



Resource Homes

Supporting resource parents and their families in New Jersey

December 2024 – January 2025 Survey Results



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES



Executive Summary

About NJ's Resource Parents

DCF relies on resource parents, nationally referred to as foster parents, to care for children and youth when they can no longer stay safely in their own homes. Resource parents serve a critical role, providing a safe and stable living environment for children in out-of-home care.

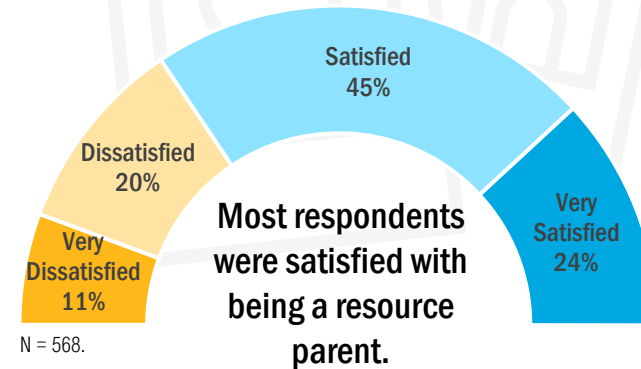
In recent years, the number of licensed resource homes in New Jersey has fallen. Some contributing factors may be that less children have entered out-of-home care¹ and DCF paused resource parent recruitment efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the number of children entering out-of-home care remained stable, at about 1,600, between 2022 and 2023, while the number of licensed resource homes fell further from 2,964 to 2,449, an 18% decline.²

Study Design

To better understand the experiences of resource parents and identify areas for improvement, the Office of Applied Research and Evaluation collaborated with the Office of Resource Families to create an anonymous survey. Currently licensed resource parents and those previously licensed within the last two years responded to the survey between December 2024 and January 2025. Of the potential 3,794 respondents, 28% partially responded to the survey and 14% completed the full survey. The number of respondents per question varies because of partial survey completion and respondents selecting “not applicable” when available.

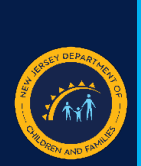


“Being foster parents brings us so much joy, and it really warms our hearts to know that we're making a positive impact in these children's lives.” – Resource Parent



Key Findings

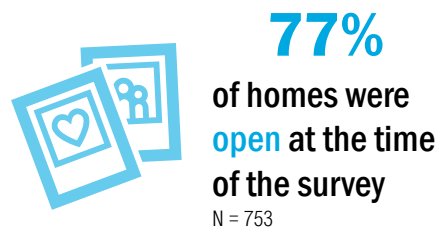
- **Satisfaction:** Most (69%) resource parents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their role. However, kinship resource parents reported higher satisfaction rates and stronger relationships with DCF than non-kin resource parents.
- **Services:** Most resource parents expressed satisfaction with services for children in their care; satisfaction rates ranged from 89% to 63% depending the service. Mental and behavioral health services were rated lowest, and one-third of resource parents reported experiencing delays when accessing this service for children in their care.
- **Teaming with staff:** Resource parents expressed the need for a stronger partnership with DCF staff. A higher share of kinship resource parents reported stronger relationships with staff, with 66% feeling like a team member compared to 56% of non-kin resource parents.
- **Training:** Nearly all resource parents felt confident in their abilities to meet the needs of children in their care. However, a higher share of kinship resource parents (81%) found training to be effective compared to non-kin resource parents (64%).



Resource Parents in New Jersey

Survey respondents included resource parents in open and closed homes. Resource parents in an open home have an active license and may have a child in their care while those in a closed home had a license in the prior two years and no longer have a child in their care.

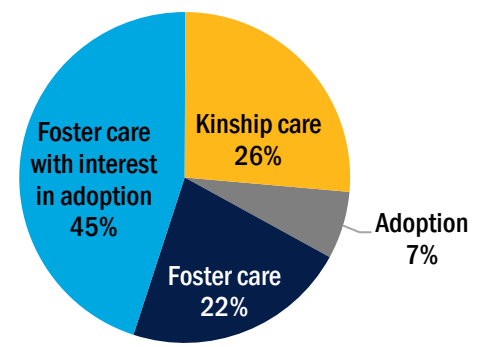
Most frequently (42%) survey respondents were resource parents for 2-4 years, followed by 26% who served for 5 to 9 years. Less than one-fifth of respondents have been resource parents for 10 years or more (18%) or for less than one year (14%).



