



PART TWO

The Invisible Achievement Gap

*How the Foster Care Experiences of California
Public School Students Are Associated with
Their Education Outcomes*

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PART TWO

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This report was developed by the California Child Welfare Indicators Project in partnership with the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd. The California Child Welfare Indicators Project is a long-standing university-agency data collaboration between the University of California, Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services. The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd is focused on teacher-development policy and practice to ensure that every student in California's elementary and secondary schools has a well-prepared, effective, and caring teacher. WestEd is a research, development, and service agency that works with education and other communities to promote excellence, achieve equity, and improve learning for children, youth, and adults.

This report follows the 2013 release of *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools*, which compared the education outcomes of students in foster care with those of other students, including both the K-12 population as a whole as well as other at-risk subgroups with documented achievement gaps, e.g., low socioeconomic status students. Part 2 examines the education outcomes of children in foster care by characteristics unique to the foster care population such as type of placement, time in care, and number of placements during the study year. This research into the foster care student achievement gap was inspired by a report commissioned by the Stuart Foundation in 2008 as part of its Ready to Succeed initiative. That report presented a number of recommendations to improve the education outcomes of students in foster care, with an immediate call for data to be shared between California's education and child welfare systems. Based on a vision developed by the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning and the Stuart Foundation, in 2010 the Center hosted "Documenting the Education Outcomes of Children and Youth in Foster Care," a policy forum that yielded data-sharing agreements and strategies to link the state's child welfare and education data, paving the way for this groundbreaking pair of research studies in California.

Both reports are available online at:

<http://www.stuartfoundation.org/NewsAndReports/ReportsAndResearch>

Suggested citation:

Wiegmann, W., Putnam-Hornstein, E., Barrat, V. X., Magruder, J. & Needell, B. (2014). *The Invisible Achievement Gap Part 2: How the Foster Care Experiences of California Public School Students Are Associated with Their Education Outcomes*.

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Executive summary

California, like many other states, has historically known little about the education of school-aged students in foster care despite the state’s legal responsibility for these children. This is largely due to challenges related to the sharing of information about these students between the education and child welfare systems, which have neither a shared definition of the foster-care population, nor a unique student identifier common to these two systems. As a result, the education needs of these students have been unstudied and unrecognized—possibly leaving many already vulnerable students in foster care trailing behind their classmates in academic achievement.

This report, *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2: How the Foster Care Experiences of California Public School Students Are Associated with Their Education Outcomes*, with support from the Stuart Foundation, continues the effort to better understand the education outcomes of students in foster care in California. Part 1, published in 2013, documented that students in foster care were a distinct subgroup of at-risk students—with education outcomes that were consistently poorer than those of the broader population of students, including English language learners, students with disabilities, and those with low socioeconomic status (low-SES). Part 2 underscores the relative educational disadvantage of students in foster care and highlights the differences in education experiences and outcomes by key characteristics of foster care placements, such as time in foster care, the type of foster care placement, and the number of foster care placements during the school year. This report describes important associations between foster care placement types and disability diagnosis, school changes, standardized-test performance, and dropout and graduation rates. *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2* also highlights the dynamics between student length of stay in the foster care system, disability diagnosis, and school changes. Finally, this report documents the association between foster care placement instability and school changes, low-standardized-test performance, as well as higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates—findings suggesting that despite legislation such as California Assembly Bill 490, which attempted to ensure school stability, as well as the timely transfer of records, grades, and credits between schools when students enter or change foster care placements, additional efforts may be needed to support the education needs of students in foster care.

The Invisible Achievement Gap, parts one and two break new ground on the issue of education for students in the foster care system. First, this research links statewide, individual-level student education and child welfare data to create a first-ever education snapshot of K–12 students in foster care in California. Second, these reports come at a time when California is beginning its efforts to track the academic progress of all students in foster care—the first state in the nation to do so. Finally, the current report documents specific aspects of the foster care experience correlated with poorer education outcomes,

providing information for policymakers and program administrators to consider in efforts to improve the academic success of students in foster care.

Students in foster care were characterized as follows:

The experiences of students in foster care—by the numbers.

In California, 43,140 students in grades K–12 and between the ages of 5 and 17 were in child welfare-supervised foster care during all or part of the 2009/2010 school year. In this context “foster care” is a generic term that includes all care of children removed from their parents’ due to various forms of abuse and neglect where the child is placed in an out-of-home setting supervised by a county child welfare agency. This care is provided in a variety of settings ranging from the homes of relatives to institutions. Among these are “foster homes” which are either certified by private child-placing foster family agencies (“FFA certified foster homes”) or, less often, licensed by either counties or the state (“licensed foster homes”). Most students were in foster care because of neglect (78 percent). Others were in care due to physical abuse (11 percent), sexual abuse (4 percent), or for other reasons (7 percent). 43 percent of these students were Hispanic, 26 percent African American, 23 percent white, and 3 percent Asian/Pacific Islander. Nearly one-third of students in foster care (32 percent) were placed in foster homes certified by private foster family agencies (FFAs) while another 30 percent were placed in kinship care. Among the remaining students in foster care, 15 percent were placed with guardians, 10 percent in group homes, and 8 percent in licensed foster homes. More than four in ten (43 percent) students in foster care had been in care for more than three years, while 28 percent had been in care less than one year. Among students in foster care, more than one in three (37 percent) experienced two or more placements during the study period. By the end of the school year, 11,400 (26 percent) of students in foster care had exited the foster care system. The remaining 74 percent were still in care.

Finding 1: Students in foster care constituted an at-risk subgroup that was distinct from low-SES students. Students in every type of foster care placement lagged significantly behind their peers who were not in foster care.

Regardless of the characteristics of their foster care experience, students in foster care remained a distinctively disadvantaged subgroup; students in foster care were more likely to be diagnosed with a disability, to be over-age for their grade level, and to fare worse academically. Across nearly all education outcomes examined, students in foster care performed worse than their low-SES peers. These disparities persisted regardless of the characteristics of a student’s experiences in foster care (e.g., placement type, removal reason, number of placements, time in care). Even students placed with kin, who typically fared better academically than their peers in other placements, lagged behind students in the general student body and among low-SES students.

Finding 2: Students in foster care were more likely than other students to change schools during the school year. School mobility was tied to a recent entry into foster care and the restrictiveness of the foster care placement setting.

Students in foster care experienced much higher rates of school mobility than other students. Foster care placement instability and placement in more restrictive settings were strongly correlated with heightened school mobility. Also noteworthy was the apparent relationship between a recent entry into foster care and school instability. Among students who had been in foster care for less than one year, 17 percent were enrolled in three or more schools during the academic year. Alternately, among students who had been in care for three or more years, 6 percent attended three or more schools during the school year.

Finding 3: Students in foster care were more likely than the general population of students to be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools and more likely to be enrolled in nontraditional schools. By high school, one in five students in foster care were attending a nontraditional school.

Using California's Academic Performance Index as an annual measure of school test-score performance, the distribution of students in foster care was examined by school rank. Students in foster care, along with their low-SES peers, were consistently more likely than the general student body to attend the lowest-performing schools, and less likely to attend the highest-performing schools. Students in foster care were also more likely to be enrolled in a nontraditional school. Overall, 11 percent of students in foster care attended a nontraditional school, although the distribution and demographic breakdown of students in nontraditional schools varied by grade level and placement type. Among elementary school students in foster care, 3 percent were in nontraditional schools, while 8 percent of middle school students in foster care attended nontraditional schools. Among high school students in foster care, 21 percent attended a nontraditional school. More than half (53 percent) of students in foster care enrolled in nontraditional schools were diagnosed with emotional disturbance.

Finding 4: Students in foster care had the lowest participation rate in California's statewide testing program and participation was tied to placement instability.

Students in foster care had consistently lower participation rates in California's Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program. Testing participation rates were linked with foster care placement instability. As placement instability increased, testing participation decreased. Ninety-one percent of students in foster care who experienced only one placement during the school year participated in the STAR Program. Participation dropped to 86 percent among students with two placements, and 73 percent among students with three or more placements.

Finding 5: Statewide testing documented an achievement gap for students in foster care. Educational disadvantage was greatest in upper grade levels, among students in group homes, and for students who experienced three or more placements.

There was a significant achievement gap between students in foster care and other low-SES students. Students in foster care consistently fell short of achieving proficiency in English language arts and elementary mathematics. Among foster care students in elementary school, 33 percent scored below or far below basic in English language arts, and 37 percent of middle school students in foster care scored in these lowest two levels. By high school, 49 percent of foster care students scored below or far below basic in English language arts. Similarly, in elementary school 32 percent of foster care students scored below or far below basic in mathematics. In middle school this figure was 45 percent (testing of students in general mathematics is not conducted in high school).

Achievement gaps in English language arts and mathematics were particularly apparent for students placed in group homes relative to other students in foster care, a finding that is consistent with the apparent association between grade level and poorer educational performance. Among students placed in group homes, 61 percent tested below or far below basic in English language arts and 66 percent tested at these lowest two levels in mathematics. Roughly two out of every three students in a group home placement failed to attain proficiency in either English language arts or mathematics. In addition, the number of placements students experienced during the school year was correlated with low performance in English language arts and mathematics, particularly among students who experienced three or more placements. Among students who experienced three or more placements, 50 percent scored below or far below basic in English language arts and 44 percent scored in the lowest two levels in mathematics.

Finding 6: Among all high school students, those in foster care had the highest dropout and lowest graduation rates; students in more stable placements showed better performance for both of these education outcomes.

Students in foster care were less likely to pass the California high school exit exam (CAHSEE), more likely to drop out, and less likely to graduate than the statewide student population and low-SES students. Placement type was correlated with student dropout and graduation rates. Among students in grades 9–12 living in group homes, 14 percent dropped out. Alternately, students placed in guardian placements (4 percent) were among the least likely to drop out. Similarly, students in kinship and guardianship placements were the most likely of foster care grade-12 students to graduate from high school at the end of the school year (64 percent and 71 percent, respectively). In contrast, students in group homes (35 percent) were among the least likely to graduate. Whereas students with one placement (63 percent) were the most likely to graduate, students with three or more placements (43 percent) were least likely.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our many colleagues who contributed to this report. This study, born out of a shared interest in the need to improve education outcomes for students in foster care, was carried out in partnership with staff at the Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning at WestEd. It would not have been possible to produce this report without the tremendous commitment and expertise of BethAnn Berliner, Holly Jacobson, and Patsy Wilkes.

This project was funded by the Stuart Foundation. We are deeply appreciative of the foundation's leadership and sustained investments in research and programs intended to improve education outcomes for students in foster care. Underlying the foundation's generous support for this work has been the strategic guidance and ongoing support of Teri Kook and Michelle Francois Traiman.

The data linkages necessary for this research were made possible thanks to the longstanding collaboration between the California Child Welfare Indicators Project at the University of California, Berkeley and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), supported by funding from both CDSS and the Stuart Foundation. We are grateful for the work of Webb Hester, Akhtar Khan, Tom Leigh, Will Lightbourne, Greg Rose, Alicia Sandoval, Heather Yee, and other colleagues at CDSS. Additional thanks is extended to the California Department of Education, particularly Keric Ashley, Meredith Babcock-Roberson, Joanna Knieriem, Deborah Sigman, and Matt Taylor.



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Introduction

California, like many other states, has had little statewide information about the education of school-aged children in the foster care system, despite the state's legal responsibility for these children. California has not tracked how many students in foster care attend public schools, where they are enrolled, how well they fare academically, or whether they receive the education supports and services they need for success. At the school level, classroom teachers and other educators are generally unaware of students' foster care status. This is largely due to challenges related to the availability, collection, and sharing of information about these students between the education and child welfare systems, which have neither a shared definition of the foster-care population, nor student identifiers common to the two systems. As a result, the education needs of these students have been unstudied and unrecognized—possibly leaving many already vulnerable students in foster care trailing behind their classmates in academic achievement.

“In some ways I wanted them to know. I wanted them to know that I was in the system because I was, like, dying for help.”

—Student in foster care

The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools, prepared by The Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning, was released in October 2013. Part 1 compared students in foster care to all California K–12 students, low-socioeconomic status (low-SES) students, and other at-risk student subgroups. Students in foster care were found to be an at-risk subgroup distinct from low-SES and other at-risk student groups. Relative to other at-risk student subgroups, students in foster care were more likely to change schools; to be diagnosed with a disability, particularly one of emotional disturbance; to be enrolled in nontraditional schools; to be at least a year older than the median age for their grade level; and to not participate in California's statewide testing program. Students in foster care also had notably lower rates of proficiency in English language arts and mathematics; had the highest single-year dropout rates; and had the lowest graduation rates.

This report, *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2: How the Foster Care Experiences of California Public School Students Are Associated with Their Education Outcomes*, further contextualizes the education experiences of students in foster care by examining variations among these students through the lens of characteristics unique to the foster care experience such as the maltreatment allegations that led to placement, the number and type of placements, and the length of time spent in care.

Together, this report and *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1* break new ground on the issue of education for students in the foster care system. First, these reports link statewide individual-level student-education and child welfare data to create a first-ever education

snapshot of K–12 students in foster care in California. Second, these reports come at a time when California is just beginning to track the academic progress of all students in foster care—the first state in the nation to do so. Taken together, these reports demonstrate that California students in foster care have unique characteristics that justify their identification as a separate at-risk student subgroup and that this subgroup has a significant achievement gap compared to other students. These reports document aspects of the foster care experience that are correlated with poorer education outcomes, providing information for policymakers that may help improve the academic success of students in foster care.

It is important to note that this study represents a cross-sectional snapshot of students who were in foster care during all or part of the August 1, 2009 to June 1, 2010 school year. The limitations of cross-sectional data are notable. Cross-sectional studies of child welfare populations tend to capture the experiences of children with longer stays in foster care—children who often differ significantly from children placed in foster care for short time periods. The cross-sectional nature of this study also means that we have failed to capture the cumulative number of children who experienced an out-of-home foster care placement at some point between entry into kindergarten and age 18. Unobserved factors related to both a child’s placement in foster care—and poor education outcomes—undoubtedly contribute to the relationships and findings that emerge. Due to the cross-sectional and observational nature of the data, no causal explanations can be derived from the findings of this report. Additionally, although a number of education disparities existed based on race/ethnicity, these findings are not discussed in this report. The rationale for this decision was two-fold. First, race/ethnicity represents a demographic attribute rather than a characteristic of the foster care experience. Additionally, without returning to the full population of low-SES children and making comparisons between students of a given race/ethnicity in foster care versus those of the same race/ethnicity who were not in foster care, a very partial story was likely to be told. Given these concerns, race/ethnicity demographics are provided for all major education outcomes in the tables, but are not discussed in the body of the report itself.

Data and Study Populations

The findings of this study are derived from a unique dataset that links statewide individual student education data from California's Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) and individual client records from California's Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). These data sources were matched to identify the education records of all K-12 students ages 5–17 who had a child welfare supervised foster care placement between August 1, 2009 and June 1, 2010. While Part 1 of this study, "The Invisible Achievement Gap: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools," compared education outcomes of students in foster care to those of all K-12 students, other low-SES students, and those in other at-risk student subgroups, Part 2 presents a within-group analysis of California's foster youth, focusing on education outcomes in terms of key foster care characteristics. The core placement-related variables examined for students in foster care include the following:

- *Removal reason* indicates the maltreatment allegation that resulted in the student being removed and placed into foster care. Categories include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and other. Other removal reason includes law violation/status offense and reasons categorized in CWS/CMS as other.
- *Child's placement type* captures the last type of placement that a child was living in while they were in foster care. Categories include pre-adoption placement, kinship or relative care, county/state licensed foster home, private foster family agency (FFA) certified home, group home, guardianship placement, and other, such as court specified home and shelter care.
- *Time in care* indicates the length of a child's current episode in foster care. Episode length was measured based on a student's entry into care, with an end date set to when the child exited foster care or June 1, 2010, whichever came first.
- *Number of placements* indicates the number of distinct foster care placements a child experienced during the academic-year study window.
- The child's *status in care and/or exit type* indicates whether or not the child exited foster care and if so, what that exit was by the end of the school year. Exit categories include reunification with family of origin, adoption, placement with a permanent guardian, emancipation, and other (e.g., incarceration, hospitalization).

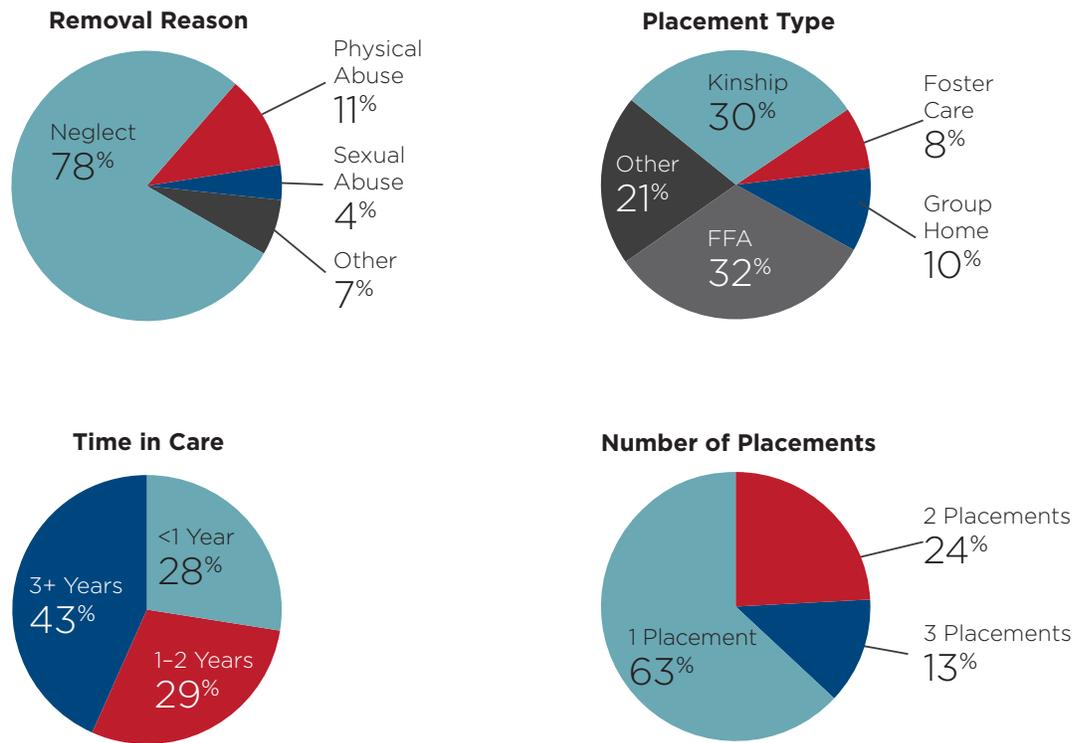
For more information on the methodology for this study and definitions of key education terms, please see Appendix A of *The Invisible Achievement Gap: Education Outcomes of Students in Foster Care in California's Public Schools, Part 1*. For additional information on key child welfare terms, please see Appendix A of the current report.

Key characteristics of students in foster care

During the 2009-10 school year, 5,969,112 K-12 students ages 5-17 were enrolled in California's public schools. Among these students, 43,140—about 1 of every 150 students—were in a child welfare supervised foster care placement for part or all of that year. An additional 5,012 children were in probation-supervised foster care. This report focuses on children supervised by the child welfare system. Companion tables for students in probation-supervised foster care are provided in Appendix D. Characteristics of child welfare supervised students in foster care were as follows (fig. 1):

- 40 percent of students in foster care were in elementary school (grades K-5), 23 percent were in middle school (grades 6-8), and 36 percent were in high school (grades 9-12).
- Students in foster care were split evenly by gender: 49 percent female; 51 percent male.
- The largest ethnic group among students in foster care was Hispanic (43 percent). 26 percent were African American, 23 percent were White, and 3 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander.
- By the end of the study period, 11,400 students (26 percent) had exited child welfare supervised foster care and 31,740 students (74 percent) were still in care. Of the students who exited care, 7,768 (68 percent) reunified with their family of origin, 1,321 (12 percent) were adopted, 1,321 (12 percent) exited to guardianship, 681 (6 percent) emancipated, and 309 (3 percent) experienced “other” exits.
- The majority of students in foster care were removed from their family of origin for neglect (78 percent). 11 percent of children were removed due to physical abuse, and 4 percent were removed for sexual abuse.
- Most students in foster care were placed in FFA certified foster homes (32 percent) or kinship care (30 percent). 8 percent of students in foster care were placed in licensed foster homes, 10 percent were placed in group homes, and 15 percent were placed with a guardian.
- 28 percent of students in foster care had been in care less than a year and another 29 percent for one or two years. More than two out of five (43 percent) had been in foster care three or more years.
- Among students in foster care, 63 percent experienced one placement during the school year, 24 percent experienced two placements, and 13 percent experienced three or more placements.

Figure 1. Percentage of students in foster care by child welfare characteristics, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 43,140 students in foster care. Definitions for removal reasons, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" and Appendix A of this report. The numbers and percentages for this figure are presented in Appendix Table B1.

Findings

1. Students in foster care constituted an at-risk subgroup that was distinct from low-SES students. Students in every type of foster care placement lagged significantly behind their peers who were not in foster care.
2. Students in foster care were more likely than other students to change schools during the school year. School mobility was tied to a recent entry into foster care and the restrictiveness of the foster care placement setting.
3. Students in foster care were more likely than the general population of students to be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools and more likely to be enrolled in nontraditional schools. By high school, one in five students in foster care were attending a nontraditional school.

Finding 1: Students in foster care constituted an at-risk subgroup that was distinct from low-SES students. Students in every type of foster care placement lagged significantly behind their peers who were not in foster care.

In addition to a demographic profile that was distinct from the statewide K–12 population, students in foster care also experienced a number of additional challenges likely to impact school performance. These experiences stem from both the conditions that brought them into the foster care system as well as their experiences once in care.

Students in foster care were more likely to be diagnosed with a disability, particularly older students, those placed in group homes, and students in care three or more years.

