

Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007: Report to Congress Executive Summary



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Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007 includes:

- ❖ Data pages for each State that contain:
 - Contextual data
 - Performance on original outcome measures
 - Performance on the CFSR composite measures
 - A State comment (if provided)
- ❖ A discussion of data issues and key findings of the data analyses across States

Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007: Report to Congress

provides information on the performance of States in seven outcome categories related to the safety, permanency, and well-being of children who come into contact with child welfare programs across the nation. In addition to reporting on State performance in each of the outcome categories, the Child Welfare Outcomes Report also includes data on contextual factors and findings of analyses conducted across States.

The importance of using data in child welfare practice

The outcomes and context data provided in the Child Welfare Outcomes Report can offer important information in understanding both the strengths and challenges of a State's child welfare system. In addition, the data can help States in determining appropriate changes to enhance its ability to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children.

Outcomes data provide information on a State's performance on standard measures of safety and permanency. A State can examine its performance as it relates to national data, and also can observe trends and changes over time through the 4 years of data shown for each State. The outcomes data can give focus and direction for program improvement by signifying each State's strengths as well as areas that could be improved upon.

The context data include such information as child victim rates, times to investigation, numbers of children entering and leaving foster care, ages and race/ethnicity of children in care, as well as other important statistics. Some national data are provided for comparison purposes—all of which can be valuable to States in understanding the unique characteristics and needs of the children and families they serve.

**SAFETY
PERMANENCY
WELL-BEING**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

CONTEXTUAL FACTORS

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report presents data on child welfare-related contextual factors relevant to understanding and interpreting State performance on the outcome measures. Below is a summary of the fiscal year (FY) 2007 data for these contextual factors.¹

In 2007, 753,357 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.

Characteristics of child victims

- In 2007, 753,357 children were confirmed to be victims of maltreatment.² The overall national child victim rate was 10.6 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.³ State child victim rates varied dramatically, ranging from 1.5 child victims per 1,000 children to 26.3 child victims per 1,000 children.⁴
- The percentage of child victims of a particular race/ethnicity varied among States. In 2007, there were many States in which the percentage of minority race/ethnicity child victims was disproportionate to the percentage of these children in the State population.⁵ Over representation was found for Black child victims (25 States), Alaska Native/American Indian child victims (13 States), and Hispanic child victims (5 States).

Approximately 491,000 children nationally were in foster care on the last day of FY 2007.

Foster care information overview

- Approximately 491,000 children nationally were in foster care on the last day of FY 2007. During that year, an estimated 293,000 children entered foster care, and 293,000 children exited foster care.⁶ Among the States, the foster care entry rate ranged from 1.5 children per 1,000 to 8.5 children per 1,000 in a State's population.⁷
- The percentage of children of a particular race/ethnicity entering foster care varied among States. In 2007, there were many States in which the percentage of minority race/

ethnicity children entering foster care was disproportionately greater than the percentage of these children in the State population.⁸

Disproportionate representation was found for Black children (37 States), Alaska Native/American Indian children (14 States), and Hispanic children (5 States) entering foster care.

- Nationally, approximately 246,000 children exited foster care to a permanent home in 2007 (i.e., were discharged to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship). Of these 246,000 children, 178,000 were discharged to reunification; 51,000 were discharged to adoption; and 17,000 were discharged to legal guardianship. Approximately 27,000 children emancipated from foster care in 2007.
- Approximately 130,000 children were waiting to be adopted in 2007.⁹

STATE PERFORMANCE ON OUTCOME MEASURES

The Child Welfare Outcomes Report presents data and analyses on seven outcome categories. A synopsis of key findings for these outcome areas is provided below. The measures relevant to these outcomes are described in detail in appendix B of the full report.

Most of the outcome measures are also listed in tables 1 and 2 of this executive summary. Note that individual measures that are part of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) permanency composites are preceded by a "C" to distinguish them from the original outcome measures.

