

# Child Welfare Outcomes 2009–2012: Report to Congress Executive Summary



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*Child Welfare Outcomes 2009–2012* includes:

- ❖ State data pages with:
  - Contextual data
  - Performance on original outcome measures
  - Performance on the CFSR composite measures
  - A state comment (if provided)
- ❖ A discussion of data issues and key findings of the data analyses across states

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report was created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) 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 the Department 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 2009–2012*, is the thirteenth report since the series' inception.

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report provides information on national performance as well as the performance of individual states in seven outcome categories.<sup>3</sup> Prior to the first report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998*, the Department 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 seven national outcomes established by the Department through this consultation process are:

**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



**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, the Child Welfare Outcomes Report also includes data on contextual factors and findings of analyses conducted across states. Data for most of the measures in this report come from the two national child welfare-related data systems—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. Below is a summary of fiscal year (FY) 2012 data for these contextual factors.<sup>4</sup>

### Characteristics of child victims<sup>5</sup>

- In 2012, there were approximately 679,000 instances of confirmed child maltreatment.<sup>6</sup> The overall national child victim rate was 9.2 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.<sup>7</sup> State child victim rates varied dramatically, ranging from 1.2 child victims per 1,000 children to 19.6 child victims per 1,000 children.<sup>8</sup>
- While the national child victim rate decreased from 9.3 child victims per 1,000 children in the population in 2009 to 9.2 in 2011, there was no change between 2011 and 2012.

In 2012, there were approximately 679,000 instances of confirmed child maltreatment.

- Child victim rates in 2012 varied rather substantially across racial/ethnic groups. Black children had the highest rates of victimization at 14.2 victims per 1,000 children in that racial group's overall child population. Asian children had the lowest rates, with 1.7 victims per 1,000 Asian children in the population.

### Foster care information overview

Nationally, there were approximately 397,000 children in foster care on the last day of 2012. During that year, an estimated 252,000 children entered foster care, and 241,000 children exited foster care. Among the states, the foster care entry rate ranged from 1.3 children per 1,000 to 8.6 children per 1,000 in a state's population.<sup>9</sup>

- Between 2002 and 2012, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 24.2 percent, from 524,000 to 397,000.<sup>10</sup> While currently it is not possible to determine the cause of the decrease in the number of children in foster care using the AFCARS database, a number of states have been making deliberate efforts to safely reduce the number of children in care through various programmatic and policy initiatives.<sup>11</sup>
- The rates of children in foster care in 2012 varied substantially across racial/ethnic groups. American Indian/Alaska Native children had the highest rates of children in care, with 13.0 per 1,000 children in that racial/ethnic group's overall child population. Asian children had the lowest rate, with 0.7 in care per 1,000 Asian children in the general child population.
- Nationally, 235,000 children exited foster care in 2012. Of these children, 207,000 (87 percent) were discharged to a permanent home (i.e., were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship).

Longer range AFCARS data show that, between FYs 2002 and 2012, the number of children in care on the last day of the FY decreased by 24.2 percent, from 524,000 to 397,000.

## STATE PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOME MEASURES

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report presents data and analyses on seven outcome categories. A synopsis of key findings for these outcome areas is provided below. The measures relevant to these outcomes are described in detail in appendix B in the full report. Most of

the outcome measures also are listed in tables 1 and 2 of this executive summary. Note that individual measures that are part of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) permanency composites are preceded by a "C" to distinguish them from the original outcome measures. The original outcome measures were developed prior to the first Child Welfare Outcomes Report (1998) in close consultation with state representatives and other professionals in the field. The composite measures, developed in 2005 and adopted in 2006, were based on the same outcome goals but were created in response to requests that the Department measure more detailed aspects of the original outcomes to allow a better understanding of state performance.