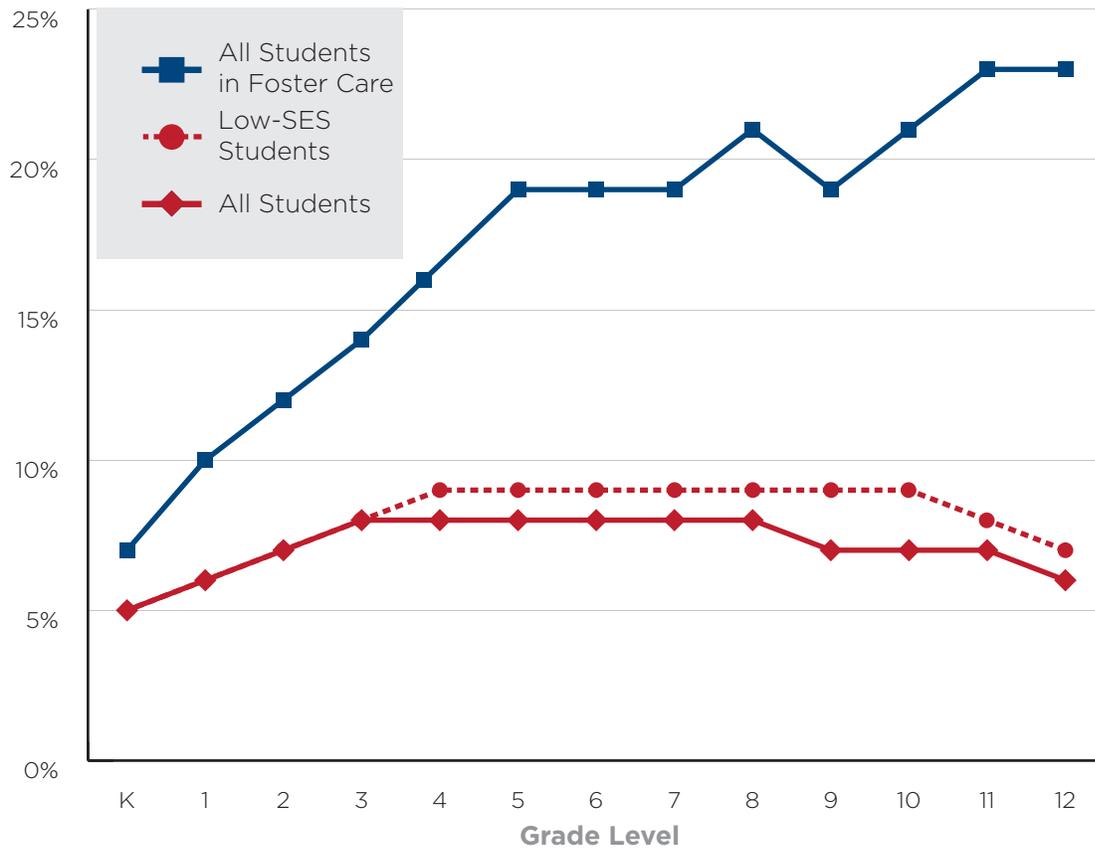
Students in foster care qualified for special education services at a much higher rate than other groups of students: nearly one in five students (18 percent) in foster care were classified with a disability compared to 7 percent of all K–12 students and 8 percent of low-SES students.

- Students in foster care were more likely to be diagnosed with a disability compared to low SES and all students in the state regardless of grade, placement type and time in care (figs. 2,3 and 4).
- Compared to younger students, students in high school were more likely to be classified with a disability (fig. 2). 13 percent of students in foster care in

elementary school, 20 percent of students in foster care in middle school, and 21 percent of students in foster care in high school were classified with a disability.

- Male students in foster care were more likely to be classified with a disability than were female students (table B2a). Although 51 percent of all students in foster care were male, 62 percent of those with a disability were male, and 38 percent were female. Among students in foster care with an emotional disturbance, 68 percent were male.
- Students' placement type was associated with a disability classification (fig. 3). Among students in foster care placed with kin, 13 percent had a disability. In contrast, among those placed in group homes, 35 percent were classified with a disability.
- Students in foster care who had been in care for a longer period of time were more likely to have a reported disability (fig. 4). Of those students in foster care for less than one year, 11 percent had a disability. This increased to 14 percent among students in foster care for one to two years. Strikingly, one in four (25 percent) students in foster care for three or more years had been diagnosed with a disability.
- One reason for the above finding may be that the presence of a diagnosed disability was associated with a lower rate of reunification (table B2a). While 19 percent of students without a disability reunified, only 12 percent of students with a disability reunified with their family of origin during the school year. Only 8 percent of students with a diagnosis of emotional disturbance reunified by the end of the school year.

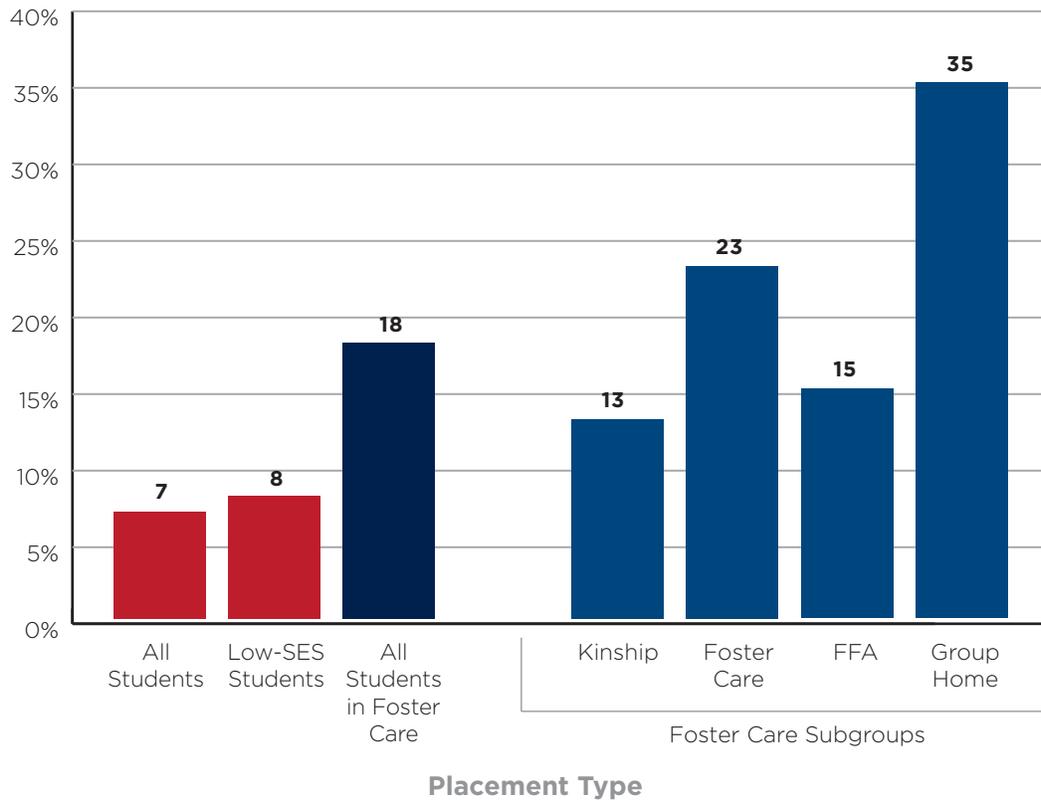
Figure 2. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care classified with any disability by grade level, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Disability category information was missing for 246 students in foster care. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing.

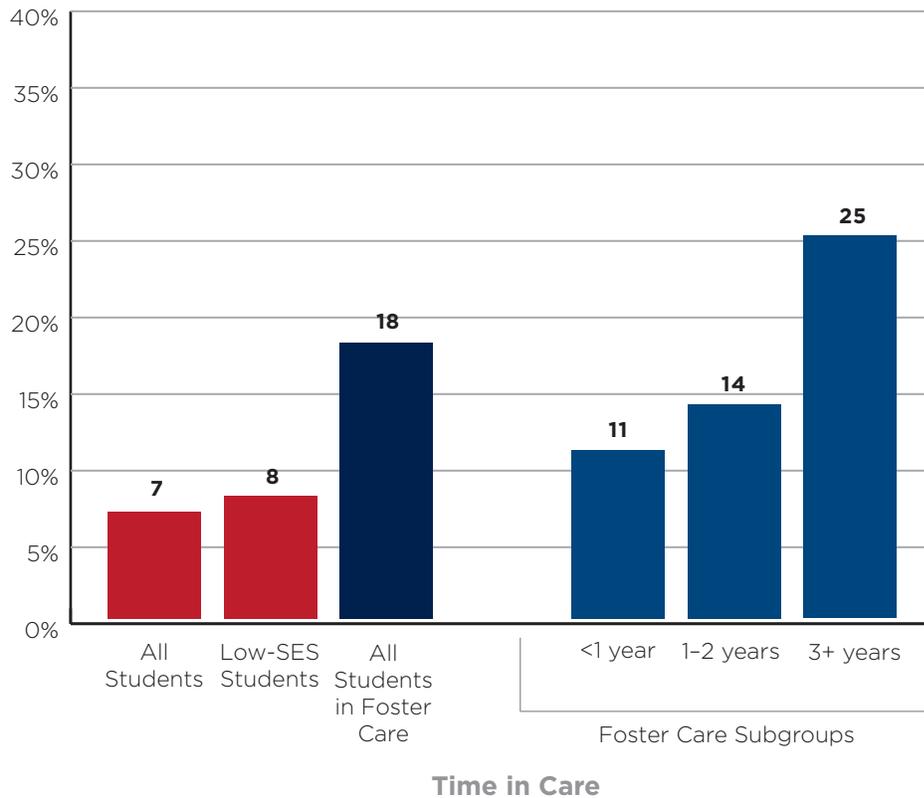
Figure 3. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care classified with any disability by placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Disability category information was missing for 246 students in foster care. Counts of students with any disability by placement type are presented in Appendix Table B2b. Please note, however, that the percentages for figure 3 above are based on row percentages (i.e., how many students placed in kinship care had a disability), not column percentages. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 4. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care classified with any disability by time in care, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Disability category information was missing for 246 students in foster care. The number of students with any disability by time in care are presented in Appendix Table B2b. Please note, however, that the percentages for figure 4 are based on row percentages (i.e., how many students in care less than 1 year had a disability), not column percentages. SES = socioeconomic status.

Relative to other students, those who were in foster care were older for their grade level. This was particularly true for students in group homes and those who experienced three or more placements.

As noted in Part 1, being over-age for grade is understood to be due to academic difficulties, interruptions in schooling (including changes in schools), or inconsistent delivery of academic supports, any of which can result in students failing to meet requirements for regular grade promotion. Overall 2 percent of students in foster care were over-age for their grade. One percent of elementary school, 2 percent of middle school, and 8 percent of grade-9 foster care students were over-age for their grade level.

- Students in group homes were more likely to be over-age for their grade level. Among students in elementary school, 3 percent of the few students placed in group homes were over-age compared to 1-1.5 percent of students placed in kinship care or in licensed foster or FFA certified homes. In middle school,

5 percent of students placed in group homes were over-age compared to 2-3 percent of students placed in kinship care, licensed foster homes, or FFA certified homes. In grade 9, 6 percent of students placed in group homes were over-age, compared to 3-4 percent of students placed in kinship placements or in licensed or FFA certified foster homes.

- Placement stability during the study period was negatively associated with being over-age for one's grade. Among students with only one placement, 2 percent were over-age for their grade. Three percent of students with two placements were over-age for their grade, and 4 percent of students with three or more placements were over-age for their grade.

Although students placed with kin often did better than their peers in other placements, they still lagged behind students in the K-12 student body and low-SES students.

- Although students placed in kinship care had the highest proficiency rates in English language arts (33 percent proficient or above) and mathematics (40 percent proficient or above) among students in foster care these proficiency rates were still below those of the general student body (53 percent proficient or above in English language arts, 60 percent in mathematics) or low-SES students (40 percent proficient or above in English language arts, 50 percent proficient or above in mathematics).

Finding 2: Students in foster care were more likely than other students to change schools during the school year. School mobility was tied to a recent entry into foster care and the restrictiveness of the foster care placement setting.

Students in foster care experienced much higher rates of school mobility than other students with only about two-thirds (68 percent) of students in foster care attending the same school for the full school year. In contrast, more than 90 percent of the low-SES and statewide student populations attended the same school all year. Furthermore, more than 9 percent of students in foster care attended three or more schools during the school year, a level of school mobility experienced by only about 1 percent of the low-SES and general student populations (table B4a). Students in foster care showed higher rates of mobility than all students in the state and low-SES students regardless of time in foster care, number of placements or type of placements (figs. 5, 6, and 7). However, the examination of those characteristics highlighted differences among students in foster care.

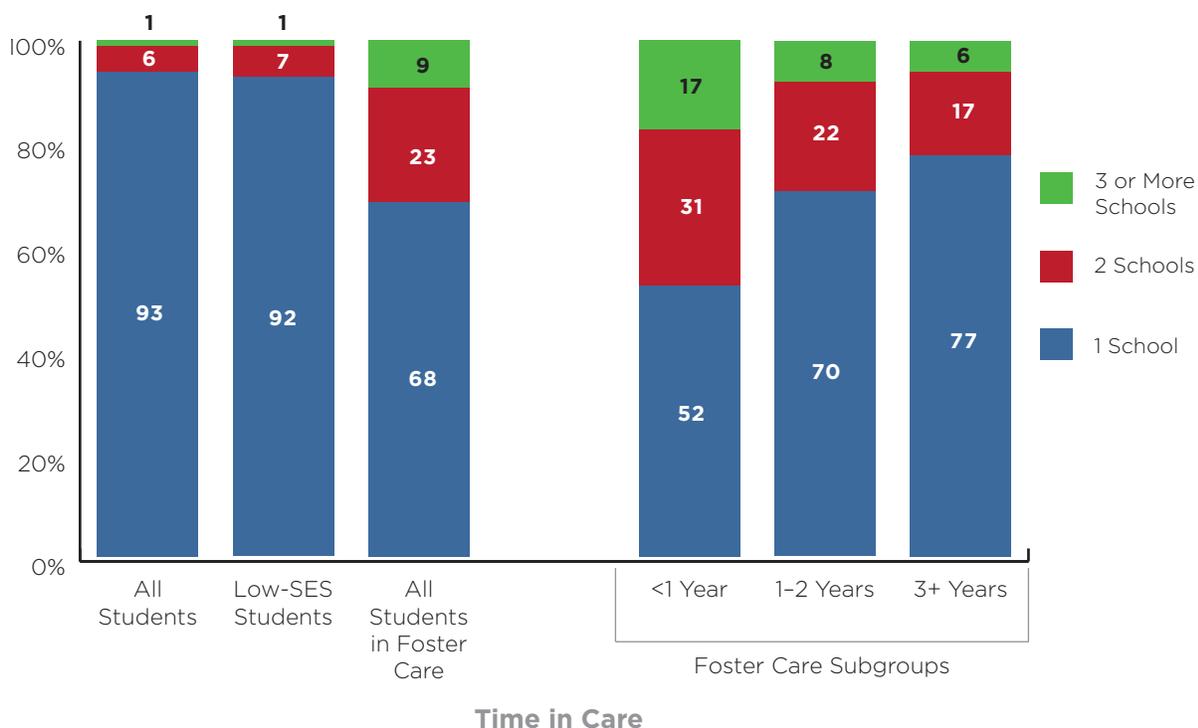
“I went to about 9 high schools ... and, all of them—nobody could ever track my credits correctly. And, at one point, I'd have 0 credits; one point, I'd have 270.”

—Former foster student

Students recently entering the foster care system were the most likely to experience school mobility.

- A link between time in care and the school mobility was observed (fig. 5). The year that a student enters foster care emerged as a period of instability. Among students in care less than one year, 52 percent attended one school, 31 percent attended two schools, and 17 percent attended three or more schools. In contrast, among students in care for three years or more, 77 percent attended one school, 17 percent attended two schools, and 6 percent of students attended three or more schools.

Figure 5. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by time in care and number of schools, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. The numbers of students by number of school placements and time in care are presented in Appendix Table B4b. Please note, however, that the percentages for figure 5 are based on row percentages (i.e., how many students in care less than 1 year attended 1 school), not column percentages. SES = socioeconomic status.

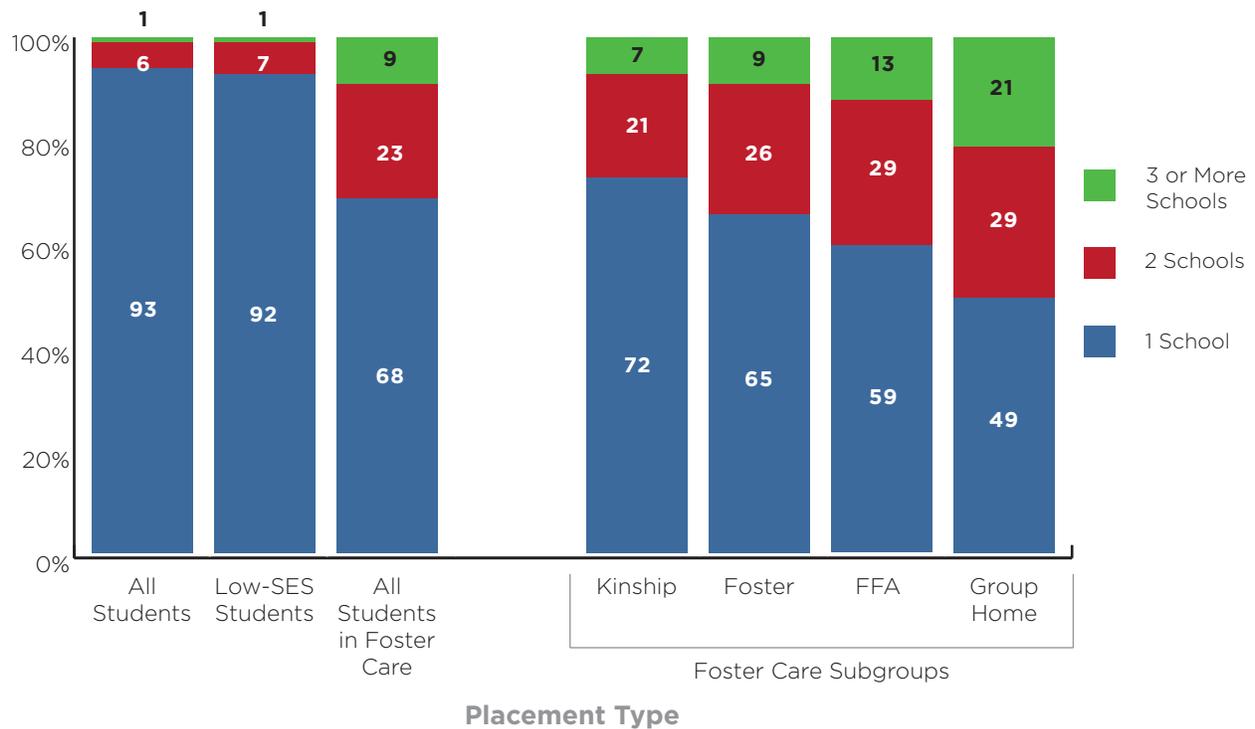
Placement type and the number of foster care placements a student experienced were also tied to school mobility.

- Placement type was associated with the number of schools that students attended (fig. 6). Among students placed in kinship care, 72 percent attended one school, 21 percent attended two schools, and 7 percent attended three or

more schools. Among students in group homes, 49 percent attended one school, 29 percent attended two schools, and 21 percent attended three or more schools.

- The number of foster placements during the school year was also, not surprisingly, associated with the number of school placements (fig. 7). Among students with one foster care placement, 79 percent also attended one school, 17 percent attended two schools, and 4 percent attended three or more schools. In contrast, among students with three or more placements, only 33 percent attended one school, 33 percent attended two schools, and 34 percent attended three or more schools.

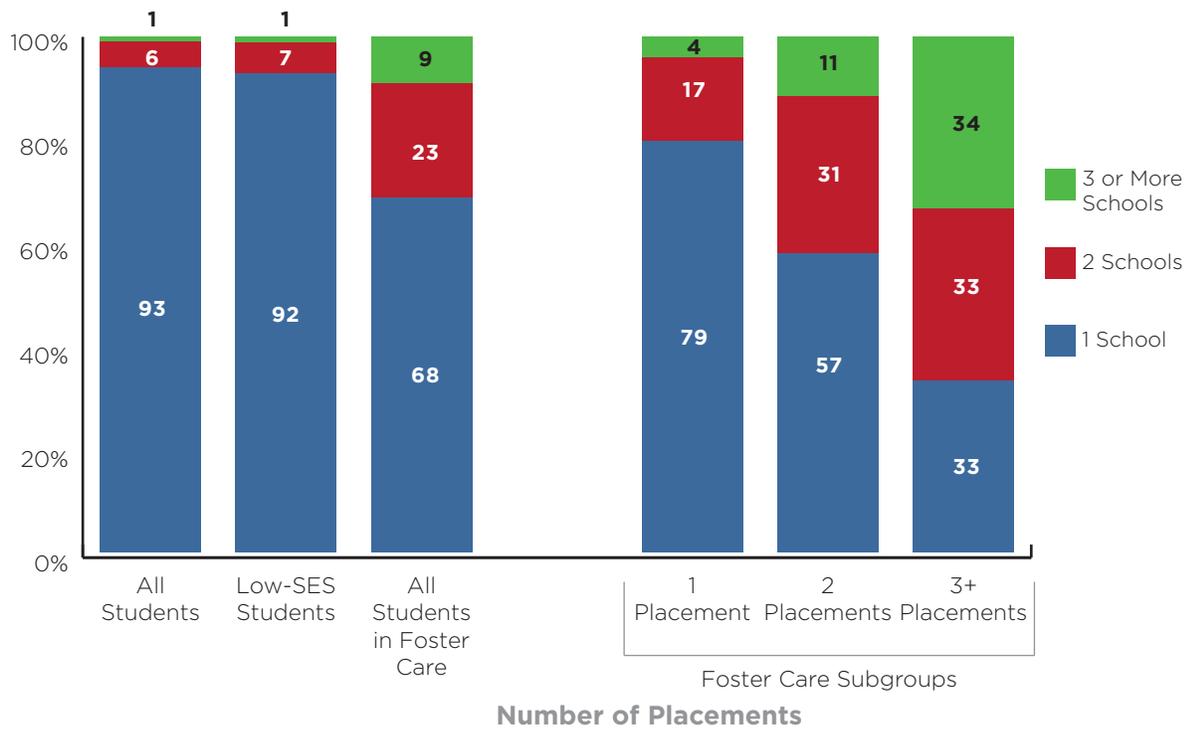
Figure 6. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by placement type and number of schools, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. The numbers of students by number of school placements and placement type are presented in Appendix Table B4b. Please note, however, that the percentages for figure 6 are based on row percentages (i.e., how many students in kinship care attended 1 school), not column percentages. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 7. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by number of placements and number of schools, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. The numbers of students by number of school placements and number of placements are presented in Appendix Table B4b. Please note, however, that the percentages for figure 7 are based on row percentages (i.e., how many students experienced 1 placement and also attended 1 school), not column percentages. SES = socioeconomic status.

California Academic Performance Index state rank decile as measure of school performance

California uses the Academic Performance Index (API), an annual measure of school test-score performance, to report results for state and federal accountability requirements. The API is a single number ranging from 200 to 1,000 that summarizes the results of each school's standardized test scores. The statewide performance target is 800, and schools that fall short are required to meet annual growth targets until they reach the goal.

