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Statewide Facts: Children in Foster Care

In Utah, there are some 2,500 children in foster care at any given time and 1,200 licensed foster/adoptive families.

Children in foster care often have special needs due to neglect, abuse or separation. Substance abuse is a contributing factor in two out of three foster care cases.

In Utah, most children are in foster care for about 12 months; some children may stay in foster care for much longer. The length of time a child is in foster care varies depending on their family's individual circumstances.

Two-thirds of children who enter foster care return to live with their birth parents or another relative. Foster families have the opportunity to mentor and support parents who are working to have their children returned to them.

Many children are adopted thru foster care. Last year (FY19), 648 children were adopted from foster care in Utah – most of them by their foster parents.

Children in foster care are between the ages of 0-19. The greatest need is for families who are able and willing to care for children over age 8.

Eight out of ten children in foster care have brothers and sisters. Families are urgently needed for sibling groups of three or more.

Children in foster care come from all racial and cultural backgrounds. There is a need for families of all races and cultures to come forward. Children do better when placed with families who can help them maintain their cultural and racial identities.

Latino and Hispanic children are over-represented in the foster care system in Utah:

- In Utah, they make up more than one in every five children in foster care (22%).
- Culturally-sensitive placements can help to ease the trauma experienced by children who are removed from their homes and placed in foster care.
- It helps when families who are fluent in both Spanish *and* English care for Latino/Hispanic children—but it is not required. All foster families must be legal US residents.

In Utah, foster parents may be married or single. They may own or rent their homes. It takes 24 hours of in-class training, additional online classes, and the ability to pass a criminal background check to become a foster parent. Utah Foster Care and Utah's Division of Child & Family Services provide ongoing training to foster and adoptive parents throughout the state.

Utah Foster Care is a private, non-profit organization contracted by the Division of Child & Family Services (DCFS) to find, educate, and support foster and adoptive families to care for the children in Utah's foster care system.