

Trends in Age, Gender, and Ethnicity Among Children in Foster Care in Alaska

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Introduction

In Alaska, as in every other state, people who suspect children are being abused or neglected can contact the designated child protection agency. In Alaska, that agency is the Office of Children Services (OCS). It is responsible for investigating all reported incidents and determining the level of risk to the health, safety, and welfare of children. In a number of instances, children will be removed from their families and homes due to unsafe conditions, and they are often placed in foster care.¹ Being taken away from their families is of course traumatizing for children.

The number of American children in foster care at any time, and the length of time they spend in foster care, has been closely watched over the last several decades. Several changes in policy and practice were introduced in the last 20 years, at national and state levels, to reduce both the number of children in foster care and the length of time they stay in foster care. These changes caused some dramatic trends at the national level: the number of children in foster care in the U.S. declined by almost a quarter (23.7%) between 2002 and 2012, with the decline being most pronounced among African-American children (47.1%). As of 2012, African-American children made up 26% of all children in foster care nationwide, down from 37% a decade earlier. But during the same period, the proportion of children in foster care classified as belonging to two or more races almost doubled. And American Indian/Alaska Native children are the highest represented ethnic group among foster children—13 of every 1,000 American Indian/Alaska Native children in the U.S. were in foster care in 2012.

In contrast, no such dramatic changes happened in Alaska in recent years. This paper reports on foster children in Alaska by age, gender, race, and region over the period 2006-2013. This information is important for state policymakers working to better protect abused and neglected children. At the end of the paper we discuss questions the data raise and describe additional data needed to better help children in foster care in Alaska.

We compiled data for this analysis from monthly reports of key indicators on foster children in the state. OCS publishes monthly data on select indicators (Alaska State Statutes 2011, *Monthly reports concerning children*, AK. Stat. § 47.05.100), in PDF format on its website (<http://dhss.alaska.gov/ocs/Pages/statistics/default.aspx>). Data presented here are snapshots in time and do not follow unique children over time.

Summary of findings

Before we turn to a detailed discussion of our findings, here we briefly summarize them.

- The number of children in foster care in Alaska was essentially unchanged from 2006 through 2013, with about 2,000 children (defined as those 21 and under) in foster care in any given month during that period. The total number of those 21 and under in Alaska also changed little during that period, from about 228,000 in 2006 to 230,000 in 2013.
- Children in Alaska were twice as likely as children nationwide to be in foster care in recent years—nearly 10 in 1,000, or 1%, compared with 0.5% nationwide.

¹ Foster care is also referred to as out-of-home care.

- Within Alaska, children in the Western region are almost twice as likely as children in other regions to be in foster care—the share in foster care in Western Alaska varied from 16 to 20 per 1,000 children in recent years.
- Alaska’s foster care population got younger in recent years, with children 9 and younger making up about 57% of foster children in 2006 but 65% by 2013.
- Toddlers consistently made up the largest single group of foster children in Alaska from 2006 through 2013, with those 4 and younger making up more than a third of all foster children in 2013.
- Nationwide, the youngest children also made up about a third of all foster children in recent years. But across the country, teenager were much more likely to be in foster care, accounting for nearly a quarter of all foster children. That was about double the percentage in Alaska.
- Girls were somewhat more likely than boys to be in foster care in Alaska during the study period. The number of boys in foster care was between 8 and 9 per 1,000 boys from 2006 to 2013, while the number of girls was between 9 and 10 per 1,000 girls.
- Alaska Native children make up about 20% of all children in the state but accounted for about 60% of all children in foster care from 2006 through 2013. In 2013, 30 of every 1,000 Alaska Native children were in foster care—making them about 7 times more likely than White children to be in foster care.

How many children are in foster care, and where are they from?

In Alaska, children removed from their homes for safety may be in, or progress through, any of a number of placement settings before they get a permanent residence—foster family (non-relative home), foster family (relative home), institutional foster care, trial home visit, pre-adoptive placement, or other placements.

On average, approximately 2,000 children, or about 10 out of every 1,000 children in Alaska, were in foster care during any given month from 2006 through 2013. Children typically can be placed in foster care until they are 18 years old, but with a possible extension of one year for those with developmental difficulties or long-term welfare issues, and two more years (extending one year at a time) with the consent of the foster child (AS 47.10.080(c)(1)(A) and (B)). Thus, children reported to be in foster care in Alaska can be any age 21 or younger. Figure 1 shows the percentage of children in foster care in Alaska and the entire U.S. in recent years^{2,3}.

Almost 1% of Alaska children 21 or younger were in foster care during that period, compared with approximately 0.5% in the entire United States. In other words, *Alaska children were twice as likely to be in foster care, compared with children nationwide.*

² Alaska's general population totals for the years 2006 through 2009, 2011, and 2012 are estimates of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development (AK DOL). US population totals for years 2006-2009 and 2011 are intercensal estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau. The same numbers for 2010 are from the decennial census of the U.S. Census Bureau. The data from the AK DOL are developed through a combination of estimates from the AK DOL, U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Center for Health Statistics.

³ Data on number of children in out-of-home care in the United States is from the U.S. Department of Health and Social Services, Administration for Children and Families: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>

Figure 2 compares the rate of representation in foster care (the number of children in foster care per 1,000 children in the general population), by age cohorts, in Alaska and the entire country. Children of all ages, except the oldest, were represented at higher rates in Alaska than nationwide in most years from 2006 to 2013.

Figure 1: Percentage of children (21 or younger) in foster care at the end of September each year, Alaska and United States, (2006-2013)

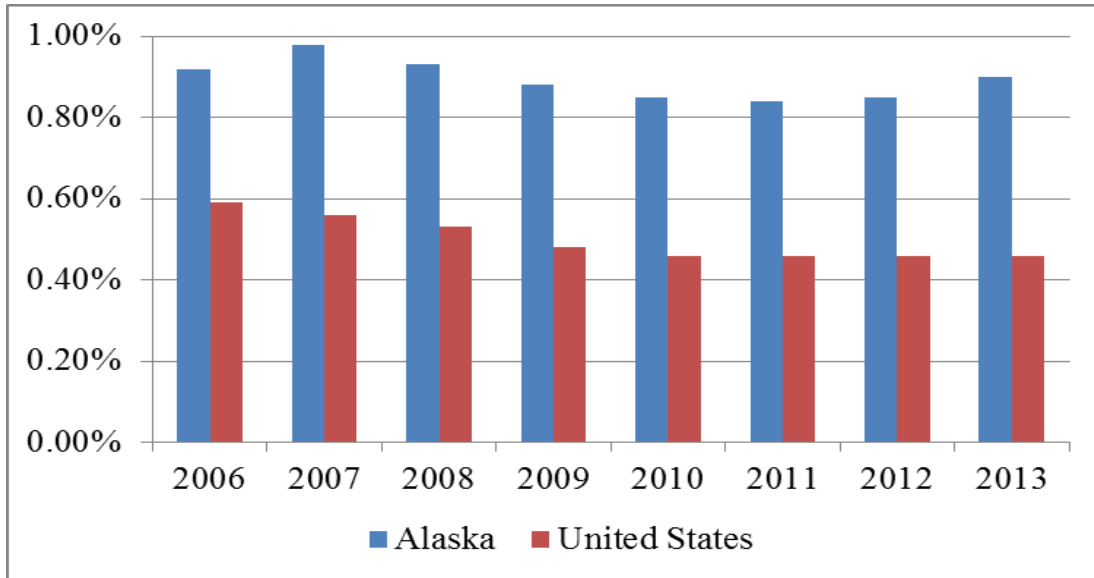


Figure 2: Number of children (21 and under) in foster care per every 1,000 children in the general population, by age cohort, Alaska and United States, (2006-2013)

