

***National Foster Care Awareness Month
Foster Care: Change A Lifetime
Facts about Children in Foster Care***

- 513,000 children were in the U.S. foster care system on September 30, 2005. Most children are placed temporarily in foster care due to parental abuse or neglect.
- The Average Age of a child in foster care is 10 years.
- Of the foster care population, 52% are male and 48% are female.
- There are more children of color in the foster care system than in the general U.S. population. However, child abuse and neglect occur at about the same rate in all racial/ethnic groups.
- In 2004, there was a total of 153,000 licensed/certified/approved kinship and relative foster homes nationwide.¹ In 2005, 24% of youth living in foster care were residing with their relatives.²
- In 2005, 60% of adopted children were adopted by their foster parent(s). The “foster parent” category excludes anyone identified as a relative of the child. 25% of children adopted in FY 2005 were adopted by a relative. A “relative” includes a step-parent or other relative of the child.
- Over 2 million American children live with grandparents or other relatives because their parents cannot care for them. When relatives provide foster care (known as kinship care), siblings can often stay together. Kinship care also improves stability by keeping displaced children closer to their extended families, their neighborhoods, and their schools.³
- Each year, an estimated 20,000 young people “age-out” of the U.S. foster care system. Many are only 18 years old and still need support and services. Several foster care alumni studies show that without a lifelong connection to a caring adult, these older youth are often left vulnerable to a host of adverse situations.

¹ Child Welfare League of America-National Data Analysis System <http://ndas.cwla.org>

² Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)
http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report13.htm

³ U.S. Census Bureau (2004). Children and the Households They Live In: 2000.
<http://census.gov/prod/2004pubs/censr-14.pdf>

Additional Sources

U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000, special tabulation. Characteristics of Children Under 18 Years of Age, Race, and Hispanic or Latino origin, for the United States: 2000. <http://www.census.gov>

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