All national medians for outcome measures referenced in this executive summary include only those states for which adequate data are available for 2009 through 2012. Tables of these medians can be found at the end of this executive summary.<sup>12</sup>

Change in state performance over time is assessed by calculating a percent change in performance on the measures.<sup>13</sup> Consistent with the Department's approach to the analyses in these reports for the past 12 years, 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 Report, if the percent change in performance from 2009 to 2012 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 2012, state performance varied considerably with regard to the percentage of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a six-month period (measure 1.1) (range = 1.4 to 12.4 percent; median = 5.1 percent).
- States with higher victim rates tended to have higher maltreatment recurrence rates within a six-month period (Pearson's  $r=.56$ ).<sup>14</sup> In addition, consistent with previous Child Welfare Outcomes 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 relatively high percentage of

**Between 2009 and 2012, state performance on the two safety-related outcome measures substantially improved.**

maltreatment recurrence within a six-month period (Pearson's  $r=.43$ ).

- Performance with regard to recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1) improved significantly between 2009 and 2012. The median improved from 5.7 percent in 2009 to 5.1 percent in 2012, a 10.5 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure). Furthermore, a higher percentage of states demonstrated an improvement in performance on this measure (43 percent) than showed a decline in performance (35 percent).

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

- In 2012, state performance regarding the maltreatment of children while in foster care (measure 2.1) ranged from 0.00 to 1.65 percent, with a median of 0.32 percent.
- Between 2009 and 2012, national performance improved with regards to the maltreatment of children in foster care (measure 2.1). While nearly equal numbers of states improved and declined in performance between 2009 and 2012, the national median declined from .34 in 2009 to .30 in 2012, an 11.8 percent decrease (note that a lower percentage is desirable for this measure).

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

- In 2012, states were fairly successful in achieving a permanent home for all children exiting foster care (measure 3.1, median = 87.3 percent). However, states were less successful in achieving permanent homes for children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2, median = 77.7 percent), and even less successful in finding permanent homes for children exiting foster care who entered care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3, median = 64.4 percent).
- For children who had been in foster care for long periods of time (measure C3.1), defined as 24 months or longer, only 33.5 percent (median) of these children had permanent homes by the end of 2012. Between 2009 and 2012, 65 percent of states exhibited an improvement in performance, and the national median for this measure increased from 29.7 percent to 34.4 percent (a 15.8 percent change).

- States that were successful in achieving permanency for children at the time of exit from foster care (measure 3.1) also were successful in achieving permanency for children who are in foster care for long periods of time (measure C3.1). This is demonstrated by the fact that there is a strong positive correlation (Pearson's  $r=.55$ ) between these two measures in 2012.
- In many states, a considerable percentage of children who were emancipated from foster care in 2012 were in foster care for long periods of time before they were emancipated (measures 3.4 and C3.3). In about one-half of the states, 23.0 percent or more of the children who were emancipated from foster care were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (measure 3.4), and 41.9 percent or more of the children emancipated from foster care, or who turned age 18 while in care, were in care for three years or longer (measure C3.3). However, it is encouraging to note that between 2009 and 2012, 70 percent of states showed improved performance on measure 3.4, and 67 percent of states showed improvement on measure C3.3.

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

- The 2012 data suggest that, in many states, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. Across states, the median percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months was between 65.8 and 68.6 percent (measures 4.1 and C1.1). The median length of stay in foster care for reunified children was 8.0 months (measure C1.2).
- Many states with a comparatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were age 12 or older at the time of entry also had a relatively high percentage of children reentering foster care (measure C1.4) (Pearson's  $r=.52$ ).
- Several states with high foster care entry rates also had relatively high percentages of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months (measure C1.1) (Pearson's  $r=.36$ ).

**Many states with a comparatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were age 12 or older at the time of entry also had a relatively high percentage of children reentering foster care (Pearson's  $r=.52$ ).**

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

- In 2012, it was unusual in most states for adoptions to occur in less than 12 months from the child's entry into foster care. The national median for the corresponding measure (5.1a) was only 4.2 percent. In addition, the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 24 months from a child's entry into foster care was fairly low (measure C2.1, median = 32.4 percent). However, it is encouraging to note that, between 2009 and 2012, the national median for measure 5.1a improved from 3.6 percent to 4.5 percent (a 25.0 percent change).