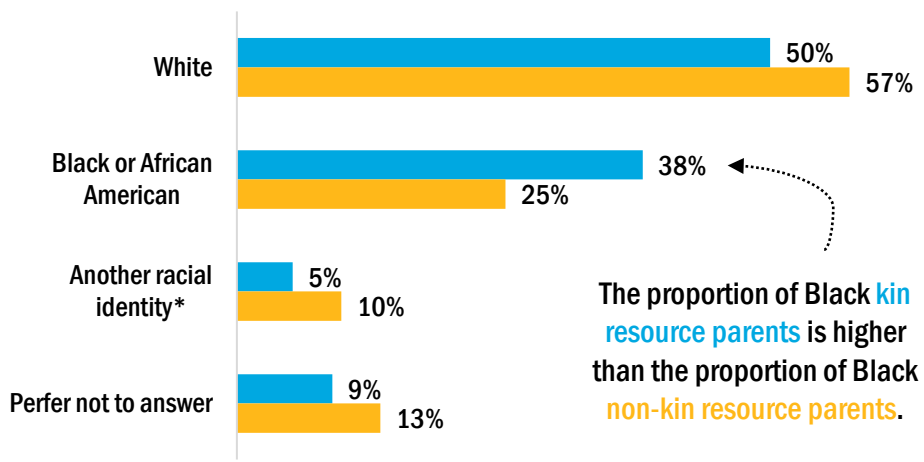
Kinship care accounts for a quarter of respondents.

N = 726

Kinship resource parents are relatives of the child or people with a positive emotional connection with the child or the child's parent.



Percentage of **Kin** and **Non-Kin** Resource Parents by Race.

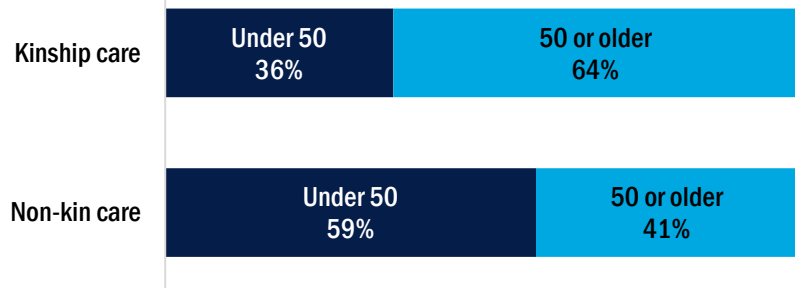


The proportion of Black **kin resource parents** is higher than the proportion of Black **non-kin resource parents**.



Kinship resource parents tend to be older than non-kin resource parents.

N = 537

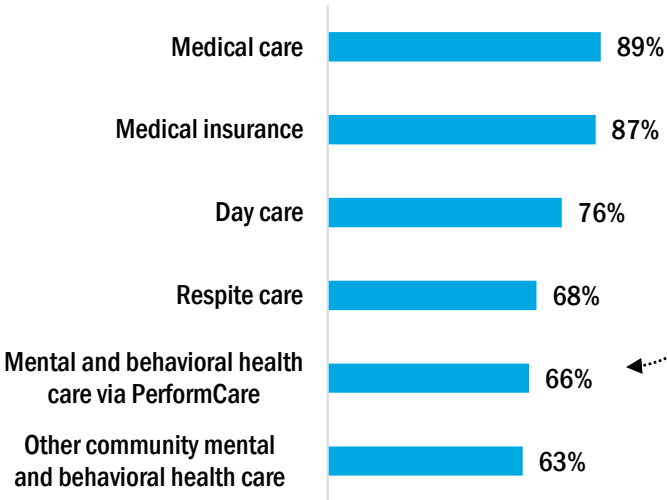


*There were very few Asian, American Indian, Alaskan Native or Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander respondents.
Note: Respondents were able to select multiple racial identities. Thus, the percentages do not sum to 100.



Service Satisfaction and Access

Most resource parents reported being satisfied or very satisfied with the following services.

