



How Long Do States Let Children in Foster Care Wait for Permanent Families?

TIMELY PERMANENCY REPORT CARDS

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A M E R I C A N E N T E R P R I S E I N S T I T U T E



Executive Summary

Children need safe and permanent families for healthy development. Therefore, states are tasked with moving children in foster care to permanency through reunification with the family of origin, adoption, guardianship, or other custodial arrangements with relatives. Federal laws that guide states emphasize timely permanency, but states exercise substantial discretion in implementation.

This report summarizes a new analysis of states' performance on four permanency measures—overall, by the child's age at entry, and by race or ethnicity. Performance across measures is summarized by an overall ranking, from 1 to 51. Complete project results are available at www.aei.org/foster-care-report-card. The analysis demonstrates that children's chances of permanency, especially through adoption, depend largely on where they live.

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Each year, over half a million US children experience foster care.¹ Foster care is a temporary arrangement that is used when children cannot remain safely in their parents' care due to abuse, neglect, parental incapacity, abandonment, or other threatening circumstances. Once children are in foster care, states are responsible for permanency. This means that states first attempt to help the child's parents address the factors leading to loss of custody so that the child can safely go home. If those efforts are unsuccessful, the state finds a safe and appropriate permanent home for the child through adoption or guardianship.

Without permanency, children have no legally or socially recognized family and can be uprooted at any time, with little warning. Children are deprived of the certainty of knowing where and to whom they belong, and this uncertainty inhibits the development of healthy relationships and discourages planning for the future.² Minimizing the duration of uncertainty by providing timely permanency is among the most important functions of the child welfare system.

Unlike in much of Europe and Asia,³ the formal policies of the US reject the idea that staying in foster care until adulthood—regardless of whether it is family-based or institutional care and regardless of children's age, race or ethnicity, or disability status—

is a solution for children who cannot be raised safely by their families of origin. Thus, permanency has been a federal goal and expectation of foster care systems since at least 1980.

However, it soon became apparent that agencies would routinely spend numerous years in pursuit of reunification when parents were unengaged and making no progress and that those years of uncertainty take a massive psychological toll on children. In 1997, a bipartisan coalition passed the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA),⁴ which maintained a strong preference for reunification but sought to make sure that states were not delaying consideration of adoption for children when reunification was clearly inappropriate or unlikely to be successful. ASFA caps the amount of time agencies and parents have to achieve reunification by instructing states to file for termination of parental rights (TPR) after a child has spent 15 of the prior 22 months in foster care. It allows states to bypass reunification efforts when "aggravated circumstances" apply. ASFA requires permanency plans to be reviewed biannually in court.

In the 25 years since ASFA was enacted, some states have committed to moving children to permanency as quickly as is safe and feasible, while others continue to let children languish in foster care for

years on end.⁵ ASFA enforcement is largely toothless, as the federal government is loath to impose financial penalties (withholding of funds) that may affect the care of vulnerable children. Thus, ASFA compliance depends largely on the state government, where the legislature can craft more detailed policies for implementation and the executive branch can determine the leadership for child welfare.

Of note, agencies' ASFA compliance alone is not sufficient to achieve timely permanency. Agencies can only petition for TPR, adoption, or guardianship. Execution of ASFA's goals requires that family courts are functional (able to schedule and hold hearings on time) and committed to permanency for children.

What Are the Timely Permanency Report Cards?

The Timely Permanency Report Cards (TPRCs) use data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System to compare states on a range of timely permanency outcomes, overall and by age group and race or ethnicity. The outcome measures used are, in some cases, similar to or consistent with those used in previous federal evaluations, but all analysis was conducted from the source data by the author. The analysis highlights that the seemingly intractable problems of foster care in the US are not entrenched in all states, suggesting that states may improve on their performance by changing their policies and practices to align with high-performing states.

Who Is Included? This report is based on a primary analysis of over 782,000 children entering foster care at age 0–14. Although permanency is important for older youth as well, the implications are less clear given that reunification or guardianship or living with relatives (adoption is exceedingly rare for older youth) may deprive older youth of additional resources that are conditional on aging out. In addition, older youth are more likely to have entered foster care for non-maltreatment reasons, such as

delinquency or severe mental health challenges, but the use of foster care for non-maltreatment-related reasons varies extensively across states and inhibits the utility of cross-state comparisons.

All 50 states and the District of Columbia (hereafter treated as a state equivalent) are included.

What Is the Period of the Study? Foster care entries between October 2014 and March 2018 were followed until the child exited care or spent three full years in continuous state custody. The most recent data available at the time of the analysis were from March 2021.

What Was Measured? The TPRCs focus on four outcomes.

Outcome 1: Timely Exits to Permanency. Outcome 1 is the percentage of children exiting to permanency (reunification, adoption, guardianship, or living with relatives) within 18 months and within three years of entry to foster care.

Outcome 2: Timely Permanency for Children Who Have Not Been Reunified. Outcome 2 is the percentage, among non-reunified children, of (1) children exiting to adoption or (2) children who were not adopted or placed in guardianship or living with relatives (negatively scored) within 18 months and within three years of entry to foster care.

Outcome 3: Application of ASFA Principles. Outcome 3 includes two indicators: Outcome 3a is the percentage, among reunified children, of reunifications occurring after 18 months in continuous foster care (negatively scored). Outcome 3b is the percentage of children who remain in care and are not legally free for adoption after 18 months and after three years (negatively scored).

Outcome 4: Failed Reunifications. Outcome 4 is the percentage, among children exiting to reunification within 18 months, of those reentering foster care in the subsequent 12 months (negatively scored).

How Were the Rankings Calculated? Specific outcome rankings are produced from averaging the standardized values (measuring deviation from the mean across states) across all age and racial and ethnic subgroups, in addition to performance in the overall cohort. This means that a state that does a great job on permanency for infants will not necessarily be ranked well if the state lets older children stay in care for long periods.

The overall ranking is an average of state performance on Outcomes 1–4 for children who entered care before age 15. The rankings are coded such that one is the highest ranked (best performing) and 51 is the lowest ranked (worst performing).

Where Can I See the Full Set of Outcome Rankings and Estimates by State and Subgroup?

All the estimates and rankings are available at www.aei.org/foster-care-report-card. Users can sort by outcome measure, state, and other attributes.

Where Can I Find More Information About the Data Coding and Analysis? Raw data used to generate this report can be requested from the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect. Stata 17 code used to generate the estimates and rankings is available for download from the TPRC website.⁶

How Should the TPRCs Be Used? The TPRCs are based on an analysis of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) data. Their purpose is to *describe*—not *explain*—state differences in timely permanency outcomes.

States perform differently on these metrics for various reasons, and some argue that differences in system features should be controlled for statistically. However, to do so would mean modeling a false version of reality in which states' policies and practices are imposed on them, when in reality they reflect or result from *choices* that states make among a range of options.

For example, a state that seeks to avoid using foster care in all but the most extreme circumstances will have a smaller but more traumatized and high-risk population in foster care than will a state that removes children before such harms have accumulated. These states would face different challenges to timely permanency; the former will serve higher-acuity children who are more difficult to place, and the latter state will serve a larger number of children and potentially have fewer resources per child. Similarly, states that use more kinship care can waive the ASFA timelines for children, but they do not have to.

States may decide that, on balance, their current policy choices are still the right choices for the children they serve, even if they perform worse on timely permanency as a result. Thus, the TPRCs are *not* intended to create or imply a benchmark to which states should be held accountable in consent decrees or other mandated reform processes. Rather, the TPRCs are intended for use in the following ways:

- For state agencies and legislatures to identify potential areas for improvement and potentially consult with states that perform well in those particular areas (e.g., permanency for adolescents);
- To provide context about current system outcomes when reporting on state-specific events, such as proposed policy changes or high-profile case studies;
- To illustrate how federal policies, such as ASFA, do not result in conformity in practice; and
- To inspire further research on the aspects of state policy and practice that influence timely permanency.

How Do the TPRCs Differ from the Federal Child and Family Services Reviews? The federal Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) provide state-specific assessments based on an in-depth

review of a small subsample of cases and, relevant to this report, a set of statewide data indicators (CFSR-SDIs). CFSR-SDIs include permanency metrics from AFCARS and—as of 2014—rely on state entry cohorts.⁷ The TPRCs use some similar metrics as CFSR-SDIs,⁸ but the CFSR-SDIs are ill-suited for a comparative assessment of states for several reasons.

- *The CFSR-SDIs are not easily accessible for cross-state comparison.* Not all states have SDI reports, and they are not updated regularly. SDIs are included in separate state-by-state documents, each spanning 100–200 pages, that do not easily permit comparisons across states.⁹
- *CFSR-SDIs do not assess how states perform when reunification efforts have not enabled safe reunification.* This makes it difficult to understand exactly how states perform on the goals relevant to ASFA. A state may have a high reunification rate and thus rate well on overall permanency even if it consistently fails to provide timely permanency for children who cannot be reunified.
- *The denominators are distortive.* The SDI reentry to care measure is the rate of reentry among children who exited to reunification, guardianship, or living with relatives. Although the outcomes of guardianship and living with relatives should be a matter of inquiry, it is distortive to include guardians in the same group as biological parents who regained custody. Guardians are supposed to be screened and selected for custody based on their capacity to provide a safe and stable environment and should have lower rates of reentry than biological parents who previously lost custody for not providing such an environment. In short, a state that relies mostly on reunification and adoption will likely have a higher reentry rate on the CFSR-SDI metric than a state that mostly relies on reunification and guardianship because the latter state’s rate of post-reunification reentry is diluted by the (typically lower) rate of post-guardianship reentry.

- *Disaggregated data are not made available for all states.* The SDI does not disaggregate rates for all states by age or race, despite the importance of these characteristics.¹⁰ (It uses a “risk adjustment” metric that includes age.)

The TPRCs can thus be thought of as a means of making the concepts of the CFSR-SDI more transparent and accessible for general audiences and highlighting the substantial range in state performance.

Overall Rankings

The overall ranking is based on a standardized average of performance on each of the four outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Timely exits to permanency,
- Outcome 2: Timely permanency for children who have not been reunified,
- Outcome 3: Application of ASFA principles, and
- Outcome 4: Failed reunifications.

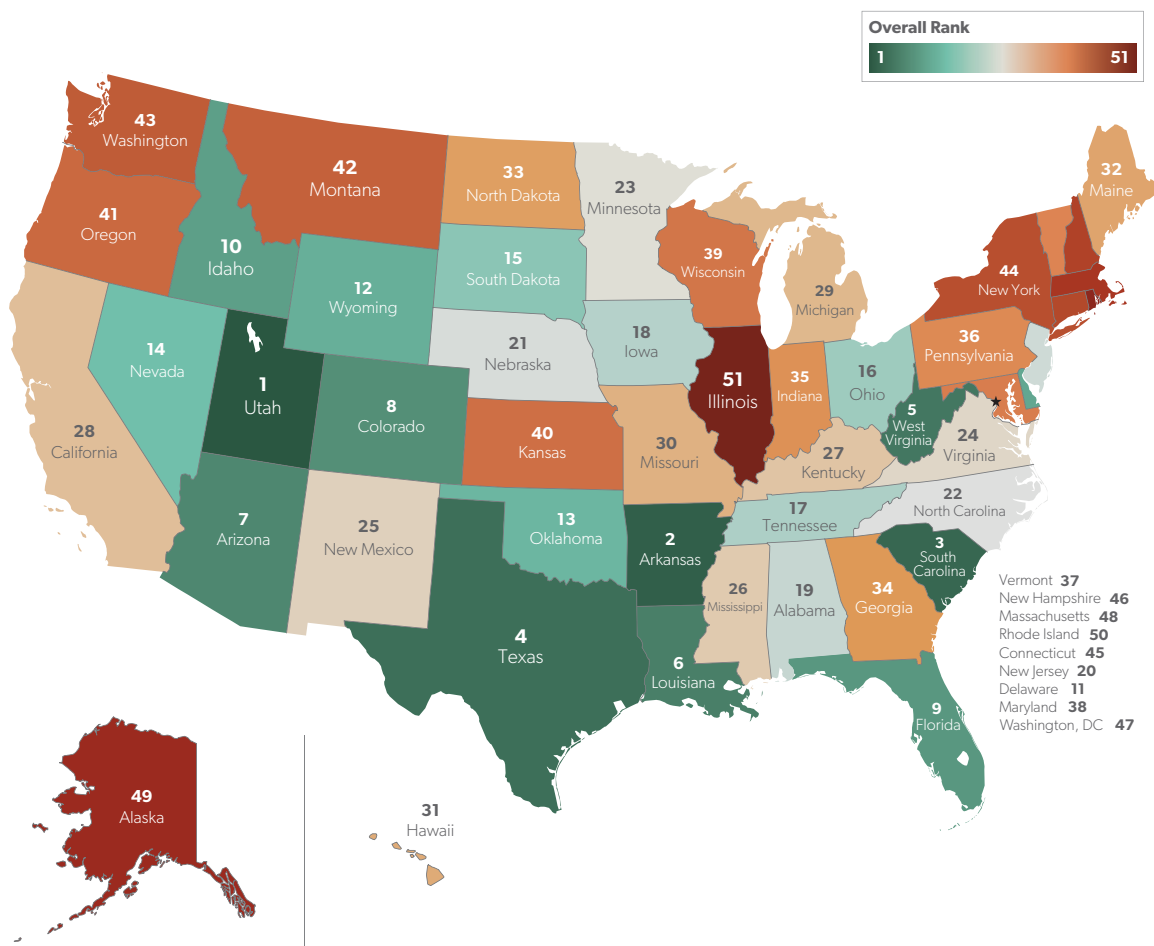
Recall that these outcomes are an average of overall performance and performance within age and racial and ethnic subgroups. Thus, a state that performs well in one subgroup (e.g., infants or white children) may not rank highly overall, even if the majority of the children it serves falls into that subgroup.

