



# RAISE *the* FUTURE

Connect Youth. Support Families. Create Hope.

## Colorado Data about Foster Care and Adoption (Updated 2025–2026)

- Approximately 3,400 youth are currently living in foster care in Colorado.  
(Source: Colorado Department of Human Services, 2025 Foster Care Month release)
- Around 350 Colorado youth are legally free and waiting to be adopted.  
(Adoption becomes an option when reunification with biological family is not possible and parental rights have been legally terminated.)  
(Source: CO4Kids / CDHS)
- About 213 youth age out of foster care in Colorado each year.
- Economic Impact of Aging Out:  
A 2023 study estimated that each annual cohort of Colorado youth who age out of foster care incurs \$66 million–\$73 million in lifetime societal costs, averaging up to \$343,453 per person. These costs stem from higher rates of homelessness, incarceration, unemployment, and lower educational attainment.  
(Source: Colorado evaluation of youth aging out of foster care, 2023)
- Colorado has approximately 2,034 certified foster and kinship families, which is not enough to meet the placement needs of youth in care.  
(Source: Colorado Department of Human Services, 2025)
- Colorado faces particular challenges in providing foster placements for children with specialized needs.

In 2024 Colorado reported:

- 56 therapeutic foster care homes
- 6 treatment foster care homes

These homes serve youth with complex behavioral and mental health needs.

(Source: CO4Kids)

- More than one-third of Colorado youth who age out of foster care experience homelessness by age 21.
  - National research shows that foster care alumni face significantly higher rates of incarceration, homelessness, and unemployment, which is why child welfare leaders emphasize achieving permanent family connections through reunification, guardianship, or adoption.
  - About 13% of adoptions of foster youth in Colorado disrupt or dissolve, compared with under 10% nationally, often due to behavioral challenges and lack of adequate post-adoption support services.  
(Source: Colorado child welfare analysis of adoption disruptions)
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### **National Data on Foster Care (Updated 2024–2025)**

- Approximately 329,000 children are currently in the U.S. foster care system.  
(Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, AFCARS FY2024)
- More than 527,000 children spent time in foster care during FY2023, including both entries and exits during the year.  
(Source: USAFacts analysis of federal child welfare data)
- Approximately 171,000 children entered foster care in FY2024, while 176,730 exited care.  
(Source: AFCARS FY2024)
- Of the children who exited foster care in FY2024:
  - 45% reunified with their parents
  - 27% were adopted
  - 11% exited to guardianship  
(Source: AFCARS FY2024)
- 46,935 children were adopted from foster care in FY2024.  
(Source: AFCARS)
- More than 15,000 youth age out of foster care each year without a permanent family connection.  
(Source: AFCARS)
- Approximately 39% of children in foster care live with relatives or kinship caregivers.  
(Source: AFCARS)
- Research has also found that a large share of youth experiencing sex trafficking or juvenile detention have previously been involved with the child welfare system, underscoring the

importance of stability and permanency for vulnerable youth.

(Source: U.S. Children's Bureau report to Congress)

- Forming secure attachments with safe, caring adults is one of the strongest protective factors for improving long-term health and wellbeing outcomes for youth.

(Source: Child Welfare Information Gateway)

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### **Raise the Future Impact**

- A Colorado Department of Human Services analysis found that 70% of youth receiving Raise the Future Youth Advocate services were adopted, compared with 44% of youth receiving traditional services alone.

- Raise the Future has helped almost 11,000 youth find permanent families since its founding in 1983.

- Last year, over 300 youth exited foster care into the home of a loving and stable adult with support from Raise the Future.

- Raise the Future provided trauma-informed training to nearly 4,000 families and professionals last year, equipping them with the tools needed to support youth healing and family stability.

- 94% of families in Raise the Future's trauma-healing family support program reported meaningful, positive changes in youth wellbeing, family functioning, and mental or behavioral health as a result of engaging with those services.

- 100% of adoptive families served through Raise the Future's trauma-healing family services in the past year maintained permanency in their homes.