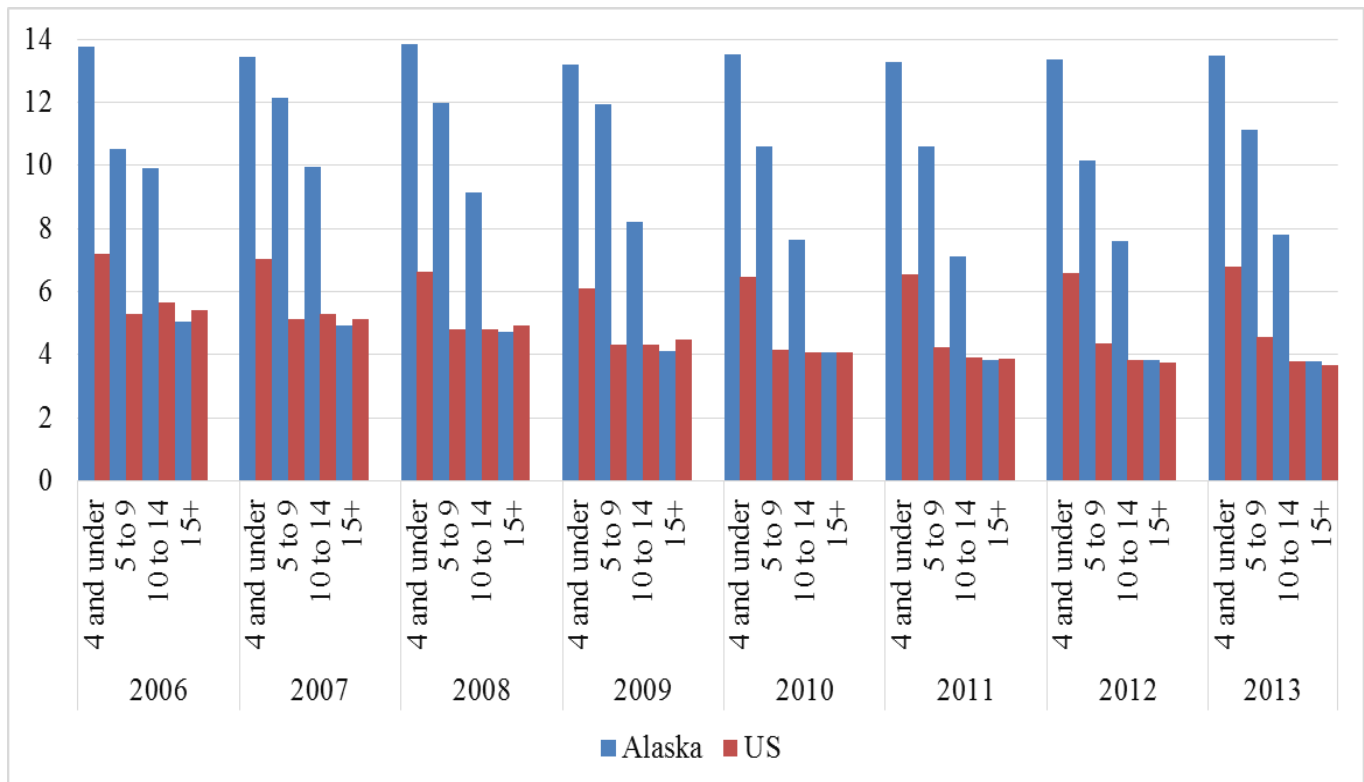
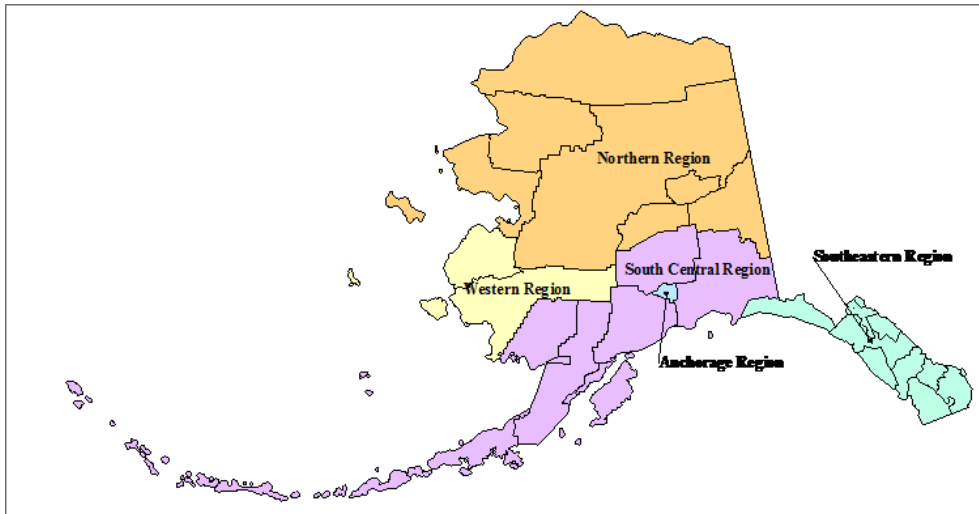
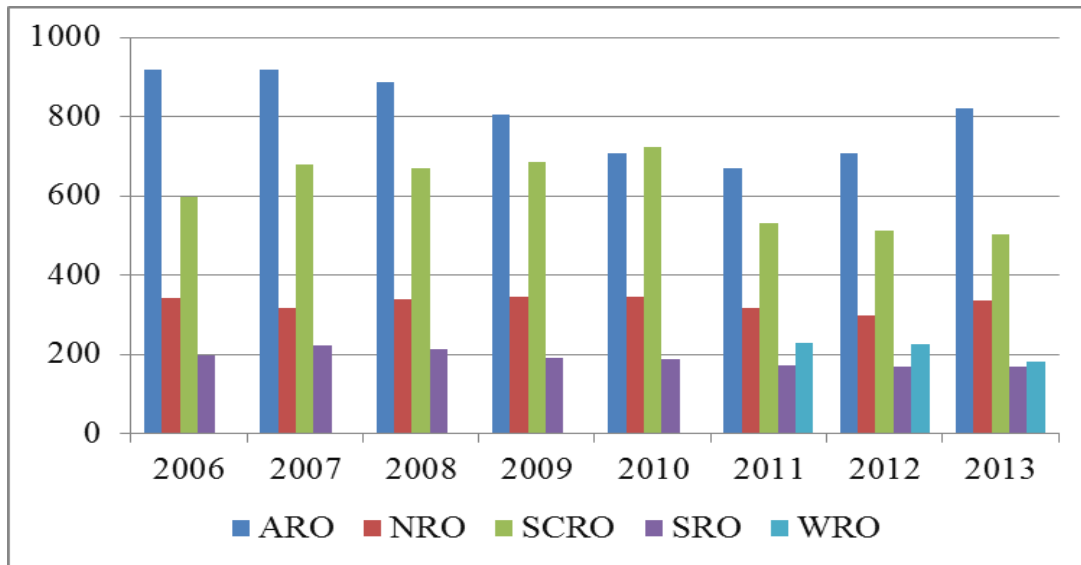


Figure 3: OCS Administrative Regions⁴



OCS has five regional OCS offices – Anchorage (ARO), South Central (SCRO), Southeastern (SRO), Northern (NRO), and Western (WRO). Except ARO, each regional office oversees several field offices. The region reported for a foster child at any given time may mean the child’s region of residence; placement; or current residence, if the child was between placements. The ARO, SCRO, and WRO together accounted for 75% of foster children from 2006 through 2013 (Figure 4). The drop in SCRO after 2010 is due to creation of WRO, carved out of SCRO in that year.