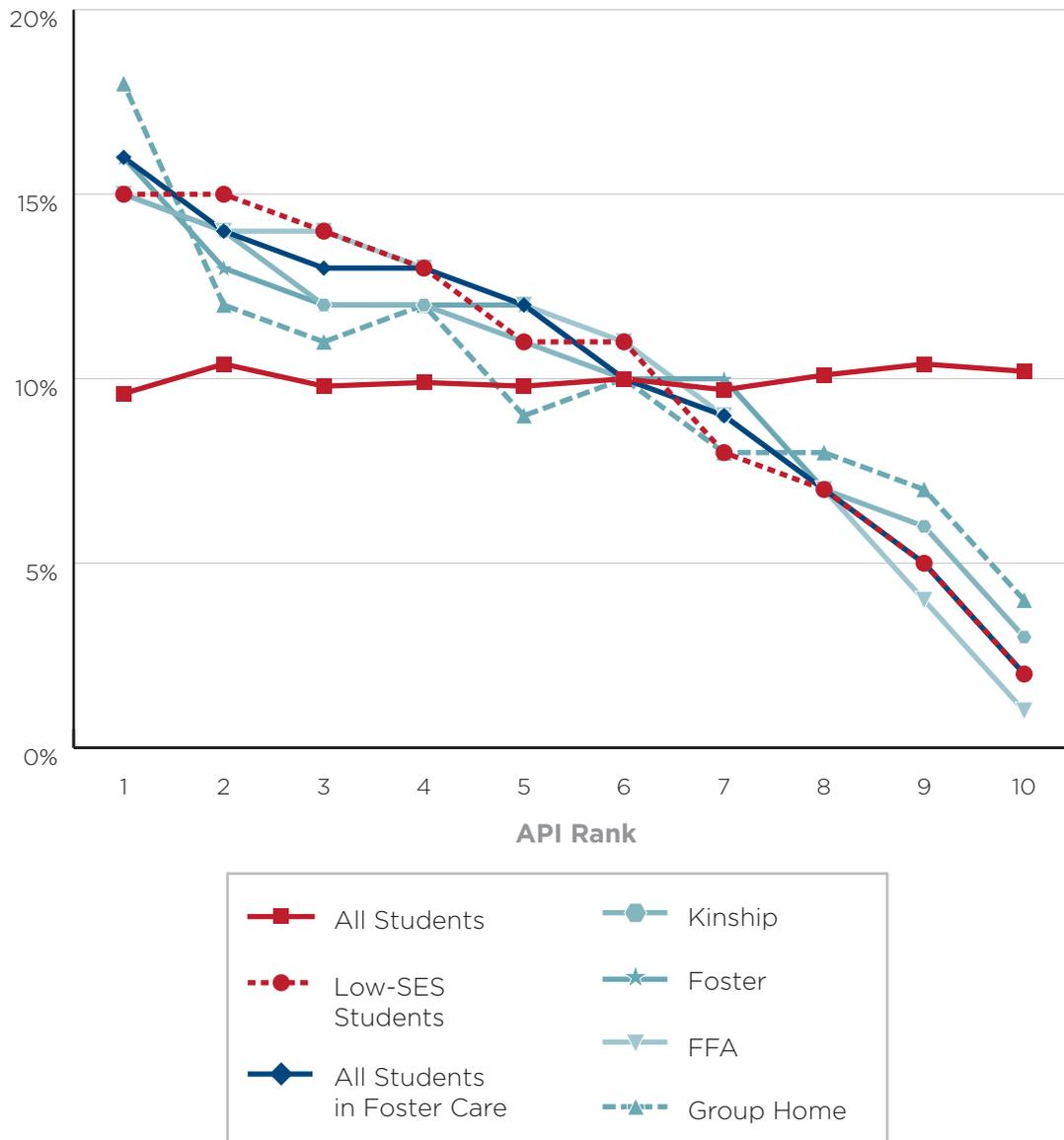
Every year the state provides a statewide API decile rank by sorting the API scores of schools of the same type (elementary, middle, and high) into 10 categories (deciles), ranging from 1 to 10. A statewide rank of 1 means that a school has an API score in the lowest-performing 10 percent of schools while a statewide rank of 10 means that a school has an API score in the highest-performing 10 percent of schools.

Finding 3: Students in foster care were more likely than the general population of students to be enrolled in the lowest-performing schools and more likely to be enrolled in nontraditional schools. By high school, one in five students in foster care were attending a nontraditional school.

Relative to the K–12 population overall, students in foster care were more likely to attend the state's lowest-performing schools and less likely to attend the state's highest-performing schools.

- Among students in foster care, roughly 15 percent attended the lowest-performing 10 percent of schools (API State Rank Decile 1; see box: *California Academic Performance Index state rank decile as measure of school performance*, above), with the percentage of foster youth steadily declining with each higher API state decile ranking. Only 2 percent of students in foster care attended the highest-performing 10 percent of schools (API State Rank Decile 10).
- Regardless of the foster care placement type, 41 to 42 percent of foster care students were in schools whose performance was in the lowest three API state rank deciles (fig. 8; kin 42 percent, licensed foster homes 41 percent, FFA certified homes 42 percent, group homes 42 percent). Between 12 to 19 percent were in schools whose performance was in the highest three API state rank deciles (kin 15 percent, licensed foster homes 14 percent, FFA certified homes 12 percent, group homes 19 percent).

Figure 8. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by the statewide school Academic Performance Index decile rank and placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,787,164 students ages 5–17, including 2,929,590 low-SES students; and 38,557 students in foster care. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as October 7, 2009. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. The numbers and percentages of students by statewide Academic Performance Index ranking are presented in Appendix Table B6. SES = socioeconomic status.

Attendance in nontraditional schools, already higher among students in foster care than among their K–12 and low-SES peers, increased steadily for students in foster care in higher grades. By high school, one in five students in foster were attending a nontraditional school.

In addition to traditional K–12 education, California, its counties, and school districts also offer alternative education options, primarily for students with academic, developmental, and/or behavioral challenges who may be better served by a nontraditional school. Alternative schools can offer a different structure, learning philosophy, or academic emphasis to address the varying needs, interests, and learning styles of students. Instructional strategies include independent study, community-based education, focused or thematic education, and flexible scheduling.¹ Enrollment in a nontraditional school often suggests that students were unsuccessful in a traditional school setting and were therefore transferred to an alternative setting to better meet students’ needs.

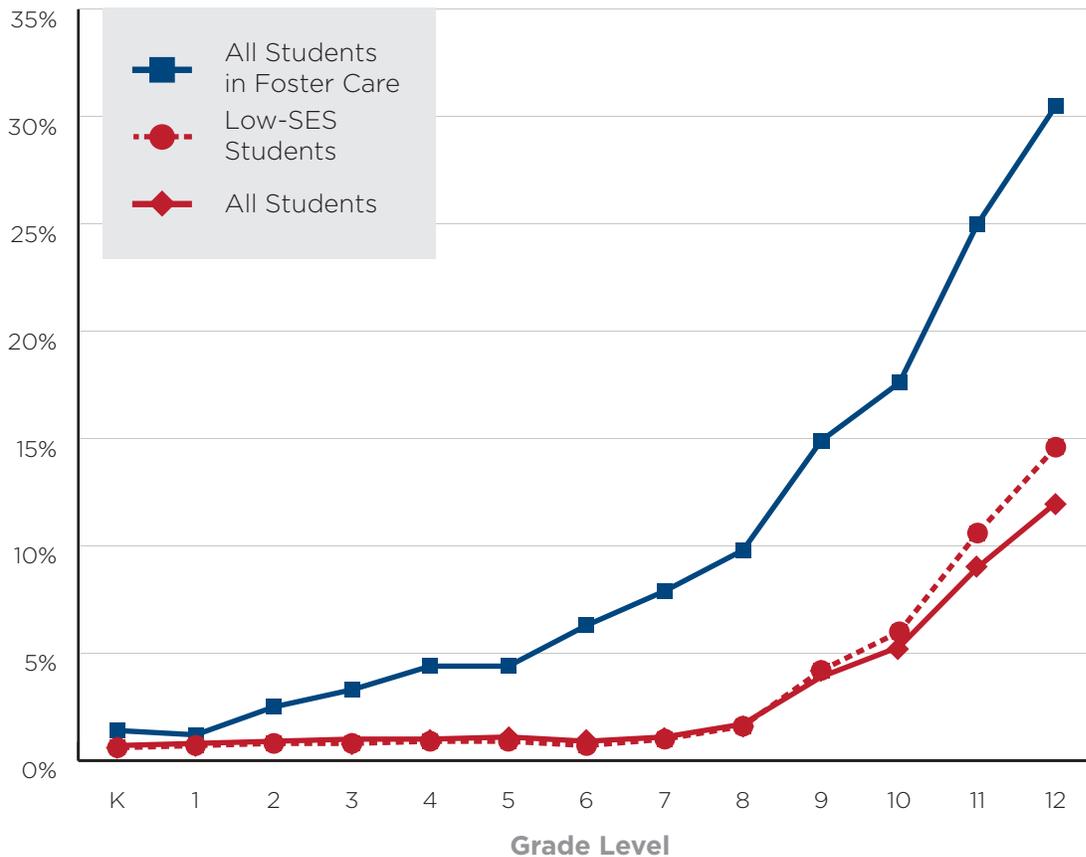
“I never was allowed to go outside, so first grade was terrifying for me. I had no social skills.”

—Former foster student

- Overall, 11 percent of students in foster care attended a nontraditional school compared to 3 percent of both the low-SES and statewide student populations.
- The distribution and demographic breakdown of children in these school settings, however, varied by grade level (fig. 9). Among foster care students in elementary school, 3 percent were in nontraditional schools, while 8 percent of middle school foster care children attended nontraditional schools. Among high school students in foster care, 21 percent attended a nontraditional school.

¹ Alternative schools include the state’s nonpublic schools, which are specialized private schools that provide education services to public school students with disabilities who cannot be served by other schools, including any group homes that have been certified by the state to operate as a nonpublic school, continuation high schools for students at risk of not graduating, special education schools for students with special learning needs, juvenile court schools for students under the authority of the juvenile justice system, and county or community day schools for students with serious attendance or behavior infractions.

Figure 9. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care in nontraditional schools by grade level, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

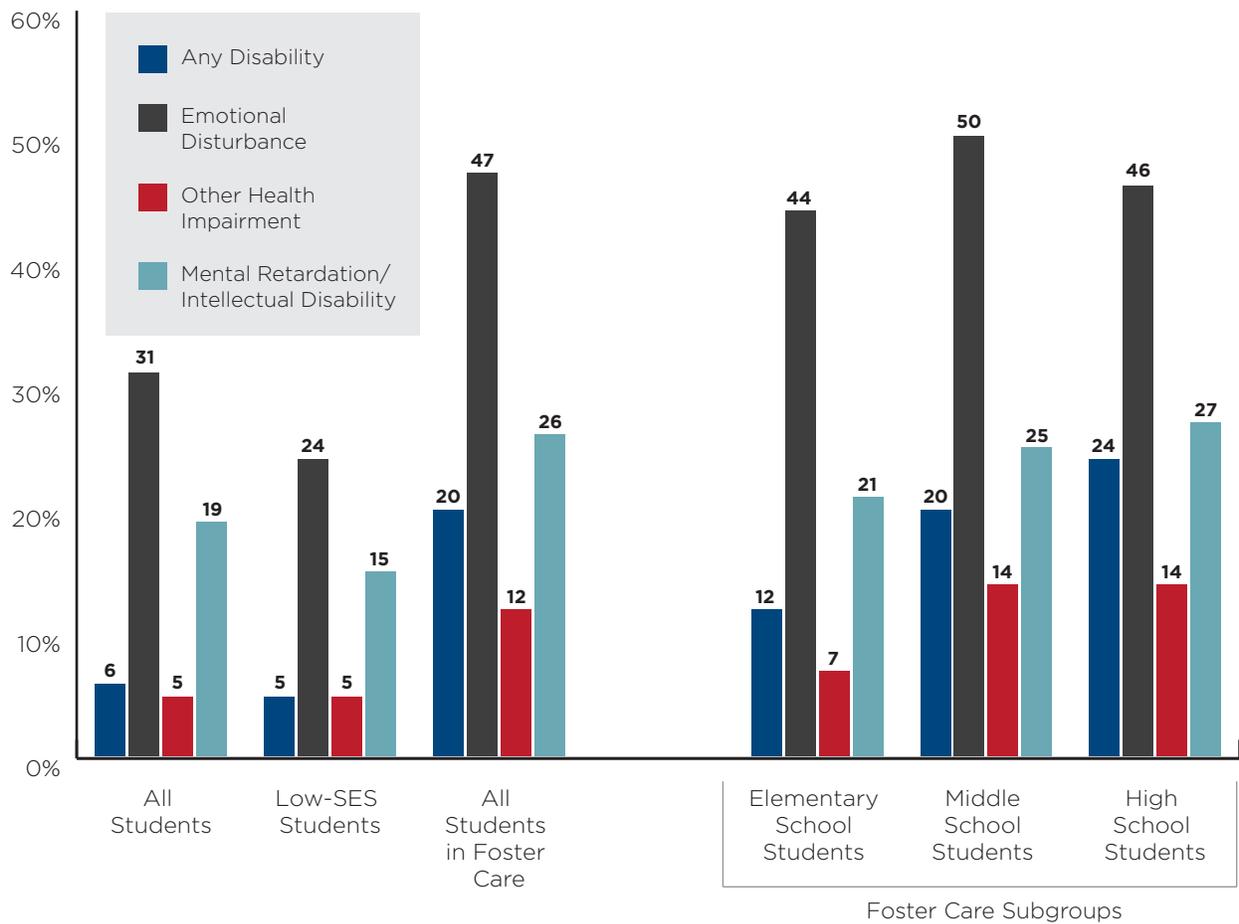
Note. Percentages are computed for 5,969,112 students ages 5–17, including 3,026,238 low-SES students; and 43,140 students in foster care. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. SES = socioeconomic status.

Enrollment in nontraditional schools was most common among male students in foster care, those placed in group homes, and students in foster care reported as having emotional disturbance.

- Overall, 55 percent of students in foster care who attended nontraditional schools were male, and 45 percent were female (table B5a). Gender differences were starker for students in elementary and middle schools with 70 percent of elementary school students in nontraditional schools being male, and 69 percent of middle school students in nontraditional schools being male. By high school however, gender differences evened out—49 percent of high school students in nontraditional schools were comprised of male students.
- Students in group homes, where on-campus schools are not uncommon, were significantly overrepresented in nontraditional schools (table B5a). Among students in group homes, 41 percent attended nontraditional schools. Among high school students in group homes, 45 percent attended nontraditional schools.

- Placement instability was also associated with nontraditional school placement (table B5a). Among students attending nontraditional schools, 55 percent experienced one placement during the school year, 24 percent experienced two placements, and 21 percent experienced three or more placements. Among students in traditional school placements, 64 percent experienced one placement during the school year, 24 percent experienced two placements, and 12 percent experienced three or more placements.
- Students reported as having an emotional disturbance were more likely than those with other disabilities to be enrolled in nontraditional schools across all grade levels (fig. 10). Overall, 47 percent of students classified with emotional disturbance were placed in nontraditional schools, compared to 26 percent of students who were classified with mental retardation/intellectual disability or 12 percent of students classified with other health impairments including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

Figure 10. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care placed in nontraditional schools by disability category and grade level, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. The numbers and percentages for this figure are presented in Appendix Table B5b. SES = socioeconomic status.

Key findings about the academic achievement and education outcomes of students in foster care

Findings *(continued)*

4. Students in foster care had the lowest participation rate in California's statewide testing program and participation was tied to placement instability.
5. Statewide testing documented an achievement gap for students in foster care. Educational disadvantage was greatest in upper grade levels, among students in group homes, and for students who experienced three or more placements.
6. Among all high school students, those in foster care had the highest dropout and lowest graduation rates, although students in more stable placements showed better performance for both of these education outcomes.

Finding 4: Students in foster care had the lowest participation rate in California's statewide testing program and participation was tied to placement instability.

During the 2009/10 school year, all California public school students in grades 2–11 were required to take a statewide test through the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, developed for each grade and subject, unless there has been a written exemption request from a parent or guardian (see box: *STAR Program*, next page). As reported in *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1*, test-taking rates among grades 2–11 in the general population ranged from 90–98 percent. For students in foster care, test taking rates between grades 2–11 ranged from 78–93 percent. As placement instability increased, testing participation decreased. Ninety-one percent of students who experienced only one placement during the school year participated in the STAR Program (table B7a). Participation dropped to 86 percent among students with two placements and 73 percent among students with three or more placements.

STAR Program

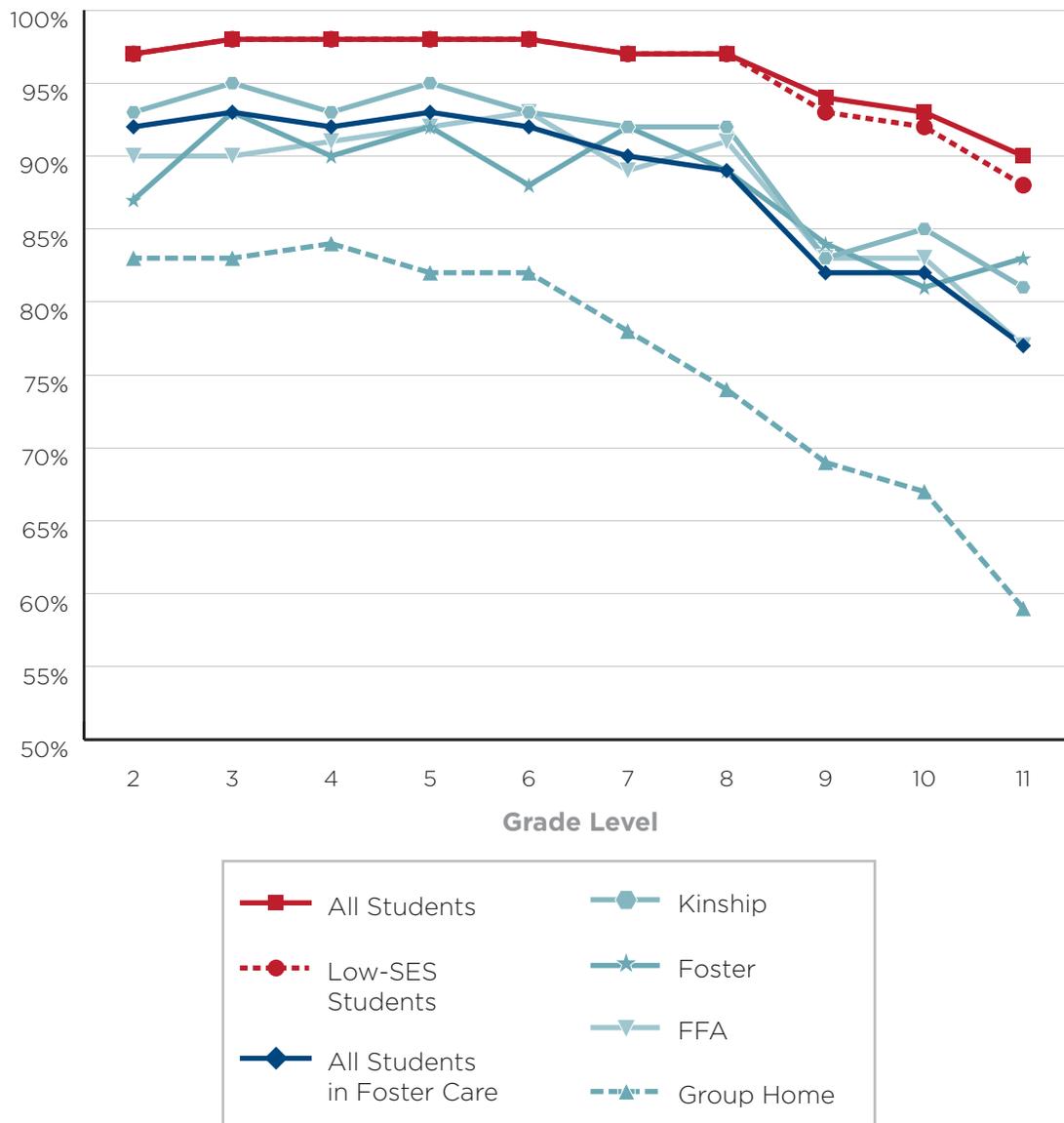
At the time of this study, all California students in grades 2–11 were required take a series of tests each spring through the Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program, which looks at how well schools and students in certain grades are performing in mathematics, reading, writing, science, and history. The individual test results are reported to families, schools, districts, and state and federal education agencies for monitoring student progress and for accountability purposes. The aggregated test results also carry consequences for schools, both additional resources to encourage improvement and recognition for accomplishments.

The STAR Program consists of four tests. Most students take the California Standards Test (CST), criterion-referenced tests that assess content standards in the designated content areas. The other three tests are the California Alternate Performance Assessment, an alternate performance assessment for students classified with significant cognitive disabilities in their individualized education programs; the California Modified Assessment, an alternate standards-based assessment for students with disabilities who meet eligibility requirements; and the Standards-based Tests in Spanish, criterion-referenced tests offered to Spanish-speaking English learners who have been enrolled in California schools for less than 12 months.

Test-taking rates were also lower among students in foster care placed in group homes and those with a high number of placements.

- Student placement type was correlated with test participation throughout all grade levels, but became more pronounced in higher grades (fig. 11). Overall, students placed in group homes were the least likely to participate in testing, while those placed in kinship care or licensed foster homes were the most likely to be tested, although still below the rate of all students in the state and low-SES students. By grade 11, 81 percent of students placed in kinship care, 83 percent of students in licensed foster homes, and 77 percent of students placed in FFA certified foster homes participated in testing, while only 59 percent of students placed in group homes participated.
- Placement instability also appears to be correlated with student test-taking (fig. 12). 91 percent of students who experienced only one placement during the school year; 86 percent of students who experienced two placements; and only 73 percent of students who experienced three or more placements participated in testing (table B7a).

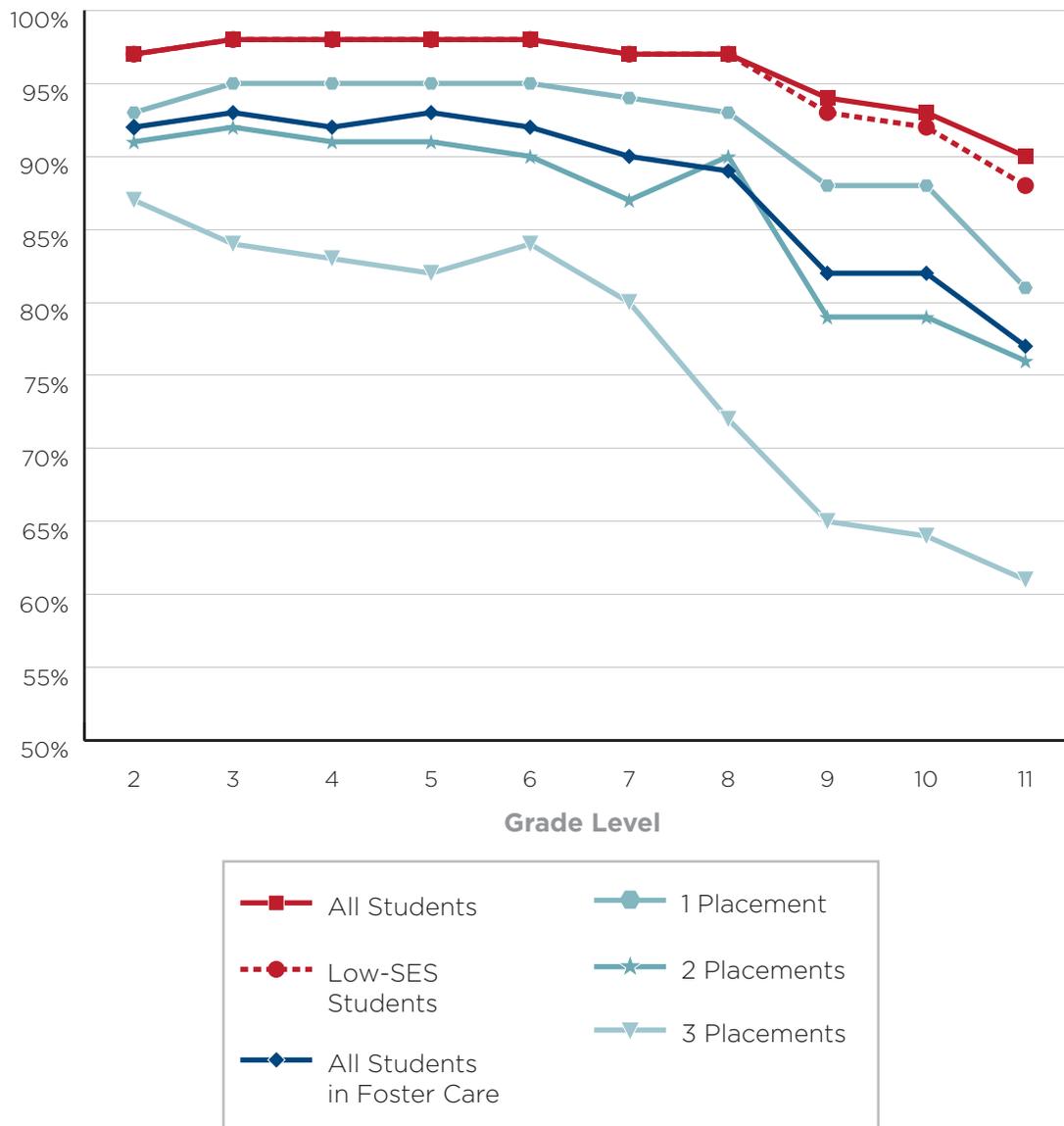
Figure 11. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care enrolled in fall who were tested in spring by grade level and placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. The population of analysis includes only students that were ages 5–17. Students tested included students who were tested in English language arts and mathematics with the California Standards Test, with or without modifications, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish. Students tested also included students with blank tests but did not include students with a parent exemption or who were absent for the test. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. The numbers and percentages of students tested are presented in Appendix Table B7a and B7b. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 12. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care enrolled in fall who were tested in spring by grade level and number of placements, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. The population of analysis includes only students that were ages 5–17. Students tested included students who were tested in English language arts and mathematics with the California Standards Test, with or without modifications, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish. Students tested also included students with blank tests but did not include students with a parent exemption or who were absent for the test. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. The numbers and percentages of students tested are presented in Appendix Table B7a and B7c. SES = socioeconomic status.

