



## **Foster care: Caring for children in out-of-home placement**

*More than 70 percent of the children in out-of-home placement were in a home setting.*

Children whose parents cannot safely care for them are placed in family foster homes or group residential facilities. Of the almost 14,700 children in out-of-home placements in 2005, about 10,500 received care and nurturing from foster families.

### **Children need foster care for a variety of reasons**

During 2005, 60 percent of the children in out-of-home placements entered care due to abuse or neglect, inadequate housing, termination of parents' rights, or parents' death, illness, disability, abandonment, incarceration, substance abuse, temporary absence or inability to cope; 26 percent due to their own behavior; 12 percent due to multiple reasons; and 2 percent due to disabilities.

### **Placement options available for children**

When children must leave their homes, they may be placed in:

- Emergency shelters, which provide immediate care for children in crisis. This may be a group residential setting or a family foster home.
- Family foster homes, which offer a temporary substitute until children can be safely reunified with their families, placed permanently with relatives or adopted. Foster homes are licensed by counties or by private agencies.
- Group residential settings, which provide structured temporary care. Many offer intensive treatment for children with serious emotional disturbances or chemical dependency.

### **Safety, well-being, permanency are goals**

Children thrive in stable, nurturing, permanent homes. County social service agencies work with foster parents and birth parents to provide for children's safety, well-being and permanency needs. Children need:

- Emergency foster care if they have been removed from their homes by police.
- Foster homes to provide temporary care until they can be safely reunified with their parents or until another permanent home is found. Through Concurrent Permanency Planning, children move out of the child welfare system and back to their homes or into adoptive homes as quickly as

*The Forgotten Children's Fund, established 65 years ago by the American Legion Auxiliary and now administered by the Minnesota Department of Human Services, provides up to \$300 per child per year so foster families can purchase special items and services. Call (651) 431-4690 for more information.*

*For more information, call the Minnesota Department of Human Services at (651) 431-4661 or see the Web site at [www.dhs.state.mn.us](http://www.dhs.state.mn.us) or contact the North American Council on Adoptable Children at (651) 644-3036 or online at [www.nacac.org](http://www.nacac.org).*

*This information is available in other forms to people with disabilities by contacting us at (651) 431-4671. TTY/TDD users can call the Minnesota Relay at 711 or (800) 627-3529. For the Speech-to-Speech Relay, call (877) 627-3848.*

possible. To support permanency for foster children, the state uses the same approval process for foster care and adoption.

- Respite care, which offers a temporary break and support services for parents, including other foster parents.

### **Most in out-of-home care are reunited with families**

For 2005, 71.8 percent of children who left out-of-home care were reunited with their birth parents, primary caregiver or other relatives. Another 6.3 percent moved to a permanent home with another relative. Some children may have entered and exited from out-of-home care more than once.

- Almost half of the children available for adoption were adopted by their foster parents or relatives.
- Fifty-one percent (51.3) of the children in foster care were from the Twin Cities' seven-county area and the remaining 48.7 percent were from the 80 nonmetro counties.
- With the move to community-based services, some children who previously would have been institutionalized by the mental health system are now in family foster care and smaller group homes.

### **Children in out-of-home care not representative of peers**

For 2005:

- Youth ages 13 to 18 were overrepresented in the out-of-home placement system compared to the number of youth in this age group in the population. Fifty-three percent of children in out-of-home care were age 13 and older.
- Children of color were overrepresented in the out-of-home placement system compared to the number in the general population. Fifty-seven percent of children in out-of-home care were Caucasian; 20 percent black; 12 percent American Indian and Alaskan native; 2 percent Asian; and less than 1 percent native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders. Seven percent were of two or more races; and more than 2 percent had heritage unknown or not reported. Eight percent indicated Hispanic ethnicity.

### **Foster parents provide critical care and nurturing**

Foster parents come from all walks of life. They may be single or married, with or without children, renters or homeowners. What they share is a concern for children and a commitment to helping them through tough times. They provide critical care and nurturing to children in crisis.