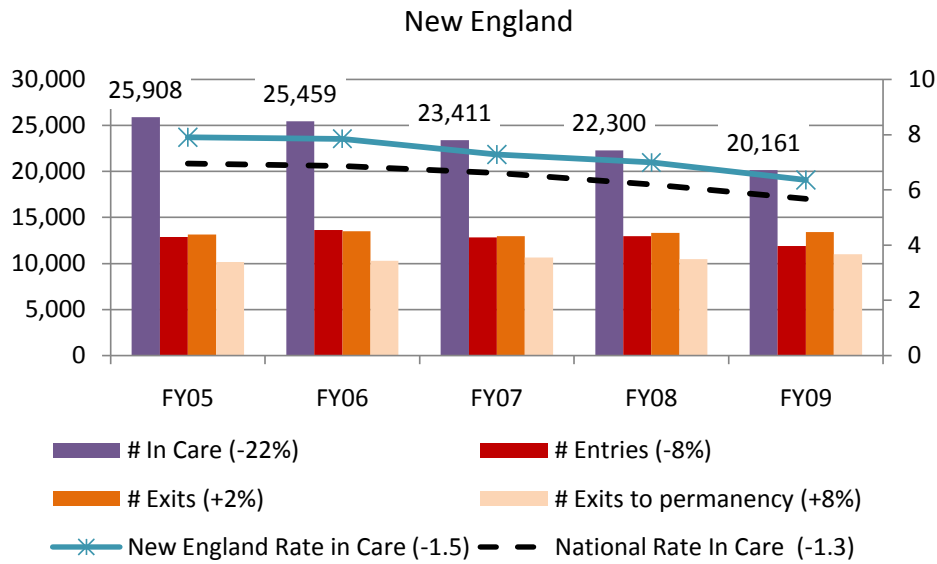


New England Child Welfare Indicators

Produced by Data Advocacy, Casey Family Programs

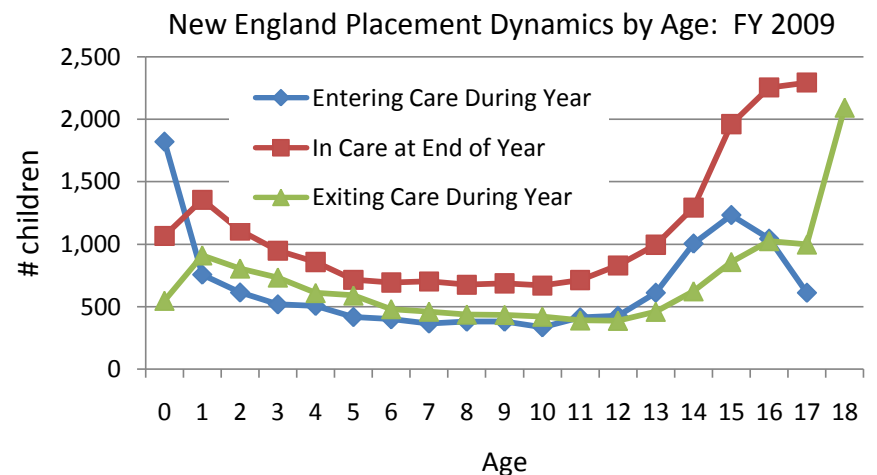
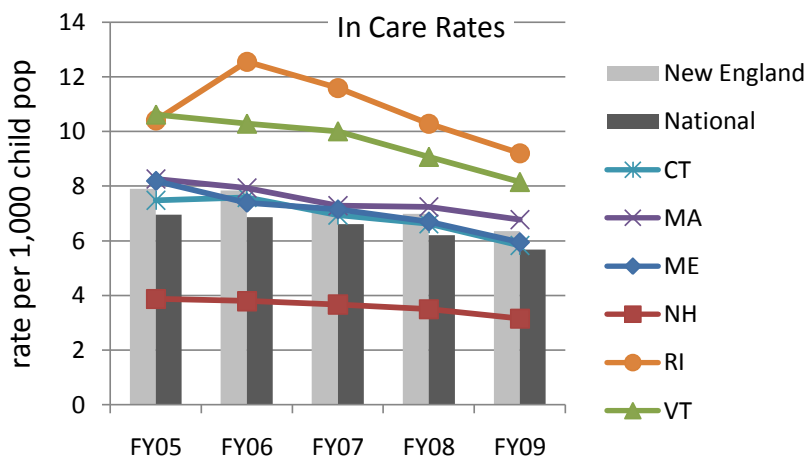


Together, the six New England states saw a 22% decline in the number of children in care between 9/30/05 and 9/30/09 (the last day of the federal fiscal year). This decline has been the result of both increased exits and decreased entries. VT, and CT have experienced the largest declines in entries (29% and 18%, respectively.) Nationally, entries have declined 17% over this time period.

The number of children in care declines when exits outpace entries into care. As shown here, exits exceeded entries in four of the last five years, most significantly in FY09.

