



# What data can tell us about foster placements for children and youth

## National Profile

Research shows that [foster children have better outcomes when they are placed in the care of families](#), but many foster children live in non-family settings.\* This fact sheet explores the different types of placement settings for children in foster care, which includes placements with relatives, other foster families, or in group care. The fact sheet also shares information about different foster care placement types by age, as well as by race and Hispanic origin.

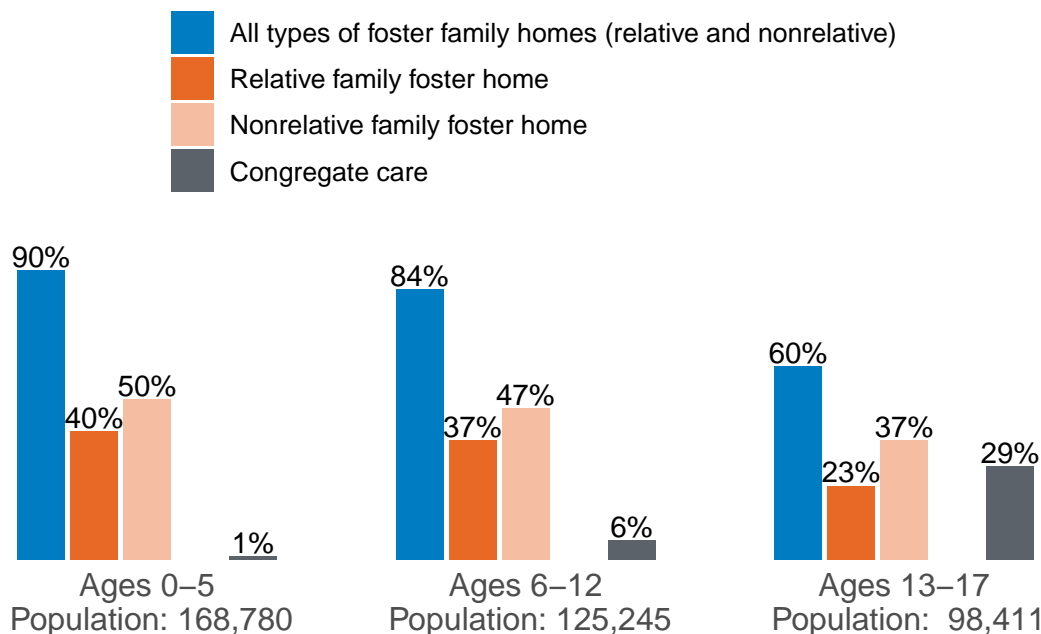
We encourage advocates and policymakers to use the data presented here to examine whether their state is doing all it can to ensure that children in foster care are in placements that will help them achieve the best possible outcomes. Please see the CHAMPS website for information about research-based policies to strengthen family-based care, including the collection and use of data.

These fact sheets are a collaboration between [Child Trends](#) ([childtrends.org](#)), the nation’s leading research organization focused exclusively on children and youth, and [CHAMPS](#) ([fosteringchamps.org](#)), a research-based policy campaign. See methodology at the end of fact sheet.

\*<https://fosteringchamps.org>

### Younger children are more likely than teens to be living in a family-based foster care placement<sup>1</sup>

Percent of children in various types of foster care settings



Percentages of children in relative and non-relative foster homes and congregate care do not sum to 100 because the percentages of children in other types of placements are not shown. Population total includes all children including those missing placement category information.

– Data is suppressed if < 25 children in denominator or < 10 children in numerator

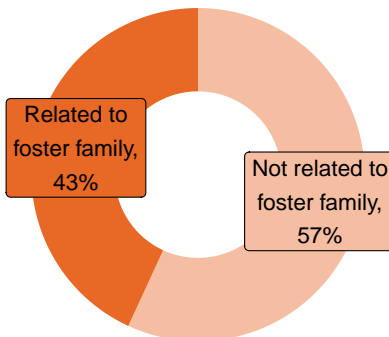
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### Children in family-based foster care may have relative or non-relative foster families

