



Optimum Children's Services – 972-617-9500

The Facts about Children and Foster Care

The Raw Numbers

- There were 903,089 substantiated cases of child abuse or neglect in 2001 in the United States.
- The number of children in the foster care system on September 30, 2001 was 542,000.
- Of those, approximately 50,000 were adopted out of the foster care system.
- There were still 126,000 children waiting to be adopted at that time. Returning home is not an option for these children and youth.

Mental Health

- The US Department of Health & Human Services estimates that 75-80% of children who need mental health services do not receive them.
- More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among teens and young adults.
- In the year 2000, 3,994 youth aged 15-24 committed suicide. That's one every 2 hours.

Other Statistics

- In 2003, families with children accounted for 40% of the overall homeless population in 25 major US cities.
- In 2001, the US Department of Health and Human Services estimated that 47% of the homeless population in the US had aged out of the foster care system.
- In 2001, 13% of youth ages 18-24 did not get a high school diploma or pass an equivalency test.
- An estimated 57% of children in 2001 were reunited with their parents or principal caretaker after an average stay of 12 months in foster care.
- The average stay for all children in foster care in 2001 was 33 months.

The 8 states with the most foster children in care (2001) are as follows:

Ranking	State	# of Children	% of US Foster Children
1	California	107,168	20%
2	New York	43,365	8%
3	Florida	32,477	6%
4	Illinois	28,460	5%
5	Ohio	21,584	4%
6	Pennsylvania	21,237	4%
7	Michigan	20,896	4%
8	Texas	19,739	4%
Totals		294,926	55%

Statistics were taken from CWLA, PEW, and AFCARS reports between 2001 & 2003 depending on the data.