	0.36%	0.16%	-53.5%
Kansas	0.20%	0.29%	0.16%	0.29%	0.19%	-4.2%
Kentucky	0.51%	0.54%	0.95%	0.96%	0.40%	-21.0%
Louisiana	0.44%	0.22%	0.30%	0.20%	0.23%	-47.1%
Maine	0.14%	0.49%	0.30%	0.40%	0.69%	400.4%
Maryland	0.48%	0.47%	0.37%	0.41%	0.60%	24.9%
Massachusetts	0.92%	1.05%	1.26%	0.97%	1.63%	76.6%
Michigan	0.66%	0.68%	0.52%	0.54%	0.42%	-35.5%
Minnesota	0.41%	0.25%	0.30%	0.41%	0.68%	65.6%
Mississippi	1.60%	0.95%	1.06%	0.96%	1.18%	-26.3%
Missouri	0.25%	0.33%	0.26%	0.24%	0.25%	3.1%
Montana	0.29%	0.18%	0.11%	0.31%	0.18%	-37.7%
Nebraska	0.46%	0.36%	0.25%	0.12%	0.13%	-71.8%
Nevada	0.66%	0.47%	0.28%	0.16%	0.27%	-59.4%
New Hampshire	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA
New Jersey	0.23%	0.34%	0.13%	0.15%	0.07%	-68.8%
New Mexico	0.62%	0.32%	0.07%	0.22%	0.09%	-85.0%
New York	1.19%	0.89%	0.62%	0.72%	3.07%	157.0%
North Carolina	0.46%	0.33%	0.44%	0.32%	0.33%	-26.7%
North Dakota	0.58%	0.10%	0.09%	0.04%	0.00%	-100.0%
Ohio	0.50%	0.56%	0.40%	0.40%	0.52%	3.2%
Oklahoma	0.89%	1.19%	1.26%	1.57%	1.28%	44.7%
Pennsylvania	0.14%	0.11%	0.12%	0.09%	0.14%	-6.2%
Rhode Island	1.02%	1.10%	1.21%	1.36%	1.60%	56.9%
South Carolina	0.43%	0.43%	0.58%	0.20%	0.39%	-8.9%
South Dakota	0.00%	0.09%	0.05%	0.05%	0.13%	NA
Tennessee	0.07%	0.11%	0.14%	0.28%	0.12%	60.8%
Texas	0.27%	0.29%	0.31%	0.29%	0.31%	16.4%
Utah	0.08%	0.25%	0.30%	0.06%	0.14%	71.7%
Vermont	0.00%	0.12%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	NA
Virginia	0.16%	0.21%	0.23%	0.25%	0.26%	60.8%
Washington	0.33%	0.32%	0.16%	0.11%	0.11%	-66.8%
West Virginia	0.20%	0.27%	0.48%	0.32%	0.11%	-47.8%
Wisconsin	0.12%	0.07%	0.12%	0.09%	0.14%	14.2%
Wyoming	0.00%	0.00%	0.05%	0.53%	0.40%	NA

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

# III: Finding Permanent Homes for Children in Foster Care

When foster care is necessary to ensure a child’s safety and well-being, state child welfare agencies are tasked with the responsibility of working with families and the courts to return children to their homes or to find other permanent homes in a timely manner.<sup>51</sup> Outcome 3 (increase permanency for children in foster care) encompasses these permanency goals for children and youth.

This chapter presents national permanency results for the following measures:

- Measure 3.1: The percentage of all children who exited foster care to a permanent home
- Measure 3.2: The percentage of all children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home
- Measure 3.3: The percentage of all children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 who were discharged to a permanent home
- Measure 3.4: The percentage of all children emancipated from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger

For the purpose of the Child Welfare Outcomes Report data indicators, a child achieves permanency when he or she is reported as discharged from foster care to one of the following arrangements:

- Reunified with parents or primary caretakers
- Living with other relatives<sup>52</sup>
- Guardianship<sup>53</sup>
- Legally adopted

State performance in finding permanent homes for children is assessed using the following data for each state: (1) the number of children in foster care, (2) the percentage of children in foster care who achieve permanency, and (3) the percentage of children in foster care who exit to emancipation. This chapter presents key findings of the analyses of these data across states. The source of most of data presented in this chapter is AFCARS.<sup>54</sup>

## RANGE OF PERFORMANCE IN ACHIEVING PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Nationally, approximately 250,000 children exited foster care in 2016. Table III–1 provides a breakdown of the foster care discharge reasons reported for these children.

**Table III–1. Foster Care Discharge Reasons, 2016 (N=52)**

Discharge Reason	Number of Children	Percent of Total Exits (N=250,241)*
Adoption	56,507	22.6%
Emancipation	20,526	8.2%
Guardianship	23,659	9.5%
Reunification	142,281	56.9%
Other**	7,268	2.9%

\*The percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

\*\*Other discharge reasons include runaway, death, and missing discharge reason.

In 2016, 88.9 percent of all children exiting foster care were discharged to a permanent home (i.e., were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship). State performance with regard to finding permanent homes for children in foster care is addressed through a number of outcome measures, as shown in table III–2.

<sup>51</sup> For the purposes of this Report, “foster care” refers to a variety of out-of-home placement settings in which children are placed away from their parents or guardians under the placement and responsibility of the state child welfare agency for at least 24 hours. This includes foster family homes, group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and similar placements. For more information, see *Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review* at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-review-guide>.

<sup>52</sup> For the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, the discharge reasons of “reunification with parents or primary caretakers” and “living with other relatives” are combined into the category of “reunification.”

<sup>53</sup> Legal guardian includes relatives and nonrelatives.

<sup>54</sup> Data used in this Report may be different from other sources for a number of reasons, especially the timing of data collection. All AFCARS data used in this Report are current as of July 5, 2017.

**Table III–2. Range of State Performance, 2016  
Outcome 3: Increase Permanency for Children in Foster Care**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range
Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=52)	85.8%	89.5%	92.1%	69.4–96.0%
Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=50)	74.2%	82.2%	86.7%	50.0–95.6%
Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=52)	59.9%	65.3%	73.2%	36.7–90.3%
Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care during the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=52)**	11.6%	17.1%	22.9%	0.0–54.8%

\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

Measures 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3 assess permanency for children at the time of discharge from foster care. The data in table III–4 (at the end of this chapter) suggest that, generally, individual states continued to be successful in 2016 in finding permanent homes for children discharged from foster care. The national median performance across states for all children that exited foster care during 2016 was 89.5 percent. Nonetheless, it is important to keep in mind that a central goal in child welfare is to find permanent, secure homes for 100 percent of children who must enter foster care.

### **Children with disabilities**

For the purpose of AFCARS, a diagnosed disability includes mental retardation, visual or hearing impairment, physical disability, emotional disturbance, or other medically diagnosed conditions requiring special care.<sup>55</sup> As indicated in table III–2, in 2016, states tended to be considerably more successful in finding permanent homes for the general foster care population exiting foster care (median performance: 89.5 percent) than for children with diagnosed disabilities that exited foster care (median performance: 82.2 percent). This disparity has been a consistent finding in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports. Because children with diagnosed disabilities often need higher levels of care, they may be more likely to be placed in residential treatment centers that may be better equipped to provide such care and are therefore less likely to achieve permanent homes with families.

Furthermore, state performance regarding permanent homes for children with disabilities varied considerably in 2016, ranging from 50.0 percent to 95.6 percent. States that were less successful in achieving permanency across all children that exited foster care (measure 3.1) also tended to be less successful in achieving permanency for children with disabilities that exited care (Pearson’s  $r=0.67$ ). These findings suggest that agencies should continue to review their data and current practices to consider whether there are ways to increase placing these children in permanent homes.

### **Older youth in foster care**

Another long-standing pattern that continues in this Report is the difficulty states have establishing permanency for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12. The national median performance in 2016 regarding the general population of children in foster care that exited to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship was 89.5 percent. However, the national median performance regarding older youth exiting to permanency was only 65.3 percent (see measures 3.1 and 3.3 in table III–2).<sup>56</sup> Similar to the population of children with disabilities that exited foster care (measure 3.2), there was a moderate correlation between a state’s success in 2016 at achieving permanency across all children that exited foster care (measure 3.1) and their success achieving permanency for older youth that exited (Pearson’s  $r=0.65$ ).

**As seen in prior Reports, states are less successful in establishing permanency for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 as compared to the entire foster care population.**

Older children in foster care may face a number of age-specific barriers to permanency.<sup>57</sup> For example, there may be a shortage of families who are willing and able to provide permanent homes for older youth. This could be due to a number of factors, but one likely contributor is the higher rate of risky behavior among older youth in foster care. Compared to younger foster youth, older youth transitioning from foster care have relatively higher rates of substance use referrals, incarceration, and giving birth to or fathering a child.<sup>58</sup> These youth require more resources, and there may be a lack of families willing and able to provide them with the support they need.

<sup>55</sup> For more information on disability and AFCARS, see AFCARS Technical Bulletin #2: Disability Information, revised in February 2012, at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-tb2>.

<sup>56</sup> The number of older children in care may include youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system and are included in the reporting population.

<sup>57</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). Enhancing permanency for youth in out-of-home care. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/enhancing/index.cfm>

<sup>58</sup> For more information, see the National Youth in Transition Database data briefs on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/data-briefs>.

Analysts have also identified agency practices that may act as barriers to permanency for older youth. Specifically, child welfare agencies may lack the commitment needed to establish permanency options for older youth in care, with staff believing these individuals unadoptable.<sup>59</sup> Additionally, some agencies may focus on providing independent living services to these youth rather than finding permanency options. Although these types of services are an important component of preparing youth for adulthood, they are not sufficient for connecting them with permanent families.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, older youth might show some resistance to permanency planning. If permanency planning involves the termination of their birth parents' rights, older youth might be hesitant to form ties with new families, as many still have emotional ties to their birth families. These youth also may be unaware of the long-term consequences of not having a family to turn to during their young adult years, which may cause feelings of apathy toward permanency.<sup>61</sup>

### **Youth emancipating from foster care**

Measure 3.4 focuses on youth who reach age 18 or exit foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation.<sup>62</sup> These are youth for whom the state was unable to find a permanent home. Nationally, approximately 21,000 youth were emancipated from foster care in 2016. The percentage of children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation has steadily decreased each year, from 9.6 percent of all exits in 2012 to 8.2 percent in 2016—a 14.4-percent decrease.

**Since 2012, the percentage of children emancipating from foster care has decreased by 14.4 percent.**

There was considerable variation across states regarding the percentage of children exiting foster care who were reported in AFCARS as having a discharge reason of emancipation. In 2016, the states with the highest percentages of children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation were New Hampshire (20.9 percent), Virginia (18.5 percent), and Maryland (17.4 percent). The states with the lowest percentages in 2016 were Wyoming (1.3 percent), West Virginia (1.7 percent), Indiana (2.9 percent), and Mississippi (2.9 percent). The median performance across states for children exiting foster care with a discharge reason of emancipation continued to decrease in 2016 to 7.5 percent—a 13.0-percent decrease from 2012.<sup>63</sup>

One possibility for this variation across states might be due to differences across states in the ages of children entering foster care (e.g., a state with proportionally more older youth entering foster care would have a higher percentage of the state's foster youth exiting to emancipation). However, there was a relatively low correlation between the percentage of youth discharged from foster care who were emancipated and the percentage of children who entered foster care in the state who were age 12 or older (Pearson's  $r=.34$ ).

Measure 3.4 examines the amount of time children were in foster care before emancipation. The data in table III–2 show that, in half the states, 17.1 percent or more of the children who were emancipated from foster care in 2016 were age 12 or younger at their entry into foster care (measure 3.4). Emancipations compose a relatively small proportion of exits from care for any given state. For example, Wyoming reported only 13 children exiting care in 2016 to emancipation. Thus, individual state performance can vary widely from year to year depending on the exit circumstances of relatively few children. In 2016, state performance ranged from 0.0 percent to 54.8 percent.

## **CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF ACHIEVING PERMANENCY**

Table III–3 presents the median performances across states for 2012–2016 on measures pertaining to achieving permanency for children in foster care. The table also presents a summary of the change in state performance between 2012 and 2016 on these measures. These median performances and changes in performance over time should be viewed together in order to gain a better understanding of trends over time.

<sup>59</sup> Groh, A. (2009). It's time to make older child adoption a reality: Because every child and youth deserves a family. Retrieved from <https://www.nacac.org/resource/its-time-to-make-older-child-adoption-a-reality-because-every-child-and-youth-deserves-a-family/>

<sup>60</sup> Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2013). Enhancing permanency for youth in out-of-home care. Retrieved from <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/focus/enhancing/>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> For more information regarding the definition of emancipation for AFCARS, see Guide to an AFCARS Assessment Review at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-review-guide>.

<sup>63</sup> The median of 7.5 percent refers to the median across states for all children exiting foster care to emancipation. This should not be confused with the median for measure 3.4, which examines the subpopulation of children who were discharged to emancipation after entering care at age 12 or younger.

**Table III–3. Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time, 2012–2016\***  
**Outcome 3: Increase Permanency for Children in Foster Care**

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					Improved in Performance	Declined in Performance
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Measure 3.1: Percentage of all children who exited foster care to a permanent home (N=51)	87.5%	89.3%	89.4%	89.4%	89.6%	8 states (16%)	2 states (4%)
Measure 3.2: Percentage of all children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=47)	77.9%	78.5%	79.0%	80.1%	82.2%	17 states (36%)	6 states (13%)
Measure 3.3: Percentage of all children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 who were discharged to a permanent home (N=51)	65.8%	65.6%	64.3%	66.2%	65.2%	14 states (27%)	12 states (24%)
Measure 3.4: Percentage of all children emancipated from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger (N=51) ****	23.6%	22.5%	20.0%	18.9%	16.9%	43 states (84%)	5 states (10%)

\*In accordance with standard procedure for the analyses conducted for this Report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

\*\*Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table III–2 and appendix B.

\*\*\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years and may be different from the data included in table III–2 due to differences in the numbers of states included for each analysis.

\*\*\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

As shown in table III–3, one of the most notable changes in performance between 2012 and 2016 was in the percentage of children who emancipated from foster care who entered care when they were age 12 or younger (measure 3.4). For this measure, 84 percent of states demonstrated improved performance between 2012 and 2016, and the national median improved from 23.6 percent to 16.9 percent—a 28.4-percent decrease (a lower percentage is desirable on this measure). This finding reflects a continuing trend noted in previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports.

**Between 2012 and 2016, 84 percent of states showed improved performance in the percentage of children emancipated from foster care who entered care when they were age 12 or younger.**

Furthermore, states demonstrated improvement over time across other measures related to this outcome. While the majority (80 percent) of states did not show a change in performance in the percentage of children exiting foster care to a permanent home (measure 3.1), there continued to be a slight increase over time in the national median performance, with several states reporting meaningful improvement. Regarding the percentage of children with a diagnosed disability exiting to permanency (measure 3.2), 36 percent of states showed improved performance between 2012 and 2016, and the national median increased 5.5 percent during the same timeframe, from 77.9 percent to 82.2 percent.

In contrast, median performance in finding permanent homes for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3) has remained relatively flat over time. The national median decreased only 0.9 percent from 2012 to 2016, and nearly as many states declined in performance as improved.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING PERMANENCY FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

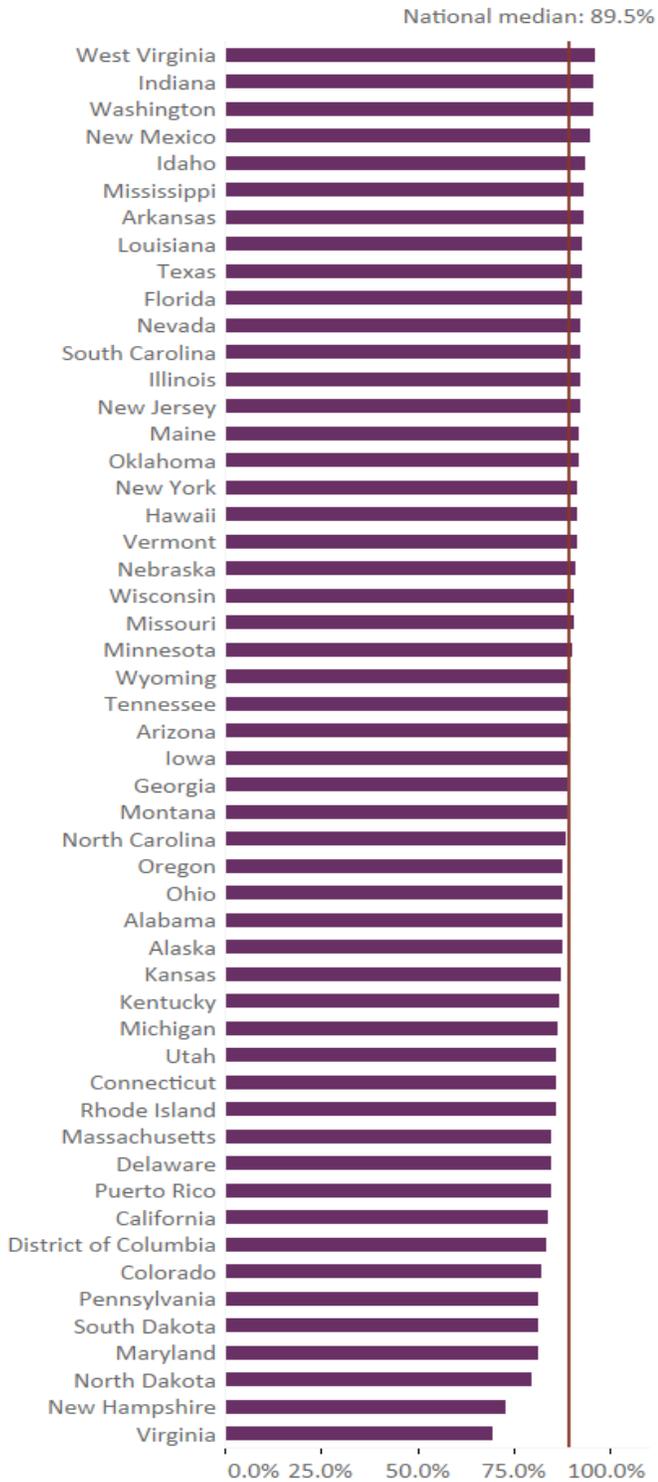
Some positive findings emerged from the 2012–2016 data regarding the achievement of permanency for children in foster care. Similar to findings from previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, the measure assessing permanency for children at the time of discharge from foster care indicates that, across the states, the majority of children exiting foster care in 2016 were discharged to permanent homes (measure 3.1, median=89.5 percent).

Notably, most states continued to show progress in reducing the percentage of children exiting foster care to emancipation. A large number of states demonstrated a reduction in the percentage of children emancipating from foster care who entered foster care at age 12 or younger (measure 3.4, 84 percent of states showed improvement). Many states are making progress in their efforts to find permanent homes for children in care for longer periods of time, and improvement in this measure may be a reflection of those efforts. However, there is still room for improvement, and this continues to be an area that calls for additional consideration from state program administrators and policymakers.

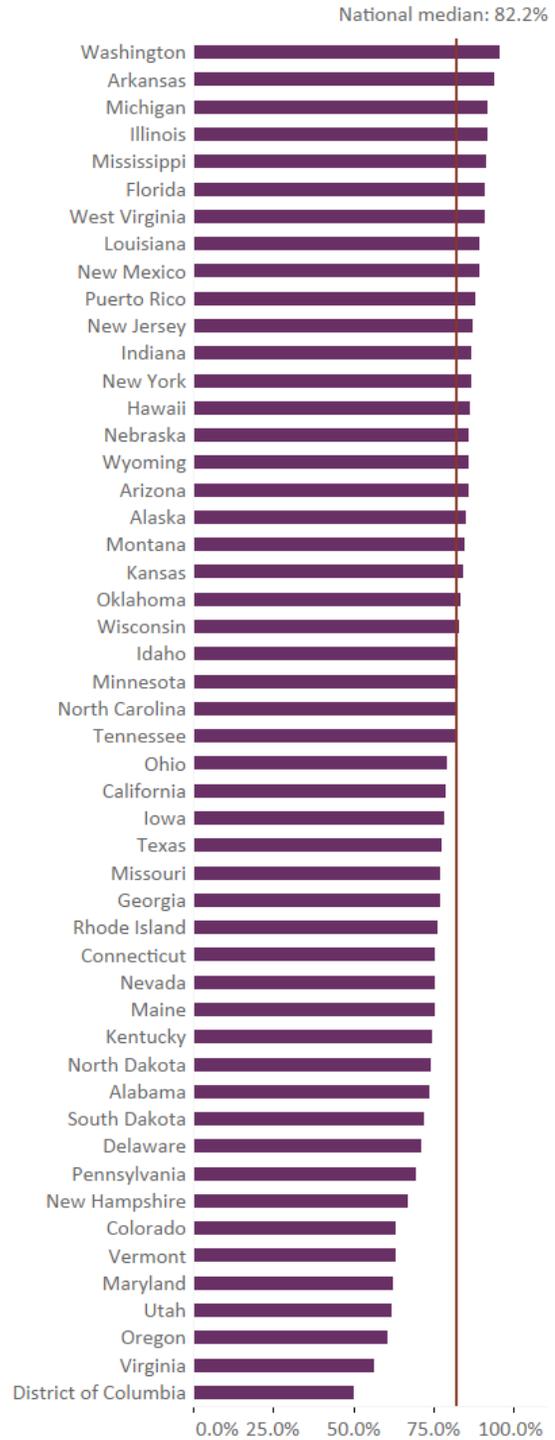
In addition to the promising results in exits to emancipation, states have shown improvement in finding permanent homes for children with disabilities (an increase from 77.9 percent in 2012 to 82.2 percent in 2016). Although efforts are still needed to continue closing the gap on disparities in achieving permanency for older children who entered care at age 12 or before and children with disabilities compared to the overall foster care population, these recent trends are encouraging. However, states continued to have mixed results for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 (a decrease from 65.8 percent in 2012 to 65.2 percent in 2016).

The end of this chapter displays outcomes-based visuals related to finding permanent homes for children in foster care and state performance on outcome 3. The Child Welfare Outcomes data site (<https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatase/>) has additional context information regarding the age and race/ethnicity of children in care, entering care, and exiting care, as well as individual state data, including those states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data.