Percent in foster family homes living with relatives versus nonrelatives

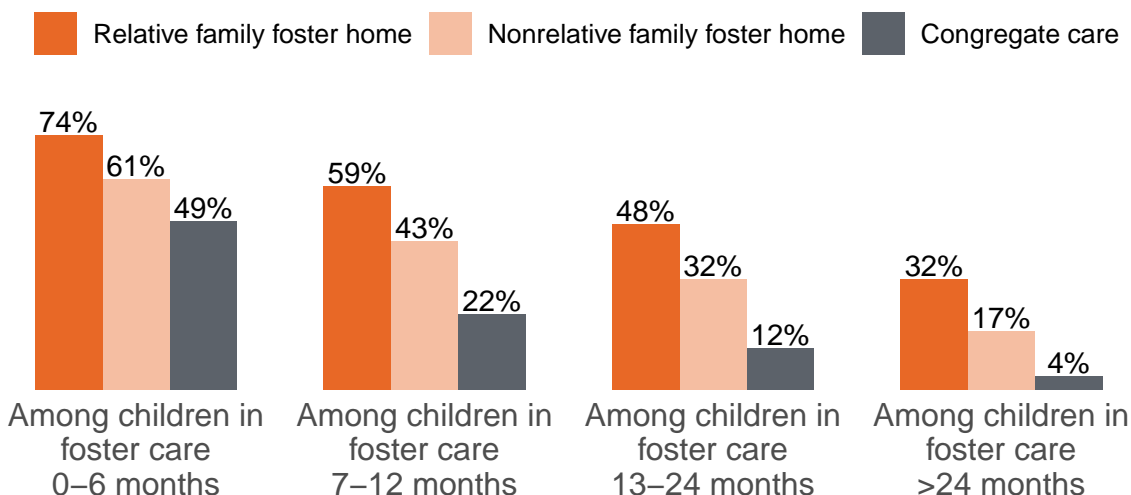
**136,026** children live with **relative foster families**



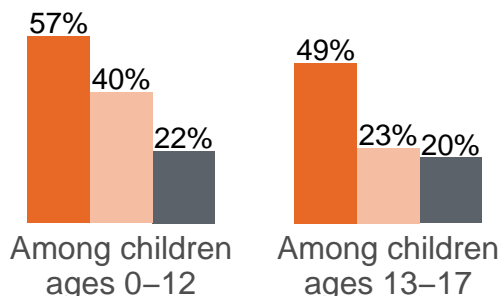
**179,345** children live with **nonrelative foster families**

### Children in family-based foster care—especially if they live with relatives—are more likely than those in congregate care to have experienced only one foster care placement

