

# **What is the Data Telling Us About Relatives' Caring For Children?**

**Presented at**

**National Association of State Foster Care Managers Annual Meeting**

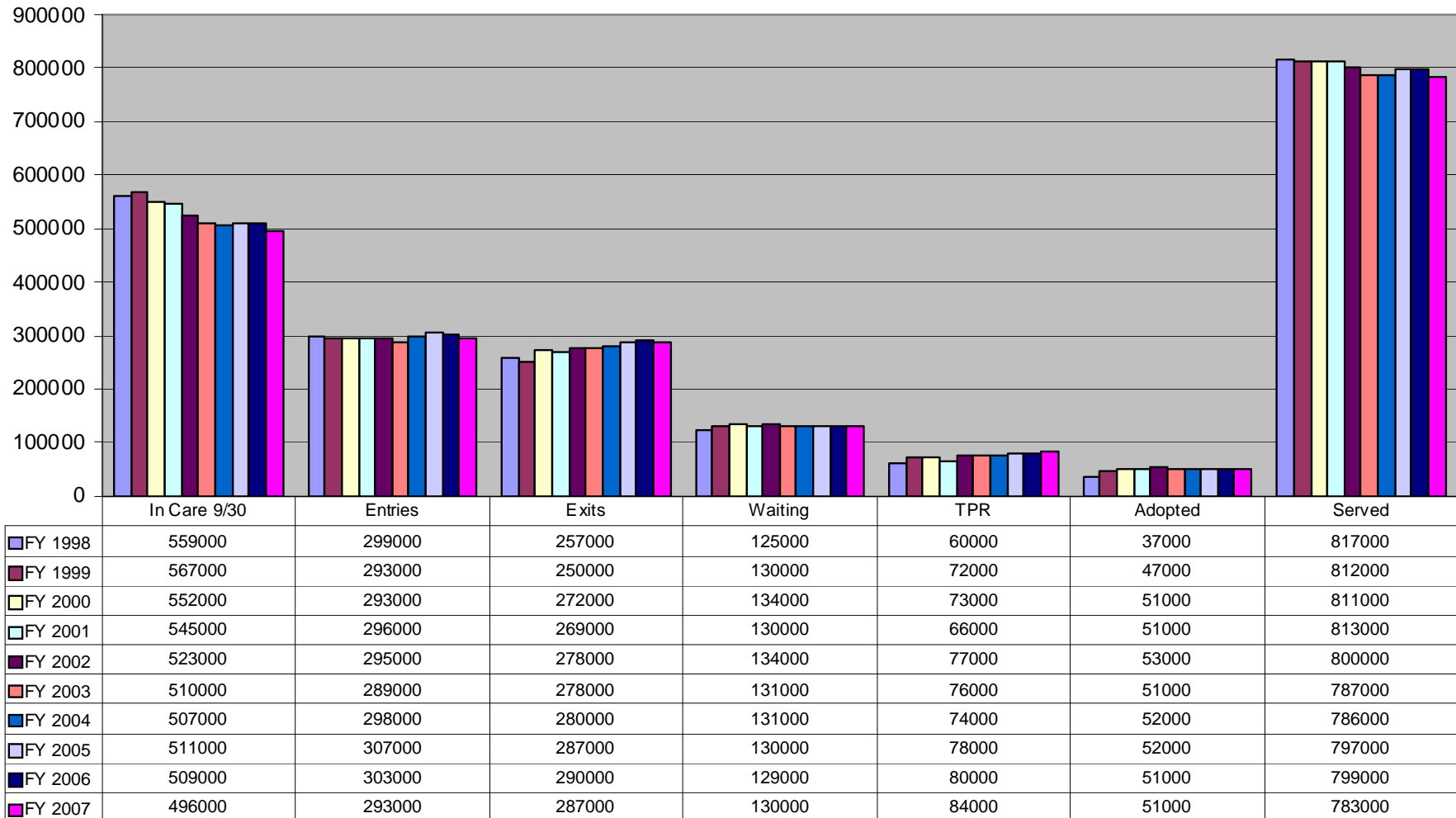
October 2008  
Washington, DC

Penelope L. Maza, Ph.D.  
Children's Bureau  
Senior Policy Research Analyst  
1250 Maryland Avenue, Eighth Floor (#8352)  
Washington, DC 20024  
202-205-8024 (voice)  
202-401-5917 (fax)  
[pmaza@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:pmaza@acf.hhs.gov)  
<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>

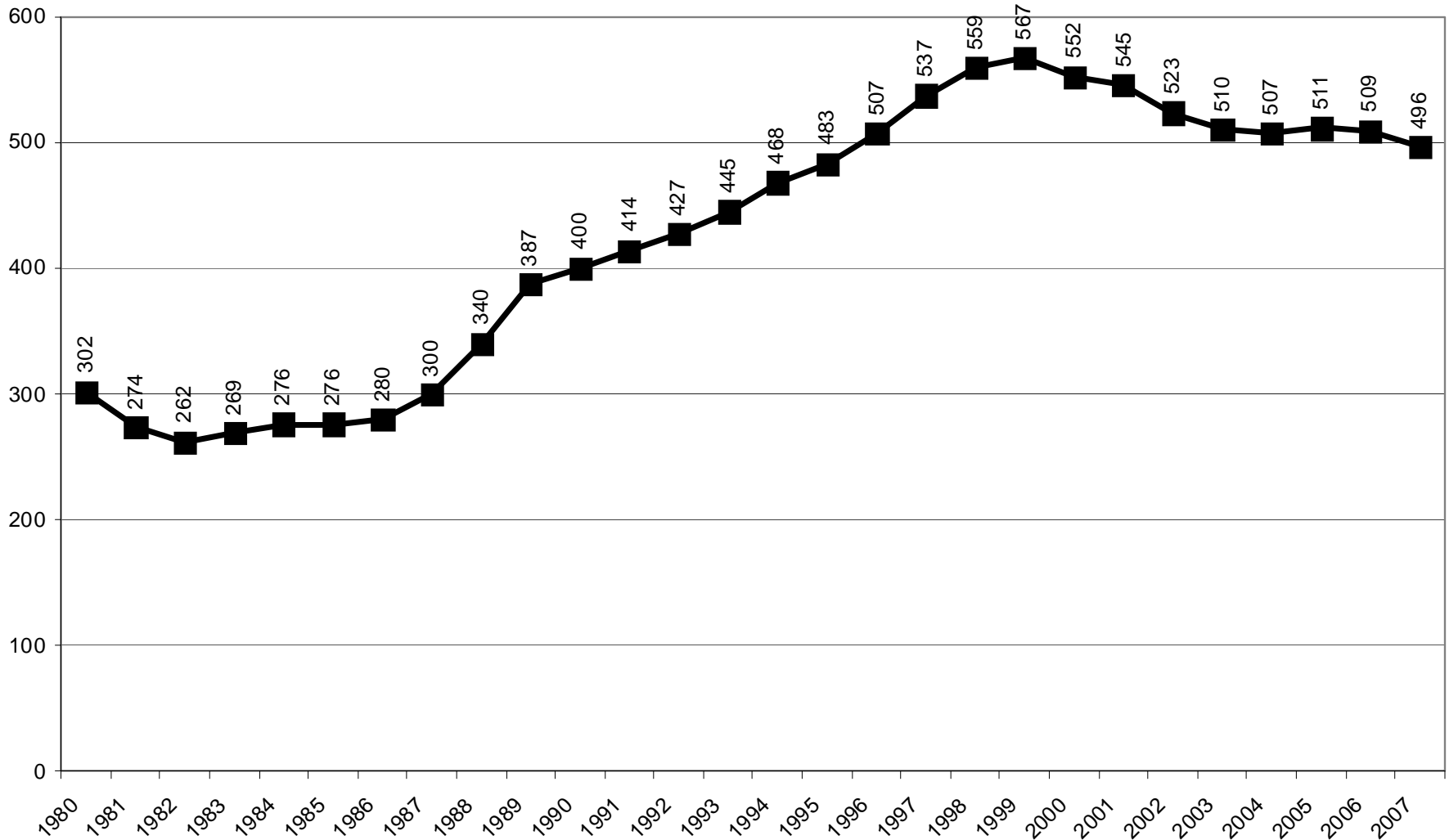
## Trends in Foster Care and Adoption—FY 1998-FY 2007

(Based on data submitted by states as of September 1, 2008)

