Children Living In Alternative Care per 1,000

Alternative care includes foster care (non-relative, kinship, and therapeutic homes), adoptive homes, group homes, residential treatment facilities, hospitals, independent living, and other types of care. After peaking at 567,000 in 1999, the number of children in care has continued to decrease dropping to 513,000 in 2005, with majority of these children (46 percent) in non-relative foster homes. While just over 100,000 children in care wait for adoptive homes, 52,000 children were adopted in 2005, a slight increase from 50,000 in 2003. Over the past several years, much attention has been given to the plight of the 20,000 youth in foster care who “age-out” of the system each year. These youth, who have often been in alternative care for most of their lives, are more likely to become homeless, use illegal drugs and be unemployed. However, with proper supports beginning years before they age-out, a successful transition into adulthood is possible.

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