California Standards Test

At the time of this study, California school districts were required to administer the California Standards Test (CST) to all students in grades 2–11 with the exception of students receiving special education services whose individualized education programs specify taking an alternate assessment and of students whose parents/guardians request an exemption from testing. For this analysis, CSTs that were taken with modifications were excluded.

The purpose of the CSTs is to determine students' achievement of the California content standards for each grade or course. Student scores are compared to preset criteria to determine whether their performance on the test is advanced, proficient, basic, below basic, or far below basic. The state's goal is for all students to reach a performance level of proficient or above on STAR tests, whereby students demonstrate a competent understanding of the knowledge and skills measured by the CSTs.

Finding 5: Statewide testing documented an achievement gap for students in foster care. Educational disadvantage was greatest in upper grade levels, among students in group homes, and for students who experienced three or more placements.

The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1, described how only 29 percent of students in foster care achieved proficiency in English language arts on the California Standards Test (CST; see box: *California Standards Test*, above). Although this rate is higher than the test results of English language learners (22 percent) and students with disabilities (24 percent), it is 10 percentage points lower than for low-SES students (40 percent). When examined in detail, 40 percent of students in foster care tested at the lowest two performance levels (below and far below basic) in English language arts, levels that indicate that students have a limited or flawed understanding of the skills being measured. Comparatively, 20 percent of all students and 28 percent of low-SES students tested at the lowest two performance levels in English language arts.

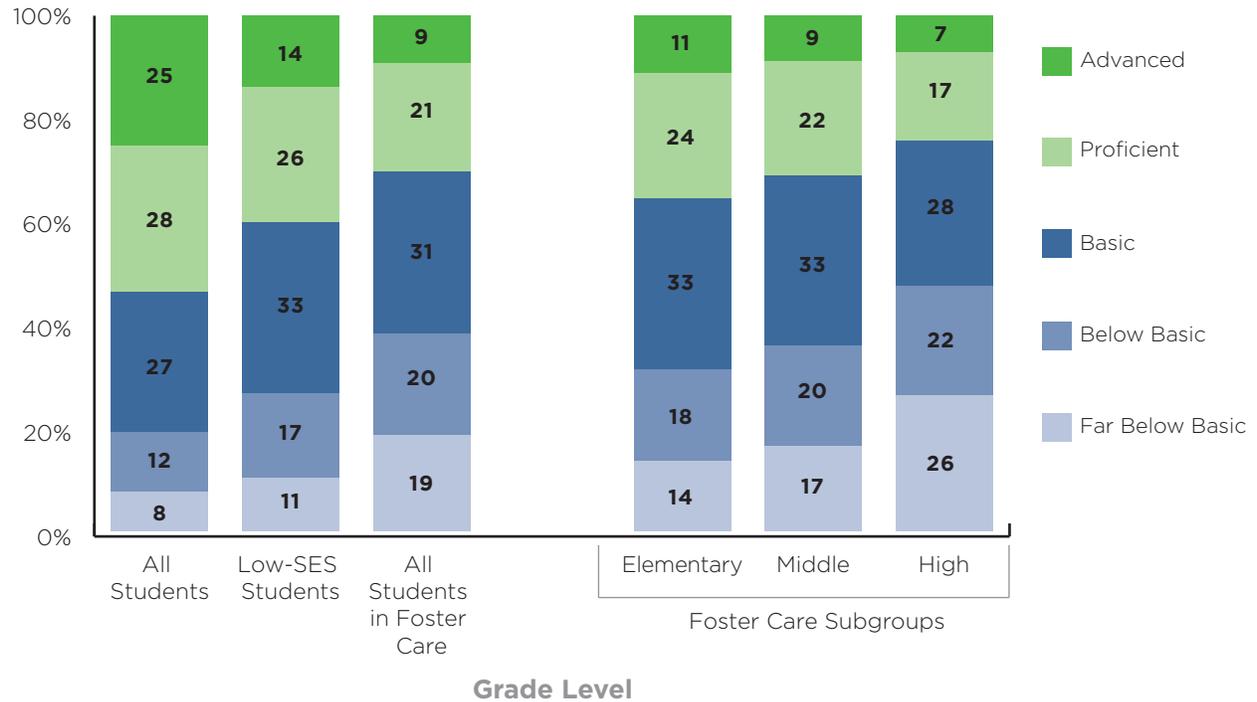
“At that time, I didn’t say anything to my teacher. If I couldn’t do it, I just let myself fail, which was really bad.”

—Former foster student

- Proficiency in English language arts for students in foster care was negatively correlated with grade level (fig. 13). Among students in elementary school, 33 percent scored below basic or far below basic in English language arts (table B8a). This figure increased to 49 percent of students scoring below or far below basic in English language arts by high school. Alternately, 34 percent of students in foster care scored proficient or above in English language arts in elementary school, but only 24 percent scored at this level by high school.

- There were also achievement gaps for students in foster care based on their placement type, particularly for those students placed in group homes (fig. 14). Among students in foster care placed with kin, 33 percent tested at proficient or above in English language arts, still below the proficient rate of all students in the state and low-SES students. 28 percent of students placed in licensed foster homes and FFA certified homes tested at proficient or above in English language arts. In contrast, only 15 percent of students placed in group homes tested at proficient or above in English language arts, and 61 percent of students in group placements tested below or far below basic (table B8a). Low performance in English language arts was observed across all grade levels but was most pronounced for students in higher grades (fig. 14). At the high school level, only 13 percent of students placed in group homes tested at proficient or above in English language arts.
- The percentage of students in foster care who were proficient or above in English language arts was below the proficiency rate of all students in the state and low-SES students regardless of the number of placements experienced by students in foster care (fig. 15). However, the number of placements students experienced during the school year was also correlated with performance in English language arts, particularly among students who experienced three or more placements. While 38 percent of students who experienced one placement, and 39 percent of students who experienced two placements tested below or far below basic in English language arts, 50 percent of students who experienced three or more placements had such performance.

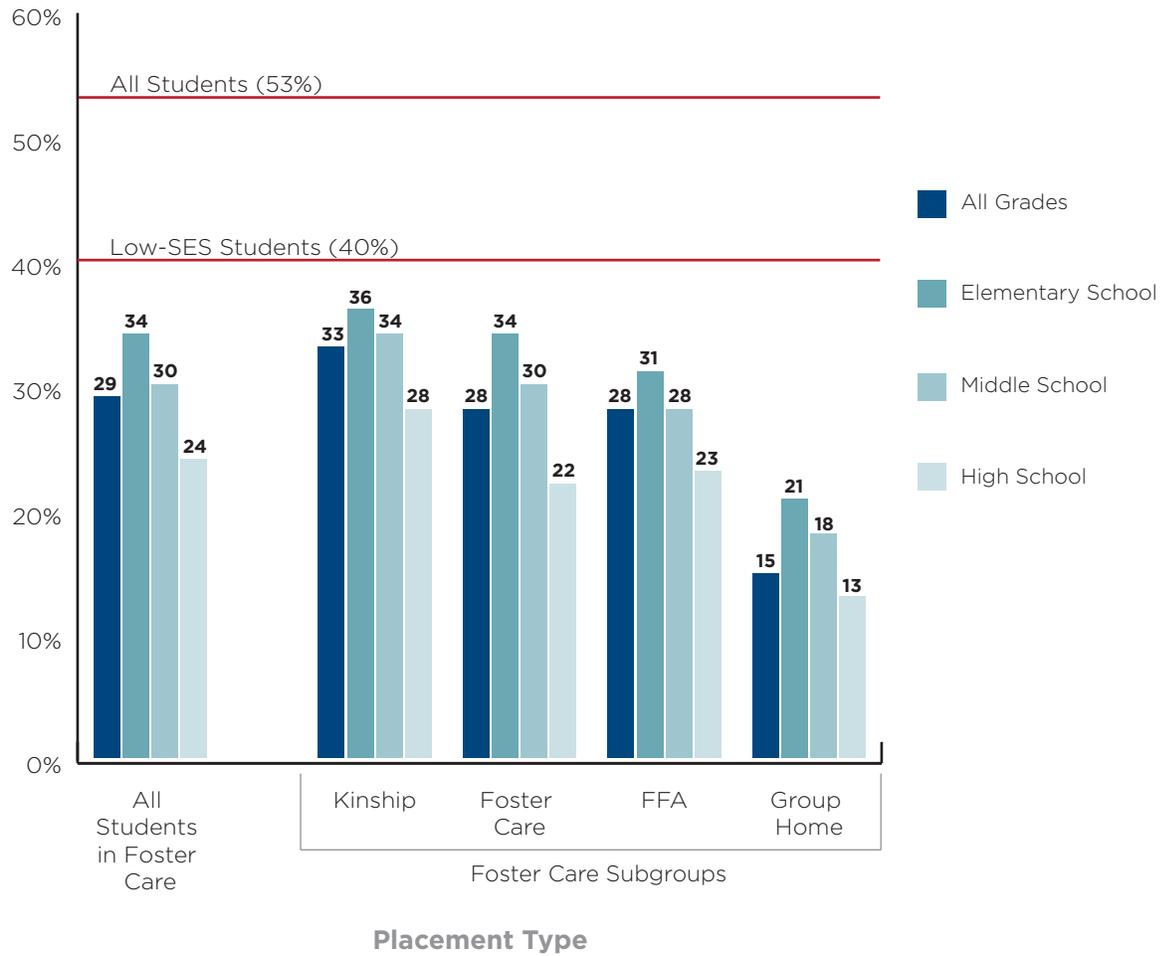
Figure 13. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by performance level in English language arts on the California Standards Test, grades 2–11, by grade level, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages computed for 4,378,521 students ages 5–17 in grades 2–11 in fall 2009 with English language arts California Standards Test (CST) results, not including CSTs that were taken with modifications; 2,218,485 low-SES students; and 26,827 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of students by performance level are presented in Appendix Table B8a. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100, or perfectly match those in tables. SES = socioeconomic status.

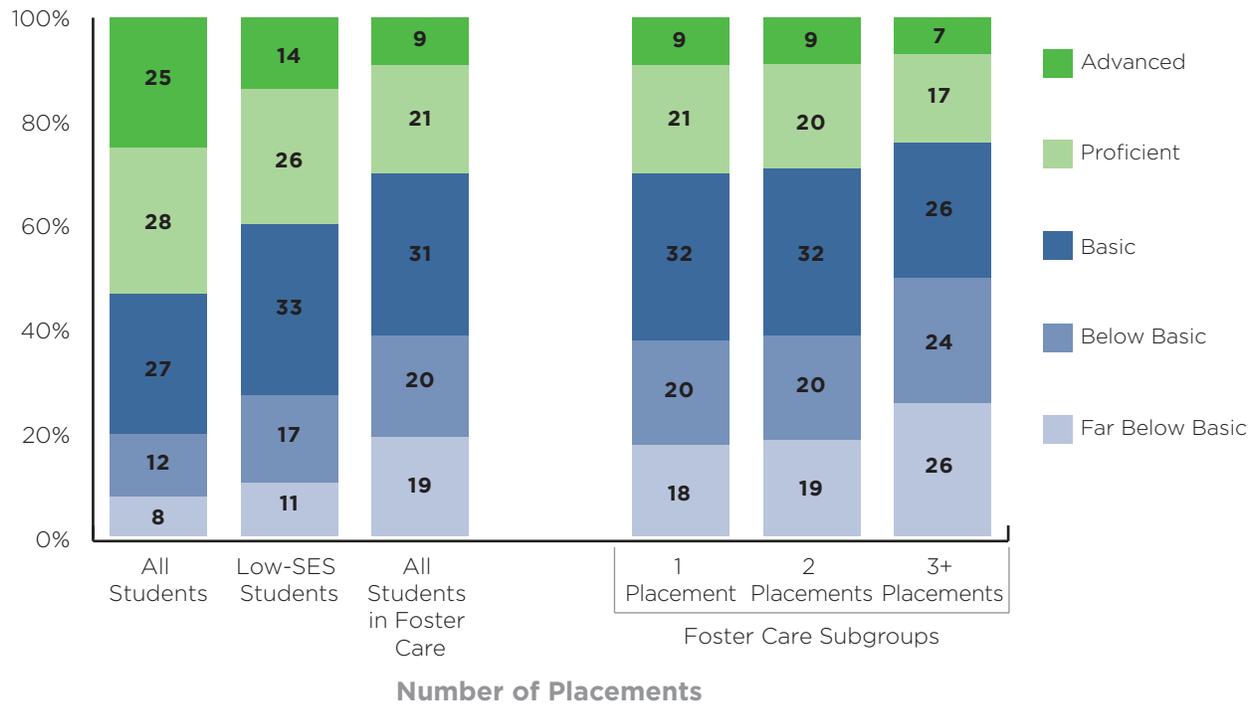
Figure 14. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care proficient or above for English language arts on the California Standards Test, grades 2–11, by grade level and placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages computed for 4,378,521 students ages 5–17 in grades 2–11 in fall 2009 with English language arts California Standards Test (CST) results, not including CSTs that were taken with modifications; 2,218,485 low-SES students; and 26,827 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of students by performance level are presented in Appendix Table B8b. Due to rounding, percentages may not perfectly match those in tables. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 15. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by performance level in English language arts on the California Standards Test, grades 2–11, by number of placements, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages computed for 4,378,521 students ages 5–17 in grades 2–11 in fall 2009 with English language arts California Standards Test (CST) results, not including CSTs that were taken with modifications; 2,218,485 low-SES students; and 26,827 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of students by performance level are presented in Appendix Table B8a. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100, or perfectly match those in tables. SES = socioeconomic status.

Students in foster care had the lowest proficiency rate in mathematics and more than one-third fell below the basic performance level.

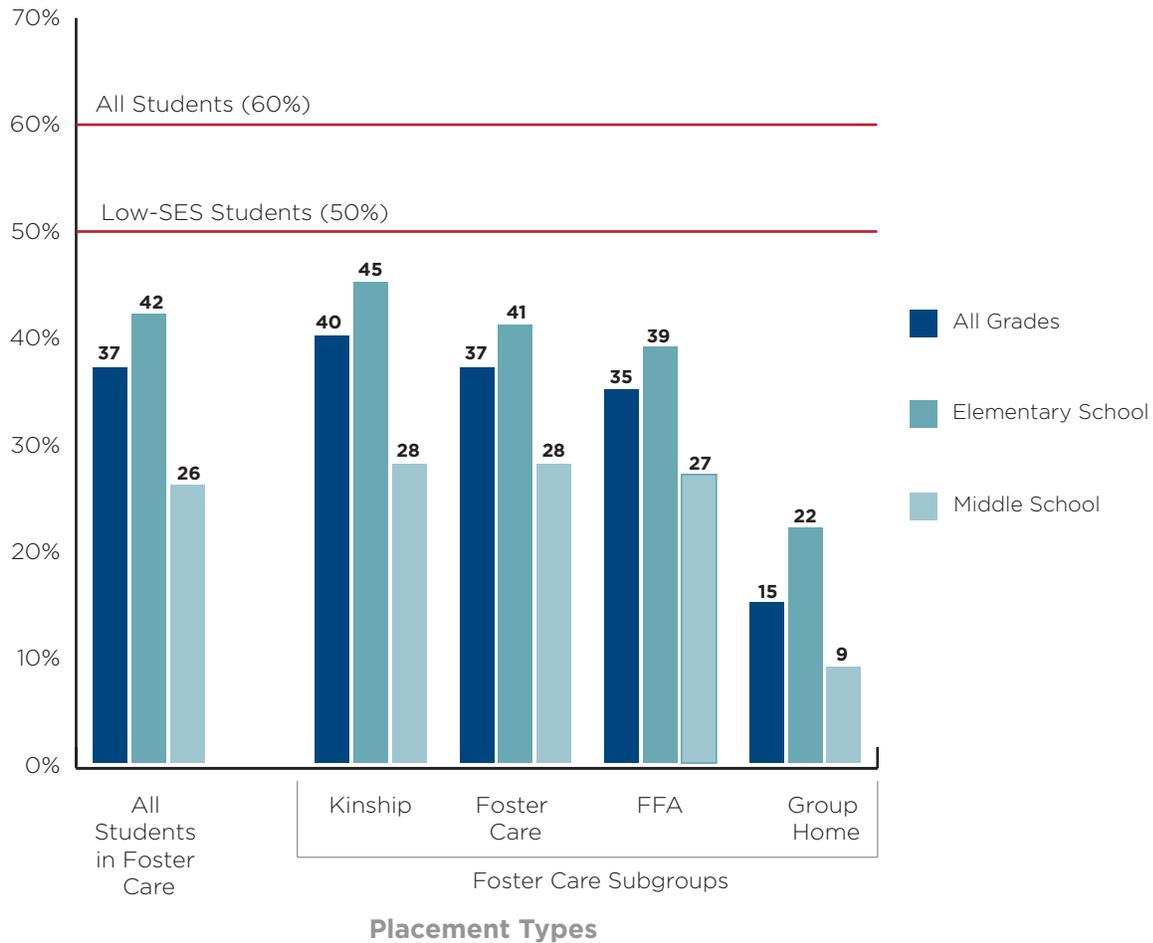
On the grade 2 through 7 mathematics portion of the California Standards Test, students in foster care had a lower proficiency rate than most other student groups. Specifically, 37 percent of students in foster care achieved proficiency, compared to 50 percent of low-SES students and 60 percent among the entire statewide student population. 36 percent of students in foster care performed at the lowest two levels (below basic and far below basic), a rate similar to that of students with disabilities (37 percent) and slightly above that of English language learners (30 percent). Comparatively, 18 percent of all students statewide and 23 percent of low-SES students tested at the two lowest levels.

“It’s hard to do homework, or focus on social studies, or learn English or math when I’m worried about what’s going to happen when I get home and where my foster parents are going, and what does that mean for me?”

—Former foster student

- Achievement gaps for students in foster care varied among placement types, and were especially low for students placed in group homes (fig. 16). Among students placed in kinship care, 40 percent tested at proficient or above in mathematics. 37 percent of students placed in licensed foster homes and 35 percent of students placed in FFA certified homes tested at proficient or above in English language arts. In contrast, only 15 percent of students placed in group homes tested at proficient or above in mathematics, and 66 percent of students in group placements tested below or far below basic (table B8c). Similar to English language arts, achievement was lower for students in middle school than for students in elementary school in all placement types. At the lowest, only 9 percent of middle school students placed in group homes tested at proficient or above in mathematics (fig. 16), which may reflect that students placed in group homes by middle school are already experiencing severe problems that affect their ability to achieve academically.
- The number of placements students experienced during the school year was also correlated with performance in mathematics, particularly among students who experienced three or more placements (fig. 17). While 35 percent of students who experienced one or two placements tested below or far below basic in mathematics, 44 percent of students who experienced three or more placements tested at the same levels.

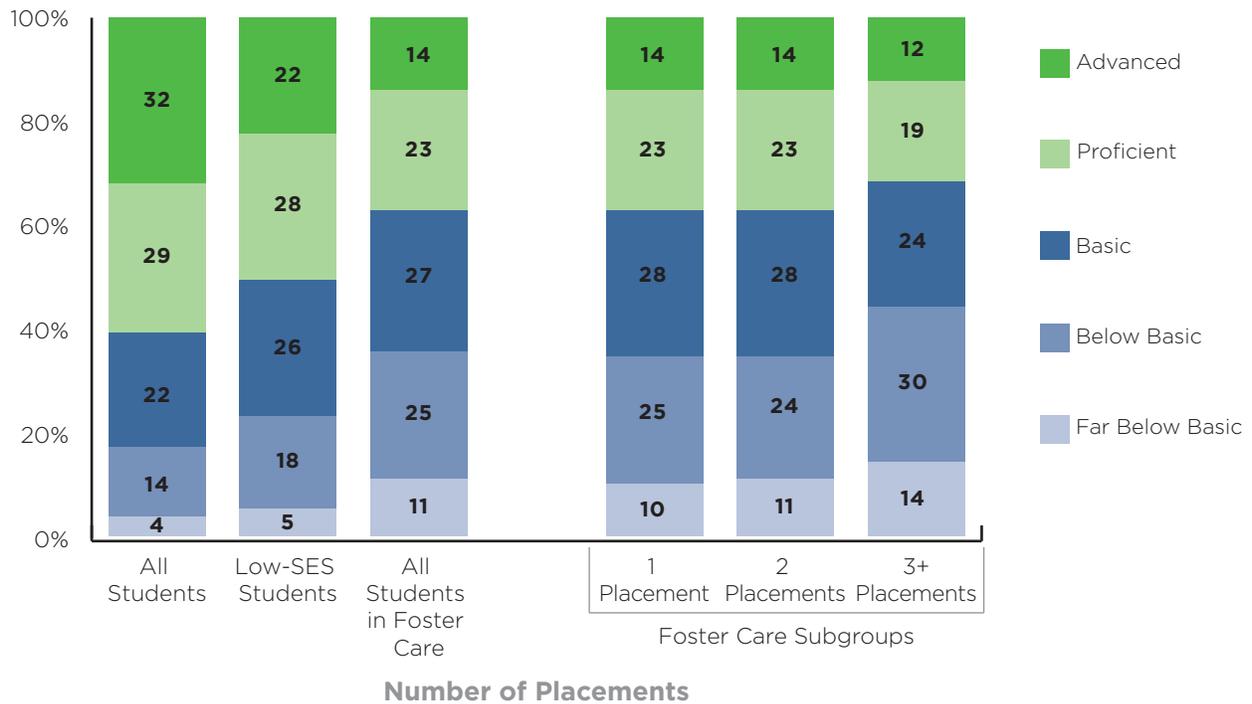
Figure 16. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care proficient or above in mathematics on the California Standards Test, grades 2–7, by grade level and placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 2,560,081 students ages 5–17 in grades 2–7 in fall 2009 with mathematics California Standards Test (CST) results, not including CSTs that were taken with modifications; 1,370,424 low-SES students; and 14,420 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of students by performance level are presented in Appendix Table B8d. Due to rounding, percentages may not perfectly match those in tables. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 17. Percentage of all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by performance level in mathematics on the California Standards Test, grades 2–7, by number of placements, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 2,560,081 students ages 5–17 in grades 2–7 in fall 2009 with mathematics California Standards Test (CST) results, not including CSTs that were taken with modifications; 1,370,424 low-SES students; and 14,420 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of students by performance level are presented in Appendix Table B8c. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100, or perfectly match those in tables. SES = socioeconomic status.