Utah is ranked first overall, reflecting number-one rankings on Outcomes 1, 2, and 3 and an above-average ranking (18) on Outcome 4. Arkansas, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia complete the top five. (See Figure 1.)

Importantly, while one might quibble with any individual measure that is included in the overall ranking, the top-ranked states typically perform in the top half of states on all measures. Their overall ranking is not distorted by any single item. Yet, Arkansas was the only state to rank in the top 10 states on all four outcome measures.

Illinois, Rhode Island, Alaska, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia complete the bottom five. Similar to the top-ranked states, the bottom-ranked

Figure 1. State Heat Map for TPRC Rankings



Source: Author.

states perform consistently in the bottom half on all four outcomes, except Illinois, which ranks last on Outcomes 1, 2 and 3 but 10th on Outcome 4. However, Illinois’s higher stability of reunification is largely because it reunifies few children within 18 months. Of note, Alaska faces highly unique challenges in child welfare, especially related to service delivery, due to small, remote, and dispersed villages throughout the state.

Outcome 1: Exits to Timely Permanency

Outcome 1 measures the percentage of children exiting to a permanent arrangement within 18 months

and within three years of their entry to foster care. Permanency is an exit of reunification, adoption, guardianship, or living with relatives. Non-permanency is remaining in care at the end of the time frame (18 months or three years) or exiting foster care due to emancipation, death, or running away. These are cumulative measures, such that all children who exited within 18 months by definition exited within three years of entry. For the full rankings of Outcome 1, see Appendix A.

Who Is Included. All children who are 0–14 years old at entry into foster care are included. Children whose cases were transferred to another jurisdiction or had an unknown exit reason are excluded from the

analysis. Additional indicators estimate outcomes within age and racial and ethnic subgroups.

Why Is This Outcome Important? This outcome provides an overall assessment of timely permanency, consistent with both the belief that children deserve the experience of growing in a safe and permanent family and the robust scientific evidence that prolonged instability and uncertainty are damaging to children's development.

Key Findings. In the top five states (Utah, Wyoming, South Carolina, Colorado, and Arkansas), at least 65 percent of children have permanent exits within 18 months, compared with a national rate of 51 percent, and 87–93 percent have permanent exits within three years, compared with a national rate of slightly under 83 percent.

Considerations for Interpretation. Reunification rates heavily influence overall permanency outcomes, because reunification is the most common form of permanency and can occur within a shorter time frame and with fewer checks and balances than other forms of permanency can. Thus, states with a high reunification rate may be highly ranked on Outcome 1, especially for the 18-months indicator, even if they perform poorly on timely permanency for children who cannot be reunified (Outcome 2) or have a high rate of reentry following reunification (Outcome 4).

Of particular note here, Wyoming and Colorado, ranked second and fourth on Outcome 1, rank 37th and 45th on Outcome 4, including an above-average rate of failed reunifications. In contrast, South Carolina and Arkansas, ranked third and fifth on Outcome 1, are also highly ranked on Outcome 4 (fifth and ninth, respectively).

States that use trial reunifications to avoid formal discharge and reentry may rank lower on Outcome 1 but should rank higher on Outcome 4. Lastly, states that prefer adoption to guardianship may rank lower on the 18-month indicator for Outcome 1, because guardianships or other custody arrangements that

do not require TPR can be completed more quickly than adoption can.

Outcome 2: Timely Permanency for Children Who Have Not Been Reunified

Outcome 2 measures the percentage of children who have not been reunified who were (1) adopted or (2) neither adopted nor placed in guardianship or with relatives (negatively scored) within 18 months and within three years of entry to foster care. For the full rankings of Outcome 2, see Appendix B.

Who Is Included. All children who are 0–14 years old at entry to foster care who were not reunified by the end of the period (18 months or three years) are included. Additional indicators estimate outcomes within age and racial and ethnic subgroups.

Why Is This Outcome Important? There will always be a subset of children for whom reunification is neither feasible nor desirable. Unmet permanency needs for this subset of children may be masked in broad metrics like Outcome 1. In addition, identifying, approving, and finalizing adoptive and permanent relative homes require different skills and activities than preparing for reunification.

Key Findings. Utah, West Virginia, Arizona, Iowa, and Arkansas are ranked as the top five states for Outcome 2.

Nationally, only 6 percent of children who have not been reunified are adopted within 18 months of entry. In the top five states for Outcome 2, these percentages are 32 percent (Utah), 16 percent (West Virginia), 15 percent (Arizona), 12 percent (Iowa), and 9 percent (Arkansas).

By the three-year mark, the percentage of non-reunified children who exit to adoption reaches 35 percent nationally but exceeds 50 percent for all top five states except Arkansas. Arkansas's rank is improved by its use of guardianships in addition to adoption to achieve a three-year permanency rate of

86 percent for children who are not reunified, compared with 66 percent nationally.

Considerations for Interpretation. Outcome 2 rankings assess whether states can move children to alternative forms of permanency when reunification efforts fail. But adoption is considered preferable to guardianship or living with relatives due to more substantial prescreening standards and preparation, legal rights and responsibilities assumed by the caregiver, and post-permanency financial and therapeutic support.

States might perform poorly on Outcome 2 for various reasons, including:

- Delayed initiation of reunification services as required under ASFA;
- Heavy reliance on the ASFA timeline exception for children in kinship foster care, rather than pursuing kin guardianship or adoption;
- Slow initiation of concurrent planning or reliance on low-yield procedures for identifying prospective adoptive families; and
- Reluctance (by agencies or courts) to discontinue unsuccessful reunification efforts and pursue alternative permanency.

Outcome 3: Application of ASFA Principles

Outcome 3 includes two indicators: (a) late reunifications and (b) long-term care without TPR. Both measures are negatively scored. Outcome 3a (late reunifications) is the state-specific probability that a child discharged to reunification within three years spent more than 18 months in continuous care before reunification. Outcome 3b (long-term care without TPR) is the state-specific probability that a child is both remaining in foster care after 18 months or after three years and not legally free for adoption. For the full rankings of Outcome 3, see Appendix C.

Who Is Included. Outcome 3a includes all children entering foster care at age 0–14 who are reunified

within three years. Outcome 3b includes all children entering foster care at age 0–14.

Why Are These Outcomes Important? Late reunifications can signal an array of potential problems, including delays in initiating services for parents or failure to accurately assess all service needs at the case's outset. They can also signal inadequate efforts to document the conditions that warrant TPR, leading to reunifications that are unlikely to succeed. TPR is necessary for a child to be adopted; it also, by virtue of legally severing the parent-child relationship, eliminates reunification as a permanency option.

Further, delaying TPR when children are not on track to reunify—though perhaps with good intentions—is based on the false premise that delaying TPR is a neutral (harmless) act but that TPR is harmful in the absence of immediate adoption. In contrast, lack of TPR, referred to as “legal risk” with adoption agencies, may deter prospective adoptive parents who fear that a court or caseworker will arbitrarily change the goal back to reunification. Similarly, so long as parental rights are intact, agencies may continue visitation; this excludes prospective adoptive families who are not within driving distance and introduces other risks and hardships.

Key Findings. The top five ranked states are Utah, Colorado, Arkansas, West Virginia, and Minnesota. For Outcome 3a, nearly 19 percent of US reunified infants take more than 18 months to reunify—ranging from under 7 percent in Colorado and Utah to over 30 percent in Washington and over 40 percent in Illinois.

For Outcome 3b among infants, where there is general agreement that permanency is an urgent psychological need, 31 percent remain in care and not legally free for adoption after 18 months, and 6 percent remain after three years. Across states, Outcome 3b for infants ranges from less than 6 percent (Utah) to nearly 64 percent (Illinois) at 18 months and from under 1 percent to nearly 25 percent at three years.

Considerations for Interpretation. Outcome 3 is consistent with the core principles of ASFA, where reunification remains the preferred form of permanency, but states are expected to move quickly to help parents meet the conditions for reunification and pursue other forms of permanency when conditions for reunification cannot be met within a reasonable time frame. Timely reunification—particularly successful reunification (Outcome 4)—requires quick commencement of necessary services (e.g., substance abuse treatment and mental health care), but states may struggle with a limited network of providers, waiting lists, or other barriers. Failure to make adequate reunification efforts is an oft-used exception to the ASFA timeline. Judicial ideology may also affect agencies' performance on Outcome 3; exceptions to ASFA timelines are subjective and broad, allowing judges to stall or reject TPR petitions indefinitely in states that do not have clear ASFA implementation guidance in state law.

Outcome 4: Failed Reunifications

Outcome 4 measures the state-specific probability that a child who exited to reunification within 18 months reenters foster care in the subsequent 12 months. This outcome is reverse coded (lower probability = higher rank). For the full rankings of Outcome 4, see Appendix D.

Who Is Included. All children who are 0–14 years old at entry to foster care with a discharge reason of reunification and an exit date within 18 months of entry are included.

Why Is This Outcome Important? Most children who reenter foster care within a short time frame are re-removed for the same parental behaviors that were present in the initial removal. Thus, rapid reentries to care are a signal that the agency (or the family courts, which may overrule agency recommendations) are not adequately assessing whether reunification is safe and sustainable.

Key Findings. The top-ranked states are North Carolina, Delaware, Oklahoma, Texas, and South Carolina. The national 12-month post-reunification reentry rate is about 8.6 percent, with state percentages ranging from less than 3 percent to 17 percent.

Considerations for Interpretation. States that reunify few children within the 18-month time frame may over-perform on this measure. This outcome should be considered alongside the 18-month measure under Outcome 1; a high rate of permanency within 18 months is unlikely to benefit children if coupled with a high rate of reentry to foster care.

In addition, special attention should be paid to states that perform well simultaneously on Outcome 1 (the 18-months measure), Outcome 3a (late reunifications), and Outcome 4, as this suggests an ability to achieve a high rate of timely reunifications without endangering child safety. South Carolina and Arkansas both rank in the top 10 states on each of those measures.

Note: Children who returned to foster care after a trial reunification are not counted as having reentered, because they were not fully discharged from the state's custody. However, the child's experience of a return is likely to be similar.

Other Findings of Note

It is beyond the scope of this report to detail all the age and race subgroup performance outcomes that contributed to states' rankings. Nevertheless, public availability of these findings can contribute to further discourse and analysis on these subjects. The points highlighted below may be of particular interest.

Age at Entry. It is well established that children who enter care early in life are less likely to reunify with their parents and more likely to be adopted, and it is generally believed that there is no shortage of adoptive homes for infants. Yet, there is nevertheless massive divergence in adoption rates for infants. Within 18 months of entry, 61 percent of Utah infants who had not been reunified were adopted,

versus less than 5 percent in Oregon, Mississippi, Alaska, Kentucky, Illinois, and Massachusetts. By three years, rates exceeded 80 percent in Arizona, Iowa, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Utah but remained below 40 percent in Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Mississippi, New York, Ohio, and South Carolina.

In some states, lower rates of adoption are driven by increased acceptance of guardianship as a permanent solution for infants, whereas previously it was proposed as an alternative to adoption for older youth. However, several states leave infants in long-term care at relatively high rates. In 22 states, more than one in four infants who are not reunified do not achieve alternative permanency through adoption or guardianship or living with relatives within three years.

Another point of interest is the extent to which states successfully find adoption or guardianship and relative arrangements for older children entering care. Nearly half (48 percent) of children nationally who entered care at age 11–14 and had not been reunified were still in care or had a non-permanency exit three years later, compared with 27 percent of Arkansas youth and 22 percent of Wyoming youth.

Racial Disparities. The racial gap in timely permanency appears to be driven by children who are not reunified on time. For example, the black-white gap in the Outcome 1 (overall timely permanency) 18-months measure was a modest 2 percentage points, with 51.6 percent of white children and 49.6 percent of black children exiting to permanency nationally. Yet, by the three-year mark, the racial gap grew to 6 percentage points nationally (84.7 percent for white children and 78.6 percent for black children).

This pattern was evident within states as well. At the 18-month mark, the black-white gap on Outcome 1 was negative (i.e., higher rates of timely permanency for black children than white children) in 18 states and near zero (less than 1 percentage point favoring white children) in an additional five states. In nine states, the gap favoring white children exceeded 5 percentage points. By the end of

three years, 28 states had a permanency gap favoring white children that exceeded 5 percentage points. Notable exceptions were South Carolina, Nevada, and Kentucky.

This larger gap at the three-year mark reflects an exceptionally low rate of adoption for black children compared with white children. The black-white gap in permanency among non-reunified children consistently favored white children and was comparatively larger. For children not reunified within three years, 38.7 percent of white children were adopted, compared with 27.3 percent of black children, with the gap exceeding 10 percentage points in 18 states. In some states, the adoption gap was partially (or in the case of South Carolina, fully) offset by greater use of guardianship and relative placement for black children.