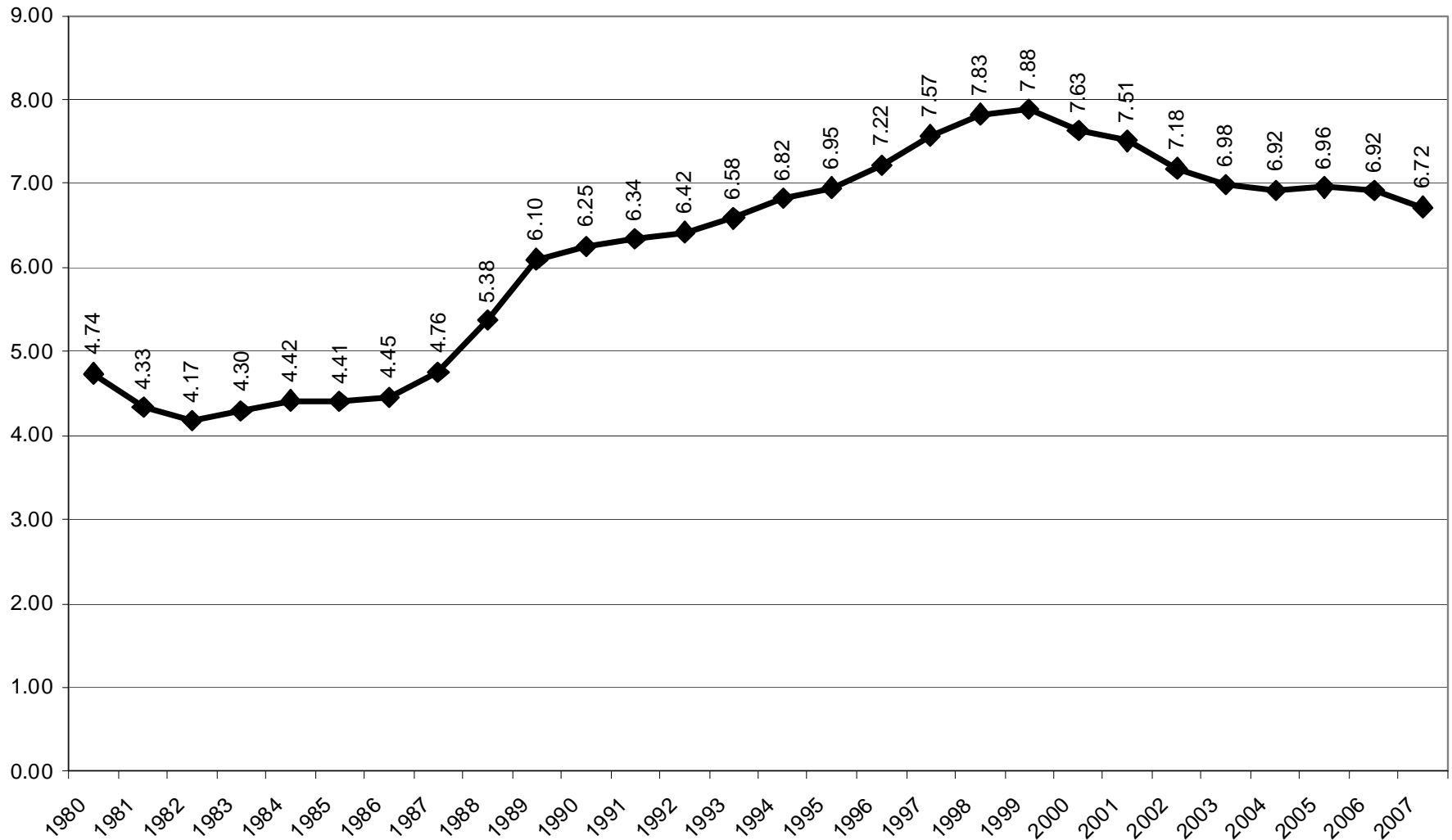
Source: AFCARS data, U.S. Children's Bureau, Administration for Children, Youth and Families



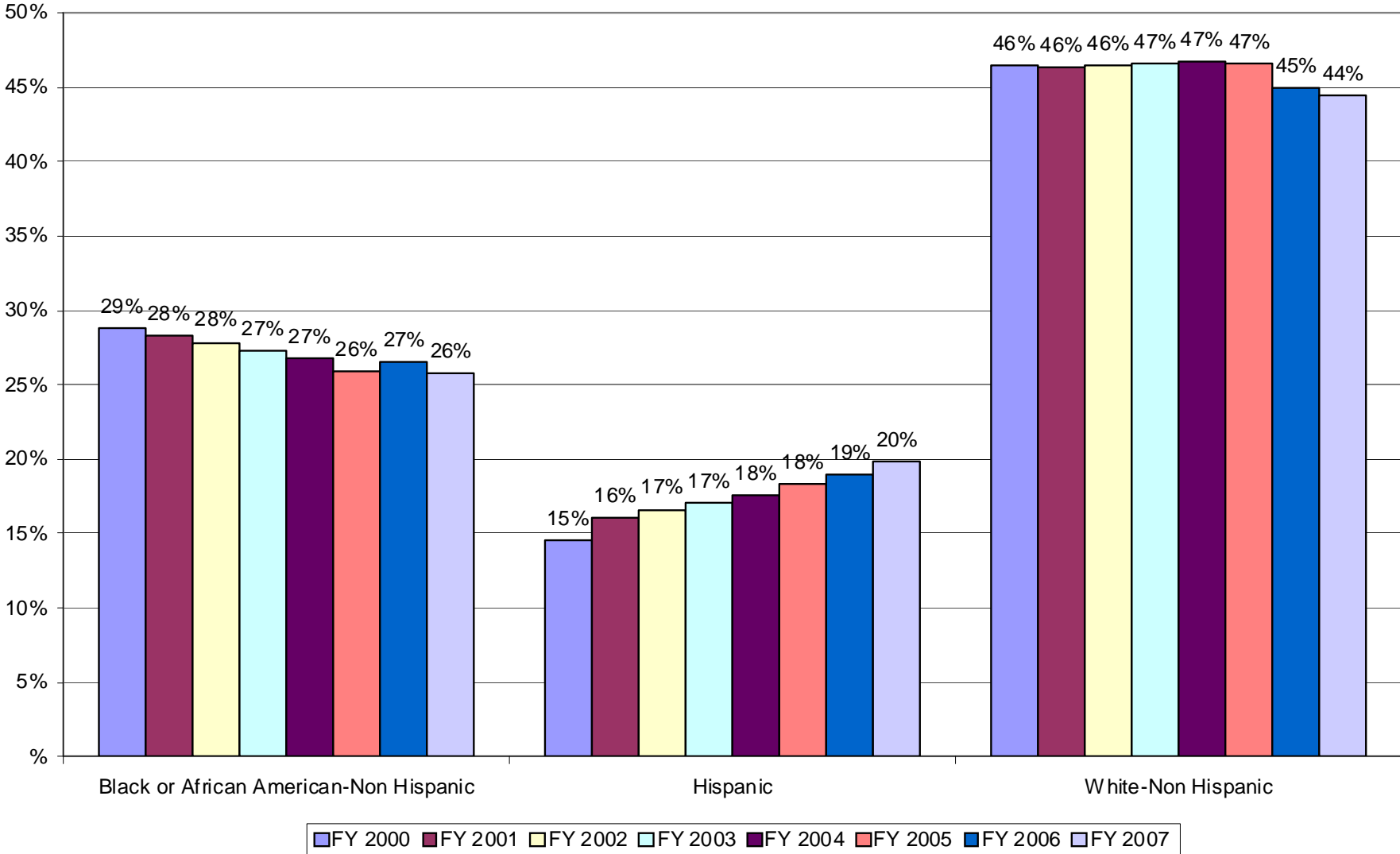
### Trend in Number of Children in Foster Care (one day count in thousands)