**Figure III–1. Percentage of Children Exiting to Permanency, 2016 (N=52)**

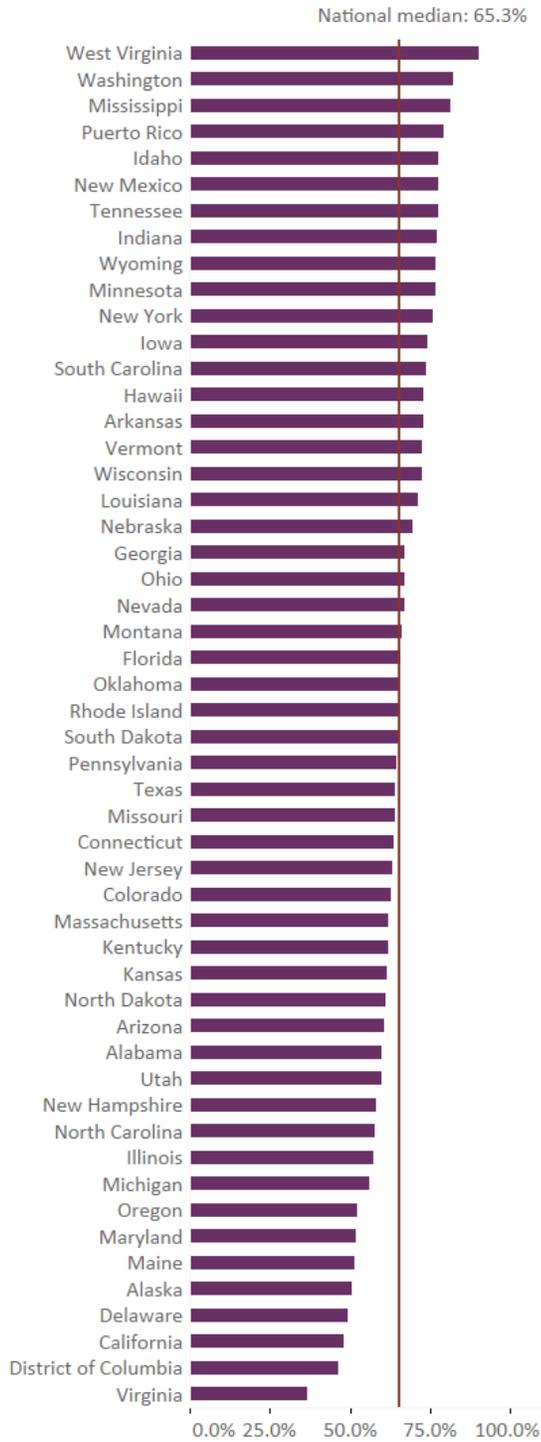


**Figure III–2. Percentage of Children With a Diagnosed Disability Exiting to Permanency, 2016 (N=50)\***

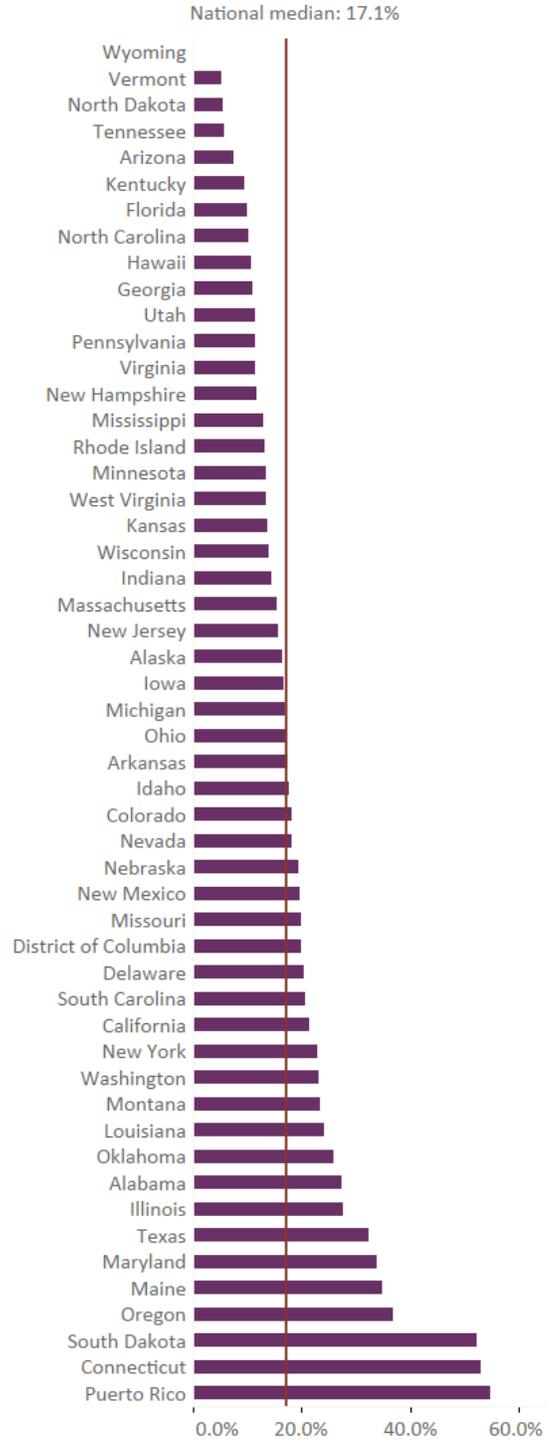


\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

**Figure III-3. Percentage of Children Age 12 and Older Exiting to Permanency, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure III-4. Percentage of Children Exiting to Emancipation Who Entered at Age 12 or Younger, 2016 (N=52)\***



\*For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance.

**Table III–4. Outcome 3.1: Percentage of Children Exiting to Permanency, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	81.3%	83.9%	78.9%	88.5%	87.5%	7.6%
Alaska	87.4%	89.5%	91.0%	86.9%	87.5%	0.1%
Arizona	86.8%	89.3%	89.0%	89.6%	89.6%	3.3%
Arkansas	93.0%	93.5%	93.6%	93.3%	93.1%	0.0%
California	84.6%	81.0%	81.4%	82.3%	83.8%	-0.9%
Colorado	85.4%	84.6%	83.1%	82.8%	82.3%	-3.6%
Connecticut	76.7%	74.1%	72.1%	69.0%	85.8%	11.9%
Delaware	82.8%	77.7%	78.6%	71.9%	84.6%	2.2%
District of Columbia	76.2%	78.0%	80.4%	77.7%	83.4%	9.4%
Florida	91.4%	92.5%	92.0%	92.4%	92.7%	1.4%
Georgia	89.0%	89.6%	89.4%	89.1%	89.0%	0.0%
Hawaii	91.1%	91.3%	89.4%	92.4%	91.6%	0.6%
Idaho	90.4%	92.3%	92.9%	92.0%	93.5%	3.4%
Illinois	90.7%	90.2%	90.9%	91.3%	92.2%	1.7%
Indiana	92.1%	94.2%	92.9%	95.2%	95.6%	3.8%
Iowa	90.2%	90.4%	91.3%	90.0%	89.3%	-1.0%
Kansas	85.2%	85.5%	86.6%	86.8%	87.4%	2.6%
Kentucky	87.3%	86.2%	87.2%	87.9%	86.7%	-0.6%
Louisiana	91.3%	93.5%	91.0%	93.1%	92.9%	1.7%
Maine	88.0%	88.1%	91.6%	91.2%	92.1%	4.6%
Maryland	80.0%	80.7%	81.0%	78.7%	81.2%	1.5%
Massachusetts	82.6%	83.0%	82.0%	84.0%	84.8%	2.7%
Michigan	87.5%	87.1%	85.3%	81.0%	86.6%	-1.0%
Minnesota	88.1%	89.6%	90.3%	89.4%	90.3%	2.6%
Mississippi	94.1%	94.0%	94.2%	93.1%	93.3%	-0.9%
Missouri	88.4%	88.8%	88.0%	89.7%	90.4%	2.2%
Montana	85.7%	91.3%	91.4%	90.1%	88.8%	3.7%
Nebraska	85.9%	86.4%	83.6%	90.1%	90.8%	5.7%
Nevada	90.7%	90.4%	91.8%	92.5%	92.4%	1.9%
New Hampshire	85.7%	83.1%	82.8%	81.6%	72.9%	-14.9%
New Jersey	89.4%	90.3%	91.0%	92.2%	92.1%	3.0%
New Mexico	93.6%	94.7%	93.9%	93.3%	94.6%	1.1%
New York	82.9%	82.8%	84.6%	91.8%	91.6%	10.6%
North Carolina	87.5%	88.5%	87.9%	88.9%	88.5%	1.1%
North Dakota	81.5%	81.3%	80.3%	82.8%	79.5%	-2.4%
Ohio	81.5%	84.8%	86.9%	87.4%	87.8%	7.7%
Oklahoma	89.4%	89.4%	90.2%	92.3%	91.8%	2.6%
Oregon	87.4%	90.3%	89.6%	87.8%	87.8%	0.5%
Pennsylvania	85.6%	86.2%	82.5%	82.0%	81.3%	-5.1%
Rhode Island	82.7%	85.7%	80.8%	82.3%	85.8%	3.7%
South Carolina	92.4%	91.4%	92.2%	93.9%	92.2%	-0.1%
South Dakota	74.1%	82.7%	81.7%	83.6%	81.3%	9.6%
Tennessee	90.2%	90.9%	89.6%	88.7%	89.9%	-0.3%
Texas	91.8%	91.9%	91.9%	92.9%	92.9%	1.1%
Utah	84.6%	85.2%	86.3%	87.8%	86.1%	1.7%
Vermont	86.7%	85.6%	87.2%	88.6%	91.3%	5.3%
Virginia	67.7%	71.9%	73.7%	75.1%	69.4%	2.5%
Washington	92.2%	92.9%	93.1%	94.6%	95.5%	3.6%
West Virginia	96.0%	97.2%	95.9%	96.1%	96.0%	0.0%
Wisconsin	87.5%	89.8%	90.4%	90.8%	90.8%	3.8%
Wyoming	90.2%	89.7%	89.4%	91.4%	90.0%	-0.3%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table III–5. Outcome 3.2: Percentage of Children With Diagnosed Disabilities Exiting to Permanency, 2012–2016 (N=47)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	61.9%	63.1%	53.8%	70.2%	74.0%	19.5%
Alaska	85.0%	85.5%	84.2%	84.8%	84.9%	-0.1%
Arizona	77.0%	83.6%	84.7%	86.2%	85.9%	11.6%
Arkansas	94.1%	91.6%	90.6%	92.1%	93.8%	-0.3%
Colorado	71.1%	69.1%	59.1%	56.3%	63.3%	-10.9%
Connecticut	63.5%	54.0%	53.7%	61.0%	75.5%	18.9%
Delaware	72.1%	61.9%	68.0%	53.4%	71.2%	-1.3%
District of Columbia	23.5%	42.1%	13.3%	45.5%	50.0%	112.5%
Florida	85.2%	88.0%	92.9%	91.9%	91.0%	6.8%
Georgia	82.7%	81.6%	79.9%	76.5%	77.2%	-6.6%
Hawaii	82.2%	85.4%	88.6%	87.3%	86.5%	5.3%
Idaho	83.8%	81.1%	89.4%	82.4%	82.4%	-1.6%
Illinois	90.2%	89.3%	90.6%	91.3%	91.7%	1.6%
Indiana	89.8%	89.5%	85.0%	87.7%	87.0%	-3.1%
Iowa	81.4%	79.4%	82.8%	83.7%	78.5%	-3.6%
Kansas	82.0%	81.9%	82.5%	82.6%	84.2%	2.7%
Kentucky	76.8%	74.2%	74.1%	75.1%	74.4%	-3.1%
Louisiana	71.7%	82.3%	86.5%	88.1%	89.4%	24.7%
Maine	73.2%	69.6%	71.2%	73.1%	75.3%	2.9%
Maryland	65.5%	64.5%	62.8%	60.1%	62.5%	-4.5%
Michigan	79.9%	79.6%	75.0%	50.9%	92.0%	15.2%
Minnesota	80.9%	82.2%	81.7%	82.1%	82.4%	1.9%
Mississippi	92.4%	94.0%	93.2%	95.6%	91.6%	-0.9%
Missouri	79.6%	76.0%	73.8%	75.2%	77.2%	-2.9%
Montana	81.3%	82.7%	87.3%	87.2%	84.6%	4.2%
Nebraska	77.9%	82.6%	75.2%	86.1%	86.1%	10.5%
Nevada	78.7%	77.3%	71.8%	76.3%	75.4%	-4.2%
New Hampshire	75.0%	43.1%	81.4%	67.4%	67.0%	-10.7%
New Jersey	78.9%	80.5%	79.0%	86.1%	87.4%	10.8%
New Mexico	88.1%	91.1%	87.1%	86.6%	89.3%	1.3%
New York	74.1%	73.6%	74.8%	86.7%	86.7%	17.1%
North Carolina	77.7%	77.7%	80.4%	79.6%	82.2%	5.8%
North Dakota	73.5%	70.3%	69.0%	75.5%	74.2%	0.9%
Ohio	67.6%	73.3%	75.5%	80.1%	79.4%	17.4%
Oklahoma	76.4%	76.4%	78.8%	83.4%	83.7%	9.5%
Oregon	67.6%	69.9%	69.0%	61.5%	60.7%	-10.2%
Pennsylvania	78.5%	77.4%	72.7%	72.4%	69.6%	-11.4%
Rhode Island	69.1%	78.5%	68.3%	75.1%	76.3%	10.5%
Tennessee	75.7%	77.8%	79.7%	72.4%	82.1%	8.5%
Texas	77.8%	77.0%	78.1%	78.9%	77.6%	-0.2%
Utah	76.4%	75.3%	77.7%	77.7%	61.9%	-19.0%
Vermont	64.7%	71.4%	50.0%	78.6%	63.2%	-2.4%
Virginia	56.3%	59.4%	63.9%	65.1%	56.7%	0.8%
Washington	84.2%	91.0%	91.9%	94.6%	95.6%	13.6%
West Virginia	92.6%	94.5%	91.5%	91.5%	91.0%	-1.8%
Wisconsin	80.5%	84.2%	84.8%	83.7%	82.8%	2.8%
Wyoming	86.8%	86.2%	83.2%	83.6%	86.0%	-1.0%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table III–6. Outcome 3.3: Percentage of Children Age 12 and Older Exiting to Permanency, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	54.7%	50.6%	60.4%	61.8%	60.0%	9.7%
Alaska	49.5%	52.2%	57.3%	50.7%	50.7%	2.3%
Arizona	56.5%	62.0%	59.7%	60.2%	60.9%	7.7%
Arkansas	73.4%	74.0%	73.3%	69.7%	72.8%	-0.8%
California	56.6%	50.0%	47.4%	48.2%	47.9%	-15.3%
Colorado	68.0%	66.4%	62.4%	59.4%	62.9%	-7.5%
Connecticut	71.9%	56.4%	58.3%	51.8%	63.7%	-11.3%
Delaware	57.2%	45.1%	48.5%	36.4%	49.5%	-13.6%
District of Columbia	35.0%	39.5%	41.6%	45.6%	46.2%	32.0%
Florida	63.4%	67.4%	65.8%	66.2%	65.6%	3.5%
Georgia	68.1%	68.9%	70.0%	70.0%	67.2%	-1.3%
Hawaii	77.3%	75.6%	72.4%	78.9%	73.1%	-5.4%
Idaho	69.4%	71.0%	73.1%	72.8%	77.5%	11.6%
Illinois	53.8%	54.0%	53.0%	55.7%	57.3%	6.4%
Indiana	74.6%	75.9%	67.2%	75.9%	77.3%	3.7%
Iowa	77.4%	76.8%	77.5%	74.0%	74.4%	-3.9%
Kansas	60.1%	59.9%	59.2%	59.9%	61.6%	2.6%
Kentucky	65.8%	61.1%	63.6%	66.4%	61.8%	-6.0%
Louisiana	71.8%	77.4%	67.2%	74.3%	71.4%	-0.6%
Maine	54.1%	50.5%	58.2%	53.9%	51.6%	-4.6%
Maryland	54.1%	52.4%	50.3%	47.4%	51.7%	-4.4%
Massachusetts	66.5%	67.0%	62.5%	62.4%	61.9%	-6.9%
Michigan	64.5%	62.0%	63.4%	48.9%	56.0%	-13.2%
Minnesota	77.4%	79.1%	79.5%	76.7%	76.6%	-1.0%
Mississippi	81.6%	83.6%	80.9%	82.1%	81.5%	-0.1%
Missouri	61.2%	60.0%	58.4%	60.6%	64.1%	4.6%
Montana	58.3%	69.1%	73.4%	68.4%	66.4%	13.9%
Nebraska	73.1%	73.3%	66.6%	71.4%	69.6%	-4.9%
Nevada	58.5%	61.0%	66.1%	67.5%	66.9%	14.3%
New Hampshire	67.2%	62.8%	71.7%	71.9%	58.4%	-13.2%
New Jersey	63.7%	65.6%	64.3%	64.8%	63.1%	-1.0%
New Mexico	76.4%	80.1%	77.9%	73.4%	77.5%	1.5%
New York	64.6%	61.7%	65.9%	77.7%	75.9%	17.6%
North Carolina	59.3%	57.2%	58.3%	59.7%	57.7%	-2.6%
North Dakota	65.8%	62.7%	59.8%	66.0%	61.1%	-7.2%
Ohio	62.8%	65.2%	64.7%	67.1%	67.1%	6.9%
Oklahoma	62.9%	62.1%	63.1%	60.3%	65.4%	4.0%
Oregon	60.7%	63.6%	57.7%	51.4%	52.4%	-13.7%
Pennsylvania	72.0%	72.1%	66.9%	67.6%	64.4%	-10.6%
Rhode Island	67.8%	71.3%	61.4%	60.5%	65.3%	-3.7%
South Carolina	74.0%	69.9%	73.6%	79.7%	73.6%	-0.5%
South Dakota	59.1%	68.8%	64.2%	63.4%	65.2%	10.3%
Tennessee	79.2%	79.3%	77.1%	74.8%	77.4%	-2.2%
Texas	56.9%	58.6%	58.2%	63.1%	64.3%	12.9%
Utah	60.0%	61.7%	63.2%	64.9%	59.7%	-0.4%
Vermont	71.5%	66.7%	66.3%	68.2%	72.6%	1.5%
Virginia	34.8%	42.1%	41.0%	43.7%	36.7%	5.5%
Washington	70.9%	73.4%	73.4%	78.8%	82.3%	16.1%
West Virginia	92.3%	94.2%	91.4%	90.6%	90.3%	-2.1%
Wisconsin	68.9%	72.7%	73.3%	73.5%	72.4%	5.1%
Wyoming	79.8%	79.5%	75.6%	79.2%	76.9%	-3.7%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table III–7. Outcome 3.4: Percentage of Children Exiting to Emancipation Who Entered Care Under Age 12, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	26.6%	27.0%	24.7%	25.7%	27.5%	3.2%
Alaska	26.4%	25.0%	29.0%	14.3%	16.4%	-37.7%
Arizona	9.1%	9.4%	8.4%	9.8%	7.5%	-16.8%
Arkansas	20.2%	24.8%	22.7%	22.5%	17.3%	-14.1%
California	30.6%	29.7%	26.8%	24.4%	21.4%	-30.1%
Colorado	19.4%	15.4%	21.8%	20.7%	18.1%	-6.3%
Connecticut	45.8%	30.5%	31.3%	42.0%	53.2%	16.0%
Delaware	21.3%	22.7%	29.2%	25.3%	20.4%	-4.1%
District of Columbia	42.6%	42.1%	43.1%	40.2%	20.0%	-53.0%
Florida	20.4%	18.8%	18.3%	14.5%	9.9%	-51.7%
Georgia	17.5%	14.2%	13.2%	13.4%	10.9%	-37.9%
Hawaii	28.6%	32.8%	20.0%	25.0%	10.6%	-62.8%
Idaho	11.4%	20.6%	11.5%	17.5%	17.6%	54.9%
Illinois	47.2%	41.4%	46.0%	37.6%	27.6%	-41.6%
Indiana	26.4%	21.3%	13.0%	9.4%	14.5%	-45.1%
Iowa	19.9%	18.3%	15.5%	17.0%	16.7%	-15.9%
Kansas	15.5%	15.2%	11.6%	15.8%	13.8%	-11.4%
Kentucky	11.3%	11.8%	11.8%	10.8%	9.4%	-16.7%
Louisiana	26.4%	31.2%	22.6%	26.5%	24.1%	-8.6%
Maine	41.6%	29.7%	35.5%	30.3%	34.8%	-16.3%
Maryland	39.7%	36.8%	33.1%	30.2%	33.8%	-14.8%
Massachusetts	23.6%	20.6%	18.9%	18.9%	15.4%	-34.8%
Michigan	28.8%	21.5%	22.7%	22.3%	16.9%	-41.2%
Minnesota	21.5%	19.5%	23.7%	19.7%	13.5%	-37.5%
Mississippi	22.1%	23.9%	12.5%	14.8%	12.9%	-41.4%
Missouri	23.3%	21.3%	19.1%	18.6%	19.9%	-14.8%
Montana	36.8%	37.0%	28.8%	37.5%	23.3%	-36.7%
Nebraska	11.5%	8.9%	6.2%	13.7%	19.4%	69.1%
Nevada	21.5%	20.8%	20.6%	21.3%	18.3%	-15.1%
New Hampshire	34.6%	32.7%	10.7%	21.7%	11.6%	-66.5%
New Jersey	24.7%	20.3%	18.0%	14.4%	15.8%	-36.1%
New Mexico	29.5%	18.0%	26.7%	21.3%	19.7%	-33.2%
New York	28.8%	24.4%	26.5%	22.4%	22.9%	-20.8%
North Carolina	19.0%	12.7%	12.0%	11.8%	10.3%	-45.6%
North Dakota	11.9%	9.4%	8.8%	14.9%	5.5%	-54.3%
Ohio	36.5%	25.9%	18.3%	16.7%	17.2%	-52.8%
Oklahoma	36.3%	34.2%	28.7%	25.5%	25.9%	-28.7%
Oregon	39.2%	34.0%	36.1%	35.1%	36.8%	-6.1%
Pennsylvania	20.0%	16.3%	15.2%	14.0%	11.4%	-42.7%
Rhode Island	26.4%	24.4%	14.8%	12.8%	13.2%	-50.1%
South Carolina	29.7%	27.0%	25.7%	29.3%	20.7%	-30.1%
South Dakota	37.9%	32.2%	42.3%	32.7%	52.4%	38.3%
Tennessee	3.0%	3.7%	6.0%	4.0%	5.8%	95.3%
Texas	39.2%	36.9%	34.0%	31.6%	32.5%	-17.2%
Utah	17.4%	13.6%	9.6%	15.9%	11.4%	-34.6%
Vermont	20.6%	10.4%	10.4%	7.6%	5.3%	-74.4%
Virginia	21.3%	23.4%	19.5%	17.7%	11.6%	-45.6%
Washington	24.7%	25.8%	27.2%	24.6%	23.2%	-6.1%
West Virginia	19.4%	22.5%	19.1%	7.0%	13.6%	-30.3%
Wisconsin	22.5%	19.8%	21.0%	16.5%	14.0%	-37.9%
Wyoming	0.0%	8.3%	12.5%	16.7%	0.0%	0.0%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

# IV: Achieving Timely Reunifications and Adoptions for Children in Foster Care

While Chapter III broadly discussed the issue of permanency and noted some special issues for the diverse population of children in foster care, this chapter focuses more specifically on the achievement of permanency through reunification and adoption. The timeliness of achieving permanency for children in foster care is reinforced and supported by federal policies and laws, such as ASFA, that stress the importance of the timely identification of permanent homes for children taken into foster care. Outcome 4 (reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry) and outcome 5 (reduce time in foster care to adoption) encompass this goal for children and youth. Because the percentage of children who are discharged from foster care to guardianship is very small in almost all states, the timeliness of guardianships is not specifically addressed in this chapter.

