

# Foster Care 2005



- A total of 13,290 children were served in family foster care in FFY 2005; 16,027 children were served in all foster care arrangements. Older children (age 13 or older) make up 28.3 percent of the children served in all foster care arrangements.
- As with most foster children, DHS provides services to help reunify older children with their families. The majority of children age 13 or older (54.3 percent) exiting from foster care are reunified with their families.
- On an average daily basis, there are 7,497 children in family foster care; 10,200 children were in all foster care arrangements on an average daily basis.
- There are 5,373 family foster homes in Oregon. These homes have an average of 1.4 foster children.
- 30.0 percent of children in family foster care are placed with relatives.

***Upon request this publication can be furnished in an alternate format for individuals with disabilities by contacting:***

***Patricia Feeny (503) 945-6955, FAX (503) 947-5461 or TTY (503) 947-5330. Available formats are: large print, Braille, audio tape recording, electronic format and oral presentation.***



## Best practices

### Child centered, family focused community based

DHS remains committed to strengths/needs-based practice, which has been a foundation of Oregon's child welfare system for several years. This practice emphasizes keeping children in their immediate families and with extended relatives. When children are not able to remain with their families or relatives, neighborhood or community-based services are utilized. Keeping children within their communities and the same school whenever possible continues to be a guiding principle in serving children and families.

Services supporting best practice, such as Family Decision meetings, improve the department's decision making process by encouraging the support and inclusion of the family, extended family and the community. The goal of all services provided to the family is to develop specific, individualized and appropriate interventions for children and families in a strengths/needs-based manner.

DHS child welfare continues to identify and develop community resources by working closely with community partners, schools, hospitals and communities of faith. In addition, the department continues to coordinate services for children and families through formalized relationships with organizations such as the Oregon Foster Parent Association, Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA), Citizen Review Boards (CRB) and the Juvenile Rights Project (JRP).

#### **Foster Care definition change :**

During 2002, Oregon changed the state definition of foster care to be consistent with the federal definition as a result of the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA). This change in definition is reflected in program performance measures required by the federal Child and Family Services Review. For the purposes of federal reporting, foster care includes:

- ***24-hour substitute care for children placed outside their own homes.***
- ***Children who have physically left a foster care placement under state agency supervision and have been returned to the parent or legal guardian on a trial home visit, usually up to six months.***

Children who have physically returned home have not always been reported in this report as "still in foster care." Therefore, the total number of children currently in foster care shows an increase, starting in 2002, as a result of this change in definition.



## Children in foster care

Children who need foster care may be infants, toddlers, preschoolers, grade-schoolers or teenagers. Foster children come from many backgrounds and types of families. Many children needing foster care have been emotionally, physically or sexually abused. As a result, they may have emotional, behavioral, mental or physical problems that require special services.

**In FFY 2005,**  
53.5 percent of children who entered foster care had four or more reasons for removal.

Children who cannot live at home enter foster care for various reasons. These children most often enter foster care as a result of their parents' actions and not as a result of the child's behavior. The percentages below reflect the proportion of foster care entrants with the reason for removal. In FFY 2005, 53.5 percent of children who entered foster care had four or more reasons for removal.

In FFY 2005 changes were made to how Reasons for Removal are calculated to be more consistent with other DHS reporting. A 3-year history is included to provide historical context for the reasons children are removed from their homes.

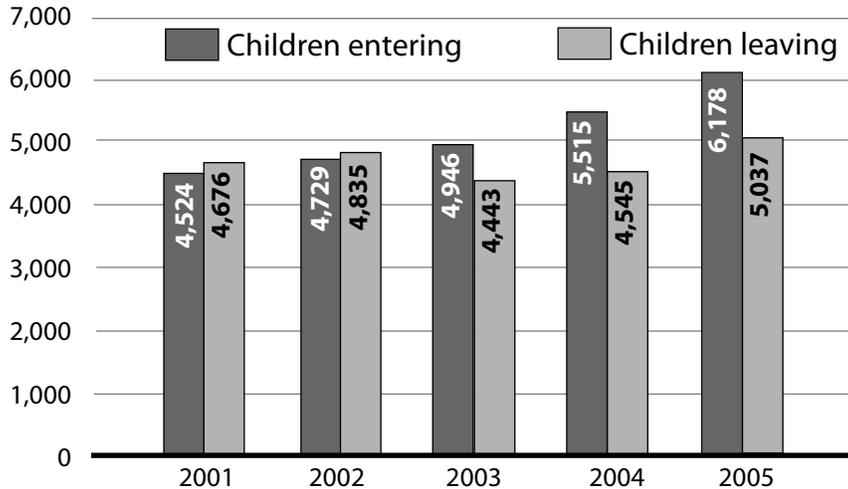
### Reasons children enter foster care *(includes all types of foster care)*