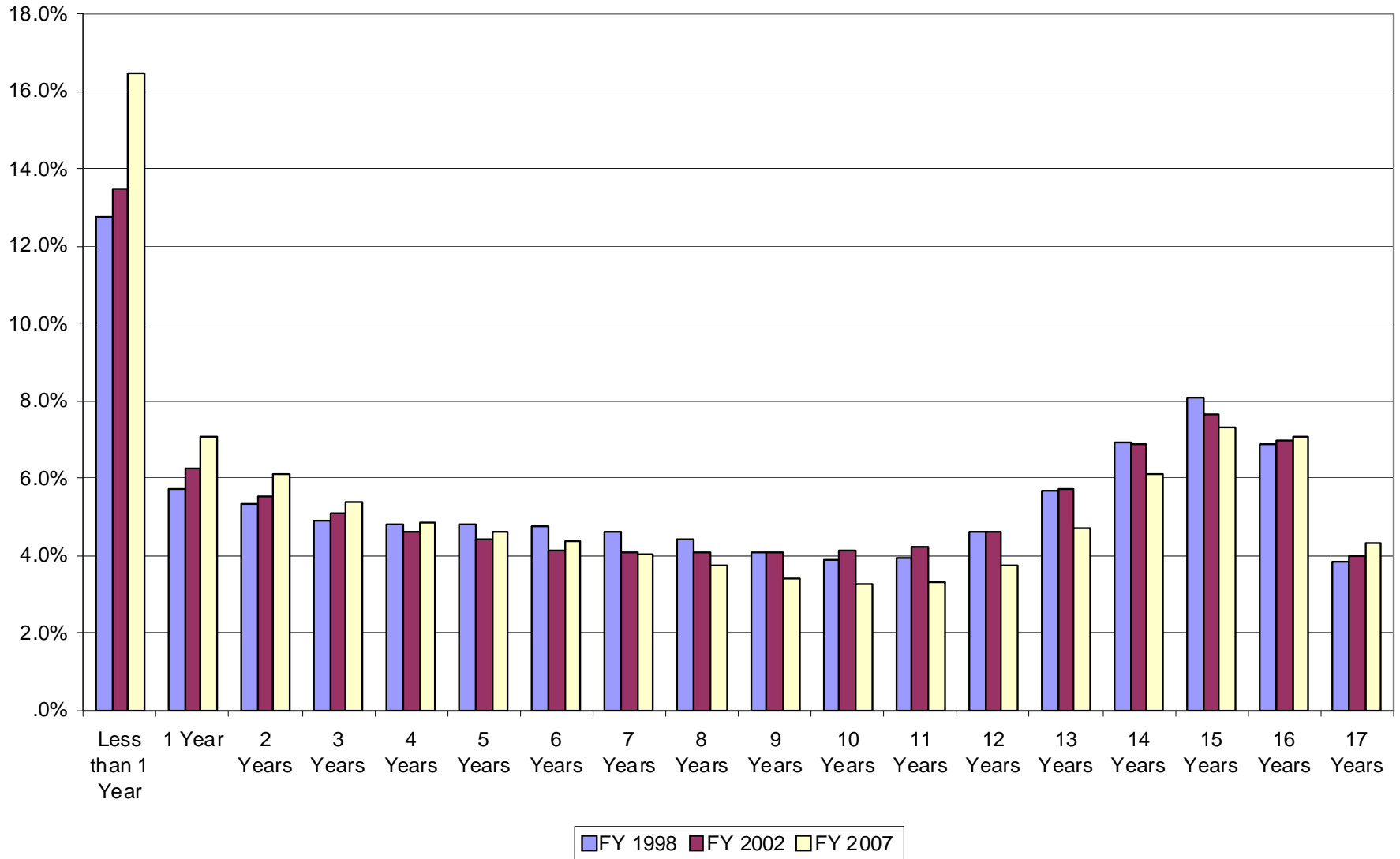
**Trend in Foster Care Rate**  
(number of children in care/1,000 children in the population)



### Trend for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups Entering Care

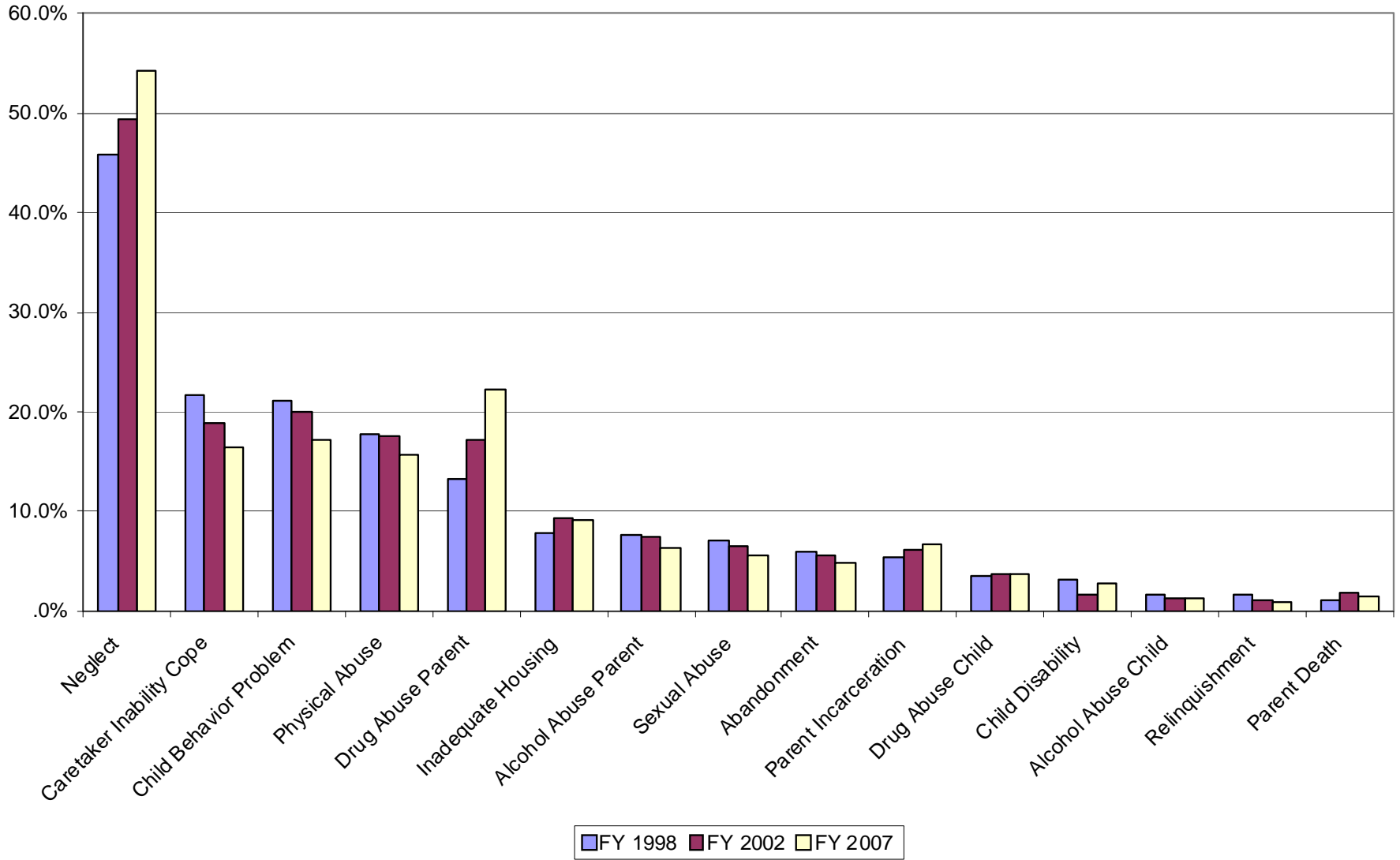


### Trend in Removal Age



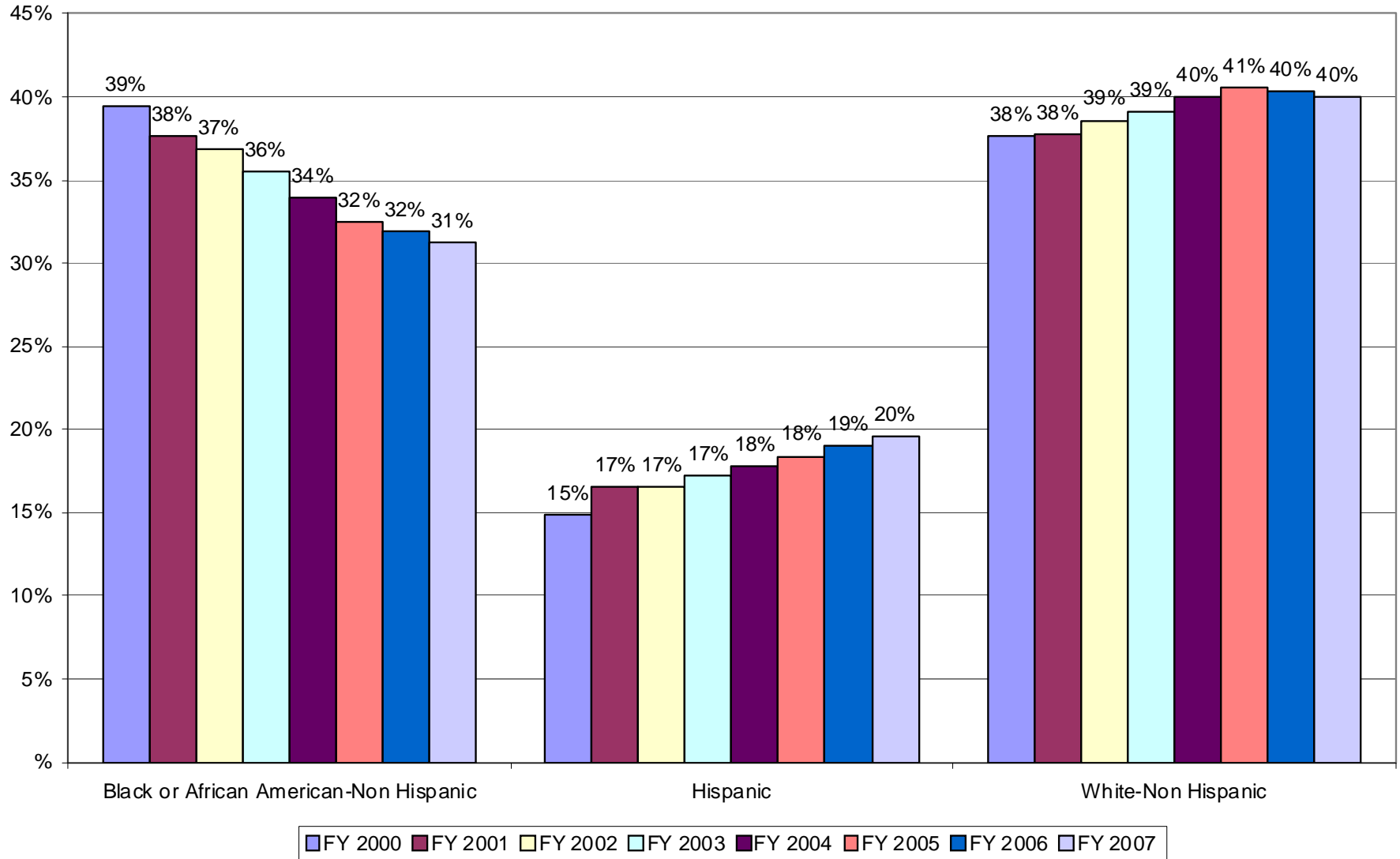
Please consult with author before quoting.

