

Foster Parent Retention Report

(FY 2021 Appropriation Act - Public Act 166 of 2020)

March 1, 2021

Sec. 583. By March 1 of the current fiscal year, the department shall provide to the senate and house appropriations subcommittees on the department budget, the senate and house standing committees on families and human services, the senate and house fiscal agencies and policy offices, and the state budget office a report that includes:

(a) The number and percentage of foster parents that dropped out of the program in the previous fiscal year and the reasons the foster parents left the program and how those figures compare to prior fiscal years.

(b) The number and percentage of foster parents successfully retained in the previous fiscal year and how those figures compare to prior fiscal years.



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Foster Home Closures

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, 1,903 foster homes closed. Twenty-eight percent of the foster homes that closed were relative homes and 72 percent were non-relative foster homes. In FY 2019, 1,835 foster homes closed. Thirty-two percent of the foster homes that closed were relative homes and 68 percent were non-relative foster homes.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) remains committed to ensuring a sufficient and adequate array of foster homes for children entering foster care.

Reasons Foster Parents Left the Program - Foster Home Closure Surveys

Each month the Office of Child Welfare Policy and Programs sends surveys to MDHHS and private agency foster care (PAFC) foster parents whose foster care home closed during the previous month.¹ The survey includes questions, such as: the length of time as a foster parent, reasons for becoming a foster parent, issues and concerns associated with being a foster parent, and the reasons for not continuing as a foster parent. There was a 34 percent response rate to the FY 2020 closed foster care home survey. The following are FY 2020 survey results:

- The top reasons foster parents closed their license:
 - Adopted the child(ren) placed with them.
 - Family needs.
 - Demands/stress.

- The top three challenges of being a foster parent:
 - Child(ren)'s behavior.
 - Visitation.
 - The foster care system.

- The top three reasons for becoming a foster parent:
 - Wanted to make a difference/wanted to help.
 - Love children.
 - Wanted to care for a specific child.

¹ Foster home closures are defined as parents who dropped out of the program due to the following reasons: adoption; death; lack of response to license renewal; voluntary withdrawal and administrative closure.

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Foster Home Retention

On October 1, 2019, there were 5,829 licensed foster homes. On September 30, 2020, 4,053 of those licensed foster parents remained licensed, which is a 70 percent retention rate. On October 1, 2018, there were 6,336 licensed foster homes. On September 30, 2019, 4,616 of those licensed foster parents remained licensed, which is a 73 percent retention rate. These numbers represent a three percentage point retention rate decrease from FY 2019 to FY 2020.

In addition to a 70 percent retention rate for FY 2020, 92 percent of the 1,573 foster homes licensed during FY 2020 remained licensed as of September 30, 2020. This percentage is one percentage point lower than the percentage reported in FY 2019 when 93 percent of the 1,686 foster homes licensed during FY 2019 remained licensed as of September 30, 2019.