All national medians for outcome measures referenced in this executive summary include only those States for which adequate data are available for FY 2004 through FY 2007. Tables of these medians can be found at the end of this executive summary.¹⁰

Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect

- In 2007, State performance varied considerably with regard to the percentage of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period (measure 1.1) (range = 1.4 to 13.1 percent; median = 5.6 percent).
- States with higher victim rates tended to have higher maltreatment recurrence rates within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r = .63$). In addition, consistent with previous Child Welfare Outcomes Reports, States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect (as opposed to other forms of maltreatment) also had some tendency to have a relatively high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's $r = .31$).¹¹
- Between 2004 and 2007, 56 percent of States demonstrated improved performance with regard to the measure of recurrence of child maltreatment (measure 1.1). In addition, the median across States for this measure changed from 6.5 percent in 2004 to 5.6 percent in 2007. Given that a lower recurrence rate is desirable, this demonstrates an overall improvement in performance (a -13.8 percent change).¹²

In 2007, 178,000 were discharged to reunification, 51,000 were discharged to adoption, and 17,000 were discharged to legal guardianship.

performance. In addition, the median performance for this measure improved from 0.39 percent in 2004 to 0.34 percent in 2007 (a -12.8 percent change).

Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care

- In 2007, States were fairly successful in achieving a permanent home for all children exiting foster care (measure 3.1, median = 86.9 percent). However, States were less successful in achieving permanent homes for children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2, median = 76.2 percent), and even less successful in finding permanent homes for children exiting foster care who entered care when they were older than age 12 (measure 3.3, median = 69.2 percent).
- While there was a wide range in performance for measure C3.1 for 2007 (9.0 percent to 46.4 percent), the data indicate that all States struggle to some degree with finding permanent homes for children who have been in foster care for a long period of time. Only 26.3 percent (median) of these children had permanent homes by the end of the year. However, between 2004 and 2007, 51 percent of States exhibited an improvement in performance, and the national median for this measure increased from 24.4 percent to 26.3 percent (a 7.8 percent change).
- In many States, a considerable percentage of children emancipated from foster care in 2007 were in foster care for long periods of time before they were emancipated (measures 3.4 and C3.3). In about one-half of the States, 27 percent or more of the children who were emancipated from foster care were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (measure 3.4). Forty-five percent or more of

Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care

- In 2007, State performance regarding the maltreatment of children while in foster care (measure 2.1) ranged from 0.03 to 1.38 percent, with a median of 0.34 percent.
- Between 2004 and 2007, 21 States (53 percent of States analyzed) demonstrated improved

the children emancipated from foster care, or who turned age 18 while in care, were in care for 3 years or longer (measure C3.3). However, it is encouraging to note that between 2004 and 2007, 44 percent of States showed improved performance on measure 3.4, and 27 percent of States showed improvement on measure C3.3.

In many States, a considerable percentage of children emancipated from foster care in 2007 were in foster care for long periods of time before they were emancipated.

children in a timely manner. Measure C1.3 focuses on children entering care for the first time during the last 6 months of the prior year and follows them for 12 months to determine the percentage that reunified within this time period. In 2007, the median across States was only 41.5 percent, and the 75th percentile was only 48.5 percent. Therefore, in at least 75 percent of States, the majority of children who entered foster care for the first time in the last 6 months of 2006 were still in foster care 12 months later.

Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing reentry

- The 2007 data suggest that, in many States, a majority of children discharged to reunification were reunified in a timely manner. Across States, the median percentage of reunifications occurring in less than 12 months was about 68 percent (measure 4.1 and C1.1).

Overall, 61 percent of States showed a decline in performance between 2004 and 2007 in the median length of stay in foster care for reunified children.

- Overall, 61 percent of States showed a decline in performance from 2004 to 2007 with regard to the median length of stay in foster care for reunified children (measure C1.2). Consistent with this finding, the national median for this measure also showed a decline in performance. The median length of stay in foster care for children prior to reunification increased from 6.5 months in 2004 to 7.7 months in 2007. Given that a shorter length of stay is desirable, this demonstrates a decline in performance (an 18.5 percent change).

Between 2004 and 2007, 57 percent of States showed improved performance in the percentage of children who reenter foster care within 12 months from discharge.

- A longitudinal view of children from the time of entry into foster care (i.e., an entry cohort) until the time of discharge indicates that most States are not reunifying

- Reentry into foster care is an area needing improvement for many States, as indicated by performance on measure C1.4 (median = 12.7 percent). Measure C1.4 assesses the permanency of reunification (reentry rate) by conducting a 12-month followup of a cohort of children who were discharged from foster care to reunification and identifying the percentage of those children who reentered foster care within 12 months of their prior discharge.

- Many States (57 percent) showed improved performance between 2004 and 2007 with regard to the percentage of children who reenter foster care within less than 12 months from being reunified (measure C1.4). In addition, the national median for this measure improved from 15.0 percent in 2004 to 12.7 in 2007 (a -15.3 percent change). Note that because a lower reentry rate is desirable, a negative percent change represents improved performance.

