

Child Safety and Permanency: Child Foster Care

May 2, 2025

May is National Foster Care Month

May is National Foster Care Month! The Department of Children, Youth, and Families expresses its gratitude to the relatives and community members who step up to support children and their families in a time of need, and to the staff who help support them. There are approximately 3,175 licensed child foster homes and another 665 relatives currently providing care to children through emergency relative placement while they work to become licensed.

The department has released an updated [fact sheet](#). This year, two trends emerged:

- The number of children in placement continues to decrease: According to preliminary data, over the past five years, the average number of children in care on any given day has gone down 31%, from 8,499 in 2020 to approximately 5,865 in 2024.
- Relative placement and permanency: County and Tribal agency staff continue to work hard to place children with relatives. In 2024, 66% of children in family foster care were placed with relatives, a substantial increase from approximately 36% in 2013. For children who left out-of-home placement during 2024, most children reunited with parents (58%) or achieved permanency with relatives (24%), compared to eight percent of children achieving permanency with unrelated individuals.

Recruitment and retention

New web page

A new PartnerLink web page focuses on the [recruitment and retention of foster parents](#), offering state and national resources, recruitment and permanency-focused contracts, practice guides, videos, articles and a social media toolkit.

Minnesota Intensive Therapeutic Homes (MITH)

Child Safety and Permanency administration staff have been collaborating with [Minnesota Intensive Therapeutic Homes \(MITH\)](#) program staff to increase placement options for children and youth with complex needs.

The MITH program offers a model approach that provides nursing, behavior management and supervisory oversight and support. Foster families involved with the MITH program can be relative or non-relative homes and become State of Minnesota employees with full-time wages and medical, dental and vision benefits. MITH foster parents also receive specialized training and 24/7 crisis coverage.

MITH homes are licensed by a county, Tribe or private child-placing agency. The MITH program helps match an eligible youth with a severe emotional disturbance with the home. MITH foster parents may also have other children, including siblings of the identified youth, placed in their home through their licensing agency. When a child in foster care is eligible for the MITH program, relatives may also apply to be a child-specific MITH home.

The MITH program seeks foster parents who are person-centered, caring, flexible and team-oriented. Please contact Tracee Bosch at Tracee.M.Bosch@state.mn.us if you are interested in more information or want to recommend a foster family.

New and updated publications

eDocs

[Engaging and Assessing Noncustodial or Unadjudicated Parents: A Child Welfare Practice Guide \(DHS-8689B\)](#)

[Practice Guide for Maintaining Family Connections for Children in Foster Care \(DHS-5552\)](#)

Relative search letter translations

To support the engagement of relatives, the [Child foster care notice to relatives \(DHS-3799-ENG\)](#) is now available in [Spanish](#), [Somali](#), [Hmong](#) and [Karen](#). The [foster parent agreement](#) has also been translated to help relatives understand roles and responsibilities of foster parents and placement agencies.

Resource highlight

Quality Parenting Initiative

Quality Parenting Initiative – Minnesota (QPI-MN) is an advocacy strategy focused on strengthening the foster care system and improving the experience for youth, parents and foster families. It is a voluntary network of counties, community-based agencies and individuals active in 10 states and over 80 jurisdictions. Learn more about QPI around the nation at [QPI website](#).

Our experience, your responsibility

QPI-MN youth leaders recently created new printed resources for child welfare professionals and foster care providers. These handouts underscore the importance of trauma-informed care and maintaining healthy boundaries while advocating for a youth's rights and empowerment. Youth leaders' lived experience helps ensure decisions reflect an understanding of the system's impact. QPI-MN offers valuable insights from lived-experience youth leaders to help professionals implement these practices effectively. QPI-MN encourages child welfare professionals to reach for presentations, resources and community engagement opportunities. Check out the [Youth Drive Advocacy page](#) for printable materials. The Quality Parenting Initiative is built on the belief that excellent parenting with strong, positive relationships is the best intervention to help children heal as they become adults.

Engaging with foster families

Foster families' voices are vital in advocating for better resources, training and support services to improve the foster care experience. QPI-MN offers foster family participation in Quality Parenting Outreach (QPO) surveys to help identify gaps in current practices, highlight successful initiatives and inform policy decisions. [Connect your families today](#) to participate in the survey!

Upcoming training and practice-sharing opportunities

The new [Training and Webinars PartnerLink web page](#) provides continuous learning opportunities related to child foster care for Tribal and county staff.

Foster Adopt Minnesota

In honor of National Foster Care Month, Foster Adopt Minnesota has a variety of [webinars](#) available at no cost until June 1, 2025, including:

- Any webinar from the Foster Care and Concurrent Planning, Mental Health – Youth and Mental Health – Caregiver categories. Enter coupon code FCMHAM at checkout.

- [The Foster Provider's Role in Supporting Reunification](#). Enter coupon code PFUH9A95 at checkout.
- [Grief and Loss in Foster Care, It's Complicated!](#) Enter coupon code C9Y4AG33 at checkout.

Questions and consultation requests

Information and resources regarding child foster care are available on [PartnerLink](#).

For foster care policy, including case and permanency planning, relative search and placement, and placement decisions, contact dcyf.csp.fostercare@state.mn.us.

For permanency policy questions, case consultations, the Northstar eligibility process, training requests, training suggestions and requests for technical assistance, contact northstar.benefits@state.mn.us.

Minnesota Department of Children, Youth, and Families

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