

Cumulative Risks of Foster Care Placement by Age 18 for American Children by Race/Ethnicity and Sex, 2000-2009

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We estimate the cumulative risk of experiencing foster care placement by age 18 for American children by race/ethnicity and sex from 2000 to 2009 using data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and synthetic cohort life tables. Our results provide support for three conclusions. First, many children experience foster care placement at some point. About 5% to 6% of children experience foster care placement by age 18. Second, there are vast racial/ethnic disparities in this risk. Asian children had the lowest risk at 2% to 3%, with whites (about 4%) and Hispanics (about 5%) slightly higher. The risks for African American and Native American children were dramatically higher. African American children had risks in the 9% to 12% percent range, while Native American children had risks of between 12% and 15%. Finally, sex differences in the cumulative risk of foster care placement were negligible.

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