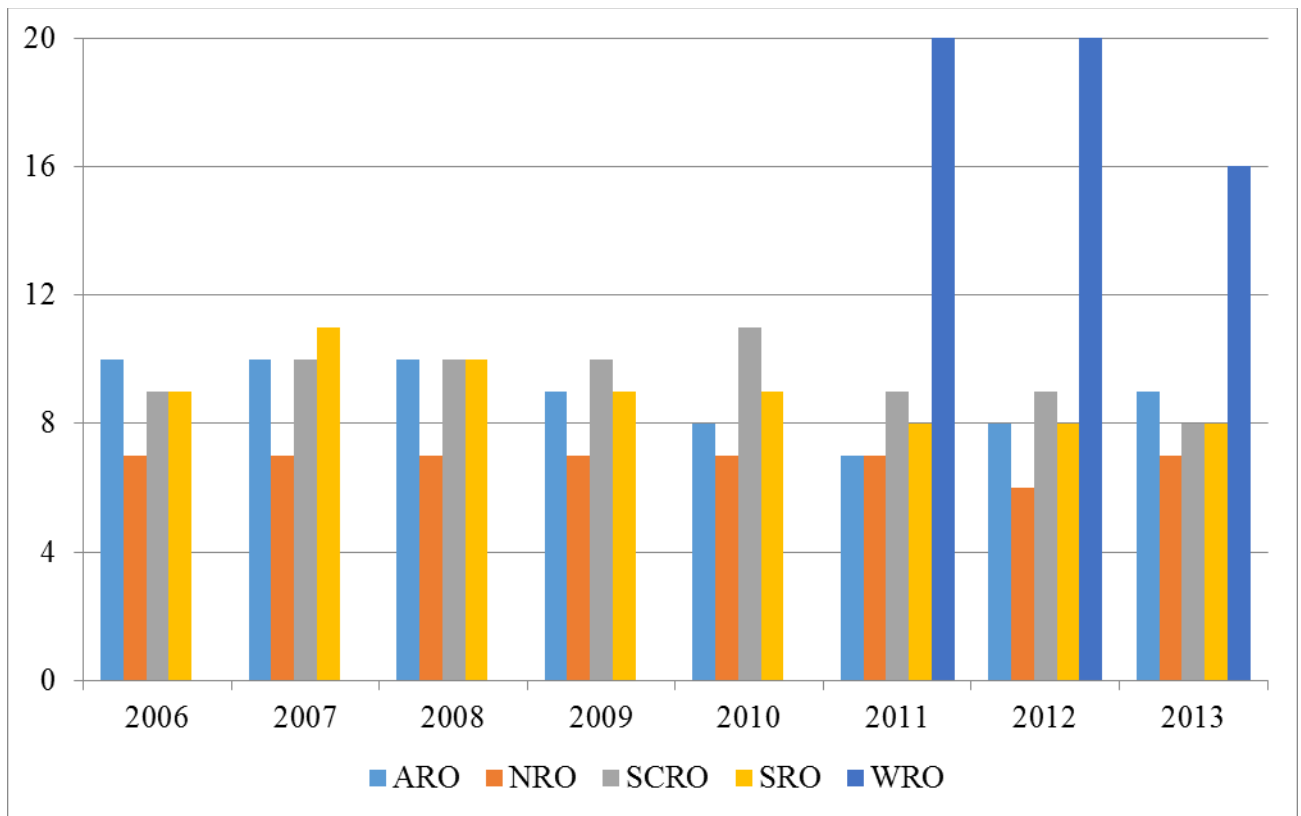
Figure 4: Number of Alaska children in foster care, by OCS region



⁴ Based on the OCS list of communities each field office serves. It is accurate, except: (1) Tyonek, (2012 pop: 171), in Kenai Peninsula Borough, is served by ARO; (2) Lime Village, (2012 pop: 27), in Bethel census area is served by SCRO.

That Anchorage and the South Central region account for a majority of children in foster care is not surprising, since most of the state’s children live in those regions. For example, in 2010, 42% of all state’s children lived in Anchorage and 36% of all children in foster care were from the Anchorage region. Does this mean the Anchorage and South Central regions need the most attention on foster care issues? A larger population may simply contribute to larger numbers of children in foster care. A better comparison among regions is the number of children in foster care per every 1,000 children in the general population, shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Number of children in foster care per every 1,000 children in general Alaska population, by OCS region



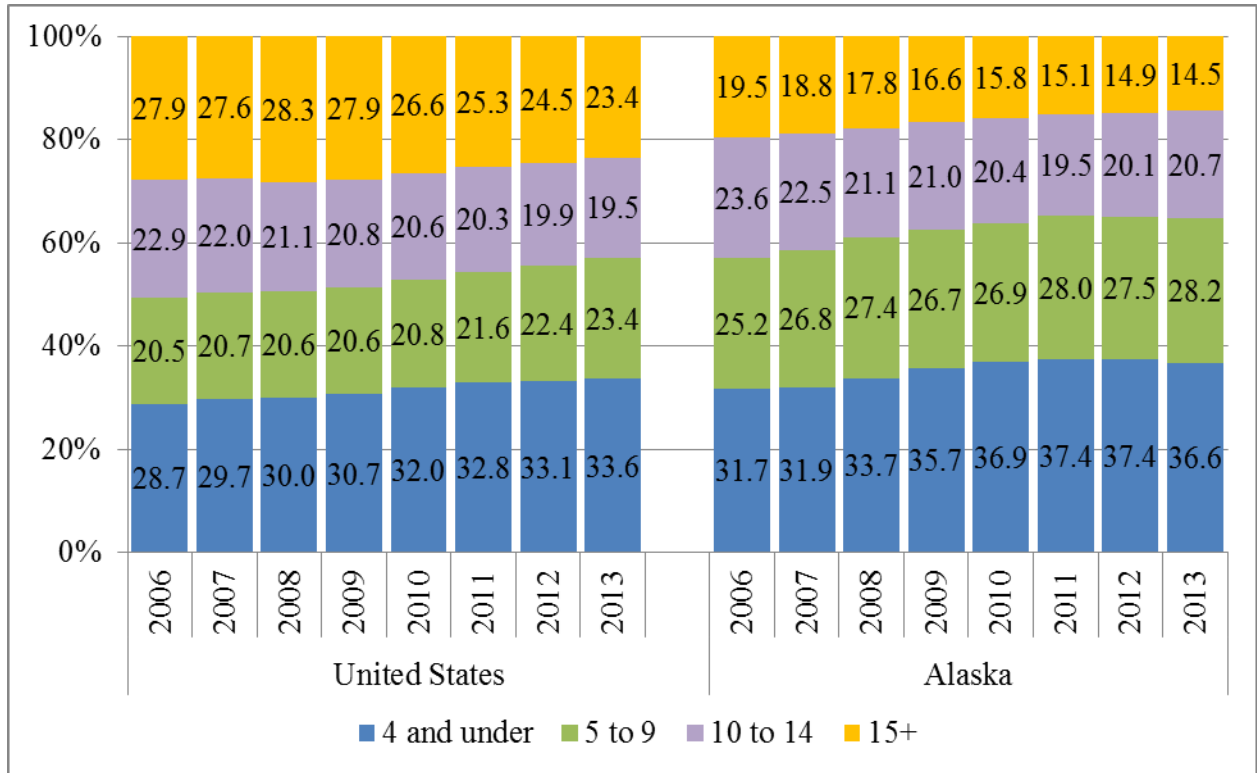
In 2010, South Central region had the highest number of children (11) in foster care per 1,000 children in the general population. That dropped significantly after OCS took Western Alaska out of the South Central region and created the new Western region. In each of the next two years, 20 of every 1,000 children in the Western region were in foster care, more than double the rate of any other region. While there was a marked decrease in 2013—16 per 1,000 children—the rate in the Western region remains high. Anchorage, with 9 children per 1,000, had the second highest rate as of 2013. *While the Anchorage region has the largest number of children in foster care, a child in the Western Region is almost twice as likely to be in foster care.*

How old are the children in foster care?

Alaska’s foster care population seems to have gotten younger from 2006 to 2013. Both in Alaska and across the nation, the number of children in the younger cohorts gradually

increased over the eight-year period. In Alaska, the share of children 9 and younger increased from about 57% to nearly 65%; nationwide, that share increased from around 50% to 57%. And the percentage of those 15 or older in foster care declined nationwide and in Alaska—but in 2013, that percentage nationwide was nearly double that in Alaska.