- Many States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were age 13 or older at the time of entry also had a relatively high percentage of children reentering foster care (measure C1.4) (Pearson's $r = .63$). Conversely, many States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger also had a relatively low percentage of children reentering foster care (Pearson's $r = -.62$).

Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption

- Achieving timely adoptions is a challenge for all but a few States. The percentage of adoptions that occur in less than 12 months from the child's entry into foster care is quite low in almost all States (measure 5.1a, median = 3.4 percent). In addition, the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 24 months from a child's entry into foster care is fairly low (measure C2.1, median = 31.5 percent).
- From 2004 to 2007, 65 percent of States demonstrated improved performance with regard to the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 24 months (measure C2.1). The national median for this measure also improved from 25.9 percent in 2004 to 31.5 percent in 2007 (a 21.6 percent change).
- Many States (55 percent) showed an improvement in the median length of stay for children adopted (measure C2.2). The national median for this measure also improved from 32.2 months in 2004 to 30.1 months in 2007 (a -6.5 percent change). Given that a shorter length of stay is desirable, this demonstrates an improvement in performance.

From 2004 to 2007, 65 percent of States demonstrated improved performance in the percentage of adoptions occurring in less than 24 months.

- Fifty-five percent of States showed improved performance in the percentage of children in foster care for 17 months or longer on the first day of the year who were adopted by the end of the year (measure C2.3). Consistent with this finding, the national median for this measure increased from 19.8 percent in 2004 to 21.0 percent in 2007 (a 6.1 percent change).

Outcome 6: Increase placement stability

- In this report, adequate placement stability is defined as limiting the number of placement settings to no more than two. Although most States appear to be reasonably successful in achieving this placement stability goal for children in foster care for less than 12 months, States tend to be far less successful in meeting this goal for children in foster care for longer periods of time. The median across States declines from 85.2 percent for children in foster care for less than 12 months to 61.0 percent for children in foster care for 12 to 24 months, and then declines even further to 31.7 percent for children in foster care for 24 months or longer.
- One variable that was found to be associated with placement stability was the median length of stay in foster care prior to adoption. States with a relatively long median length of stay prior to adoption (measure C2.2) also tended to have good placement setting stability, as indicated by a relatively high percentage of children in care for 24 months or longer who had no more than two placement settings (measure 6.1c) (Pearson's $r = .53$). A possible explanation is that, when a child is in a stable, pre-adoptive home, it may take additional time for the adoption to become finalized, but there would be no reason for additional placement setting changes.

Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

- In about one-half of the States, 5.7 percent or less of children entering foster care under the age of 12 were placed in group homes or institutions. However, in 12 States, between 10 percent and 20 percent of young children were placed in group homes or institutions, indicating that this is still an important issue in several States.
- In 2006 there was a substantial improvement toward fewer placements of young children in group homes or institutions (measure 7.1), and this improvement has continued through 2007. The national median percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions decreased from 7.2 percent in 2004 and 2005 to 5.9 percent in 2006 and 2007 (a -18.1 percent change). Consistent with this finding, 76 percent of States showed improved performance on this measure between 2004 and 2007.

CONCLUSION, QUESTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INVESTIGATION

In reviewing the key findings in all seven outcome areas, it is clear that there are both areas of strength and areas in need of improvement with regard to achieving positive outcomes for children who come into contact with State child welfare systems. All of these areas deserve additional investigation in order to gain further understanding and to move the child welfare field forward. Some areas needing additional attention are the following:

- Nationally, performance on measures of child safety fluctuated somewhat between 2004 and 2007, but the 2006 and 2007 data indicate that performance may be improving overall. States should be encouraged by improvements and work to build on their efforts to ensure that children remain safe.
- Finding permanent homes for children identified as having a diagnosed disability is a challenge for most States. In addition to relatively low performance in 2007, a change in performance between 2004 and 2007 indicates a decline in this area. The reasons for low or declining performance need to be better understood. In addition, the strategies used by States that are more successful in this area should to be carefully examined.
- Another area in need of improvement is finding permanent homes for children who have been in foster care for 24 months or longer. Between 2005 and 2007, national performance in this area remained essentially unchanged. What are the factors that contribute to children being in foster care for long periods of time? What programs or policies have worked to increase permanency for children who have been in care for long periods of time?
- Overall national performance on the percentage of children reunified in less than 12 months and the median length of stay for children reunified point toward a performance decline between 2004 and 2007. However, the reentry rate for children reunified improved within this same time period. These three areas should be reviewed in conjunction with one another so that strategies can be developed that improve performance in both the timeliness and permanency of reunifications. For example, are there services that are effective in ensuring safe and timely reunifications, while also preventing reentry?
- While overall national performance on timeliness of adoptions has improved, it continues to be a significant challenge for almost all States. It is important to note that there may be a variety of factors that contribute to lower performance on these measures, and these factors may vary considerably between States. However, for those States that struggle in this area, a careful review

