

09.05.2024

Foster care in 2023

 **3.5%**

Increase in the number of children in foster care compared to 2022

At the end of 2023, in foster care there were 75.3 thousand children, including 58.2 thousand in family foster care and 17.1 thousand in institutional foster care. In comparison to 2022, the number of children in foster care increased by 3.5%.

Family foster care

At the end of 2023 family foster care functioned in the form of related, not professional and professional families which amounted to 35 978 and in the form of foster homes – 834 units. Among foster families, related families accounted for 63.8%, not professional families – 30.4%, and professional families – 5.8%.

The function of foster family was fulfilled by 18 675 married couples and by 17 303 lone persons. The families which admitted one child accounted for 72.3%, two children – 18.1%, three children – 5.4%, and four or more children 4.1% of all foster families. Over a half of persons performing the role of foster family were persons at age of 51–70. Foster homes were run by 707 married couples and by 127 lone persons. Most persons (77.5%) performing the function of a family foster home were in the 41–60 age group.

Children in family foster care

There were 58 210 children in family foster care, including 6 226 children in foster homes. Among all children who were provided with foster care 7 105 had legal confirmation of disability, moderate disability or severe disability and 2 659 were orphans. There were 28 839 girls in family foster care. Children at age of 7–13 constituted the major group (20 179) both in foster families and in foster homes, while children at age under 1 were in the smallest group (1 004). In 2023 there were 10 756 children who were admitted for the first time in family foster care. In 2023, 8 062 children up to age of 18 left family foster care. The largest number of children were placed in another form of family foster care (2 522). There were 1 351 children went to adoption families, and 2 488 children returned to their natural families. Family foster care was left by 961 children because they were moved to institutional foster care and 47 children left family foster care, because of transferring them to social assistance house. Out of 4 022 adult residents who left foster care in 2023, 2 174 set up their own households, and 127 returned to their own families or relatives. Among the residents who left foster care at age over 18, 1 440 did not start to lead independent life.

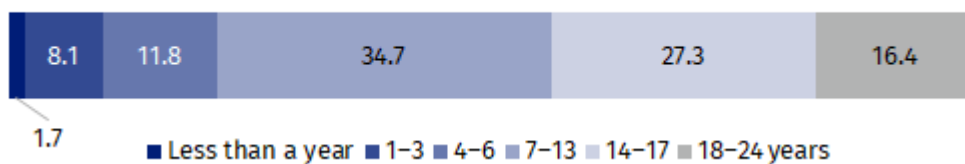
Related families accounted for over a half of all foster families

53.1% of persons performing the function of foster family were at age of 51–70

Among children who were provided with family types of foster care, 7 105 had legal confirmation of disability or of the level of disability

Chart 1. Structure of children in family foster care by age group in 2023

As of 31 December



Institutional foster care centres

At the end of 2023 in Poland there were 1 318 institutional foster care centres, including 1 305 care and education centres, 10 regional care and therapy centres and 3 intervention pre-adoptive centres. The care and education centres encompass socialisation centres (812), family centres (204), intervention centres (61), specialist therapy centres (37) and tasks combining centres (191).

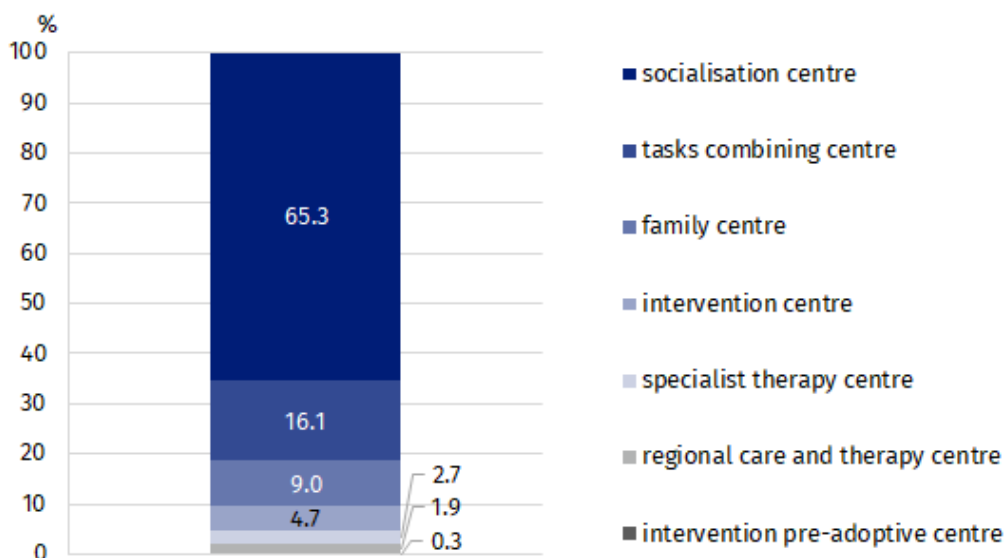
Socialisation centres accounted for 61.6% of all institutional foster care centres

Places in institutional foster care

There were 16 630 places in institutional foster care centres, including 10 834 places in socialisation centres, 2 681 places in task combining centres and in family, intervention and specialist therapy centres 1 499, 788 and 456 respectively. In other centres there were 372 places in total.