- Eighty percent of states showed improved performance in the percentage of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year who were adopted by the end of the year (measure C2.3). Consistent with this finding, the national median for this measure increased from 24.5 percent in 2009 to 29.2 percent in 2012 (a 19.2 percent change).
- Many states (65 percent) showed improvement in the percentage of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year who became legally free for adoption in the first six months of the year (measure C2.4).
- Sixty-seven percent of states showed improved performance in the percentage of children who were legally free for adoption who were adopted within 12 months of becoming legally free (measure C2.5). In addition, the national median for this measure improved from 55.3 percent in 2009 to 62.9 percent in 2012 (a 13.7 percent change).

#### Outcome 6: Increase placement stability

- In this report, adequate placement stability is defined as limiting the number of placement settings for a child to no more than two for a single foster care episode. Although most states appeared to be reasonably successful in achieving this placement stability goal for children in foster care for less than 12 months, states tended to be far less successful in meeting this goal for children in foster care for

**The 2012 data indicate that achieving adoptions in less than 24 months still remains a challenge for all but a few states.**

longer periods of time. The median across states declined from 85.2 percent for children in foster care for less than 12 months to 64.1 percent for children in foster care for 12 to 24 months, and then declined even further to 35.2 percent for children in foster care for 24 months or longer.

**States generally are more successful in minimizing the number of placement settings for children in care for less than 12 months, but children in care for longer periods of time tend to have far more placement setting changes.**

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

- In about one-half of the states, 4.5 percent or less of children entering foster care under the age of 12 were placed in group homes or institutions. However, in four states, between 10 percent and 20 percent of young children were placed in group homes or institutions, indicating that this is still an important issue in some states.
- Between 2009 and 2012, states *declined* in performance with regards to the percentage of children entering foster care when they were age 12 or younger who were placed in a group home or institution (measure 7.1). The national median for this measure increased from 4.2 percent in 2009 to 4.6 percent in 2012 (an 8.1 percent increase). Fifty-seven percent of states did improve their performance on this measure, but 35 percent declined in performance and 9 percent exhibited no change.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

In reviewing the key findings in all seven outcome areas, it is clear that 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. All of these areas deserve additional investigation in order to gain further understanding and move the child welfare field forward. Some areas needing additional attention are shown below. Note that the AFCARS data are too limited to provide insight into many of these issues, but they are presented here for the purpose of encouraging the field to further review and address the issues. These areas include the following:

- Between 2009 and 2012, state performance on the two safety-related outcome measures, recurrence of

maltreatment and maltreatment in foster care, improved substantially. 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 experience maltreatment, either at home or in out-of-home care, can experience a wide variety of consequences ranging from physical and mental health problems to issues with cognitive development and academic achievement.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, maltreatment recurrence is associated with an increase in trauma symptoms in children.<sup>16</sup> States should continue to monitor performance on these two measures and work to improve upon their efforts to ensure that children remain safe.

- States continue to experience challenges finding permanent homes for children with disabilities and for children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12. Agencies should review their data and current practices to consider what additional barriers may be preventing these older youth and children with disabilities from being placed into permanent homes.
- States that were successful in achieving permanency for children at the time of exit from foster care also were successful in achieving permanency for children who were in foster care for long periods of time. Evaluating and understanding the practices of successful states could provide useful information to states that are working to improve performance in these areas.
- A consistent finding in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is that many states with a relatively high percentage of foster care reentries also had a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were adolescents (age 12 or older). The challenges that these youth present to state child welfare systems with regard to meeting the reunification needs of the children and their families may be quite different from those encountered in working with younger children and their families. Consequently, states with large numbers of youth in their foster care populations would benefit from developing strategies that target the needs of these youth.

- Overall, national performance on timeliness of adoptions has improved, but it continues to be a significant challenge for most states. It is important to note that there may be a variety of factors that contribute to lower performance on these measures, and these factors may vary considerably between states. However, for those states that struggle in this area, a careful review of specific barriers would be beneficial.
- Placement setting stability for children in foster care longer than 12 months consistently has been an area of difficulty for many states, and overall performance remained stagnant between 2009

and 2012. More work is needed on how states can prevent children from remaining in care for long periods of time and increase placement setting stability for children who have been in care for long periods of time.