Percent with no placement changes, by time spent in foster care



Percent with no placement changes, by age

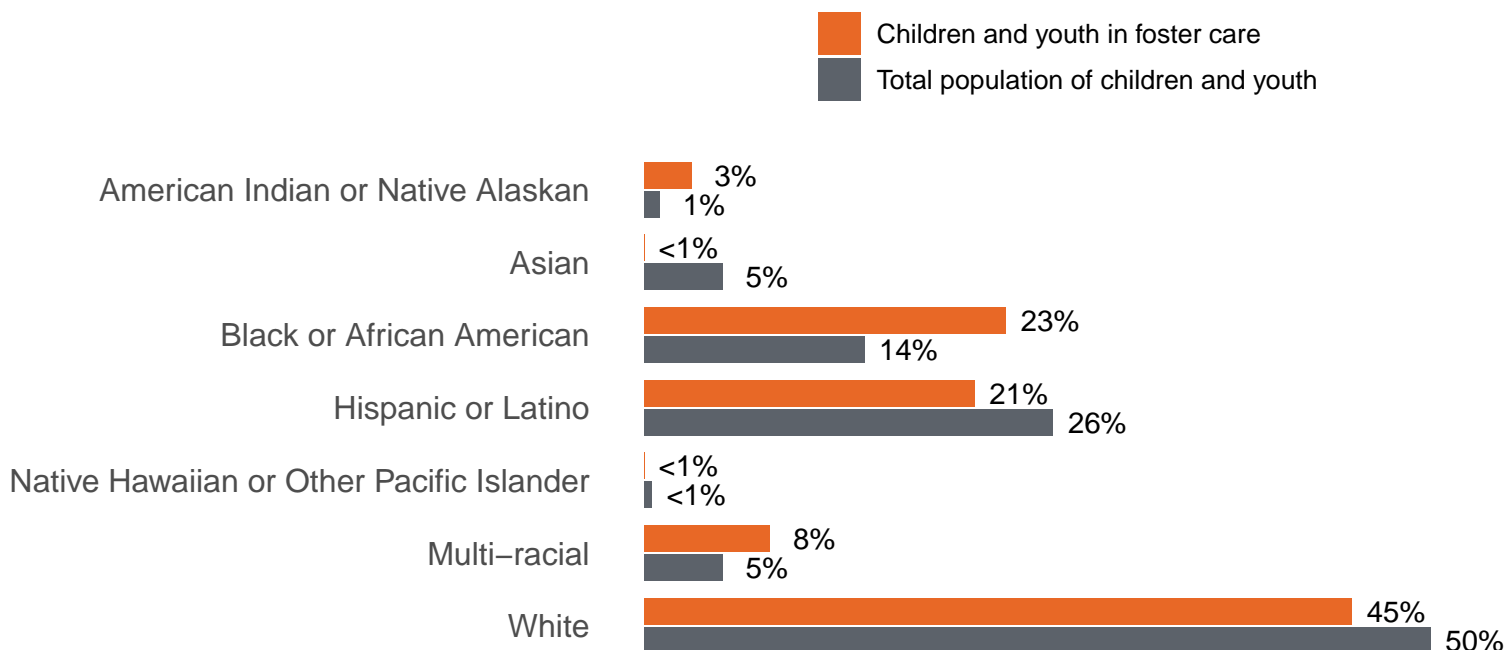


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## National profile

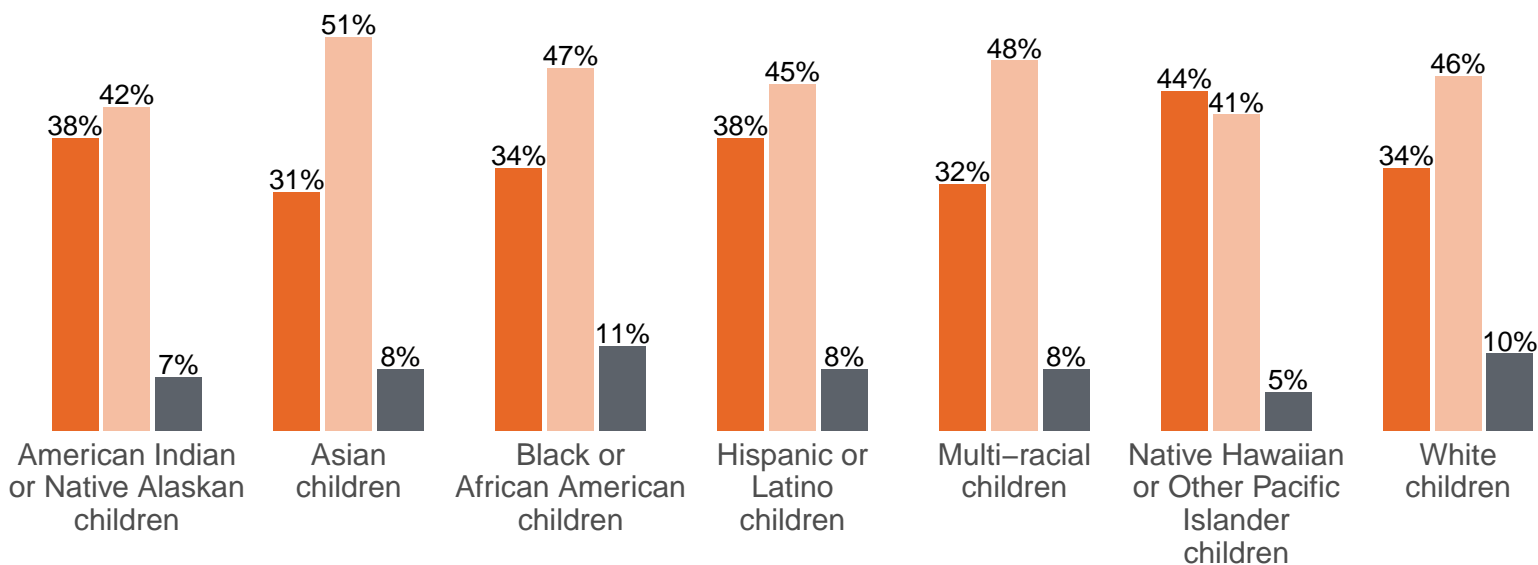
### Race and Hispanic origin of children and youth in foster care compared to the total child population<sup>2</sup>



### Foster placement type, shown by child's race and Hispanic origin<sup>2</sup>

Percent in different types of foster care settings

Legend:   
█ Relative family foster home   
█ Nonrelative family foster home   
█ Congregate care