Conclusion

Over the past decade, there has been a clear retreat from the idea that foster care can help children in dire circumstances. This retreat has been largely promulgated by research¹¹ and advocacy¹² in states that score poorly on the TPRCs—Illinois and New York, among others. Yet, many attribute the poor experiences and outcomes of children in foster care to ASFA, rather than to the failure to comply with ASFA.¹³ This narrative relies on the misappropriation of “lived experience” as a replacement for scientific research and evaluation and has gone largely unchallenged due to a lack of comparable research from the states that perform well on the TPRCs, such as Utah and Arkansas.

The TPRCs highlight that, despite existing federal laws and monitoring, states are highly variable on issues of permanency. Although many state characteristics might influence TPRC rankings, high-performing states do not spend the most on child welfare,¹⁴ nor do they have the most generous or extensive social infrastructures.

Timely permanency is no panacea; reunifications, guardianships,¹⁵ and adoptions¹⁶ sometimes dissolve or fail to meet children’s needs. But, amid growing

calls to dismantle ASFA,¹⁷ this report shows that many states have already de facto repealed or never implemented ASFA. These states have fewer permanent exits from foster care for all children and wider racial inequalities in permanency. Is that a model for the nation?

About the Author

Sarah Font is an associate professor of sociology and public policy at the Pennsylvania State University. Her research focuses on the role of the family

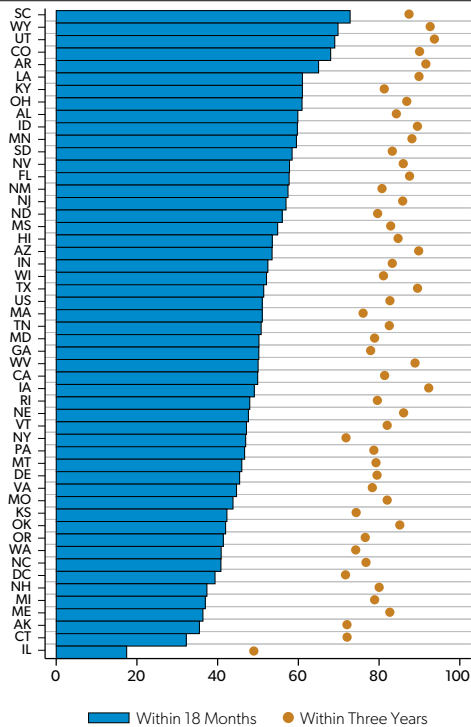
and the state in shaping the experiences and outcomes of vulnerable children.

Acknowledgment and Disclaimer

This report relies on data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System. The data were accessed through the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN).¹⁸ The author is solely responsible for the content of the report. The NDACAN does not endorse or certify the accuracy or conclusions of the report.

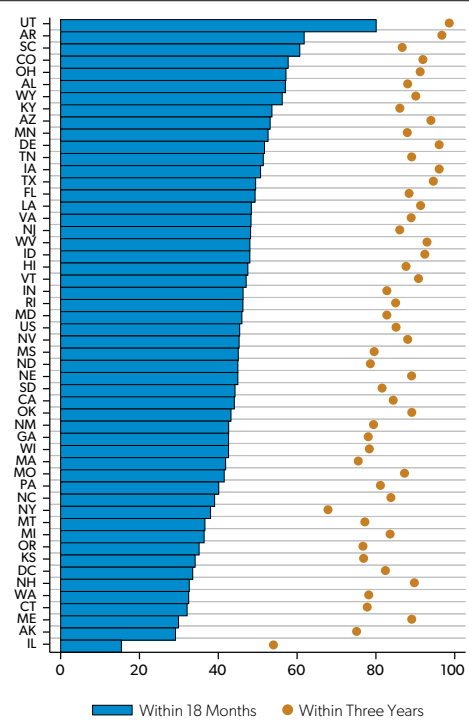
Appendix A. Results for Outcome 1

Figure A1. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Age 0-14 at Entry



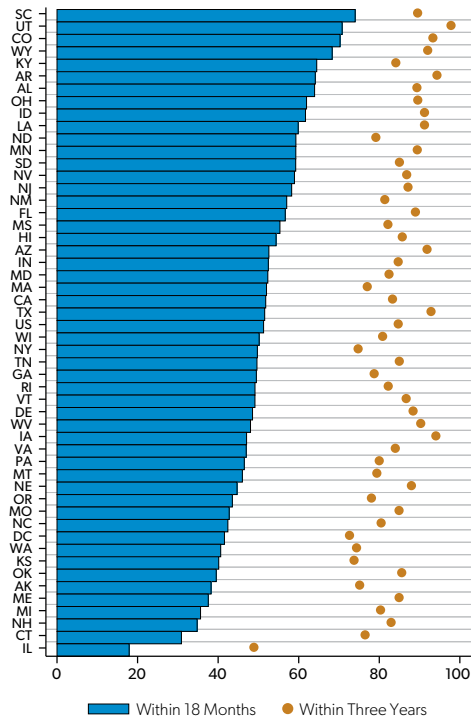
Source: Author.

Figure A2. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Infants at Entry



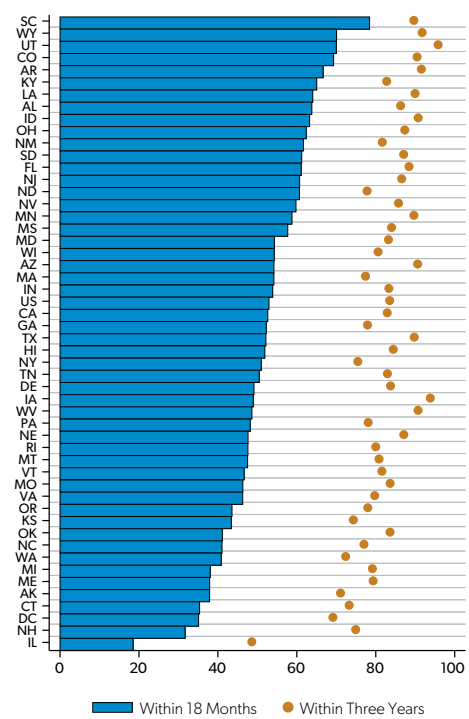
Source: Author.

Figure A3. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Age 1–3 at Entry



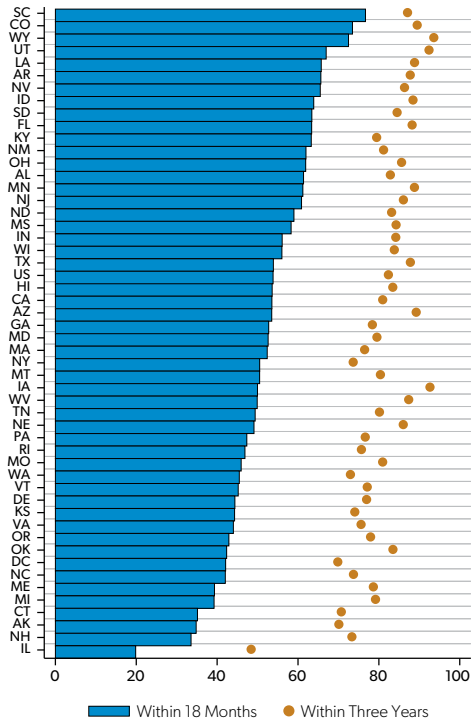
Source: Author.

Figure A4. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Age 4–6 at Entry



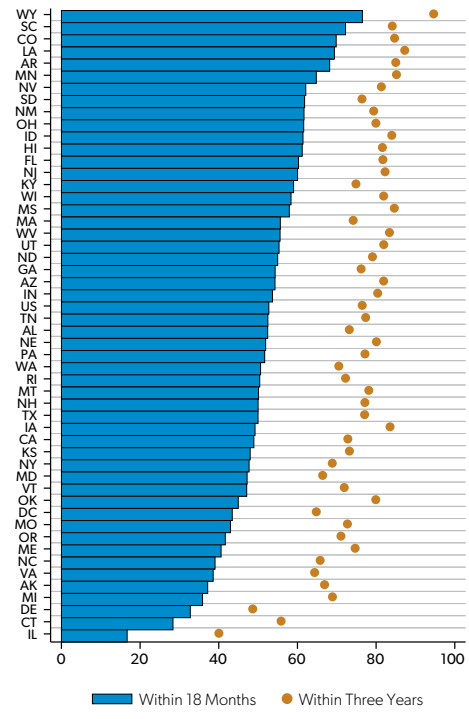
Source: Author.

Figure A5. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Age 7–10 at Entry



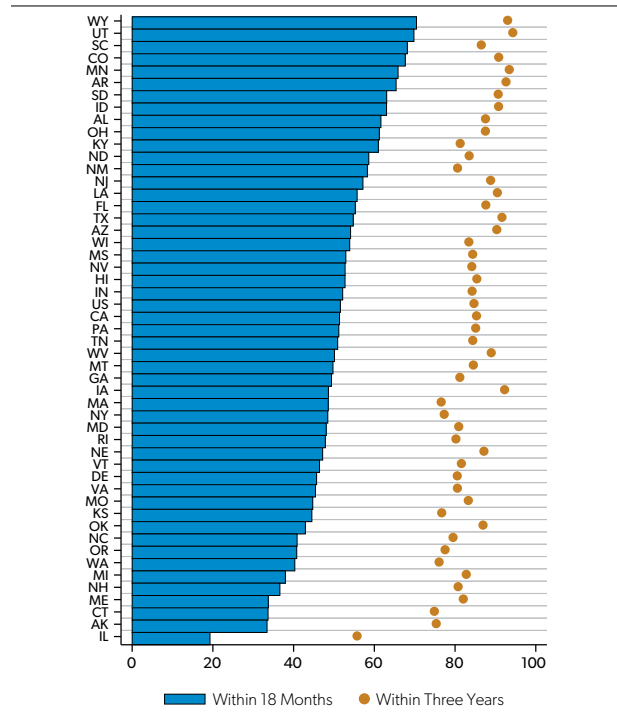
Source: Author.

Figure A6. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Age 11–14 at Entry



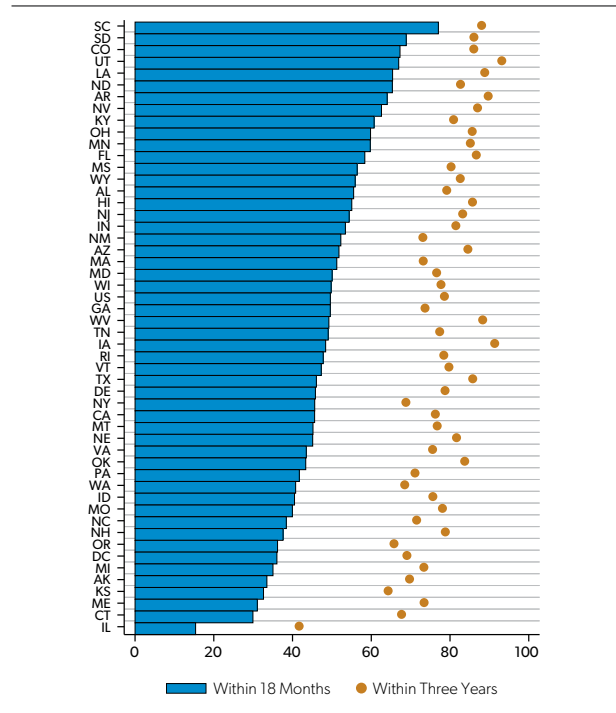
Source: Author.