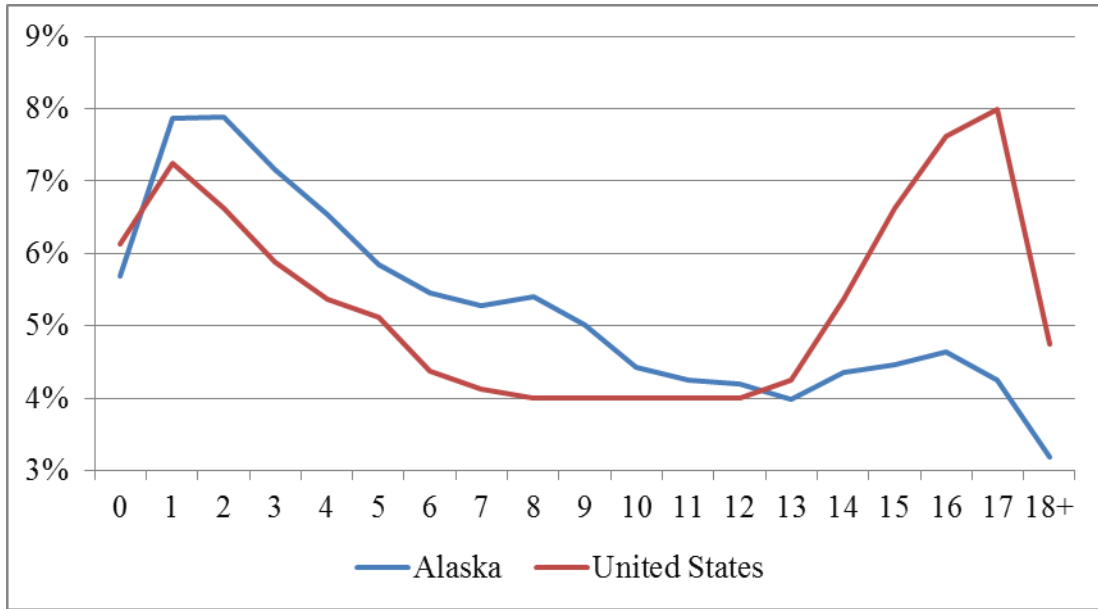
Figure 6: Percentage if children in foster care by age cohort, Alaska and United States.



Toddlers were consistently the largest group in foster care over the study period in Alaska, with approximately a third of those in foster care younger than 5. A similar pattern held nationally, except that across the U.S. the proportion of older teenagers in foster care was significantly higher.

Younger children are more vulnerable to maltreatment and end up in the foster care system in large numbers in Alaska and nationwide—but that pattern is even more pronounced in Alaska. On the other hand, teenagers are much less likely to be in foster care in Alaska than across the country (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Percentage of children in foster care, by age, (averaged, 2006 – 2013)



Boys or girls: who is more likely to be in foster care?

The number of boys and girls in foster care in Alaska remained approximately the same over the 2006-2013 study period. Table 1 shows the number of children, by gender, in foster care and in the general population. The number of children in foster care for every 1,000 children in the general population (presented in the last two columns of Table 1) remained largely unchanged over the eight years.

Table 1: Gender distribution in foster care and in general Alaska population, 21 or younger

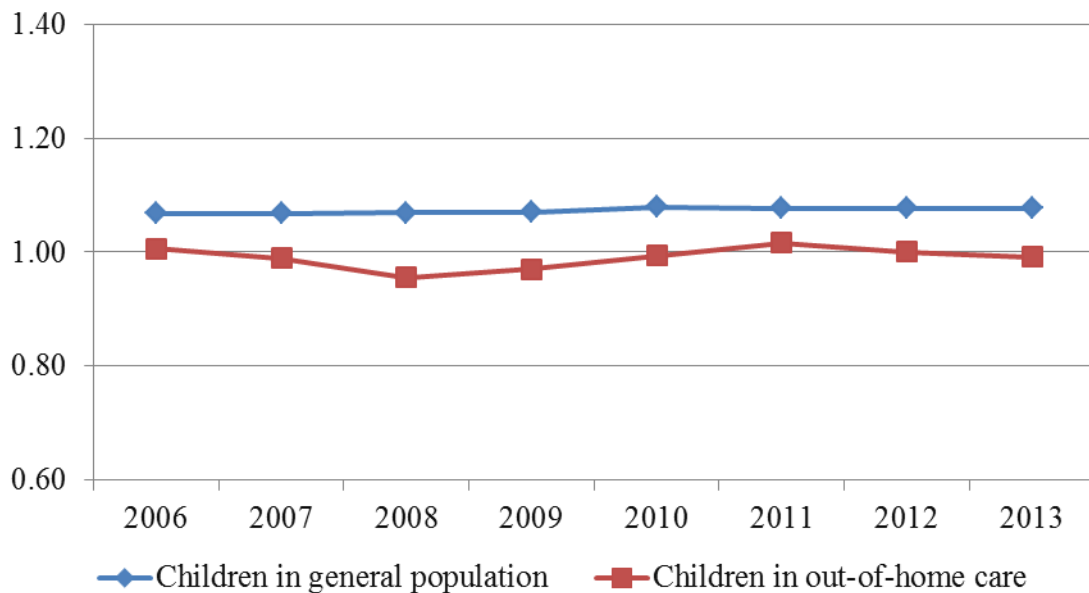
| Year | Out-of home care population | | General Population | | Number in out-of-home care per 1,000 in general population | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------|--------------------|---------|--|-------|
| | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls | Boys | Girls |
| 2006 | 1032 | 1026 | 117,704 | 110,253 | 9 | 9 |
| 2007 | 1062 | 1074 | 117,522 | 110,085 | 9 | 10 |
| 2008 | 1033 | 1080 | 117,342 | 109,709 | 9 | 10 |
| 2009 | 997 | 1029 | 118,088 | 110,340 | 8 | 9 |
| 2010 | 980 | 985 | 118,912 | 110,133 | 8 | 9 |
| 2011 | 966 | 951 | 119,573 | 110,975 | 8 | 9 |
| 2012 | 958 | 958 | 119,390 | 110,888 | 8 | 9 |
| 2013 | 1002 | 1010 | 119,438 | 110,859 | 8 | 9 |

The gender ratio (Figure 8) compares the distribution of boys and girls in the foster care population, by age, and in the same age cohorts in the general population. Values on the vertical axis show the ratio between boys and girls, with the value 1 meaning the number

of boys and girls is equal. Values greater than 1 indicate more boys than girls, and values less than 1 indicate more girls than boys.

Throughout the years from 2006 to 2013, there were more boys than girls in the general population—as evidenced by the general population line being above 1 throughout. In comparison, the gender ratio among the children in foster care dipped below 1 toward the end of the last decade. There were more girls in foster care than there were boys during the years 2007 through 2010. In other words, the gender distribution of the population in foster care is not like of the general population. *Girls were marginally more likely to be in foster care than boys during the period 2006-2013.*

Figure 8: Gender ratio (ratio of boys to girls) among children in foster care and among Alaska children age 21 or younger in the general population



While girls overall were always more likely to be in foster care over the eight years, that differed by age. Figure 9 (plotted on the same scale on vertical axis as Figure 8) shows the “gender ratio index”⁵ (the ratio of boys to girls) across single-year age cohorts. The numbers of boys and girls were approximately equal among children up to nine years old. But boys ages 10 to 13 were more (1.2 times) likely to be in foster care, and girls 15 and older were more likely (1.4 times) to be in foster care. There were approximately 120 boys for every 100 girls in the 11-year age cohort and approximately 70 boys for every 100 girls in the 17-year cohort.⁶ Figure 10 shows the same patterns among boys and girls, but with actual numbers of boys and girls in foster care by age.

⁵ The gender ratio index is a standardized number representing the gender ratio for the entire period between 2006-2013. The value represents the ratio of boys to girls during any month during this period.

⁶ The same trends could not be computed for the gender ratio in the general population due to lack of similar monthly data.