Data and analysis presented throughout the full Child Welfare Outcomes Report offer additional details regarding overall national performance. In addition, State Data Pages provide a profile of individual state performance between 2009 and 2012.

<sup>1</sup> See appendix A in the full report for the specifications of section 479A of the Social Security Act, as created by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. The group within the Department that is responsible for this report is the Children's Bureau, within the Administration for Children and Families.

<sup>2</sup> The title IV-E agency is the state agency authorized to use federal title IV-E funds to support foster care, adoption assistance, and kinship guardianship assistance. Title IV-E has been amended on several occasions to provide federal funding for foster care, adoption, and the relative guardianship program. Title IV-B provides preventative and protective services for children. For a more detailed understanding of the history and changes over time, please see <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/title-iv-e-legislation-policy>.

<sup>3</sup> In this report, the designation of "state" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore, the report provides information on a total of 52 states.

<sup>4</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for federal fiscal year 2012 (October 1, 2011–September 30, 2012).

<sup>5</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. This is a change from prior reports, which used duplicate counts. These data are now consistent with the reporting practice in the Child Maltreatment reports.

<sup>6</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. A state may include some children with alternative dispositions as victims (see *Child Maltreatment 2012*). It is important to note that the Child Welfare Outcomes Report uses the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which often is reported in Child Maltreatment. The total number of victims reported in this report is rounded to the nearest 1,000.

<sup>7</sup> The national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the total number of child victims (678,810) by the child population for all states that submitted NCANDS data (74,150,798), and multiplying by 1,000.

<sup>8</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>9</sup> Rate of entry 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 by 1,000 [(N entering FC/child population) x 1,000].

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2002–FY 2012* on the Children's Bureau website: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/trends-in-foster-care-and-adoption>. The data used in *Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 2002–FY 2012* were updated as of July 2013.

<sup>11</sup> See the following for examples: (1) Freundlich, M. (2010). *Legislative strategies to safely reduce the number of children in foster care*. National Conference of State Legislatures. Retrieved from [http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/strategies\\_reducing\\_the\\_number\\_of\\_children\\_in\\_foster\\_care.pdf](http://www.ncsl.org/documents/cyf/strategies_reducing_the_number_of_children_in_foster_care.pdf); and (2) National Governors Association Center for Best Practices. (2010). State efforts to safely reduce the number of children in foster care. Retrieved from <http://www.nga.org/cms/home/nga-center-for-best-practices/center-publications/page-ehsw-publications/col2-content/main-content-list/state-efforts-to-safely-reduce-t.html>

<sup>12</sup> In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, two separate national medians are computed for each measure for 2012. In the 2012 "Range of State Performance" tables, national medians are calculated using all states that had adequate data available for 2012 only. However, when looking at performance over time, a separate 2012 national median is calculated that includes only the states that had adequate data available for all the relevant years (2009 through 2012). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Therefore, the number of states (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may vary slightly. For consistency, the medians used in this executive summary are those that include states that had adequate data available for all relevant years.

<sup>13</sup> Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, maltreatment recurrence was 5.7 percent in 2009 and 5.1 percent in 2012, so the formula is  $[(5.1 - 5.7)/5.7] \times 100 = -10.5$  percent decrease.

<sup>14</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>15</sup> Goldman, J., Salus, M. K., Wolcott, D., & Kennedy, K. Y. (2003). What are the consequences of child abuse and neglect? In *A coordinated response to child abuse and neglect: The foundation for practice* (pp. 35–38). Washington DC: Department of Health and Human Services.

<sup>16</sup> Finkelhor, D., Ormrod, R. K., & Turner, H. A. (2007). Polyvictimization and trauma in a national longitudinal cohort. *Development and Psychopathology*, 19, 149–166.