This chapter provides information on contextual factors related to caseworker visits and presents national results for the following measures:

- Measure 4.1: The percentage of reunifications that occurred in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care
- Measure 4.2: The percentage of children entering foster care who reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode
- Measure 5.1a: The percentage of children discharged to adoption in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care
- Measure 5.1b: The percentage of children discharged to adoption at least 12 months but less than 24 months from the date of entry into foster care

## CASEWORKER VISITS

Achieving permanency in a timely manner for children in foster care can be linked in part to the frequency and quality of caseworker visits with children. During the first and second rounds of the CFSRs, an association was found between measures involving caseworker visits and positive outcomes for children in foster care. For example, frequent contact between the caseworker and the child (as indicated by positive ratings on item 19 in the round 2 CFSR onsite review instrument) was associated with better ratings on CFSR permanency outcome 1 (children have permanency and stability in their living situations).<sup>64</sup>

Based in part on these findings, the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109–288) amended Title IV-B of the Act to include requirements for states to collect data on monthly caseworker visits for children in foster care.<sup>65</sup> The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112–34) extended these requirements, which are now in Sections 424(f)(1)(A) and (2)(A) as well as 479(A)(6) of the Act and establish the following performance standards for caseworker visits:<sup>66</sup>

- For 2012–2014, the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care during a FY must not be less than 90 percent of the total number of such visits that would occur if each child were visited once every month while in care. Starting in 2015, this number increased to 95 percent.
- For 2012 and afterwards, at least 50 percent of the total number of monthly visits made by caseworkers to children in foster care during a FY must occur in the child’s residence.

Beginning in 2012, states were required to begin meeting these new performance requirements using a revised methodology for calculating caseworker visits data.<sup>67</sup> This Report presents the first complete 5-year review of the revised methodology. The caseworker visits data presented include the percentage of children in foster care visited each full month they were in care, as well as the proportion of those visits that occurred in the homes where the children were then living. Data for monthly caseworker visits and visits in the home for 2012–2016 are shown in table IV–1.

<sup>64</sup> More information concerning caseworker visits from round 1 of the CFSRs can be found in General Findings From the Federal Child and Family Services Review at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/cwmonitoring/results/genfindings04/genfindings04.pdf> (p. 35), and more information from round 2 can be found in Federal Child and Family Services Reviews, Aggregate Report, Round 2, Fiscal Years 2007–2010 at [https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/fcfsr\\_report.pdf](https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/cb/fcfsr_report.pdf) (p. 57).

<sup>65</sup> More information about the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 can be found on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi-109-288>.

<sup>66</sup> More information about the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 can be found on the Children’s Bureau website in Information Memorandum ACYF-CB-IM-11-06, which was issued October 6, 2011. It is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/im1106>.

<sup>67</sup> More information on the caseworker visits measures can be found in appendix C of this Report. For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for FY 2007–2011, see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-03, which is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi0803>. Additional detailed guidance on the revised requirements for reporting the caseworker visits measures is outlined in Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01, which was issued January 6, 2012. It is available at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi1201>.

**Table IV–1. Monthly Caseworker Visits and Visits in the Home, 2012–2016**

Measures*	Median Performance				
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Percentage of children receiving monthly caseworker visits (N=52)	93.9%	94.6%	94.7%	95.3%	95.3%
Percentage of monthly visits that occurred in the home of the child (N=51)	85.3%	87.1%	86.3%	88.0%	87.8%

\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

The national median regarding the percentage of children in foster care receiving a caseworker visit at least once each month while in care exceeded the national standard each year. In 2016, 35 states (67 percent) met or exceeded the national standard of 95 percent. The national median in 2016 for the percentage of monthly visits occurring in the child’s home was 87.8 percent—well above the national standard of 50 percent. One state (Utah) reported 100 percent of monthly visits to children in foster care occurred in the child’s residence, and no states fell below the 50-percent standard.

## TIMELINESS OF REUNIFICATIONS

The assessment of timeliness of reunification is addressed through outcome 4 (reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry).<sup>68</sup> The wording of this outcome is intended to ensure that reunifications are not viewed as timely if they also are not permanent (i.e., if the child reenters foster care within 12 months of being reunified). Since a state’s reunification speed is understood best when it is also known how many of those children reentered foster care within a short period of time, a measure of reentry is also included. For the purpose of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, a reunification is considered to be timely if it occurs in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care.

Table IV–2 presents summary data regarding state performance in 2016 on timeliness of reunification without increasing reentries.

**Table IV–2. Range of State Performance, 2016  
Outcome 4: Achieving Timely Reunifications**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range
Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=52)	56.0%	66.0%	72.0%	25.8–85.1%
Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=52)**	5.7%	6.8%	9.8%	0.8–15.8%

\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

The 2016 data shown in table IV–2 indicate, in many states, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. State performance ranged from 25.8 percent to 85.1 percent, and the median performance was 66.0 percent. For 87 percent of states, more than half of reunifications were timely (see figure IV–3 at the end of this chapter). Additionally, table IV–2 shows that 6.8 percent of children who entered foster care in 2016 were reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. There was a wide range of performance across states in the proportion of children reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode, from 0.8 percent to 15.8 percent.

<sup>68</sup> For the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, children are considered reunified if the discharge reason provided to AFCARS is either (1) reunified with parent or primary caretaker or (2) living with other relatives.

## CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO ACHIEVING TIMELY REUNIFICATIONS

Table IV–3 shows the change over time in the national median for achieving timely reunifications for children in foster care. This table also shows the number of states that demonstrated an improvement or decline in performance, as determined by a percent change calculation.

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					Improved in Performance	Declined in Performance
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Measure 4.1: Percentage of reunifications that occurred in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care (N=51)	65.5%	67.4%	66.4%	67.8%	66.1%	11 states (22%)	21 states (41%)
Measure 4.2: Percentage of children entering foster care who reentered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (N=51)****	8.0%	8.5%	7.3%	7.2%	6.9%	30 states (59%)	12 states (24%)

\*In accordance with standard procedure for data analysis in this Report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

\*\*Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table IV–2 and appendix B.

\*\*\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years and may be different from the data included in table IV–2 due to differences in the numbers of states included for each analysis.

\*\*\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

As illustrated in table IV–3, there was little change over time in state performance on the percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months of the child’s entry into foster care, with an increase of only 0.9 percent between 2012 and 2016. During this period, 22 percent of states improved in performance, but 41 percent showed a decline. There was a marked improvement in state performance from 2012 to 2016 on the percentage of children reentering care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. The national median declined 13.8 percent between 2012 and 2016, with 59 percent of states improving in performance (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure).

## TIMELINESS OF ADOPTIONS

The majority of children exiting foster care are reunified with their families and not adopted (see table III–1). However, when a decision is made that adoption is in the best interest of the child (and agreed upon by the youth, if age appropriate), adoption should proceed rapidly so that the child is able to be placed quickly in a secure, caring, and safe environment.

As referenced in the beginning of this chapter, the timeliness of achieving permanency for children in foster care is critical to their well-being. ASFA amended Section 475(5)(E) of the Act to require that a state file a petition to terminate the parents’ parental rights and concurrently pursue adoption as a permanency goal for any child who has been in foster care for 15 of the most recent 22 months, unless the agency documents a compelling reason why such action would not be in the best interests of the child. In accordance with Section 475(5)(F) of the Act, a child is considered to have “entered foster care” (for purposes of starting the clock for the 15 of 22 months) on the earlier of the following:

- The first judicial finding that the child has been subjected to abuse and/or neglect
- The date that is 60 days (2 months) after the date on which the child is removed from the home

For the purposes of calculating this Report’s related outcome measures, a 17-month timeframe was used because AFCARS does not collect information pertaining to the date of the first judicial finding. HHS calculates this timeframe by adding 60 days (to account for the second scenario for having “entered foster care”) and 15 months (to account for the ASFA guidance) to the date of the child’s removal.

In 2016, approximately 57,000 children exited foster care to adoption, and 118,000 children were waiting for adoption.<sup>69</sup> Outcome measure 5.1 addresses the timeliness of adoptions. Table IV–4 presents summary data showing the range of state performance in 2016 on this measure.

<sup>69</sup> There is no federal definition for a child “waiting for adoption.” The definition used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports includes children through age 17 who have a goal (as indicated in AFCARS) of adoption and/or whose parents’ parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents’ parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A state’s own definition may differ from that used here. The data on children waiting for adoption are frequently updated. Please see the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research> for the most current data.

**Table IV–4. Range of State Performance, 2016  
Outcome 5: Achieving Timely Adoptions**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from foster care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=52)*	1.7%	3.6%	5.1%	0.0–28.0%
Measure 5.1b: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care at least 12 months but less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=52)*	21.0%	28.8%	38.0%	0.0–54.1%

\*Measure 5.1 was among the original outcome measures established in 1998. It is a calculation of discharges to adoption for a variety of time periods. Other time periods composing measure 5.1 are not shown in this table. State performance on each of the time periods is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. See appendix B for more information on how the measure is defined.

Outcome measure 5.1 focuses on the length of time in foster care for children who are discharged to adoption. Performance on this measure in 2016 suggests achieving timely adoptions is a challenge for all but a few states. As shown in table IV–4, it was rare in most states for adoptions to occur in less than 12 months from the child’s entry into foster care. The national median was only 3.6 percent. Only three states reported that at least 10.0 percent of adoptions in 2016 occurred in less than 12 months: Utah (28.0 percent), Florida (13.9 percent), and Wyoming (13.6 percent). States were more successful at achieving adoptions occurring in more than 12 months but less than 24 months from the child’s entry into foster care, with a national median of 28.8 percent in 2016.

### CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO TIMELINESS OF ADOPTIONS

The median performance across states from 2012 through 2016 pertaining to achieving timely adoptions for children in foster care is presented in table IV–5, which also presents the number of states showing an improvement or decline in performance during the same timeframe. Change in median state performance over time was computed by using a percent-change calculation.

**Table IV–5. Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time, 2012–2016\*  
Outcome 4: Achieving Timely Adoptions**

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					Improved in Performance	Declined in Performance
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Measure 5.1a: Percentage of children discharged to adoption in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care (N=51)****	4.4%	3.2%	4.1%	3.3%	3.7%	15 states (29%)	32 states (63%)
Measure 5.1b: Percentage of children discharged to adoption at least 12 months but less than 24 months from the date of entry into foster care (N=51)****	30.2%	31.3%	29.8%	30.8%	29.1%	19 states (37%)	22 states (43%)

\*In accordance with standard procedure for data analysis in this Report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

\*\*Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table IV–4 and appendix B.

\*\*\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years and may be different from the data included in table IV–4 due to differences in the numbers of states included for each analysis.

\*\*\*\*Measure 5.1 was among the original outcome measures established in 1998. It is a calculation of discharges to adoption for a variety of time periods. Other time periods composing measure 5.1 are not shown in this table. State performance on each of the time periods is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. See appendix B for more information on how the measure is defined.

For the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 12 months (measure 5.1a), the national median from 2012 to 2016 decreased significantly from 4.4 percent to 3.7 percent—a 15.9-percent decrease. In addition, a greater proportion of states reported a decline in performance (63 percent) as compared to the proportion that showed improved performance (29 percent), reflecting a trend observed in other recent Reports.

For the percentage of adoptions occurring at least 12 months but less than 24 months from a child’s entry into care (measure 5.1b), there was a 3.6-percent decrease in the national median between 2012 and 2016. Again, more states showed a decline in performance (43 percent) than an improvement (37 percent).

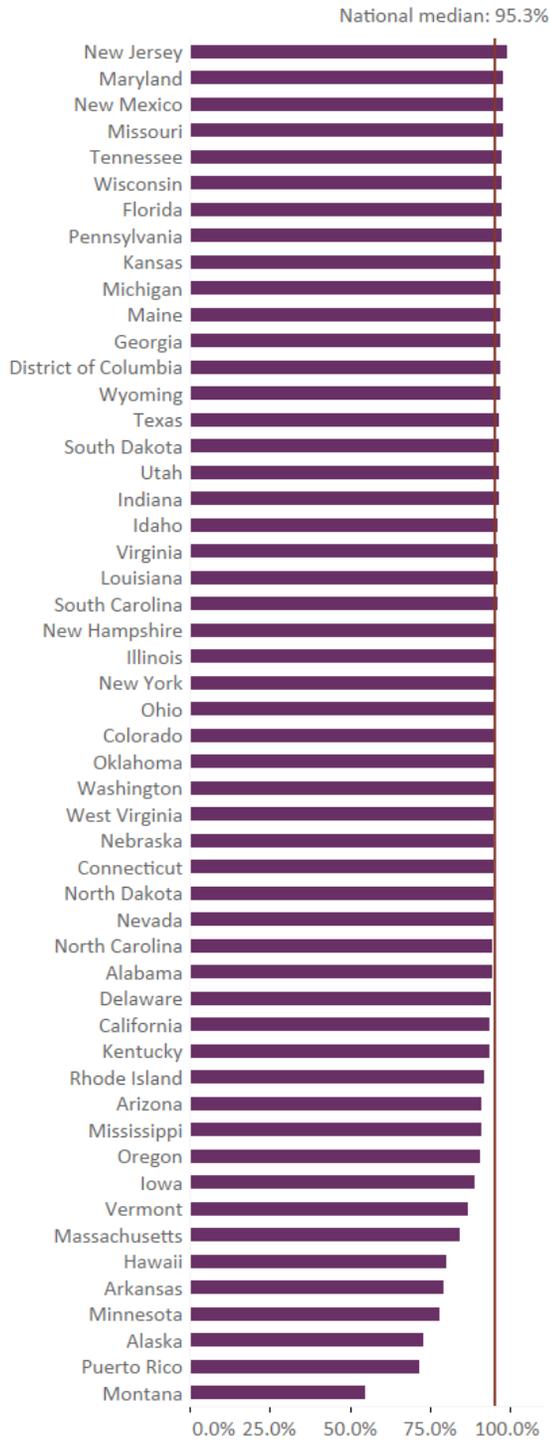
## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING REUNIFICATIONS AND ADOPTIONS IN A TIMELY MANNER**

Achieving permanency for children in foster care in a timely manner remains a challenge for a number of states, and national performance has fluctuated in both reunification and adoption measures over the past 5 years. States demonstrated a mixed performance in achieving reunifications in a timely manner. In 2016, the national median percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry to care was 66.0 percent. While there was a slight improvement in the national median between 2012 and 2016, nearly half of states (41 percent) declined in performance on this measure during that period. However, the majority of states (59 percent) improved in performance from 2012 to 2016 in the percentage of children reentering foster care within 12 months of a prior episode, and the national median improved by 13.8 percent.

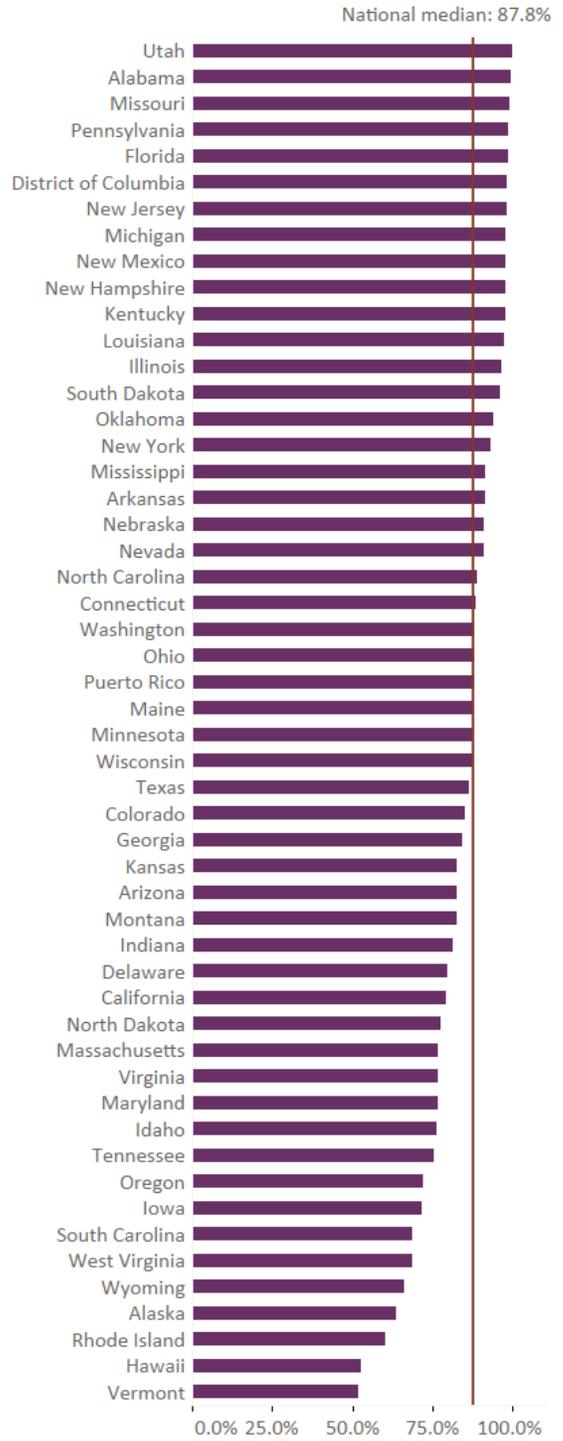
Conversely, state performance on achieving adoptions in a timely manner was less successful. In 2016, nearly two-thirds of states (63 percent) declined in performance from 2012 to 2016 in the percentage of children discharged to adoption in less than 12 months from the date of entry into foster care. In addition, over two-fifths of states (43 percent) also showed a decline in performance for the percentage of children discharged in more than 12 months but less than 24 months from the date of entry.

The end of this chapter displays outcomes-based visuals related to achieving reunifications and adoptions in a timely manner, including caseworker visits data and state performance on outcomes 4 and 5. More information on achieving reunifications and adoptions in a timely manner—data on reentries to care, breakdown by lengths of stay, and state data, including states excluded from analyses and counts due to incomplete or inadequate data—is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

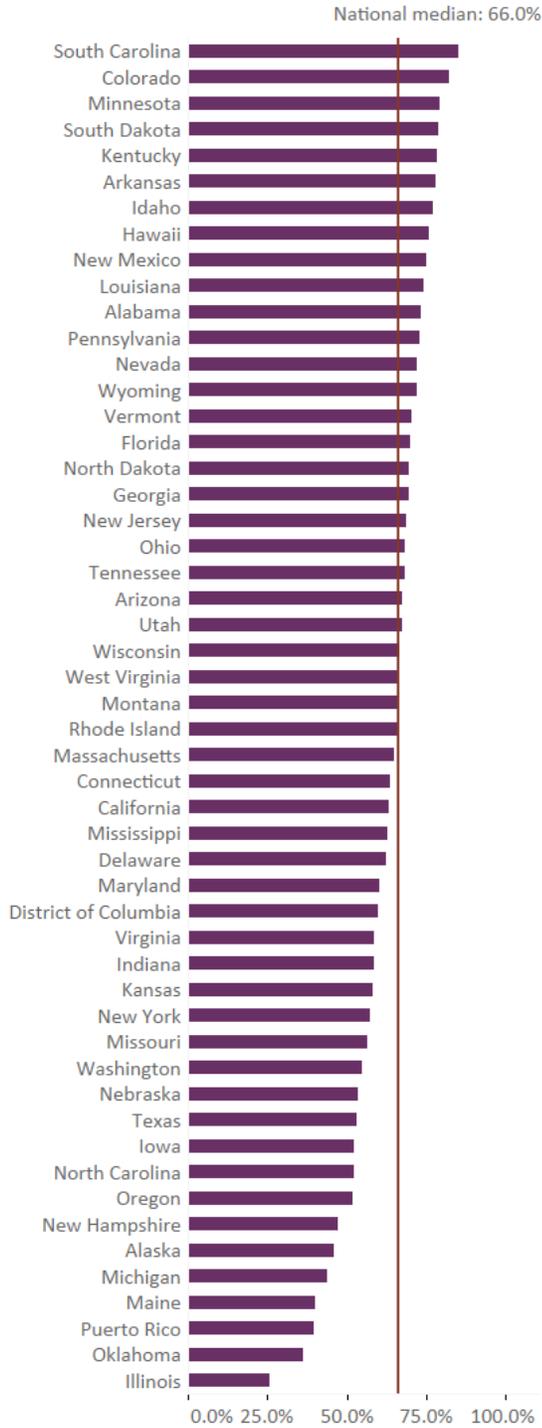
**Figure IV–1. Percentage of Children Receiving Monthly Caseworker Visits, 2016 (N=52)**



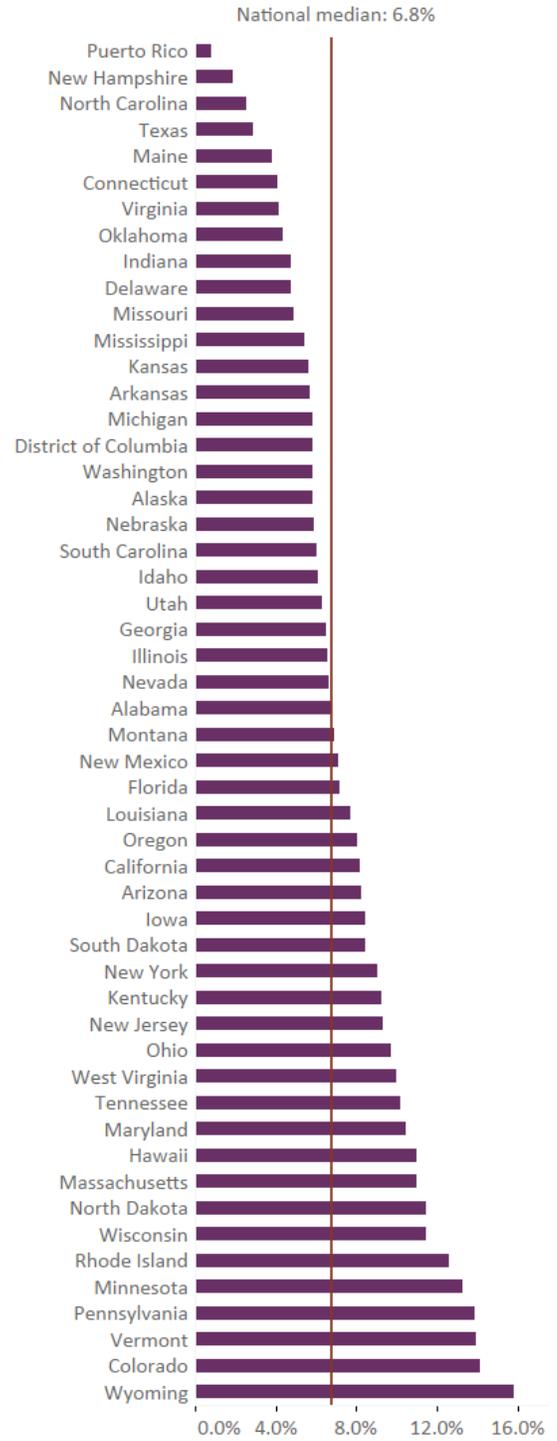
**Figure IV–2. Percentage of Monthly Caseworker Visits Occurring in the Home of the Child, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure IV–3. Percentage of Children Reunified in Less Than 12 Months From Entering Care, 2016 (N=52)**

