Child Welfare Outcomes Measures

The [Child Welfare Outcomes Measures](#) were created by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in consultation with various child welfare experts and state legislators for the purpose of guiding the measurement and reporting of the welfare of children in the foster care and child welfare systems, as required by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, an amendment to Title IV of the Social Security Act. Each of the 7 outcomes (12 measures) is linked to one of two national data sources: The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) or the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).

The measures focus on experiences of abuse and neglect of children before entering child welfare and/or foster care systems, length of time spent in these systems, and other topics associated with foster care and adoption outcomes including reunification, reentry and permanency. The [Child Welfare Information Gateway](#) provides additional information on child welfare topics and state resources. The [2016 Report to Congress](#) is the most recent report available, and additional data visualizations and reports are available on the Child Welfare Outcomes Report Data Site.

> ### Child Welfare Agencies
>
> **States and territories run their own child protection and child welfare programs and receive funding and other support from the Children's Bureau, an office of the Administration for Children & Families (ACF). Child welfare agencies protect children from abuse and neglect and promote the safety and permanency of children in foster care and adoptive families. They also provide training and professional development to the child welfare workforce.**

Child Welfare Outcomes Measures	
Developer(s)	The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), in consultation with child welfare administrators, researchers, other experts, child advocacy organizations, and state legislators.
Funder(s)	The Children's Bureau, An Office of the Administration for Children & Families (ACF).
Purpose(s)	To assess state performance in operating child protection and child welfare programs.
Target Populations	Children who have interacted with child welfare, foster care, and/or adoption systems.
Data Sources	The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) and the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS).
Technical Measure Descriptions	Detailed descriptions of the measures can be found in the 2016 Child Welfare Outcomes [Report to Congress](#), Appendix B.
Number of Measures	The current report includes 12 original measures (within 7 outcome categories)
Topics of Measurement	Child demographic characteristics, experiences of maltreatment, adoption outcomes, foster care length-of-stay, stability, reunification, and reentry.
Reporting Requirements	HHS is required to issue an annual report to congress that assesses state performance on these outcome measures (see [Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997](#)).
Recommended or Required Stratification	Key report findings are stratified by age, race/ethnicity, and disability status. However, both NCANDS and AFCARS collect data on other characteristics and additional stratifications may be possible.
Link to Additional Info	[Reports to congress](#) | [Child Welfare Outcomes Data Site](#) | A national [framework](#) for child welfare practice.

Browse and Search the Measures