**Table 1. Median State Performance, 2009–2012, Original Outcome Measures**

Outcome Measures <sup>17</sup>	Median Performance by Year			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
*Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first six months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a six-month period? (N=51 states)	5.7%	5.0%	5.2%	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 member? (N=47 states)	.34%	.35%	.34%	.30%
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=46 states)	86.6%	86.4%	87.2%	87.6%
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=37 states)	77.6%	77.6%	77.7%	78.8%
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=46 states)	66.6%	65.3%	66.0%	64.8%
*Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care in the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=46 states)	25.5%	24.1%	24.9%	22.5%
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=46 states)	68.5%	69.4%	68.4%	66.5%
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage were discharged in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=46 states)	3.6%	4.0%	3.8%	4.5%
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=46 states)	85.2%	85.8%	86.1%	85.2%
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=46 states)	60.4%	61.7%	63.2%	64.1%
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=46 states)	30.0%	32.6%	32.8%	35.2%
*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 institution? (N=46 states)	4.2%	4.5%	4.5%	4.6%

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

<sup>17</sup> Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available.

**Table 2. Median State Performance, 2009–2012, Composite Measures**

Composite Measures <sup>18</sup>	Median Performance by Year			
	2009	2010	2011	2012
Measure C1.1: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in care for eight days or longer, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=45 states)	67.3%	67.5%	70.4%	68.4%
*Measure C1.2: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in care for eight days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of the latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=45 states)	8.0 mos.	7.8 mos.	7.7 mos.	8.0 mos.
Measure C1.3: Of all children who entered foster care for the first time in the six-month period just prior to the year shown, and who remained in care for eight days or longer, what percentage were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=45 states)	41.3%	41.7%	40.9%	38.0%
Measure C1.4: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percentage reentered care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge? (N=45 states)	12.4%	12.1%	11.4%	11.8%
Measure C2.1: Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what percentage were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=46 states) <sup>19</sup>	32.9%	32.8%	33.2%	32.6%
*Measure C2.2: Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what was the median length of stay in care (in months) from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption? (N=46 states)	30.2 mos.	29.6 mos.	29.3 mos.	28.6 mos.
Measure C2.3: Of all children in foster care on the first day of the year who were in care for 17 continuous months or longer, what percentage was discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year? (N=46 states) <sup>20</sup>	24.5%	25.0%	25.9%	29.2%
Measure C2.4: Of all children in foster care on the first day of the year who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, and who were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, what percentage became legally free for adoption during the first six months of the year? (N=46 states) <sup>21</sup>	13.1%	12.1%	13.4%	13.4%
Measure C2.5: Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percentage were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months from the date of becoming legally free? (N=46 states)	55.3%	59.1%	60.2%	62.9%
Measure C3.1: Of all children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year, what percentage were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday and by the end of the year? (N=46 states)	29.7%	29.9%	32.5%	34.4%
Measure C3.2: Of all children who were discharged from foster care during the year, and who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge, what percentage were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday? (N=46 states) <sup>22</sup>	93.8%	94.1%	94.9%	95.8%
*Measure C3.3: Of all children who, during the year shown, either (1) were discharged from foster care prior to age 18 with a discharge reason of emancipation, or (2) reached their 18th birthday while in foster care, what percentage were in foster care for three years or longer? (N=46 states)	44.7%	43.9%	43.1%	41.9%

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

<sup>18</sup> Data for this table include all states for which adequate data are available. Numbers are expressed as percentages except when measured by months, as noted. Individual measures developed for Composite 4: Placement stability are not shown in this table because the measures are nearly identical to the original measures of placement stability incorporated into measure 6.1 (see table 1).

<sup>19</sup> Although measure C2.1 is calculated exactly the same way as original measure 5.1b, the results can vary slightly because the source files are different for the composite measures. In the source files for measure C2.1, all children are excluded who were not age 17 for at least 1 day. No such exclusion exists for measure 5.1b. In addition, composites are calculated at the county level and then are aggregated to the state level, which also could influence slightly performance on C2.1 compared to 5.1b.

<sup>20</sup> The denominator for this measure excludes children who, by the last day of the year, were discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with relatives, or guardianship.

<sup>21</sup> A child is considered to be "legally free" for adoption if there is a date for parental rights termination reported to AFCARS for both mother and father. Also, the denominator for this measure excludes children who, during the first 6 months of the year, were discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship.