of specific barriers would be beneficial. In addition, a comprehensive analysis of what has been effective in States is also of significant importance.

- Placement setting stability for children in foster care longer than 12 months has consistently been an area of difficulty for many States. Overall performance improved between 2004 and 2007 for children in care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months. However, performance declined within this same time period for children in care 24 months or longer. How can States prevent children from remaining in care for long periods of time and increase placement setting stability for children who have been in care for long periods of time?

- The majority of States have made considerable strides toward decreasing the percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions. What has led to this decrease? States should be encouraged by improvements in this area and work to ensure that improvements continue.

Data and analysis presented throughout the full Child Welfare Outcomes Report offer additional details regarding overall national performance. In addition, State Data Pages provide a profile of individual State performance between 2004 and 2007.

¹ Unless otherwise specified, the data used in this report are for Federal fiscal year 2007 (October 1, 2006–September 30, 2007).

² For the purposes of this report, a victim of child maltreatment is defined as a child for whom an incident of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. A State may include some children with alternative dispositions as victims (*Child Maltreatment 2007*). It is important to distinguish that the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports use the total reported number of child victims as opposed to a national estimate of child victims, which is often reported in *Child Maltreatment*.

³ The overall national child victim rate is calculated by dividing the child population for all States that submitted NCANDS data (71,099,024) by the total number of child victims (753,357), and multiplying by 1,000.

⁴ A State's rate of child victims is defined as the number of child victims reported to NCANDS per 1,000 children in the State's population. Children with more than one report of substantiated or indicated maltreatment may be counted more than once.

⁵ For the purposes of this report, we are defining representation as disproportionate when the percentage of a racial/ethnic group of victims constitutes at least one and one-half times the percentage of children of that racial/ethnic group in a State's child population. The analysis of disproportionate representation was conducted for Black, White, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic children (of any race). Other races were not included in the analysis because of their very small representation in the population of the majority of States. Puerto Rico was excluded from this analysis due to unavailable data.

⁶ Some national numbers used in this section were updated using more recent AFCARS data than were available at the time the main report was written. The total number of children in foster care on the last day of FY 2007 changed from 490,000 to 491,000; the number of children exiting care in FY 2007 changed from 287,000 to 293,000.

⁷ Rate of entry is calculated by dividing the total number of children entering foster care in a State by the total child population in that State and multiplying by 1,000 [(N entering FC/child population) x 1,000].

⁸ For the purposes of this report, representation is considered disproportionate when a racial/ethnic group of children entering foster care constitutes at least one and one-half times the number of children of that racial/ethnic group in a State. The analysis of disproportionate representation was conducted for Black, White, American Indian/Alaska Native, and Hispanic children (of any race). Other races were not included in the analysis because of their very small representation in the population of the majority of States. Puerto Rico was excluded from this analysis due to unavailable data.

⁹ There is no Federal definition for a child waiting to be adopted. The definition used in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports includes children and youth through age 17 who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parents' parental rights have been terminated. It excludes children 16 years old and older whose parents' parental rights have been terminated and who have a goal of emancipation. A State's own definition may differ from that used here.

¹⁰ In the Child Welfare Outcomes Report, two separate national medians are computed for each measure for FY 2007. In the 2007 "Range of State Performance" tables, national medians are calculated using all States that had adequate data available for FY 2007 only. However, when looking at performance over time, a separate FY 2007 national median is calculated that includes only the States that had adequate data available for all the relevant years (FY 2004 through FY 2007). This is done to provide a more accurate calculation of change over time. Therefore, the number of States (N) included in each of these calculations may vary, and these two medians may be slightly different. For consistency, the medians used in this executive summary are those that include States that had adequate data available for all relevant years.