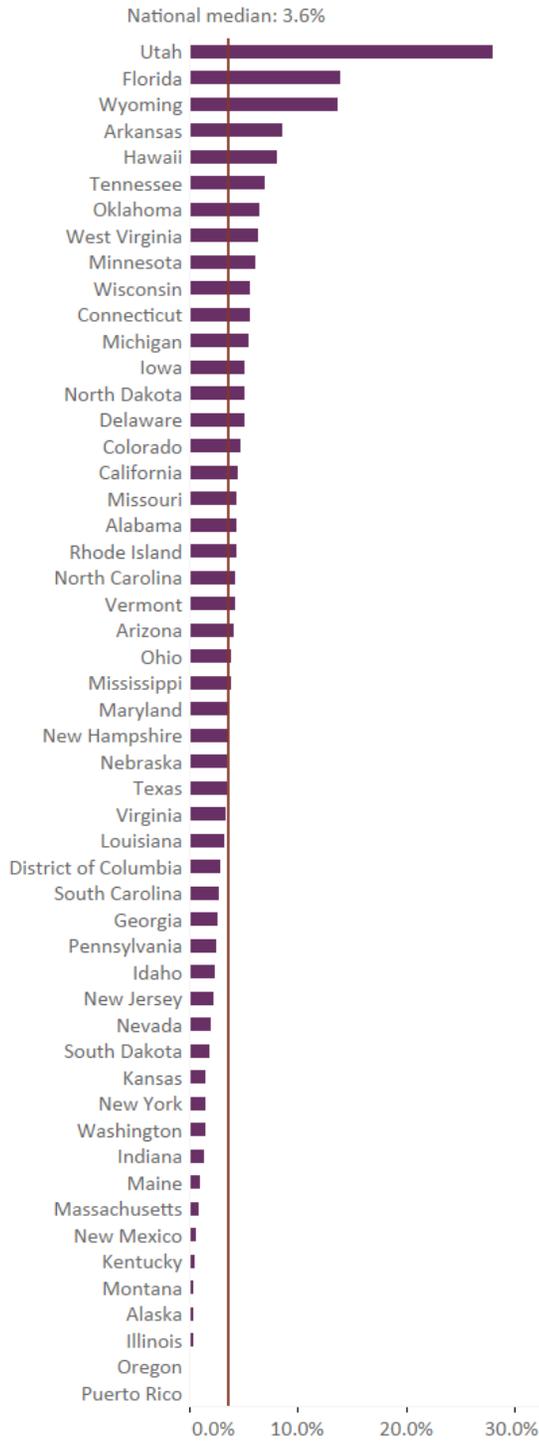


**Figure IV–4. Percent of Children Reentering Care Within 12 Months of a Prior Foster Care Episode, 2016 (N=52)\***

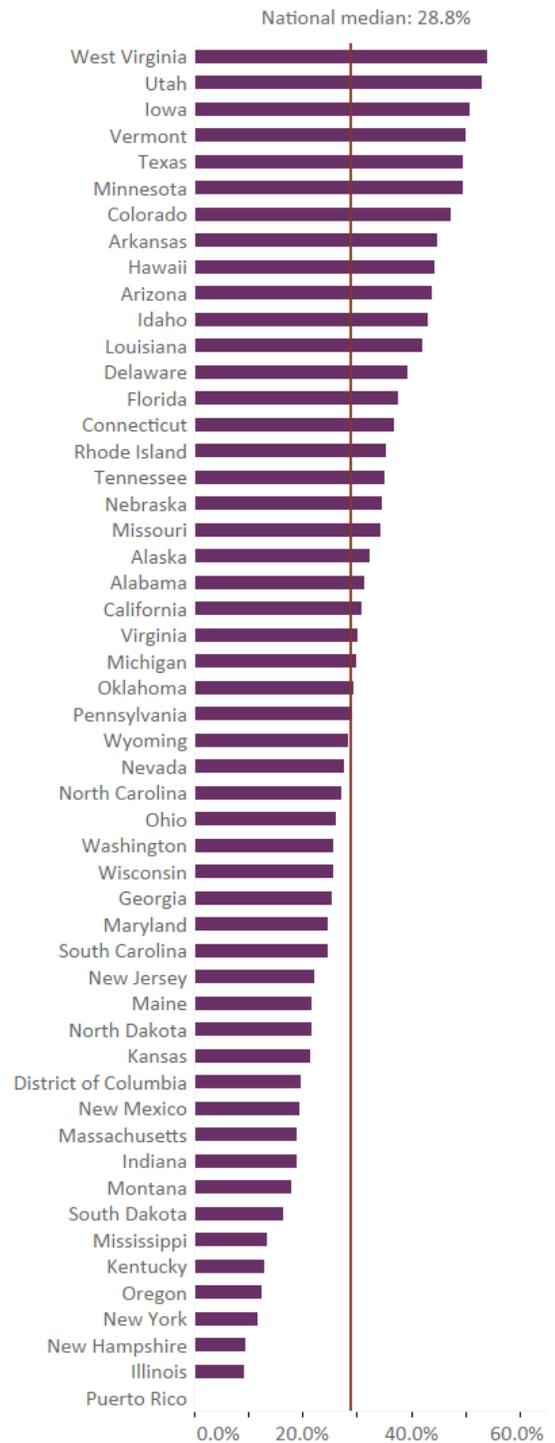


\*For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance.

**Figure IV-5. Percentage of Children Exiting to Adoption Who Were in Care Less Than 12 Months, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure IV-6. Percentage of Children Exiting to Adoption Who Were in Care More Than 12 Months but Less Than 24 Months, 2016 (N=52)**



**Table IV–6. Outcome 4.1: Percentage of Children Reunified in Less Than 12 Months From Entering Care, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	63.0%	67.7%	71.7%	73.9%	73.2%	16.2%
Alaska	49.4%	49.0%	49.8%	54.9%	45.9%	-7.2%
Arizona	76.2%	72.8%	72.4%	69.2%	67.6%	-11.2%
Arkansas	82.8%	81.9%	81.6%	78.5%	78.1%	-5.7%
California	65.1%	65.8%	65.5%	63.9%	63.2%	-2.8%
Colorado	77.1%	76.0%	76.8%	79.9%	82.4%	6.9%
Connecticut	48.1%	56.0%	63.1%	58.8%	63.6%	32.4%
Delaware	65.5%	63.5%	52.3%	60.4%	62.3%	-4.9%
District of Columbia	60.5%	48.6%	57.5%	57.8%	59.8%	-1.2%
Florida	74.1%	71.6%	76.2%	73.1%	70.0%	-5.4%
Georgia	73.1%	70.8%	75.7%	75.3%	69.4%	-5.1%
Hawaii	80.9%	84.0%	83.1%	80.9%	76.0%	-6.0%
Idaho	72.6%	73.8%	74.1%	73.3%	77.1%	6.3%
Illinois	27.7%	27.8%	29.3%	32.1%	25.8%	-6.6%
Indiana	62.1%	58.0%	58.9%	59.1%	58.5%	-5.7%
Iowa	54.9%	56.0%	54.2%	53.9%	52.4%	-4.4%
Kansas	56.8%	64.1%	60.1%	57.2%	58.1%	2.3%
Kentucky	79.3%	79.9%	81.3%	78.2%	78.4%	-1.1%
Louisiana	73.5%	73.9%	76.6%	76.4%	74.3%	1.0%
Maine	51.2%	60.9%	53.0%	47.0%	40.2%	-21.6%
Maryland	54.5%	52.5%	53.0%	54.8%	60.2%	10.5%
Massachusetts	68.1%	68.7%	72.8%	67.4%	64.7%	-4.9%
Michigan	38.3%	44.3%	41.6%	35.3%	43.7%	14.0%
Minnesota	89.3%	88.3%	86.2%	84.0%	79.4%	-11.1%
Mississippi	60.9%	62.0%	66.4%	63.6%	62.6%	2.9%
Missouri	63.6%	60.7%	58.7%	56.9%	56.5%	-11.2%
Montana	63.5%	65.8%	62.5%	63.6%	66.1%	4.0%
Nebraska	48.6%	44.2%	48.3%	52.7%	53.6%	10.2%
Nevada	55.3%	63.7%	63.2%	70.3%	72.3%	30.8%
New Hampshire	79.2%	76.9%	45.4%	50.3%	47.1%	-40.5%
New Jersey	76.7%	75.1%	73.2%	69.6%	68.9%	-10.2%
New Mexico	76.2%	75.8%	78.7%	71.4%	75.2%	-1.3%
New York	56.9%	56.3%	56.8%	59.7%	57.1%	0.3%
North Carolina	54.9%	56.8%	54.7%	52.3%	52.2%	-4.9%
North Dakota	64.5%	64.3%	71.1%	67.8%	69.6%	7.9%
Ohio	73.0%	72.2%	70.9%	70.5%	68.4%	-6.2%
Oklahoma	54.5%	46.0%	43.3%	37.8%	36.2%	-33.5%
Oregon	54.7%	51.3%	49.3%	53.0%	51.9%	-5.2%
Pennsylvania	74.3%	72.4%	73.7%	73.2%	72.7%	-2.2%
Rhode Island	72.4%	77.8%	74.6%	68.8%	66.0%	-8.9%
South Carolina	76.9%	82.6%	86.0%	86.2%	85.1%	10.5%
South Dakota	75.8%	75.4%	78.0%	75.0%	78.7%	3.8%
Tennessee	72.3%	70.5%	66.3%	68.0%	68.2%	-5.7%
Texas	48.9%	49.2%	47.6%	50.3%	52.9%	8.3%
Utah	74.4%	69.2%	70.7%	68.7%	67.6%	-9.2%
Vermont	67.1%	69.0%	72.6%	74.2%	70.4%	5.0%
Virginia	60.8%	60.9%	64.0%	63.2%	58.6%	-3.6%
Washington	57.0%	56.6%	58.2%	54.5%	54.8%	-3.9%
West Virginia	66.0%	67.4%	69.0%	68.6%	66.1%	0.2%
Wisconsin	71.9%	71.9%	71.8%	69.2%	66.5%	-7.6%
Wyoming	76.6%	74.2%	77.2%	73.7%	71.9%	-6.2%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table IV–7. Outcome 4.2: Percentage of Children Reentering Foster Care Within 12 Months of a Prior Episode, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	6.8%	8.7%	8.3%	7.1%	6.8%	-1.2%
Alaska	3.9%	4.8%	5.0%	3.9%	5.8%	48.6%
Arizona	8.0%	8.8%	8.1%	8.0%	8.3%	3.5%
Arkansas	7.7%	7.8%	7.0%	6.5%	5.7%	-25.3%
California	9.2%	8.3%	8.2%	8.4%	8.2%	-11.0%
Colorado	15.7%	15.6%	14.1%	15.0%	14.1%	-9.9%
Connecticut	5.1%	5.8%	5.5%	3.6%	4.1%	-20.8%
Delaware	3.9%	4.0%	3.5%	5.0%	4.8%	22.0%
District of Columbia	9.3%	10.4%	7.6%	5.7%	5.8%	-37.4%
Florida	7.8%	8.8%	7.0%	6.2%	7.2%	-8.2%
Georgia	6.9%	7.0%	6.5%	6.8%	6.5%	-5.7%
Hawaii	8.9%	10.7%	9.2%	9.2%	11.0%	24.1%
Idaho	6.5%	4.8%	6.8%	6.2%	6.1%	-5.7%
Illinois	8.8%	7.7%	7.3%	7.3%	6.6%	-25.1%
Indiana	6.0%	4.6%	4.3%	4.8%	4.8%	-20.8%
Iowa	10.5%	8.8%	10.7%	9.1%	8.4%	-19.6%
Kansas	4.7%	4.9%	5.9%	4.9%	5.6%	19.4%
Kentucky	10.0%	10.0%	9.9%	10.7%	9.2%	-7.9%
Louisiana	8.8%	8.7%	6.3%	7.1%	7.7%	-12.7%
Maine	4.7%	2.6%	4.8%	3.8%	3.8%	-19.0%
Maryland	11.0%	11.3%	11.5%	11.2%	10.5%	-4.7%
Massachusetts	12.3%	11.7%	9.3%	10.0%	11.0%	-10.3%
Michigan	3.0%	2.9%	4.9%	3.7%	5.8%	94.3%
Minnesota	19.8%	16.2%	15.6%	13.7%	13.3%	-32.7%
Mississippi	5.3%	5.0%	5.0%	4.6%	5.4%	2.2%
Missouri	5.9%	5.2%	4.5%	5.4%	4.9%	-17.1%
Montana	8.1%	6.2%	6.9%	7.4%	6.9%	-14.4%
Nebraska	6.4%	6.8%	6.3%	6.7%	5.9%	-7.9%
Nevada	4.9%	5.6%	6.7%	7.0%	6.6%	36.1%
New Hampshire	12.9%	9.5%	2.7%	1.0%	1.9%	-85.5%
New Jersey	8.3%	10.1%	10.6%	9.3%	9.3%	12.6%
New Mexico	7.1%	7.4%	7.9%	9.1%	7.1%	-0.5%
New York	12.0%	9.8%	10.0%	9.1%	9.0%	-24.5%
North Carolina	2.8%	2.6%	2.3%	2.1%	2.6%	-10.0%
North Dakota	8.2%	9.4%	9.0%	7.2%	11.4%	39.9%
Ohio	11.0%	11.1%	9.8%	10.3%	9.7%	-11.3%
Oklahoma	4.3%	4.4%	3.7%	4.5%	4.4%	1.6%
Oregon	8.0%	9.1%	8.0%	8.2%	8.1%	0.7%
Pennsylvania	19.2%	18.2%	16.3%	17.5%	13.9%	-27.9%
Rhode Island	18.2%	14.4%	13.1%	13.0%	12.6%	-30.6%
South Carolina	6.8%	5.8%	5.6%	5.8%	6.0%	-11.0%
South Dakota	13.6%	9.4%	10.6%	8.4%	8.4%	-38.1%
Tennessee	8.2%	8.5%	9.1%	7.3%	10.2%	23.5%
Texas	3.4%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	2.9%	-15.9%
Utah	5.9%	7.1%	7.1%	6.3%	6.3%	6.6%
Vermont	12.0%	9.6%	10.3%	10.9%	13.9%	15.5%
Virginia	4.6%	4.6%	3.8%	4.2%	4.1%	-9.0%
Washington	6.0%	6.8%	5.9%	7.4%	5.8%	-2.4%
West Virginia	10.2%	11.2%	9.9%	8.8%	10.0%	-2.2%
Wisconsin	13.8%	11.0%	10.4%	11.4%	11.5%	-17.0%
Wyoming	11.4%	13.6%	15.4%	10.5%	15.8%	39.1%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table IV–8. Outcome 5.1a: Percentage of Children Exiting to Adoption in Less Than 12 Months, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	3.1%	3.0%	4.7%	3.7%	4.3%	40.1%
Alaska	0.7%	1.9%	1.6%	2.5%	0.3%	-50.8%
Arizona	6.0%	5.8%	4.7%	4.0%	4.1%	-31.7%
Arkansas	6.8%	7.6%	8.7%	5.1%	8.6%	26.1%
California	5.0%	5.5%	4.6%	4.9%	4.5%	-9.3%
Colorado	10.4%	8.5%	6.7%	6.5%	4.8%	-54.1%
Connecticut	4.6%	2.6%	4.1%	2.0%	5.6%	21.2%
Delaware	4.4%	2.7%	4.8%	5.1%	5.1%	14.9%
District of Columbia	0.9%	1.9%	2.8%	0.0%	2.8%	219.6%
Florida	15.6%	14.6%	15.4%	15.0%	13.9%	-10.6%
Georgia	5.3%	5.5%	2.5%	2.2%	2.6%	-50.3%
Hawaii	4.4%	8.7%	7.6%	8.0%	8.1%	84.2%
Idaho	6.3%	3.0%	6.2%	1.0%	2.3%	-63.2%
Illinois	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%	-16.6%
Indiana	3.0%	1.8%	3.2%	1.4%	1.4%	-54.0%
Iowa	6.9%	6.3%	7.9%	5.6%	5.1%	-26.0%
Kansas	3.0%	1.9%	2.1%	1.7%	1.5%	-50.7%
Kentucky	1.2%	0.6%	0.9%	0.5%	0.5%	-60.7%
Louisiana	1.7%	1.8%	4.0%	2.1%	3.3%	95.2%
Maine	1.0%	0.5%	4.2%	1.2%	1.0%	-3.0%
Maryland	2.4%	2.8%	3.7%	2.7%	3.7%	52.0%
Massachusetts	1.1%	1.6%	1.0%	0.8%	0.9%	-17.3%
Michigan	5.8%	7.1%	6.8%	5.5%	5.5%	-4.8%
Minnesota	8.4%	8.3%	8.2%	7.3%	6.2%	-26.9%
Mississippi	2.4%	2.5%	1.6%	1.9%	3.8%	61.9%
Missouri	7.4%	7.5%	6.1%	8.1%	4.4%	-40.7%
Montana	2.2%	3.0%	2.1%	0.0%	0.4%	-82.5%
Nebraska	4.5%	4.4%	4.1%	3.1%	3.5%	-22.9%
Nevada	2.0%	2.0%	1.3%	3.1%	2.0%	2.4%
New Hampshire	4.0%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	-11.6%
New Jersey	3.6%	2.1%	1.9%	2.7%	2.3%	-36.7%
New Mexico	2.5%	1.9%	2.2%	2.0%	0.6%	-76.4%
New York	1.1%	1.9%	1.9%	2.1%	1.5%	27.3%
North Carolina	7.9%	5.3%	4.9%	3.1%	4.2%	-46.2%
North Dakota	2.6%	5.0%	2.9%	4.5%	5.1%	96.1%
Ohio	5.6%	6.6%	5.5%	4.6%	3.8%	-32.1%
Oklahoma	5.1%	5.4%	4.1%	4.7%	6.5%	27.0%
Oregon	0.3%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%	-54.0%
Pennsylvania	3.9%	4.6%	3.5%	3.6%	2.5%	-37.4%
Rhode Island	9.1%	5.6%	5.4%	3.3%	4.3%	-52.5%
South Carolina	4.9%	3.9%	4.7%	4.3%	2.8%	-43.2%
South Dakota	3.2%	0.6%	1.9%	0.0%	1.8%	-42.2%
Tennessee	7.7%	7.8%	9.5%	4.9%	7.0%	-8.7%
Texas	3.5%	3.2%	3.2%	4.0%	3.5%	-1.7%
Utah	33.5%	34.4%	28.3%	28.2%	28.0%	-16.6%
Vermont	7.0%	8.5%	4.3%	4.3%	4.2%	-40.1%
Virginia	2.7%	2.4%	2.1%	3.3%	3.4%	23.4%
Washington	2.7%	2.2%	1.7%	2.2%	1.4%	-46.9%
West Virginia	5.7%	4.5%	6.3%	8.1%	6.3%	10.9%
Wisconsin	9.0%	13.8%	10.0%	6.0%	5.6%	-37.7%
Wyoming	9.1%	12.9%	1.4%	4.1%	13.6%	50.0%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table IV–9. Outcome 5.1b: Percentage of Children Exiting to Adoption in More Than 12 Months but Less Than 24 Months, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance, 2012–2016**
Alabama	19.8%	24.0%	21.1%	31.4%	31.4%	58.9%
Alaska	27.4%	26.2%	34.2%	24.7%	32.5%	18.5%
Arizona	47.9%	50.6%	51.1%	45.5%	43.9%	-8.4%
Arkansas	39.8%	42.7%	48.0%	47.1%	44.8%	12.5%
California	32.1%	31.9%	33.3%	32.4%	30.8%	-4.0%
Colorado	45.0%	43.0%	51.6%	46.5%	47.3%	5.2%
Connecticut	30.3%	25.2%	30.6%	31.3%	36.8%	21.6%
Delaware	27.5%	40.5%	28.6%	32.9%	39.4%	43.4%
District of Columbia	14.0%	10.6%	16.8%	31.0%	19.6%	39.8%
Florida	39.3%	41.6%	35.9%	38.2%	37.5%	-4.7%
Georgia	34.1%	32.6%	29.5%	26.4%	25.3%	-25.7%
Hawaii	20.8%	31.1%	33.6%	32.4%	44.3%	113.3%
Idaho	49.8%	50.7%	40.3%	43.8%	43.0%	-13.6%
Illinois	7.6%	8.2%	6.1%	7.3%	9.2%	21.8%
Indiana	26.1%	24.2%	21.7%	18.2%	18.9%	-27.4%
Iowa	54.4%	52.6%	49.7%	52.9%	50.9%	-6.6%
Kansas	34.1%	31.7%	28.2%	23.3%	21.5%	-37.0%
Kentucky	19.9%	19.9%	19.8%	15.8%	13.1%	-34.2%
Louisiana	27.1%	29.0%	32.9%	43.1%	42.0%	55.2%
Maine	30.2%	36.2%	34.3%	25.2%	21.8%	-28.1%
Maryland	21.4%	22.1%	28.0%	35.1%	24.7%	15.5%
Massachusetts	23.1%	36.0%	29.4%	25.1%	19.0%	-17.7%
Michigan	32.3%	34.2%	39.9%	33.8%	29.9%	-7.3%
Minnesota	43.6%	42.9%	51.4%	48.0%	49.5%	13.4%
Mississippi	23.4%	18.2%	20.1%	17.4%	13.4%	-42.8%
Missouri	32.9%	33.6%	31.0%	30.9%	34.5%	4.6%
Montana	20.5%	22.3%	16.4%	17.3%	17.9%	-12.6%
Nebraska	27.3%	27.2%	26.2%	29.8%	34.6%	27.0%
Nevada	23.3%	25.9%	28.6%	29.8%	27.7%	18.5%
New Hampshire	36.4%	20.5%	28.2%	16.7%	9.5%	-73.8%
New Jersey	21.1%	22.9%	21.8%	19.3%	22.1%	4.4%
New Mexico	31.4%	31.3%	31.4%	26.6%	19.3%	-38.3%
New York	9.1%	9.9%	12.7%	12.3%	11.7%	28.5%
North Carolina	31.4%	33.1%	29.3%	29.2%	27.3%	-13.1%
North Dakota	25.9%	38.0%	22.1%	30.8%	21.7%	-15.9%
Ohio	26.9%	28.2%	29.8%	25.4%	26.2%	-2.6%
Oklahoma	32.9%	34.6%	28.8%	28.8%	29.5%	-10.3%
Oregon	12.3%	11.9%	14.5%	16.0%	12.5%	1.8%
Pennsylvania	32.4%	34.2%	32.5%	29.3%	29.1%	-10.2%
Rhode Island	36.9%	28.4%	36.6%	32.7%	35.3%	-4.5%
South Carolina	23.7%	26.8%	29.4%	31.3%	24.6%	3.6%
South Dakota	28.6%	25.4%	33.5%	23.3%	16.5%	-42.2%
Tennessee	43.0%	38.3%	34.5%	34.6%	35.2%	-18.1%
Texas	45.9%	45.6%	46.6%	50.3%	49.5%	7.7%
Utah	50.9%	48.7%	49.4%	51.6%	53.1%	4.2%
Vermont	54.4%	48.3%	55.6%	43.1%	50.0%	-8.1%
Virginia	29.1%	30.4%	34.6%	32.9%	30.1%	3.4%
Washington	35.1%	28.3%	27.4%	28.9%	25.6%	-27.2%
West Virginia	39.8%	47.5%	47.7%	51.6%	54.1%	35.8%
Wisconsin	21.7%	21.3%	22.9%	25.5%	25.6%	17.8%
Wyoming	22.1%	34.1%	27.1%	21.6%	28.4%	28.7%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

# V: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings for Children in Foster Care

The state child welfare agency is responsible for ensuring a child is in a stable placement setting while in foster care. The appropriateness of a placement setting also is important to the well-being of children in foster care. Placement setting stability is addressed in outcome 6 (increase placement stability for children in foster care). The Child Welfare Outcomes Reports define placement setting stability as a child having had two or fewer placement settings in a single foster care episode.<sup>70</sup> Placement setting appropriateness is addressed in outcome 7 (reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions).