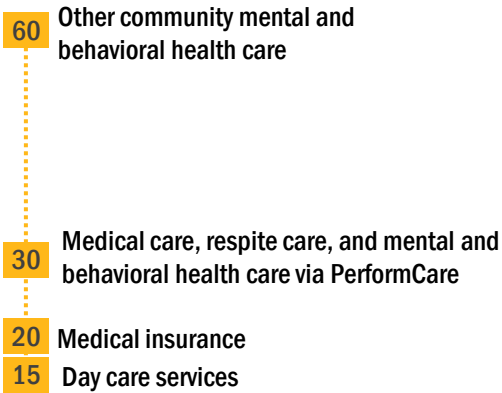


Note: Respondents had the option of selecting not applicable. The number of respondents varies from 281 to 636 depending the service.

Resource parents were **least satisfied** with mental and behavioral health care and were more likely to experience **delays** when accessing them for a child in their care.

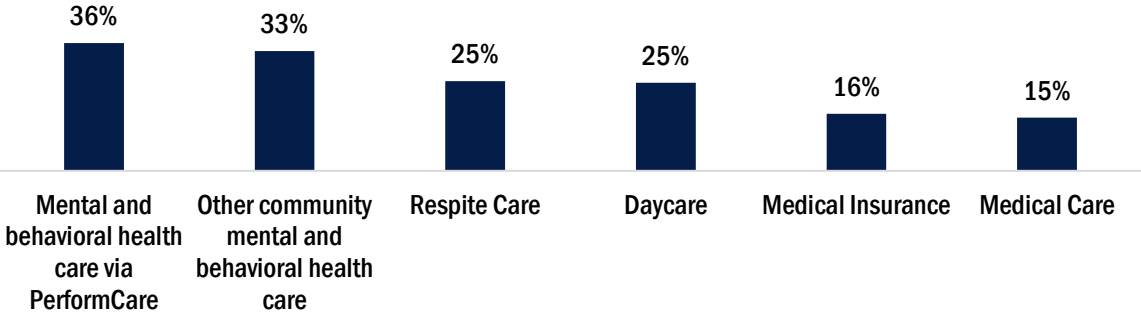


Median wait time in days among those who experienced delays



About **one-third** of resource parents who access mental and behavioral health care services for a child in their care experienced delays.

Percentage of resource parents who experienced delays in care when accessing service by type.



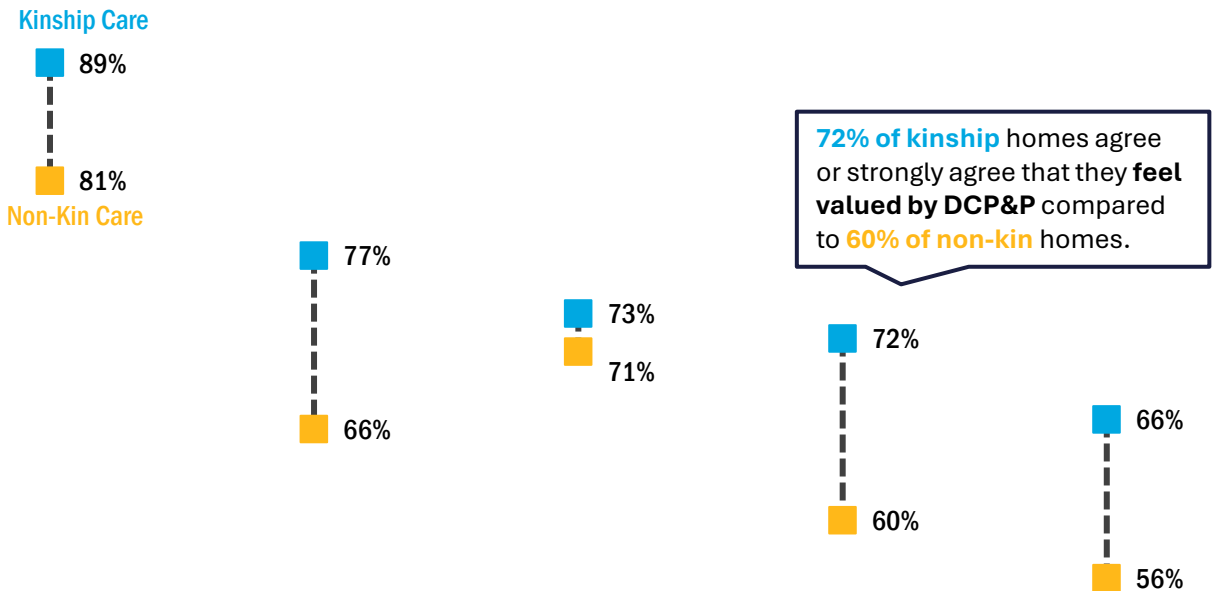
Insights & Recommendations

Compared to other concrete services, mental and behavioral health services received the lowest satisfaction rating, with significant delays reported in accessing services. DCF may consider exploring barriers to access for these services and consider increasing provider availability.