Figure 9: Gender ratio index (ratio of boys to girls) for single-year age cohorts among Alaska children in foster care (data standardized over the period 2006 – 2013)

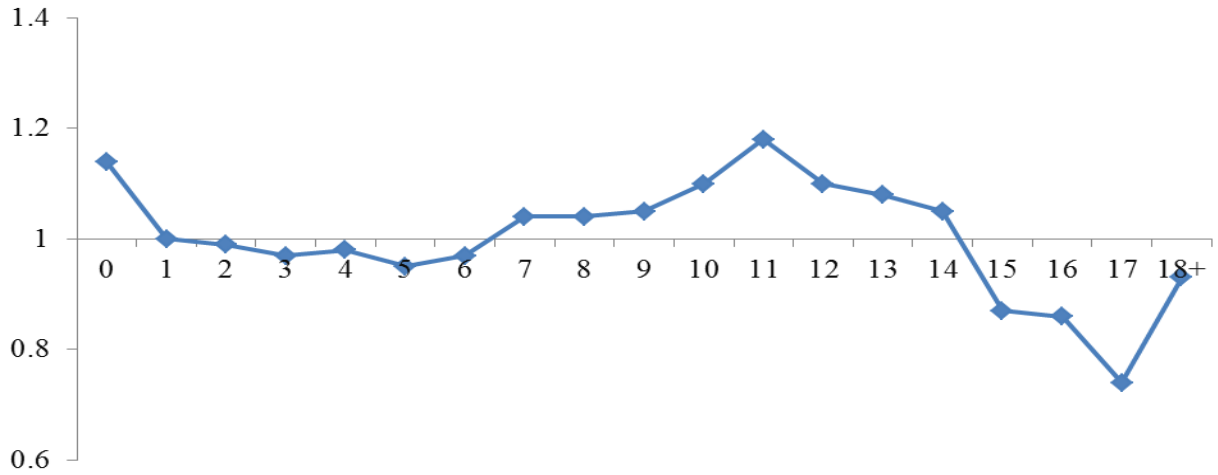
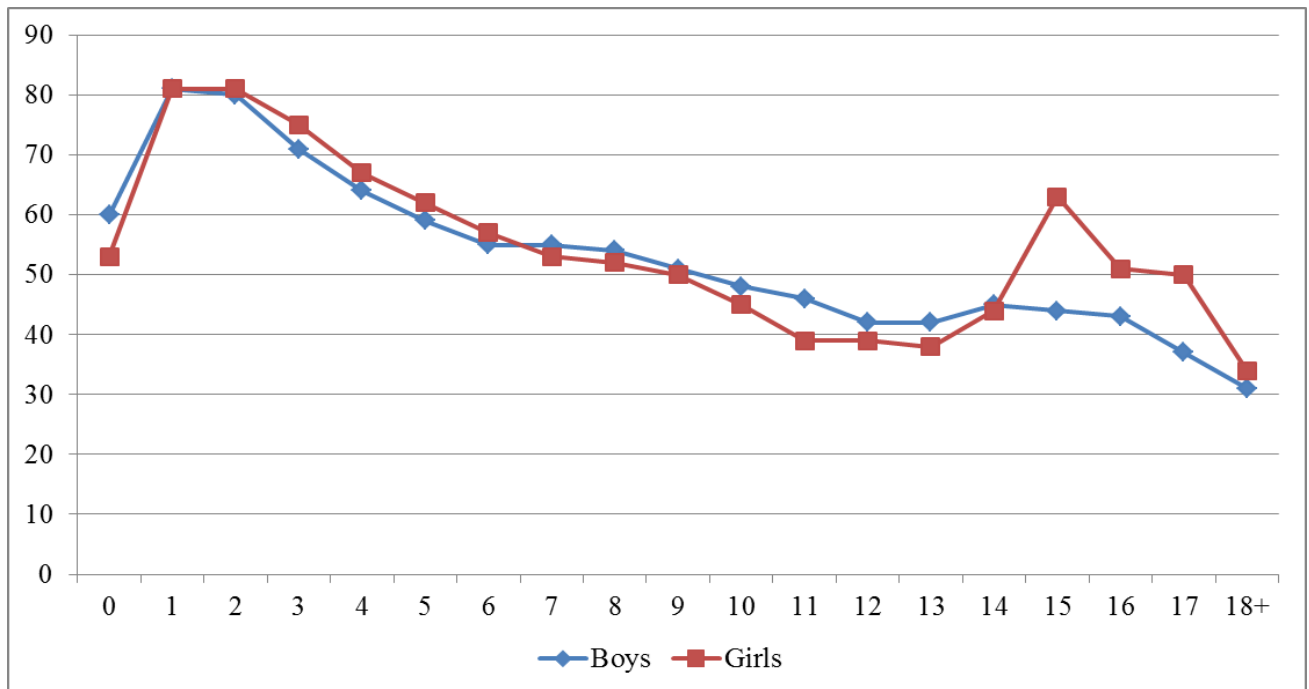


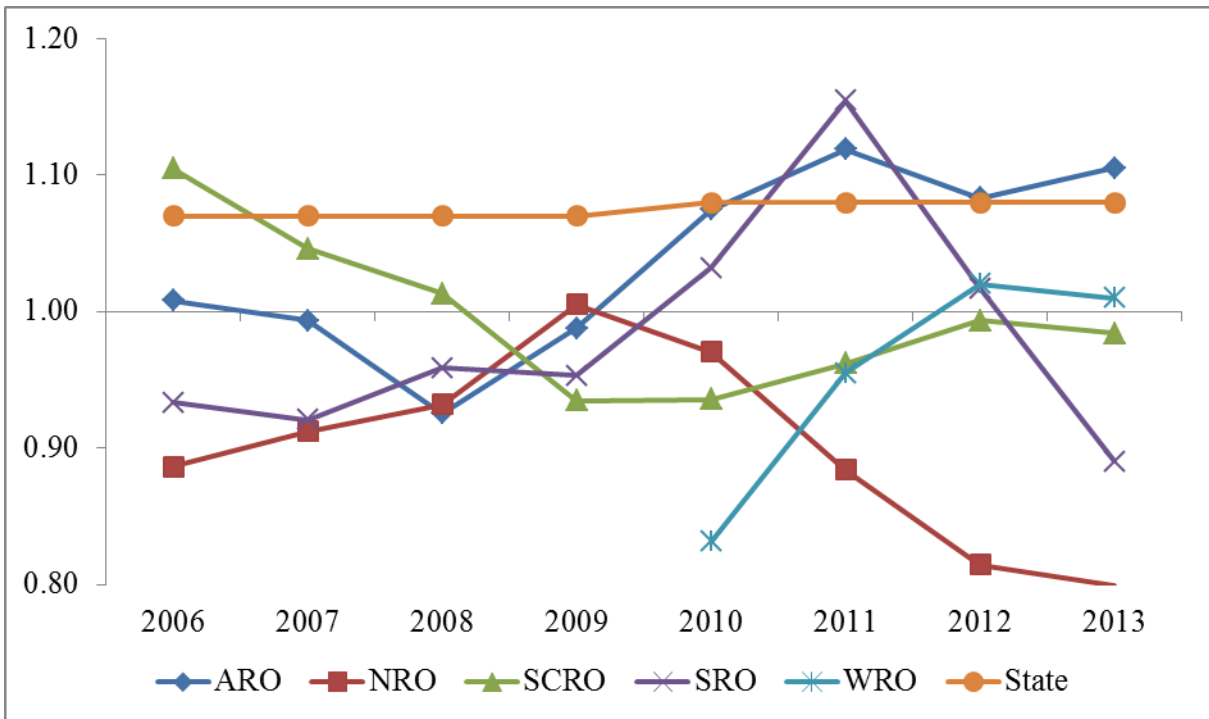
Figure 10: Monthly average number of Alaska children 21 and under in foster care, by gender and age, 2006 – 2013



The chances of girls or boys being in foster care also vary by region (Figure 11). The change in the gender ratio for the statewide population in foster care is included for comparison. There were more boys than girls among the foster care population in South Central Region (SCRO) during the earlier years, 2006 and 2007. All other regions had

about the same number or more girls than boys during these years. A convergence in the gender ratio among children in all regions during the years 2008-2009 is noteworthy. Beyond 2009, foster care in the Northern region was dominated by girls, while boys dominated in the Anchorage and Southeastern regions.