This chapter presents national results for the following measures:

- Measure 6.1a: The percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings
- Measure 6.1b: The percentage of children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings
- Measure 6.1c: The percentage of children in foster care for 24 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings
- Measure 7.1: The percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who were placed in group homes or institutions

Outcome 7 is evaluated by examining the degree to which children age 12 or younger are placed in family foster homes rather than group homes or institutions. According to AFCARS definitions, group homes generally have between 7 and 12 children, and institutions are typically larger and may include residential treatment facilities or child care institutions. There are some instances in which a group home or institution is determined to be the most appropriate placement to meet the needs of a child. For example, young children may need a particular type of care to meet certain physical or mental health needs that a group home or institution is best equipped to provide.

However, the driving assumption behind this outcome measure is that, while group homes or institutions may be appropriate for some children in foster care, younger children are likely to have their needs better met in a family setting.<sup>71</sup>

**There are some children in foster care for whom a foster family setting will not meet their highly specialized needs. However, a family setting commonly will be the most appropriate, especially for young children.**

Table V–1 presents the findings on state performance regarding placement stability (measure 6.1) and placements of young children in group homes or institutions (measure 7.1). For outcome measure 6.1, data are presented that measure placement stability for multiple timeframes regarding length of stay in foster care.

**Table V–1. Range of State Performance, 2016  
Outcomes 6 and 7: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings**

Outcome Measures*	25th Percentile	National Median (50th Percentile)	75th Percentile	Range
Measure 6.1a: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)*	81.6%	84.3%	87.8%	70.7–94.8%
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)*	58.2%	65.4%	70.2%	49.3–88.4%
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)*	32.6%	39.3%	43.3%	13.0–56.5%
Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or an institution? (N=52)**	1.9%	3.3%	5.0%	0.7–19.4%

\*Other time periods comprising measure 6.1 are not shown in this table. See appendix B for more information on how the measure is defined.

\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

<sup>70</sup> A single foster care episode begins on the date when a child is removed from the home and ends when the child is discharged from foster care (i.e., is no longer under the care and placement responsibility of the state). For the purposes of this Report, the count of placement settings does not include temporary stays in hospitals, camps, respite care, or institutional placements.

<sup>71</sup> The Children’s Bureau released a data brief in 2015 on the use of group homes and institutions (i.e., congregate care placements) in child welfare that underscores the importance of placing children age 12 and younger in settings that are most appropriate to meet their needs, including (and especially) family-like settings. The brief can be accessed on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/congregate-care-brief>.

As shown in table V–1, the majority of children in foster care for less than 12 months across all states experienced no more than two placement settings in 2016, with a national median performance of 84.3 percent. It is encouraging that more than four out of five children remain in stable placements during their first year in foster care. While there may be times when a new placement setting will be in the best interest of the child, such as a move to a placement that better reflects the permanency goals and service needs of the child, it is generally important for states to continue to do as much as they can to keep placement setting counts to a minimum.

Across the time periods comprising measure 6.1, most states appeared to be generally successful in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months. However, states tend to be far less successful in keeping the number of placement settings low for children in foster care for longer periods of time. As shown in table V–1, the median across states declined from 84.3 percent for children in foster care for less than 12 months to 65.4 percent for children in foster care between 12 months and 24 months. The median declined even further among children in foster care for 24 months or longer to 39.3 percent, with only four states achieving placement stability for the majority of these children.<sup>72</sup>

Direct comparisons between these measures are difficult to make. First, these measures count all of a child’s placement settings up until discharge from care or until the end of the reporting period rather than just those that occurred during the year of interest. In addition, the demographics of children included in each measure vary. For example, the population of children in care less than 12 months includes infants and very young children, whereas, by definition, the measure for children in care 24 months or longer limits the population to age 2 and older. Age is an important factor to consider when assessing placement stability.

Additionally, the relationship between time in care and placement setting stability is more nuanced than it may initially appear. Research suggests a link between placement stability and factors such as the age of the child, placement setting type, the presence of child behavioral problems, and the availability of programs and services for children and resource families.<sup>73</sup> Research also indicates that children who experience early placement stability experience fewer behavioral problems and better outcomes.<sup>74</sup> Therefore, time in care is likely also linked to other variables that have an impact on its relationship to placement stability.

In about one-half of the states in 2016, 3.3 percent or less of children entering foster care under the age of 12 were placed in group homes or institutions. The low median on this measure indicates positive national performance overall. This is further supported by data indicating that there were only four states in which the percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions was above 10.0 percent.<sup>75</sup>

## CHANGES OVER TIME IN STATE PERFORMANCE ON MEASURES OF ACHIEVING STABLE AND APPROPRIATE PLACEMENT SETTINGS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

Table V–2 displays the change in the national median over time on measures pertaining to achieving stable and appropriate placement settings for children in foster care. This table also shows the number of states that demonstrated an improvement or decline in performance on these measures.

**Table V–2. Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time, 2012–2016\*  
Outcomes 6 and 7: Achieving Stable and Appropriate Placement Settings**

Outcome Measures**	Median Performance by Year***					Improved in Performance	Declined in Performance
	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		
Measure 6.1a: Percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings (N=51)****	85.1%	86.2%	86.2%	85.7%	84.0%	6 states (12%)	6 states (12%)
Measure 6.1b: Percentage of children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings (N=51)****	64.1%	64.5%	65.4%	63.7%	65.0%	22 states (43%)	8 states (16%)
Measure 6.1c: Percentage of children in foster care for 24 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings (N=51)****	33.9%	33.9%	35.1%	35.9%	39.0%	36 states (71%)	6 states (12%)
Measure 7.1: Percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who were placed in group homes or institutions (N=51)*****	4.4%	3.9%	4.1%	3.8%	3.3%	29 states (57%)	18 states (35%)

\*In accordance with standard procedure for data analysis in this Report, when there was a percent change of less than 5.0 in either direction (positive or negative), a determination was made that there was “no change” in performance.

\*\*Full descriptions for the measures in this table can be found in table V–1 and appendix B.

\*\*\*Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available for all relevant years and may be different from the data included in table V–1 due to differences in the numbers of states included for each analysis.

\*\*\*\* Other time periods composing measure 6.1 are not shown in this table. See appendix B for more information on how the measure is defined.

\*\*\*\*\*For this measure, a lower number indicates better performance.

<sup>72</sup> The four States were New Jersey, Maine, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico.

<sup>73</sup> Noonan, K., Rubin, D., Mekonnen, R., Zlotnik, S., & O’Reilly, A. (2009). Securing child safety, well-being, and permanency through placement stability in foster care. Evidence to Action, 1. Retrieved from <https://policylab.chop.edu/evidence-action-brief/securing-child-safety-well-being-and-permanency-through-placement-stability>.

<sup>74</sup> Rubin, D. M., O’Reilly, A. L., Luan, X., & Localio, R. (2007). The impact of placement stability on behavioral well-being for children in foster care. *Pediatrics*, 119(2), 336–44.

<sup>75</sup> The four States were Arkansas, Nevada, South Carolina, and Puerto Rico.

As indicated by table V–2, there was very little change between 2012 and 2016 in the percentage of children in foster care for 12 months or less who experienced two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1a). During this time, the median for this measure decreased only 1.3 percent, and 76 percent of states showed no significant change in performance. Similarly, there was minimal change between 2012 and 2016 in the percentage of children in foster care for more than 12 months but less than 24 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1b), increasing only 1.4 percent during that time period. However, 43 percent of states demonstrated an improvement in performance, and only 16 percent of states showed a decline.

In contrast, there was a strong improvement over time related to the percentage of children in foster care for 24 months or longer who experienced two or fewer placement settings (measure 6.1c). The national median for this measure increased from 33.9 percent in 2012 to 39.0 percent in 2016—a 15.0-percent increase. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of states demonstrated improvement on this measure, while only 12 percent declined in performance. Although states have been less successful at achieving placement setting stability for children in care longer than 12 months compared to shorter time periods, the consistent improvement of performance on this measure is encouraging.

**Thirty-six states showed improvement in placement stability from 2012 to 2016 for children who have been in care for 24 months or longer.**

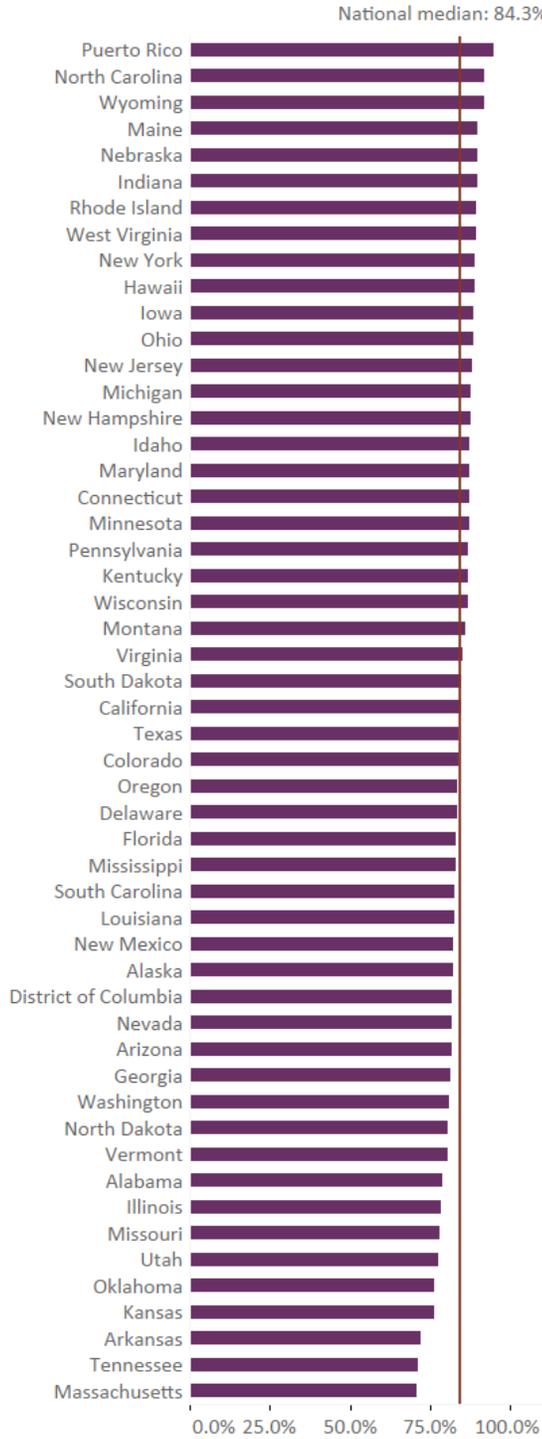
Previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports have shown improvements over time on measure 7.1 (the percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who are placed in group homes or institutions). This improvement continued between 2012 and 2016, with the median performance decreasing from 4.4 percent to 3.3 percent—a 25.0-percent decline. During the 5-year span, 57 percent of states showed improved performance on this measure, and 35 percent declined in performance (a lower number indicates better performance).

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS REGARDING ACHIEVING STABLE AND APPROPRIATE PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE**

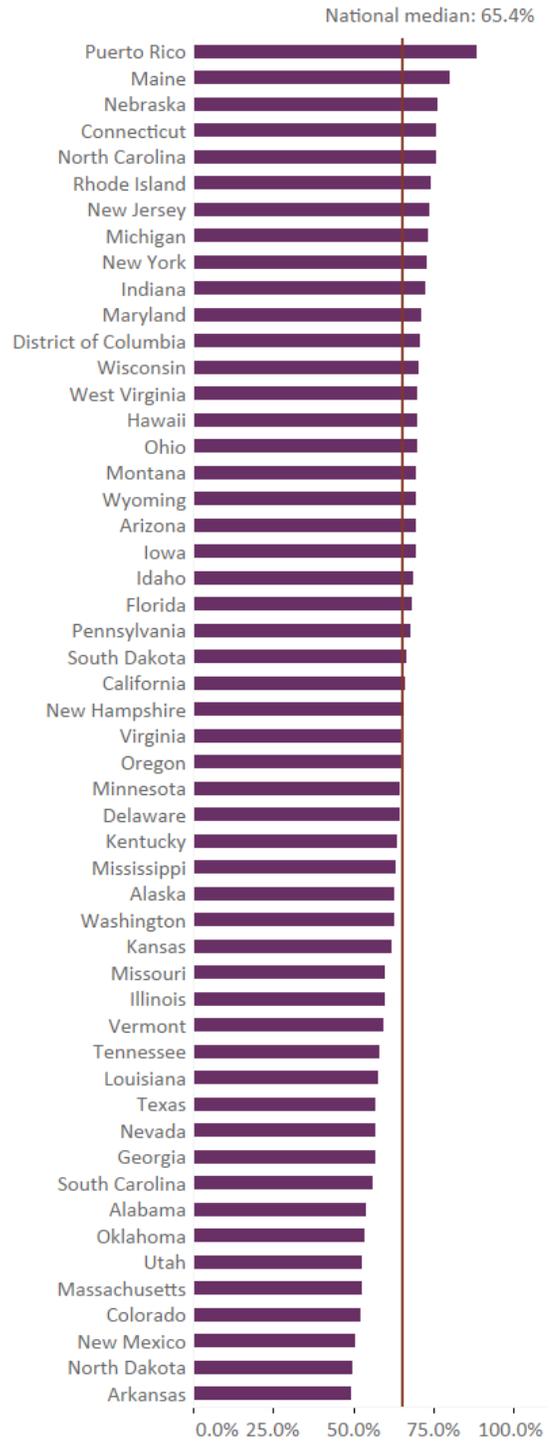
A consistent finding of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is that, although states are fairly successful in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months, the percentage of children who have placement stability declines the longer children are in foster care. It is promising, however, that states have demonstrated improvement in achieving placement setting stability for children in care longer than 12 months, especially for those children who have been in care for 24 months or longer. It is also encouraging that the use of group homes and institutions for children aged 12 and younger continued to decline and that over half of the states have shown meaningful improvement over the past 5 years on this measure.

The end of this chapter displays outcomes-based visuals related to achieving stable and appropriate placements for children in foster care, including state performance on outcomes 6 and 7. Additional information on achieving stable and appropriate placements for children and state data, including data for states excluded from analyses due to incomplete or inadequate data, is available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

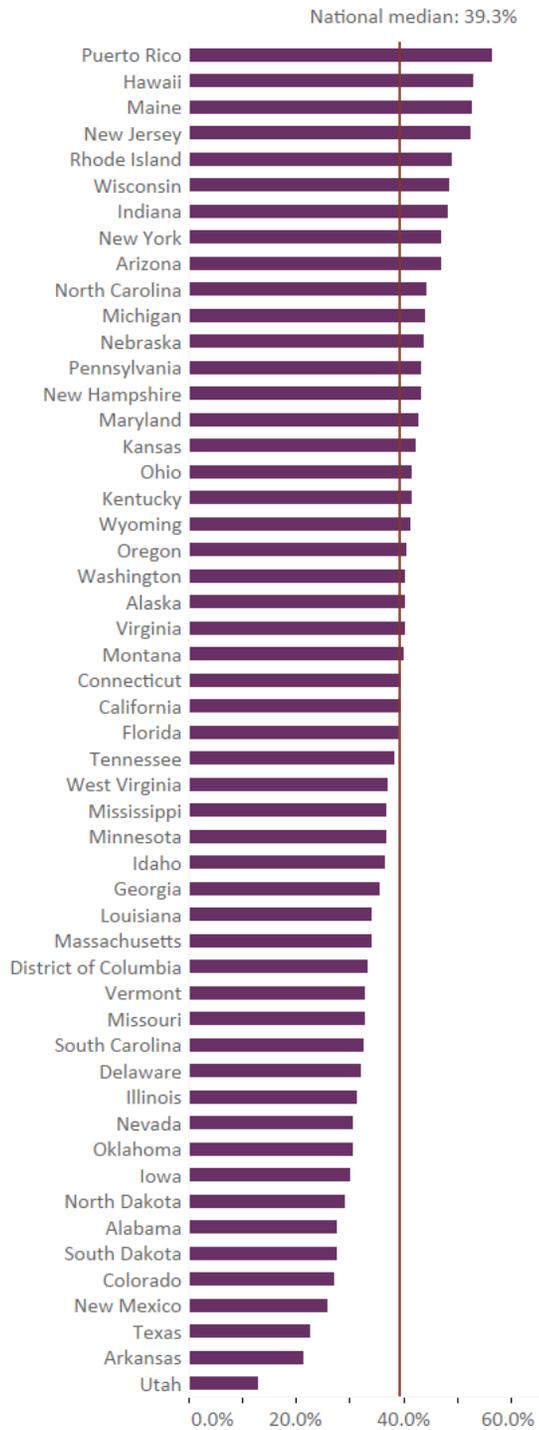
**Figure V–1. Percentage of Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2016 (N=52)**



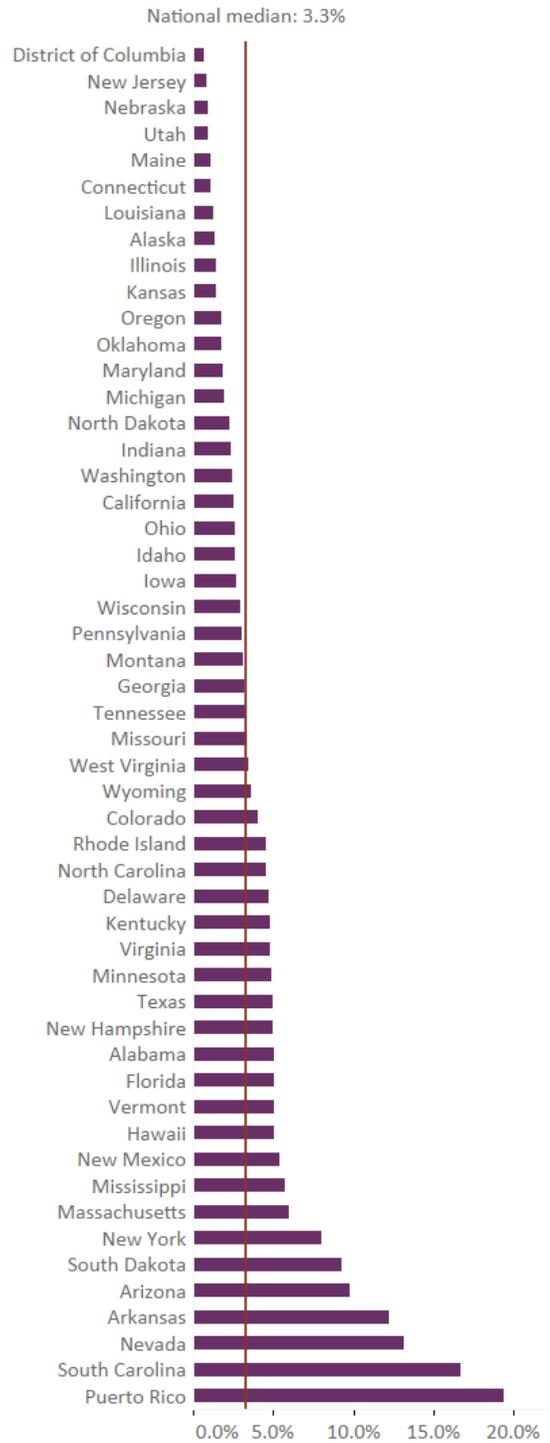
**Figure V–2. Percentage of Children in Care More Than 12 Months but Less Than 24 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure V–3. Percentage of Children in Care More Than 24 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2016 (N=52)**



**Figure V–4. Percentage of Children Age 12 and Under Placed in Group Homes or Institutions, 2016 (N=52)\***



\*For this measure, a lower value indicates better performance.