Partnering with staff and birth families

Most resource parents reported strong relationships with DCP&P staff.



When I have a concern, I do not hesitate to phone DCP&P staff

DCP&P staff respect my opinions regarding the children in my care

DCP&P staff respond to my phone calls, emails, and requests promptly

I feel valued by DCP&P staff in my role as a resource parent

DCP&P staff treat me like a team member

N = about 140 kinship homes and 430 non-kin homes.

Based on a chi-square test, differences are statistically significant for all items except "DCP&P staff respond to my phone calls, emails, and requests promptly."



“I think that resource parents can provide valuable information and perspective as those who interact most often with the child in placement.” – Resource Parent

Over half of resource parents reported positive collaboration and coordination with birth families.

DCP&P helped to **facilitate a positive partnership** with the child's birth family

53%

I was **informed with adequate time** about visitation changes or cancellations

55%

I **felt supported** in matters involving the child's birth family (e.g., visitation, behavior, impact on the child, court)

57%

I **maintained a positive relationship** with the birth family of children in my placement

68%

N = 628. The following number of respondents selected "Not applicable" to each of the respective statements: 208, 84, 109, and 193.



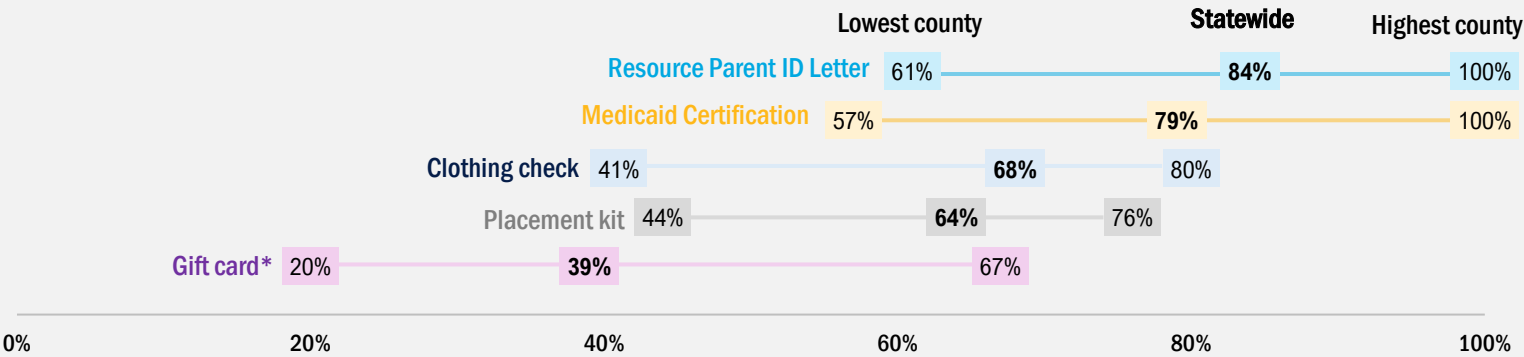
Placement Material and Visitations

When a child is placed in a resource home, resource parents should receive relevant placement materials within 24 hours. Materials may include the Resource Parent Identification Letter, which is needed for school registration, obtaining routine medical care, and receiving other necessary services; the child's Medicaid certification; a placement kit folder containing information about the child and resources; a clothing check; and a gift card. Timely receipt facilitates a smooth transition and ensures the child receives support and services promptly.

** The timely receipt of gift cards is lower than other placement material. Distribution of gift cards started December 2022. Although respondents could select "not applicable," some may have provided responses even if they closed or their most recent placement occurred before the gift card program was introduced.*

Most resource parents received placement material within 24 hours of a new placement.

Percentage of resource parents who received material within 24 hours - county with lowest rate, statewide rate, and highest county.