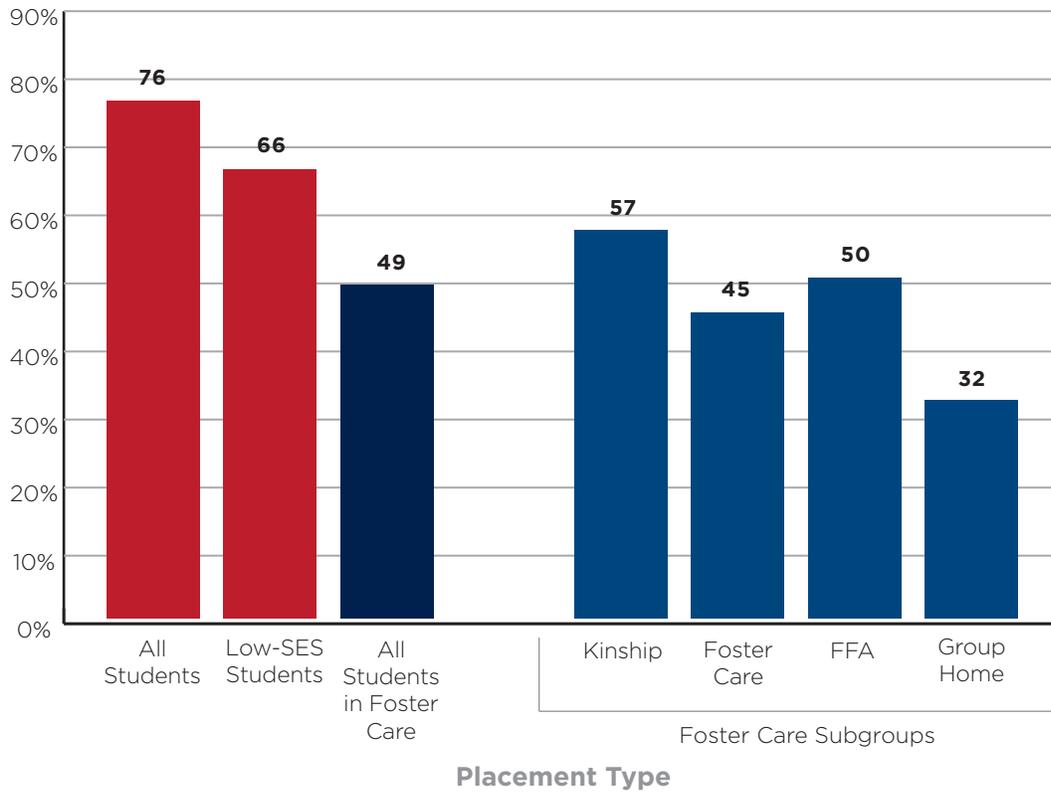
Finding 6: Among all high school students, those in foster care had the highest dropout and lowest graduation rates, although students in more stable placements showed better performance for both of these education outcomes.

Only about half of students in foster care passed California's high school exit exam in grade 10.

The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1 reported that 49 percent of the students in foster care who took the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) passed both parts in grade 10 (see box: *The California High School Exit Exam*, page 36). This pass rate was considerably lower than the pass rate for low-SES students (66 percent) and all K–12 grade-10 students who took the California High School Exit Exam in 2009/10 (76 percent) and it remained lower than for those student groups regardless of type of placements and time in care.

- Students in foster care placed in kinship care were most likely (57 percent) to pass both parts of the CAHSEE in grade 10 compared to students in other placements (fig. 18). 45 percent of students placed in licensed foster home placements also passed the CAHSEE, as did 50 percent of students placed in FFA certified homes. Only 32 percent of students placed in group homes passed both parts of the CAHSEE in grade 10.
- Time in care was also correlated with whether or not students in foster care passed the CAHSEE in grade 10 (fig. 19). Among those students placed in foster care for less than a year, 54 percent passed the CAHSEE, 52 percent of those in care between one and two years also passed the exam in grade 10. Of those students in care for three or more years, 46 percent passed the CAHSEE in grade 10.

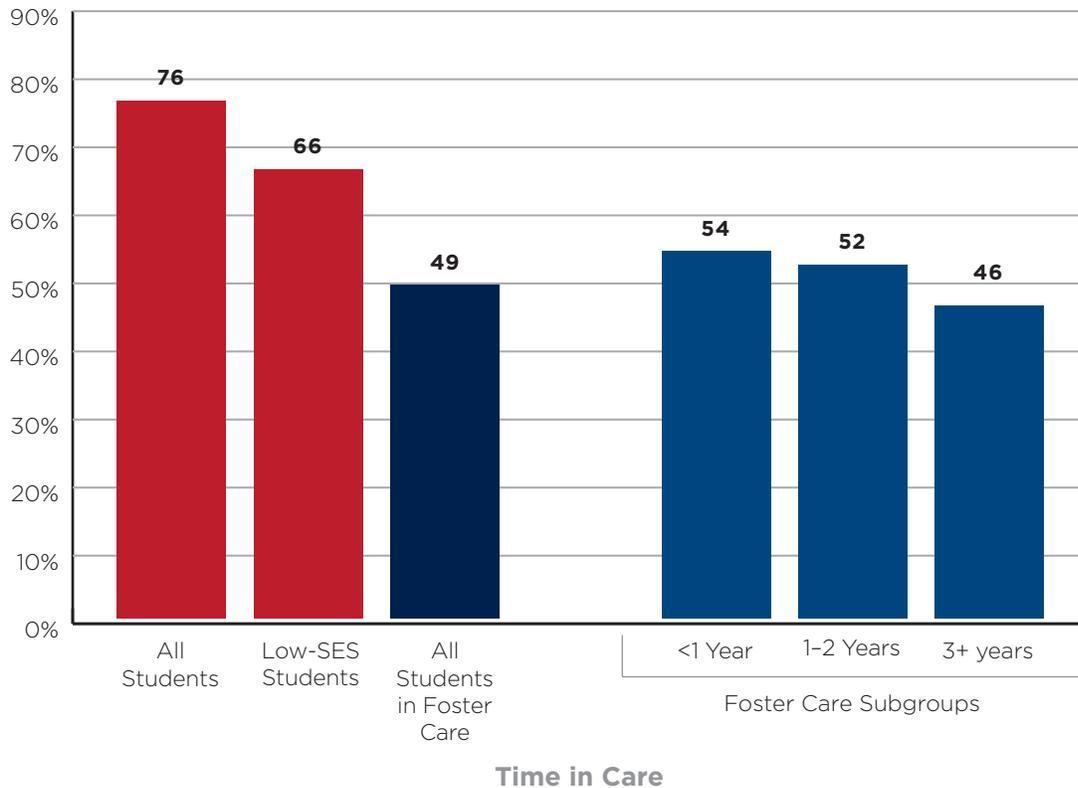
Figure 18. Percentage of tested grade-10 students who passed both the English language arts and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Examination, for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 455,171 students age 17 or younger who took both the English language arts and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Examination in grade 10; 210,467 low-SES students; and 3,266 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of grade-10 students who passed the CAHSEE are presented in Appendix Table B9. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 19. Percentage of tested grade-10 students who passed both the English language arts and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Examination, for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by time in care, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 455,171 students age 17 or younger who took both the English language arts and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Examination in grade 10; 210,467 lowSES students; and 3,266 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages of grade-10 students who passed the CAHSEE are presented in Appendix Table B9. SES = socioeconomic status.

The California High School Exit Exam

The California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) is a required test that all students must pass in order to graduate from a California public high school. Students with disabilities can take the test with accommodations or modifications as specified in their independent living plans, or they may be eligible for an exemption or waiver. The CAHSEE has two parts: English language arts and mathematics. It is first administered to students in grade 10, at which point passing both parts is an indicator of being on track to graduate on time from high school. Students have multiple opportunities to retake one or both parts of the test in grades 11 and 12 if they fail it the first time.

Students in foster care dropped out at a higher rate than the other at-risk student subgroups, but those placed with guardians and in more stable foster care placements were the least likely to drop out.

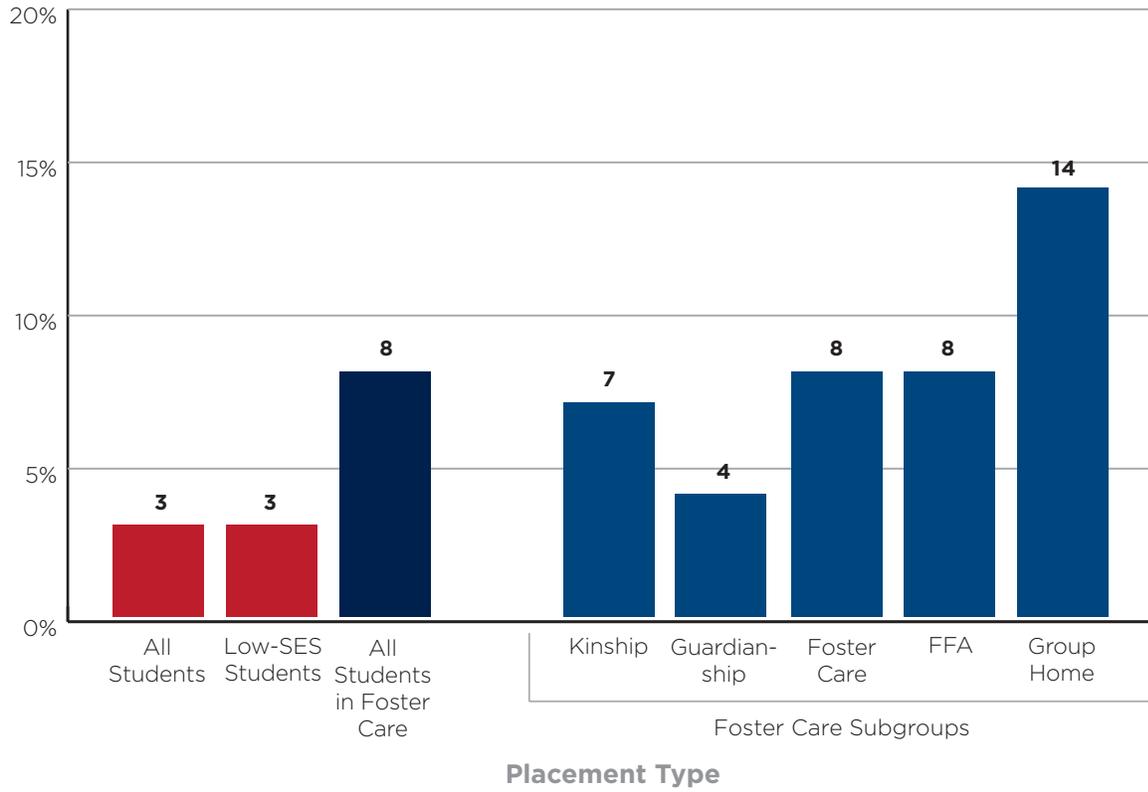
The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1 described the different methods for measuring dropout rates for students in grades 9–12. The single-year dropout rate, that is, the proportion of students enrolled in fall 2009 who subsequently dropped out without completing high school, typically produces the lowest rate. The adjusted cohort rate—now used in California—typically produces the highest and most complete rate, but it requires longitudinal data unavailable for this study. The single-year dropout rate for all students in foster care was more than 8 percent, nearly three times higher than the statewide dropout rate (3 percent) and also higher than the rate for all other at-risk student groups: English learners (5 percent), students with disabilities (3 percent), and low-SES students (3 percent).

“Eventually, I ended up in the system for the first time. And, I had a really rough year my freshman year. My freshman year, I was failing classes, a lot of classes.”

—*Student in foster care*

- Placement type was associated with student dropout (fig. 20). Among the 2,615 students living in group homes, 14 percent dropped out. Alternately, students placed in guardian placements (4 percent) were among the least likely to drop out.
- Students with three or more placements (13 percent) were more than twice as likely to drop out as students with one placement (6 percent) although this single-year dropout rate is still twice as high as for low-SES students and all students in the state (fig. 21).

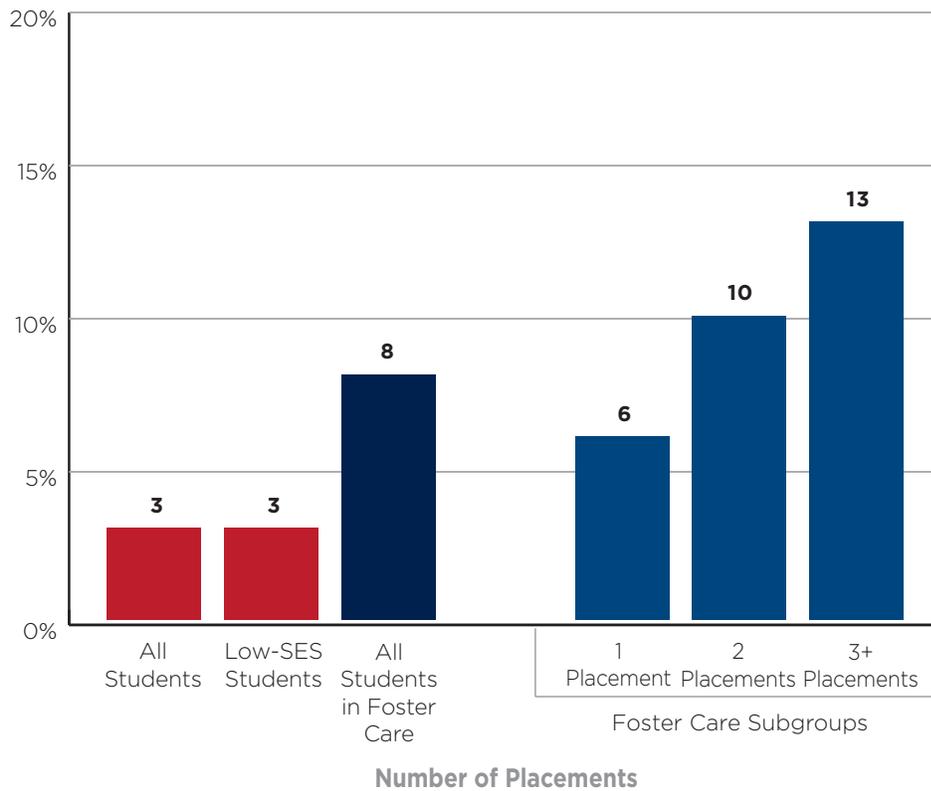
Figure 20. Single-year dropout rate for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by placement type, grades 9–12, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 1,902,259 students age 17 or younger enrolled in grades 9–12 in fall 2009; 869,449 low-SES students; and 15,584 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages for single year dropout rates are presented in Appendix Table B10. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 21. Single-year dropout rate for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by number of placements, grades 9–12, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

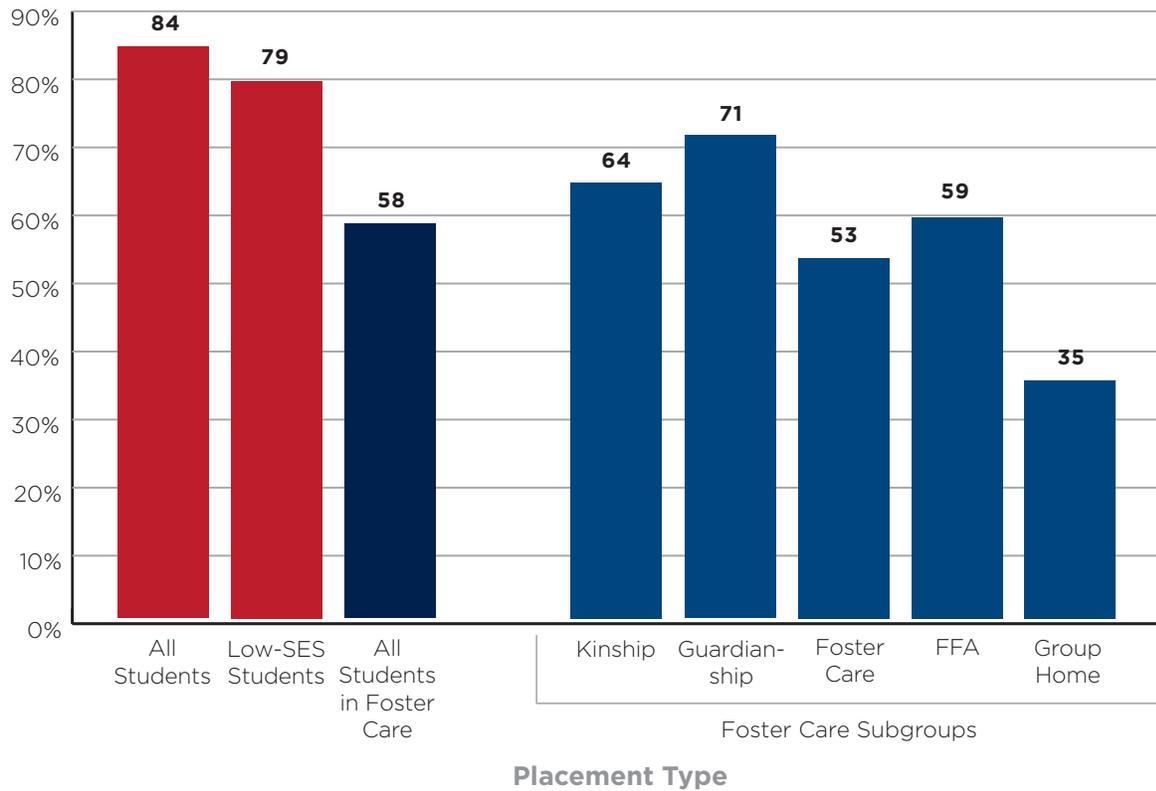
Note. Percentages are computed for 1,902,259 students age 17 or younger enrolled in grades 9–12 in fall 2009; 869,449 low-SES students; and 15,584 students in foster care. The numbers and percentages for single year dropout rates are presented in Appendix Table B10. SES = socioeconomic status.

The grade-12 graduation rate for students in foster care was lower than for the other at-risk student subgroups. Just as placement stability and guardianship placements were linked to a lower likelihood of dropping out, these factors were also associated with a greater likelihood of graduating.

As reported in *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1*, the graduation rate for all grade-12 students statewide was 84 percent and 79 percent among low-SES students, but for students in foster care it was just 58 percent—the lowest rate among all at-risk student groups. As with the CAHSEE and dropout findings, it is clear that stability and permanency are associated in a number of ways with high school graduation for students in foster care.

- Students in kinship (64 percent), and guardianship (71 percent) placements were among the most likely to graduate from high school in grade 12 (fig. 22). In contrast, students in group homes (35 percent) were among the least likely to graduate.
- Whereas students with one placement (63 percent) were most likely to graduate, students with three or more placements (43 percent) were least likely to graduate in grade 12 (fig. 23).

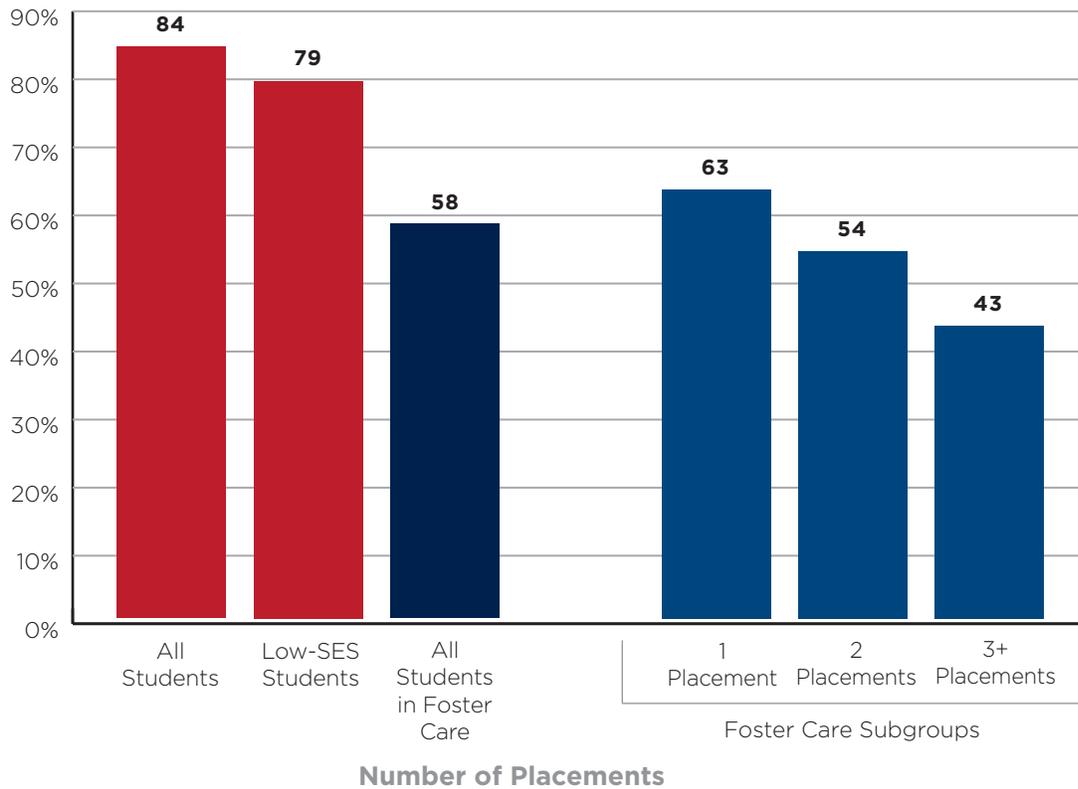
Figure 22. Percentage of grade-12 graduates for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by placement type, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 394,715 students age 17 or younger enrolled in grades 12 in fall 2009; 163,208 low-SES students; and 2,674 students in foster care. Graduates are students who graduated with a standard high school diploma, including those students with disabilities who graduated with a California High School Exit Examination waiver. The numbers and percentages for grade-12 graduation rates are presented in Appendix Table B11. SES = socioeconomic status.

Figure 23. Percentage of grade-12 graduates for all students, low-SES students, and students in foster care by number of placements, 2009/10



Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 394,715 students age 17 or younger enrolled in grades 12 in fall 2009; 163,208 low-SES students; and 2,674 students in foster care. Graduates are students who graduated with a standard high school diploma, including those students with disabilities who graduated with a California High School Exit Examination waiver. The numbers and percentages for grade-12 graduation rates are presented in Appendix Table B11. SES = socioeconomic status.

Conclusions

During the 2009/10 school year, more than 43,000—or about 1 of every 150—K–12 public-school students in California spent some period of time in foster care. *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 1* described how students in foster care have a different demographic profile than both their K–12 classmates in general and their low-SES classmates in particular.