<sup>22</sup> A child is considered to be "legally free" for adoption if there is a date for the parental rights termination reported to AFCARS for both mother and father.

## CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORT DATA SITE

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site provides users with the latest data from the State Data Pages of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports and allows for significantly faster release of these data than is possible via the publication of the full report. The site features the latest Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) data that have been reviewed and approved by the states. Data updates to the site occur annually.

### Take advantage of the data site's increased capabilities

With the data site, you have the ability to:

- View one state's data or simultaneously compare data outputs for multiple states
- Create data outputs by ACF Region
- Isolate a specific state's context (including demographic) data and outcome variables
- Compare data across years or view data from one particular year
- Choose from a variety of data display formats, including map, graph, or table
- Get instant access to the state data tables from the full Reports
- Download customized data outputs in Excel or printer-friendly formats

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site can be accessed at <http://www.cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data>

### Recent Enhancements to the Site

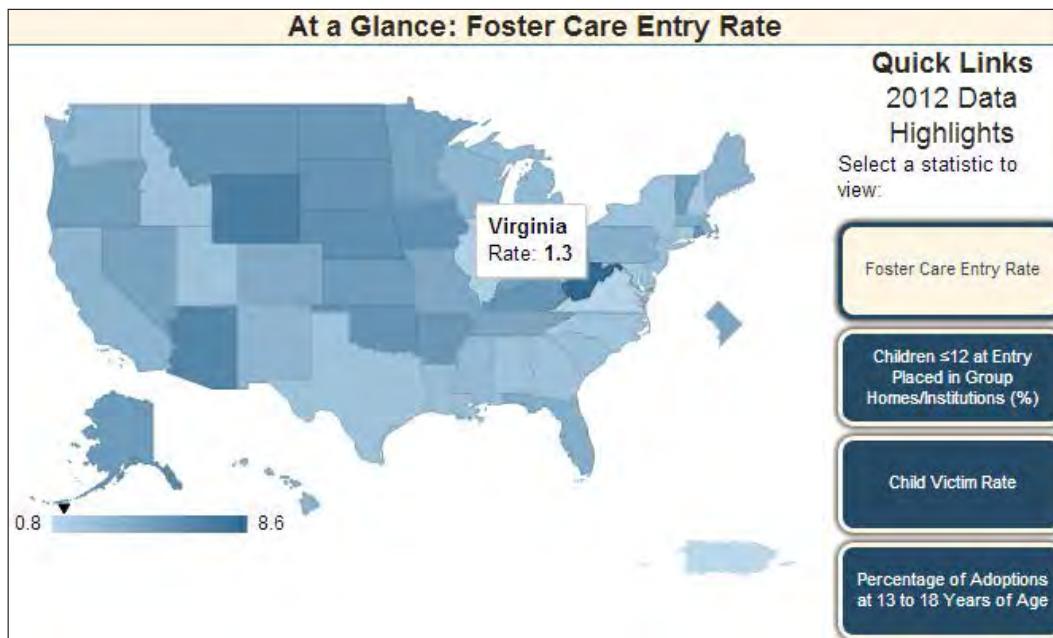
The Data Site's most recent functionality update involves increased capabilities for viewing race/ethnicity data. Users can now create data reports using the following two race/ethnicity breakdown options:

- The “traditional” breakdown, where race and ethnicity are treated as mutually exclusive categories, and the affirmative reporting of Hispanic origin trumps race, thus removing a child from any race categories
- The new “alternative” breakdown, where race and ethnicity are reported as two separate categories; however, they are not mutually exclusive, and both race and ethnicity can be reported for each child

New Data Site features include options for viewing race/ethnicity data.

## Use Quick Links to view data on key child welfare indicators

*Quick Links*, on the site homepage, features indicators of particular importance in the modern child welfare climate. See the example below for the types of Quick Links featured on the site and the kind of information available when selecting a particular Quick Link option (in this case, Foster Care Entry Rate).