Figure A7. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Non-Hispanic White Children



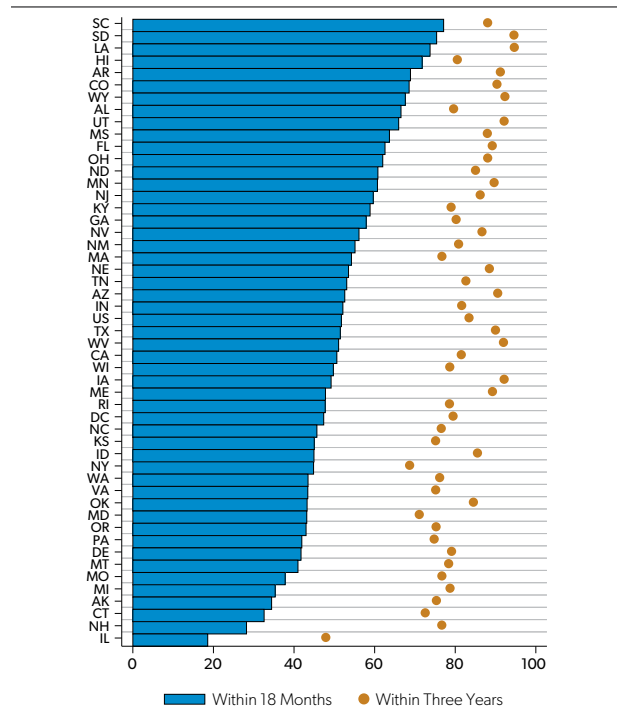
Note: States are excluded if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure A8. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Non-Hispanic Black Children



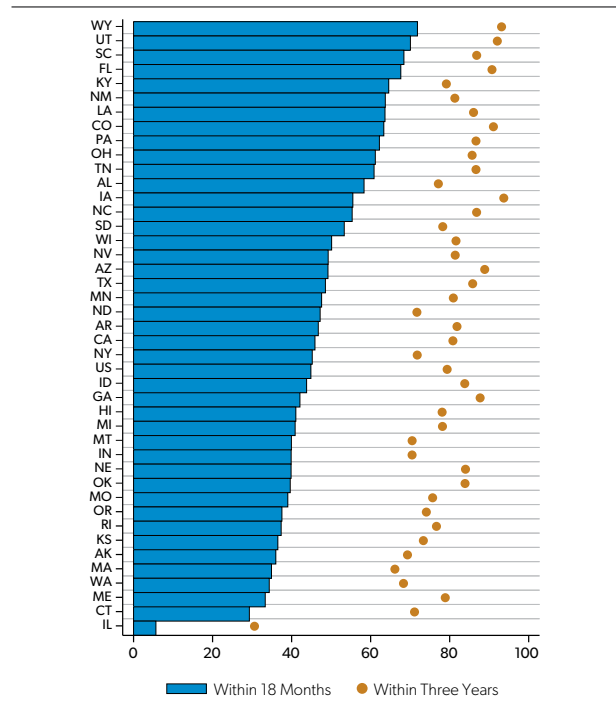
Note: States are excluded if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure A9. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, Hispanic Children



Note: States are excluded if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

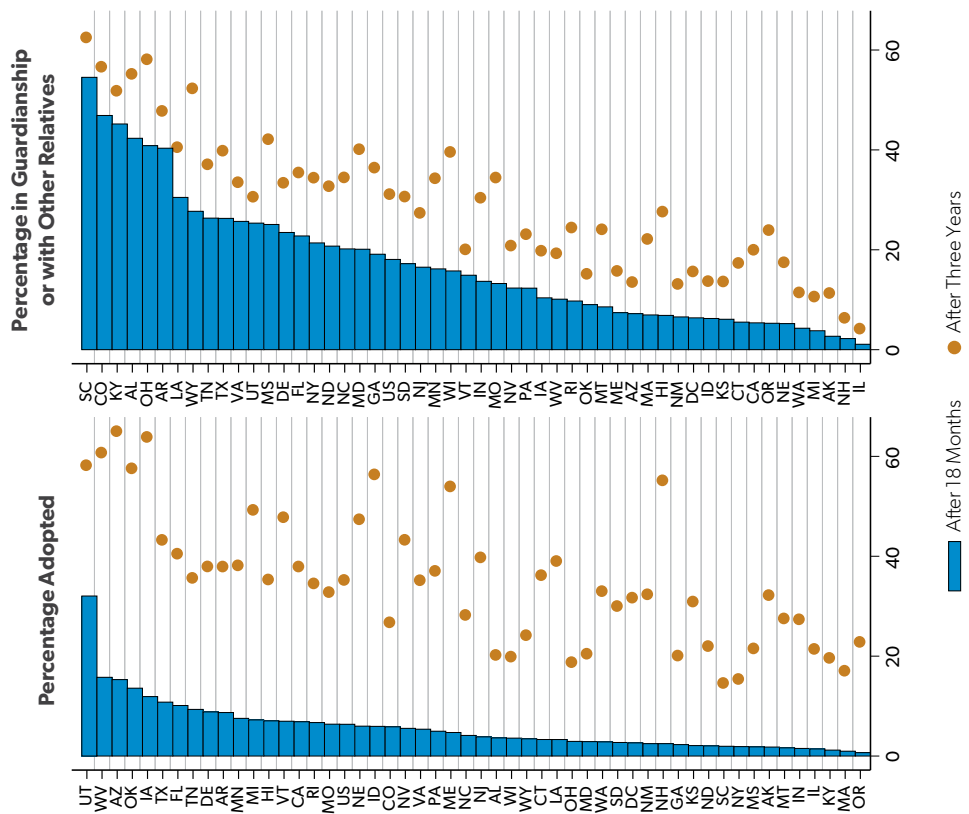
Figure A10. Percentage Exiting to Permanency, American Indian and Alaskan Native Children



Note: States are excluded if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

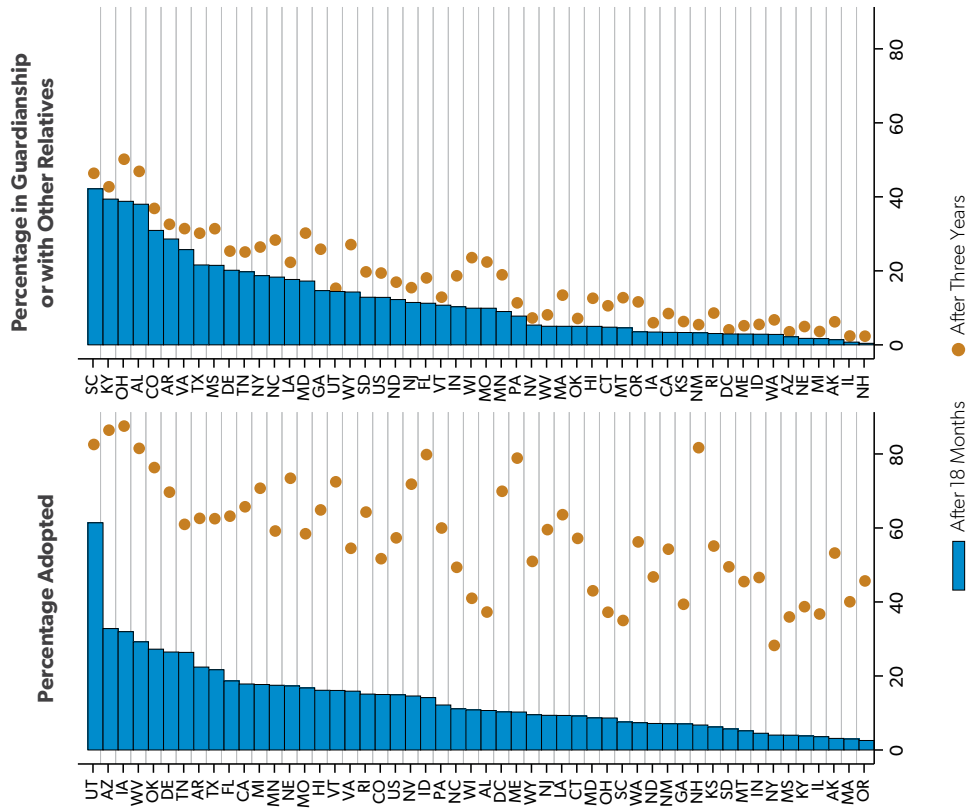
Appendix B. Results for Outcome 2

Figure B1. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Age 0–14 at Entry



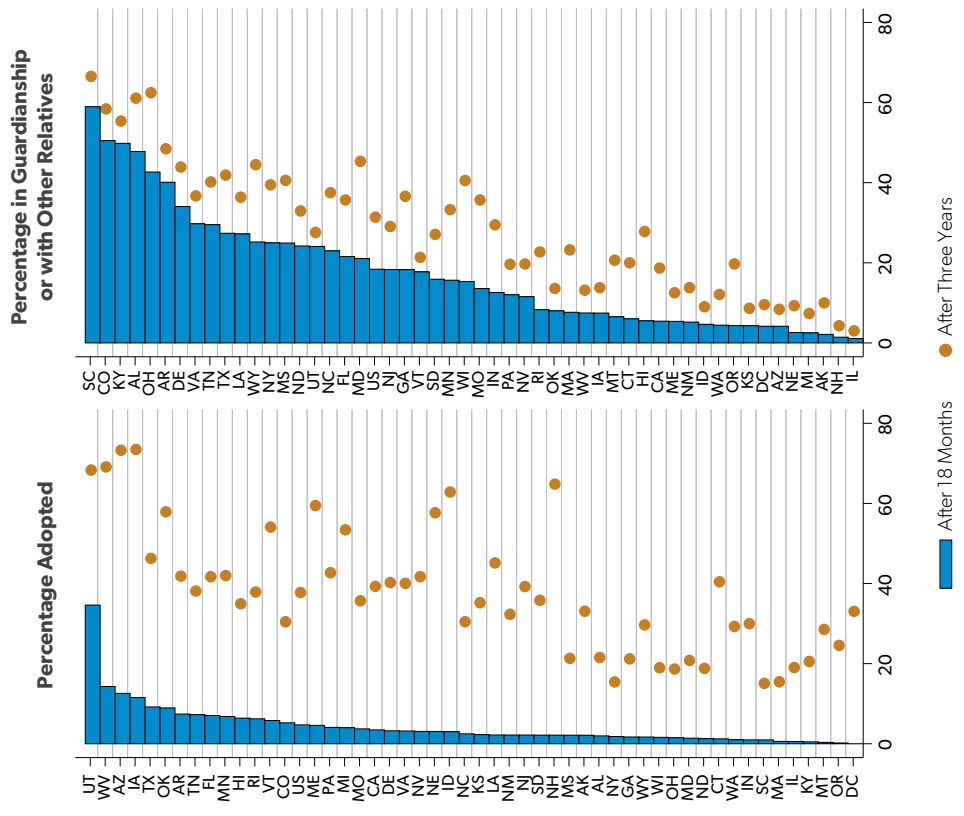
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B2. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Infants at Entry



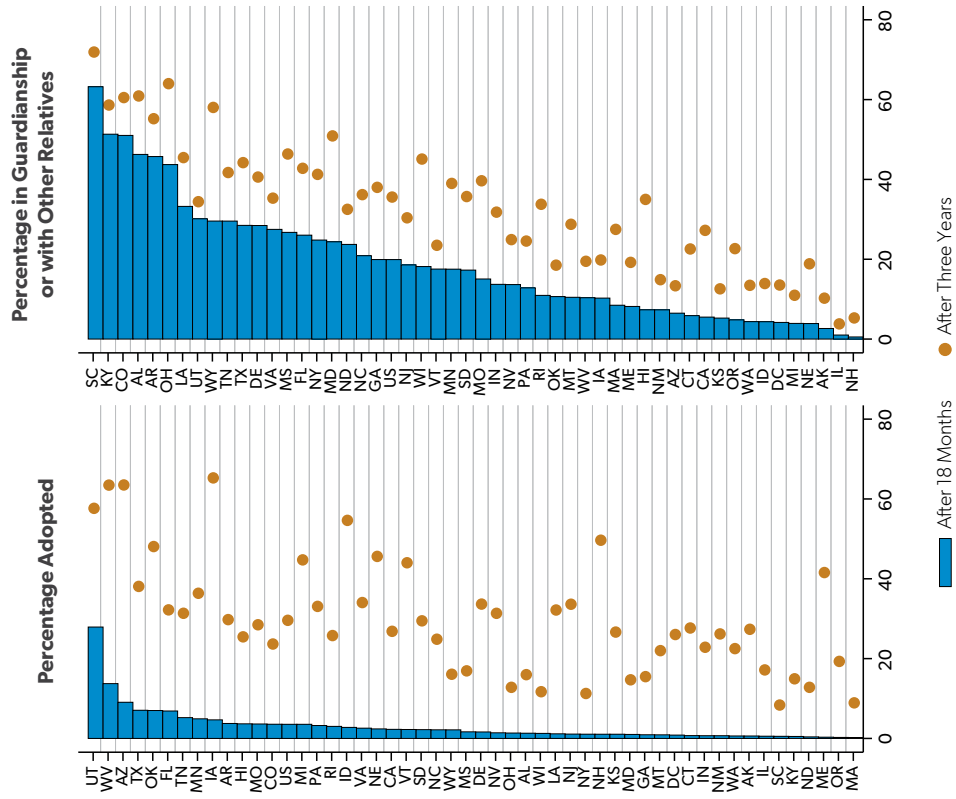
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B3. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Age 1-3 at Entry