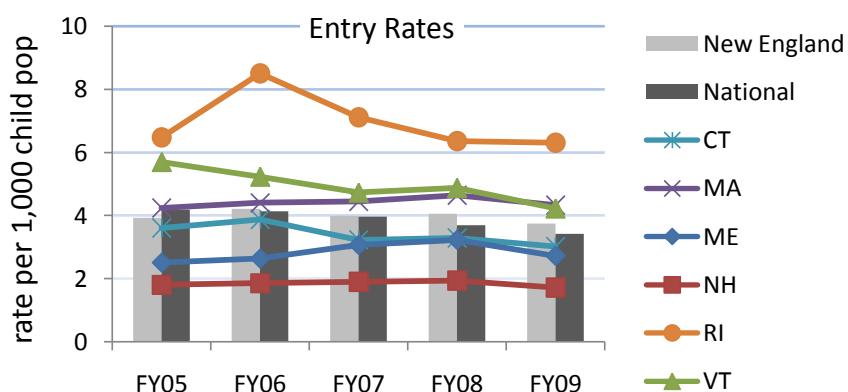
The percentage of permanent exits has remained between 77% and 82% of all exits between FY05 and FY09.

In Care Rates: The rate of children in out-of-home care shows how many children are in care for every 1,000 children in the population. Rates are important because they control for differences in the population from year to year, and across geographic areas. National population estimates show a small (2%) increase in the child population between 2005 and 2009. In the New England states, these estimates show a small (-3%) decrease in the child population during this timeframe. The in-care rate is trending downward in New England, but remains slightly above the national rate. When looking at regional data, it should be noted that in 2009, 48% of the children in care in the six New England states were from Massachusetts.



Entry Rates: In FY09, the entry rate for all of the New England states combined was 3.7 entries per 1,000 children in the population. This is just above the national rate of 3.4. The entry rate has declined slightly across New England and nationally.

The highest entry rates are seen in Rhode Island where entry rates peaked at 8.5 entries per 1,000 children in FY06. Since then, the entry rate in RI has dropped to 6.3.



Placement Dynamics by Age:

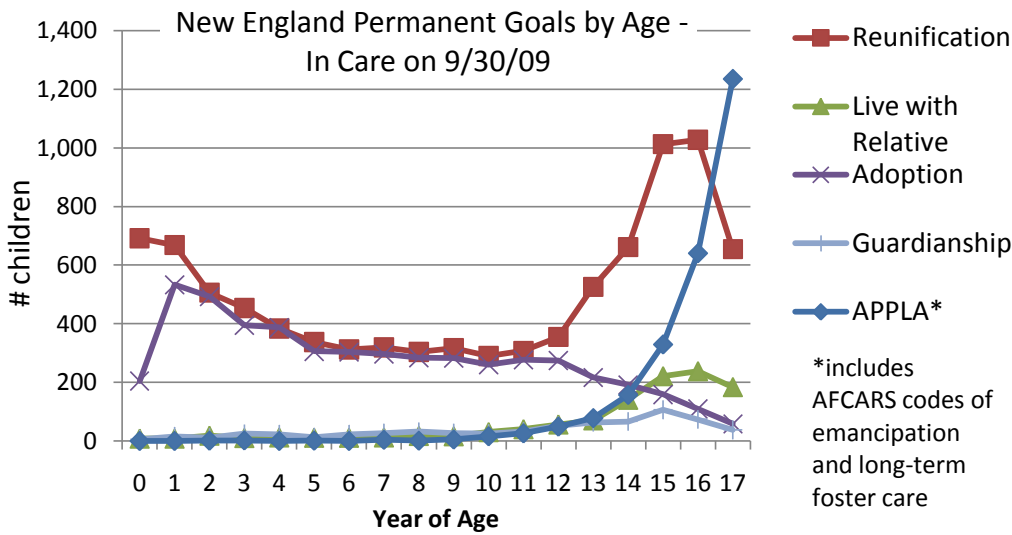
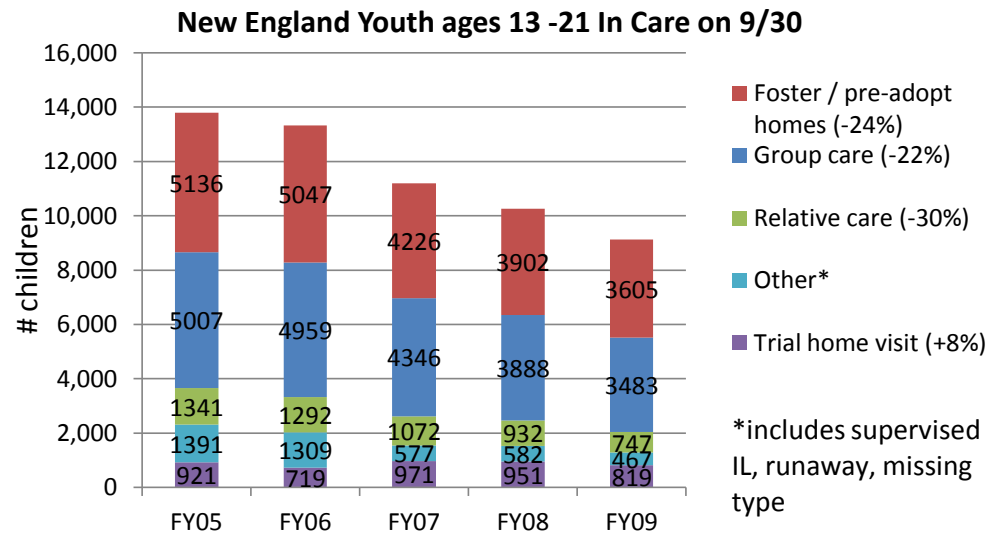
New England entries follow a pattern very similar to that seen in the national data. Infants are the largest group of children entering care. Entries then drop and level off through the pre-school and latency ages, and begin to increase during adolescence, with a peak at about age 15. This pattern is largely due to the differing levels of risk associated with infants, and with the challenging behaviors that present themselves during adolescence.

