



Children's Services: Foster care or out-of-home placement

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Fast facts

- ▲ In 2007, Hennepin County had 3,530 children in out-of-home placement; approximately 361 new placements were made each month.
- ▲ About 23 percent of children who come to Hennepin's out-of-home placement are under the age of 5. Nearly 32 percent are between the ages of 13 and 17.

What is foster care or out-of-home placement?

Foster care, which is called out-of-home placement in Minnesota, serves children whose parents cannot safely care for them.

Children come to foster care for many reasons, including abuse or neglect, inadequate housing, termination of parental rights, or the parents' inability to care for their children due to incarceration, substance abuse, illness, disability or death. Other reasons include the child's own behavior or release from juvenile corrections.

Children may be placed in one of three settings:

- An **emergency shelter**, which provides immediate care for children in crisis such as children who have been removed from a dangerous situation by police.
- A **family foster home**, which is licensed and offers a temporary home until the children can be reunited with their families, placed permanently with relatives or adopted.
- **Group residential housing**, which provides structured care, especially for children with emotional or behavioral issues or chemical dependency. These facilities generally have on-site schooling and therapies.

Who does it serve and at what cost?

In 2007, Hennepin Human Services and Public Health Department:

- Had 3,530 children in out-of-home placement.
- Made approximately 361 new placements each month.

Nearly 32 percent of the children in out-of-home placement are between the ages of 13 and 17; 25 percent are between the ages of 5 and 12; 23 percent are five years of age or younger; and 20 percent are between the ages of 18 and 21. Seventy percent are children of color.

In 2007, Hennepin paid approximately \$46 million for children in out-of-home placement; youth in emergency shelters cost another \$6.5 million.

What is Hennepin's role with foster families, emergency shelters, group homes and residential treatment?

Hennepin staff recruits, trains and assesses foster care providers. Families are trained to deal with issues that may arise with special-needs children; they must pass background checks, participate in a home study, live in a home with at least two bedrooms, and have sufficient income for themselves and their family. Foster families are not paid for their time but are compensated for basic costs such as food and clothing. The compensation is set by the Minnesota Department of Human Services.

Hennepin contracts with four emergency shelter providers, five group home providers and three residential treatment providers. Hennepin also uses providers in other counties and states for placement. These programs are licensed by the state of Minnesota under the Residential Licensing Rule or by the state in which the program is located.