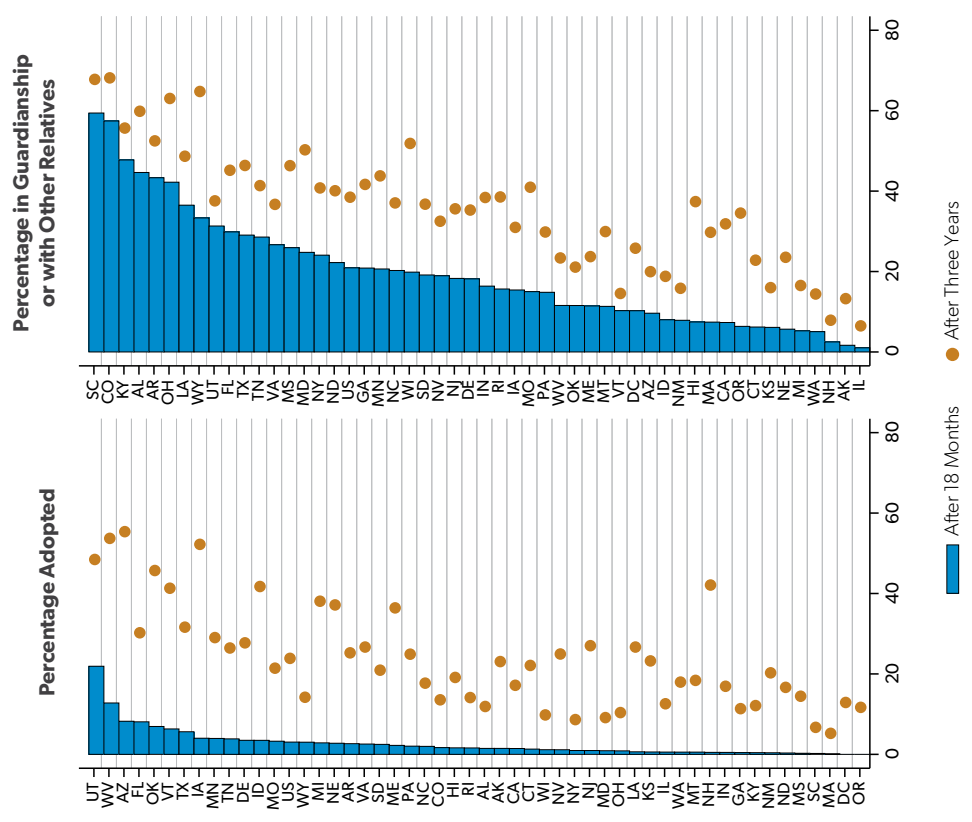
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B4. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Age 4-6 at Entry



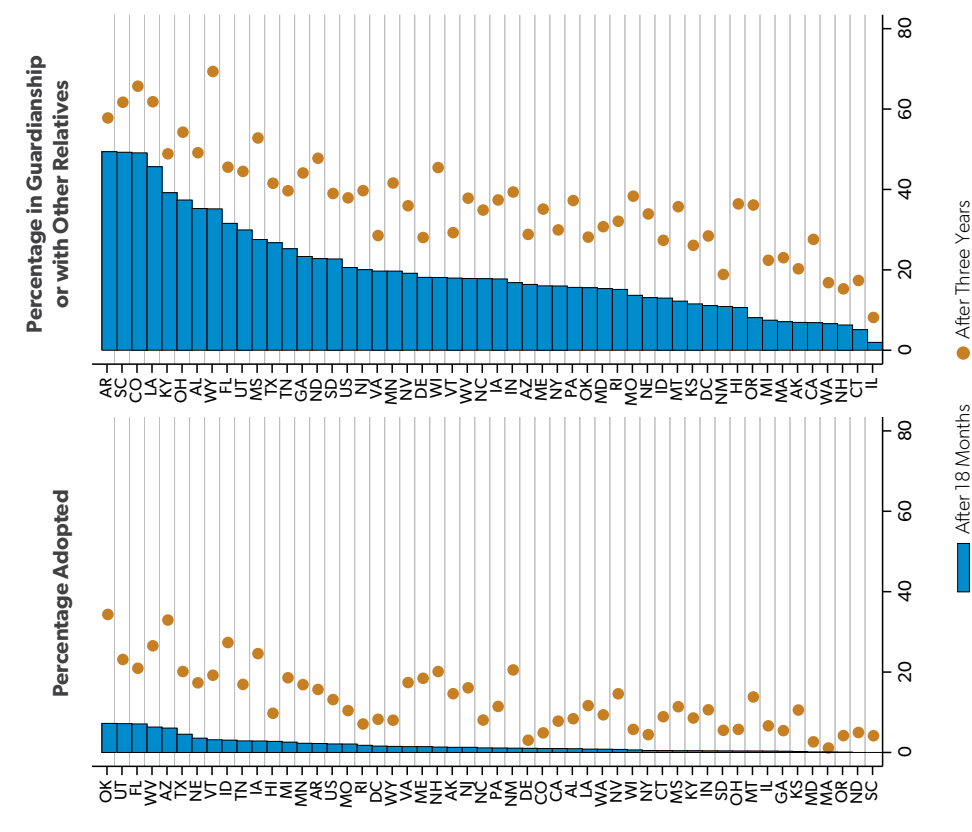
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B5. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Age 7-10 at Entry



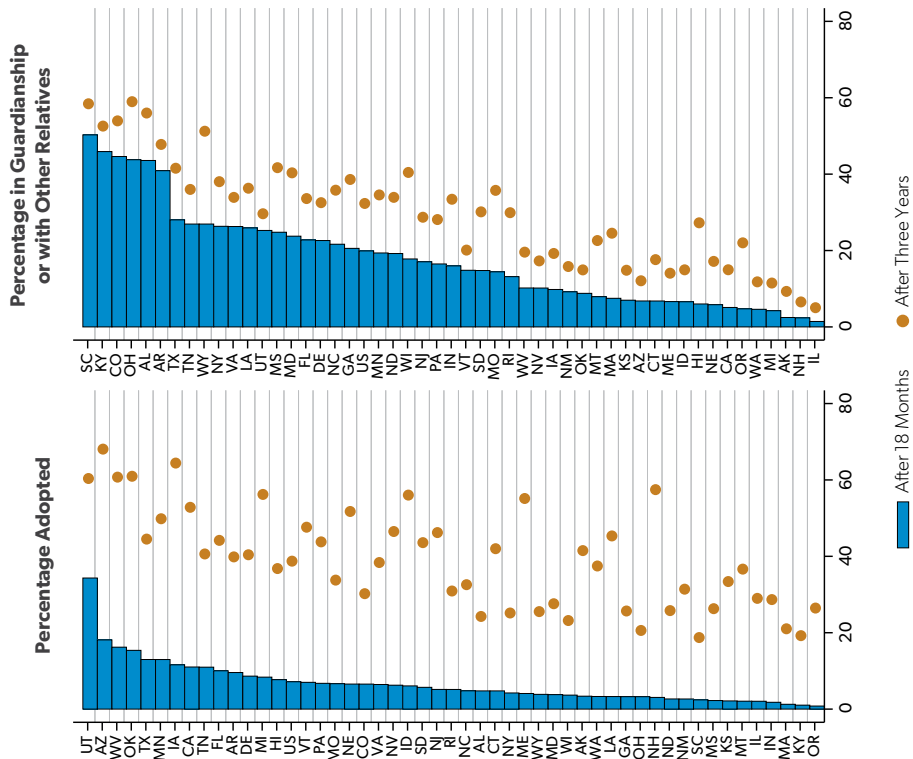
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B6. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Age 11-14 at Entry



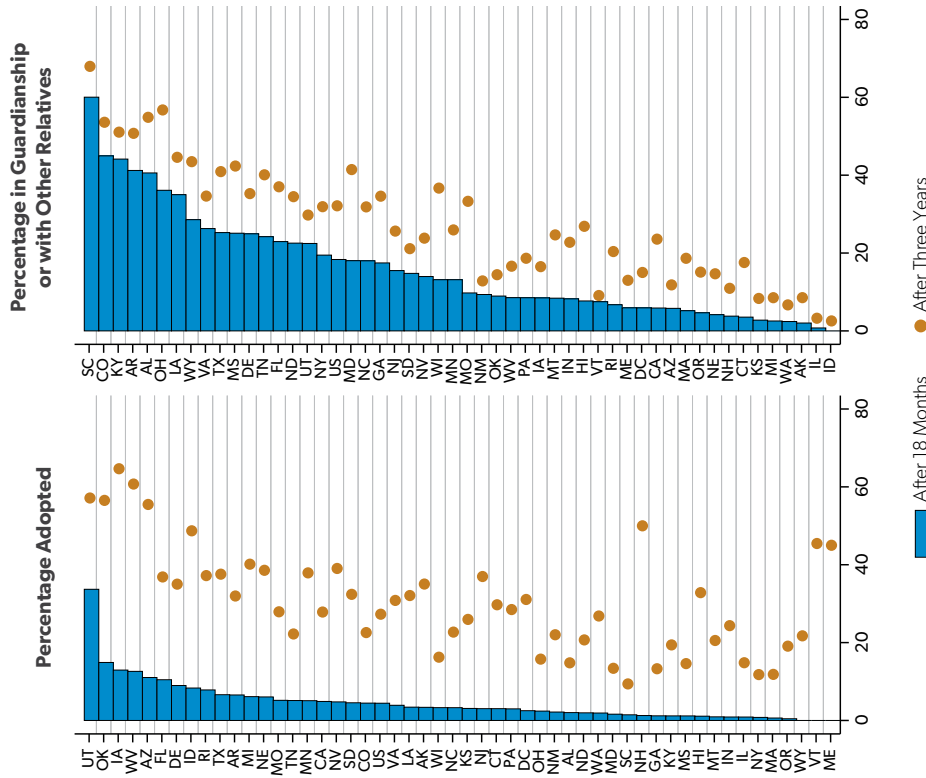
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B7. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Non-Hispanic White Children



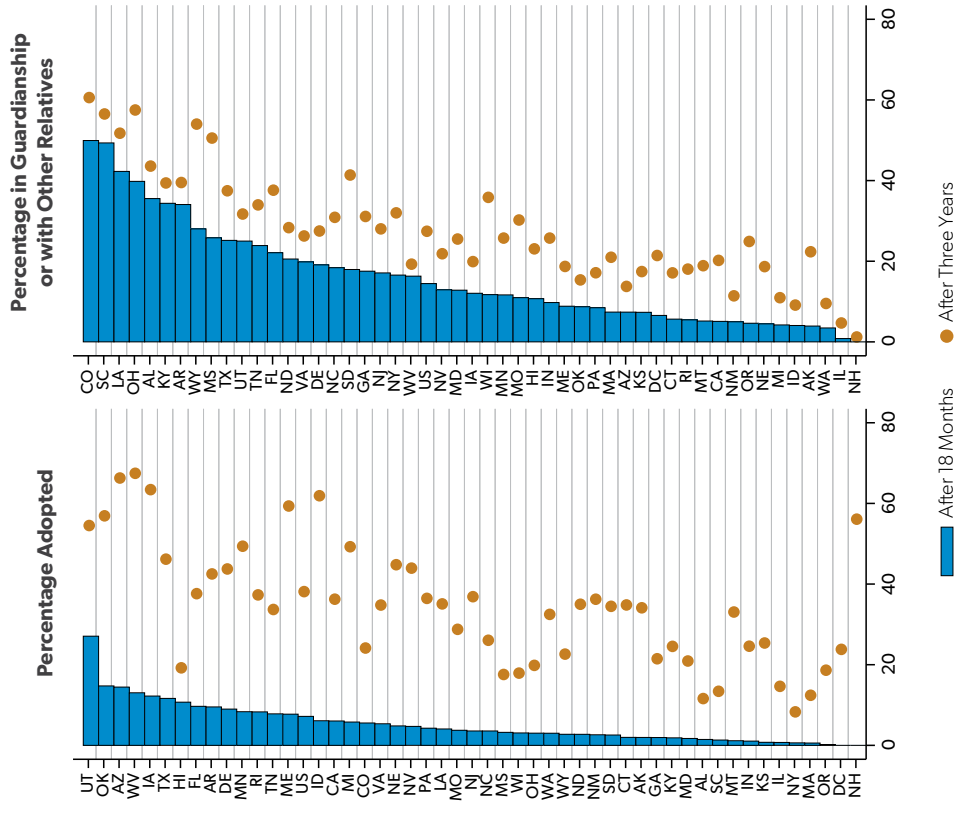
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B8. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Non-Hispanic Black Children



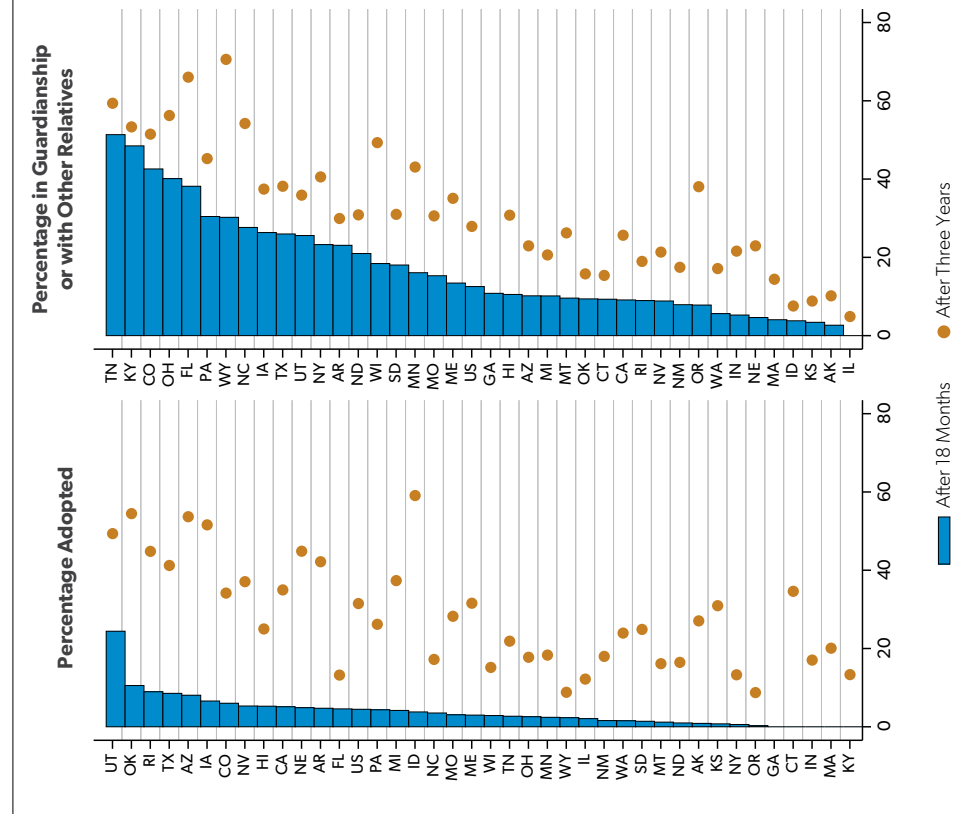
Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