### Trend in Circumstances Associated with Removal



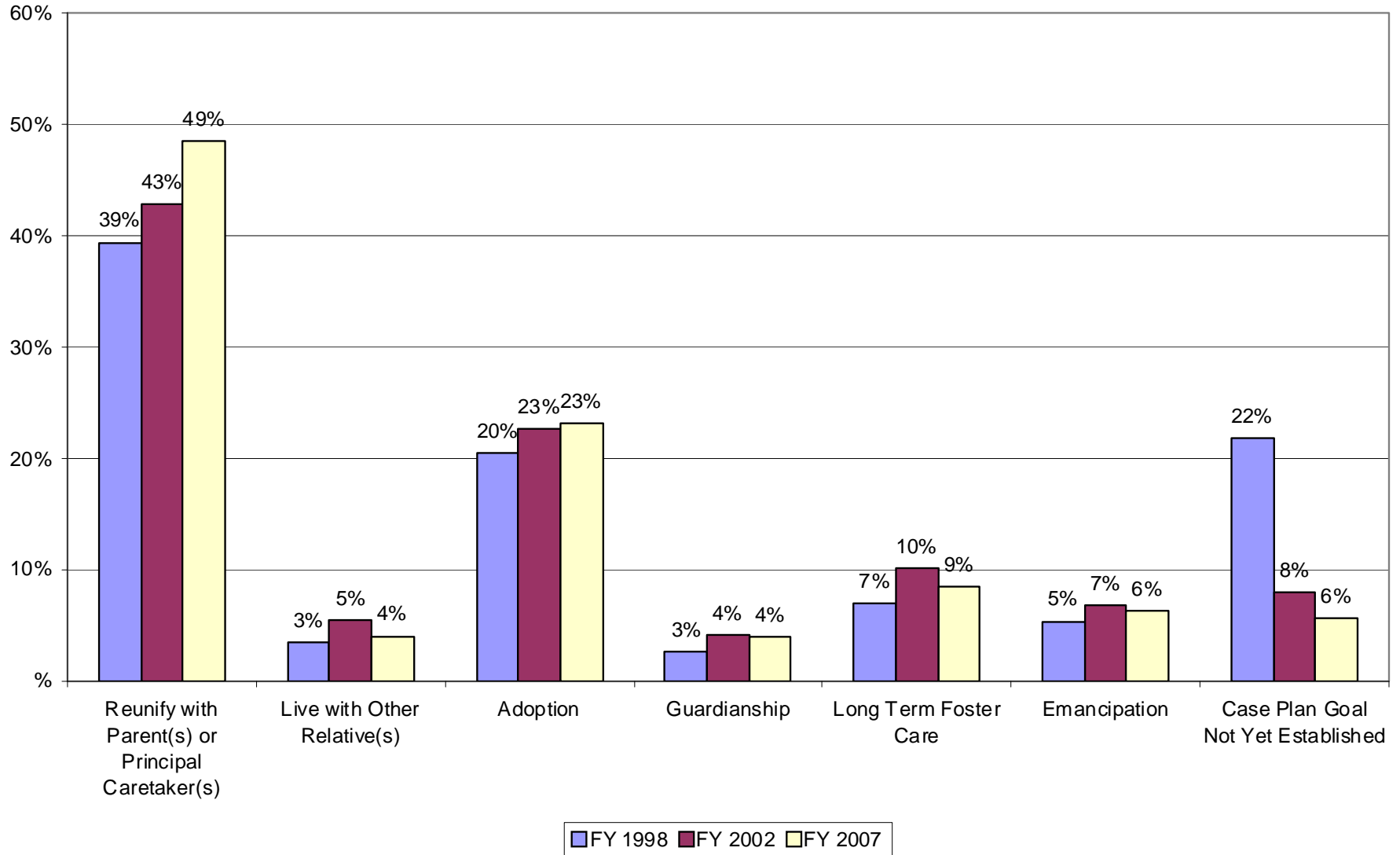
Please consult with author before quoting.

### Trend for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups in Care on September 30



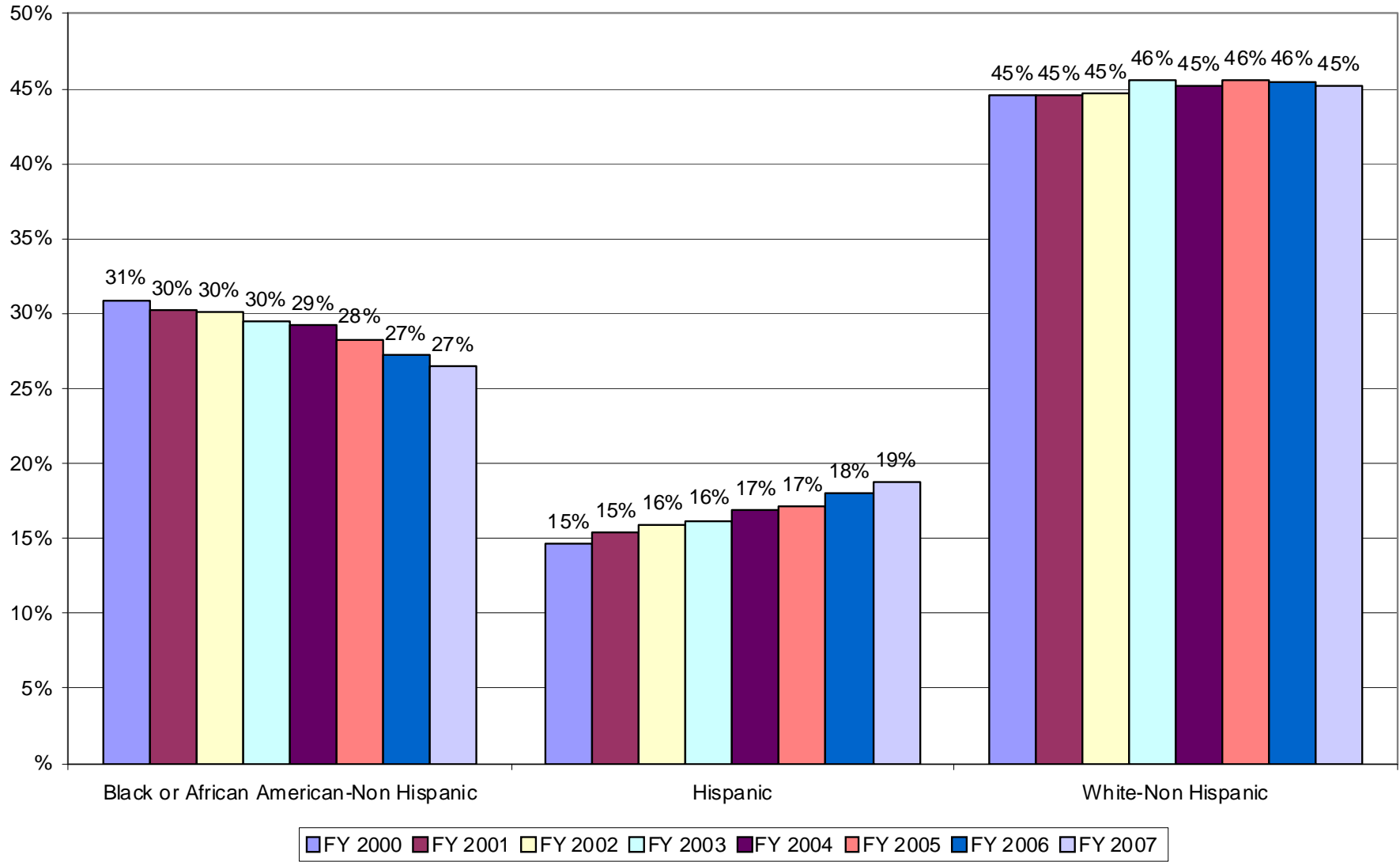
Please consult with author before quoting.