Students in foster care were more likely to be African American and less likely to be Hispanic or to be English learners; twice as likely to be eligible for special education services; and four times more likely to change schools at least once during the school year. Like low-SES students, a much greater proportion of students in foster care attended the state’s lowest performing schools compared to the statewide student population; but compared to both the statewide student population and low-SES students, they were more likely to attend nontraditional schools. Students in foster care also

showed the lowest participation rate in the state’s STAR Program, the highest dropout rate, and the lowest grade-12 graduation rate, even when compared with the other at-risk student groups of low-SES students, English learners, and students with disabilities. For those students in foster care who did participate in state testing, students in foster care performed worse than the general K–12 and low-SES populations, but comparable to English learners and students with disabilities.

This report documents that students in foster care constitute an at-risk subgroup that is distinct from low-SES students regardless of the characteristics of their foster care experience. Yet, despite relative disadvantage overall, significant variations among students in foster cares still emerged. This report describes important associations between foster care placement types and disability diagnosis, school changes, standardized-test performance, dropout and graduation rates. *The Invisible Achievement Gap, Part 2* also highlights the dynamics between student length of stay in the foster care system, disability diagnosis, and school changes. Finally, this report documents the association between foster care placement instability and school changes, low-standardized-test performance, as well as higher dropout and lower graduation rates.

Findings indicate that students in foster care are more likely to be classified with a disability than other students, but this is particularly true for students placed in group homes and those who have experienced three or more placements. Students in foster care have high rates of school mobility relative to other students, but mobility is tied to foster care placement instability, the type of placement, and a recent entry into foster care. Students

“Having the skills and everything necessary, all allowed me to truly appreciate my education. And actually realize what’s there for me — and that it’s a good resource, it’s a stable environment. It’s, it’s my future, right?”

—Former foster student

in foster care have the lowest participation rate in California's statewide testing program, yet participation rates vary by placement type and placement instability. For students who participated in the STAR Program, educational disadvantage for students in foster care is increasingly pronounced in the upper grade levels with large variations by placement type and number of placements. Finally, high school students in foster care have the highest dropout rate and lowest graduation rate, with large variations in these outcomes by placement type, time in care, and number of placements.

Study limitations

Notwithstanding the contributions of this unique study, several limitations should be noted. First, as mentioned at the outset, the data used in this study represent a point-in-time or cross-sectional snapshot of children who experienced a foster care placement between August 1, 2009 and June 1, 2010. The limitations of cross-sectional data are notable and include: (1) a bias towards children with long stays in foster care, the experiences of whom are not likely to be representative of all children placed in foster care; (2) an underestimate of the number of children who cumulatively experience an out-of-home foster care placement at some point between entry into kindergarten and age 18; and (3) only a brief examination of children's foster care and education experiences over time (i.e., over a one-year period). Second, this analysis is restricted to students under age 18 as of the state's census date, October 7, 2009. A third limitation is that the number of students in foster care reported by school district is based on the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. Given the changing foster care status of these students and their high rates of school mobility, the number of students reported by district is likely an undercount. Additionally, because the data were only for the school year 2009/10, it was not possible for this study to compute cohort graduation and dropout rates, the recommended convention for reporting these outcomes.

Despite the fact that a number of education disparities existed based on race/ethnicity, we did not explicitly note these in the study's findings. The rationale for this decision was two-fold. First, race/ethnicity represents a core demographic attribute of the foster care population, rather than a characteristic of students' experiences while in care. Additionally, without returning to the full population of low-SES children and making comparisons between students of various races/ethnicities in foster care versus low-SES students of various races/ethnicities, this would only tell a very partial story, particularly one that does not account for the sociodemographic dynamics of race/ethnicity. Given these concerns, race/ethnicity characteristics are reported for all major education outcomes in the tables, but are not represented in the body of the report itself. Due to small cell sizes, examination of Algebra I and Algebra II proficiency were also not possible for this report.

Lastly, despite the study achieving a high matching rate (81 percent), it is likely that some children with an open episode in foster care during the period of study were not identified as students in foster care.

Appendix A. Methodology

Variables

To further contextualize the education experiences of students in the foster care system, the following variables, entered by child welfare workers into the statewide case management system (CWS/CMS), were examined in terms of their effect on education outcomes for children in the foster care system. When applicable, variables that are limited by the time period contained within the sampling window (i.e., the academic year) are indicated.

Child's Gender

Categories include female and male.

Child's Race/Ethnicity

Categories include white, black, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American, and missing/multi-race.

Removal Reason

Removal Reason was defined as the maltreatment allegation associated with the child's removal and placement into foster care. For the purposes of this study, Removal Reason was defined as the first foster care placement episode before/during the academic year sampling window. Categories include neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and other. Other removal reasons include law violation/status offense and reasons categorized in CWS/CMS as other. When there are multiple removal reasons the most serious is reported.

Child's Placement Type

Placement Type was defined as a child's last placement before exiting care, or the placement type at the end of the academic year sampling window if still in care. Categories include pre-adoption placement, kinship, licensed foster home, foster family agency certified home, group home, guardianship, and other. Other placement types include court specified home and shelter care. (Please note that a child's first placement during the academic year was also examined. Findings were similar across all education domains examined.)

Time in Care

Time in Care reflects the length of the child's episode in foster care and was measured based on the episode start date through until either an exit from care during the academic year study window or the conclusion of the study window if no exit occurred.

Number of Placements

Number of Placements was defined as the number of distinct foster care placements a child experienced during the academic year sampling window. This variable does not reflect the total number of placements over the entirety of a child's foster care experiences.

Status in Care/Exit Type

The child's Status in Care and/or Exit Type at the end of the study window. Categories include reunified, adopted, guardianship, other exit, and still in care. Other exits include such categories as emancipated, hospitalization, incarceration, and runaway.

Appendix B. Frequency tables

Table B1. Number and percentage of students in foster care in California public schools, by demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		43,140	100.0	17,319	100.0	10,084	100	15,584	100.0
Gender	Female	21,227	49.2	8,278	47.8	5,039	50.0	8,517	54.7
	Male	21,913	50.8	9,041	52.2	5,045	50.0	7,067	45.3
Race/ Ethnicity	White	9,845	22.8	3,728	21.5	2,289	22.7	3,788	24.3
	Black	11,024	25.6	3,790	21.9	2,600	25.8	4,585	29.4
	Hispanic	18,655	43.2	8,316	48.0	4,380	43.4	5,906	37.9
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	1,238	2.9	444	2.6	277	2.7	512	3.3
	Native American	808	1.9	328	1.9	209	2.1	268	1.7
	Missing/ Multi-Race	1,570	3.6	713	4.1	329	3.3	525	3.4
Removal Reason	Neglect	33,705	78.1	14,012	80.9	7,777	77.1	11,805	75.8
	Physical Abuse	4,851	11.2	1,862	10.8	1,195	11.9	1,778	11.4
	Sexual Abuse	1,723	4.0	523	3.0	428	4.2	766	4.9
	Other	2,861	6.6	922	5.3	684	6.8	1,235	7.9
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	1,711	4.0	1,182	6.8	320	3.2	201	1.3
	Kinship	12,819	29.7	6,301	36.4	2,752	27.3	3,745	24.0
	Foster Care	3,338	7.7	1,364	7.9	766	7.6	1,177	7.6
	FFA	13,824	32.0	5,671	32.7	3,263	32.4	4,858	31.2
	Group Home	4,320	10.0	543	3.1	1,130	11.2	2,615	16.8
	Guardian	6,631	15.4	2,092	12.1	1,715	17.0	2,799	18.0
	Other	497	1.2	166	1.0	138	1.4	189	1.2

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Table B1. Number and percentage of students in foster care in California public schools, by demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		43,140	100.0	17,319	100.0	10,084	100	15,584	100.0
Time in Care	<1 year	11,909	27.6	6,162	35.6	2,766	27.4	2,959	19.0
	1-2 years	12,659	29.3	6,374	36.8	2,747	27.2	3,510	22.5
	3+ years	18,572	43.1	4,783	27.6	4,571	45.3	9,115	58.5
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	27,309	63.3	11,102	64.1	6,438	63.8	9,651	61.9
	2 placements	10,377	24.1	4,557	26.3	2,384	23.6	3,417	21.9
	3+ placements	5,454	12.6	1,660	9.6	1,262	12.5	2,516	16.1
Exit Type	Reunified	7,768	18.0	4,040	23.3	1,836	18.2	1,874	12.0
	Adopted	1,321	3.1	894	5.2	257	2.5	164	1.1
	Guardianship	1,321	3.1	600	3.5	332	3.3	389	2.5
	Other	990	2.3	45	0.2	57	0.6	885	5.6
	Still in Care	31,740	73.6	11,740	67.8	7,602	75.4	12,272	78.7

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Table B2a. Number and percentage of students in foster care by disability category, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Any Disability		Specific Learning Disability		Emotional Disturbance	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		7,693	100.0	2,996	100.0	1,710	100
Gender	Female	2,928	38.1	1,310	43.7	546	31.9
	Male	4,765	61.9	1,686	56.3	1,164	68.1
Race/ Ethnicity	White	2,083	27.1	664	22.2	576	33.7
	Black	2,209	28.7	925	30.9	538	31.5
	Hispanic	2,783	36.2	1,225	40.9	444	26.0
	Asian/Pacific Islander	174	2.3	48	1.6	40	2.3
	Native American	172	2.2	56	1.9	36	2.1
	Missing/ Multi-Race	272	3.5	78	2.6	76	4.4
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	312	4.1	116	3.9	23	1.3
	Kinship	1,700	22.1	742	24.8	270	15.8
	Foster Care	774	10.1	273	9.1	114	6.7
	FFA	2,025	26.3	942	31.4	345	20.2
	Group Home	1,502	19.5	321	10.7	774	45.3
	Guardian	1,249	16.2	565	18.9	144	8.4
	Other	131	1.7	37	1.2	40	2.3
Time in Care	<1 year	1,295	16.8	527	17.6	176	10.3
	1-2 years	1,782	23.2	740	24.7	331	19.4
	3+ years	4,616	60.0	1,729	57.7	1,203	70.4
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	4,997	65.0	1,941	65.0	996	58.0
	2 placements	1,725	22.0	701	23.0	376	22.0
	3+ placements	971	13.0	354	12.0	338	20.0

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Table B2a. Number and percentage of students in foster care by disability category, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Any Disability		Specific Learning Disability		Emotional Disturbance	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		7,693	100.0	2,996	100.0	1,710	100
Exit Type	Reunified	905	11.8	363	12.1	143	8.4
	Adopted	238	3.1	92	3.1	19	1.1
	Guardianship	185	2.4	85	2.8	22	1.3
	Other	225	2.9	81	2.7	75	4.4
	Still in Care	6,140	79.8	2,375	79.3	1,451	84.9

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Disability category information was missing for 246 students in foster care. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Table B2b. Number and percentage of students in foster care with any disability, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		7,693	100.0	2,309	100.0	1,974	100	3,346	100.0
Gender	Female	2,928	38.1	761	33.0	726	36.8	1,415	42.3
	Male	4,765	61.9	1,548	67.0	1,248	63.2	1,931	57.7
Race/ Ethnicity	White	2,083	27.1	613	26.5	508	25.7	935	27.9
	Black	2,209	28.7	538	23.3	588	29.8	1,071	32.0
	Hispanic	2,783	36.2	941	40.8	733	37.1	1,093	32.7
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	174	2.3	47	2.0	41	2.1	82	2.5
	Native American	172	2.2	66	2.9	39	2.0	64	1.9
	Missing/ Multi-Race	272	3.5	104	4.5	65	3.3	101	3.0
Removal Reason	Neglect	5,972	77.6	1,883	81.6	1,507	76.3	2,536	75.8
	Physical Abuse	880	11.4	247	10.7	245	12.4	379	11.3
	Sexual Abuse	296	3.8	72	3.1	82	4.2	139	4.2
	Other	545	7.1	107	4.6	140	7.1	292	8.7
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	312	4.1	190	8.2	69	3.5	52	1.6
	Kinship	1,700	22.1	623	27.0	446	22.6	624	18.6
	Foster Care	774	10.1	265	11.5	167	8.5	330	9.9
	FFA	2,025	26.3	674	29.2	518	26.2	822	24.6
	Group Home	1,502	19.5	218	9.4	417	21.1	849	25.4
	Guardian	1,249	16.2	308	13.3	320	16.2	609	18.2
	Other	131	1.7	31	1.3	37	1.9	60	1.8
Time in Care	<1 year	1,295	16.8	592	25.6	337	17.1	359	10.7
	1-2 years	1,782	23.2	749	32.4	476	24.1	548	16.4
	3+ years	4,616	60.0	968	41.9	1,161	58.8	2,439	72.9

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Table B2b. Number and percentage of students in foster care with any disability, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		7,693	100.0	2,309	100.0	1,974	100	3,346	100.0
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	4,997	65.0	1,496	64.8	1,266	64.1	2,182	65.2
	2 placements	1,725	22.4	587	25.4	461	23.4	671	20.1
	3+ placements	971	12.6	226	9.8	247	12.5	493	14.7
Exit Type	Reunified	905	11.8	407	17.6	234	11.9	257	7.7
	Adopted	238	3.1	139	6.0	55	2.8	44	1.3
	Guardianship	185	2.4	-	-	65	3.3	50	1.5
	Other	225	2.9	-	-	-	-	201	6.0
	Still in Care	6,140	79.8	1,685	73.0	1,605	81.3	2,794	83.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the - denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B3. Number and percentage of students in foster care who were over-age for their grade, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		9th Grade	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		829	100.0	204	100.0	251	100	374	100.0
Gender	Female	409	49.3	86	42.2	105	41.8	218	58.3
	Male	420	50.7	118	57.8	146	58.2	156	41.7
Race/Ethnicity	White	159	19.2	-	-	53	21.1	63	16.8
	Black	230	27.7	49	24.0	73	29.1	108	28.9
	Hispanic	385	46.4	105	51.5	106	42.2	174	46.5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	16	1.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Native American	15	1.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Missing/Multi-Race	24	2.9	-	-	-	-	-	-
Removal Reason	Neglect	646	77.9	165	80.9	191	76.1	290	77.5
	Physical Abuse	85	10.3	24	11.8	31	12.4	30	8.0
	Sexual Abuse	43	5.2	-	-	-	-	22	5.9
	Other	55	6.6	-	-	-	-	32	8.6
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kinship	195	23.5	63	30.9	55	21.9	77	20.6
	Foster Care	71	8.6	19	9.3	23	9.2	29	7.8
	FFA	271	32.7	84	41.2	73	29.1	114	30.5
	Group Home	168	20.3	-	-	-	-	96	25.7
	Guardian	101	12.2	18	8.8	34	13.5	49	13.1
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Time in Care	<1 year	226	27.3	75	36.8	59	23.5	92	24.6
	1-2 years	233	28.1	71	34.8	60	23.9	102	27.3
	3+ years	370	44.6	58	28.4	132	52.6	180	48.1
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	423	51.0	105	51.5	123	49.0	195	52.1
	2 placements	230	27.7	59	28.9	77	30.7	94	25.1
	3+ placements	176	21.2	40	19.6	51	20.3	85	22.7

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Table B3. Number and percentage of students in foster care who were over-age for their grade, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		9th Grade	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		829	100.0	204	100.0	251	100	374	100.0
Exit Type	Reunified	120	14.5	39	19.1	35	13.9	46	12.3
	Adopted	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Guardianship	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Other	39	4.7	-	-	-	-	32	8.6
	Still in Care	639	77.1	151	74.0	201	80.1	287	76.7

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Over-age for grade was computed for grades K-9 only because of the age restriction (17 years old or younger) of the sample. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the - denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B4a. Number and percentage of students in foster care by number of school placements and grade level, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		43,140	100.0	17,319	100.0	10,084	100	15,584	100.0
Number of Schools	1	29,331	68.0	11,671	67.4	6,865	68.1	10,669	68.5
	2	9,782	22.7	3,987	23.0	2,295	22.8	3,483	22.3
	3+	4,027	9.3	1,661	9.6	924	9.2	1,432	9.2

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Table B4b. Number and percentage of students in foster care by number of school placements, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		1 School		2 School		3+ Schools	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		29,331	100.0	9,782	100.0	4,027	100
Gender	Female	14,941	50.9	5,009	51.2	1,963	48.7
	Male	14,390	49.1	4,773	48.8	2,064	51.3
Race/ Ethnicity	White	6,815	23.2	2,174	22.2	856	21.3
	Black	7,541	25.7	2,460	25.1	1,023	25.4
	Hispanic	12,443	42.4	4,375	44.7	1,837	45.6
	Asian/Pacific Islander	903	3.1	244	2.5	91	2.3
	Native American	565	1.9	174	1.8	69	1.7
	Missing/Multi-Race	1,064	3.6	355	3.6	151	3.7
Removal Reason	Neglect	23,221	79.2	7,472	76.4	3,012	74.8
	Physical Abuse	3,035	10.3	1,236	12.6	580	14.4
	Sexual Abuse	1,136	3.9	428	4.4	159	3.9
	Other	1,939	6.6	646	6.6	276	6.9
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	1,572	5.4	-	-	-	-
	Kinship	9,281	31.6	2,642	27.0	896	22.2
	Foster Care	2,173	7.4	854	8.7	311	7.7
	FFA	8,114	27.7	3,981	40.7	1,729	42.9
	Group Home	2,121	7.2	1,274	13.0	925	23.0
	Guardian	5,764	19.7	766	7.8	101	2.5
	Other	306	1.0	-	-	-	-
Time in Care	<1 year	6,196	21.1	3,730	38.1	1,983	49.2
	1-2 years	8,800	30.0	2,845	29.1	1,014	25.2
	3+ years	14,335	48.9	3,207	32.8	1,030	25.6
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	21,583	73.6	4,696	48.0	1,030	25.6
	2 placements	5,947	20.3	3,265	33.4	1,165	28.9
	3+ placements	1,801	6.1	1,821	18.6	1,832	45.5

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Table B4b. Number and percentage of students in foster care by number of school placements, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		1 School		2 School		3+ Schools	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		29,331	100.0	9,782	100.0	4,027	100
Exit Type	Reunified	4,178	14.2	2,588	26.5	1,002	24.9
	Adopted	1,214	4.1	-	-	-	-
	Guardianship	1,163	4.0	141	1.4	17	0.4
	Other	615	2.1	-	-	-	-
	Still in Care	22,161	75.6	6,690	68.4	2,889	71.7

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the - denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B5a. Number and percentage of students in foster care in nontraditional schools, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		4,625	100.0	500	100.0	817	100	3,259	100.0
Gender	Female	2,094	45.3	152	30.4	254	31.1	1,664	51.1
	Male	2,531	54.7	348	69.6	563	68.9	1,595	48.9
Race/ Ethnicity	White	1,337	28.9	155	31.0	247	30.2	916	28.1
	Black	1,400	30.3	153	30.6	276	33.8	951	29.2
	Hispanic	1,544	33.4	156	31.2	235	28.8	1,148	35.2
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	109	2.4	-	-	-	-	80	2.5
	Native American	95	2.1	-	-	-	-	61	1.9
	Missing/ Multi-Race	140	3.0	17	3.4	20	2.4	103	3.2
Removal Reason	Neglect	3,520	76.1	393	78.6	609	74.5	2,484	76.2
	Physical Abuse	535	11.6	72	14.4	106	13.0	352	10.8
	Sexual Abuse	180	3.9	-	-	-	-	142	4.4
	Other	390	8.4	-	-	-	-	281	8.6
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	58	1.3	-	-	-	-	17	0.5
	Kinship	819	17.7	101	20.2	112	13.7	603	18.5
	Foster Care	363	7.8	59	11.8	61	7.5	233	7.1
	FFA	1,046	22.6	102	20.4	134	16.4	804	24.7
	Group Home	1,750	37.8	143	28.6	403	49.3	1,185	36.4
	Guardian	483	10.4	66	13.2	74	9.1	334	10.2
	Other	106	2.3	-	-	-	-	83	2.5
Time in Care	<1 year	766	16.6	121	24.2	127	15.5	515	15.8
	1-2 years	1,109	24.0	138	27.6	193	23.6	768	23.6
	3+ years	2,750	59.5	241	48.2	497	60.8	1,976	60.6
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	2,557	55.3	316	63.2	443	54.2	1,762	54.1
	2 placements	1,095	23.7	108	21.6	215	26.3	767	23.5
	3+ placements	973	21.0	76	15.2	159	19.5	730	22.4

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Table B5a. Number and percentage of students in foster care in nontraditional schools, by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		4,625	100.0	500	100.0	817	100	3,259	100.0
Exit Type	Reunified	492	10.6	56	11.2	70	8.6	364	11.2
	Adopted	38	0.8	18	3.6	-	-	-	-
	Guardianship	60	1.3	-	-	16	2.0	-	-
	Other	412	8.9	-	-	-	-	392	12.0
	Still in Care	3,623	78.3	416	83.2	706	86.4	2,457	75.4

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the - denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B5b. Number and percentage of students in foster care in nontraditional schools, by grade level and disability category, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Grades		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Disability Category	Any Disability	1,505	19.6	266	11.5	394	20.0	819	24.5
	Emotional Disturbance	803	47.0	130	43.6	237	50.3	431	46.3
	Other Health Impairment	102	11.8	19	7.1	32	13.8	50	14.1
	Mental Retardation/Intellectual Disability	157	25.6	35	20.7	35	24.7	77	27.0

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. "Other" disability category includes hard of hearing, deafness/hearing impairment, speech or language impairment, visual impairment, and traumatic brain injury.

Table B6. Number and percentage of students in foster care by statewide Academic Performance Index (API) rate and placement type, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		All Placements		Kinship		Foster		FFA		Group Home	
		Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total		38,557	100.0	11,998	100.0	2,962	100	12,774	100.0	2,632	100.0
Statewide School Academic Performance Index Rank	1	5,982	15.5	1,840	15.3	480	16.2	1,859	14.6	480	18.2
	2	5,326	13.8	1,712	14.3	399	13.5	1,832	14.3	328	12.5
	3	4,900	12.7	1,452	12.1	343	11.6	1,735	13.6	295	11.2
	4	4,908	12.7	1,475	12.3	365	12.3	1,722	13.5	318	12.1
	5	4,463	11.6	1,349	11.2	348	11.8	1,579	12.4	237	9.0
	6	3,978	10.3	1,206	10.1	309	10.4	1,359	10.6	263	10.0
	7	3,471	9.0	1,114	9.3	299	10.1	1,126	8.8	220	8.4
	8	2,701	7.0	869	7.2	210	7.1	841	6.6	208	7.9
	9	1,976	5.1	666	5.6	144	4.9	532	4.2	190	7.2
	10	852	2.2	315	2.6	65	2.2	189	1.5	93	3.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Special education schools and schools participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) do not receive statewide ranks; the 2010 statewide school Academic Performance Index (API) decile rank was only available for 38,557 students in foster care. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as of October 7, 2009. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Table B7a. Number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program in English language arts or mathematics, by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Students Tested	Total Enrolled in Fall 2009	Percentage Tested
Total		30,412	34,754	87.5
Grade Level	2	2,740	2,979	92.0
	3	2,780	2,984	93.2
	4	2,741	2,965	92.4
	5	2,639	2,832	93.2
	6	2,796	3,025	92.4
	7	3,050	3,377	90.3
	8	3,283	3,682	89.2
	9	3,739	4,559	82.0
	10	3,578	4,353	82.2
	11	3,066	3,998	76.7
	Gender	Female	15,382	17,683
Male		15,030	17,071	88.0
Race/ Ethnicity	White	6,897	7,854	87.8
	Black	7,849	9,095	86.3
	Hispanic	13,183	14,938	88.3
	Asian/Pacific Islander	896	1,009	88.8
	Native American	550	650	84.6
	Missing/Multi-Race	1,037	1,208	85.8
Removal Reason	Neglect	23,723	27,038	87.7
	Physical Abuse	3,429	3,974	86.3
	Sexual Abuse	1,265	1,453	87.1
	Other	1,995	2,289	87.2
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	1,134	1,203	94.3
	Kinship	8,962	9,932	90.2
	Foster Care	2,297	2,628	87.4
	FFA	9,717	11,121	87.4
	Group Home	2,719	3,833	70.9
	Guardian	5,279	5,621	93.9
	Other	304	416	73.1

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Table B7a. Number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program in English language arts or mathematics, by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Students Tested	Total Enrolled in Fall 2009	Percentage Tested
Total		30,412	34,754	87.5
Time in Care	<1 year	7,957	9,359	85.0
	1-2 years	8,632	9,768	88.4
	3+ years	13,823	15,627	88.5
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	20,010	21,941	91.2
	2 placements	7,062	8,221	85.9
	3+ placements	3,340	4,592	72.7
Exit Type	Reunified	5,172	6,085	85.0
	Adopted	893	951	93.9
	Guardianship	1,039	1,103	94.2
	Other	237	499	47.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Students tested in Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program 2010 in English language arts or mathematics include students who took, with or without modification, the California Standards Test, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish in either English language arts or mathematics in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report.

