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state fact sheet

# ARKANSAS

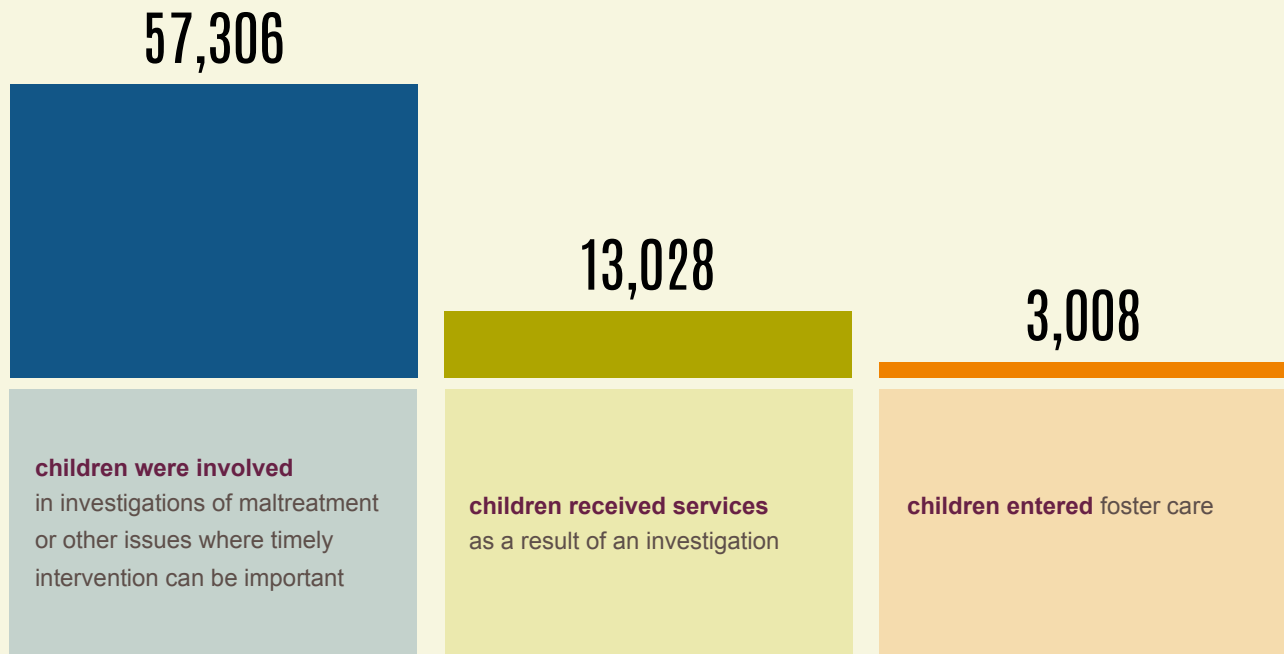
Casey Family Programs works in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and with tribal nations across North America to safely reduce the need for foster care and influence long-lasting improvements to the well-being of children, families and the communities where they live. From 2008 through 2020, Casey Family Programs has invested **\$1.6 million** in Arkansas to support the work of the child welfare system, courts, policymakers and organizations that support children and families.

Approximately 3.5 million children across the country were involved in an investigation or alternative response for maltreatment in 2019. About 424,000 youth under age 18 currently live in foster care. To transform the child welfare system as we know it into a true child and family well-being system, we should make more effective and equitable investments at the federal, state and local level to support programs that keep children safe from harm, reduce the need for foster care and produce better outcomes for children and their families.



We talk about a “foster care system,” but the goal is to create a child and family well-being system that prevents abuse and neglect and helps every child grow up safely in his or her own family whenever possible. Rather than waiting for maltreatment to occur, we can improve the safety of children who have come to the attention of child protective services by helping their families with evidence-based and promising practices.

Across **Arkansas** in 2019, approximately:



Most states currently are limited to using the bulk of the \$9.8 billion in dedicated federal child welfare funding only for services related to foster care. The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 and the Family First Transition Act of 2019 provide states with the historic opportunity to invest federal funding to support preventive services, including substance abuse, mental health and parental skill training, so more children can remain safely at home. States and tribes now have access to new federal prevention resources to help keep children safe from harm in the first place by helping strengthen their families.

How federal child welfare funding is currently aligned in **Arkansas\***:



\*Figures are for Fiscal Year 2020 and do not reflect state spending on prevention using funds from Family First.

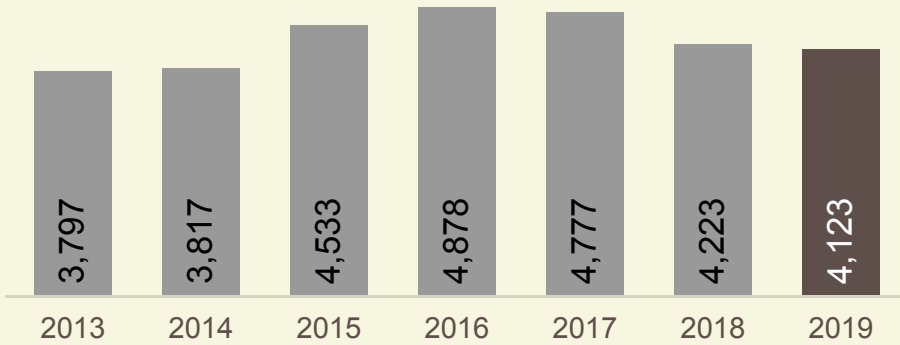
**\$6,017,140**  
Approximate amount of federal money spent on prevention and permanency

Safety and effective response go hand in hand. Most children enter foster care due to neglect and other reasons — not because of physical or sexual abuse. In Arkansas, providing targeted and effective interventions as soon as possible, including by accessing new federal resources provided under the Family First Prevention Services Act and the Family First Transition Act, can safely allow children to remain with their families and thrive.