### Trend in Most Recent Case Plan Goal at the End of the Fiscal Year

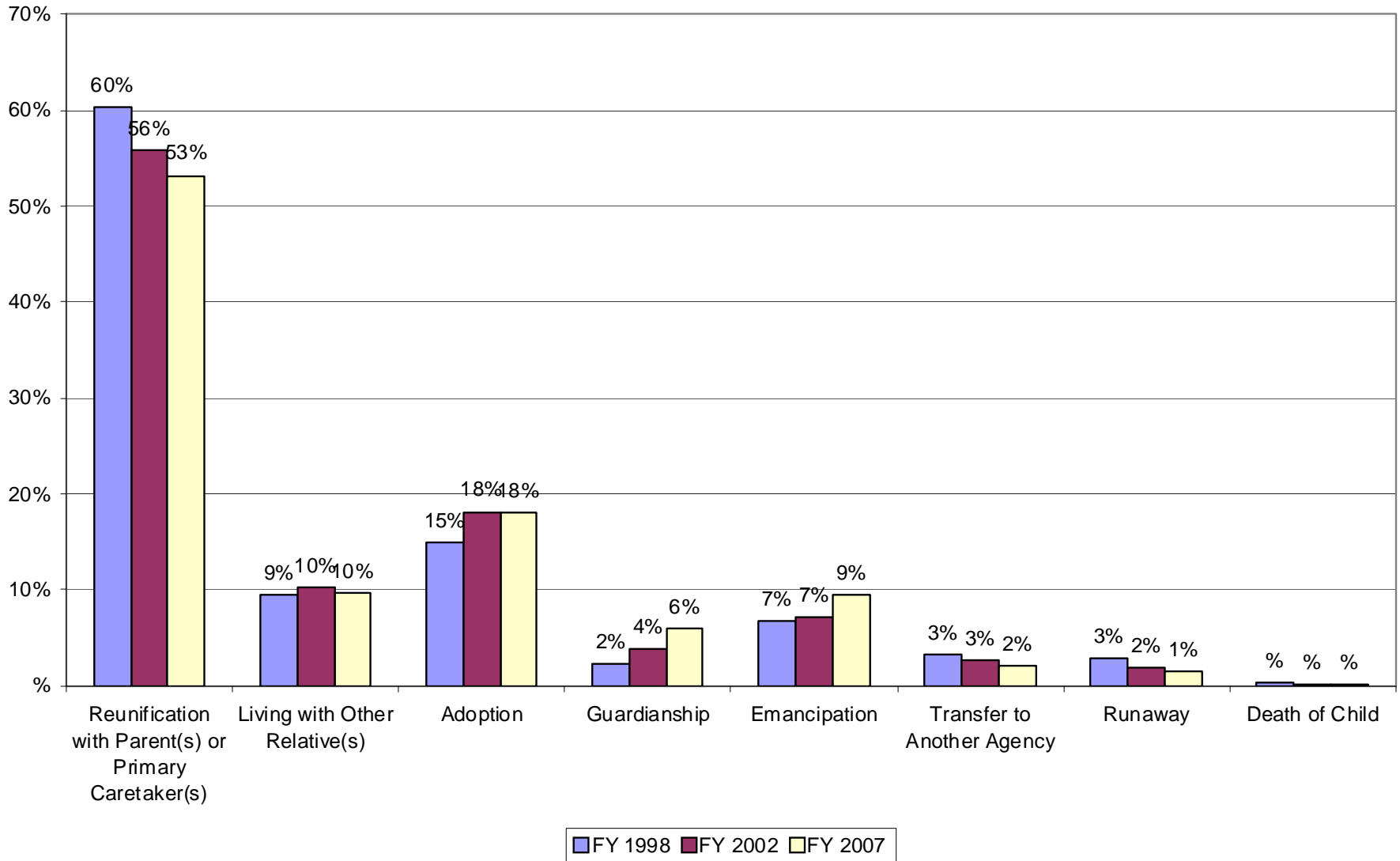


Please consult with author before quoting.