Removal Reason	FFY 2003		FFY 2004		FFY 2005	
	Number	% of Entrants	Number	% of Entrants	Number	% of Entrants
Parent Drug Abuse	2,715	54.9%	3,151	57.1%	3,855	62.4%
Parent Alcohol Abuse	2,657	53.7%	3,046	55.2%	3,788	61.3%
Physical Abuse	2,838	57.4%	3,239	58.7%	3,697	59.8%
Child's Behavior	1,854	37.5%	2,420	43.9%	2,618	42.4%
Neglect Abuse	1,689	34.1%	2,043	37.0%	2,599	42.1%
Inability To Cope	2,343	47.4%	2,606	47.3%	2,284	37.0%
Inadequate Housing	1,260	25.5%	1,436	26.0%	1,424	23.0%
Child's Disability	429	8.7%	447	8.1%	467	7.6%
Sexual Abuse	358	7.2%	422	7.7%	466	7.5%
Incarceration Of Parent	87	1.8%	112	2.0%	119	1.9%
Abandonment	86	1.7%	127	2.3%	109	1.8%
Child Drug Abuse	81	1.6%	79	1.4%	105	1.7%
Child Alcohol Abuse	99	2.0%	121	2.2%	93	1.5%
Death Of Parent	4	0.1%	3	0.1%	4	0.1%
<b>Total Number of Foster Care Entrants</b>	<b>4,946</b>		<b>5,515</b>		<b>6,178</b>	



## Children entering/leaving foster care

Federal Fiscal Year 2005



**On the average daily basis**, there are 7,497 children in family foster care.

**A total of 13,290 children were served** in family foster care in FFY 2005.

### Race of children served in foster care

Asian	0.8%
African American	7.5%
Caucasian	64.7%
Hispanic	13.4%
Native American	13.2%
Pacific Islander	0.3%

\*The race of 13.7 percent of children in foster care was not recorded.

### Foster care settings include :

- *Nonrelative family foster homes.*
- *Relative care homes.*
- *Family group homes.*
- *Emergency shelters.*
- *Residential treatment programs.*
- *Child care institutions.*
- *Pre-adoptive homes.*

### Age of children served in foster care

0-5	39.4%
6-12	32.3%
13+	28.3%

**Children age 13 and older** make up 28.3 percent of the children served in foster care.



# Assuring quality in family foster care

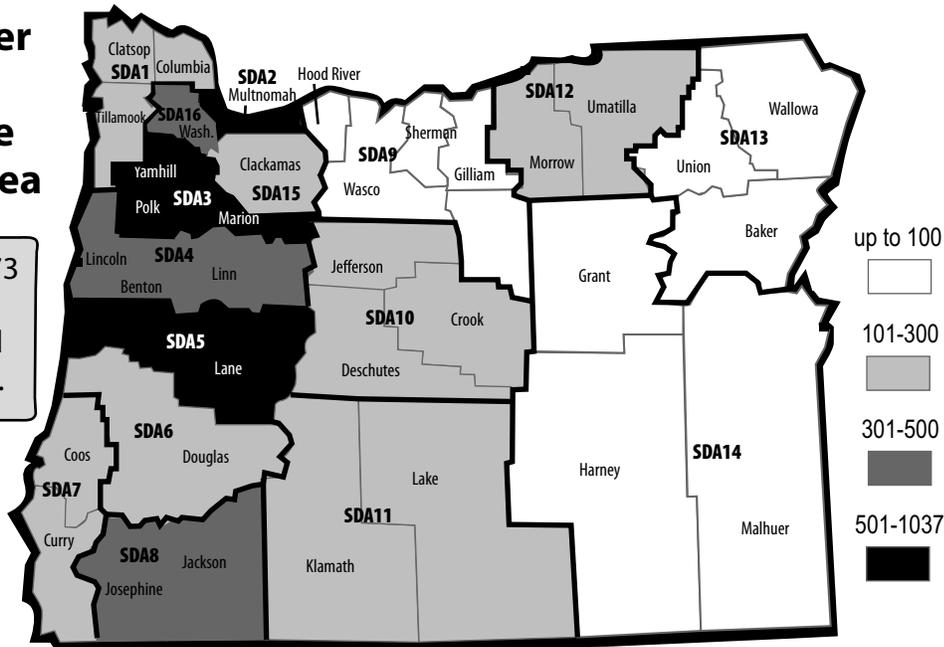
Foster parents care for children who have been abused or neglected and who cannot remain in their own homes. Foster parents come from all walks of life. They are essential people on whom DHS child welfare depends to do the day-to-day parenting for these children until they can return home or, if that is not possible, be placed with a permanent family.

All foster homes must be certified as meeting safety standards. The safety standards are the same for relatives, nonrelatives and families considering adoption.

A significant factor contributing to the safety and stability of children is keeping them involved with their families, school and communities as much as safely possible. DHS works toward keeping children in their neighborhoods by having an adequate number of families available for children in need throughout the state. The map below shows how many homes are available for children in each of the 16 DHS service delivery areas of Oregon.

## Family foster homes by DHS Service Delivery Area

There are 5,373 family foster homes located across Oregon.



DHS child welfare conducts thorough assessment and background checks on prospective foster parents and relatives caretakers. This includes a family assessment, home study, criminal records check, personal reference check, home safety and health inspection, and a check for previous child abuse/neglect history.



