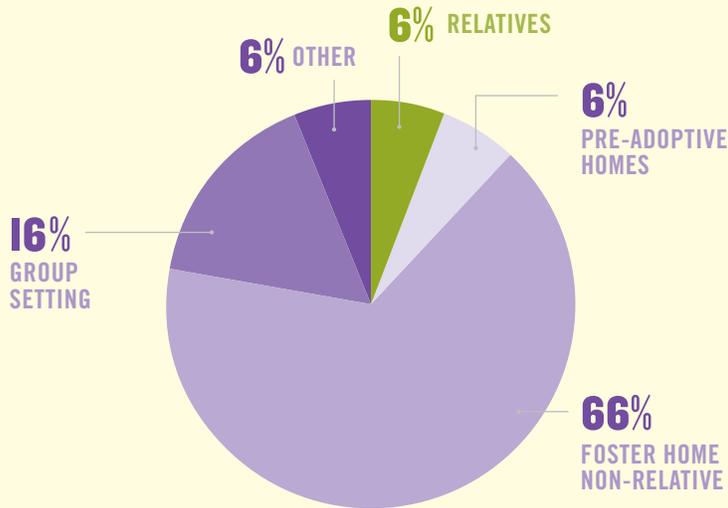


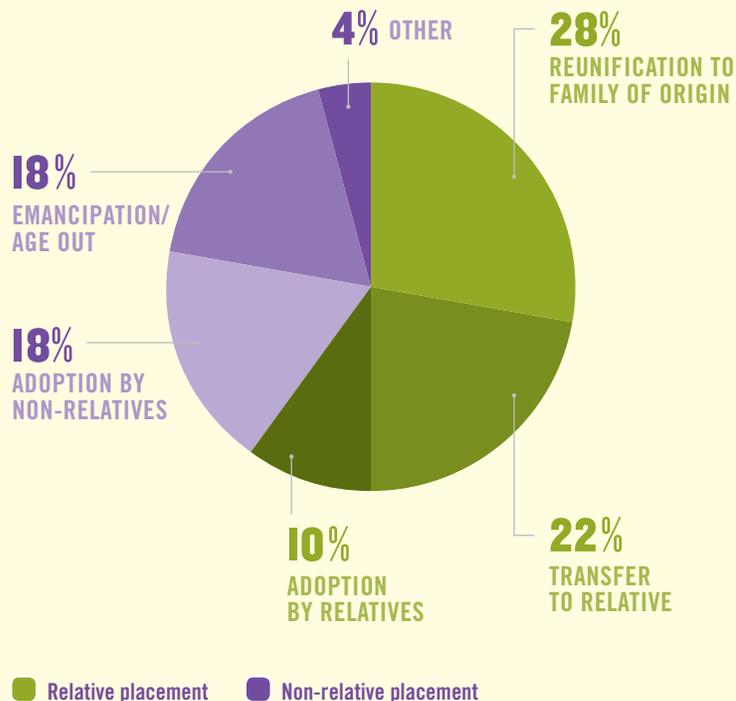
Success for kids in foster care relies on strengthening families

The majority of children leave care to live with their families

THE MAJORITY OF CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE ARE PLACED IN NON-RELATIVE HOMES



3 OUT OF EVERY 5 KIDS WHO EXIT FOSTER CARE GO TO LIVE WITH FAMILY



WHEN CHILDREN EXIT FOSTER CARE TO LIVE WITH RELATIVES, THEY HAVE A BETTER SENSE OF BELONGING AND STAY CONNECTED TO THEIR FAMILIES AND THEIR CULTURE

Research shows children who exit to family have better outcomes, but continue to face challenges

Families need assistance with:



Financial support when they take in relative children



Coordinated health and mental health services for children who experienced trauma



Educational stability for kids transitioning to new environments



Ability to connect to community resources

NOT ALL CHILDREN WHO EXIT THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM HAVE PERMANENT FAMILY CONNECTIONS

To help support youth who turn 18 while in foster care, Virginia has started the Fostering Futures program

In this program youth 18 to 21 years old receive:



Case management



Housing



Financial aid for education



Job training



Health insurance

* All sources available at vakids.org/elections



Questions for Candidates

#VAVotes4Kids

- 1 All children in foster care have been exposed to some form of trauma. The very act of entering foster care is traumatic for children because it means the loss of their birth families and often friends, schoolmates, teachers, and everything that is familiar. **If elected, what would you do to support children in care no matter where they are in the system?**
- 2 Most children entering foster care are returned to their families. Usually, these families do not receive additional support and services from the child welfare system, which can lead to poor health and education outcomes for children. **How do you think the Commonwealth can better support children once they are returned to their families?**
- 3 According to census data, approximately 170,000 children in Virginia are living in informal kinship family placements. Kinship care promotes a sense of belonging and helps children stay connected to their families and culture and prevents them from remaining in foster care. **What role, if any, do you think government should play in supporting children being raised in kinship homes?**
- 4 From fiscal year 2015 to 2016, Virginia experienced a 21% increase in the number of substance exposed infants reported to the local departments of social services – up to 1,334 reports of substance exposed infants. **If elected, what policy solutions would you propose to respond to this growing epidemic?**
- 5 On average youth in the foster care system miss five weeks of school per year. Only 4% of youth in foster care obtain a four-year degree. **How do you propose we address the problem of children in foster care falling behind in school?**
- 6 Studies show that children who have been involved in the child welfare system face a number of adverse outcomes compared to their peers, including higher rates of mental health issues, homelessness, risk of sexual abuse, poor educational attainment, over-prescription of psychotropic medications, and other obstacles that hinders their overall well-being. **What would you do to achieve better outcomes for youth in foster care?**

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