Table B7b. Number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program in English language arts or mathematics, by grade level and placement type, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Kinship			Foster			FFA			Group Home		
		Tested	Enrolled	Percentage	Tested	Enrolled	Percentage	Tested	Enrolled	Percentage	Tested	Enrolled	Percentage
Total		8,963	9,932	90.2	2,297	2,628	87.4	9,717	11,121	87.4	2,719	3,833	70.9
Grade Level	2	1,024	1,097	93.3	215	246	87.4	866	961	90.1	59	71	83.1
	3	986	1,037	95.1	214	230	93.0	932	1,033	90.2	88	106	83.0
	4	1,006	1,079	93.2	202	225	89.8	868	949	91.5	106	126	84.1
	5	843	888	94.9	171	186	91.9	863	937	92.1	140	171	81.9
	6	847	906	93.5	220	249	88.4	897	968	92.7	193	235	82.1
	7	848	922	92.0	233	252	92.5	970	1,088	89.2	297	379	78.4
	8	848	924	91.8	237	265	89.4	1,094	1,207	90.6	380	516	73.6
	9	921	1,108	83.1	276	328	84.1	1,205	1,447	83.3	544	792	68.7
	10	879	1,034	85.0	262	325	80.6	1,083	1,309	82.7	497	737	67.4
	11	761	937	81.2	267	322	82.9	939	1,222	76.8	415	700	59.3

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Students tested in Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program 2010 in English language arts or mathematics include students who took, with or without modification, the California Standards Test, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish in either English language arts or mathematics in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing.

Table B7c. Number and percentage of students in foster care who participated in the state's Standardized Testing and Reporting Program in English language arts or mathematics, by grade level and number of placements during school year, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		1 Placement			2 Placements			3 Placements		
		Tested	Enrolled	Percentage	Tested	Enrolled	Percentage	Tested	Enrolled	Percentage
Total		20,010	21,941	91.2	7,062	8,221	85.9	3,340	4,592	72.7
Grade Level	2	1,759	1,888	93.2	709	779	91.0	272	312	87.2
	3	1,801	1,892	95.2	734	802	91.5	245	290	84.5
	4	1,843	1,950	94.5	657	724	90.7	241	291	82.8
	5	1,818	1,906	95.4	609	669	91.0	212	257	82.5
	6	1,834	1,934	94.8	679	754	90.1	283	337	84.0
	7	2,050	2,192	93.5	680	783	86.8	320	402	79.6
	8	2,145	2,312	92.8	761	847	89.8	377	523	72.1
	9	2,411	2,736	88.1	815	1,036	78.7	513	787	65.2
	10	2,333	2,638	88.4	772	979	78.9	473	736	64.3
	11	2,016	2,493	80.9	646	848	76.2	404	657	61.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Students tested in Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) Program 2010 in English language arts or mathematics include students who took, with or without modification, the California Standards Test, the California Modified Assessment, the California Alternate Performance Assessment, or the Standards-based Tests in Spanish in either English language arts or mathematics in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing.

Table B8a. Percentage of students in foster care by California Standards Test performance levels in English language arts (grades 2–11) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of Students by Performance Level				
			Far Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Total		26,827	19.3	20.3	31.1	20.6	8.7
Grade Level	Elementary	9,579	14.1	18.5	33.3	23.5	10.6
	Middle	7,684	16.9	20.1	32.6	21.7	8.7
	High	9,564	26.3	22.4	27.7	16.8	6.8
Gender	Female	14,027	15.3	20.2	33.0	21.9	9.6
	Male	12,800	23.6	20.5	29.0	19.2	7.8
Race/Ethnicity	White	6,101	16.1	16.6	28.8	25.3	13.2
	Black	6,752	23.5	23.1	31.0	17.0	5.5
	Hispanic	11,754	19.3	21.3	32.3	19.7	7.5
	Asian/Pacific Islander	821	13.3	16.2	31.9	23.9	14.7
	Native American	478	19.2	20.5	30.1	21.1	9.0
	Missing/Multi-Race	921	14.5	16.8	30.4	25.0	13.2
Removal Reason	Neglect	20,962	18.9	20.3	31.1	20.9	8.8
	Physical Abuse	2,998	21.4	19.9	31.4	19.4	7.9
	Sexual Abuse	1,126	20.1	22.5	28.9	20.8	7.8
	Other	1,741	18.7	20.7	31.5	19.5	9.5
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	973	11.4	17.9	32.0	25.6	13.2
	Kinship	8,106	15.8	19.2	31.8	22.6	10.6
	Foster Care	1,876	21.0	19.8	30.8	20.5	8.0
	FFA	8,759	19.2	21.1	32.1	20.1	7.5
	Group Home	2,214	38.2	22.6	23.8	11.1	4.4
	Guardian	4,644	16.9	20.2	31.7	21.9	9.3
	Other	255	23.5	24.7	25.1	18.8	7.8
Time in Care	<1 year	7,268	18.5	20.2	30.4	21.1	9.8
	1–2 years	7,753	17.2	19.3	32.0	22.3	9.2
	3+ years	11,806	21.1	21.1	30.8	19.2	7.8

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Table B8a. Percentage of students in foster care by California Standards Test performance levels in English language arts (grades 2–11) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of Students by Performance Level				
			Far Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Total		26,827	19.3	20.3	31.1	20.6	8.7
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	17,569	18.0	19.8	31.6	21.5	9.1
	2 placements	6,260	19.3	20.2	31.8	20.1	8.6
	3+ placements	2,998	26.5	23.9	26.4	16.5	6.7
Exit Type	Reunified	4,741	17.8	20.2	31.1	21.4	9.4
	Adopted	777	11.2	17.4	31.4	26.4	13.6
	Guardianship	932	13.6	19.1	34.4	21.0	11.8
	Other	211	37.4	21.3	23.7	-	-
	Still in Care	20,166	20.0	20.5	31.0	20.2	8.3

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes only students who took the California Standards Test without modifications in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

^aCST = California Standards Test.

Table B8b. Percentage of students in foster care proficient or above on the California Standards Test in English language arts (grades 2–11) by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above
Total		9,579	34.1	7,684	30.4	9,564	23.6
Gender	Female	4,793	36.5	4,027	32.9	5,207	25.9
	Male	4,786	31.8	3,657	27.7	4,357	20.9
Race/ Ethnicity	White	2,019	43.1	1,768	42.3	2,314	31.7
	Black	2,145	28.0	1,870	23.0	2,737	17.7
	Hispanic	4,620	31.9	3,413	27.0	3,721	21.3
	Asian/ Pacific Islander	267	43.8	225	39.6	329	33.7
	Native American	167	32.3	162	30.9	149	26.8
	Missing/ Multi-Race	361	42.4	246	40.7	314	31.5
Removal Reason	Neglect	7,730	34.8	5,961	30.8	7,271	23.3
	Physical Abuse	1,021	30.0	878	28.6	1,099	23.8
	Sexual Abuse	323	31.6	324	29.0	479	26.3
	Other	505	33.7	521	30.7	715	24.5
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	581	39.8	248	41.1	144	30.6
	Kinship	3,494	36.4	2,197	33.5	2,415	28.1
	Foster Care	646	34.1	548	30.1	682	21.8
	FFA	3,144	31.1	2,571	28.4	3,044	23.2
	Group Home	285	21.4	645	17.5	1,284	13.1
	Guardian	1,357	36.0	1,383	33.4	1,904	26.1
	Other	72	29.2	92	32.6	91	18.7
Time in Care	<1 year	3,234	34.1	2,148	30.3	1,886	26.3
	1-2 years	3,385	34.5	2,146	32.5	2,222	25.8
	3+ years	2,960	33.8	3,390	29.3	5,456	21.8

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Table B8b. Percentage of students in foster care proficient or above on the California Standards Test in English language arts (grades 2–11) by grade level, demographic, and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Elementary School		Middle School		High School	
		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above
Total		9,579	34.1	7,684	30.4	9,564	23.6
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	6,351	34.7	5,044	31.7	6,174	25.4
	2 placements	2,384	33.8	1,798	29.9	2,078	21.8
	3+ placements	844	30.7	842	24.2	1,312	17.8
Exit Type	Reunified	2,143	34.2	1,454	31.6	1,144	23.7
	Adopted	459	40.3	204	42.6	114	34.2
	Guardianship	-	-	267	35.6	307	27.0
	Other	-	-	28	28.6	169	14.2
	Still in Care	6,605	33.6	5,731	29.5	7,830	23.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes only students who took the California Standards Test without modifications in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

^aCST = California Standards Test.

Table B8c. Percentage of students in foster care by California Standards Test performance levels in mathematics (grades 2–7) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of Students by Performance Level				
			Far Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Total		14,420	10.8	25.3	27.3	22.8	13.8
Grade Level	Elementary	9,624	8.5	23.1	26.3	24.7	17.4
	Middle	4,796	15.3	29.7	29.4	19.0	6.6
Gender	Female	7,233	8.9	25.5	29.0	23.5	13.1
	Male	7,187	12.7	25.0	25.6	22.1	14.6
Race/Ethnicity	White	3,131	8.6	20.2	26.3	26.7	18.2
	Black	3,304	15.1	30.9	26.4	18.6	9.0
	Hispanic	6,786	9.9	25.5	28.5	22.5	13.6
	Asian/Pacific Islander	408	9.6	16.7	25.7	27.7	20.3
	Native American	284	13.7	29.2	24.6	22.2	10.2
	Missing/Multi-Race	507	7.7	21.5	26.0	26.4	18.3
Removal Reason	Neglect	11,556	10.4	25.0	27.4	22.9	14.3
	Physical Abuse	1,542	12.3	26.2	26.8	21.9	12.8
	Sexual Abuse	513	11.1	28.8	25.7	24.4	9.9
	Other	809	13.0	24.6	28.1	22.5	11.9
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	779	7.4	20.5	26.1	25.8	20.2
	Kinship	4,966	9.0	23.8	27.5	24.4	15.3
	Foster Care	997	12.0	27.4	24.1	23.0	13.5
	FFA	4,713	10.6	26.2	28.3	22.6	12.2
	Group Home	616	33.6	32.5	18.5	10.2	5.2
	Guardian	2,229	9.2	25.5	29.0	21.9	14.4
	Other	120	17.5	20.8	28.3	-	-
Time in Care	<1 year	4,568	11.3	25.0	26.9	23.0	13.8
	1-2 years	4,815	9.5	24.0	27.7	23.7	15.2
	3+ years	5,037	11.6	26.8	27.3	21.7	12.6

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Table B8c. Percentage of students in foster care by California Standards Test performance levels in mathematics (grades 2–7) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of Students by Performance Level				
			Far Below Basic	Below Basic	Basic	Proficient	Advanced
Total		14,420	10.8	25.3	27.3	22.8	13.8
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	9,570	10.2	25.0	27.5	23.3	14.0
	2 placements	3,519	11.1	24.4	27.8	22.8	13.9
	3+ placements	1,331	14.3	30.1	24.4	18.9	12.4
Exit Type	Reunified	3,082	10.7	24.0	28.6	22.2	14.5
	Adopted	616	7.1	20.3	26.6	26.1	19.8
	Guardianship	550	8.2	22.4	29.1	25.3	15.1
	Other	23	-	-	-	-	-
	Still in Care	10,149	11.2	26.2	26.8	22.6	13.2

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes only students who took the California Standards Test without modifications in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

^a CST = California Standards Test.

Table B8d. Percentage of students in foster care proficient or above on the California Standards Test in mathematics (grades 2–7) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Elementary School		Middle School	
		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above
Total		9,624	42.1	4,796	25.6
Gender	Female	4,784	42.7	2,449	24.5
	Male	4,840	41.5	2,347	26.8
Race/Ethnicity	White	2,028	50.9	1,103	33.8
	Black	2,166	32.5	1,138	18.2
	Hispanic	4,633	41.4	2,153	24.7
	Asian/Pacific Islander	270	53.7	138	37.0
	Native American	170	39.4	114	21.9
	Missing/Multi-Race	357	51.8	150	28.0
Removal Reason	Neglect	7,766	42.6	3,790	26.0
	Physical Abuse	1,024	39.5	518	25.3
	Sexual Abuse	323	41.2	190	22.6
	Other	511	40.5	298	23.8
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	593	49.6	186	34.4
	Kinship	3,521	44.6	1,445	27.8
	Foster Care	652	41.3	345	27.5
	FFA	3,132	39.1	1,581	26.5
	Group Home	285	22.5	331	9.4
	Guardian	1,368	43.8	861	24.4
	Other	73	42.5	47	19.1
Time in Care	<1 year	3,226	41.7	1,342	25.0
	1-2 years	3,414	42.9	1,401	29.0
	3+ years	2,984	41.6	2,053	23.8
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	6,386	42.8	3,184	26.4
	2 placements	2,396	41.7	1,123	26.2
	3+ placements	842	38.0	489	19.6

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Table B8d. Percentage of students in foster care proficient or above on the California Standards Test in mathematics (grades 2–7) by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Elementary School		Middle School	
		Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above	Number of students with CST ^a scores	Percentage of students proficient or above
Total		9,624	42.1	4,796	25.6
Exit Type	Reunified	2,137	40.5	945	28.1
	Adopted	470	49.4	146	34.9
	Guardianship	-	-	-	-
	Other	-	-	-	-
	Still in Care	6,634	41.8	3,515	24.5

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes only students who took the California Standards Test without modifications in spring 2010. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded elementary (n = 77) and ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

^aCST = California Standards Test.

Table B9. Number and percentage of grade-10 students in foster care who passed both parts of the California High School Exit Exam by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Grade-10 Students Tested	Number of Students Passing	Percentage Passed
Total		3,266	1,610	49.3
Gender	Female	1,804	936	51.9
	Male	1,462	674	46.1
Race/ Ethnicity	White	819	479	58.5
	Black	910	379	41.6
	Hispanic	1,263	597	47.3
	Asian/Pacific Islander	108	68	63.0
	Native American	63	33	52.4
	Missing/Multi-Race	103	54	52.4
Removal Reason	Neglect	2,506	1,218	48.6
	Physical Abuse	356	170	47.8
	Sexual Abuse	169	98	58.0
	Other	235	124	52.8
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	53	26	49.1
	Kinship	799	457	57.2
	Foster Care	232	105	45.3
	FFA	1,013	508	50.1
	Group Home	457	148	32.4
	Guardian	677	350	51.7
	Other	35	16	45.7
Time in Care	<1 year	630	343	54.4
	1-2 years	764	399	52.2
	3+ years	1,872	868	46.4
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	2,086	1,071	51.3
	2 placements	731	354	48.4
	3+ placements	449	185	41.2

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Table B9. Number and percentage of grade-10 students in foster care who passed both parts of the California High School Exit Exam by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Grade-10 Students Tested	Number of Students Passing	Percentage Passed
Total		3,266	1,610	49.3
Exit Type	Reunified	363	199	54.8
	Adopted	41	-	-
	Guardianship	107	65	60.7
	Other	40	-	-
	Still in Care	2,715	1,313	48.4

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the - denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B10. The single-year dropout rate for students in foster care by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Grade-10 Students Tested	Number of Students Passing	Percentage Passed
Total		15,584	1,244	8.0
Grade Level	Grade 9	4,559	277	6.1
	Grade 10	4,353	267	6.1
	Grade 11	3,998	324	8.1
	Grade 12	2,674	376	14.1
Gender	Female	8,517	737	8.7
	Male	7,067	507	7.2
Race/ Ethnicity	White	3,788	273	7.2
	Black	4,585	375	8.2
	Hispanic	5,906	497	8.4
	Asian/Pacific Islander	512	28	5.5
	Native American	268	27	10.1
	Missing/Multi-Race	525	44	8.4
Removal Reason	Neglect	11,805	975	8.3
	Physical Abuse	1,778	127	7.1
	Sexual Abuse	766	51	6.7
	Other	1,235	91	7.4
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	201	-	-
	Kinship	3,745	244	6.5
	Foster Care	1,177	92	7.8
	FFA	4,858	408	8.4
	Group Home	2,615	355	13.6
	Guardian	2,799	115	4.1
	Other	189	-	-
Time in Care	<1 year	2,959	243	8.2
	1-2 years	3,510	348	9.9
	3+ years	9,115	653	7.2
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	9,651	590	6.1
	2 placements	3,417	329	9.6
	3+ placements	2,516	325	12.9

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Table B10. The single-year dropout rate for students in foster care by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Grade-10 Students Tested	Number of Students Passing	Percentage Passed
Total		15,584	1,244	8.0
Exit Type	Reunified	1,874	190	10.1
	Adopted	164	-	-
	Guardianship	389	-	-
	Other	885	248	28.0
	Still in Care	12,272	774	6.3

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Table B11. Number and percentage of grade-12 graduates for students in foster care by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Students in Grade 12	Number of Graduates at the End of the School Year	Percentage Who Graduated
Total		2,674	1,558	58.3
Gender	Female	1,522	939	61.7
	Male	1,152	619	53.7
Race/ Ethnicity	White	716	439	61.3
	Black	796	461	57.9
	Hispanic	938	512	54.6
	Asian/Pacific Islander	92	70	76.1
	Native American	40	25	62.5
	Missing/Multi-Race	92	51	55.4
Removal Reason	Neglect	2,003	1,141	57.0
	Physical Abuse	301	183	60.8
	Sexual Abuse	127	86	67.7
	Other	243	148	60.9
Placement Type	Pre-Adopt	26	-	-
	Kinship	666	426	64.0
	Foster Care	202	107	53.0
	FFA	880	519	59.0
	Group Home	386	134	34.7
	Guardian	492	349	70.9
	Other	22	-	-
Time in Care	<1 year	306	168	54.9
	1-2 years	565	304	53.8
	3+ years	1,803	1,086	60.2
Number of Placements During School Year	1 placement	1,784	1,118	62.7
	2 placements	554	297	53.6
	3+ placements	336	143	42.6

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Table B11. Number and percentage of grade-12 graduates for students in foster care by demographic and child welfare characteristics, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care		Number of Students in Grade 12	Number of Graduates at the End of the School Year	Percentage Who Graduated
Total		2,674	1,558	58.3
Exit Type	Reunified	234	116	49.6
	Adopted	25	17	68.0
	Guardianship	33	21	63.6
	Other	466	204	43.8
	Still in Care	1,916	1,200	62.6

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/2010.

Note. Graduates are students who graduated with a standard high school diploma including those students with disabilities who graduated with a California High School Exit Exam waiver. Grade level was missing for 31 students in foster care. Students with grade level ungraded secondary (n = 45) were also coded as missing. Definitions for removal reason, placement type, and exit type "other" are provided in the informational box titled "Data and Study Populations" on page 2 and in Appendix A of this report. Where applicable, the * denotes rounding to zero and the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality.

Appendix C. Public school students in foster care in California by county, 2009/10

Table C1. Percentage of students in foster care by county for key education outcomes, 2009/10

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care	Total Students in Foster Care	Percentage Any Disability Category	Percentage Emotional Disturbance	Percentage 3+ School Placements	Percentage Nontraditional School	Percentage Proficient or Above in English Language Arts ^a	Percentage Proficient or Above in Mathematics ^b	Percentage Passed CAHSEE ^c	Percentage Dropped Out ^d	Percentage Graduated ^e	
California	43,140	17.8	4.0	9.3	10.7	29.3	36.6	49.3	8.0	58.3	
County	Alameda	1,082	23.9	5.7	6.1	10.6	26.4	35.9	51.1	9.1	57.0
	Alpine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Amador	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Butte	491	18.9	3.1	7.3	12.2	28.8	34.5	42.9	8.1	62.2
	Calaveras	79	26.6	-	-	-	38.5	58.1	-	-	-
	Colusa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Contra Costa	1,017	15.8	5.0	6.0	13.6	30.7	31.6	51.5	8.1	59.5
	Del Norte	55	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	El Dorado	248	28.2	11.3	6.9	17.7	40.1	46.5	-	-	-
	Fresno	1,825	17.4	2.1	6.1	7.1	28.8	41.8	42.3	9.6	56.4
	Glenn	66	-	-	-	22.7	32.0	-	-	-	-
	Humboldt	151	12.6	-	-	-	30.5	30.4	-	-	-
	Imperial	220	10.9	-	10.9	6.8	31.8	31.9	-	-	-
	Inyo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Kern	1,538	17.1	2.9	14.8	6.8	27.9	32.5	48.5	6.7	49.5
	Kings	195	8.2	-	12.3	-	29.9	43.5	-	-	-
	Lake	92	35.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Lassen	53	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Los Angeles	12,648	12.9	2.8	10.8	8.7	27.3	34.9	46.0	9.0	59.3
	Madera	214	17.8	-	8.4	9.4	31.3	35.6	-	-	-
	Marin	108	51.9	38.0	-	47.2	40.3	-	-	-	-
Mariposa	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mendocino	158	17.1	-	-	-	40.0	42.0	-	-	-	
Merced	625	17.1	4.3	12.0	13.1	27.7	32.6	51.4	8.8	-	
Modoc	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Mono	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Monterey	205	11.7	-	7.3	7.3	24.6	27.4	-	-	-	

(Continued on next page)

Table C1. Percentage of students in foster care by county for key education outcomes, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care	Total Students in Foster Care	Percentage Any Disability Category	Percentage Emotional Disturbance	Percentage 3+ School Placements	Percentage Nontraditional School	Percentage Proficient or Above in English Language Arts ^a	Percentage Proficient or Above in Mathematics ^b	Percentage Passed CAHSEE ^c	Percentage Dropped Out ^d	Percentage Graduated ^e
California	43,140	17.8	4.0	9.3	10.7	29.3	36.6	49.3	8.0	58.3
County	Napa	101	26.7	-	-	-	36.9	41.0	-	-
	Nevada	94	20.2	-	-	24.5	34.5	-	-	-
	Orange	1,592	21.0	3.4	12.6	11.6	36.9	40.9	56.2	7.9
	Placer	285	24.6	5.6	-	12.6	34.9	36.0	71.4	-
	Plumas	36	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Riverside	3,615	19.7	3.7	11.0	10.5	30.0	38.6	50.3	9.9
	Sacramento	2,334	19.6	5.7	6.3	13.0	27.3	37.8	45.4	7.9
	San Benito	74	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	San Bernardino	3,601	19.0	3.4	9.4	7.7	28.6	38.3	47.6	7.7
	San Diego	2,759	25.1	6.1	8.0	13.9	33.8	43.2	53.0	4.5
	San Francisco	577	30.7	9.7	3.6	22.9	19.1	23.8	40.0	-
	San Joaquin	964	13.1	-	11.7	11.7	26.1	28.9	50.0	7.1
	San Luis Obispo	277	23.5	-	7.6	12.6	31.8	36.4	62.5	-
	San Mateo	267	23.6	-	8.2	13.9	34.9	31.5	60.6	-
	Santa Barbara	363	17.1	-	8.5	6.1	27.8	34.1	-	-
	Santa Clara	906	26.5	6.0	6.3	12.3	25.6	32.4	49.3	9.6
	Santa Cruz	220	21.4	-	5.5	17.7	34.9	52.6	-	20.7
	Shasta	433	10.9	-	6.7	21.3	34.4	37.3	65.7	10.0
	Sierra	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Siskiyou	73	-	-	-	-	34.1	-	-	-
Solano	475	19.0	3.2	5.9	7.8	28.5	27.4	45.5	-	
Sonoma	394	36.8	15.7	8.6	30.7	35.5	42.2	-	-	
Stanislaus	602	19.6	7.1	11.3	16.6	31.2	34.2	53.2	7.6	
Sutter	146	15.1	-	-	15.8	30.7	38.3	-	-	
Tehama	179	19.0	-	8.4	11.7	35.1	47.2	-	-	
Trinity	28	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

(Continued on next page)

Table C1. Percentage of students in foster care by county for key education outcomes, 2009/10 (continued)

Students in Child Welfare Supervised Foster Care	Total Students in Foster Care	Percentage Any Disability Category	Percentage Emotional Disturbance	Percentage 3+ School Placements	Percentage Nontraditional School	Percentage Proficient or Above in English Language Arts ^a	Percentage Proficient or Above in Mathematics ^b	Percentage Passed CAHSEE ^c	Percentage Dropped Out ^d	Percentage Graduated ^e	
California	43,140	17.8	4.0	9.3	10.7	29.3	36.6	49.3	8.0	58.3	
County	Tulare	681	10.0	-	7.1	7.5	29.9	37.5	58.8	-	65.7
	Tuolumne	58	-	-	-	-	43.8	-	-	-	-
	Ventura	514	18.9	6.0	8.4	8.4	38.9	40.5	59.5	-	-
	Yolo	170	22.9	10.6	10.0	24.7	26.9	34.6	-	-	-
	Yuba	139	21.6	-	14.4	-	21.9	34.1	-	-	-

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. County indicated is the county where the student attended school. Percentages are computed for 43,140 students in foster care. Where applicable, the – denotes masking low cell size. In certain cases, complementary cell suppression was also utilized to protect student confidentiality. Additionally, where applicable, ^a denotes a measure that applies to grades 2–11, ^b to grades 2–7, ^c to grade 10 only (CAHSEE = California High School Exit Exam), ^d to grades 9–12, and ^e to grade 12 only.

