



## FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

### Indiana's National Rankings\*

<b>KIDS COUNT Family and Communities Domain</b>	<b>31st</b>
<b>Children in Single-parent Families</b>	<b>27th</b>
<b>Children Living in High Poverty Areas</b>	<b>31st</b>
<b>KIDS COUNT Well-being Index</b>	
<b>White Children</b>	<b>37th</b>
<b>African-American Children</b>	<b>36th</b>
<b>Hispanic Children</b>	<b>28th</b>
<b>Asian Children</b>	<b>16th</b>

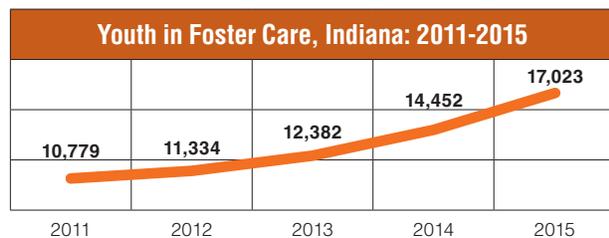
*\*For each indicator, higher rankings (1st) indicate better outcomes for youth*

Children thrive in stable, nurturing families and supportive communities. Parental challenges such as substance abuse, incarceration and family instability affect children's well-being. Where families live matters too. Communities with strong social supports, adult mentors and afterschool activities help children thrive.



# FAMILY SPOTLIGHT Children in Foster Care

Indiana has seen a 58% increase in the number of children in foster care over the past five years. 17,023 Hoosier children were in foster care in 2015.<sup>1</sup>



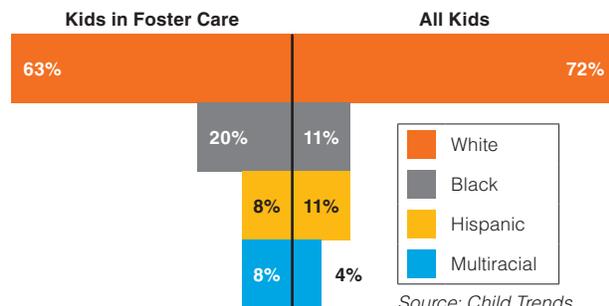
Source: KIDS COUNT Data Center

## Why are children placed in foster care?

**Children are placed in foster care when it is not safe for them to remain at home.** This displacement may be the result of neglect, parental substance abuse, child behavioral problems, inadequate housing or other factors. Neglect occurs when a caregiver does not provide necessary food, clothing, shelter, medical care, or education.<sup>2</sup>

- Neglect contributes to 89% of Indiana entries into foster care, compared to 61% nationally.
- After neglect, the most common reasons Hoosier children enter foster care are parental substance abuse (59% of cases), parental incarceration (19%) and inadequate housing (17%).<sup>3</sup>

## Children in Foster Care by Race/Ethnicity: Indiana, 2015



Source: Child Trends

## Who is in foster care?

**Children in foster care are disproportionately children of color and tend to be younger than the general child population.**

- 45% of Hoosier children in foster care are younger than six, 26% are between ages six and ten, 19% are ages 11-15, and 11% are ages 16-20.<sup>4</sup>



**1 in 4**

**foster children have experienced more than two placements.**

## What are the challenges?

**Children who spend time in foster care face increased risk of behavioral and emotional problems, difficulties in school, and poor physical and mental health.<sup>5</sup>**

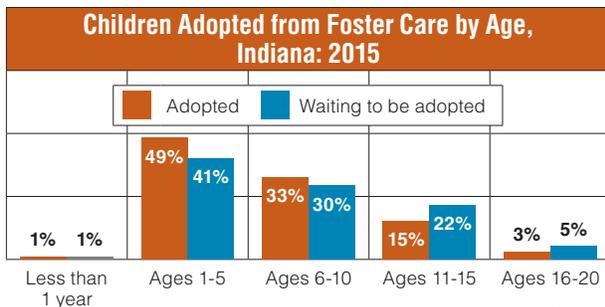
**Separation.** For youth, being separated from family and familiar surroundings can be traumatizing. Separations that are sudden, unexpected or prolonged can interfere with a child's ability to adjust to their new everyday life and develop healthy coping strategies.<sup>6</sup>

- 37% of children in foster care are placed in a nonrelative foster family, 36% are placed with a relative foster family, 7% are in a group home, 5% are in a pre-adoptive home, and 14% are in a trial home visit.<sup>7</sup>
- In Indiana, two-thirds (67%) of children exiting foster care are reunited with their parents.<sup>8</sup>

**Waiting for Adoption.** Child protective services may determine that it is not safe for children to return home and adoption is in the child's best interest. When family reunification is not possible, adoption becomes a critically important path to a safe and permanent family. In some cases, Hoosier children spend significant amounts of time in foster care waiting to be adopted.