**Table V-3. Outcome 6.1a: Percentage of Children in Care Less Than 12 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance 2012–2016**
Alabama	77.5%	75.9%	79.2%	79.5%	78.8%	1.6%
Alaska	80.7%	83.0%	81.6%	80.8%	82.2%	1.9%
Arizona	86.7%	85.2%	83.3%	83.2%	81.6%	-5.9%
Arkansas	77.0%	77.3%	75.0%	72.7%	72.1%	-6.4%
California	84.1%	84.8%	84.7%	84.2%	84.6%	0.6%
Colorado	85.1%	84.8%	84.0%	84.2%	83.8%	-1.6%
Connecticut	87.4%	89.3%	90.5%	88.6%	87.3%	0.0%
Delaware	80.5%	84.0%	86.3%	85.7%	83.3%	3.4%
District of Columbia	81.6%	82.7%	88.9%	86.1%	81.9%	0.3%
Florida	85.7%	87.4%	85.4%	84.8%	83.2%	-2.9%
Georgia	80.2%	78.5%	79.0%	75.8%	81.5%	1.6%
Hawaii	89.0%	90.2%	87.3%	87.5%	89.1%	0.1%
Idaho	86.9%	87.1%	89.2%	88.3%	87.4%	0.6%
Illinois	48.4%	52.0%	58.9%	69.4%	78.4%	62.2%
Indiana	88.4%	89.5%	89.6%	89.8%	89.8%	1.6%
Iowa	86.7%	87.5%	86.2%	87.2%	88.5%	2.1%
Kansas	83.8%	82.0%	79.5%	78.3%	76.2%	-9.0%
Kentucky	88.5%	88.5%	88.1%	87.3%	86.7%	-2.0%
Louisiana	83.9%	83.9%	82.8%	83.5%	82.7%	-1.4%
Maine	87.9%	87.5%	89.2%	89.9%	89.9%	2.3%
Maryland	85.3%	86.7%	87.8%	87.5%	87.3%	2.4%
Massachusetts	81.0%	80.2%	76.9%	74.5%	70.7%	-12.6%
Michigan	87.8%	88.0%	88.4%	88.1%	87.7%	-0.1%
Minnesota	86.3%	87.1%	87.4%	87.1%	87.2%	1.1%
Mississippi	80.5%	80.5%	80.0%	80.1%	83.2%	3.3%
Missouri	76.3%	73.6%	79.7%	79.8%	78.2%	2.5%
Montana	88.1%	87.9%	86.9%	86.8%	86.0%	-2.4%
Nebraska	84.9%	86.3%	89.2%	91.9%	89.9%	5.9%
Nevada	83.1%	82.8%	79.9%	81.5%	81.6%	-1.8%
New Hampshire	82.6%	81.4%	86.2%	86.3%	87.6%	6.0%
New Jersey	89.0%	88.3%	88.3%	87.3%	88.2%	-0.9%
New Mexico	85.0%	83.6%	82.7%	81.7%	82.3%	-3.2%
New York	90.7%	90.3%	90.5%	89.4%	89.1%	-1.7%
North Carolina	91.6%	91.4%	91.4%	90.5%	92.1%	0.5%
North Dakota	74.5%	80.2%	79.5%	81.4%	80.6%	8.2%
Ohio	88.7%	88.1%	87.8%	88.0%	88.5%	-0.2%
Oklahoma	71.8%	74.3%	77.3%	72.8%	76.3%	6.3%
Oregon	86.9%	86.9%	86.5%	84.0%	83.3%	-4.1%
Pennsylvania	85.5%	87.5%	88.0%	86.2%	86.8%	1.5%
Rhode Island	88.4%	88.7%	88.2%	88.8%	89.5%	1.3%
South Carolina	83.8%	86.5%	84.8%	83.6%	82.7%	-1.3%
South Dakota	87.2%	86.7%	87.4%	88.4%	84.7%	-2.9%
Tennessee	79.5%	79.5%	77.9%	79.2%	71.2%	-10.4%
Texas	83.7%	84.4%	85.0%	84.1%	84.0%	0.4%
Utah	78.5%	76.1%	73.3%	78.2%	77.5%	-1.3%
Vermont	72.3%	75.6%	78.7%	78.0%	80.6%	11.5%
Virginia	88.4%	86.2%	86.0%	85.7%	85.1%	-3.8%
Washington	86.9%	84.6%	83.3%	81.0%	80.8%	-7.0%
West Virginia	87.8%	88.2%	87.4%	89.4%	89.3%	1.7%
Wisconsin	85.0%	87.1%	86.7%	87.1%	86.7%	2.0%
Wyoming	91.3%	88.3%	90.7%	89.7%	91.7%	0.5%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table V-4. Outcome 6.1b: Percentage of Children in Care More Than 12 Months but Less Than 24 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance 2012–2016**
Alabama	54.2%	57.3%	55.5%	56.0%	54.0%	-0.4%
Alaska	54.1%	58.9%	67.6%	63.2%	62.9%	16.4%
Arizona	70.8%	70.7%	68.8%	70.2%	69.4%	-2.0%
Arkansas	48.0%	50.2%	48.2%	44.9%	49.3%	2.8%
California	63.1%	64.1%	65.4%	65.7%	66.1%	4.7%
Colorado	63.1%	54.4%	55.9%	52.8%	52.2%	-17.4%
Connecticut	65.2%	64.5%	74.2%	77.1%	75.7%	16.2%
Delaware	61.4%	62.1%	66.0%	62.1%	64.4%	4.9%
District of Columbia	55.7%	58.5%	62.6%	70.9%	71.0%	27.3%
Florida	64.7%	65.8%	65.8%	66.7%	68.2%	5.3%
Georgia	57.0%	54.7%	53.7%	51.7%	56.8%	-0.4%
Hawaii	71.0%	72.8%	70.1%	68.6%	70.0%	-1.5%
Idaho	63.0%	67.3%	66.9%	68.6%	68.5%	8.8%
Illinois	42.7%	44.2%	48.2%	55.7%	59.7%	39.8%
Indiana	71.8%	69.4%	72.2%	72.7%	72.4%	0.8%
Iowa	64.6%	63.5%	63.9%	63.2%	69.4%	7.4%
Kansas	66.4%	64.9%	64.4%	60.0%	62.0%	-6.6%
Kentucky	65.8%	66.2%	64.5%	62.2%	63.5%	-3.6%
Louisiana	55.1%	60.7%	61.3%	58.8%	57.9%	5.1%
Maine	64.9%	74.8%	76.9%	79.6%	80.0%	23.2%
Maryland	70.2%	70.8%	70.2%	70.3%	71.3%	1.6%
Massachusetts	53.3%	56.7%	57.1%	54.5%	52.6%	-1.3%
Michigan	73.8%	73.6%	71.6%	72.2%	73.3%	-0.7%
Minnesota	58.0%	59.0%	62.9%	63.2%	64.5%	11.4%
Mississippi	51.4%	57.2%	58.8%	59.5%	63.1%	22.8%
Missouri	57.1%	57.0%	62.0%	60.0%	60.0%	5.1%
Montana	66.1%	67.9%	67.9%	66.3%	69.6%	5.2%
Nebraska	64.2%	65.6%	69.2%	77.8%	76.2%	18.7%
Nevada	57.9%	61.1%	59.3%	58.3%	56.8%	-1.8%
New Hampshire	72.0%	67.1%	63.3%	63.7%	65.8%	-8.5%
New Jersey	71.5%	72.5%	72.2%	73.8%	73.7%	3.0%
New Mexico	56.6%	50.8%	48.7%	50.3%	50.6%	-10.6%
New York	71.4%	73.7%	73.7%	72.5%	73.0%	2.3%
North Carolina	76.0%	76.0%	75.5%	75.7%	75.7%	-0.4%
North Dakota	53.2%	51.1%	50.7%	53.9%	49.6%	-6.9%
Ohio	67.3%	66.1%	68.5%	66.7%	69.9%	3.9%
Oklahoma	49.6%	50.8%	54.0%	53.8%	53.5%	7.8%
Oregon	70.3%	71.3%	69.5%	68.1%	64.8%	-7.8%
Pennsylvania	65.5%	68.2%	68.6%	66.8%	68.0%	3.8%
Rhode Island	64.2%	69.3%	75.5%	74.9%	74.0%	15.2%
South Carolina	52.8%	56.1%	58.2%	58.1%	55.9%	5.8%
South Dakota	51.9%	57.0%	62.9%	61.1%	66.5%	28.1%
Tennessee	61.6%	60.8%	60.9%	59.0%	58.3%	-5.5%
Texas	57.9%	57.6%	57.6%	57.8%	57.0%	-1.7%
Utah	49.8%	44.1%	44.0%	48.7%	52.6%	5.6%
Vermont	44.6%	43.4%	50.4%	60.4%	59.4%	33.2%
Virginia	64.8%	65.9%	66.2%	64.7%	65.0%	0.3%
Washington	67.9%	67.6%	66.3%	65.6%	62.7%	-7.7%
West Virginia	64.1%	68.1%	67.6%	67.5%	70.1%	9.3%
Wisconsin	67.7%	67.0%	70.4%	70.7%	70.6%	4.3%
Wyoming	64.1%	69.4%	67.0%	68.5%	69.5%	8.4%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table V-5. Outcome 6.1c: Percentage of Children in Care More Than 24 Months With Two or Fewer Placement Settings, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance 2012–2016**
Alabama	29.7%	27.0%	28.2%	27.5%	27.7%	-6.6%
Alaska	31.8%	28.6%	30.2%	35.2%	40.3%	26.7%
Arizona	41.0%	43.7%	42.2%	44.0%	47.0%	14.5%
Arkansas	20.6%	22.3%	21.0%	19.9%	21.4%	4.1%
California	34.0%	34.2%	35.7%	37.6%	39.6%	16.7%
Colorado	33.8%	23.2%	25.0%	25.2%	27.2%	-19.5%
Connecticut	33.2%	33.3%	35.1%	37.7%	39.7%	19.4%
Delaware	35.8%	32.3%	32.0%	31.3%	32.1%	-10.2%
District of Columbia	29.8%	28.7%	25.3%	28.7%	33.5%	12.2%
Florida	28.9%	33.1%	34.5%	37.1%	39.0%	35.2%
Georgia	30.0%	32.7%	32.5%	32.9%	35.7%	19.3%
Hawaii	46.1%	44.4%	49.3%	52.8%	53.1%	15.4%
Idaho	26.2%	27.2%	33.0%	31.3%	36.5%	39.2%
Illinois	29.4%	29.4%	31.2%	32.5%	31.3%	6.3%
Indiana	36.6%	39.3%	43.0%	46.9%	48.3%	32.1%
Iowa	27.2%	25.8%	27.2%	26.9%	30.0%	10.4%
Kansas	35.3%	39.4%	41.7%	42.3%	42.4%	20.0%
Kentucky	38.1%	40.0%	44.0%	39.9%	41.5%	8.9%
Louisiana	36.5%	33.9%	34.1%	35.2%	34.2%	-6.2%
Maine	35.6%	36.2%	44.2%	52.4%	52.8%	48.3%
Maryland	40.6%	40.3%	42.3%	41.7%	42.7%	5.2%
Massachusetts	25.1%	25.4%	29.2%	32.7%	34.1%	35.8%
Michigan	47.4%	48.3%	43.8%	42.5%	44.1%	-6.9%
Minnesota	33.0%	32.8%	32.0%	35.0%	36.8%	11.7%
Mississippi	30.6%	30.6%	33.6%	35.6%	36.9%	20.6%
Missouri	30.2%	30.5%	33.4%	33.0%	32.9%	8.8%
Montana	37.1%	39.7%	41.8%	40.9%	40.1%	7.9%
Nebraska	33.5%	35.7%	34.3%	39.3%	43.9%	31.0%
Nevada	30.3%	29.3%	33.1%	29.4%	30.7%	1.3%
New Hampshire	30.3%	41.6%	41.8%	41.5%	43.2%	42.8%
New Jersey	47.9%	50.6%	53.2%	52.8%	52.4%	9.4%
New Mexico	21.6%	23.1%	22.1%	24.4%	25.9%	19.7%
New York	44.7%	44.9%	46.4%	47.5%	47.1%	5.4%
North Carolina	42.7%	43.5%	43.9%	43.9%	44.4%	3.9%
North Dakota	40.3%	32.8%	40.5%	29.1%	29.2%	-27.5%
Ohio	36.3%	34.5%	35.2%	35.9%	41.7%	15.0%
Oklahoma	23.0%	24.9%	27.6%	29.2%	30.5%	32.8%
Oregon	39.7%	40.5%	41.1%	39.9%	40.6%	2.2%
Pennsylvania	38.4%	42.5%	44.4%	44.6%	43.3%	12.8%
Rhode Island	33.9%	38.6%	41.5%	46.2%	49.0%	44.4%
South Carolina	23.6%	23.4%	27.1%	30.8%	32.7%	38.5%
South Dakota	24.5%	26.1%	26.8%	27.4%	27.7%	13.0%
Tennessee	37.6%	41.6%	39.1%	40.1%	38.4%	2.1%
Texas	22.6%	23.4%	23.3%	22.9%	22.6%	-0.1%
Utah	13.5%	15.5%	15.7%	14.2%	13.0%	-3.7%
Vermont	23.9%	22.0%	25.4%	24.6%	32.9%	38.0%
Virginia	35.5%	36.4%	37.7%	38.6%	40.2%	13.5%
Washington	39.4%	40.8%	41.3%	41.0%	40.4%	2.5%
West Virginia	35.8%	36.3%	38.5%	35.7%	37.1%	3.7%
Wisconsin	45.2%	45.3%	45.8%	47.0%	48.5%	7.4%
Wyoming	37.4%	37.0%	38.8%	44.9%	41.2%	10.3%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

**Table V-6. Outcome 7.1: Percentage of Children Age 12 or Younger in Group Homes or Institutions, 2012–2016 (N=51)\***

State	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percent Change in Performance 2012–2016**
Alabama	4.0%	3.9%	4.8%	5.3%	5.0%	26.2%
Alaska	2.7%	3.1%	2.3%	2.6%	1.4%	-49.7%
Arizona	8.0%	8.7%	8.4%	10.4%	9.8%	21.7%
Arkansas	15.5%	13.5%	14.1%	14.0%	12.2%	-21.1%
California	3.0%	2.4%	2.6%	2.8%	2.5%	-17.0%
Colorado	4.0%	3.1%	3.1%	4.0%	4.0%	0.3%
Connecticut	3.2%	2.7%	2.7%	2.4%	1.1%	-64.3%
Delaware	4.9%	2.8%	7.8%	2.4%	4.7%	-3.9%
District of Columbia	7.3%	0.3%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	-90.8%
Florida	5.7%	5.0%	5.4%	5.4%	5.1%	-11.6%
Georgia	4.2%	4.2%	3.9%	4.4%	3.2%	-24.4%
Hawaii	7.9%	8.9%	6.0%	4.0%	5.1%	-35.3%
Idaho	3.9%	3.3%	2.9%	3.8%	2.6%	-33.1%
Illinois	2.3%	2.3%	2.8%	2.1%	1.4%	-39.7%
Indiana	1.8%	1.9%	1.6%	1.5%	2.4%	35.0%
Iowa	2.4%	2.9%	2.9%	2.1%	2.7%	12.2%
Kansas	0.9%	0.9%	1.2%	1.0%	1.5%	58.7%
Kentucky	4.5%	4.4%	5.2%	4.8%	4.8%	5.1%
Louisiana	0.8%	1.2%	0.9%	1.2%	1.3%	49.6%
Maine	4.5%	0.8%	1.5%	0.7%	1.1%	-76.1%
Maryland	3.4%	2.7%	3.0%	2.7%	1.9%	-45.1%
Massachusetts	6.1%	6.2%	5.3%	6.3%	5.9%	-2.0%
Michigan	1.5%	1.4%	1.5%	1.1%	1.9%	32.1%
Minnesota	12.5%	8.0%	7.7%	5.8%	4.9%	-60.8%
Mississippi	5.6%	6.1%	6.1%	6.1%	5.7%	2.3%
Missouri	4.4%	4.4%	4.2%	3.5%	3.3%	-24.4%
Montana	6.9%	5.8%	5.4%	4.2%	3.1%	-55.4%
Nebraska	2.3%	1.5%	0.7%	1.1%	0.9%	-60.5%
Nevada	5.4%	6.3%	9.4%	11.4%	13.2%	144.7%
New Hampshire	4.7%	8.1%	8.5%	8.4%	5.0%	5.6%
New Jersey	2.0%	1.9%	1.4%	0.7%	0.9%	-55.5%
New Mexico	4.6%	5.5%	4.1%	5.0%	5.4%	17.8%
New York	4.6%	5.9%	5.4%	6.0%	8.0%	72.7%
North Carolina	3.6%	3.3%	4.3%	3.7%	4.5%	26.5%
North Dakota	8.1%	6.9%	4.2%	3.6%	2.2%	-72.4%
Ohio	2.4%	2.3%	2.2%	2.5%	2.6%	7.4%
Oklahoma	9.6%	7.0%	5.3%	3.3%	1.8%	-81.8%
Oregon	1.1%	1.0%	13.1%	14.6%	1.7%	53.7%
Pennsylvania	4.9%	4.3%	3.8%	3.9%	3.1%	-36.9%
Rhode Island	7.5%	7.7%	6.9%	6.5%	4.5%	-39.6%
South Carolina	21.2%	22.0%	21.9%	22.9%	16.7%	-21.3%
South Dakota	10.7%	8.6%	9.3%	7.7%	9.3%	-13.2%
Tennessee	1.9%	2.0%	2.6%	2.5%	3.3%	74.0%
Texas	7.7%	7.5%	8.0%	6.8%	5.0%	-35.3%
Utah	1.7%	1.4%	1.4%	0.9%	1.0%	-42.5%
Vermont	7.3%	6.2%	5.0%	4.0%	5.1%	-30.4%
Virginia	3.9%	4.0%	3.5%	4.6%	4.8%	22.8%
Washington	2.1%	1.7%	1.6%	2.2%	2.5%	15.8%
West Virginia	3.9%	3.6%	4.6%	4.9%	3.4%	-12.4%
Wisconsin	4.0%	3.7%	3.2%	3.5%	2.9%	-26.8%
Wyoming	6.0%	4.6%	3.1%	2.7%	3.6%	-39.6%

\*Data include all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds.

\*\*A change of +/-5.0 percent is considered a change in performance. Values shaded in green indicate an improvement in performance, values shaded in red indicate a decline in performance, and values with no shading indicate no change in performance.

# VI: State Comments on Performance Relevant to the Seven National Child Welfare Outcomes

The previous chapters provide key findings from analyses of performance across states over time relevant to the seven national child welfare outcomes. State-specific performance over time on these outcomes, as well as relevant state context data, are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>.

Prior to the release of the data on the data site and the report, states were given the opportunity to comment on their data. What follows are the state comments from those states that opted to provide context and comment on their state data. The comments have been printed exactly as they were submitted by the states.

# Alabama

## STATE COMMENT

**Karen Smith, Director  
Family Service Division  
Department of Human Resources**

The following are Alabama's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

The Alabama Department of Human Resources continues to strive toward providing the most accurate data possible through our NCANDS and AFCARS submissions. We remain steadfast in our efforts to continue to enhance our data collection systems so that vital information is available to those ensuring that the highest level of services are provided to the children and families of our state.

Alabama has experienced an increase in the foster care population during the FY 2012–FY 2016 period. Despite this increase, Alabama has maintained at least 94% on frequency of caseworker visits with children and 99% of those visits have occurred within the child's home.

Alabama has worked hard to help children achieve permanency during these review periods with more than 2,600 children receiving permanency through adoption between FY 2012 and FY 2016. An increase has also been noted in the percent of children achieving reunification in less than 12 months.

Alabama's top priority remains child safety. We continue to direct resources toward strengthening risk and safety assessments through partnering with providers, development of additional resources and continued training for our front line workers.

Recurrence of Maltreatment remains low with an average of 1.7 for the reporting periods. Maltreatment in Foster Care has also remained low over the periods in review with an average of less than 1%.

**Rebecca Jones Gaston, M.S.W., Executive Director  
Social Services Administration  
Maryland Department of Human Services**

The following are Maryland's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

The Child Welfare Outcomes report for this time period continues to reflect a substantial downward trend in foster care placements, which in Maryland has been underway since 2007, while not adversely impacting child safety (the six month recurrence rate has remained at its 7% average throughout this time frame). During these years Maryland was implementing its Place Matters initiative, featuring the Family-Centered Practice model, which focuses attention on families' natural support systems to bolster their capacity to care for their children, and develops service plans based on comprehensive assessments. Family Involvement Meetings encourage family participation in making decisions about the needs of their children, as well as decisions about reunification or making other permanent exits from foster care, including guardianship placement or adoptive placement. These efforts often result in identifying relatives and other community resources for families struggling with child maltreatment. The State expects continued success with its Family-Centered Practice Model.

Maryland continues to conduct Alternative Response which enables the State to address low risk cases of child abuse and neglect. Alternative Response permits the State to intervene with families to ensure safety and address risk without the stigma of a finding of maltreatment being attached to the parent, and approximately 40% of the Child Protective Services cases in Maryland are Alternative Response. This approach enables Maryland to engage families who face challenges in a way that emphasizes the State's commitment to support and strengthen parents and caregivers, and connect them with agency and community resources that keep children safe in their own homes.

Maryland's continuing commitment to supporting and strengthening families has been bolstered through federal approval of its IV-E Waiver demonstration known as Families Blossom Place Matters. The IV-E Waiver enables Maryland to extend its vision to prevent and divert children and families from foster care, reduce the need for foster care, and have timely and lasting permanency for the children and families we serve. Families Blossom Place Matters is focused on a broader systems improvement strategy that includes a comprehensive, integrated Practice Model that infuses trauma responsiveness, strengths-based, family-centered and youth-guided principles within and across the child welfare continuum, the utilization of trauma-informed assessments, the expansion of the array of evidence-based interventions, the increase of data analytics capabilities to monitor trends and progress, and the development of organizational structures that aligns with the agency's strategic vision and promotes an intentional focus on outcomes improvement across the child welfare continuum.

Maryland has already experienced considerable success with its Place Matters initiative featuring Family-Centered Practice. Alternative Response and the Families Blossom Place Matters initiative will increase the State's positive impact on the children and families served.

# Michigan

Herman McCall, Ed.D., Executive Director  
Children's Service Agency  
Department of Health and Human Services

The following are Michigan's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

## Child Welfare Vision

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will lead the state in supporting our children, youth and families to reach their full potential.

## Child Welfare Mission

Child welfare professionals will demonstrate an unwavering commitment to engage and partner with families we serve to ensure safety, permanency and well-being through a traumainformed approach.

The vision and mission are achieved through the following guiding principles:

- Safety is the first priority of the child welfare system.
- Families, children, youth and caregivers will be treated with dignity and respect while having a voice in decisions that affect them.
- The ideal place for children is with their families; therefore, we will ensure children remain in their own homes whenever safely possible.
- When placement away from the family is necessary, children will be placed in the most family-like setting and placed with siblings whenever possible.
- The impact of traumatic stress on child and family development is recognized and used to inform intervention strategies.
- The well-being of children is recognized and promoted by building relationships, developing child competencies and strengthening formal and informal community resources.
- Permanent connections with siblings and caring and supportive adults will be preserved and encouraged.
- Children will be reunited with their families and siblings as soon as safely possible.
- Community stakeholders and tribes will be actively engaged to protect children and support families.
- Child welfare professionals will be supported through identifying and addressing secondary traumatic stress, ongoing development and mentoring to promote success and retention.
- Leadership will be demonstrated within all levels of the child welfare system.
- Decision making will be outcome-based, research-driven and continuously evaluated for improvement.
- Michigan is dedicated to providing the most accurate data possible through our NCANDS and AFCARS submissions.

Michigan would like to note that the number reported for Maltreatment in Care in fiscal year 2016 appears to have decreased which is not accurate. Michigan will be resubmitting NCANDS data to reflect the updated number.

The total number of children in foster care for fiscal year 2016 has continued to decrease slightly, along with a reduction in the median length of stay. These decreases can be attributed to an increase in the number of finalized adoptions as well as the staffs' implementation of Michigan's case practice model. There has been a substantial reduction in the number of children waiting for adoption.

Michigan has observed an increase in the rate children re-enter foster care within twelve months of being discharged from their first out of home placement episode. Michigan anticipates substance use/abuse and national opiate crisis as a contributing factor to the dynamic change.

Michigan continues to focus efforts on improving our state's performance in outcomes related to child safety, permanency and well-being.

# Minnesota

**Jamie Sorenson, Director**  
**Child Safety and Permanency Division**  
**Minnesota Department of Human Services**

The following are Minnesota's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments regarding Minnesota's National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), as well as census and caseworker visit data for inclusion in the 2012–2016 Child Welfare Outcomes Report. Upon review, additional contextual information is being provided regarding three specific data elements, including increases in the number of:

- Children who were the subject of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment
- Child maltreatment victims in federal fiscal year (FFY) 2016
- Children in care on Sept. 30, 2016.

As indicated in NCANDS data, Minnesota continues to see a substantial increase in the number of children who were subjects of investigated reports alleging child maltreatment, with a corresponding number of child maltreatment victims in FFY 2016. There are several possible reasons for this increase. A primary indicator may be the opioid crisis occurring nationally having an impact in Minnesota broadly, and child protection in particular. The number of child protection reports including allegations of prenatal exposure to drugs has more than doubled over the past five years. Also, there is increased public attention to the child protection system heightened sensitivity, both by the public and local agencies serving children and families. This, coupled with statutory changes that make it more likely that child protection reports will be screened in for a child protection response, resulted in an increase in the use of traditional investigations rather than differential response. Increased use of traditional investigations resulted in more children with determinations of maltreatment.

Although Minnesota is experiencing small increases in the number of children entering out-of-home care, the length of time they are remaining in care is increasing, resulting in more children in care on Sept. 30, 2016, (as reflected in AFCARS data). In part, this increase in the length of time that children are in care may also be the result of the rise in opioid abuse. The number of children entering care for the reason of parental drug abuse is increasing, and the challenges that result from drug addiction make it difficult to achieve permanency quickly.

# Missouri

**Tim Decker, Director**  
**Missouri Children's Division**  
**Missour Department of Social Services**

The following are Missouri's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

Missouri continues to be dedicated to providing the most accurate data possible through our NCANDS and AFCARS transmissions. We persist in our efforts to enhance our data systems to more thoroughly detail compliance with the mandates of ASFA and to better serve families.

Child safety is a priority for the Children's Division. Missouri is in the implementation phase of an integrated practice model that uses Signs of Safety, Five Domains of Well Being and Trauma Informed care to more effectively serve and improve outcomes with children and families. Missouri is hopeful and has already started to see benefits from this approach.

Missouri continued to see an increase in the foster care population during the 2012–2016 time period. The state is still challenged with timely permanency and will be addressing this through their upcoming program improvement plan. Missouri still experiences court delays in termination of parental rights proceedings until an adoptive home has been found for a specific child or sibling group. Often these courts terminate parental rights and finalize adoptions in the same court proceeding. In addition, Missouri has identified areas of the state where cases are not moving in a timely manner and has used rapid permanency reviews, as well as the targeted use of contract attorneys to alleviate delays. For example, Jackson County has a concentrated effort in 2017–2018 with regard to finalization of Termination of Parental Rights cases for many children currently waiting for adoption.

Despite the increased number of foster children, Missouri achieved 97% on the frequency of caseworker visits with children during FFY 2017. Missouri has continually improved the percent of children having visits by caseworkers since 2008. A performance measure report as well as a tracking tool in the SACWIS system allow for staff to maintain high frequency of visits with children in out-of-home care. Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement efforts additionally address the quality of visits.

