



# IMPROVING FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION SYSTEMS IN CALIFORNIA

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Of nearly 400,000 children in foster care in the United States, more than **60,000 children (15%) are in the foster care system in California.**



Unfortunately, children in California's foster care system experience frequent placement changes that increase the risk of mental health issues.

ACCORDING TO THE [California Child Welfare Indicator Project](#), of children who are in foster care for 24 months or longer:

**15%** experienced **5+** placements.  
**44%** experienced **3+** placements.

However, adoption and kinship placements can help mitigate this problem. **Unfortunately, not enough children are placed with kin in California. In 2021:**

**22,707** OR **47%**  
foster children were placed in  
non-relative homes.



More than **3,000** California youth aged out of the system from October 2022 to September 2023 alone, and they are less likely to complete high school or obtain a GED than children who have not spent time in foster care. A quarter of those who aged out also lack stable housing. Currently, it's estimated that **one-third of all the Nation's unaccompanied homeless youth are in California.** To reduce the number of youths in foster care and aging out without finding a forever home, California must take action to increase adoptions and reunification.

## TO IMPROVE FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION SYSTEMS, CALIFORNIA SHOULD:

- ★ Protect religious liberty of faith-based foster care and adoption providers such as [Family Connections Adoptions](#) and [FosterHope](#).
- ★ Implement expanded state-level adoption tax credits for foster families. **California only offers \$2,500 per child, which is below the federal adoption tax credit.**
- ★ Support and utilize programs that aim to decrease the number of children entering foster care by connecting families in need with churches and communities, such as [CarePortal](#).
- ★ Better support foster parents by establishing comprehensive support programs that include pre-placement training to equip foster parents with the necessary skills to care for children with diverse backgrounds and experiences.
- ★ Improve mental and behavioral healthcare for foster children by conducting periodic screenings, providing timely treatment, and passing trauma-informed care legislation like Illinois's [Public Act 099-0927](#).
- ★ Review and eliminate burdensome regulations. **California imposes a lengthy list of home safety requirements, including comprehensive home evacuation plans and locks and screens on each window and door.**
- ★ Improve communication between agencies and foster parents to ensure effective recruitment and matching processes.
- ★ Maximize the functionality and public awareness of data systems like the [California Adoption Exchange](#), an online database that allows prospective adoptive parents to create profiles and search for children available for adoption.

For more information, obtain the full report [here](#).