Figure B9. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, Hispanic Children



Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

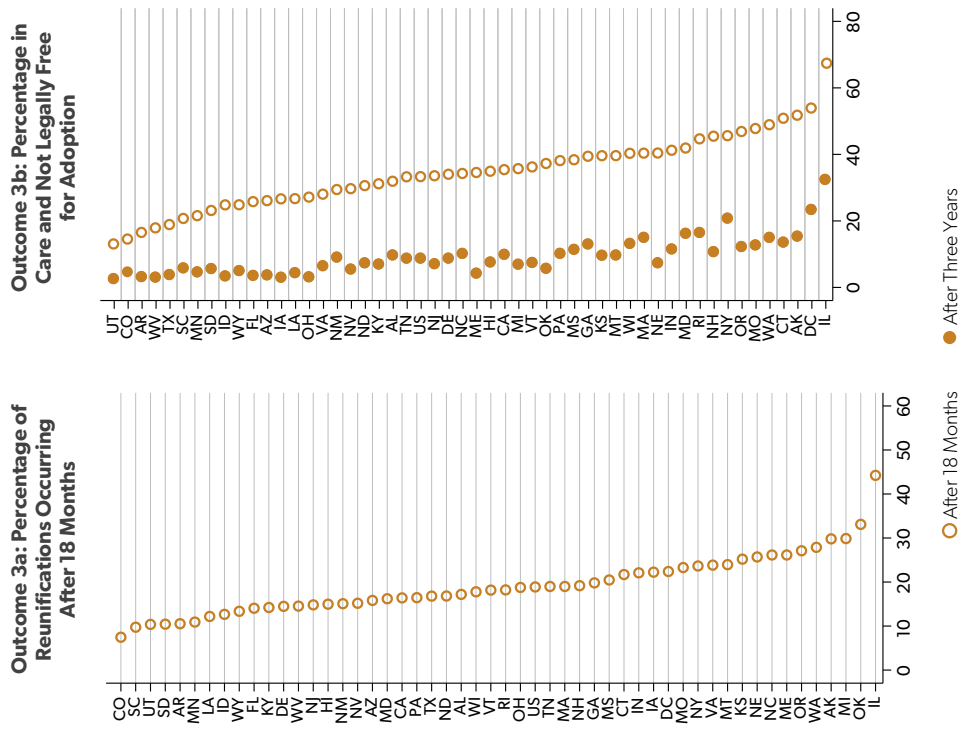
Figure B10. Timely Permanency If Not Reunified, American Indian and Alaskan Native Children



Note: This figure includes only children who are not reunified within the time frame, if the status is known.
Source: Author.

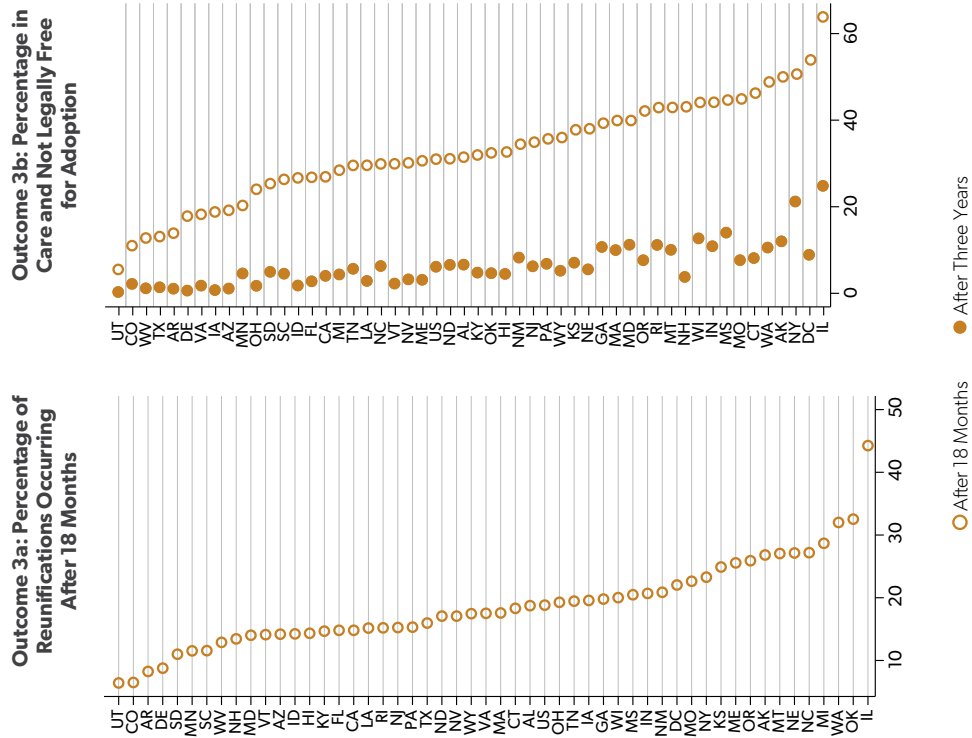
Appendix C. Results for Outcome 3

Figure C1. Application of ASFA Principles, Age 0-14 at Entry



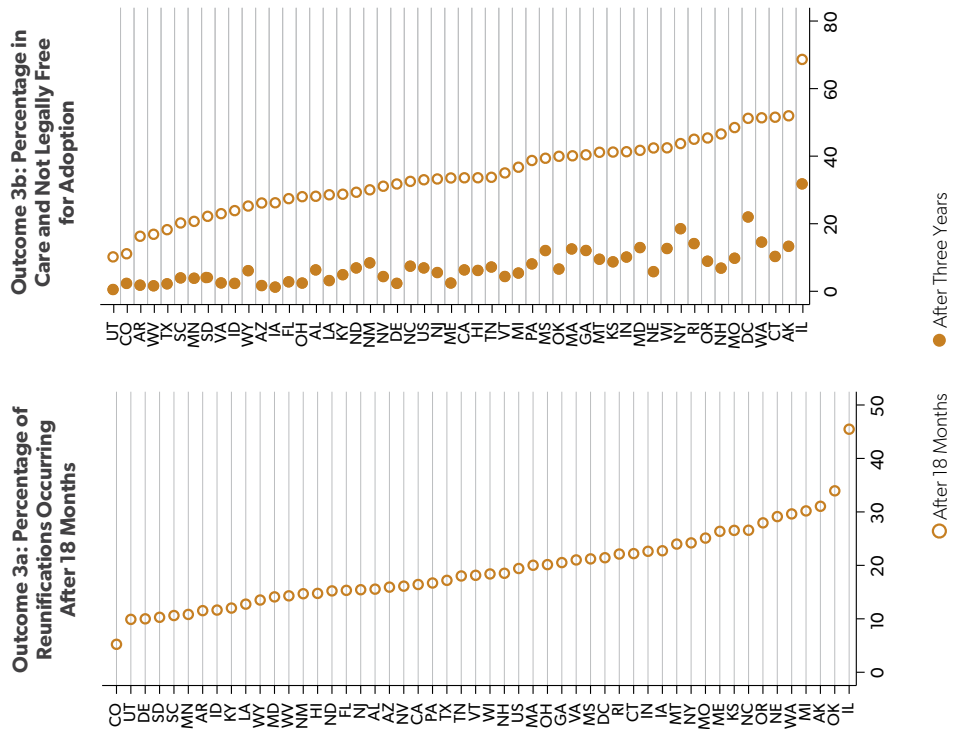
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Source: Author.

Figure C2. Application of ASFA Principles, Infants at Entry



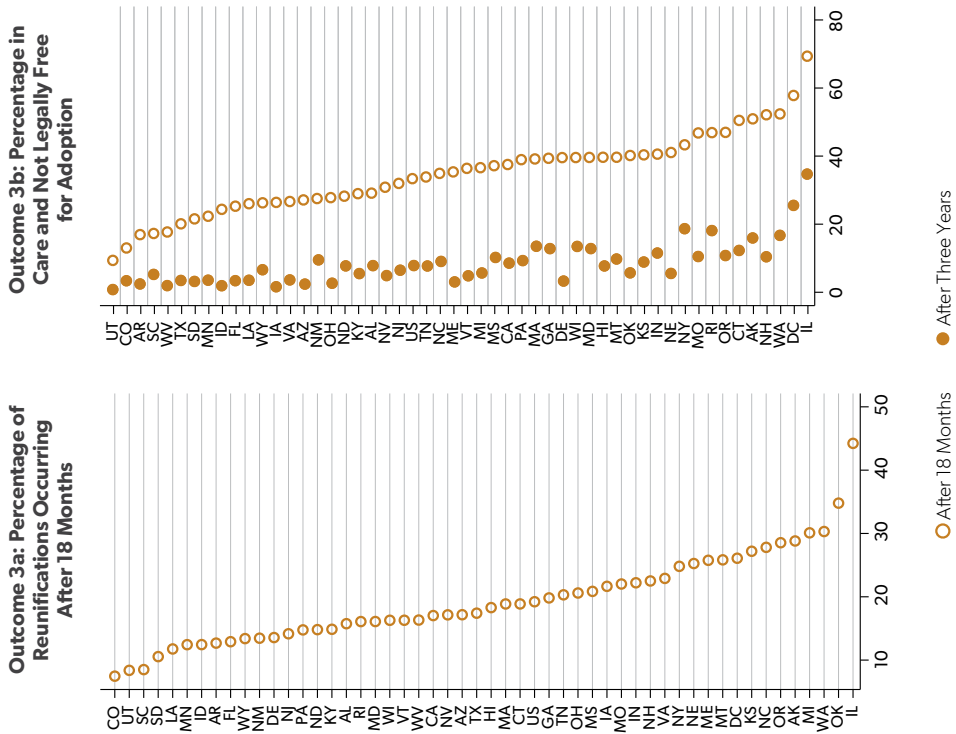
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

Figure C3. Application of ASFA Principles, Age 1–3 at Entry



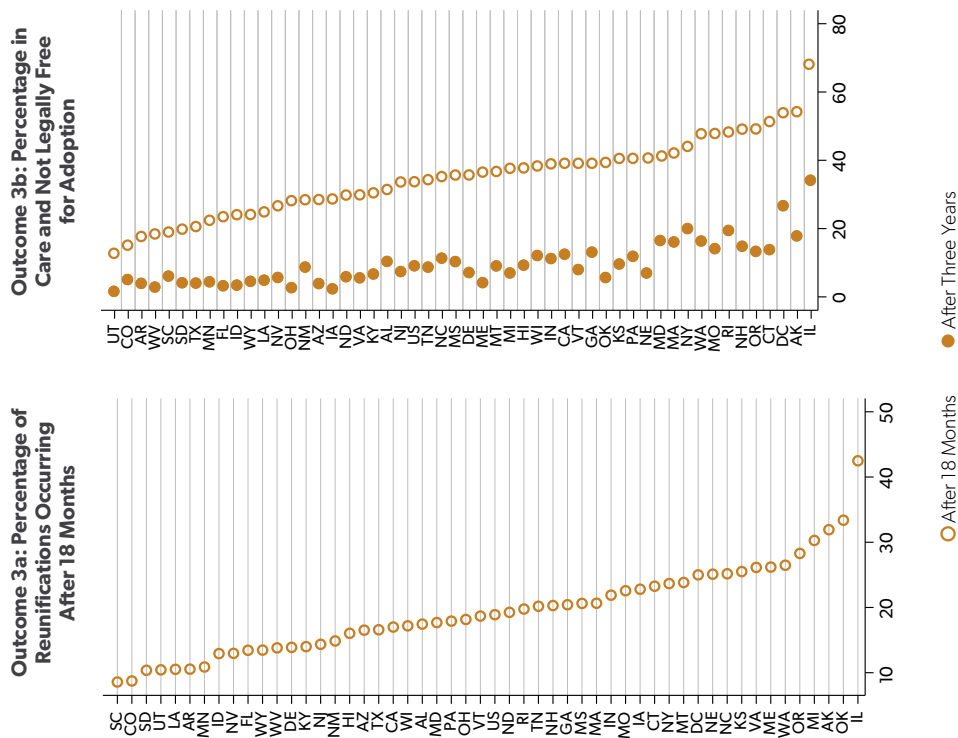
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure C4. Application of ASFA Principles, Age 4–6 at Entry



