

Discussion of Foster Care and Adoption Processes

Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children
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As THE independent voice for Kentucky's children, Kentucky Youth Advocates works to ensure policymakers create investments and policies that are good for all children.

Kentucky Youth Advocates believes all children deserve to be safe, healthy, and secure.

kyyouth.org



Work with legislators, the Governor, and other elected officials to change and enact policies to benefit kids and families

Help families through our case advocacy program. We serve as their guide when they don't know where to turn

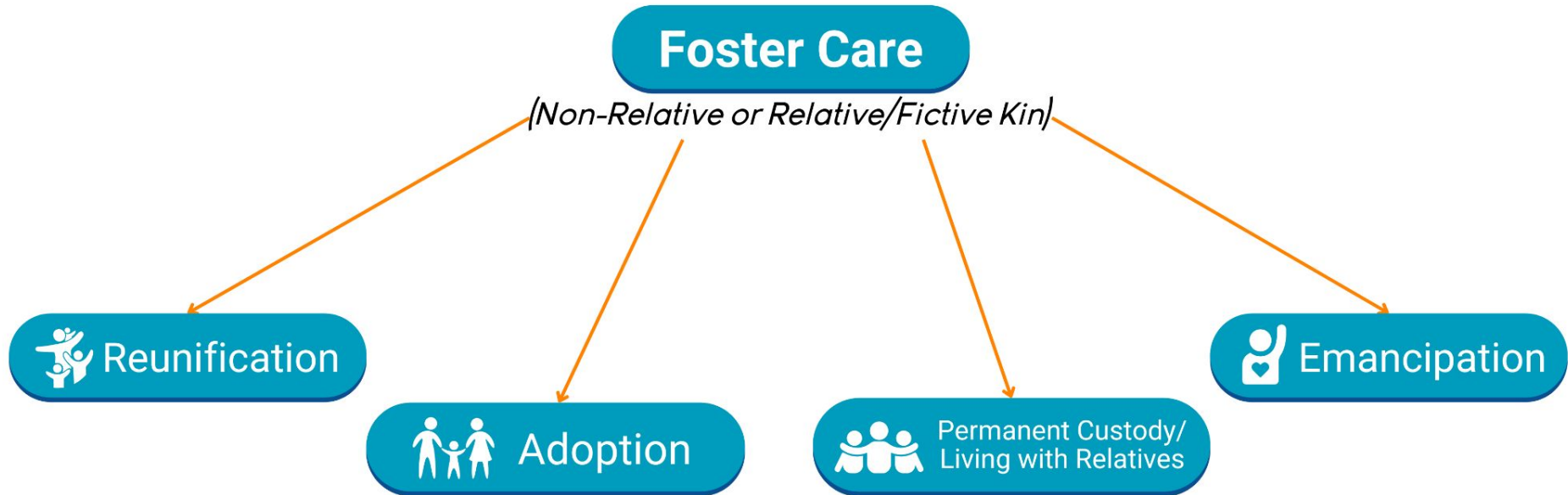
Conduct research and education that informs and recommends solutions to help kids succeed

Mobilize advocates to take action on behalf of kids and families through rallies, advocacy training, partnerships, and action alerts

Present the "state of kids" to communities to help people know how children are faring and how to address problems

Engage youth by training the next generation of leaders to advocate for themselves and their communities

Pathways to Permanency

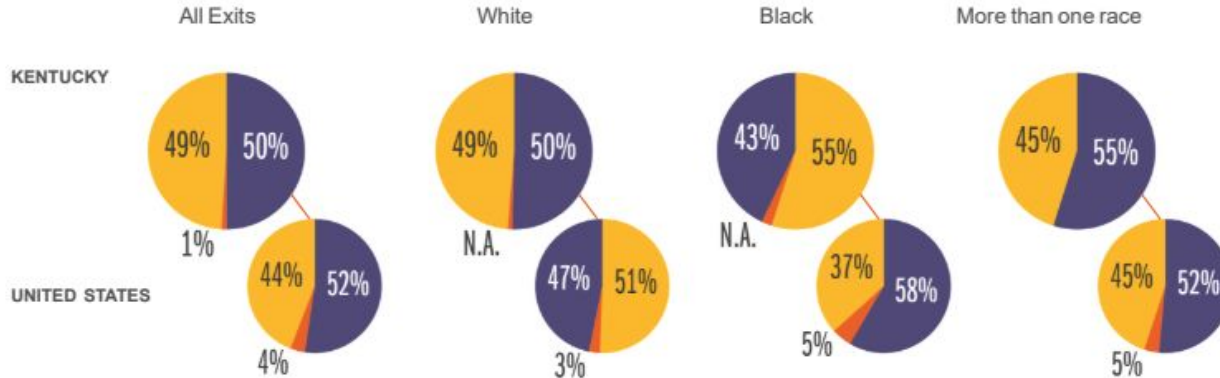


Youth Exiting Care

Exit Reasons

Many young people who leave foster care without permanent, legal connections to family or caregivers are exposed to risks including homelessness and economic instability.