Chart 2. Structure of places in institutional foster care centres by type of centre in 2023

As of 31 December



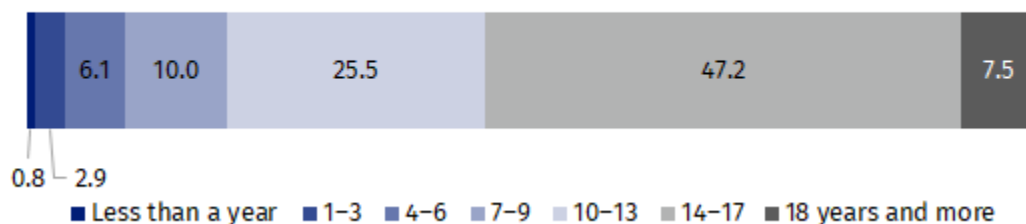
Residents in institutional foster care

At the end of 2023, there were 17 128 residents in institutional foster care. Residents at age of 14-17 constituted the major group (8 079 children). The second biggest group (4 367 persons) were children at age of 10-13. The smallest was the youngest age group under age of 1 (142 residents). In institutional foster care centres there were 1 292 adult residents who continued their education.

Children at age of 14-17 constituted the major group of residents in institutional foster care (47.2%)

Chart 3. Structure of residents in institutional foster care by age group in 2023

As of 31 December



Throughout the year 2023, 4 468 residents up to age of 18 left institutional foster care centres. The major group (39.7%) were residents who returned to their own family. Transfer to other type of institutional foster care was the reason for leaving the centres for 25.1% of children. In family foster care 21.0% of residents were placed, while 5.8% went to adoption families. Out of 2 061 residents at age over 18 who left the centres, 1 199 set up their own household and 681 returned to their own family.

Volunteers in institutional foster care

In 2023, 1 240 volunteers did charity work in institutional foster care. The works of education and care centres were attended by 1 177 persons, 34 persons worked for regional care and therapy centres and 29 volunteers were involved in the works of pre-adoptive intervention centres. Among care and education centres most volunteers supported the activities of socialisation centres (68.6%) and the smallest group worked in family centres (6.5%).

Legally disabled persons in institutional foster care

By the end of 2023 there were 2 210 disabled residents of institutional foster care. In care and education centres there were 1 982 persons certified as disabled while in regional care and therapy centres 227 persons. In socialisation centres the disabled persons accounted for 58.9% of total of disabled residents in care and education centres, 17.3% in tasks combining centres, 10.0% in specialist therapy centres, 9.9% in family centres and 3.9% in intervention centres.

Among all residents of institutional foster care the disabled persons accounted for 12.9%

Table 1. Foster care by voivodships in 2023

As of 31 December

SPECIFICATION	Family care		Institutional care	
	families	children	centres	residents
POLSKA	36 812	58 210	1 318	17 128
Dolnośląskie	3 965	6 035	162	2 070
Kujawsko-pomorskie	2 188	3 541	90	1 246
Lubelskie	1 776	2 782	93	1 022
Lubuskie	1 338	2 110	41	527
Łódzkie	2 737	3 970	85	1 213
Małopolskie	2 053	3 151	97	1 099
Mazowieckie	4 102	6 249	140	1 786
Opolskie	995	1 590	29	412
Podkarpackie	1 150	1 748	47	691
Podlaskie	901	1 394	30	384
Pomorskie	2 420	4 596	81	1 113
Śląskie	4 898	7 761	178	2 307
Świętokrzyskie	935	1 361	46	612
Warmińsko-mazurskie	1 735	2 830	66	900
Wielkopolskie	3 309	5 190	70	911
Zachodniopomorskie	2 310	3 902	63	835

In the case of quoting data from the Statistics Poland, please provide information: "Statistics Poland data source", and in the case of publishing calculations made on data published by the Statistics Poland, please provide information: "Own study based on Statistics Poland data".







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Related information

[Social assistance, child and family services in 2022](#)

Data available in databases

[Database Local Data Bank – health care and social welfare](#)

Terms used in official statistics

[Pre-adoptive intervention centre](#)

[Family foster care coordinator](#)

[The organiser of family foster care](#)

[Foster care](#)

[Centres combining tasks of the centres](#)

[Care and education centre for children and young people](#)

[Intervention centre](#)

[Family centre](#)

[Socialization centre](#)

[Specialist therapy centre](#)

[Poviat centre for family support](#)

[Regional care and therapy centre](#)