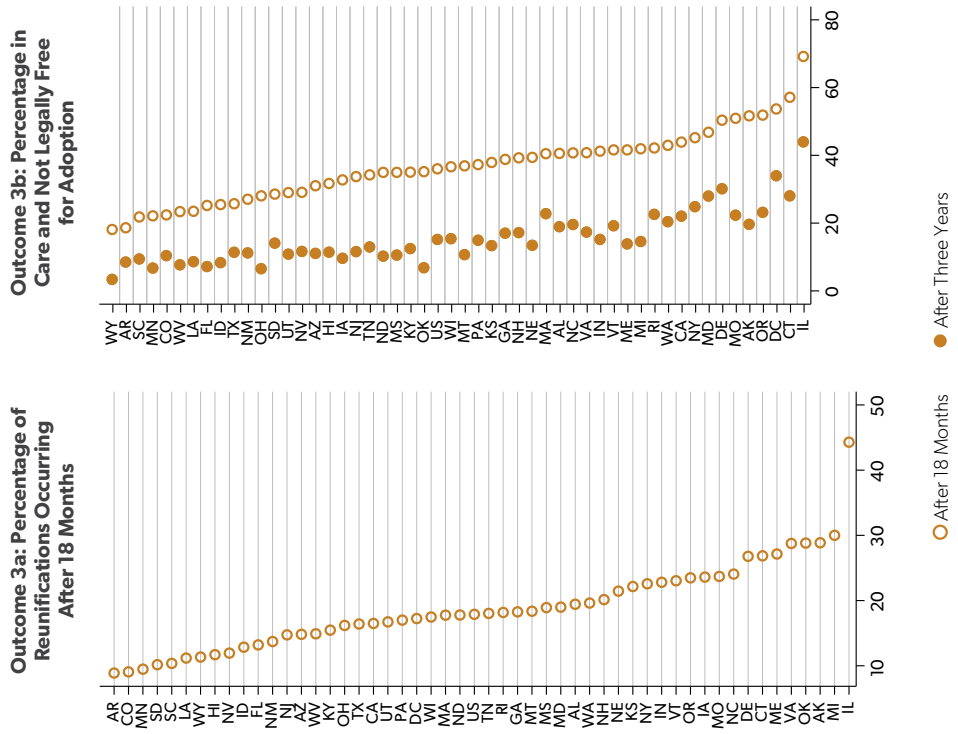
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure C5. Application of ASFA Principles, Age 7–10 at Entry



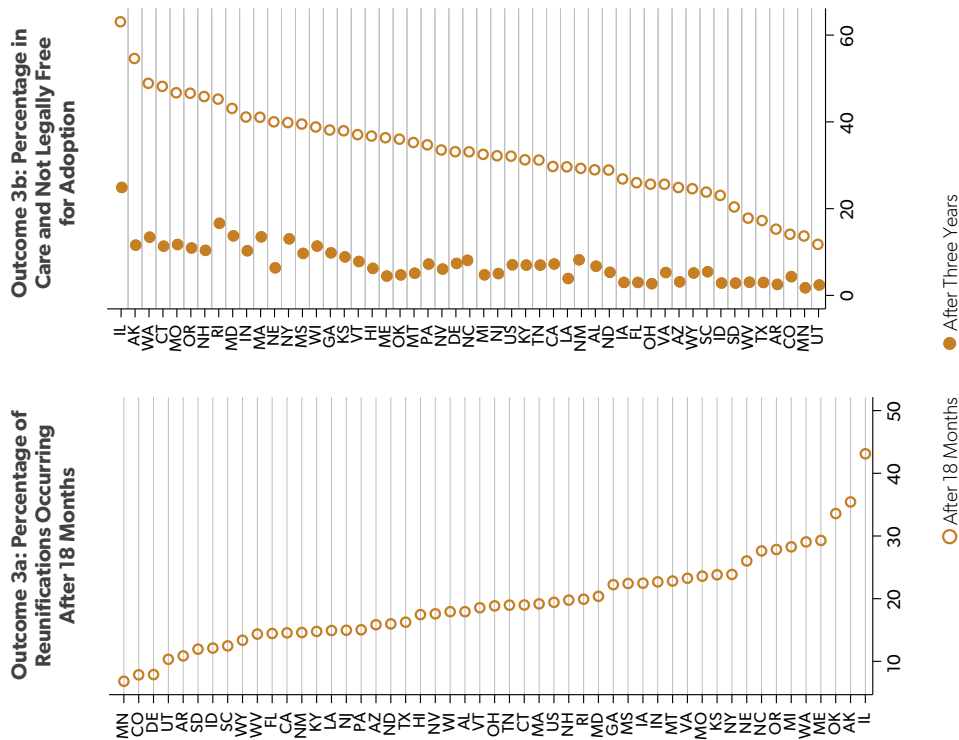
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

Figure C6. Application of ASFA Principles, Age 11–14 at Entry



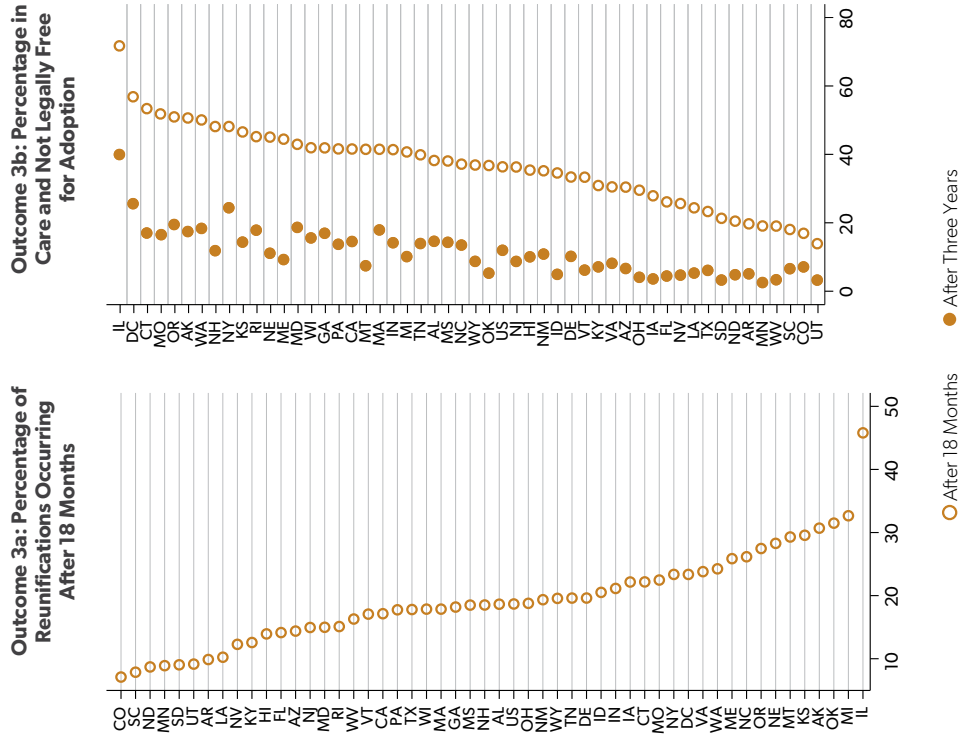
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

Figure C7. Application of ASFA Principles, Non-Hispanic White Children



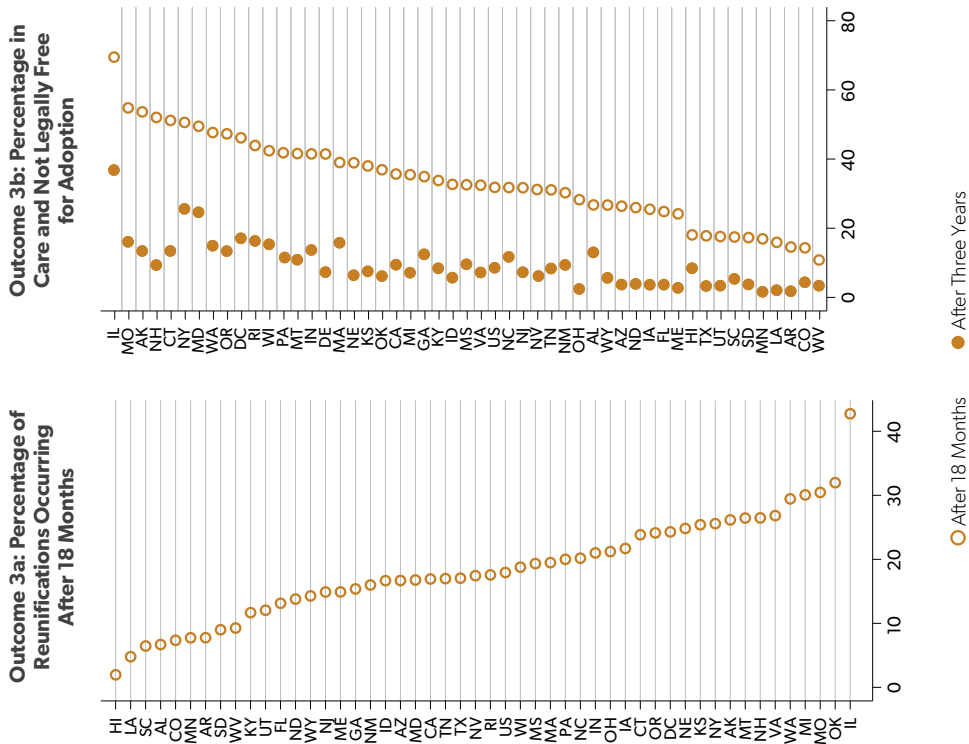
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

Figure C8. Application of ASFA Principles, Non-Hispanic Black Children



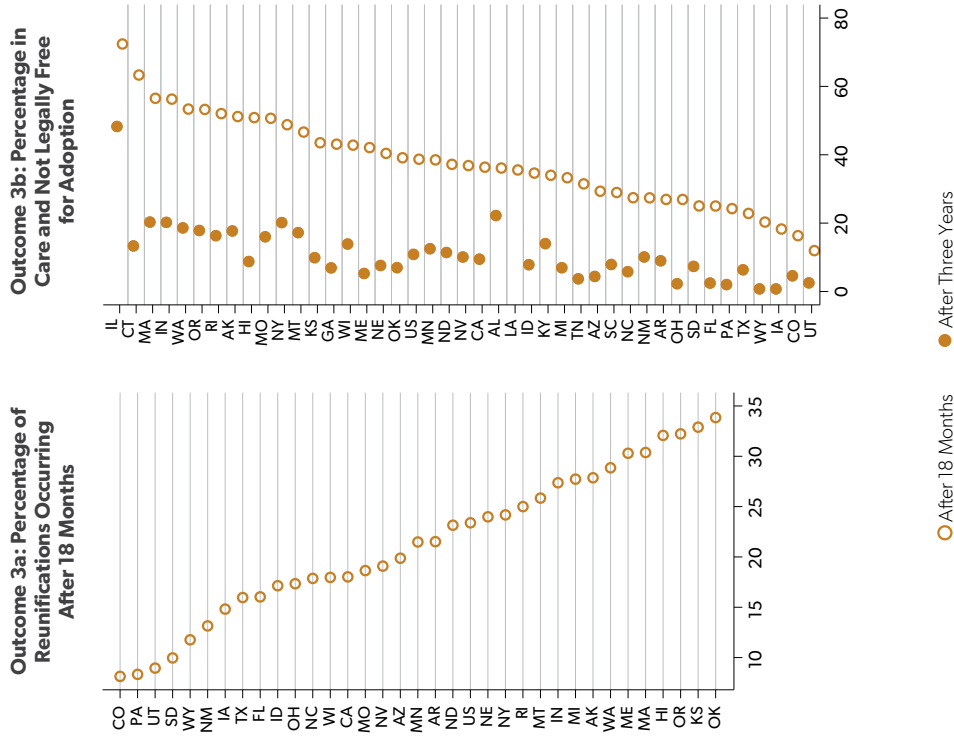
Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

Figure C9. Application of ASFA Principles, Hispanic Children



Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

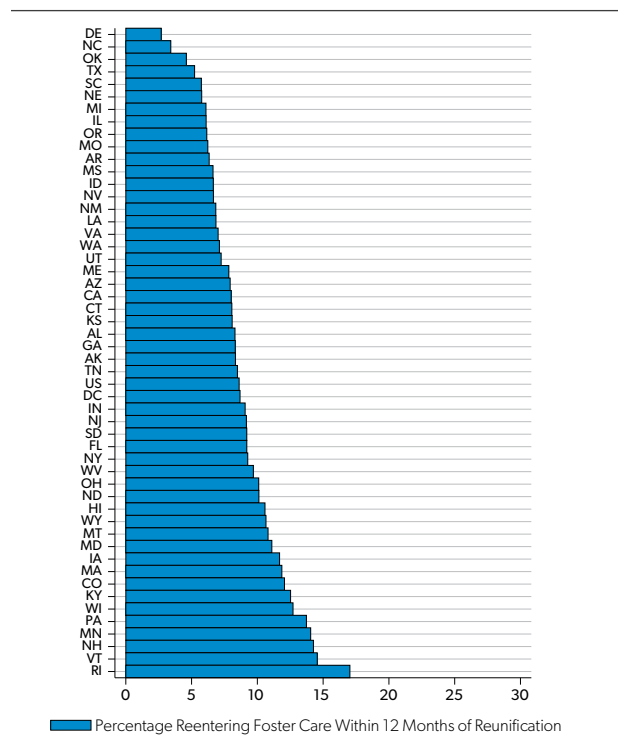
Figure C10. Application of ASFA Principles, American Indian and Alaskan Native Children



Note: Outcome 3a is based on children reunified within three years. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations. Source: Author.