### Trend for Major Racial/Ethnic Groups Exiting Care

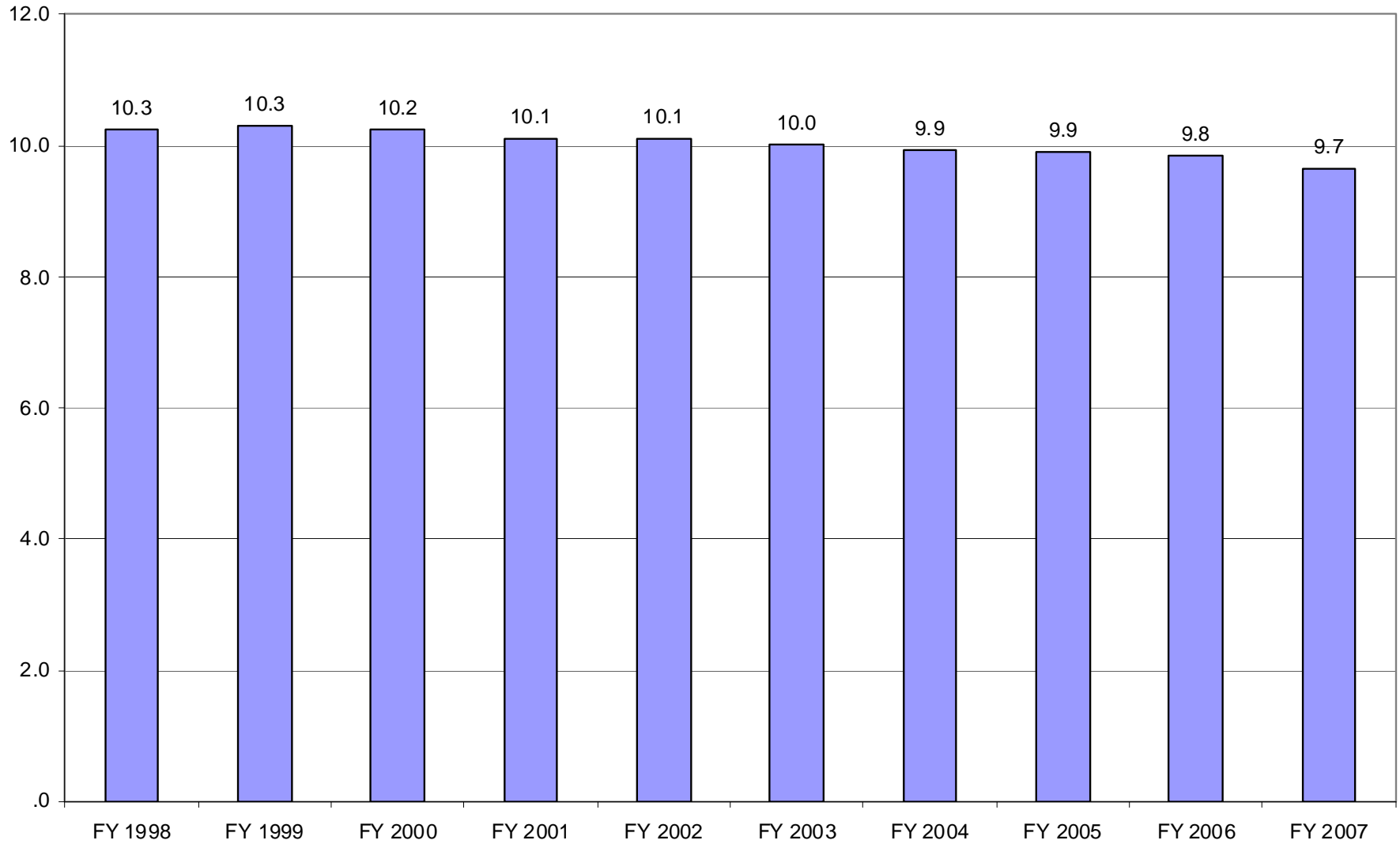


### Trend in Discharge Reasons

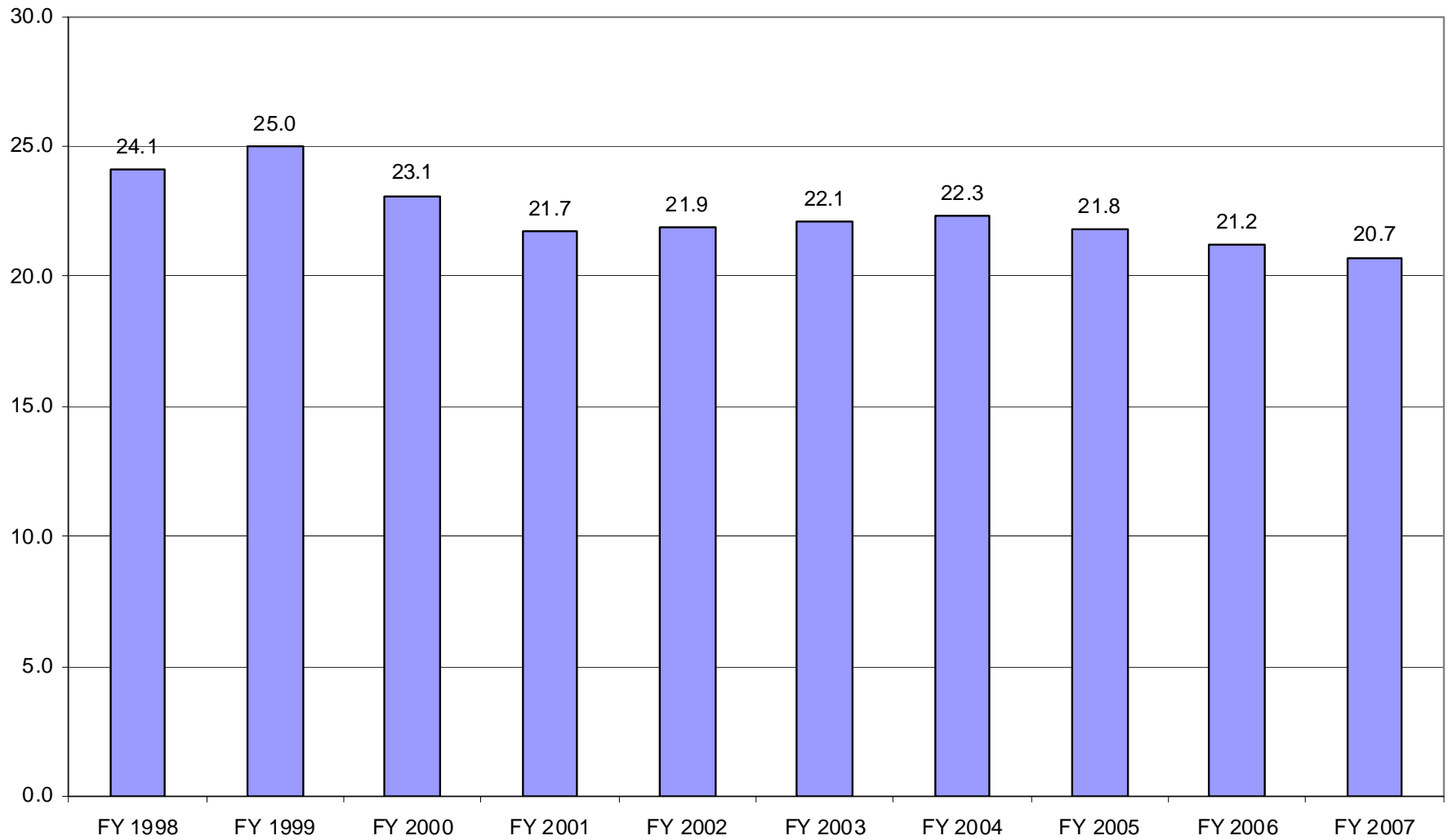


Please consult with author before quoting.

### Trend in Mean Age at Exit



### Trend in Mean Length of Stay (in months)



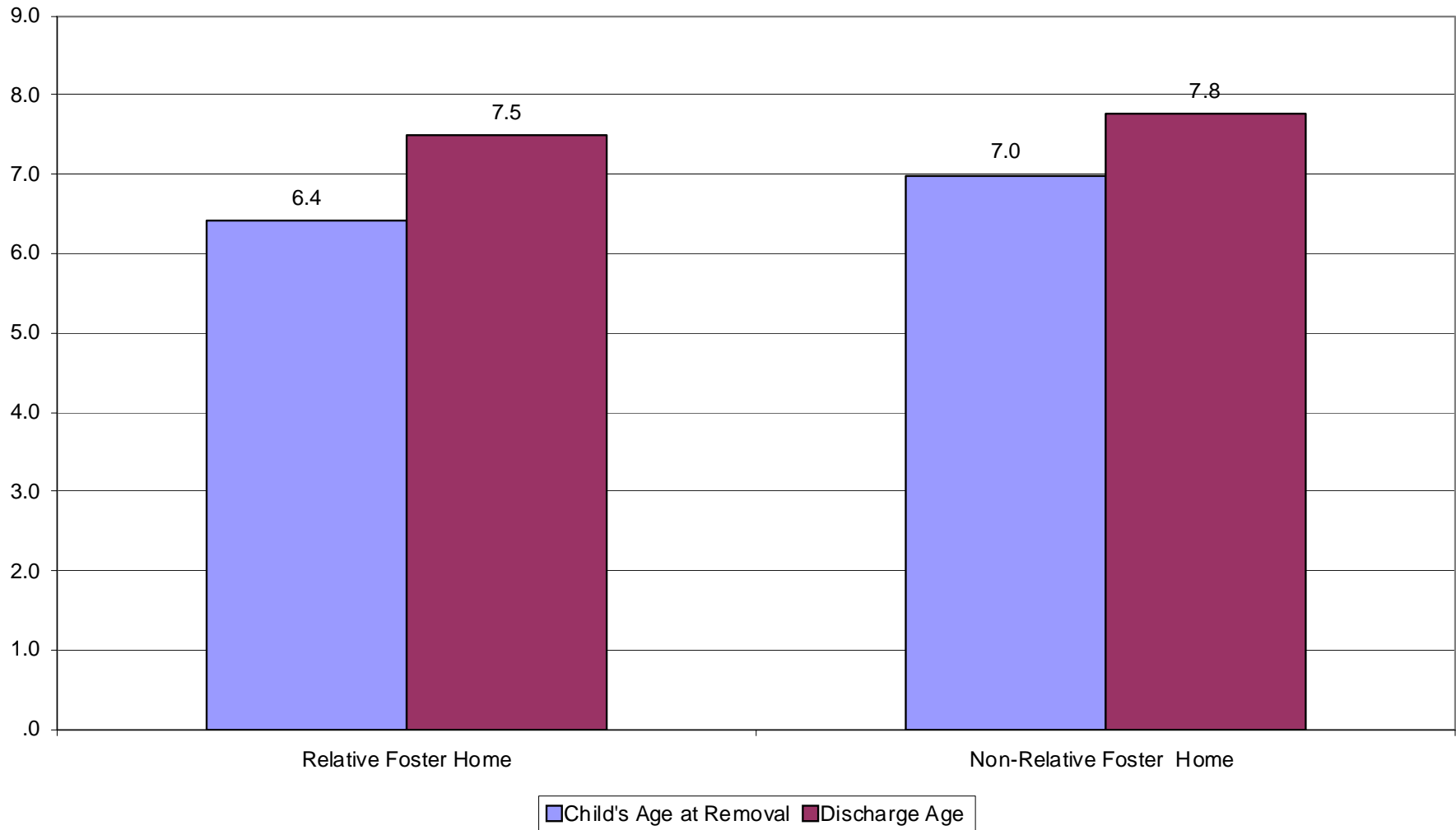
# Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Family Care

## Notes:

Only relative and non-relative care with 1 of 3 permanency outcomes (reunification, live with relative and guardianship) are included in the following analysis.

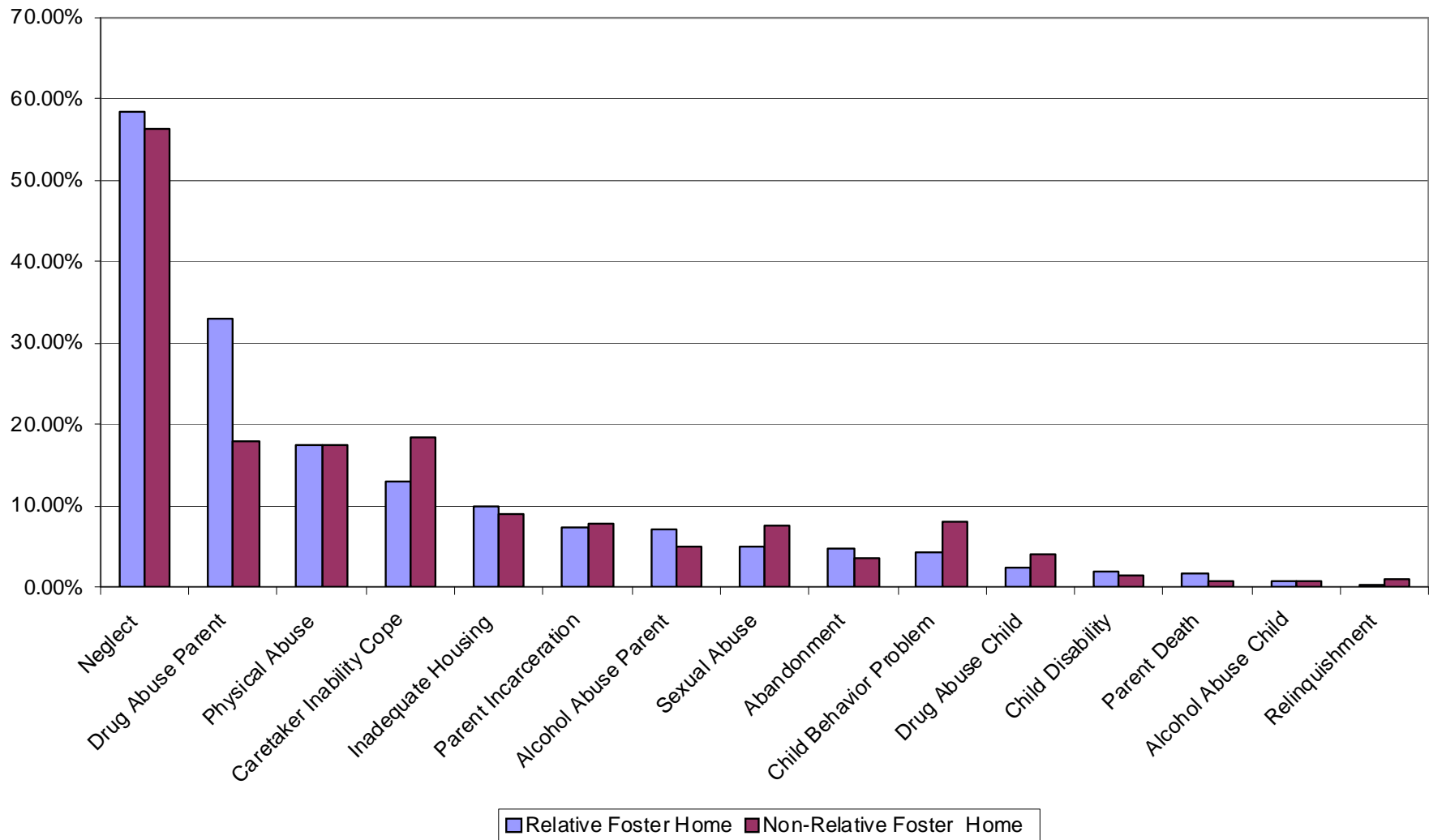
Trends were examined. The major trend was that there was an increasing percentage of children exiting to guardianship from relative care between FY 1998 and FY 2007.