Figure 11: Gender ratio (ratio of boys to girls) among Alaska children in foster care, by OCS administrative region



Are Alaska Native children over-represented among children in foster care?

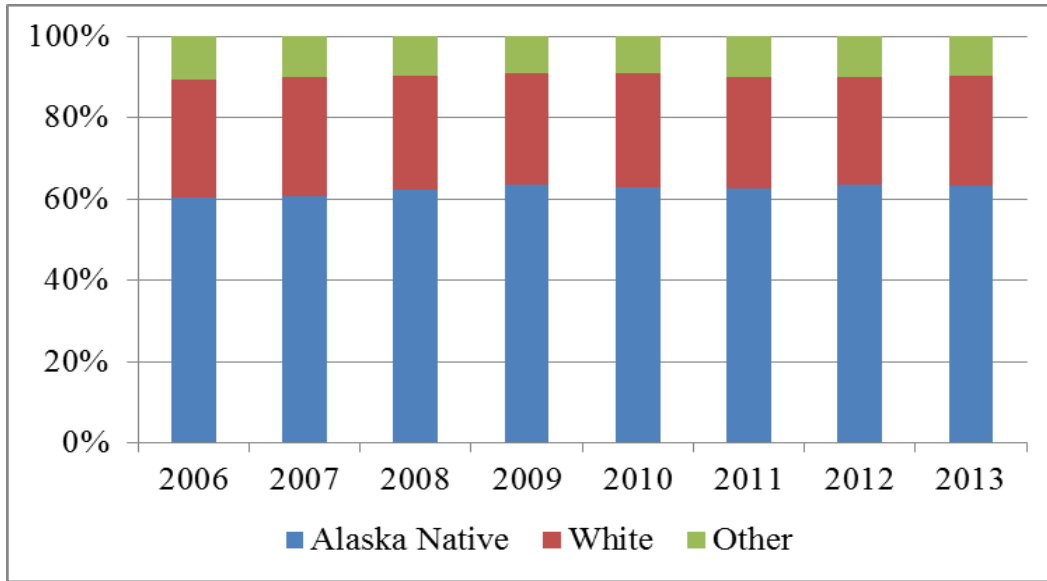
It has become common knowledge that Alaska Native children are over-represented in Alaska's child welfare system, and that issue has been discussed at length over the last several years. The Western and Pacific Child Welfare Implementation Center (WPIC) has worked with OCS and its tribal partners, trying to find ways to reduce the disproportional representation of Alaska Native children in foster care.⁷

Figure 12 shows the percentage of children of Alaska Native, White, and Other races in foster care for each year between 2006 and 2013.⁸ Alaska Native children consistently made up more than 60% of the children in foster care in the state, while making up only about 20% of the population 21 years or younger.

⁷ Details about this implementation project, along with a number of presentations, videos and some documents are available at: <http://wpicenter.org/projects-alaska.php>

⁸ Percentages are derived from the average monthly number of children in foster care for each race. OCS reports data for four race categories – Alaska Native, White, Other, and Undetermined. To accommodate comparisons with the general population, “Other” and “Undetermined” categories were combined into “Other” category.

Figure 12: Percentage of children in foster care by race.



Another way of looking at this issue is asking: How likely are Alaska Native children to be in foster care, compared with children of other races? As shown in Table 2, approximately 25 to 30 of every 1,000 Alaska Native children were in foster care from 2006 through 2013, compared with 4 of every 1,000 White children and 4 of every 1,000 children of other races.

The last two columns in Table 2 show the Disproportionality Index (DI)⁹ values for both Alaska Native children and children of other races in foster care, compared with White children. Alaska Native children were 5.82 times more likely than White children to be in foster care in 2006, but by 2013 they were 6.95 times more likely. *Over the eight-year period, Alaska Native children made up an increasing percentage of all children in foster care and became more likely to be in foster care, compared with White children.*

⁹ For more discussion on measuring racial disproportionality in child welfare see: Shaw, T. V., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Magruder, J., and Needell, B. (2008). Measuring racial disparity in child welfare. *Child Welfare*, 87(2), 23-36.

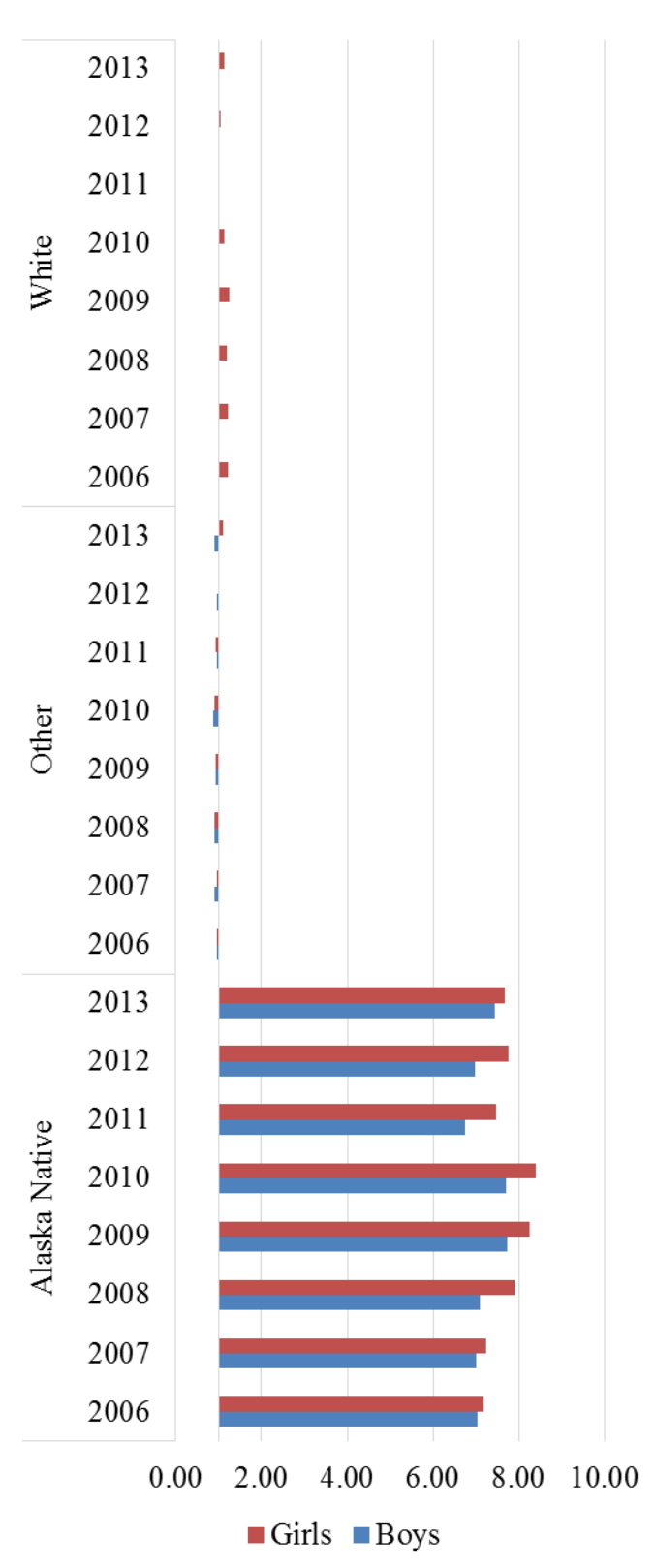
Table 2: Children in foster care – rate of representation by race and disproportionality index (DI).

| Year | Rate of representation (per 1000 children in general population) | | | Disproportionality Index (DI) | |
|------|--|-------|-------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| | Alaska Native | White | Other | Native/White | Other/White |
| 2006 | 26 | 4 | 7 | 5.82 | 1.70 |
| 2007 | 27 | 5 | 7 | 5.82 | 1.58 |
| 2008 | 28 | 4 | 7 | 6.26 | 1.51 |
| 2009 | 27 | 4 | 6 | 6.54 | 1.48 |
| 2010 | 26 | 4 | 4 | 6.38 | 1.07 |
| 2011 | 25 | 4 | 5 | 6.52 | 1.20 |
| 2012 | 26 | 4 | 5 | 6.73 | 1.19 |
| 2013 | 30 | 4 | 4 | 6.95 | 0.92 |

Do the DI values differ by gender? Are Alaska Native girls just as likely as Alaska Native boys to be in foster care? *Alaska Native girls were the most likely of all gender-race groups to be in foster care in Alaska during the study period.* In 2013, Alaska Native girls were 7.5 times more likely to be in foster care, and Alaska Native boys were 7 times more likely, to be in foster care, compared with White boys.