¹¹ The strength of relationships in the Child Welfare Outcomes Reports is assessed using correlation coefficients, specifically Pearson's *r*, which can range in value from -1 to +1.

¹² Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing that result by old data, and multiplying it by 100. For example, if maltreatment recurrence were 9.2 in 2004 and 7.6 in 2007, the formula is [(7.6-9.2)/9.2] x 100 = -17.4 percent change.

Table 1. Median State Performance, 2004–2007 Original Outcome Measures

Outcome Measures ¹³	Median Performance by Year			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
*Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the year, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=43)	6.5%	6.6%	6.1%	5.6%
*Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the year, what percentage were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member? (N=40)	0.39	0.44	0.42	0.34
Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care during the year, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=50)	87.4	87.3	87.3	86.9
Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=45)	78.9	78.4	76.9	76.2
Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care during the year and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=49)	72.3	72.4	70.7	69.2
*Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care in the year to emancipation, what percentage were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care? (N=52)	28.5	28.3	28.6	27.4
Measure 4.1: Of all children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care during the year, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=52)	70.6	70.8	69.3	67.6
Measure 5.1a: Of all children discharged from care during the year to a finalized adoption, what percentage were discharged in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=51)	3.8	3.5	3.0	3.4
Measure 6.1a: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)	83.1	84.4	84.0	85.2
Measure 6.1b: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)	58.5	59.8	60.5	61.0
Measure 6.1c: Of all children served in foster care during the year who were in foster care for at least 24 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings? (N=52)	32.1	31.8	32.1	31.7
*Measure 7.1: Of all children who entered foster care during the year and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage were placed in a group home or institution? (N=51)	7.2	7.2	5.9	5.9

*For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

¹³ Data for this table include all States for which adequate data are available.

Table 2. Median State Performance, 2004–2007 Composite Measures

Composite Measures ¹⁴	Median Performance by Year			
	2004	2005	2006	2007
Measure C1.1: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in care for 8 days or longer, what percentage were reunified in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=51)	69.8	70.7	69.0	68.2
*Measure C1.2: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification during the year who had been in care for 8 days or longer, what was the median length of stay (in months) from the date of the latest removal from home until the date of discharge to reunification? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=51)	6.5 mos.	6.9 mos.	7.1 mos.	7.7 mos.
Measure C1.3: Of all children who entered foster care for the first time in the 6-month period just prior to the year shown, and who remained in care for 8 days or longer, what percentage were discharged from foster care to reunification in less than 12 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (Includes trial home visit adjustment) (N=52)	37.8	38.7	40.9	41.5
Measure C1.4: Of all children discharged from foster care to reunification in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percentage reentered care in less than 12 months from the date of discharge? (N=51)	15.0	14.9	14.0	12.7
Measure C2.1: Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what percentage were discharged in less than 24 months from the date of the latest removal from home? (N=51) ¹⁵	25.9	29.0	30.3	31.5
*Measure C2.2: Of all children discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption during the year, what was the median length of stay in care (in months) from the date of latest removal from home to the date of discharge to adoption? (N=51)	32.2 mos.	31.6 mos.	31.8 mos.	30.1 mos.
Measure C2.3: Of all children in foster care on the first day of the year who were in care for 17 continuous months or longer, what percentage were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption by the last day of the year? (N=51) ¹⁶	19.8	20.3	20.0	21.0
Measure C2.4: Of all children in foster care on the first day of the year who were in foster care for 17 continuous months or longer, and who were not legally free for adoption prior to that day, what percentage became legally free for adoption during the first 6 months of the year? (N=50) ¹⁷	9.1	9.1	9.5	9.5
Measure C2.5: Of all children who became legally free for adoption in the 12-month period prior to the year shown, what percentage were discharged from foster care to a finalized adoption in less than 12 months from the date of becoming legally free? (N=50)	45.8	46.6	50.4	50.8
Measure C3.1: Of all children in foster care for 24 months or longer on the first day of the year, what percentage were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday and by the end of the year? (N=51)	24.4	26.2	26.4	26.3
Measure C3.2: Of all children who were discharged from foster care during the year, and who were legally free for adoption at the time of discharge, what percentage were discharged to a permanent home prior to their 18th birthday? (N=49) ¹⁸	96.7	95.1	94.6	94.6
*Measure C3.3: Of all children who, during the year shown, either (1) were discharged from foster care prior to age 18 with a discharge reason of emancipation, or (2) reached their 18th birthday while in foster care, what percentage were in foster care for 3 years or longer? (N=49)	47.8	48.3	47.7	45.7

*For these measures, a lower number indicates better performance.

