

Child Welfare

Children in Foster Care: The number of children in the Arkansas foster care system has decreased from an all-time high of 5,200 children in foster care to 4,331. The majority of these were cases of neglect by parents, which we know can be addressed through preventive services and programs.

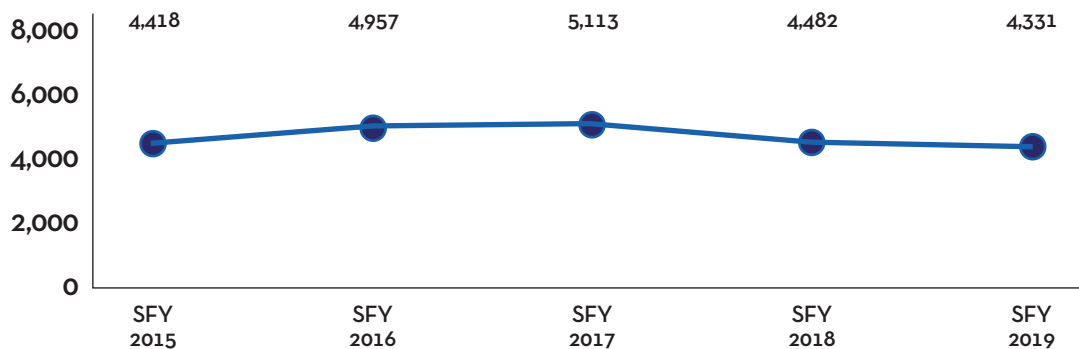
The Family First Prevention Services Act is a landmark piece of federal legislation recently passed by Congress and is the first major federal child welfare law enacted in decades. The new federal law focuses on keeping children safely with their families when possible, because entering foster care can be traumatizing for many children. It also places an emphasis on placing children with relatives, so that a child can maintain a connection with their family. And if children do have to enter foster care, it encourages children to be placed in the most family-like setting available, such as a family foster home, and it discourages using group care for children by limiting funds for group care settings.

What to Ask Candidates

- What are your thoughts on the role that the state government can play in making sure that children are in safe and nurturing homes?
- How can state government help provide services so that children can remain safely in their homes without entering foster care?
- For those children who do enter foster care, how can state government help them and their families receive the services they need so that they do not remain for a long period of time?

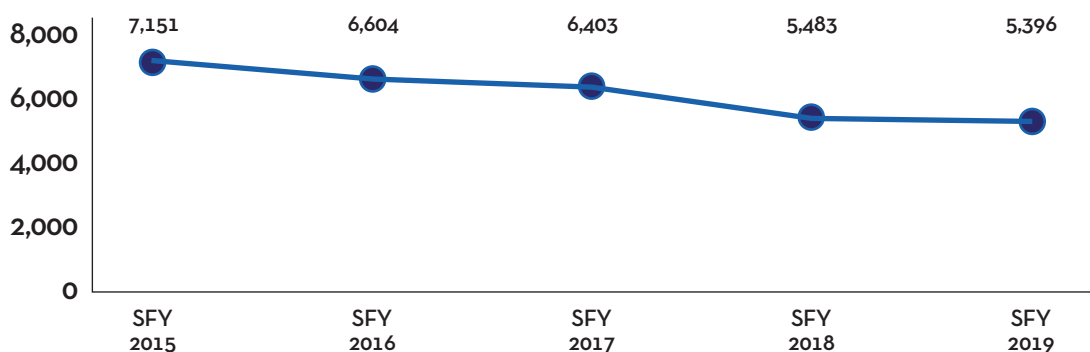
Arkansas Shows Recent Decline in Number of Children in Foster Care, But Also in Number of Children Receiving In-Home Services

Number of Children in Foster Care



Source: https://human.services.arkansas.gov/images/uploads/dafs/publications/ARC_SF_Y_2019_-_Final.pdf

Number of Children in in-home services* through protective services cases



*Children remain in their home and receive services