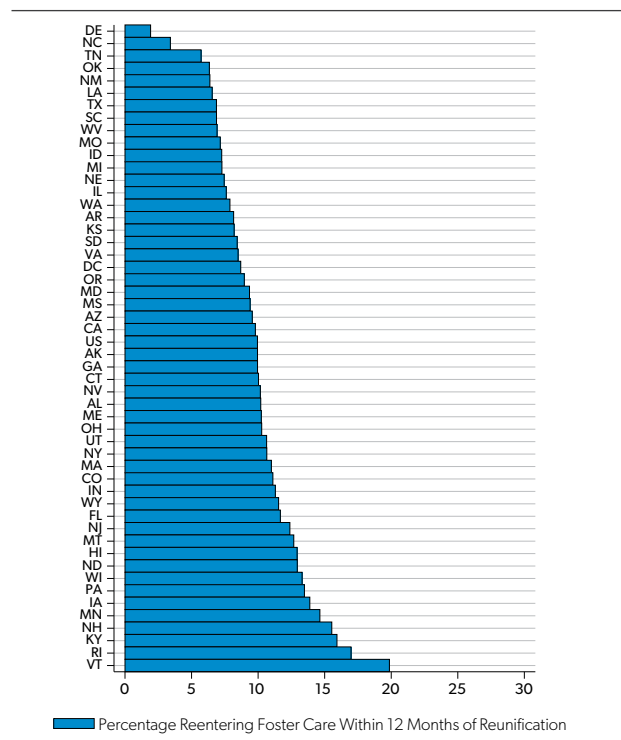
Appendix D. Results for Outcome 4

Figure D1. Failed Reunifications, Age 0–14 at Entry



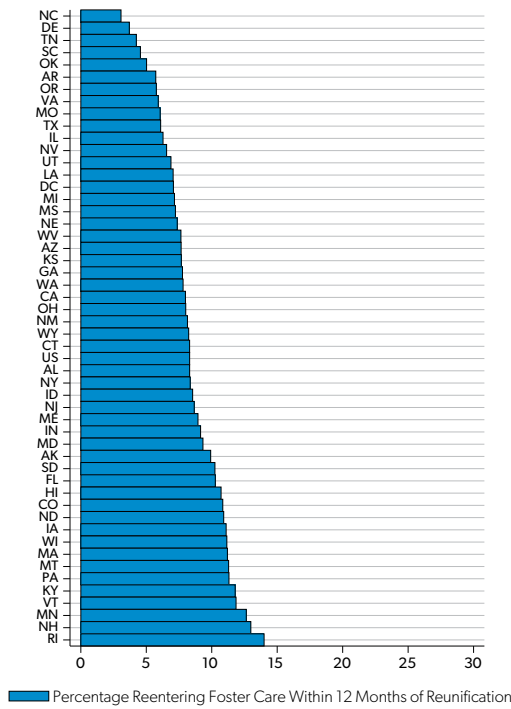
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry.
Source: Author.

Figure D2. Failed Reunifications, Infants at Entry



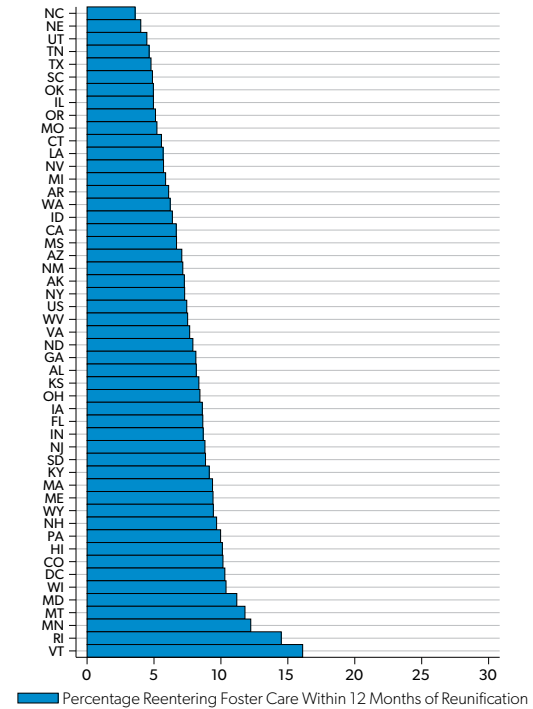
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D3. Failed Reunifications, Age 1–3 at Entry



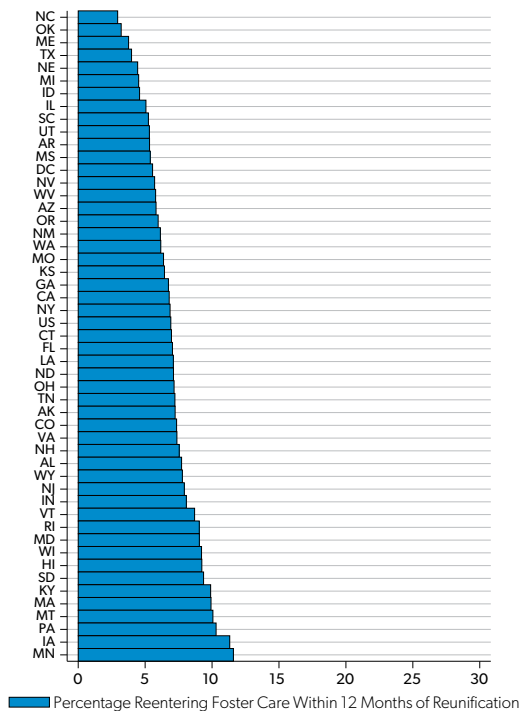
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D4. Failed Reunifications, Age 4–6 at Entry



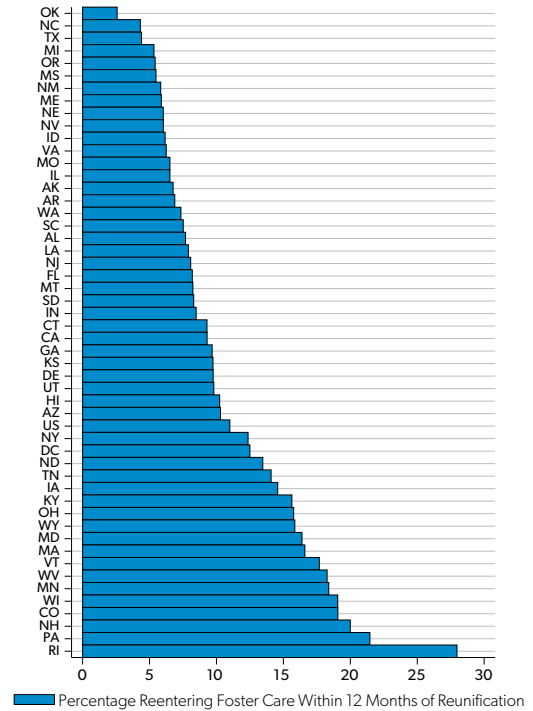
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D5. Failed Reunifications, Age 7–10 at Entry



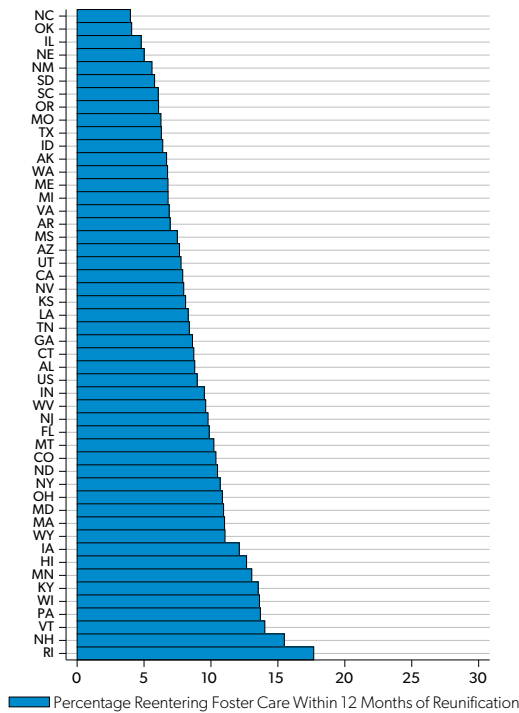
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D6. Failed Reunifications, Age 11–14 at Entry



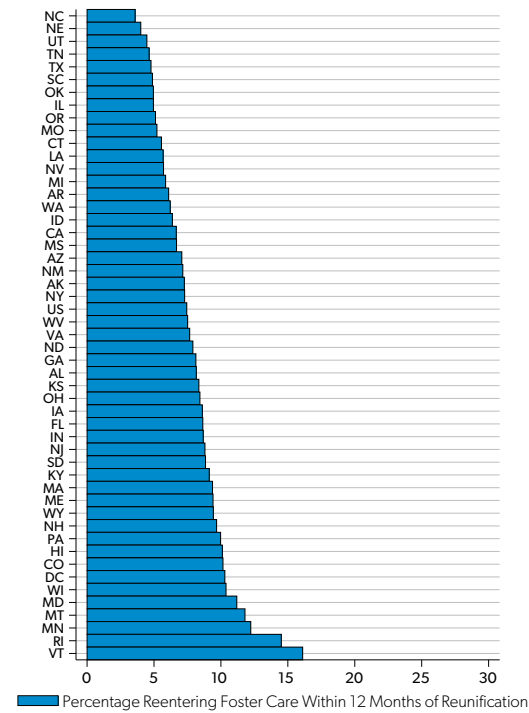
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D7. Failed Reunifications, Non-Hispanic White Children



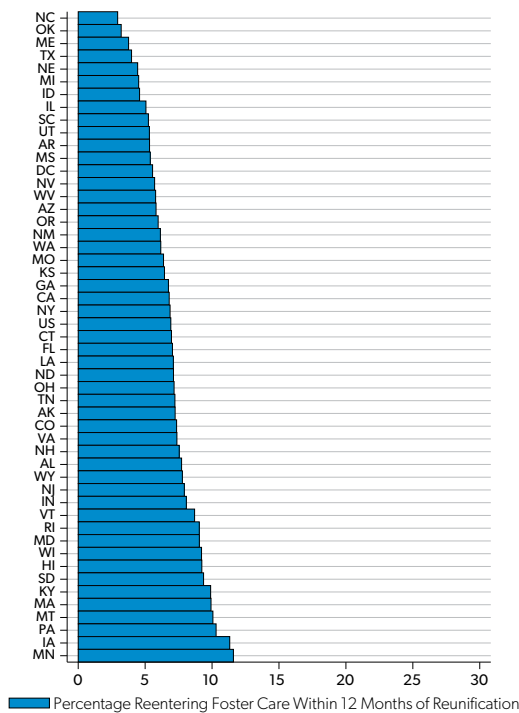
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D8. Failed Reunifications, Non-Hispanic Black Children



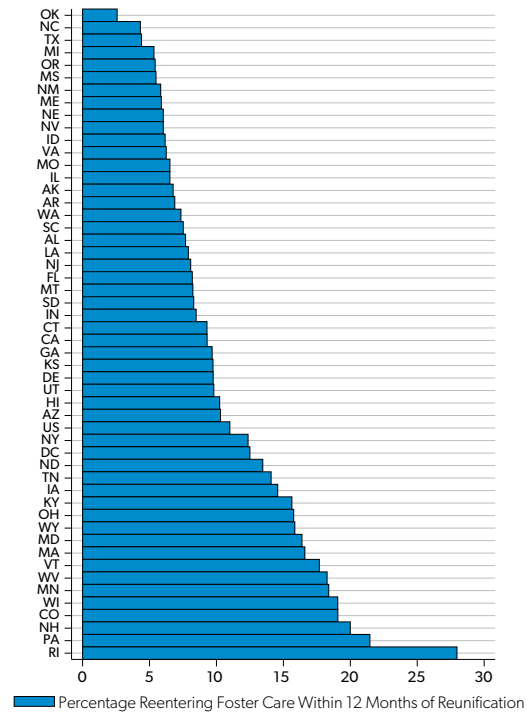
Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D9. Failed Reunifications, Hispanic Children



Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Figure D10. Failed Reunifications, American Indian and Alaskan Native Children



Note: Based on children reunified within 18 months of entry. Values are not reported if there are fewer than 30 observations.
Source: Author.

Notes

1. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, “The AFCARS Report,” June 28, 2022, <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/afcars-report-29.pdf>.
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10. US Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, “Child and Family Services Reviews Aggregate Report Addendum: Round 3: Fiscal Years 2015–2018,” https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cfsr_aggreport_addendum_2020.pdf.
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12. JMAC for Families, website, <https://jmacforfamilies.org>.
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14. Child Trends, “Child Welfare Financing Survey SFY2018,” March 9, 2021, <https://www.childtrends.org/publications/child-welfare-financing-survey-sfy2018>.
15. Kierra M. P. Sattler and Sarah A. Font, “Predictors of Adoption and Guardianship Dissolution: The Role of Race, Age, and Gender Among Children in Foster Care,” *Child Maltreatment* 26, no. 2 (September 10, 2020), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1077559520952171>.
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18. National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect, “Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS),” <https://www.ndacan.acf.hhs.gov/datasets/datasets-list-afcars-foster-care.cfm>.

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