Reasons children in Arkansas enter foster care:



Children under age 18 living in foster care in Arkansas:  
(as of September 30 of each year)



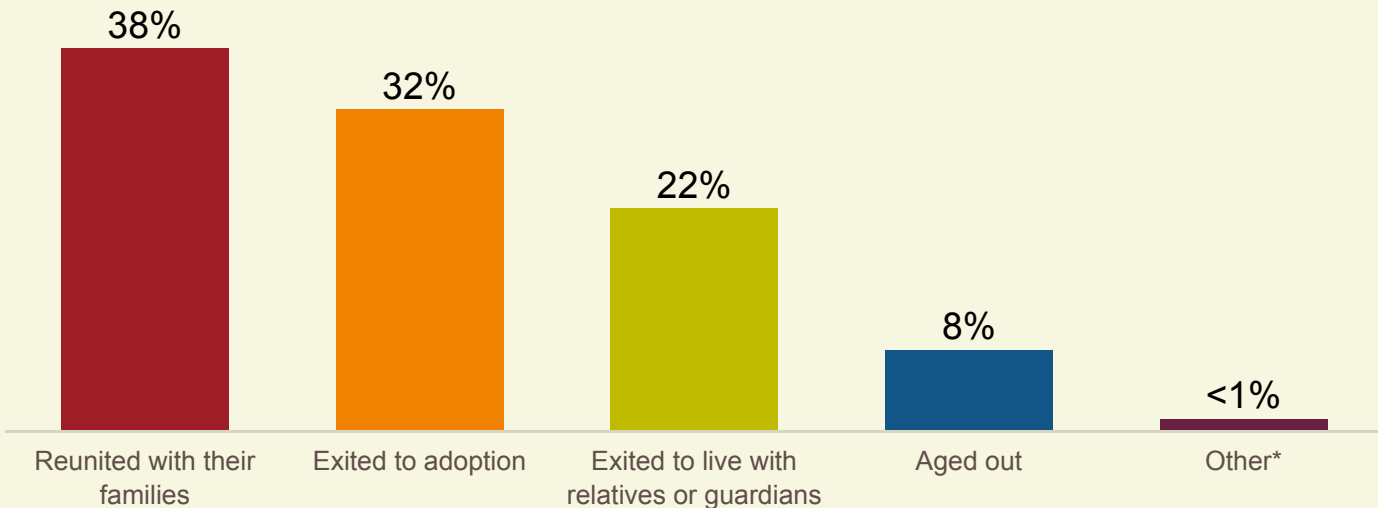
\*\*Other" includes parental substance abuse, child substance abuse, child disability, child behavior problems, parent death, parent incarceration, caretaker inability to cope, relinquishment or inadequate housing.

95% of children in Arkansas do not experience a repeat occurrence of maltreatment within six months

Keeping children safe

What happens to children who end up in foster care? Most are safely reunited with their own family or extended family. A significant number are adopted. Under the Family First Prevention Services Act, communities can more easily invest in helping more children to grow up in safe, stable families by providing appropriate and timely services prior to the need for removal, or after they return home or have been adopted.

Among children in Arkansas who exited foster care in 2019:



\*\*Other" includes transferred to another agency, ran away or died.  
Numbers may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Every child deserves a lifelong family

## Progress in Arkansas and new opportunity

Since our founding in 1966, Casey Family Programs has invested more than \$2.9 billion to help communities across America keep children safe, make families strong and build Communities of Hope.

We partner with child welfare agencies, policymakers, families and community organizations in all 50 states, Washington D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and with tribal nations and the federal government on child welfare policies and practices to influence long-lasting improvements to the well-being of children, families and the communities where they live. We believe every child deserves a safe, strong and permanent family.

Casey Family Programs operates 16 offices across the United States to provide and improve – and ultimately prevent the need for – foster care.

We believe this work is making a meaningful improvement to the lives of children and families in Arkansas. It is critical that Congress and the federal government continue to enable states like Arkansas to make effective investments that address the needs of children and their families, including providing an array of family-strengthening interventions to prevent child abuse and neglect from happening in the first place.

Casey Family Programs is committed to building a 21st century child and family well-being system that ensures all children are safe and thriving in strong families. The Family First Prevention Services Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-123) and the Family First Transition Act (P.L. 116-94) are critical tools that provide states and tribes the ability to target federal resources into an array of prevention and early intervention services to keep children safe, strengthen families and reduce the need for foster care whenever it is safe to do so.

Updated April 2021

This report is based on *Child Maltreatment 2019* and 2019 data made available by the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN), including the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

Check with state officials for the most up-to-date data.

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