Differences in length of stay, and the gap between entries and exits among adolescents create the larger group of older youth in the in-care population. It is also worth noting that five of the six New England states include some Juvenile Justice youth in their out of home care numbers.

Entries and entry rates are based on the total number of entries over the FY. Exits are a count of the total number of children discharged from care during the FY. In care counts and rates are based on the number in care on the last day of each FY.

Older Youth in Care: Since 2005, the number of older youth in care in New England has declined by 34%. Teens and young adults now make up 45% of all children in out of home care in the six New England states. The reduction has occurred across all types of care. The proportions of teens in group care and foster/pre adopt care have remained about the same.

States vary considerably in the use of the placement categories of runaway and supervised independent living, as well as the use of trial home visits. These changes should be interpreted with caution as they are likely due to changes in reporting or routine data cleanup.

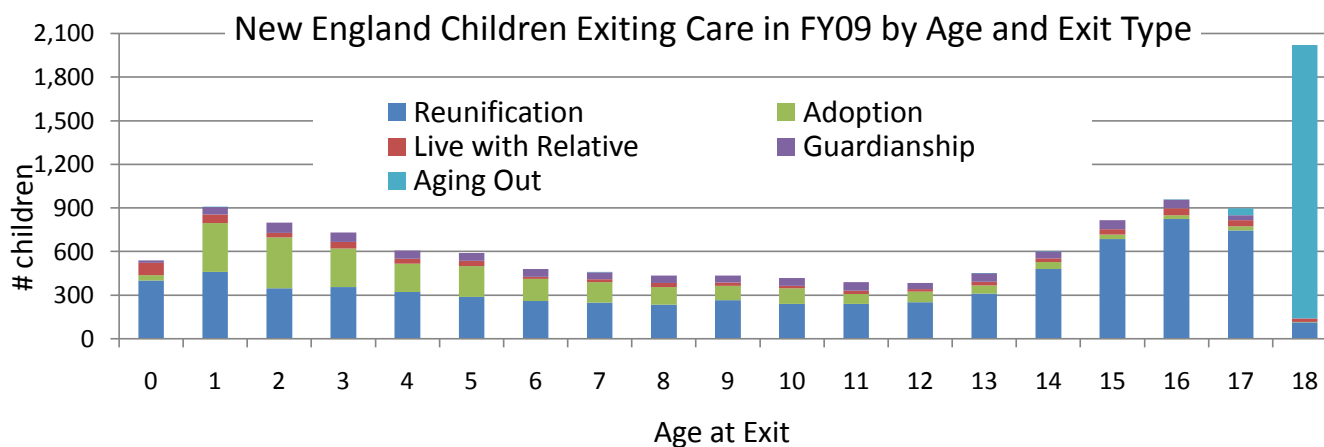


Permanent Goals: The majority of children and youth in care in New England have a permanent goal of Reunification. Among children ages 1 to 10, a goal of adoption is nearly as common.

After age 10, the percentage of children with adoption as a permanent goal drops dramatically. Among teens in care, about 15% have goals of guardianship or live with another relative. After age 15, more youth begin to have Another Permanent Planned Living Arrangement (APPLA) as a goal.

There is statewide variation in the use of permanent goals by age. Among 15 yr olds, for example, the percentage with a goal of Adoption ranges from 5% in MA to 31% in Maine. Concurrent goals are not included in AFCARS.

Exits: A relatively large group of children exit care at ages one to three, this is likely a reflection of the large number of infants entering care. In this age group, adoptions and reunifications are by far the most common exits. After age two, however, the number of exits declines until age 13. During the teen years, reunification increases. By far the largest number of exits in FY 09 were youth aging out at age 18.



As shown in the table to the right, there is great variation across the New England states, both in the volume of exits (a reflection of population, for the most part), and in the proportion of those exits that represent youth aging out of care. As a region, however, exits to emancipation are currently higher than the national average. Exit cohorts may not capture the most current practice, however, and it is important to follow children as they enter care to determine what percent remain in care until the age of majority.

Jurisdiction	FY09		
	# exits to emancipation	# total exits	% emancipation
CT	456	2,972	15%
MA	1076	6,673	16%
ME	158	959	16%
NH	72	558	13%
RI	164	1,604	10%
VT	88	647	14%
New England	2,014	13,413	15%
National	29,471	276,266	11%

Data source : AFCARS data sets and Claritas population estimates