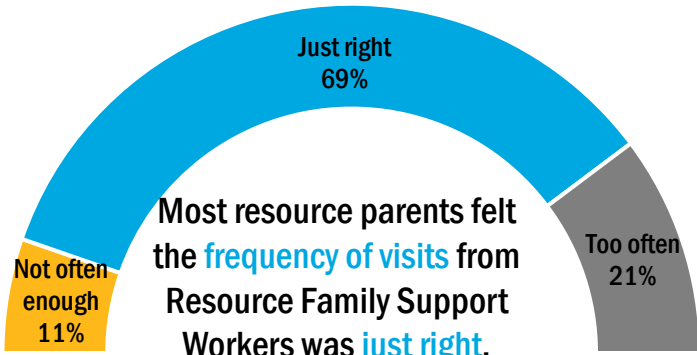


“I had a great experience due to my amazing worker, [name redacted]. She is one of a kind and truly got me and my family through when things were difficult. We wouldn't have been able to do it without her! She ALWAYS made us feel like we were her only case, and that made all of the difference.” – Resource Parent

92%

of resource parents received an in-person visit from their Resource Family Support Worker at least once every two months.

N = 624



N = 620

Most resource parents felt the frequency of visits from Resource Family Support Workers was just right.

90%

of resource parents received an in-person visit from their caseworker at least once every month.

N = 615



Initial and Ongoing Training

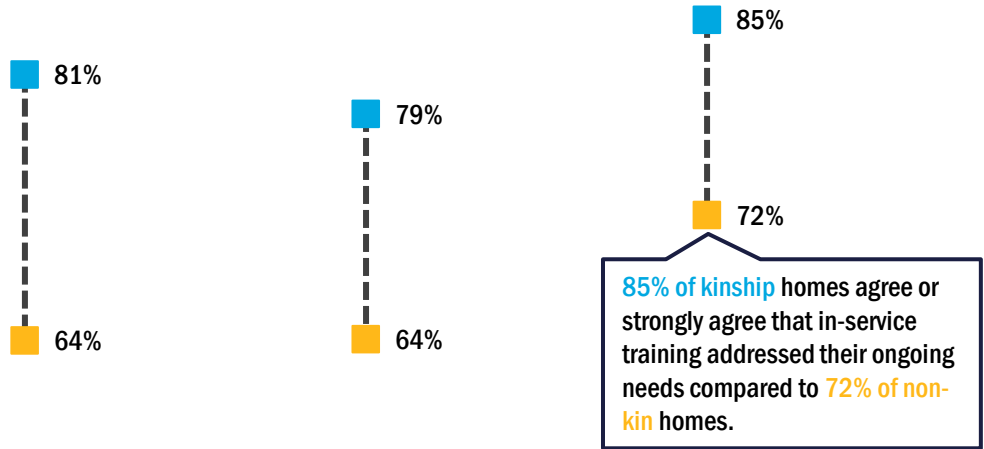
Training meets the needs of resource parents; however, kinship resource parents find training more effective than non-kin resource parents.

N = 145 kinship and 439 non-kin.
The following number of respondents selected "Not applicable" to each of the respective statements: 0, 16, 36, and 63.
Difference statistically significant for all items excluding "I feel confident in my ability to meet the needs of children placed in my care."

Kinship Care



Non-Kin Care



The Department of Children and Families believes that foster, adoptive, and kinship families are an essential part of our work.

Thank you to all the current and former resource parents who completed the survey and shared about their experience!

For More Information Contact:
Mahnoush Vaziri, Assistant Director
Office of Resource Families
mahnoush.vaziri@dcf.nj.gov

Victoria Perez-Zetune, Research Scientist
Office of Applied Research & Evaluation
victoria.perez-zetune@dcf.nj.gov

References:

- 1 New Jersey Child Welfare Data Hub (n.d.) *Children Entering Out of Home Placement*.
<https://njchilddata.rutgers.edu/portal/children-entering-out-of-home-placement>
- 2 The Imprint (n.d.) *Foster Care Capacity – New Jersey*
<https://www.fostercarecapacity.com/states/new-jersey>

I feel confident in my ability to meet the needs of the children placed in my care	Overall, the pre-service and in-service trainings prepared me to be a resource parent	Looking back, the pre-service training (PRIDE and Traditions of Care) helped me to anticipate many of the challenges I later experienced	The in-service training offered by Embrella addressed my ongoing needs
--	---	--	--