Appendix D. Students in probation-supervised foster care

In California, 5,969,112 K–12 students ages 5–17 were enrolled in the state’s public schools on the official census date for the 2009/10 school year. Among them were 43,140 in child welfare supervised foster care and 4,012 in probation-supervised foster care.

Students in probation² were concentrated in a small number of school districts (table D1):

- In 2009/2010 about half of students in probation could be found enrolled in just 10 school districts. The number of students in probation in those districts ranged from 85 to 575 students in probation.
- 7 of those 10 districts were county offices of education.

Table D1. The 10 California school districts enrolling the most students in probation-supervised foster care, 2009/10

School Districts	Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
Los Angeles Unified School District	575
Los Angeles County Office of Education	549
El Dorado County Office of Education	170
San Bernardino County Office of Education	134
Chino Valley Unified School District	131
Sacramento County Office of Education	112
Riverside County Office of Education	107
San Diego County Office of Education	103
Alameda County Office of Education	87
San Juan Unified School District	85
Total for 10 school districts	2,053
Total for California	4,012

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Students in probation had distinct demographic characteristics (table D2):

- Most students in probation (95 percent) were 14 and older.
- 80 percent of students in probation were male.

² Probation supervises many other children in other settings from parents’ homes to county-operated detention facilities. This appendix only reports on the subset of probation-supervised children who were placed in foster care.

- Nearly one in five students in probation were classified with a disability.
- The percentages of students in probation who were migrant students or eligible for gifted and talented education services were both below 1 percent.

Table D2. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools, by demographic characteristics, 2009/10

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	
		Number	Percentage
Age	Under 14 years old	271	5.4
	14 to 17 years old	4,741	94.6
Gender	Female	1,011	20.2
	Male	4,001	79.8
Race/Ethnicity	Hispanic	2,487	49.6
	White	957	19.1
	Asian	79	1.6
	African American	1,224	24.4
	Filipino	22	0.4
	American Indian/ Alaska Native	77	1.5
	Pacific Islander	25	0.5
	Two or more races	57	1.1
	None reported	84	1.7
Special education	Yes	883	17.6
	No	4,129	82.4
Migrant	Yes	-	<1
	No	-	100
English learner	Yes	677	13.5
	No	4,335	86.5
GATE^a	Yes	36	0.7
	No	4,976	99.3

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,012 students in probation. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100. The - masks low cell sizes.

^aGATE = gifted and talented education.

Among students in probation identified with a disability, two disability types characterized more than 80 percent of the students with disabilities in probation (table D3):

- The largest proportion of students in probation with a disability was identified with a specific learning disability (44.8 percent).
- Among students with disabilities, more than one-third of students in probation were classified with emotional disturbance.

Table D3. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care with disabilities in California public schools, by disability category, 2009/2010

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	
		Number	Percentage
Disability category	Specific learning disability	381	44.8
	Emotional disturbance	331	38.9
	Other health impairment	90	10.6
	Several disabilities indicated	18	2.1

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 851 students in probation with disabilities for whom disability category information was available. The categories speech or language impairment, autism, mental retardation/intellectual disability, orthopedic impairment, hard of hearing, multiple disabilities, visual impairment, deafness/hearing impairment, traumatic brain injury, deaf-blindness, and several disabilities indicated each had less than 15 students.

Students in probation had specific experiences in California public schools (table D4):

- Most students in probation (92 percent) were enrolled in grades 9–12.
- In grades 6–9, nearly one in five students in probation were over-age for their grade level.
- Two-thirds of students in probation changed schools at least once during the school year, with a third attending three or more schools during the school year.
- More than two-thirds of students in probation were enrolled in nontraditional public schools and 30 percent attended Juvenile court/Youth authority schools at the beginning of the school year.

Table D4. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care by grade level, over-age in grades 6–9, number of schools attended during the school year, and by school type, 2009/10

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	
		Number	Percentage
Grade level	5 and under	-	-
	6	17	0.3
	7	103	2.1
	8	272	5.4
	9	1,075	21.5
	10	1,280	25.5
	11	1,315	26.2
	12	940	18.8
	Ungraded elementary	0	0.0
	Ungraded secondary	-	-
Over-age for grades 6–9	Over-age by more than one year	337	23.0
Number of schools attended during the school year	1 school	1,553	31.0
	2 schools	1,872	37.4
	3 schools	1,165	23.2
	4+ schools	422	8.4
School type	Elementary schools	19	0.4
	Intermediate/ Middle schools	152	3.0
	High schools	1,434	28.6
	K-12 schools	57	1.1
	Alternative schools of choice	104	2.1
	Continuation high schools	473	9.4
	Special education schools	41	0.8
	County community day schools	332	6.6
	Juvenile court/Youth authority schools	1,535	30.6
	District community day schools	478	9.5
	Nonpublic schools	367	7.3
	Opportunity schools	20	0.4

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,012 students in probation. Over-age for grade was computed for grades 6–9 only because of the age restriction (17 years old or younger) of the sample. The – masks low cell sizes.

California uses the Academic Performance Index (API), an annual measure of school test-score performance, to rank schools in two ways: statewide and by 100 similar schools that have comparable demographic profiles. Based on both of these rankings, students in probation were more likely to attend low performing schools (table D5). Specifically:

- 25 percent of students in probation attended the lowest-performing 10 percent of schools (Statewide API Decile 1), and the percentage of these students declined, down to about only 2 percent, in the highest performing 10 percent of schools (Statewide API Decile 10).
- The majority of students in probation (about 52 percent) attended the lowest-performing 30 percent of schools (Statewide API Deciles 1–3).
- The distribution across the similar schools ranks are much less marked than for the statewide school ranks, however, more than 60 percent of students in probation attended schools in the lower 50 percent of schools (Similar Schools Deciles 1–5), with about 5 percent attending schools in the highest decile (Similar Schools Decile 10).

Table D5. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools, by school characteristics, 2009/10

	Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care		
		Number	Percentage
Statewide school Academic Performance Index rank	1	403	25.0
	2	256	15.9
	3	171	10.6
	4	184	11.4
	5	149	9.2
	6	176	10.9
	7	117	7.3
	8	68	4.2
	9	59	3.7
	10	29	1.8
Similar schools' Academic Performance Index rank	1	148	9.7
	2	220	14.4
	3	224	14.7
	4	196	12.8
	5	151	9.9
	6	144	9.4
	7	157	10.3
	8	104	6.8
	9	104	6.8
	10	79	5.2

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Percentages are computed for 5,012 students in probation ages 5–17. Special education schools and schools participating in the Alternative Schools Accountability Model (ASAM) do not receive statewide ranks; the 2010 statewide school API decile rank was only available for 1,612 probation students. Special education schools, schools participating in the ASAM, and small schools with between 11–99 valid STAR Program scores do not receive similar schools ranks; similar schools API decile rank was only available for 1,527 probation students. Information is reported for the school of enrollment as October 7, 2009. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

Table D6 presents the percentage of students enrolled in Fall 2009 who were tested in English language arts or mathematics with any of the STAR tests in Spring 2010.

- The STAR test participation rate for students in probation was around 60 percent.
- The participation rate decreased from about 71 percent in grades 6–8 to 54 percent in grade 11.

While the reasons for the lower test-taking rates of students in probation are not fully understood, the changes in placements and higher mobility rates for this student group may at least partially explain why these students were less likely to be present during testing.

Table D6. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care who participated in the state’s Standardized Testing and Reporting Program in English language arts or mathematics by grade level, 2009/10

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care		
		Number of Students Tested	Total Enrolled in Fall 2009	Percentage Tested
Grade Level	All grades	2,462	4,066	60.6
	6 or under	15	21	71.4
	7	74	103	71.8
	8	197	272	72.4
	9	678	1,075	63.1
	10	784	1,280	61.3
	11	714	1,315	54.3

Source. Authors’ analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Students tested in STAR 2010 in English language arts or mathematics include students who took, with or without modification, the California Standards Test (CST), the Modified Assessment (CMA), the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) or the standards-based tests in Spanish in either English language arts or mathematics in spring 2010.

Table D7 presents the number and percentage of students in probation by performance levels in English language arts (up to grade 11) and Algebra I (end of course). Students in probation fell far short of achieving proficiency in English language arts. Specifically:

- Fewer than 10 percent of students in probation who took the English language arts test were proficient or above.
- Nearly half scored at far below basic, the lowest performance level.
- Fewer than 4 percent of students in probation who took the Algebra I test were proficient or above.
- Again, nearly half scored at far below basic, the lowest performance level, and the two lowest performance levels accounted for about 90 percent of students in probation.

Table D7. Number and percentage of students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools, by California Standards Test performance levels in English language arts, and Algebra I, 2009/10

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	
		Number	Percentage
English language arts grades 2-11	Number of students with CST^a scores	2,327	100.0
	Far below basic	1,115	47.9
	Below basic	572	24.6
	Basic	413	17.8
	Proficient	185	8.0
	Advanced	42	1.8
Algebra I (end of course)	Number of students with CST^a scores	990	100.0
	Far below basic	486	49.1
	Below basic	391	39.5
	Basic	77	7.8
	Proficient	36	3.6
	Advanced		

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes only students who took the CST without modifications in spring 2010. Due to rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

^aCST = California Standards Test.

To be on track to graduate from a California public high school, students are required to pass both the English language arts and mathematics parts of the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE), offered for the first time in grade 10. Table D8 presents the number and percentage of grade-10 students in probation in California public schools who passed the English language arts, mathematics, and both parts of the CAHSEE. It shows that:

- Fewer than half of the students in probation who took either the CAHSEE in English language arts or mathematics in grade 10 passed the test.
- Only about one-third of students in probation passed California’s high school exit exam in grade 10.

Table D8. Number and percentage of grade-10 students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools who passed the English language arts, mathematics, and both parts of the California High School Exit Exam, 2009/10

	Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care		
	Number of Students Tested	Number of Students Passing	Percentage of Students Passing
English language arts grade 10	764	347	45.4
Mathematics grade 10	740	317	42.8
Both English language arts and mathematics grade 10	691	237	34.3

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Reducing dropout rates and boosting high school graduation rates are state education priorities. Table D9 presents the single-year dropout rates, by grade, for students in probation. Nearly one in five students in probation in grades 9–12 dropped out in 2009/10. Specifically:

- Single-year dropout rates were about 14 percent in grades 9 and 10.
- Single-year dropout rates increased with grade level to about one in five students in probation dropping out in grade 11 and one in three in grade 12.

Table D9. The single-year dropout rate by grades 9–12 for students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools, 2009/10

		Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care		
		Number of Dropouts	Number of Students	Percentage of Dropouts
Dropout rate	Grades 9–12	4,610	910	19.7
	9	1,075	143	13.3
	10	1,280	186	14.5
	11	1,315	280	21.3
	12	940	301	32.0

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Table D10 presents the number and percentage of grade-12 students in probation-supervised foster care who graduated with a standard high school diploma at the end of the school year.

- The graduation rate for all grade-12 students in probation-supervised foster care was only about 21 percent.

Table D10. Number and percentage of grade-12 graduates for students in probation-supervised foster care in California public schools, 2009/10

	Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care		
	Number of Students in Grade 12	Number of Grade-12 Graduates	Percentage of Grade-12 Graduates
Grade-12 graduation	940	196	20.9

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/2010.

Note. Graduates are students who graduated with a standard high school diploma, including those students with disabilities who graduated with a California High School Exit Exam waiver.

Table D11. Public school students in probation-supervised foster care and in foster care, by California county, 2009/10

County	Total Students	Number of Students in Foster Care	Number of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	Percentage of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care by County	Percentage of California Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
Alameda	204,936	1,082	177	0.1	3.5
Alpine	109	<15	-	-	-
Amador	4,469	42	<15	-	-
Butte	30,474	491	17	0.1	0.3
Calaveras	6,077	79	15	0.2	0.3
Colusa	4,295	<15	<15	-	-
Contra Costa	160,768	1,017	47	0.0	0.9
Del Norte	4,150	55	<15	-	-
El Dorado	28,690	248	193	0.7	3.9
Fresno	185,434	1,825	165	0.1	3.3
Glenn	5,467	66	<15	-	-
Humboldt	17,350	151	16	0.1	0.3
Imperial	34,756	220	20	0.1	0.4
Inyo	2,919	<15	<15	-	-
Kern	167,194	1,538	129	0.1	2.6
Kings	27,431	195	<15	-	-
Lake	9,003	92	<15	-	-
Lassen	4,857	53	26	0.5	0.5
Los Angeles	1,534,486	12,648	1,698	0.1	33.9
Madera	28,385	214	39	0.1	0.8
Marin	29,205	108	<15	-	-
Mariposa	2,095	<15	<15	-	-
Mendocino	12,421	158	27	0.2	0.5
Merced	53,973	625	16	0.0	0.3
Modoc	1,598	24	19	1.2	0.4
Mono	1,559	<15	-	-	-
Monterey	67,935	205	<15	-	-
Napa	19,832	101	26	0.1	0.5
Nevada	11,594	94	24	0.2	0.5
Orange	483,105	1,592	144	0.0	2.9
Placer	65,647	285	48	0.1	1.0
Plumas	2,273	36	<15	-	-
Riverside	406,976	3,615	269	0.1	5.4
Sacramento	227,952	2,334	256	0.1	5.1

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Table D11. Public school students in probation-supervised foster care and in foster care, by California county, 2009/10 (continued)

County	Total Students	Number of Students in Foster Care	Number of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	Percentage of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care by County	Percentage of California Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
San Benito	10,997	74	<15	-	-
San Bernardino	400,804	3,601	487	0.1	9.7
San Diego	475,072	2,759	226	0.0	4.5
San Francisco	53,621	577	95	0.2	1.9
San Joaquin	130,906	964	109	0.1	2.2
San Luis Obispo	33,427	277	39	0.1	0.8
San Mateo	87,573	267	39	0.0	0.8
Santa Barbara	63,441	363	38	0.1	0.8
Santa Clara	255,314	906	112	0.0	2.2
Santa Cruz	36,901	220	15	0.0	0.3
Shasta	26,781	433	48	0.2	1.0
Sierra	443	<15	<15	-	-
Siskiyou	5,837	73	<15	-	-
Solano	63,272	475	34	0.1	0.7
Sonoma	68,308	394	61	0.1	1.2
Stanislaus	100,176	602	67	0.1	1.3
Sutter	19,656	146	<15	-	-
Tehama	9,919	179	<15	-	-
Trinity	1,656	28	<15	-	-
Tulare	93,129	681	82	0.1	1.6
Tuolumne	6,323	58	<15	-	-
Ventura	136,236	514	46	0.0	0.9
Yolo	28,549	170	23	0.1	0.5
Yuba	13,356	139	<15	-	-

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes counts of students ages 5–17 as of October 7, 2009.

Table D12. California public school students in probation-supervised foster care, by county and school district, 2009/10

County	District	Total Students	Number of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	Percentage of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care in School District	Percentage of California Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
Alameda	Alameda County Office of Education	2,296	87	3.8	1.7
Alameda	Oakland Unified	44,244	51	0.1	1.0
Calaveras	Calaveras County Office of Education	453	15	3.3	0.3
Contra Costa	Contra Costa County Office of Education	961	33	3.4	0.7
El Dorado	El Dorado County Office of Education	1,017	170	16.7	3.4
El Dorado	Lake Tahoe Unified	3,813	19	0.5	0.4
Fresno	Central Unified	13,958	18	0.1	0.4
Fresno	Clovis Unified	36,896	27	0.1	0.5
Fresno	Fresno County Office of Education	1,749	46	2.6	0.9
Fresno	Fresno Unified	72,171	67	0.1	1.3
Imperial	Imperial County Office of Education	610	16	2.6	0.3
Kern	Kern County Office of Education	3,416	54	1.6	1.1
Kern	Kern Union High	36,486	52	0.1	1.0
Lassen	Lassen County Office of Education	82	16	19.5	0.3
Los Angeles	Antelope Valley Union High	24,195	39	0.2	0.8
Los Angeles	Baldwin Park Unified	18,939	81	0.4	1.6
Los Angeles	Bonita Unified	9,681	23	0.2	0.5
Los Angeles	Compton Unified	25,019	23	0.1	0.5
Los Angeles	El Monte Union High	10,002	55	0.5	1.1
Los Angeles	Long Beach Unified	83,357	75	0.1	1.5
Los Angeles	Los Angeles County Office of Education	8,657	549	6.3	11.0
Los Angeles	Los Angeles Unified	634,039	575	0.1	11.5
Los Angeles	Pasadena Unified	19,112	29	0.2	0.6
Los Angeles	Pomona Unified	27,951	30	0.1	0.6
Los Angeles	William S. Hart Union High	25,050	15	0.1	0.3
Madera	Golden Valley Unified	1,884	31	1.6	0.6
Modoc	Modoc County Office of Education	43	16	37.2	0.3
Napa	Napa County Office of Education	172	15	8.7	0.3
Orange	Fullerton Joint Union High	14,323	27	0.2	0.5
Orange	Orange County Department of Education	6,290	62	1.0	1.2
Orange	Santa Ana Unified	54,310	19	0.0	0.4
Placer	Placer County Office of Education	524	35	6.7	0.7

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Table D12. California public school students in probation-supervised foster care, by county and school district, 2009/10 (continued)

County	District	Total Students	Number of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	Percentage of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care in School District	Percentage of California Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
Riverside	Riverside County Office of Education	5,881	107	1.8	2.1
Riverside	Riverside Unified	40,884	64	0.2	1.3
Riverside	Val Verde Unified	18,851	36	0.2	0.7
Sacramento	Elk Grove Unified	60,192	23	0.0	0.5
Sacramento	Sacramento City Unified	45,938	16	0.0	0.3
Sacramento	Sacramento County Office of Education	812	112	13.8	2.2
Sacramento	San Juan Unified	45,172	85	0.2	1.7
San Bernardino	Apple Valley Unified	14,365	48	0.3	1.0
San Bernardino	Chino Valley Unified	30,917	131	0.4	2.6
San Bernardino	Redlands Unified	20,844	15	0.1	0.3
San Bernardino	Rialto Unified	26,044	19	0.1	0.4
San Bernardino	San Bernardino City Unified	51,352	34	0.1	0.7
San Bernardino	San Bernardino County Office of Education	3,301	134	4.1	2.7
San Bernardino	Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified	9,565	52	0.5	1.0
San Diego	Grossmont Union High	24,177	17	0.1	0.3
San Diego	San Diego County Office of Education	3,233	103	3.2	2.1
San Diego	San Diego Unified	125,769	46	0.0	0.9
San Diego	Sweetwater Union High	40,683	18	0.0	0.4
San Francisco	San Francisco County Office of Education	584	53	9.1	1.1
San Francisco	San Francisco Unified	52,595	42	0.1	0.8
San Joaquin	San Joaquin County Office of Education	2,475	63	2.5	1.3
San Joaquin	Stockton Unified	36,646	24	0.1	0.5
San Luis Obispo	San Luis Obispo County Office of Education	615	25	4.1	0.5
San Mateo	San Mateo County Office of Education	529	23	4.3	0.5
Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara County Office of Education	714	19	2.7	0.4
Santa Clara	East Side Union High	25,089	18	0.1	0.4
Santa Clara	Santa Clara County Office of Education	4,330	70	1.6	1.4
Shasta	Shasta County Office of Education	506	18	3.6	0.4
Shasta	Shasta Union High	5,799	30	0.5	0.6
Solano	Vallejo City Unified	15,472	16	0.1	0.3
Sonoma	Santa Rosa High	11,263	17	0.2	0.3
Sonoma	Sonoma County Office of Education	715	40	5.6	0.8

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Table D12. California public school students in probation-supervised foster care, by county and school district, 2009/10 (continued)

County	District	Total Students	Number of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care	Percentage of Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care in School District	Percentage of California Students in Probation-Supervised Foster Care
Stanislaus	Stanislaus County Office of Education	1,721	30	1.7	0.6
Stanislaus	Turlock Unified	13,368	29	0.2	0.6
Tulare	Exeter Union High	1,108	29	2.6	0.6
Tulare	Tulare County Office of Education	1,455	31	2.1	0.6
Tulare	Visalia Unified	26,035	16	0.1	0.3
Yolo	Yolo County Office of Education	245	21	8.6	0.4

Source. Authors' analysis of linked California Department of Education and California Department of Social Services administrative data, 2009/10.

Note. Includes counts of students ages 5–17 as of October 7, 2009. All other California districts, not included in this table, had counts of students in probation below 15.

PART TWO

The Invisible Achievement Gap

*How the Foster Care Experiences of
California Public School Students Are
Associated with Their Education Outcomes*