¹⁴ Data for this table include all States for which adequate data are available. Numbers are expressed as percentages except when measured by months, as noted. Individual measures developed for Composite 4: Placement stability are not shown in this table because the measures are nearly identical to the original measures of placement stability incorporated into measure 6.1 (see table I).

¹⁵ Although measure C2.1 is calculated exactly the same way as original measure 5.1b, the results can vary slightly because the source files are different for the composite measures. In the source files for measure C2.1, all children are excluded who were not age 17 for at least 1 day. No such exclusion exists for measure 5.1b. In addition, composites are calculated at the county level and are then aggregated to the State level, which could also slightly influence performance on C2.1 compared to 5.1b. In this instance, there is the added possible impact of using only 49 States for C2.1, while 50 States were used for 5.1b.

¹⁶ The denominator for this measure excludes children who, by the last day of the year, were discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with relatives, or guardianship.

¹⁷ A child is considered to be "legally free" for adoption if there is a date for parental rights termination reported to AFCARS for both mother and father. Also, the denominator for this measure excludes children who, during the first 6 months of the year, were discharged from foster care with a discharge reason of reunification with parents or primary caretakers, living with other relatives, or guardianship.

¹⁸ A child is considered to be "legally free" for adoption if there is a date for the parental rights termination reported to AFCARS for both mother and father.

ABOUT THE CHILD WELFARE OUTCOMES REPORTS

Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007: Report to Congress is a report created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Department) to meet requirements of section 203(a) of the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 (ASFA). ASFA amended section 479A of the Social Security Act to require an annual report on State performance. *Child Welfare Outcomes 1998* was the first report created in the Child Welfare Outcomes series of reports. The present report, *Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007*, is the ninth report since the series' inception.

Child Welfare Outcomes Reports provide information on the performance of States in seven outcome categories. The Department identified these outcomes prior to the first Child Welfare Outcomes Report in close consultation with State and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, State legislators, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes used in this report reflect widely accepted performance objectives for child welfare practice.

In addition to reporting on State performance in these outcome categories, the Child Welfare Outcomes Report also includes data on contextual factors and findings of analyses conducted across States. Data for all measures in this report come from the Department's two national child welfare-related data systems—the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Child Maltreatment Reports

Child Maltreatment reports present national data about child abuse and neglect known to CPS agencies in the United States. The data are collected and analyzed through the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) supported by the Children's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Child Maltreatment reports are released annually and are available at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research

The AFCARS Report

The Adoption and Foster Care Reporting and Analysis System (AFCARS) collects case level information on all children in foster care for whom State child welfare agencies have responsibility for placement, care, or supervision, and on children who are adopted under the auspices of the State's public child welfare agency. National estimates of foster care and adoption population characteristics are provided through annual AFCARS reports, available at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research

Coming Soon - Child Welfare Outcomes Data Center

The Children's Bureau will soon be launching a new Child Welfare Outcomes Data Center. This new website will provide increased access to the Child Welfare Outcomes Report data. Users will have the flexibility to view, search, manipulate, and download data in a variety of user-friendly formats. In addition, Child Welfare Outcomes data will be available to the public more timely than ever before.

Child Welfare Information Gateway

Child Welfare Information Gateway connects child welfare and related professionals to comprehensive information and resources to help protect children and strengthen families. This resource features the latest topics from prevention to permanency, including child abuse and neglect, foster care, and adoption. A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway provides access to print and electronic publications, websites, databases, and online learning tools for improving child welfare practices, including resources that can be shared with families. www.childwelfare.gov

Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007: Report to Congress



NOW AVAILABLE!

View the full Child Welfare Outcomes Report:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cwo04-07/cwo04-07.pdf

Child Welfare Outcomes 2004–2007 includes:

- ❖ Data pages for each State that contain:
 - Contextual data
 - Performance on original outcome measures
 - Performance on the CFSR composite measures
 - A State comment (if provided)
- ❖ A discussion of data issues and key findings of the data analyses across States

Questions about the content of this report should be directed to the Children's Bureau Data Team: CBDataTeam@acf.hhs.gov

**SAFETY
PERMANENCY
WELL-BEING**



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau