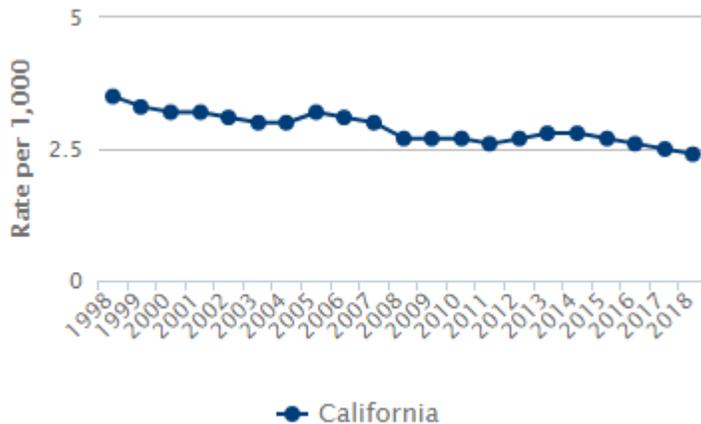


## Foster Care in California

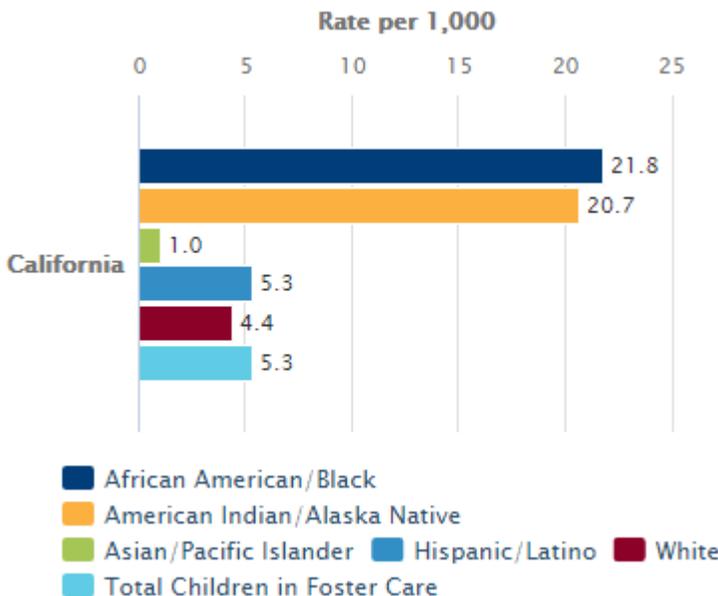
### Children Entering Foster Care for the First Time



**Definition:** Number of children ages 0-17 entering foster care for the first time, per 1,000 children (e.g., in 2018, 2.4 per 1,000 California children entered foster care for the first time).

**Data Source:** Webster, D., et al. *California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports*, UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jul. 2019).

### Children in Foster Care, by Race/Ethnicity: 2018



**Definition:** Number of children and youth ages 0-20 in foster care on July 1, per 1,000 children/youth, by race/ethnicity (e.g., on July 1, 2018, 5.3 per 1,000 Hispanic/Latino children/youth in California were in foster care).

**Data Source:** Webster, D., et al. *California Child Welfare Indicators Project Reports*, UC Berkeley Center for Social Services Research (Jul. 2019).

### Children in Foster Care Receiving Timely Medical Exams: 2019; Showing Counties

### What It Is

Kidsdata.org provides the following indicators of children and youth involved in the foster care system:

- Children ages 0-17 entering foster care for the first time, by age group, race/ethnicity, reason for removal from home, and type of foster care placement
- Children and youth ages 0-20 in foster care on July 1st, by age group, race/ethnicity, and type of placement
- The number of foster youth enrolled in public schools on the first Wednesday in October, along with the percentage of foster youth in the total student population
- The percentage of children in foster care who receive timely medical exams and timely dental exams

### Why This Topic Is Important

Foster care is intended to provide temporary, safe living arrangements and therapeutic services for children and youth who cannot remain safely at home because of risk for maltreatment or inadequate care. The U.S. foster care system aims to safely reunify children with their parents or secure another permanent home, e.g., through adoption. Often this goal is not achieved, however, especially for older children and those with disabilities. Instead, many children spend years in foster family homes or group homes, often moving many times.

Young people in foster care are at increased risk for a range of emotional, physical, behavioral, academic, and employment problems, with outcomes generally worse for those in group homes. Recognizing this, leaders and policymakers have made efforts to safely reduce the number of children living in foster care, particularly in group settings. While the number of children in foster care has decreased since the 2000s, statewide and nationally, California continues to have the largest number of children entering the system each year. Further, American Indian/Alaska Native, black, and Latino children continue to be overrepresented in the foster care system; in California, for example, African American/black children represent 19% of foster children but only 5% of the general child population. Research has shown that children of color, those with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ youth are at increased risk for poorer outcomes compared

with the general foster care population.

## How Children Are Faring

In 2018, 2.4 per 1,000 California children ages 0-17 entered foster care for the first time, a drop of more than 30% compared with twenty years earlier. Across time periods, infants consistently have higher rates of first entry into care than older children. Statewide, the rate of children under age 1 entering foster care for the first time in 2016-2018 (12.2 per 1,000) was more than three times the rate for children ages 1-2, nearly five times that for ages 3-5, and more than 6 times the rates for older groups. Among all children entering foster care for the first time in 2016-2018, 87% were removed from their families due to neglect, 7% due to physical abuse, and 2% due to sexual abuse.

The number of California children and youth ages 0-20 living in foster care on July 1, 2018 was 59,172—a rate of 5.3 per 1,000. Of these, 19,111 were placed in kinship care, 13,229 with foster family agencies, 7,452 in foster homes, and 6,147 in guardianship. At the county level, rates of youth in care ranged from 1.2 per 1,000 (Marin) to 18.8 per 1,000 (Trinity) among regions with data. In-care rates for African American/black and American Indian/Alaska Native youth statewide are substantially higher than rates for their peers in other groups—more than 20 youth in care per 1,000 in 2018, compared with 5.3 per 1,000 (Hispanic/Latino), 4.4 per 1,000 (white), and 1 per 1,000 (Asian/Pacific Islander).

Among California children under age 18 in foster care on March 31, 2019, 73% had received timely medical exams and 67% timely dental exams. Across counties with data, percentages ranged from 42% to 98% for timely medical exams and from 7% to 95% for timely dental exams.

*View references for this text and additional research on this topic:*

<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/4/foster-care/summary>



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