

STATISTICS



A STATEWIDE FOSTER/ADOPTION CRISIS

As a result of abuse, neglect and/or abandonment, there are over **8,000** children in the Tennessee foster care system.

350 of them are legally-free for adoption and are waiting for a forever family.

7,650 have the goal to reunited with their birth family and need a loving foster family while they wait.

Every year, **~1,000** youth in TN age out of the system at 18 (or 21 with extension of foster care) without a family.

WHEN A CHILD IS WITHOUT A FAMILY, THE RESULTS CAN BE TRAGIC

Permanence and a sense of belonging are crucial to the development of a child. A loving, safe and supportive family provides both of these things. When a child is without a family, the results can be tragic.

- LESS THAN HALF will have graduated from high school.
- 1 in 4 will be in trouble with the law within just two years of aging out.
- NEARLY 2/3 of the girls will be pregnant by age 21.
- 1 in 4 will experience Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in their lifetime (more than twice the rate of U.S. Veterans of War).
- 1 in 5 will become homeless.
- ALL have an exponentially higher risk of becoming a victim of human trafficking.

SEX-TRAFFICKING STING HIGHLIGHTS VULNERABILITY OF FOSTER CHILDREN

According to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, the information clearinghouse that tracks missing child reports in the United States, 60% of runaways who are victims of sex trafficking had been in the custody of social services or in foster care.

The center assisted the FBI in the weekend raids, part of the agencies' Innocence Lost Initiative that the FBI says has rescued more than 2,700 sexually exploited children since 2003.

"We are finding a very disturbing trend," John Ryan, the center's chief executive, said at a news conference at FBI headquarters. "They leave foster care and they literally fall off the radar. That's something that needs to be addressed."

The circumstances that put minors into foster care are often what make them especially vulnerable to sex trafficking, said Staca Shehan, director of the center's case analysis division.

"These kids are usually without an involved parent," she said in a telephone interview. "Pimps can come into their life and initially take on the role of protector."

Without families to work on their behalf, Shehan added, it is more difficult to rescue foster youths from sex trafficking and keep them out of the cycle. Victims of sex trafficking might be returned to a group home only to begin recruiting their friends into the sex trade, she said.

<http://articles.latimes.com/2013/jul/29/nation/la-na-child-sex-20130730>

THE AVERAGE IQ OF CHILDREN LIVING IN ORPHANAGES IS LOWER

One startling yet representative study in Romania by Harvard professor Charles Nelson found that up to age three, children's IQ decreased by nearly one point for every two months spent in an orphanage. Another meta-analysis reviewing seventy-five studies covering nineteen countries found that the average IQ of children living in orphanages was twenty points lower than those living in families. Dr. Nelson's study found that children placed in homes via foster care fared much better than those in institutions. Best of all were those placed in a permanent family while still young — quickly catching up to their nonorphaned peers. We see this even with the relatively well-funded US foster system. The future awaiting young adults who grow up in the US foster system without being adopted is sheer tragedy. By their mid-twenties, less than half are employed. More than 60% of males have been incarcerated as adults versus 9% of men overall. With women, 68% are on food stamps, compared to 7% overall.

Barna Group; Jedd Medefind (2014-01-07). Becoming Home: Adoption, Foster Care, and Mentoring -- Living Out God's Heart for Orphans (Frames) (p. 61). Zondervan.

LEFT BEHIND: AFRICAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FOSTER CARE

Are African American children getting left behind when it comes to foster care and adoption?

Is the African American church staying behind when it comes to foster care and adoption?

You decide...

[Here are a] list of statistics entitled "Foster Care and the African American Community," compiled by Darrell "D.J." Jordan, Jr. This document contains some dismal stats, a few of which I'll pass on.

- Although African American children represent 14% of the general U.S. children population, they make up 27% of the foster care population.
- Many states have an alarmingly disproportionate ratio of African American children in the foster care system versus the percentage of African American children in the state's population. For example: in Maryland, 65% of foster children are African American while only 32% of all children are African American. In Illinois, 55% of foster children are African American while only 16% of all children are African American. Many other states* have disproportionate numbers as well.

- African American children have lower rates of adoption from the foster care system than those of other races and ethnicities.
- A higher rate of poverty is among several factors contributing to the higher proportion of African American children entering and remaining in foster care.
- Children of color enter foster care at a higher rate, stay longer and leave at a slower rate than white children.
- Children of color are also far less likely to be reunified with their families.

The bottom line? The foster care system has far too many African American children that remain in the system far too long. Too few African American children get adopted out of the system and too few are reunited with their families.

Source <http://adoptionfostercareadvocate.blogspot.com/2013/07/left-behind-african-american-children.html>

THE TURNOVER RATE FOR FOSTER PARENTS

The turnover rate for foster parents in the United States is between 30 and 50 percent each year (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2005).

DeGarmo, Dr. John (2016-04-04). Faith & Foster Care: How We Impact God's Kingdom (pp. 21-22). New Hope Publishers.

28.6 MONTHS

The average amount of time a foster child spends in the foster care system is 28.6 months, with half of all foster children being placed in another home for a year or more (DeGarmo, 2015-Helping Foster Children in School, JKP). As a result, most of these children have not experienced a stable or nurturing environment during their early, formative years.

DeGarmo, Dr. John (2016-04-04). Faith & Foster Care: How We Impact God's Kingdom (p. 26). New Hope Publishers.