## Residential treatment services

Residential treatment services are provided to a significant number of children in the DHS child welfare system. Children served require intensive supervision and treatment because they have experienced severe abuse and neglect and/or have emotional problems that cannot be managed in a family setting.

- **Professional shelter programs** serve children with behavioral and emotional problems in need of professional evaluation. Programs provide assessment and evaluation to assist DHS in developing a treatment or placement plan for each child.
- **Residential treatment services** include an array of counseling, skill building and interventions provided in facilities under the close supervision of highly trained, professional staff.
- **Therapeutic foster care programs** use trained professional foster parents to provide supervision and treatment under the direction of a licensed private child care agency. Children served have abuse histories and behavior problems that are more appropriately treated in a family setting, but who still require the intense level of services and back-up offered by residential treatment providers.

In addition, some children have problems so severe that they require psychiatric hospitalization or placement in a mental health psychiatric residential treatment program.

### A typical child served in residential treatment:

- Has been severely abused and/or neglected.
- Is unable to be maintained at home or in family foster care due to uncontrollable behaviors and emotional problems.
- Has not responded to outpatient counseling services provided in the community.
- Has major school problems, has been expelled or refuses to attend school.
- Needs daily training, guidance and supervision in a highly structured living environment.

**On any given day**  
737 children were served in some type of residential treatment



## Services to teens

During the legislative session in 2003 and 2005, Senate Bill 808 and Senate Bill 1034 were passed, requiring DHS to develop a Comprehensive Transition Plan for youth who are receiving services through DHS as a result of dependency and report this plan to the court. These transition plans are to include assessing and planning for the needs and goals of the youth related to housing, physical and mental health, education, employment, community connections and supportive relationships.

- Teens comprise 28.3 percent of the foster care population.
- During FFY 2005, 4,540 teens spent at least one day in foster care.
- Over half of the teens who left foster care returned home (54.3 percent).
- 86 former foster care youth received scholarships for higher education through a federal grant awarded to DHS and implemented with the assistance of the Oregon Student Assistance Commission in 2005.

Foster care youth are eligible for Independent Living Programs (ILP). The number of youth receiving Independent Living Services rose from 1,161 served in Federal Fiscal Year 2004 to 1,248 youth served in FFY 2005. ILP's services are provided by 22 different community-based partners throughout the state. The ILP services are directed at youth to assist them in the following ways:

- Making the transition to self-sufficiency as an adult.
- Receiving the education, training and services necessary to obtain employment.
- Attaining academic and/or vocational education and preparing for post-secondary training and education.
- Obtaining personal and emotional support and promoting healthy interactions with dedicated adults.

**22 community providers** make up the statewide ILP service network.

**1,248 youth received ILP services** in FFY 2005, a 7.5 percent increase from the previous year.



## Permanency for children

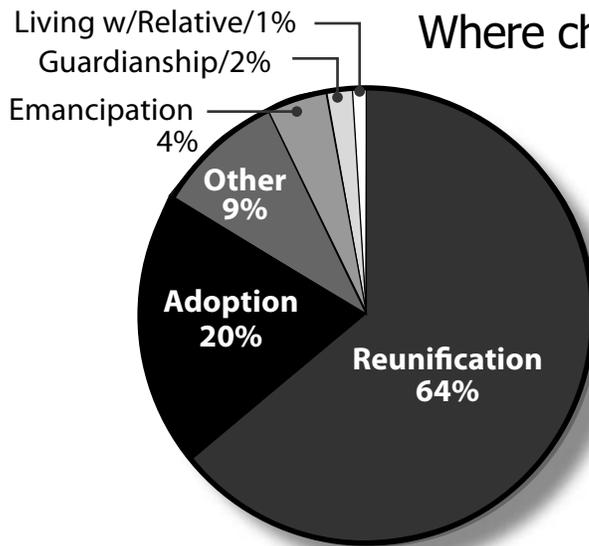
When a child is placed in foster care, DHS child welfare staff, foster parents and other partners work together to ensure the child's needs are met.

The child will be returned home whenever it is possible to do so safely. However, the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act passed by Congress in 1997 limits the time parents have to make changes to keep their child safe. The role of foster parents or other caregivers is vital in helping the child return home or be placed in another permanent home.

Parents, extended family, foster parents and community partners work with DHS child welfare to make a plan for a permanent home for a child. Foster parents or relative caregivers can help with visits and can encourage parents to become involved in their children's activities. They can also help the child and parents get to school or counseling appointments.

During FFY 2005, 64.0 percent of children who left foster care were reunified with their families. If a child cannot return home, the law requires that an alternate permanency plan be put into place quickly. If adoption is not in the best interest of the child, other permanency plans may include:

- Guardianship
- Permanent relative care
- Another planned permanent living arrangement



**Where children went after foster care**

The majority of children entering foster care are reunified with their parents. But for other children, reunification with their parents does not occur for various reasons. These children who exit foster care may move on to various other living arrangements and permanent plans, such as adoption or guardianship.

DHS involves parents in planning to make their home a safe and healthy environment before their child returns home.

*If you would like to become a foster or adoptive parent, call:*  
**1-800-331-0503**

