

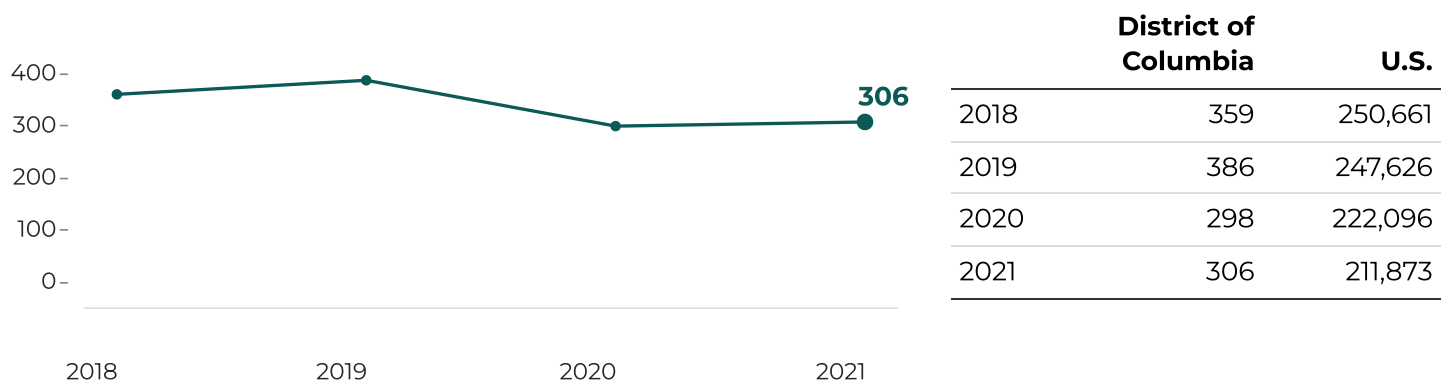
Permanency

District of Columbia

It is essential that children have positive, nurturing, and long-term connections with caring adults who support their healthy development—referred to as “permanency” in the child welfare field. When children are separated from their families by the foster care system, they can establish permanency through reunification, guardianship, or adoption. Conversely, children are at risk of experiencing negative outcomes when the child welfare system fails to provide permanency, underscoring the importance of providing comprehensive, culturally appropriate services to ensure that children are able to safely reunify with their families or find homes with relatives or adoptive families.

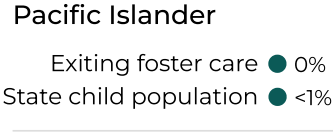
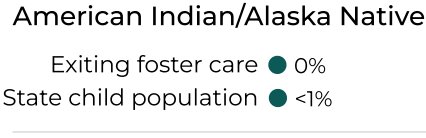
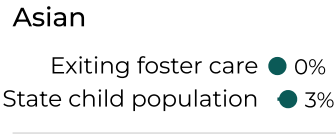
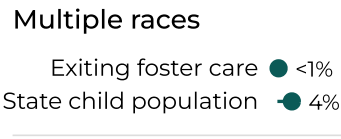
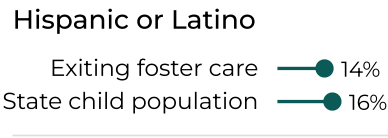
Exiting foster care

Number of children exiting foster care¹

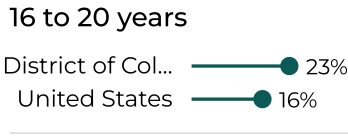
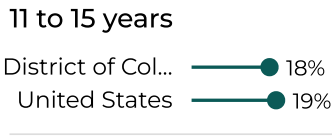
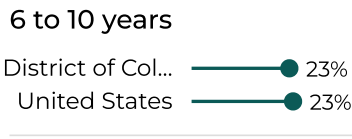
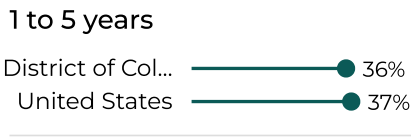


Demographics of children exiting foster care

Race and ethnicity²

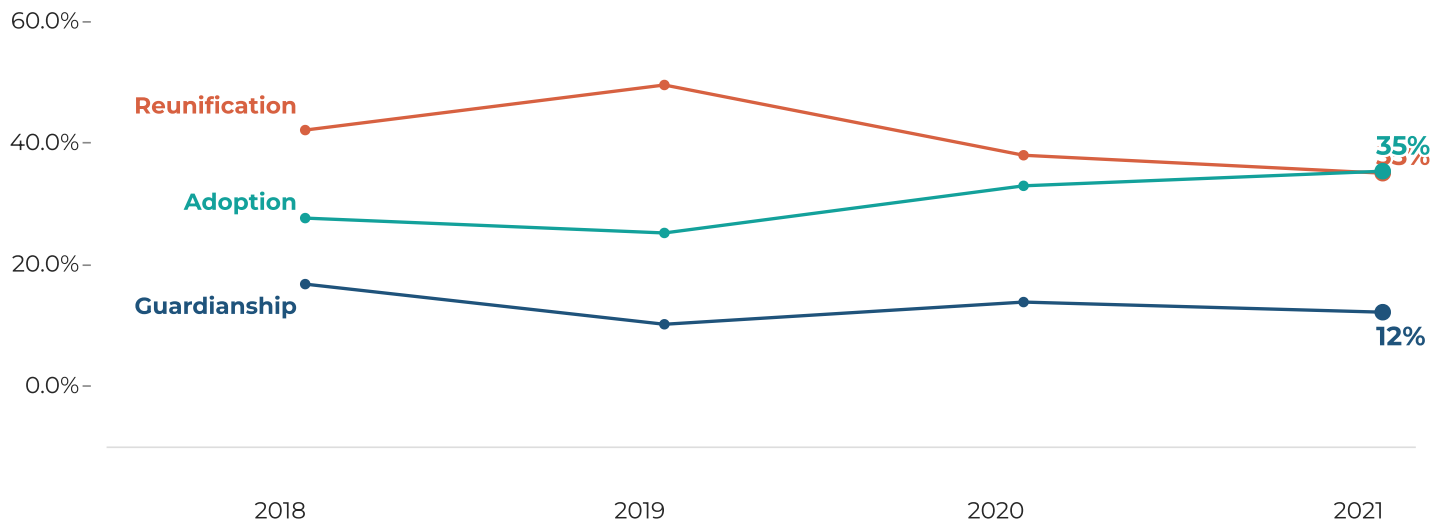


Age distribution



Exiting foster care to permanency

Percent of children exiting foster care to permanency



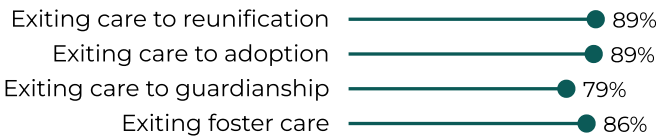
Number of children exiting foster care to each form of permanency in 2021

	District of Columbia	United States
Reunification	107	99,822
Adoption	108	53,337
Guardianship	37	37,383

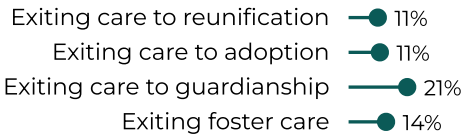
Demographics of children exiting foster care to permanency

Race and ethnicity

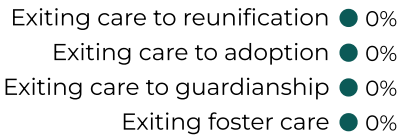
African American



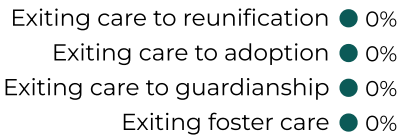
Hispanic or Latino



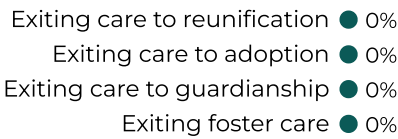
White



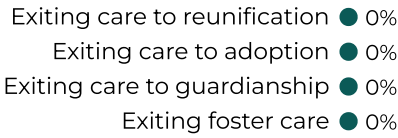
Asian



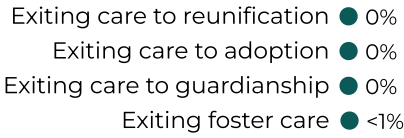
American Indian/Alaska Native



Pacific Islander

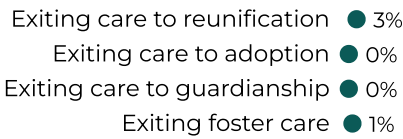


Multiple races

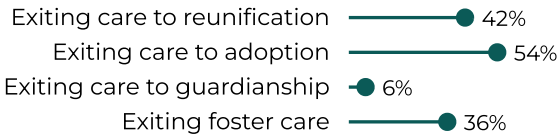


Age distribution

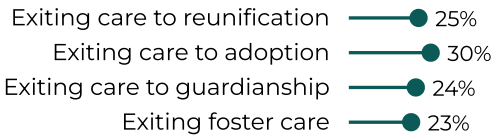
Less than 1 year



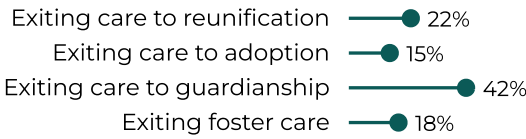
1 to 5 years



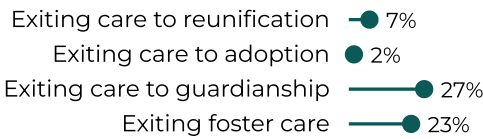
6 to 10 years



11 to 15 years



16 to 20 years



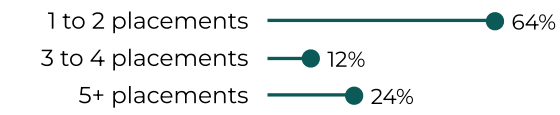
Placement stability among children exiting to permanency

Number of placements

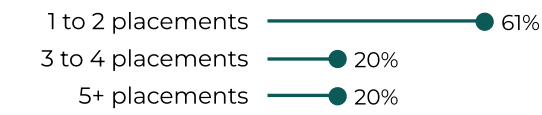
Children exiting to adoption



Children exiting to guardianship

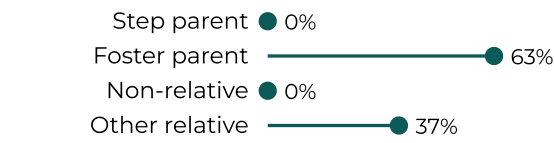


Children exiting to reunification



Relationship of adoptive parent to child³

Children exiting to adoption



Length of stay in foster care

	District of Columbia	United States
Average length of stay in foster care before exit to reunification ⁴	15.9 months	13.4 months
Average length of stay before exit to adoption	33.6 months	34.2 months
Average length of stay before exit to guardianship	33.0 months	22.9 months

Source, unless specified otherwise:

The data used in this publication 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 data represent the federal fiscal years 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 reporting periods (October 1, 2017 – September 30, 2018, October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019, October 1, 2019 – September 30, 2020, October 1, 2020 – September 30, 2021, respectively). Unless otherwise noted, for each calculation, children who were missing data on the relevant indicator were excluded from analyses. 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.

Datasets used include:

- Dataset #235, AFCARS Foster Care File FY2018, Version 3
- Dataset #239, AFCARS Foster Care File FY2019, Version 2
- Dataset #255, AFCARS Foster Care File FY2020
- Dataset #274, AFCARS Foster Care FY2021; Dataset #275, AFCARS Adoption FY2021

Notes

¹All figures related to exits from care include children from birth to age 20 exiting care during the FFY.

²If a child is determined to be of Hispanic origin, they are only counted as Hispanic and are not included in any other racial/ethnic categories. Data for the general child population under age 20 in 2021 are from the U. S. Census Bureau which are publicly available on the U.S. Census Bureau website.

³The response categories for relationship of adoptive parents come from the AFCARS Adoption file and are not mutually exclusive. Therefore, percentages may not add up to 100%. For some states there was a large amount of missing data. In District of Columbia, the relationship of adoptive parents was missing for 1% of records in the Adoption file.

⁴Length of stay in care is calculated based on the most recent removal episode.