Missouri remains committed to the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process which monitors and identifies areas of strength and areas needing improvement at both the statewide and local levels. The CQI process monitors all aspects of the service delivery from child abuse and neglect reports to permanency. The Division continually strives to improve our ability to serve youth and families in our care.

# Oregon

**Marilyn Jones, Director  
Office of Child Welfare Programs  
Department of Human Services**

The following are Oregon's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

At this time, Oregon is pleased to report that the data coming from AFCARS and NCANDS has been updated to reflect accurate information for the foster care population for the data reported in the Child Welfare Outcomes report. Oregon continues to work on reporting certain elements, which largely do not impact this report.

During the review of the 2012–2016 data in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, Oregon noticed that the Round 1 measure for Recurrence of Maltreatment within Six Months is inconsistent with Oregon's calculation of approximately 5.6%. We are investigating further at this time.

The following data notes are important to understand when interpreting Oregon's NCANDS data

- Prior to 2012, the number of children subjects of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment is an estimate. The Oregon legacy system did not collect data at the child level on non-victims.
- Oregon's maltreatment type "threat of harm" is captured in the category of "Other."
- In Oregon, all reports of child abuse/neglect that are referred for investigation are assigned a response time. There are two types of response times in Oregon - "within 24 hours" and "within 5 days."

Also, Oregon began a phased implementation of a two track response system called Differential Response (DR) in May of 2014. As of September 30, 2015, there were nine of Oregon's 36 counties using the system. The two types of response tracks within the DR system are Traditional Response (TR) and Alternative Response (AR). Data is reported in the NCANDS Child File for all screened-in Child Protective Services (CPS) reports, regardless of Differential Response Track. Alternative Response Track CPS reports will have Report and Maltreatment Dispositions of "Alternative response nonvictim" as the response option.

Oregon is committed to providing the most accurate data possible through AFCARS and NCANDS transmissions.

# Pennsylvania

**Cathy A. Utz, Deputy Secretary  
Children, Youth and Families  
Department of Public Welfare**

The following are Pennsylvania's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

- Overview Maltreatment Information

Major changes to Pennsylvania's Child Protective Services Law (CPSL) became effective December 31, 2014. The changes included expansion of the definitions of "child abuse" and "perpetrator" and clarified mandatory child abuse reporting processes. The law now requires a mandated reporter to make a direct report to the child abuse hotline rather than reporting up a chain of command within their organization. The amendments to the definition of child abuse, specifically the inclusion of additional categories of abuse and a lower threshold for substantiating a report of child abuse, led to an increase in the number of reports of alleged abuse, as well as the substantiation of these reports. The definition of perpetrator was also expanded to capture additional categories of individuals as perpetrators when they abuse a child. To address these changes, Pennsylvania implemented a new Child Welfare Information Solution (CWIS) in December 2014. The 2016 National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) child file is the first year that incorporated 12 months of data collected under the new statute.

- Race/Ethnicity of Child Victims

Changes to the CPSL in 2014 included the collection of race/ethnicity data on child victims and other subjects of the report. Prior to these changes, data on the race/ethnicity of victims was not available.

- Time to Investigation

Although response time is not reported at the state level, Pennsylvania's CPSL mandates that upon receipt of a report of suspected child abuse, the investigating agency shall immediately commence an appropriate investigation and see the child immediately if emergency protective custody is required or has been taken. If it cannot be determined from the report whether emergency protective custody is needed, the agency must see the child within 24 hours of the receipt of the report. The county agency documents all contacts with the alleged victim. As part of the state's licensing of County Children and Youth Agencies (CCYAs), timely response to reports is an area reviewed for compliance with applicable law.

The Office of Children, Youth and Families (OCYF) and CCYAs have also established a Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) process, which includes Quality Service Reviews (QSRs). The QSR process is based on our practice model and standards, and formalizes an internal and external evaluative process and quality reviews. Two indicators measured during the reviews are used to evaluate the safety of the child across multiple settings. Implementation of CQI and QSRs are individualized by county in collaboration with the regional OCYF staff and technical assistance providers/collaborators that support the county. QSRs allow CCYAs to identify strengths, needs, and resulting action steps for improvements.

- Children Reentering Foster Care

Pennsylvania has identified foster care reentry as an area needing improvement. As part of our yearly Needs-Based Plan and Budget process, CCYAs are provided with county-specific data packages. These include information in regard to population flow, reunification, adoption, permanency, and reentry. CCYAs are required to establish goals for improving outcomes in areas needing improvement.

# Washington

**Connie Lambert-Eckel, Acting Assistant Secretary  
Children's Administration  
Department of Social and Health Services**

The following are Washington's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

Child safety is at the forefront of every aspect of our work as we endeavor to:

- Maintain children in their own homes and prevent out-of-home placement
- Serve and support children during the time they are in out-of-home care
- Return children home safely as quickly as possible
- Support children in homes with relatives
- Secure permanent families for children who cannot safely return home
- Decrease the over-representation of children of color in the child welfare system

Washington State is taking active steps to continue to improve safe, timely outcomes for children through:

- Working with Quality Improvement Center for Workforce Development (QIC-WD) at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) to enter into a five-year partnership to strengthen our workforce. Over the next four years the QIC-WD will work with Washington, one of eight sites chosen, to address and study potential solutions around workforce development and support strategies to reduce staff turnover.
- Implementation of Washington's Title IV-E Waiver demonstration project which involves the implementation of a differential response pathway we call Family Assessment Response (FAR).
- Close monitoring of timeliness of initial face-to-face contact with alleged child victims with the focus on quality of safety assessments and services that promote safety.
- Focused attention on engagement with children and families in shared planning meetings to facilitate timely identification and implementation of appropriate permanency plans.

Washington, like many states, is experiencing challenges that are impacting outcomes throughout the system. These difficulties have included an increase in referrals (194% increase since 2010) to our system, cases requiring an immediate response, families and children presenting with increased complexity, and an increase in Child and Family Welfare Services caseloads. Washington regrettably is also not immune to the opioid crisis impacting our country right now. Social safety net reductions at the state and national level have increased the number of problems facing our families while decreasing available resources.

Efforts to review, analyze and plan to improve the safety, permanency and well-being outcomes for children and their families are ongoing. Updated training on safety and risk assessment, parent engagement and intervention is provided for caseworkers and supervisors. Efforts to understand the staff turnover is occurring through the use of employee surveys and a grant to streamline and reduce caseworker workload are in process.

The Governor and Washington State Legislature are committed to management accountability and performance measurement. Children's Administration tracks performance and reports publicly on safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes and uses data for decision-making.

# Wisconsin

Fredi-Ellen Bove, Administrator  
Division of Safety and Permanence  
Wisconsin Department of Children and Families

The following are Wisconsin's comments on the State data presented in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2016: Report to Congress* and its related data site <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite>.

Wisconsin's child welfare system is state-supervised and county-administered in 71 counties and state-administered in Milwaukee. Wisconsin's current focus areas are:

- **Promoting Trauma-Informed Approaches:** Scientific research shows that traumatic experiences in childhood have a "toxic effect" and inhibit the healthy development of a child's brain. As a result, a child's cognitive development, social skills, behavior, and physical health can be significantly impaired. Wisconsin is incorporating trauma-informed principles into our child welfare system, through training of child welfare workers, birth, foster, and adoptive parents, and transforming the policies, practices and workplace culture of child welfare agencies and other child and family serving systems at the state and local levels.
- **Preventing Child Maltreatment:** Wisconsin places a high priority on preventing child maltreatment. The Department of Children and Families (DCF) is supporting home visiting and other evidence-based and promising practices and exploring the use of predictive analytic tools to identify and provide timely support to high risk families to prevent the occurrence of child maltreatment.
- **Combating Youth Human Trafficking:** Wisconsin is making progress on developing a coordinated, comprehensive, and trauma-informed response and service system for youth who have experienced or are at risk of human trafficking. Efforts underway include establishment of a broad-based cross-system state level stakeholder group to develop and coordinate strategies, establishment of a dedicated Anti-Human Trafficking Coordinator position, development of training curriculum for child welfare workers and professionals in other youth-serving systems, development of a public awareness campaign, identification of prevention curriculum targeted to youth, support for specialized residential treatment programs, and implementation of regional hubs to coordinate and support services at the local level.
- **Addressing Substance Use Disorder (SUD):** In response to the sharp increase in opioid use in recent years, Wisconsin is implementing a robust set of strategies to protect safety in families with members with SUD, including promoting cross-system collaboration, expanding medication assisted treatment service capacity, increasing training for child welfare workers and law enforcement, supporting prevention programs targeted to high risk youth, expanding the use of Family Drug Treatment Courts and improving the collection of data on SUD-related child welfare cases.
- **Achieving Educational Success for Children in Out-of-Home Care:** In collaboration with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and local child welfare agencies and school districts, the DCF is working on improving the educational outcomes for youth in foster care through: establishment of data exchanges between the child welfare and school systems; development of practices to promote timely communication and collaboration between child welfare and school workers; and research on the educational outcomes of these children.
- **Supporting Youth Transition to Adulthood:** Youth who age out of foster care face significant challenges in achieving self-sufficiency as adults. Wisconsin has transitioned from a county-based to a regional service delivery system for independent living services for former foster youth to increase the effectiveness of these services and strengthen the linkage with the regional adult workforce system.

Through these efforts, we are expanding healthy community connections and bolstering resiliency in the children, youth and families we serve to help them thrive.

# Appendix A

## Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (Pub. L. 105–89)

SEC. 203. Performance of States in Protecting Children.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON STATE PERFORMANCE.—Part E of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.) is amended by addition at the end of the following:

Sec 479A. Annual Report.

The Secretary, in consultation with Governors, state legislatures, state and local public officials responsible for administering child welfare programs, and child welfare advocates, shall—

- (1) develop a set of outcome measures (including length of stay in foster care, number of foster care placements, and number of adoptions) that can be used to assess the performance of states in operating child protection and child welfare programs pursuant to Parts B and E to ensure the safety of children;
- (2) to the maximum extent possible, the outcome measures should be developed from data available from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System;
- (3) develop a system for rating the performance of states with respect to the outcome measures, and provide to the states an explanation of the rating system and how scores are determined under the rating system;
- (4) prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to ensure that states provide to the Secretary the data necessary to determine state performance with respect to each outcome measure, as a condition of the state receiving funds under this part;
- (5) on May 1, 1999, and annually thereafter, prepare and submit to the Congress a report on the performance of each state on each outcome measure, which shall examine the reasons for high performance and low performance and, where possible, make recommendations as to how state performance could be improved;
- (6) include in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (5) for fiscal year 2007 or any succeeding fiscal year, state-by-state data on—
  - (A) the percentage of children in foster care under the responsibility of the state who were visited on a monthly basis by the caseworker handling the case of the child;
  - (B) the total number of visits made by caseworkers on a monthly basis to children in foster care under the responsibility of the state during a fiscal year as a percentage of the total number of the visits that would occur during the fiscal year if each child were so visited once every month while in such care; and
  - (C) the percentage of the visits that occurred in the residence of the child; and
- (7)<sup>1</sup> include in the report submitted pursuant to paragraph (5) for fiscal year 2016 or any succeeding fiscal year, state-by-state data on—

- (A) children in foster care who have been placed in a child care institution or other setting that is not a foster family home, including —
  - (i) the number of children in the placements and their ages, including separately, the number and ages of children who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement;
  - (ii) the duration of the placement in the settings (including for children who have a permanency plan of another planned permanent living arrangement);
  - (iii) the types of child care institutions used (including group homes, residential treatment, shelters, or other congregate care settings);
  - (iv) with respect to each child care institution or other setting that is not a foster family home, the number of children in foster care residing in each such institution or nonfoster family home;

<sup>1</sup> Section 115 of Pub. L. 113–183 added Sections 479A(a)(7) and (b).

(v) any clinically diagnosed special need of such children; and

(vi) the extent of any specialized education, treatment, counseling, or other services provided in the settings; and

(B) children in foster care who are pregnant or parenting.

(b) CONSULTATION ON OTHER ISSUES.—The Secretary shall consult with states and organizations with an interest in child welfare, including organizations that provide adoption and foster care services, and shall take into account requests from Members of Congress, in selecting other issues to be analyzed and reported on under this section using data available to the Secretary, including data reported by states through the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System and to the National Youth in Transition Database.

# Appendix B

## Child Welfare Outcomes Report: Outcomes and Measures

### ***Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect***

**Measure 1.1:** Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?<sup>1</sup>

### ***Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care***

**Measure 2.1:** Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff?

### ***Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care***

**Measure 3.1:** Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

**Measure 3.2:** Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

**Measure 3.3:** Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

**Measure 3.4:** Of all children exiting foster care during the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care?

**Measure 3.5:** Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage by racial/ethnic category left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

### ***Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry***

**Measure 4.1:** Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in the following time periods?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

**Measure 4.2:** Of all children who entered foster care during the year, what percentage reentered care in the following time periods?

- (a) Within 12 months of a prior foster care episode
- (b) More than 12 months after a prior foster care episode

### ***Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption***

**Measure 5.1:** Of all children discharged from foster care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in the following time periods?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

<sup>1</sup> In this Report, all references to "year" indicate a federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). Although alternate types of years (e.g., calendar years) are never used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, the Child and Family Services Reviews sometimes use alternate 12-month time periods to track progress over time.

***Outcome 6: Increase placement stability***

**Measure 6.1:** Of all children served in foster care during the year who had been in care for the time periods listed below, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period?

- (a) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (b) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (c) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (d) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (e) 48 or more months

***Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions***

**Measure 7.1:** Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or an institution?

# Appendix C

## Caseworker Visits

States have been required to meet performance standards and submit data on monthly caseworker visits for a fiscal year (FY) since FY 2007.<sup>1</sup> These requirements were initiated through the passage of the Child and Family Services Improvement Act of 2006 (Pub. L. 109–288), which amended Title IV-B of the Social Security Act (the Act). This amendment also included new funding to partially support monthly caseworker visits (MCVs) with children who are in state foster care. The Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act of 2011 (Pub. L. 112–34) extended the requirements for states to collect and report information on MCVs in FY 2012 and in each FY thereafter.<sup>2</sup> Funding under Title IV-B, subpart 2 of the Act for MCVs with children in foster care is provided in accordance with Section 433(e) of the Act.

### Reporting Population and Methodology

The reporting population subject to the caseworker visits requirements includes all children under age 18 for at least the first day of the FY (October 1) who have been in foster care for at least 1 full calendar month during the FY.

### Calculation of MCVs<sup>3</sup>

To calculate the percentage of required visits to children in foster care that were made on a monthly basis, the following data are required:

- **Denominator:** the aggregate number of complete calendar months all children in the reporting population spent in care. This denominator, expressed in “visit months,” is aggregated for all children and refers to the number of months in which visits should have occurred.
- **Numerator:** the aggregate number of monthly caseworker visits made to children in the reporting population. If a child is visited more than once in a month, only one visit is counted.

For example, if a state had 1,000 children in its foster care caseworker visits reporting population and if these children were in care the entire 12-month period, then each child should have been visited each month he or she was in care. Therefore, the aggregate number of “visit months” those 1,000 children should have been visited would be 12,000 for the year. That would be the MCV denominator.

The numerator would be the aggregate number of required visit months where at least one actual caseworker visit was made to each of those children. For the purpose of this example, a total of 10,000 visits occurred (not the expected 12,000) during the year for the 1,000 children in the reporting population. To calculate the correct numerator for MCVs, a further assessment must be made to count only one visit for each month for each visited child. Thus, if 100 of these children were visited twice in 6 of the months of the year, a deduction of 600 (100x6) must be made to exclude multiple visits during the same month. Therefore, the total for the numerator is 9,400 (10,000-600), which is the actual “visit months” for the year.

The MCV percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator/denominator)x100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number. In this example, the MCV percentage is 78.3 [(9,400/12,000)x100].

### Calculation of Children Receiving Visits In the Home

To calculate the percentage of monthly visits in the home (VIHs), the following data are required:

- **Denominator:** the number of MCVs made for children in the reporting population, which will be the same number as the numerator for the MCV calculation. The number in this denominator is expressed as the number of “visit months” aggregated for all the children (but limited to counting only one visit per child per month).

<sup>1</sup> The FY is the 12-month period beginning October 1 and ending September 30.

<sup>2</sup> Beginning in FY 2012, states were required to use a revised methodology for calculating caseworker visits. For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for FY 2007–FY 2011, see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-08-03 at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi0803>. For detailed information on the collection and reporting of caseworker visits data for FY 2012 and beyond, see Program Instruction ACYF-CB-PI-12-01 at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/pi1201>.

<sup>3</sup> Even though a state may keep some children in foster care beyond age 17, only children under age 18 on the first day of the FY are included in this calculation.

- Numerator: the number of monthly visits made to children in the reporting population that occurred in the child’s home.<sup>4</sup> The numerator is expressed as “visit months,” and it is aggregated for all the visits to all the children in the foster care reporting population (but limited to only counting one visit per child per month).

The VIH percentage is calculated by dividing the numerator by the denominator and multiplying that product by 100 [(numerator/denominator)x100]. This calculation is expressed as a percentage and rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Data Collection Methodology

States may choose to report caseworker visits data based on their total foster care population or based on sample data. States that choose to submit sample data must use a sampling methodology that has been approved by their Children’s Bureau Regional Office in consultation with the Administration for Children, Youth and Families’ Office of Data, Analysis, Research and Evaluation. Table 1 shows the states that elected to submit sample data for 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, and/or 2016.

**Table 1. States That Submitted Sample Data**

State	Used Sample in 2012	Used Sample in 2013	Used Sample in 2014	Used Sample in 2015	Used Sample in 2016
Alabama	X	X	X		
Hawaii	X	X	X	X	X
Idaho	X				
Michigan	X	X	X	X	X
Mississippi			X		
Pennsylvania	X	X	X	X	X

<sup>4</sup> A child’s home is defined as the home where the child is residing, whether in-state or out-of-state, and can include the foster placement setting.

# Appendix D

## Child Welfare Outcomes Report: Data Sources and Elements<sup>1</sup>

### Context Information

Items	Data Sources and Elements
<i>Context Statistics</i>	
Total children under 18 years	U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Race/ethnicity (%)	U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Child population in poverty (%)	U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau
Caseworker visits for children in foster care	States submit data in conjunction with their Child and Family Services Plans and Annual Progress and Services Reports
<i>Child Maltreatment Data (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System)</i>	
Children subject of an investigated report alleging child maltreatment	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Administration for Children and Families (ACF), Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Children's Bureau, National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS Summary Data Component (SDC): Item 3.1, Children Subject of a Child Protective Services (CPS) Investigation or Assessment by Disposition
Total child maltreatment victims	Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS SDC: Sum of Item 3.1A, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Substantiated; 3.1B, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Indicated; and 3.1C, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment Was Given an Alternative Response That Identified Child Victim(s)
Child fatalities	Three possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Element 34, Maltreatment Death (2) NCANDS Agency File: Element 4.1 (3) NCANDS SDC: Item 5.1, Child Victims Who Died as a Result of Maltreatment
Age of child victims	Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Element 12, Child Age at Report; or a combination of Element 6, Report Date, and Element 13, Child Date of Birth (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.2, Child Victims By Age
Race/ethnicity of child victims	Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 15 through 20, Child Race; and Element 21, Child Ethnicity (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.4, Child Victims by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity; and Item 4.5, Child Victims by Race
Maltreatment types of child victims	Two possible data sources: (1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 26 through 33, Maltreatment Type, Maltreatment Disposition Level (2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.1, Child Victims by Type of Maltreatment
Response time	Mean response time in hours is computed from the Child File records using the Report Date, Field 6, and the Investigation Start Date, Field 7. The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24. Median response time in hours is computed from the NCANDS Child File records using the Report Date, Field 6, and the Investigation Start Date, Field 7. The result is converted to hours by multiplying by 24.
<i>Characteristics of Children in Foster Care (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System)</i>	
Total number (for each fiscal year [FY]) In care on 10/1 Entered care Exited care In care on 9/30	HHS/ACF/ACYF/Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Median length of stay (for each FY) In care on 10/1 Exited care In care on 9/30	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Age of children (for each FY) In care on 10/1 Entered care Exited care In care on 9/30	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
Race/ethnicity of children (for each FY) In care on 10/1 Entered care Exited care In care on 9/30	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; and Element 9, Hispanic Origin
<i>Characteristics of Children Waiting for Adoption on 9/30 (AFCARS)</i>	
Total waiting children	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
Items	Data Sources and Elements
Number of waiting children whose parents' rights have been terminated	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights

<sup>1</sup> All of the data may be found on the Child Welfare Outcomes data site at <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwodatasite/>. Not all of the data listed are included in the printed report. For a full list of AFCARS data elements, see AFCARS Technical Bulletin #1: Data Elements, revised in February 2012, at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/afcars-tb1>. For more information regarding NCANDS data elements, see <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/ncands>.

Items	Data Sources and Elements
Age of children waiting for adoption	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
Race/ethnicity of children waiting for adoption	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; Element 9, Hispanic Origin; Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights
<i>Characteristics of Children Adopted (AFCARS)</i>	
Total children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 21, Date Adoption Legalized
Age of children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; Element 5, Child's Date of Birth; and Element 21, Date Adoption Legalized
Race/ethnicity of children adopted	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; Element 7, Race; and Element 8, Hispanic Origin

## Outcome Information

Outcome Measures	Data Sources and Elements
<i>Outcome 1. Reduce Recurrence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (NCANDS)</i>	
1.1 Recurrence of maltreatment within 6 months	NCANDS Child File: Field 4, Child ID; Field 6, Report Date; Fields 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level(s); and Field 34, Maltreatment Death
<i>Outcome 2. Reduce the Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care (NCANDS and AFCARS)</i>	
2.1 Maltreatment in foster care	AFCARS Annual Foster Care Database: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care NCANDS Child File: Field 4, Child ID; Field 6, Report Date; Fields 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level(s); Field 34, Maltreatment Death; and Fields 89, 108, and 127, Perpetrator Relationship
<i>Outcome 3. Increase Permanency for Children in Foster Care (AFCARS)</i>	
3.1 Exits of children from foster care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.2 Exits of children with a diagnosed disability	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 10, Child Diagnosed With Disabilities; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.3 Exits of children older than age 12 at entry	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.4 Exits to emancipation	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
3.5 Exits by race/ethnicity	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; Element 9, Hispanic Origin; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
<i>Outcome 4. Reduce Time to Reunification Without Increasing Reentry (AFCARS)</i>	
4.1 Time to reunification	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
4.2 Children reentering foster care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 19, Total Number of Removals; Element 20, Date of Discharge From Last Foster Care Episode; and Element 21, Date of Latest Removal
<i>Outcome 5. Reduce Time in Foster Care to Adoption (AFCARS)</i>	
5.1 Time to adoption	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
<i>Outcome 6. Increase Placement Stability (AFCARS)</i>	
6.1 Number of placements by time in care	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 23, Date of Placement in Current Placement Setting; Element 24, Number of Previous Settings in Episode; and Element 56, Date of Discharge From Foster Care
<i>Outcome 7. Reduce Placement of Young Children in Group Homes or Institutions (AFCARS)</i>	
7.1 Most recent placement settings of children age 12 or younger who entered care during FY	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 23, Date of Placement in Current Placement Setting; and Element 41, Current Placement Setting

# Appendix E

## ***Child Maltreatment 2016: Summary of Key Findings***

The following are key findings adapted from *Child Maltreatment 2016*. The statistics in the Child Maltreatment series of reports are based on data submitted to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

The full *Child Maltreatment 2016* report is available on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2016>.