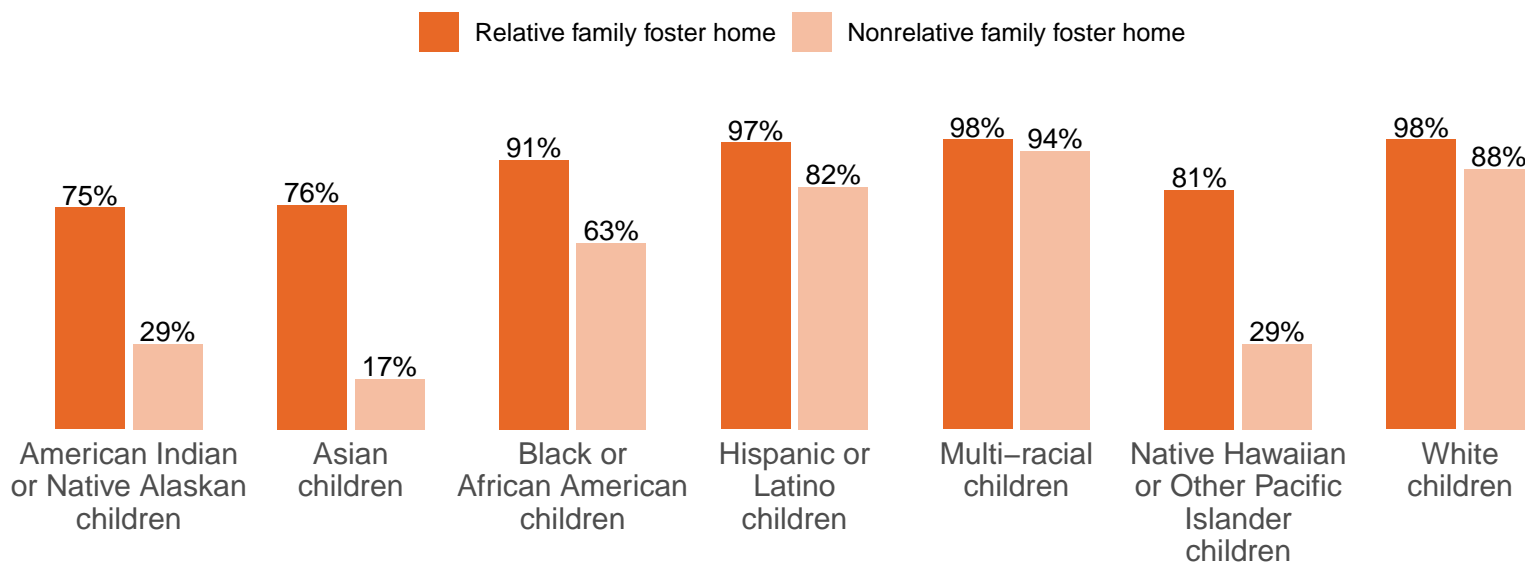
– Data is suppressed if < 25 children in denominator or < 10 children in numerator

# What data can tell us about foster placements

## National profile

### Child and at least one foster parent share same race or Hispanic origin<sup>3</sup>

Percent of children living with at least one foster parent who shares their race or Hispanic origin



–Data is suppressed due to concerns regarding reliability if < 50 children in denominator or < 10 children in numerator, or if more than 20% of data is missing.

## Methods

Source: Child Trends' analyses of data from the Adoption and Foster Care Reporting and Analysis System (AFCARS, v. 1) for federal fiscal year 2020. All states report data into AFCARS from their child welfare administrative data systems. Data for the statewide population of children by race and Hispanic origin come from the KIDS COUNT Data Center (<https://datacenter.kidscount.org/>). Data presented here are for children under 18 in foster care at the end of federal fiscal year 2020. Children in informal kinship care are not included in these fact sheets, because they are not considered to be in foster care, and because states do not report data into AFCARS on children in informal kinship care placements. Data on types of foster care placement settings pertain to the child's placement setting at the end of the fiscal year. Children with missing data on variables of interest are included in the denominators in calculations of percentages. The data used in this publication, Dataset #258, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (v. 1), were obtained from the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect and have been used in accordance with its Terms of Use Agreement license. The Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, the Children's Bureau, the original dataset collection personnel or funding source, NDACAN, Cornell University and their agents or employees bear no responsibility for the analyses or interpretations presented here.

1 – The percentages in congregate care, relative foster families, and non-relative foster families do not sum to 100 because children in other types of placements (supervised independent living, runaway, trial home visit, and pre-adoptive home) or for whom data on placement types are missing are not shown in this chart.

2 – The categories for race and Hispanic origin are mutually exclusive; if a child is reported to be Hispanic, they are included in the Hispanic category regardless of their race. Other categories exclude Hispanic children.

3 – Children and foster parents were identified as sharing the same race and/or Hispanic ethnicity if the race of at least one foster parent (regardless of Hispanic origin) is the same as that of either foster parent, or if the child and at least one foster parent are both Hispanic. For children and/or foster parents who are multi-racial, we compared each of the multiple racial and/or Hispanic ethnicity designations. If any of these designations was the same for the child and at least one foster parent, we identified the child as sharing the same race and/or Hispanic ethnicity with their foster parent.

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