■ PERMANENCE ■ EMANCIPATION/AGING OUT (NON-PERMANENCE) ■ OTHER



The above charts represent young people ages 16+ who exited foster care in 2021. Due to rounding, some charts may not equal 100 percent. Permanence includes adoption, reunification with birth families, living with a relative and guardianship. When fewer than 10 young people are reported in data, this brief uses N.A. Please see Source Notes for additional detail.

Importance of Permanency

Without permanency...

- Increased risk of juvenile/criminal justice involvement and incarceration
- Increased risk of severe behavioral health issues
- Increased risk of homelessness
- Increased likelihood of becoming a young parent

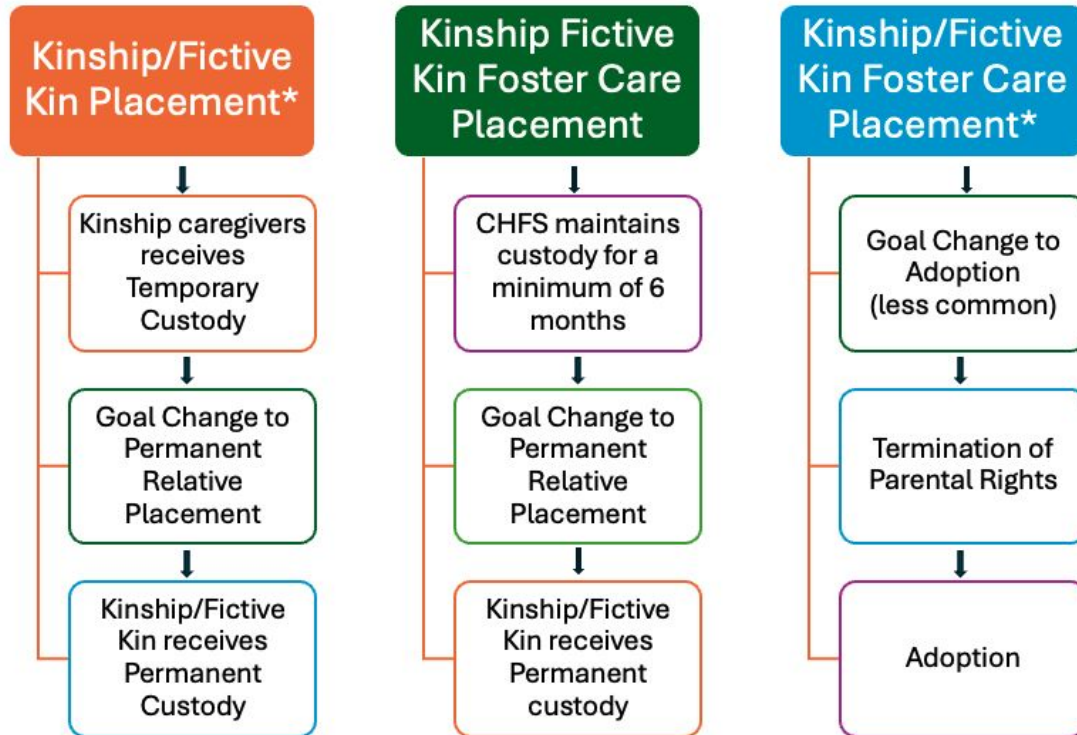
With permanency...

- Reduced risk of homelessness
- Improved physical health
- Increased psychological well-being
- Increased physical well-being
- Increased post-secondary educational attainment
- Increased likelihood of having a bank account

Path to Adoption - Foster Care



Path to Permanency - Kinship Care



*Ineligible for Subsidized Permanent Custody (SPC)

Barriers to Permanency and Transition to Adulthood

- Multiple foster care placements or residential care placement can reduce the likelihood of adoption or another desirable permanency option.
- Behavioral health issues can impact stability and likelihood of achieving permanency.
- Underutilization of extended foster care options by youth.
- At 18, young people are asked to leave their foster home by their foster parents.
- At 18, young people are asked to leave their home by their adoptive parents.

Recommendations

- Innovative policies that allow youth 16 and older to connect to trusted adults
 - Example: Kansas SOUL Family allows legal permanent connection without TPR
- Targeted recruitment of more foster parents for teens, especially those who are Black/African American, have an intellectual disability, or who identify as LGBTQ+
- Utilize relative and fictive kin to step down youth in residential care to a community-based placement
- Reduce the use of congregate care and group placement whenever possible
- Post-Adoption or Post-Permanency supports for independent living
 - Providing supports for the caregivers or adoptive parents
 - Providing young people access to similar supports for independent living

Questions?

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