- In 2015, there were 2,965 children in foster care waiting to be adopted.<sup>9</sup>
- Of children in foster care waiting for adoption, more than 1 in 3 (37%) have been waiting three years or longer, and 1 in 8 (12%) have been waiting five years or longer.<sup>10</sup>

- On average, Hoosier children spend more time in foster care waiting for adoption (36 months) than their peers nationally (32 months).<sup>11</sup>
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted is 7.4 years.<sup>12</sup>



**Multiple placements.** Children who experience multiple placements while in foster care may have trouble planning for the future and difficulty in making lasting relationships with teachers, peers and friends.<sup>13</sup>

Children who are older, a racial or ethnic minority, have special needs, or suffer from behavioral disorders are more likely to experience multiple placements.<sup>14</sup>

## What Resources are Available?

**Child Welfare Information Gateway Podcast Series** supports learning for parents and case workers, with insight from professionals in the child welfare continuum. <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/capacity/child-welfare-podcast-series>

**Indiana Department of Child Services** family preservation program helps reunify children and their families through informal adjustments, education, counseling, sexual abuse treatment and visitations. <https://www.in.gov/dcs/2372.htm>

**U.S. Department of Health & Human Services** provides tools on how to care for youth, deal with changes in family, build relationships with the permanency team, and find support. <https://www.childwelfare.gov/fostercaremonth/resources/caregivers/>

## What Solutions are Possible?

### Individuals

- ✓ Help children maintain relationships with extended family, siblings and biological parents when appropriate.
- ✓ Be consistent in relationships with youth, emphasizing belief in their future.
- ✓ Support foster families by providing respite care, including foster children in playdates, offering to cook a meal, providing transportation or babysitting.
- ✓ Adopt, serve as a foster parent or volunteer to mentor youth.

### Organizations and Communities

- ✓ Schools and youth-serving programs can be inclusive in family engagement efforts, being sure to include grandparents, foster parents and anyone else caring for children.

### Leaders and Policy Makers

- ✓ Expand access to mental health care/counseling for children who have been separated from family.
- ✓ Expand social supports for grandparents and other relatives providing informal kinship care for children.
- ✓ Establish kinship navigator programs to coordinate support for kinship caregivers.

**Adopt US Kids** is a project of the Children's Bureau and provides support for foster and adoptive families. They are available both online and over the phone. 888-200-4005 <https://www.adoptuskids.org/adoption-and-foster-care/parenting-support/for-foster-parents>



# 2018 Indiana KIDS COUNT<sup>®</sup> Data Book

a profile of child well-being

## Families and Communities Spotlight Sources

- <sup>1</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Center (n.d.) Children in foster care. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN>
- <sup>2</sup> Child Trends (2015). Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet_2015.pdf)
- <sup>3</sup> Child Trends (2015). Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet_2015.pdf)
- <sup>4</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Center (n.d.) Children in foster care by age group. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN>
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- <sup>6</sup> National Child Traumatic Stress Network (n.d.). Children with Traumatic Separation: Information for Professionals. Retrieved from [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/children\\_with\\_traumatic\\_separation\\_professionals.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/children_with_traumatic_separation_professionals.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Center (n.d.) Children in foster care by placement type. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN>
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- <sup>9</sup> Child Trends (2015). Adoption from Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet_2015.pdf)
- <sup>10</sup> KIDS COUNT Data Center (n.d.) Children in foster care waiting for adoption by amount of time waiting. Retrieved from <http://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#IN>
- <sup>11</sup> Child Trends (2015). Adoption from Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet_2015.pdf)
- <sup>12</sup> Child Trends (2015). Adoption from Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Adoption-Factsheet_2015.pdf)
- <sup>13</sup> Annie E Casey Foundation (2017). The Road to Adulthood. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-theroadtoadulthood-2017.pdf>
- <sup>14</sup> Child Trends (2015). Foster Care Indiana. Retrieved from [https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet\\_2015.pdf](https://www.childtrends.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Indiana-Foster-Care-Factsheet_2015.pdf)