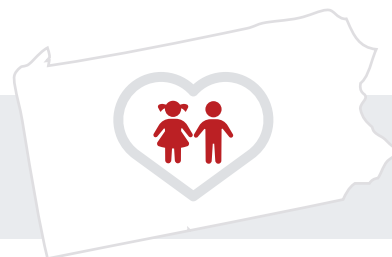




IMPROVING FOSTER CARE & ADOPTION SYSTEMS IN PENNSYLVANIA

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There are nearly 400,000 children in foster care in the United States, including around **15,000 children in Pennsylvania.**



ACCORDING TO THE 2021 CHILD WELFARE REPORT FROM

[Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children](#), of children aged 14-21

who are placed in out-of-home care through the welfare system,

42% have been in more than three placements.



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

If a child experienced re-entry into care, only

36.4%
were placed
with kin.



Older children in foster care were only placed

**with kin
30%**
of the time.



On average, 1,100 Pennsylvania youth age out of foster care each year and exit the system with little support. These youth are more likely to experience homelessness and mental health challenges than children who haven't spent time in foster care. 37% do not have stable housing, and only 49% have full or part-time employment. To reduce the number of youths who age out of foster care without finding a forever home, Pennsylvania must take action to increase adoptions and reunification.

TO IMPROVE FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION SYSTEMS, PENNSYLVANIA SHOULD:

- ★ Protect the religious liberty of faith-based foster care and adoption providers, such as the [Bair Foundation](#) and [Adoption Connection PA](#). Neglecting to protect religious liberty means fewer adoption providers and more children stuck in the system.
- ★ Implement expanded adoption tax credits for foster families.
- ★ 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.
- ★ Improve communication between agencies and foster parents to ensure effective recruitment and matching processes for children and adoptive parents.
- ★ Maximize the functionality and public awareness of data systems like the [Pennsylvania 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](#).