Figure 13 plots the state-wide DI values for different gender-race groups in foster care, compared with White boys. We compared all other race-gender groups with White boys because White boys are the least likely to be in foster care. Thus, the DI value for White boys is 1 for each year, and Figure 13 shows all values plotted relative to that number. It's clear that both Alaska Native boys and girls are far more likely than White boys to be in foster care, and that Alaska Native girls are slightly more likely than Alaska Native boys to be in foster care. Generally, boys and girls of other races were as likely as, or more likely, to be in foster care than White boys—but overall differences between these groups were small.

Figure 13: State-wide Disproportionality Index values by race and gender among Alaska children in foster care, compared with White boys in foster care, 2006-2013



Do these patterns hold true for Alaska Native children in foster care in all regions of the state? As shown in Figure 14, the answer is generally yes. Alaska Native girls were typically more likely to be in foster care than Alaska Native boys, or any other gender-race group, in every region. Alaska Native girls in the Northern region were consistently more likely than Alaska Native boys to be in foster care. But gender differences were not as marked or as consistent in the Anchorage, South Central, and Southeast regions over the study period.

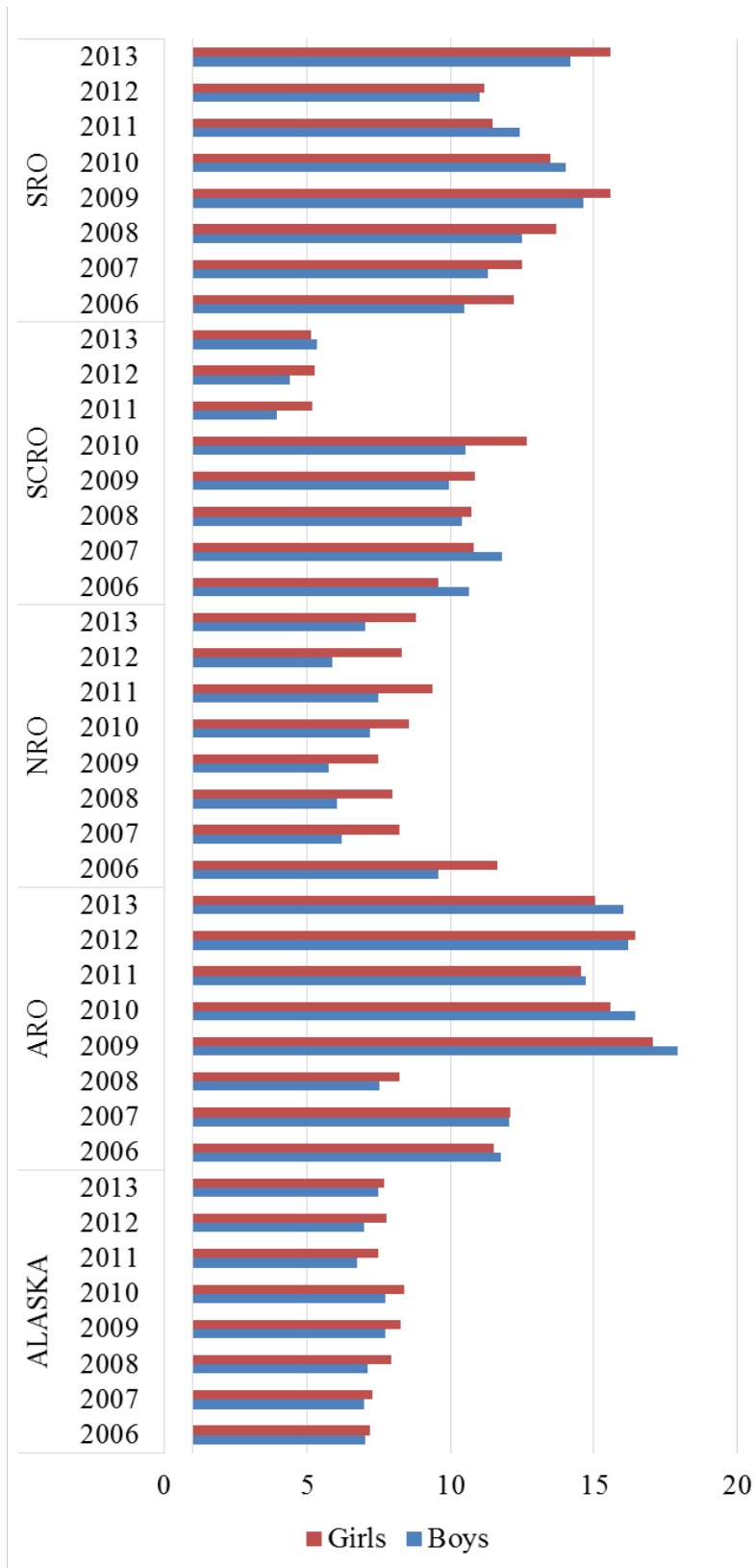
Foster care populations in the Anchorage and Southeast regions were more disproportional than those in either the Northern or South Central regions. Anchorage and Southeast regions differ considerably in the structure of their populations, availability of services, and connectivity to the rest of the state. Anchorage is the largest city in the state, and many communities from across the state depend on Anchorage for services; thus, children and families move to Anchorage for either these services or other reasons. Since the majority of rural Alaska population is Alaska Native, this in-migration into Anchorage may account for the disproportionality in the Anchorage region. The Southeast region, on the other hand, is relatively secluded from the rest of the state, and there is relatively little in-migration from other regions.

The special case of the Western region: Data for the Western region (not presented in Figure 14) were available only starting in July 2010, when it was created out of the South Central region. In this analysis, 2010 data for the South Central region included data from the Western region. For the years 2011 through 2013, there were no White children in foster care from the Western region. Therefore, comparable DI values could not be calculated.

The discussion of disproportionality by race is categorically different in the Western region. Every other OCS region has a major urban center with a majority of the population being White. By comparison, 86.6% of the Western region's population is Alaska Native. Among the children 21 years and younger, 91.4% are Alaska Native and only 3.17% White. In other words, racial disproportionality does not exist in the Western region because almost all the children in foster care are of the same race.

However, the number of children in foster care in the Western region—per every 1,000 children in the general population—is quite high (20 in 2011 and 2012, 16 in 2013) compared with levels in any other region, the state, or the nation (Figure 5). Girls in this region are marginally more likely than boys (Figure 11) to be in foster care.

Figure 14: Disproportionality Index values for Alaska Native children in foster care, compared with White boys in foster care, by gender and OCS region, 2006-2013



Discussion

Children in foster care are the responsibility of the state, and thus a responsibility of society. Foster care is intended to be a safer arrangement for children who are unsafe in their own homes. But being removed from one's own home and family is a traumatic experience for children. Children need permanency, and foster care is a temporary arrangement before each child is either reunited with family or adopted into a safer household.