**Mean Age at Removal and Discharge for Children Exiting Care  
from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**



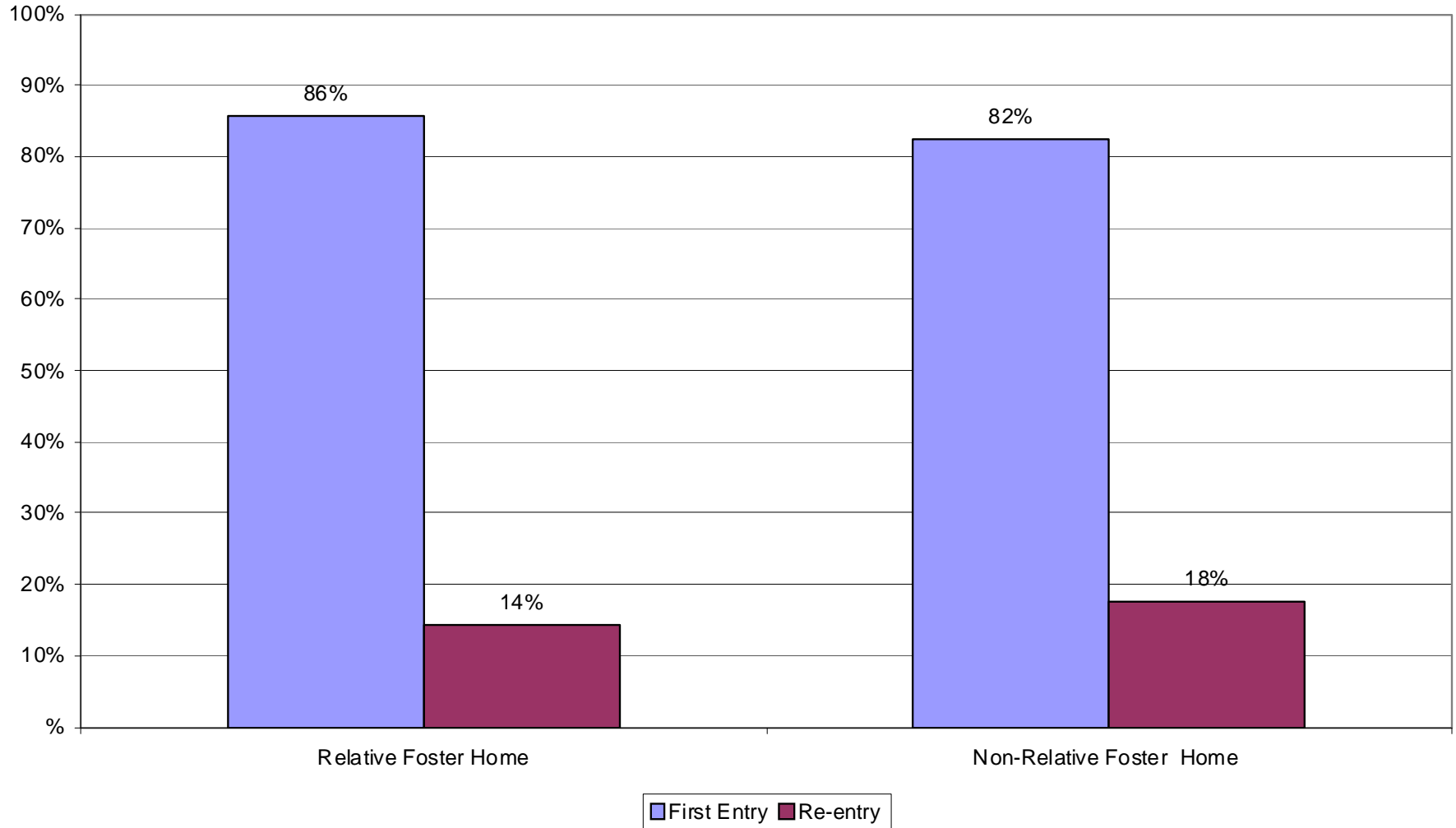
Please consult with author before quoting.

### Circumstances Associated with Removal for Children Exiting Care from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes (FY 2007)



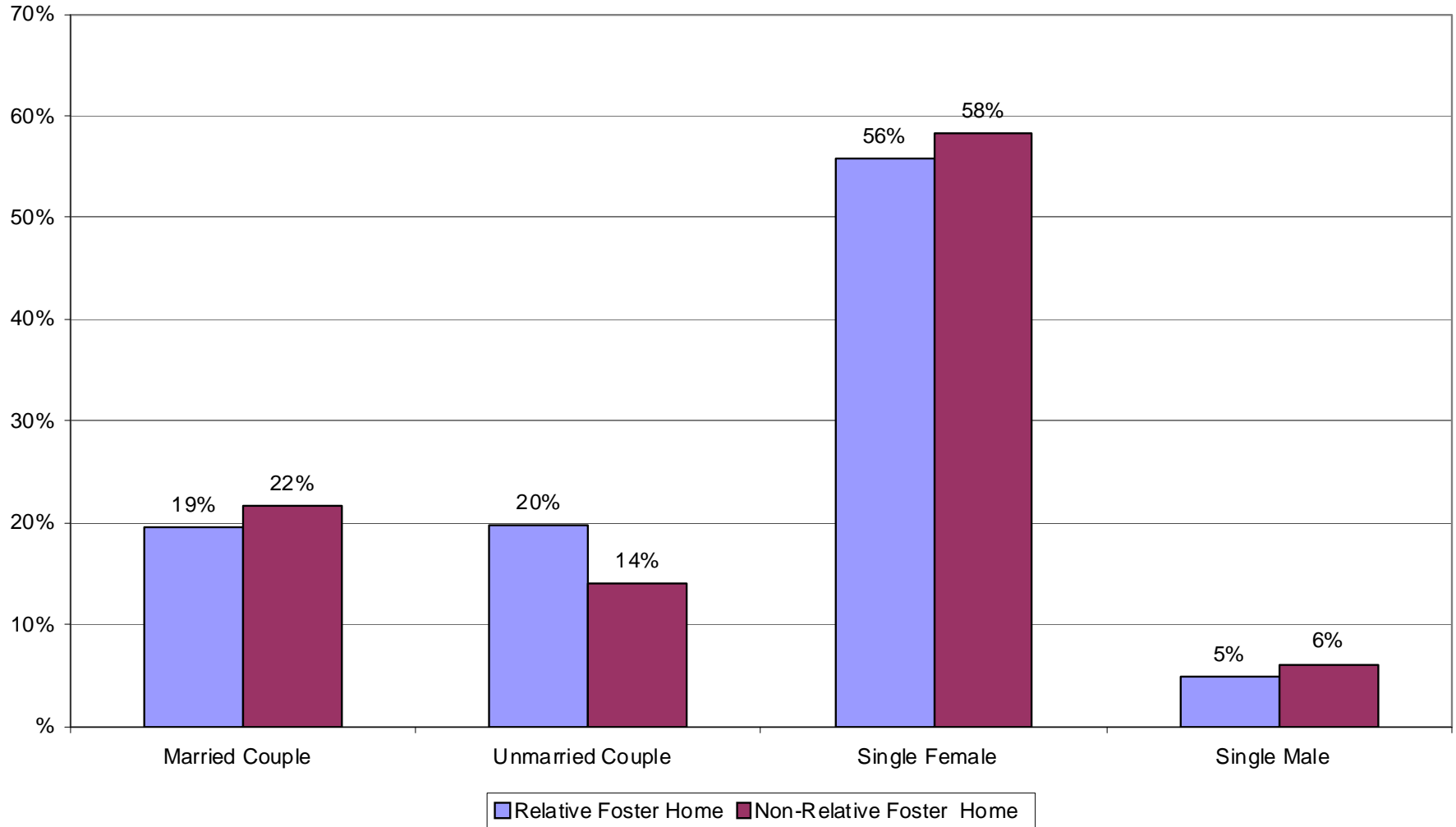
Please consult with author before quoting.

