

Adoption creates a permanent legal relationship between a child and their adoptive family. Children adopted from foster care were removed from their birth families because child protective services and the court determined it was not safe for them to return home and that adoption would be in the children's best interest. Not every child in foster care has a goal of adoption – most will reunify with their families or will live with relatives as their guardians. However, for children for whom reunification is not possible, adoption is a critically important path to a safe, permanent family. While there has been increased focus on ensuring eligible children are adopted from foster care in the past decade, in 2015 there were over 100,000 U.S. children still waiting for adoptive families.

Children adopted from foster care

	DE	US
Number of children adopted from foster care	79	53,549
Average length of stay in care before adoption finalized ¹	30 months	32 months
Average age of adopted children ²	4.3 years	5.7 years
Percent of adopted children who did not receive Title IV-E federal adoption assistance	57%	24%

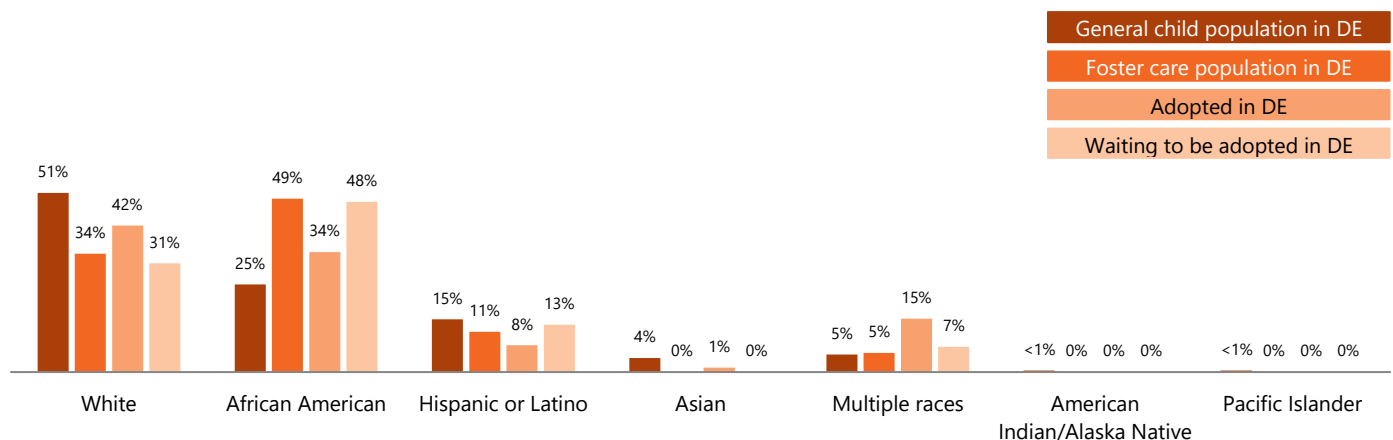
Children waiting to be adopted from foster care

	DE	US
Number of children waiting to be adopted from foster care ³	223	111,820
Average length of stay in care	33 months	32 months
Average age of children waiting to be adopted ⁴	7.6 years	7.2 years
Percent of children waiting to be adopted who have spent 5 or more years in foster care	12%	10%

Age distribution of children adopted and waiting to be adopted from foster care⁵

	Less than 1 year	1 to 5 years old	6 to 10 years old	11 to 15 years old	16 to 20 years old
DE					
Adopted	1%	71%	20%	6%	1%
Waiting to be adopted	4%	37%	27%	23%	9%
US					
Adopted	2%	54%	28%	13%	3%
Waiting to be adopted	4%	41%	28%	21%	7%