During the eight-year period (2006-2013) reviewed here, children in Alaska were twice as likely to be in foster care as children nationwide. Approximately 10 of every 1,000 children in Alaska were in foster care during that time. Within Alaska, a child in the Western region was almost twice as likely to be placed in foster care than in any other region. Does that mean Alaska's families are twice as unsafe, compared with families elsewhere? Or does it mean Alaska is simply less tolerant of unsafe conditions?

Alaska's foster care population also seems to have gotten younger over the last eight years. Although infants and toddlers together were consistently the largest group in foster care among all age groups, their proportion increased over the last eight years—and stayed higher than the proportions for the same age groups in foster care nationwide. Again, are Alaska's infants and toddlers more vulnerable, or are Alaska's safety standards more stringent?

Interestingly, older children make up a smaller percentage of the foster care population in Alaska than in the U.S. as a whole. Is Alaska more successful in finding safe homes for children in the foster care system than other states? This implies that Alaska has better and more functional systems of support for children in foster care and for the families that receive these children. Is that true?

Girls were marginally more likely to be in foster care in Alaska over the study period. However, this varied considerably among different age groups. Boys between 9 and 13 were more likely to be in foster care, and girls older than 15 were more likely to be in foster care. The gender ratio differed inconsistently among the OCS regions. The reasons for these trends may be many, complex, and interrelated. Cohort studies or cross sectional studies, specifically focusing on these children, are necessary to clarify the reasons for these trends.

Considerable racial disproportionality existed among children in foster care throughout the study period. With the available data, we could only examine disproportionality among children in foster care during any month within the study period. Alaska Native children were seven times more likely than White children to be in foster care in 2013. Among Alaska Native children, girls were marginally more likely to be in foster care. Disproportionality was most severe in the Anchorage and Southeastern regions. A more complete picture would emerge if we could examine similar measures as children enter foster care, and leave foster care, for the same time period. This would allow us to assess if certain race-gender-age groups are more likely to stay in foster care longer. In addition, studying the trajectories of a sample of unique children through the foster care system would provide a clear picture of the amount of time they spend in each phase of the foster care system.

Trends explored in this paper are instructive in many ways, and call for increased attention to the policies governing foster care in Alaska. Questions raised above can be investigated through more in-depth examination of various components of the foster care system. It is impossible to know why certain age cohorts are represented more than others, or why girls are represented more than others, or why Alaska Native children are more likely to be in foster care than other racial groups, without studying the circumstances of these children and their families. OCS collects some of this data as needed for service provision, and could be used to answer some of these questions. Other data may have to be collected in specially designed studies focused on specific aspects of the foster care system.

Decades of research shows that well being among children in foster care is markedly lower than for children in other circumstances. With 10 out of every 1,000 children—and approximately 30 of every 1,000 Alaska Native children—in foster care, Alaska’s current child population is at risk of facing severe challenges as they age into adulthood and into the workforce. A thorough look at the circumstances leading to, and while in, foster care is necessary.

Limitations

Data on each of the four indicators have several limitations.

- All data used are aggregate data. Individual case-level data were unavailable.
- Each month’s data are a snapshot of the foster care population as reported on the third day of the following month. Thus, the entire dataset is a series of 96 snapshots in time, at approximately equal intervals through the period. If there is any periodicity inherent in the foster care population that parallels this monthly interval, that may have systematically biased the data.
- It is important to note that the population in foster care is dynamic. Children may be entering and exiting foster care at any time. While there may be many of the same children each month, several children may have left the system during any given month and new or the same children may enter during the same month. The number of children reported each month is not a count of unique children.
- Data for this analysis were retrieved from monthly reports listed below, posted in PDF format on OCS website.
 - All children in Alaska OCS out-of-home placement for the month of [Month, Year] *by race and region*
 - All children in Alaska OCS out-of-home placement for the month of [Month, Year] *by gender and age*
 - All children in Alaska OCS out-of-home placement for the month of [Month, Year] *by race and age*
 - All children in Alaska OCS out-of-home placement for the month of [Month, Year] *by race and region [and gender]*
- Data on age distribution among foster children are most restricted. Children can be in foster care through age 21. All children 18 years and older are grouped into one age cohort: “18+.” From the available public data it is impossible to discern the number of children in each single-year age cohort from 18 through 21 years of age. Additionally, age distribution data is not available by OCS administrative region.

- Data on race distribution were available only by gender and OCS region, not by age.
- The available data does not include any child well-being outcomes, and thus does not allow assessment of outcomes for children in foster care over time.
- Placement statistics such as child median age, number of placements, or time in care were limited. The most recent report available with these statistics was from September 2011. Thus, this data could not be used.

Note on population of OCS regions

The boundaries of the five OCS regions did not seem to match any known census boundaries. In other words, it seemed impossible to know the number of children living within the boundary of any of the OCS regions, making it impossible to calculate regional rates. This situation drove us to closely examine the boundaries of OCS regions, to compute total population of children in each region. We found that the OCS regions closely line up with the census area/borough boundaries with only two exceptions—Tyonek (2012 pop. 171) and Lime Village (2012 pop. 29). Table 3 shows the final numbers by year and gender, for each of the five OCS regions.

Table 3: Population 21 and under by gender and OCS region, 2006 to 2013

| | Anchorage Region | | Northern Region | | South Central Region | | Southeast Region | | Western Region | |
|------|------------------|--------|-----------------|--------|----------------------|--------|------------------|--------|----------------|--------|
| | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |
| 2006 | 48199 | 45214 | 23642 | 22147 | 28779 | 27014 | 11092 | 10461 | 5992 | 5417 |
| 2007 | 47735 | 44750 | 24200 | 22677 | 29027 | 27288 | 10691 | 10029 | 5869 | 5341 |
| 2008 | 47639 | 44530 | 24200 | 22649 | 29114 | 27329 | 10546 | 9904 | 5843 | 5296 |
| 2009 | 48481 | 45301 | 24058 | 22475 | 29261 | 27513 | 10479 | 9786 | 5808 | 5266 |
| 2010 | 48446 | 45322 | 24337 | 22126 | 29985 | 27663 | 10392 | 9714 | 5751 | 5307 |
| 2011 | 48541 | 45319 | 24180 | 22106 | 30534 | 28225 | 10518 | 9860 | 5800 | 5465 |
| 2012 | 48251 | 45151 | 24466 | 22223 | 30422 | 28205 | 10489 | 9868 | 5762 | 5442 |
| 2013 | 48381 | 45241 | 24180 | 21817 | 30608 | 28499 | 10372 | 9793 | 5898 | 5509 |

Methods used in this process:

1. We worked with the OCS research staff in Juneau and identified the regional offices, field offices, and all communities served through each of these offices.
2. OCS region for each community was cross-walked with 2010 census area/borough boundary in which that community is located.
3. With the exceptions of Tyonek and Lime Village, all communities, their field offices, and regional offices fit well within existing borough/census area boundaries.
4. OCS serves children 21 years and younger. The U.S. Census Bureau reports data for single-age cohorts only for decennial censuses. The Alaska Department of Labor estimates population for intercensal years by 5-year age cohorts, and total

numbers for ages 20 and 21 are included in the 20-24 age cohort. Therefore, we calculated the percentage of children that were 20 and 21 years old within the 20-24 cohort for the year 2010, and applied these percentages to the AK DOL annual estimates from 2006 through 2013 (the latest year for which estimates are available). We did this for each census area/borough, and the communities of Tyonek and Lime Village.

5. Finally, we added the population numbers of all census areas/boroughs, by OCS region, for each year. The population of Tyonek was subtracted from the Kenai Peninsula Borough and added to the Anchorage region, and the population of Lime Village was subtracted from Bethel census area and added to the Northern region.

Availability of these numbers will now allow calculation of not only disproportionality statistics and several indicators for children in out-of-home placement in each region, but also computation of many other indicators on incidence of and response to all types of maltreatment. Further, it is now possible to examine relationships between social and economic outcomes and various child protection indicators within each OCS region.

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