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**Addressing the Kansas Foster Care Crisis  
*New Report Provides Reform Recommendations***

(TOPEKA, KANSAS) –The number of children in Kansas foster care hit record highs this year. Today, the Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope coalition released a report identifying key problems in Kansas’s child welfare system and recommendations for reform.

Too many Kansas children are in foster care, and they are entering at racially disproportionate rates. The ratio of Kansas kids in foster care per 1,000 is nearly double the national ratio, and African American children are 75 percent more likely than white children to enter Kansas foster care.

“I have consistently seen and experienced the problems identified in this report since I began practicing in 2013,” said Tara Wallace, president, African American Foster Care/Adoption Coalition’s Topeka chapter. “Children are facing more trauma, confusion, disruption...kids feel like they’re being abandoned again and again.”

Kansas children are in foster care for too long. More youth enter the system than exit each year, contributing to the rising number of kids in care. Once in care, youth do not find permanency in a timely manner, which negatively affects behavior and long-term wellbeing.

Youth in care experience high placement instability. The average child in Kansas care moves 10.3 times per 1,000 days—2.5 times more than the performance standard—and many youth sleep in a new place every night.

To prevent kids from entering care, the report recommends supporting Kansas families by strengthening the safety net.

“We see the restrictive policy changes that have reduced thousands of families’ access to critical safety net programs as one of the biggest reasons for the increase of kids in foster care,” said Scott Anglemeyer, executive director of the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs.

According to the report, the Family First Prevention Services Act should be fully implemented, which will expand child welfare services before, during and after foster care. Kansas should substantially increase funding for family preservation services.

To combat systemic racial disparities, Kansas must engage external expertise and focus on racial biases which lead to higher reporting and investigation levels for families of color.

By improving conditions for those working in foster care and providing greater oversight of the system, Kansas kids in care will experience improved service delivery and the stability they are entitled to.

“Turnover, retention and high caseloads have not improved,” said Becky Fast, executive director, Kansas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. “It’s impacting the children that we serve and the care they receive.”

Read the full report at [RebuildHopeKansas.org](http://RebuildHopeKansas.org).

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**About Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope:** Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope is an independent coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to reforming Kansas's foster care system. As part of our efforts to develop effective recommendations, SFRH hosted and participated in events and community forums in Garden City, Manhattan, Pittsburg, Prairie Village, Salina, Topeka, and Wichita. For more information about the Strengthen Families Rebuild Hope coalition, visit [www.RebuildHopeKansas.org](http://www.RebuildHopeKansas.org).