### **Overview**

All 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. territories have child abuse and neglect reporting laws that mandate certain professionals and institutions to refer suspected maltreatment to a child protective services (CPS) agency.

Each state has its own definitions of child abuse and neglect that are based on standards set by federal law. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) (42 U.S.C § 5101), as amended by the CAPTA Reauthorization Act of 2010 (P.L. 111–320), defines child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum:

Any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker, which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation; or an act or failure to act, which presents an imminent risk of serious harm.

Most states recognize four major types of maltreatment: neglect, physical abuse, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse. Any of the forms of child maltreatment may be found separately or in combination.

### **What is NCANDS?**

NCANDS is a federally sponsored effort to collect and analyze annual data on child abuse and neglect. The 1988 CAPTA amendments directed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to establish a national data collection and analysis program. The Children’s Bureau within the HHS, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families collects and analyzes these data.

The data are submitted voluntarily by the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico (referred to collectively as the states). The first report from NCANDS was based on data for 1990. The report for fiscal year (FY) 2016 data is the 27th issuance of this annual publication.<sup>1</sup>

### **How are the data used?**

NCANDS data are used for the Child Maltreatment report series, and they are also a critical source of information for many other publications, reports, and activities of the federal government and other groups. More information about these reports and programs are available on the Children’s Bureau website at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/reporting-systems/ncands>.

### **What data are collected?**

Once an allegation (called a referral) of abuse and neglect is received by a CPS agency, it is either screened in for a response by CPS or it is screened out. A screened-in referral is called a report. CPS agencies respond to all reports. In most states, the majority of reports receive an investigation, which determines if a child was maltreated or is at-risk of maltreatment and establishes whether an intervention is needed. Some reports receive alternative responses, which focus primarily upon the needs of the family and do not determine if a child was maltreated or is at-risk of maltreatment.

NCANDS collects case-level data on all children who received a CPS agency response in the form of an investigation response or an alternative response. Case-level data (meaning data on individual children) include information about the characteristics of screened-in referrals (reports) of abuse and neglect that are made to CPS agencies, the children involved, the types of

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this appendix are for federal fiscal years (October 1–September 30). Additionally, unless otherwise specified, the data used in this appendix are for 2016.

maltreatment they suffered, the dispositions of the CPS responses, the risk factors of the children and caregivers, the services provided, and the perpetrators.

### **Where are the data available?**

The Child Maltreatment reports are available on the Children’s Bureau website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/research-data-technology/statistics-research/child-maltreatment>. If you have questions or require additional information about this report, please contact Child Welfare Information Gateway at [info@childwelfare.gov](mailto:info@childwelfare.gov) or 1–800–394–3366. Restricted-use files of NCANDS data are archived at the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) at Cornell University. Researchers who are interested in using these data for statistical analyses may contact NDACAN by phone at 607–255–7799 or by email at [ndacan@cornell.edu](mailto:ndacan@cornell.edu). For additional information, refer to <https://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/>.

### **How many allegations of maltreatment were reported to CPS and received an investigation response or alternative response?**

During 2016, CPS agencies received an estimated 4.1 million referrals involving approximately 7.4 million children. Among the 45 states that reported both screened-in and screened-out referrals, 58.0 percent of referrals were screened in, and 42.0 percent were screened out. In 2016, 2.3 million referrals were screened in for a CPS response and received a disposition. The national rate of screened-in referrals (reports) was 31.3 per 1,000 children in the national population.

### **Who reported child maltreatment?**

For 2016, professionals (i.e., people who had contact with the alleged child maltreatment victim as part of his or her job) submitted 64.9 percent of reports alleging child abuse and neglect. Professionals include teachers, police officers, lawyers, and social services staff. The highest percentages of reports were from education personnel (18.9 percent), legal and law enforcement personnel (18.4 percent), and social services personnel (11.2 percent).

Nonprofessionals—including friends, neighbors, and relatives—submitted one-fifth (18.1 percent) of reports. Unclassified sources submitted the remaining reports (17.0 percent). Unclassified includes anonymous, other, and unknown report sources. States use the code “other” for any report source that does not have an NCANDS designated code.

### **Who were the child victims?**

Fifty-one states submitted data to NCANDS about the dispositions of children who received one or more CPS responses. For 2016, approximately 3.5 million children were the subjects of at least one report. Nearly one-fifth (17.2 percent) of children were classified as victims with dispositions of substantiated (16.5 percent) and indicated (0.7 percent). The remaining children were determined to be nonvictims of maltreatment (82.8 percent). For 2016, there were a nationally estimated 676,000 victims of child abuse and neglect. The victim rate was 9.1 victims per 1,000 children in the population. The following are examples of victim demographics:

- Children in their first year of life had the highest rate of victimization at 24.8 per 1,000 children of the same age in the national population.
- American Indian or Alaska Native children had the highest rate of victimization of any racial or ethnic group at 14.2 per 1,000 children in the population of the same race or ethnicity. African-American children had the second highest rate at 13.9 per 1,000 children of the same race or ethnicity.
- For all victims younger than 1 year, the percentage of victims with the child risk factor of alcohol abuse increased from 3.1 percent in 2012 to 4.8 percent in 2016. The rates per 1,000 children of the same age increased from 0.7 to 1.2.
- For all victims younger than 1 year, the percentage of victims with the child risk factor of drug abuse increased from 12.3 percent in 2012 to 15.2 percent in 2016. The rates per 1,000 children of the same age increased from 2.6 to 3.9.

### **What were the most common types of maltreatment?**

As in prior years, the greatest percentages of children suffered from neglect (74.8 percent) and physical abuse (18.2 percent). A child may have been the victim of multiple types of maltreatment and counted in more than one maltreatment type category. However, multiple instances of any one type of maltreatment for a single child are counted only once.

### **How many children died from abuse or neglect?**

Child fatalities are the most tragic consequence of maltreatment. For 2016, 49 states reported 1,700 fatalities. Based on these data, a nationally estimated 1,750 children died from abuse and neglect. The analyses of case-level fatality data show the following:

- The national rate of child fatalities was 2.36 deaths per 100,000 children.
- For nearly three-quarters (70 percent) of all child fatalities, the victims were younger than 3 years old.
- Boys had a higher child fatality rate than girls (2.87 fatalities per 100,000 boys compared to 2.11 fatalities per 100,000 girls).
- The rate of African-American child fatalities (4.65 fatalities per 100,000 African-American children) is 2.2 times greater than the rate for White children (2.08 fatalities per 100,000 White children) and nearly 3 times greater than the rate for Hispanic children (1.58 fatalities per 100,000 Hispanic children).
- More than three quarters (78.0 percent) of child fatalities involved at least one parent.

### **Who abused and neglected children?**

The term “perpetrator” is used to describe the person responsible for the abuse or neglect of a child. Fifty states reported 518,136 perpetrators. An analysis of case-level data show the following:

- More than four-fifths (83.4 percent) of perpetrators were between the ages of 18 and 44.
- More than one-half (53.7 percent) of perpetrators were women, 45.3 percent of perpetrators were men, and 1.0 percent were of unknown sex.
- The three largest percentages of perpetrators’ races and ethnicities were White (49.8 percent), African American (20.0 percent), and Hispanic (18.8 percent).

### **Who received services?**

CPS agencies provide services to children and their families, both in their homes and while a child is in foster care. Reasons for providing services may include preventing future instances of child maltreatment and remedying conditions that brought the children and their family to the attention of the agency. The following are statistics about service receipt during 2016:

- Forty-five states reported approximately 1.9 million children received prevention services.
- Approximately 1.3 million children received postresponse services from a CPS agency.
- Nearly two-thirds (60.6 percent) of victims and almost one-third (29.7 percent) of nonvictims received postresponse services.

# Appendix F

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau, [www.acf.hhs.gov/cb](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb)

## The AFCARS Report

Preliminary FY<sup>1</sup> 2016 Estimates as of Oct 2017 • No. 24

**SOURCE:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) FY 2016 data<sup>2</sup>

### Numbers At A Glance

Fiscal Year	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Number in foster care on September 30 of the FY	396,966	400,911	414,435	427,444	437,465
Number entered foster care during FY	251,352	254,719	264,364	268,720	273,539
Number exited foster care during FY	239,496	238,892	236,906	243,043	250,248
Number waiting to be adopted on September 30 of the FY	101,945	104,395	108,068	111,358	117,794
Number waiting to be adopted whose parental rights (for all living parents) were terminated during FY	58,240	58,681	61,012	62,093	65,274
Number adopted with public child welfare agency involvement during FY	52,025	50,820	50,671	53,556	57,208

### Children in Foster Care on September 30, 2016 • N=437,465

Age as of September 30th	Years
Mean	8.5
Median	7.8

Age as of September 30th	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	7%	31,295
1 Year	8%	36,942
2 Years	8%	33,034
3 Years	7%	28,754
4 Years	6%	25,607
5 Years	5%	23,190
6 Years	5%	21,999
7 Years	5%	21,580
8 Years	5%	20,957
9 Years	4%	19,546
10 Years	4%	18,006
11 Years	4%	16,858
12 Years	4%	15,984
13 Years	4%	17,077
14 Years	4%	18,831
15 Years	5%	22,034
16 Years	6%	24,835
17 Years	6%	26,166
18 Years	2%	8,353
19 Years	1%	2,834
20 Years	0%	2,129

Sex	Percent	Number
Male	52%	227,248
Female	48%	210,166

Most Recent Placement Setting	Percent	Number
Pre-Adoptive Home	4%	16,572
Foster Family Home (Relative)	32%	139,017
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	45%	196,446
Group Home	5%	21,649
Institution	7%	31,679
Supervised Independent Living	1%	4,599
Runaway	1%	4,660
Trial Home Visit	5%	21,566

Case Plan Goal	Percent	Number
Reunify with Parent(s) or Principal Caretaker(s)	55%	233,108
Live with Other Relative(s)	3%	12,993
Adoption	26%	109,482
Long Term Foster Care	3%	10,549
Emancipation	4%	17,394
Guardianship	3%	14,491
Case Plan Goal Not Yet Established	5%	22,485

<sup>1</sup> 'FY' refers to the Federal Fiscal Year, October 1st through September 30th.

<sup>2</sup> Data from both the regular and revised AFCARS file submissions received by Oct 2017 are included in this report. Missing data are excluded from each table. Therefore, the totals within each distribution may not equal the total provided for that subpopulation (e.g. number in care on September 30th may not match the sum across ages for that group)

Race/Ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	10,366
Asian	1%	2,290
Black or African American	23%	101,825
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	936
Hispanic (of any race)	21%	91,352
White	44%	191,433
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	8,418
Two or more Races	7%	30,224

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

Time in Care	Months
Mean	20.1
Median	12.7

Time in Care (Months)	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	6%	24,071
1 - 5 Months	22%	95,884
6 - 11 Months	20%	89,315
12 - 17 Months	15%	67,509
18 - 23 Months	10%	43,507
24 - 29 Months	8%	32,830
30 - 35 Months	5%	20,662
3 - 4 Years	9%	37,998
5 Years or More	6%	25,620

### Children Entering Foster Care during FY 2016 • N=273,539

Age at Entry	Years
Mean	7.2
Median	6.3

Age at Entry	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	18%	49,234
1 Year	8%	20,709
2 Years	7%	18,282
3 Years	6%	16,236
4 Years	5%	14,610
5 Years	5%	13,724
6 Years	5%	13,260
7 Years	5%	12,897
8 Years	4%	11,923
9 Years	4%	11,051
10 Years	4%	9,935
11 Years	3%	9,270
12 Years	3%	9,491
13 Years	4%	10,532
14 Years	4%	12,172
15 Years	5%	13,976
16 Years	5%	14,338
17 Years	4%	10,439
18 Years	0%	1,098
19 Years	0%	224
20 Years	0%	96

Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	6,033
Asian	1%	1,696
Black or African American	21%	58,211
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	702
Hispanic (of any race)	20%	54,722
White	47%	127,152
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	6,090
Two or more Races	7%	18,195

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

Circumstances Associated With Child's Removal	Percent	Number
Neglect	61%	166,679
Drug Abuse (Parent)	34%	92,107
Caretaker Inability To Cope	14%	37,857
Physical Abuse	12%	33,671
Child Behavior Problem	11%	28,829
Housing	10%	27,871
Parent Incarceration	8%	20,939
Alcohol Abuse (Parent)	6%	15,143
Abandonment	5%	12,889
Sexual Abuse	4%	9,904
Drug Abuse (Child)	2%	6,273
Child Disability	2%	4,554
Relinquishment	1%	2,694
Parent Death	1%	2,212
Alcohol Abuse (Child)	0%	1,242

NOTE: These categories are not mutually exclusive, so percentages will total more than 100% and counts will be more than the total number of entries.

**Children Exiting Foster Care during FY 2016 • N=250,248**

<b>Age at Exit</b>	<b>Years</b>
Mean	8.8
Median	7.8

<b>Age at Exit</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Less than 1 Year	4%	11,153
1 Year	8%	20,382
2 Years	8%	20,610
3 Years	7%	17,845
4 Years	6%	15,517
5 Years	6%	14,348
6 Years	5%	13,451
7 Years	5%	12,953
8 Years	5%	12,063
9 Years	5%	11,283
10 Years	4%	9,721
11 Years	4%	8,934
12 Years	3%	8,172
13 Years	3%	8,166
14 Years	4%	9,006
15 Years	4%	10,066
16 Years	5%	11,742
17 Years	5%	11,618
18 Years	7%	18,017
19 Years	2%	3,901
20 Years	0%	666

<b>Time in Care</b>	<b>Months</b>
Mean	19.0
Median	13.9

<b>Time in care</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Less than 1 Month	10%	24,602
1 - 5 Months	15%	37,771
6 - 11 Months	20%	49,113
12 - 17 Months	16%	40,796
18 - 23 Months	12%	30,494
24 - 29 Months	9%	21,272
30 - 35 Months	6%	14,259
3 - 4 Years	9%	22,070
5 Years or More	4%	9,388

<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	5,125
Asian	1%	1,605
Black or African American	22%	55,391
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	570
Hispanic (of any race)	21%	53,004
White	45%	112,779
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	4,258
Two or more Races	7%	17,225

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

<b>Reasons for Discharge</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Reunification with Parent(s) or Primary Caretaker(s)	51%	125,975
Living with Other Relative(s)	7%	16,306
Adoption	23%	56,507
Emancipation	8%	20,532
Guardianship	10%	23,659
Transfer to Another Agency	2%	4,336
Runaway	0%	881
Death of Child	0%	320

Children Waiting to be Adopted<sup>3</sup> on September 30, 2016 • N=117,794

Age as of September 30th	Years
Mean	7.7
Median	6.9

Age at Entry into Foster Care	Years
Mean	5.1
Median	4.2

Age as of September 30th	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	4%	4,326
1 Year	10%	11,226
2 Years	9%	11,190
3 Years	8%	9,577
4 Years	7%	8,315
5 Years	6%	7,514
6 Years	6%	6,885
7 Years	6%	6,820
8 Years	6%	6,670
9 Years	5%	6,244
10 Years	5%	5,834
11 Years	5%	5,405
12 Years	4%	4,929
13 Years	4%	4,960
14 Years	4%	4,862
15 Years	4%	5,166
16 Years	4%	4,493
17 Years	3%	3,378

Age at Entry into Foster Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	25%	29,811
1 Year	9%	10,154
2 Years	8%	8,934
3 Years	7%	8,177
4 Years	7%	7,660
5 Years	6%	7,558
6 Years	6%	7,312
7 Years	6%	6,661
8 Years	5%	5,988
9 Years	5%	5,361
10 Years	4%	4,754
11 Years	4%	4,143
12 Years	3%	3,724
13 Years	3%	3,152
14 Years	2%	2,269
15 Years	1%	1,415
16 Years	1%	600
17 Years	0%	94

Placement type	Percent	Number
Pre-Adoptive Home	13%	14,765
Foster Family Home (Relative)	26%	30,954
Foster Family Home (Non-Relative)	52%	60,595
Group Home	3%	3,751
Institution	5%	6,195
Supervised Independent Living	0%	106
Runaway	0%	454
Trial Home Visit	1%	720

Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	2,302
Asian	0%	455
Black or African American	23%	26,709
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	152
Hispanic (of any race)	22%	25,822
White	44%	51,279
Unknown/Unable to Determine	2%	1,799
Two or more Races	8%	9,245

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

Sex	Percent	Number
Male	52%	61,730
Female	48%	56,058

<sup>3</sup> Waiting children are identified as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation have been excluded from the estimate.

Time in Care	Months
Mean	31.2
Median	25.0

Time in Care	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	0%	463
1 - 5 Months	4%	4,190
6 - 11 Months	10%	11,442
12 - 17 Months	17%	19,957
18 - 23 Months	17%	19,463
24 - 29 Months	15%	17,631
30 - 35 Months	10%	11,807
3 - 4 Years	18%	21,495
5 Years or More	10%	11,346

**Of Children Waiting for Adoption whose Parents' Parental Rights have been Terminated (N=65,274), Time elapsed since termination of parental rights as of September 30, 2016**

Time since TPR	Months
Mean	18.2
Median	9.0

**Children Adopted with Public Agency Involvement in FY 2016 • N=57,208**

Age at Adoption	Years
Mean	6.2
Median	5.2

Age at Adoption	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Year	2%	1,276
1 Year	12%	7,055
2 Years	14%	8,085
3 Years	11%	6,301
4 Years	9%	5,103
5 Years	8%	4,446
6 Years	7%	3,891
7 Years	6%	3,629
8 Years	6%	3,162
9 Years	5%	2,859
10 Years	4%	2,329
11 Years	4%	2,040
12 Years	3%	1,608
13 Years	2%	1,407
14 Years	2%	1,175
15 Years	2%	1,014
16 Years	2%	920
17 Years	1%	758
18 Years	0%	98
19 Years	0%	25
20 Years	0%	18

Time elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption	Months
Mean	11.8
Median	8.7

Time elapsed from Termination of Parental Rights to Adoption	Percent	Number
Less than 1 Month	2%	1,222
1-5 Months	29%	16,435
6-11 Months	35%	19,848
12-17 Months	17%	9,437
18-23 Months	7%	4,088
24-29 Months	4%	2,167
30-35 Months	2%	1,037
3-4 Years	3%	1,501
5 Years or more	1%	541

Race/ethnicity	Percent	Number
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	970
Asian	0%	235
Black or African American	17%	9,988
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	0%	80
Hispanic (of any race)	22%	12,371
White	49%	27,776
Unknown/Unable to Determine	1%	772
Two or more Races	9%	4,991

NOTE: All races exclude children of Hispanic origin. Children of Hispanic ethnicity may be any race.

<b>Adoptive Family Structure</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Married Couple	69%	38,840
Unmarried Couple	3%	1,786
Single Female	25%	14,049
Single Male	3%	1,967

<b>Relationship of Adoptive Parents to Child Prior to Adoption</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Non-Relative	14%	7,725
Foster Parent	52%	29,044
Stepparent	0%	51
Other Relative	34%	18,854

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Male	51%	29,281
Female	49%	27,923

<b>Receive Adoption Subsidy</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
Yes	92%	52,795
No	8%	4,371

### FY 2016 AFCARS Foster Care Data Release

With this release of the AFCARS FY 2016 foster care data the Children’s Bureau would like to bring to the attention of the readers\users of the AFCARS data our continuing efforts in addressing data quality issues associated with the AFCARS data. The Children’s Bureau is currently focusing on the issue of dropped cases which is described below.

Historically the Children’s Bureau has been aware of the data quality issue involving “Dropped Cases”, i.e., cases which appear in one six-month AFCARS submission without a date of discharge and do not appear in the subsequent six-month submission. The following link’s “Technical Discussion” tab provides a more detailed description of the “Dropped Cases” issue.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption-fy15>

Early in our efforts to understand the dropped cases issue it was understood that the majority fell into a category of those exiting care, however more recent analyses includes a category of instances in which record numbers change, i.e., child records undergo a merge process, hence the child’s record is in the subsequent submission but with a different record number. The records merge process typically happens when a child’s information exists in the State’s information system but the child is inadvertently assigned a new record number, sometimes due to a re-entry into care. We do not believe the two aforementioned categories account for all dropped cases.

We have historically addressed the dropped cases by excluding these records from our AFCARS estimates, and we believe this has ameliorated most negative effects on the annual estimates. Although there has been some decrease in the numbers of “Dropped Cases,” given that the problem still exists, we are now formally addressing the issue with each applicable State beginning with the 2017 AFCARS data. To the extent practicable and reasonable we will attempt to address prior year’s data.

# Appendix G

## Data-Quality Criteria

In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, two separate national medians are computed for each outcome measure. The following summarizes the data-quality checks performed for each state's data for each fiscal year. In the 2016 Range of State Performance tables, national medians are calculated using data from all states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds in 2016 only. In the Median State Performance and Change in Performance Over Time tables, national medians are calculated using data from the states that met the relevant data-quality thresholds for all relevant fiscal years (2012–2016).

**Criteria:** Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) IDs

**Description:** Percentage of records that do not match for a given record number in the next 6-month period

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in the first 6-month file for the fiscal year

**Numerator:** Number of children with AFCARS IDs that do not match in the next 6-month file for the fiscal year

**Threshold:** 50 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, and 7.1
- Calculations for entry rate, children in care, entries, exits, children waiting for adoption, and adopted

**Criteria:** Dropped records

**Description:** Record is missing a date of discharge, suggesting the child is still in care but a record for this same child in the next 6-month period does not exist

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in first 6-month file for the fiscal year

**Numerator:** Number of children reported without discharge dates in first 6-month file for the fiscal year who do not appear in the subsequent 6-month file for the fiscal year

**Threshold:** 10 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 4.1, 4.2, 5.1, 6.1, and 7.1
- Calculations for entry rate, children in care, entries, exits, children waiting for adoption, and adopted

**Criteria:** Missing child disability status

**Description:** Percentage of records missing data for child disability status

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing data for their disability status

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measure 3.2

**Criteria:** Missing date of birth

**Description:** Percentage of records with a missing date of birth

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing date of birth

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 3.3 and 7.1

**Criteria:** Missing date of latest removal

**Description:** Percentage of records with a missing date of latest removal

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing date of latest removal

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 4.1, 5.1, and 6.1

**Criteria:** Missing discharge reason

**Description:** Percentage of records where date of discharge from the most recent foster care episode exists but the reason for discharge is missing

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of records where date of discharge exists but the discharge reason is missing

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 4.1, and 5.1

**Criteria:** Missing number of placement settings

**Description:** Percentage of records with a missing number of placement settings

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing number of placement settings

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measure 6.1

**Criteria:** Missing current placement setting

**Description:** Percentage of records missing the current placement setting

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing data for their current placement setting

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measure 7.1

**Criteria:** Missing current placement setting date

**Description:** Percentage of records missing the date for the current placement setting

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of children missing data for the date of their current placement setting

**Threshold:** 15 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measures 6.1 and 7.1

**Criteria:** Missing data on perpetrator relationship if 95 percent of perpetrators have a known relationship

**Description:** Percentage of records that do not have perpetrator relationship data and at least 95 percent of perpetrators have a known relationship to the child

**Denominator:** Number of children reported in a fiscal year file

**Numerator:** Number of cases that are missing perpetrator relationship data if at least 95 percent of perpetrators have a known relationship to the child

**Threshold:** 25 percent

**States that exceed the data-quality threshold are excluded from the following:**

- Measure 2.1