## The Custom Report Builder allows you to adapt your data outputs to fit your research needs

The *Custom Report Builder* gives you the capability of viewing data from a specific state, comparing data across states of your choosing, and even comparing data from states within a particular ACF Region. After the state(s) or region(s) is selected, you can choose the variables for viewing. Use the *Custom Report Builder's* drop-down data selection menu to change states and/or data elements. Once the initial outputs are created, you can isolate specific data years.

**Custom Report Builder**

**1 Choose State(s) or Region(s) to View**

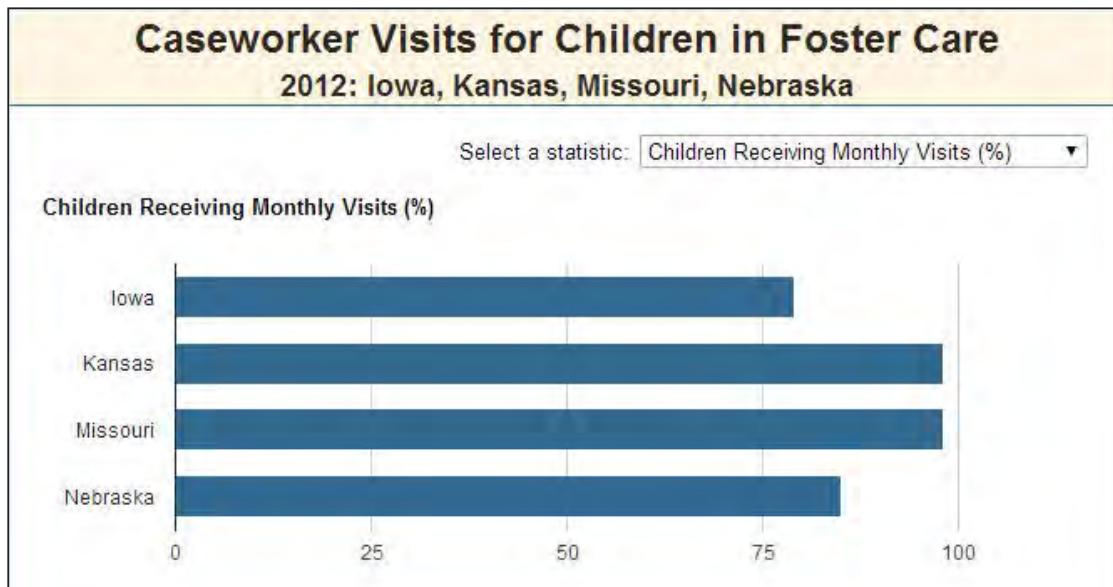
Add a State... Selected States:  
Multi-State Quick Select None  
ACF Region...  
What are ACF Regions?

**2 Choose Data to View**

- \* Demographics
- \* Maltreatment
- \* Foster Care
- \* Permanency/Adoption
- \* Context Data
- \* Outcomes Data
- \* Composite Measures
- \* Race/Ethnicity Data
- \* Age Group Data

## Choose from a variety of data output formats for presenting your data

You can choose to view your data in table, graph, or map format. The graph and map options are particularly useful when viewing data from multiple states, as these formats provide good visual representations for making comparisons.



The table and graph options are ideal for looking at a state's data fluctuations over time.

### 1.1 Recurrence of Maltreatment Within 6 Months (%) Hawaii: 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Children Without a Recurrence	96.1	97.6	97.6	98.1
Children With One or More Recurrences	3.9	2.4	2.4	1.9
Number	942	1,018	674	727

[Export table to Excel.](#)

[Print this report](#)

[View Hawaii's State data tables from the years 2009-2012 \(PDF, <2.2MB\)](#)

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

# Child Welfare Outcomes 2009–2012: Report to Congress

## Executive Summary



### VISIT THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES DATA SITE

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site provides users with the latest data from the State Data Pages of the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports. CWO data for 2009 through 2012 are currently available. Features of the site include:

- The latest AFCARS and NCANDS data
- A custom report builder
- Quick Links to important indicators
- Flexible data output formats

Visit the data website: <http://www.cwooutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/data>

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Administration for Children and Families  
Administration on Children, Youth and Families  
Children's Bureau

