

## Foster care in Philadelphia: Key facts

Data compiled by Paul Socolar

### The overall picture

- More than **8,000 children** in Philadelphia were in foster care at some point during 2016.
- That number is up by more than one-third since 2012.
- That means **nearly 2 percent** of the city's youth (age 0-20) were in foster care during the year, more than twice the statewide rate.
- Many children leave foster care during the course of each year. A snapshot as of September 30, 2016 shows **5,436 children** in foster care, the most recent data available.
- During 2016, 1,982 children entered foster care for the first time; there were an additional 873 re-entries during the year. The latter number includes duplicates – multiple foster care episodes for the same child.

### Demographics

- A third of those in foster care are **5 or under**. Teens and young adults (13-20) represent 38 percent.
- A majority of the nearly 2,000 new entries to foster care in 2016 were school-age children; 57 percent were between ages 6 and 17.
- The foster care population in 2016 was **68 percent black**, **15 percent Latino**, and **12 percent white**.
- Foster youth are nearly evenly divided between male and female.

### Exits, re-entries, length of stay

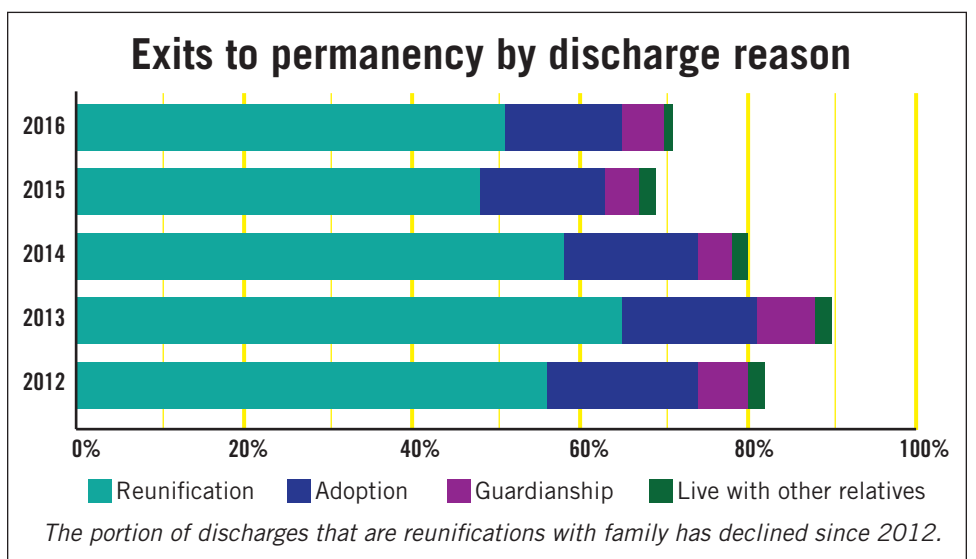
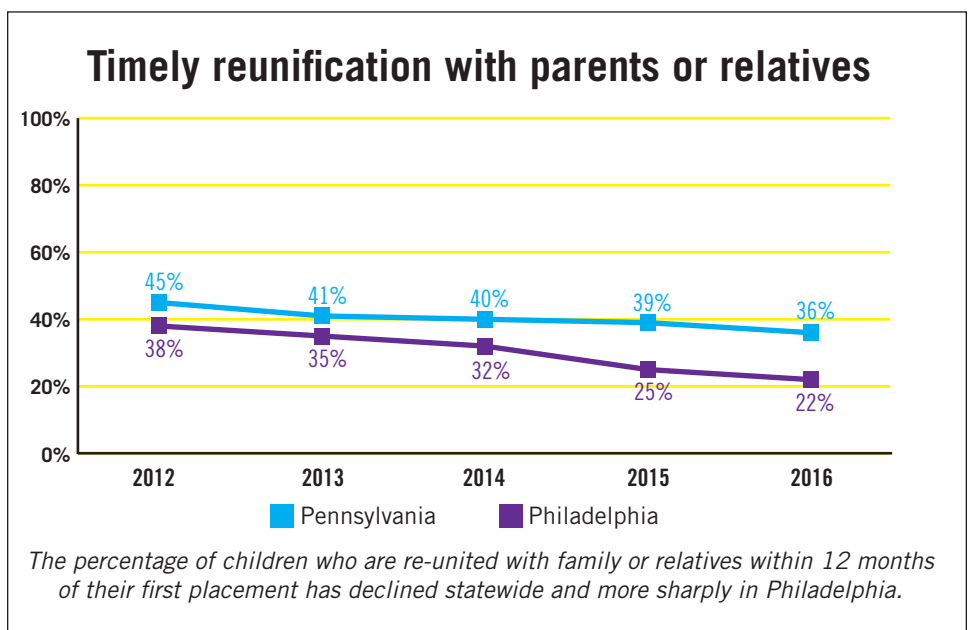
- In 2016, there were 3,315 exits of children from foster care; this number includes multiple exits for children who had multiple episodes of foster care.
- Just over half of those exits were reunifying with their family; 14 percent were adopted. Nearly a quarter were transferring to another agency.
- For exiting youth, the average length of their latest foster care episode was just over **14 months** in 2016.
- For youth still in care at the end of 2016, the average length of stay was **15.9 months**, nearly 3 months longer than it was in 2012.

### Reunification, re-entry

- The goal of timely reunification with family (in less than 12 months) is much less commonly achieved in Philly than statewide and has declined to 22 percent for first-time placements.
- Just over half of children had failed reunifications in 2016, meaning that they re-entered foster care less than 12 months after reunification with parents or relatives. That is more than twice the statewide failure rate.
- Older children, age 12-17, account for **60 percent** of the re-entry cases.

Note: Years correspond to federal fiscal year; "2016" data are for Oct. 1, 2015 to Sep. 30, 2016.

Source for all data: State of Child Welfare 2017, Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children ([bit.ly/philly-child-welfare-2017](http://bit.ly/philly-child-welfare-2017))



More charts about foster care on p. 8.