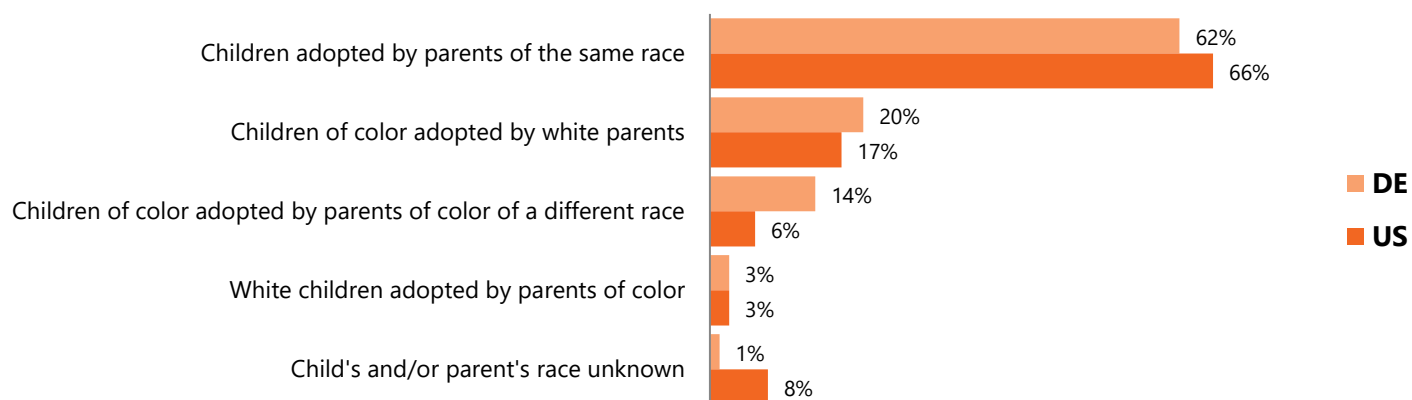
Race and ethnicity of children in DE adopted and waiting to be adopted from foster care⁶



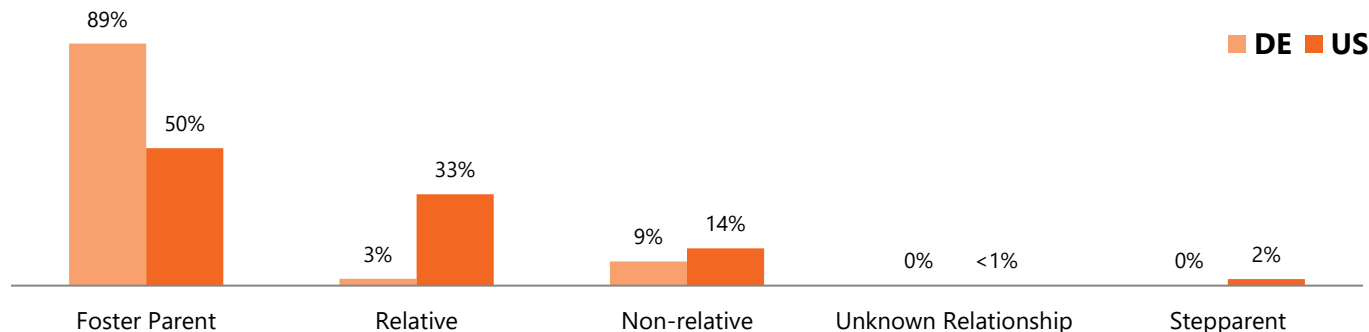
Source, unless noted otherwise: This information is from the federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS), and represents the federal fiscal year 2015 reporting period (October 1, 2014 – September 30, 2015).

Gender	DE	US
Children adopted from foster care		
Female	54%	49%
Male	46%	51%
Children waiting to be adopted from foster care		
Female	42%	47%
Male	58%	53%

Transracial adoptions⁷



Relationship of adoptive parent to child⁸



¹ Length of stay in care is calculated based on the current removal episode.

² Based on child's age on date of adoption.

³ Children are included in this count if they are in foster care at the end of the fiscal year, under the age of 18, and either their parents have lost parental rights or their case goal is adoption. Children ages 16 and 17 with the case goal of emancipation are not included.

⁴ Based on child's age at end of fiscal year.

⁵ Does not include children over age 20 or children missing birthdate data; children waiting to be adopted from foster care are age 17 or younger.

⁶ If a child is determined to be of Hispanic origin, they are only counted as Hispanic and are not included in any of the other racial/ethnic categories. Data for the general child population under age 18 is from the U. S. Census Bureau and is publicly available from the Kids Count Data Center.

⁷ An adoption is considered transracial if the child has two adoptive parents and is not the same race as either parent or if the child has one adoptive parent and is not the same race as that parent.

⁸ In cases where more than one type of adoptive family was selected, stepparent receives priority followed by relative, foster parent and non-relative.