**Distribution of Number of Entries for Children Exiting Care from  
Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**



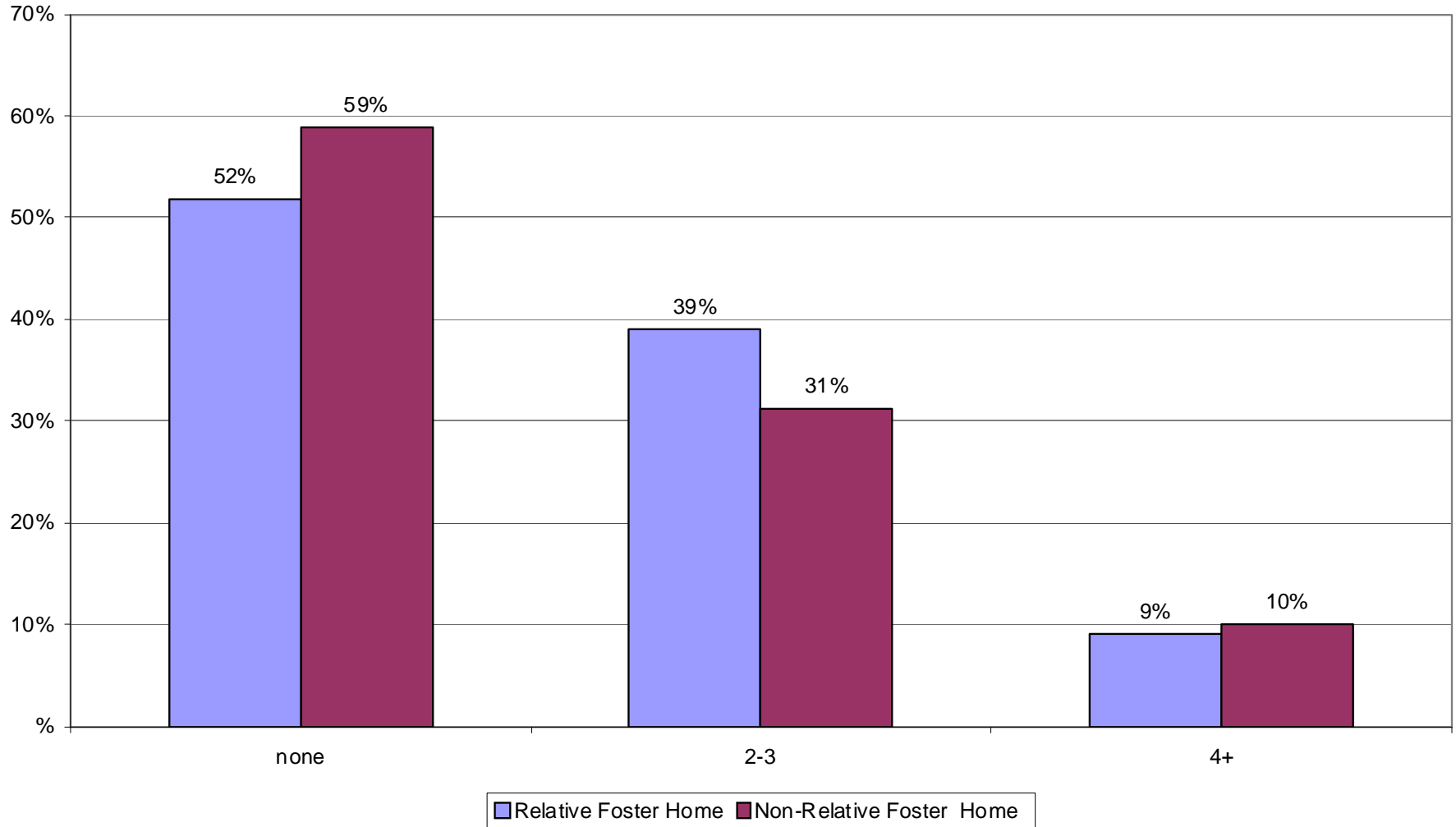
Please consult with author before quoting.

**Distribution of Family Structures from Which Children were Removed for Those Exiting Care  
from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**



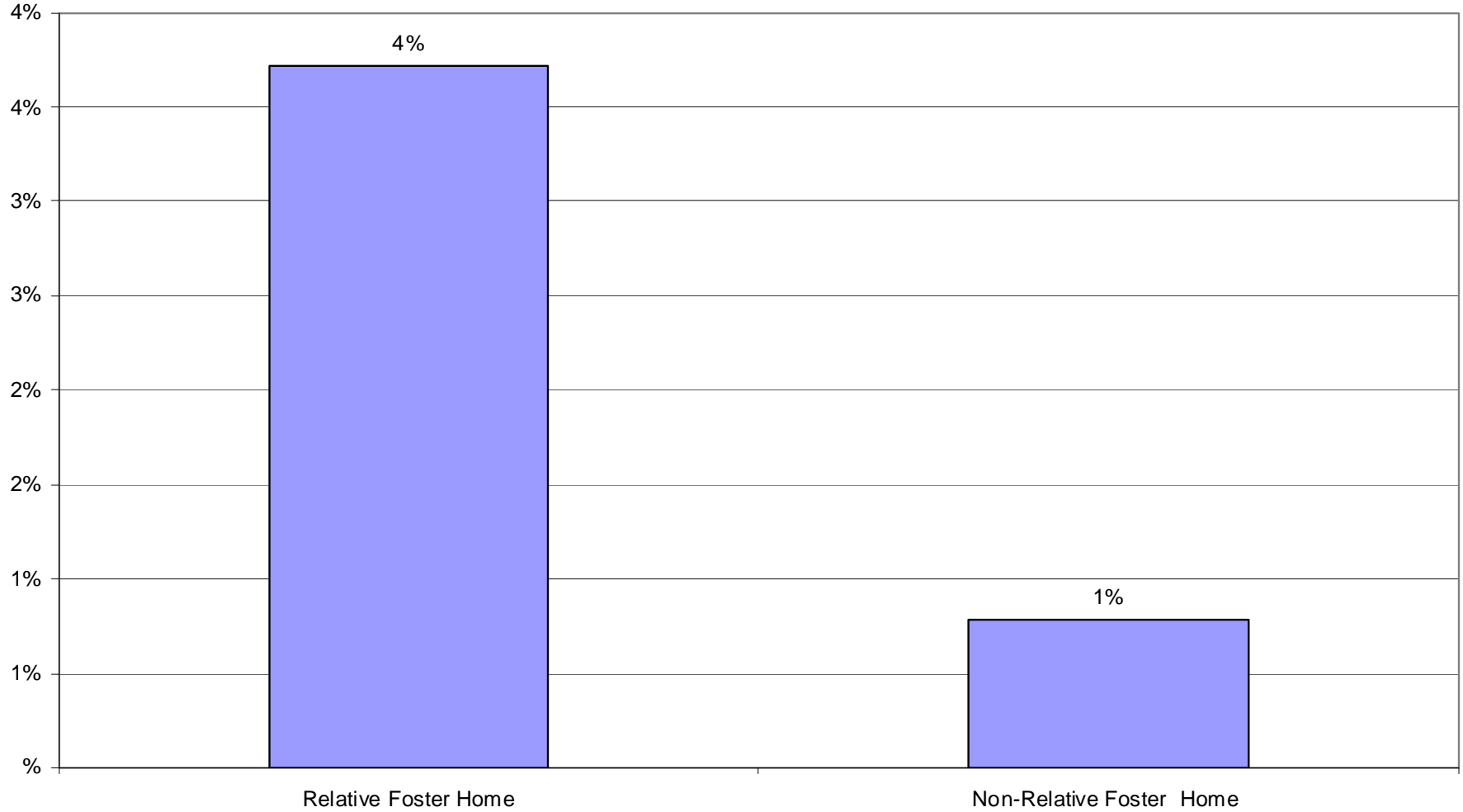
Please consult with author before quoting.

**Distribution of Number of Moves for Childen Whose Last Placement Setting was in Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes (FY 2007)**

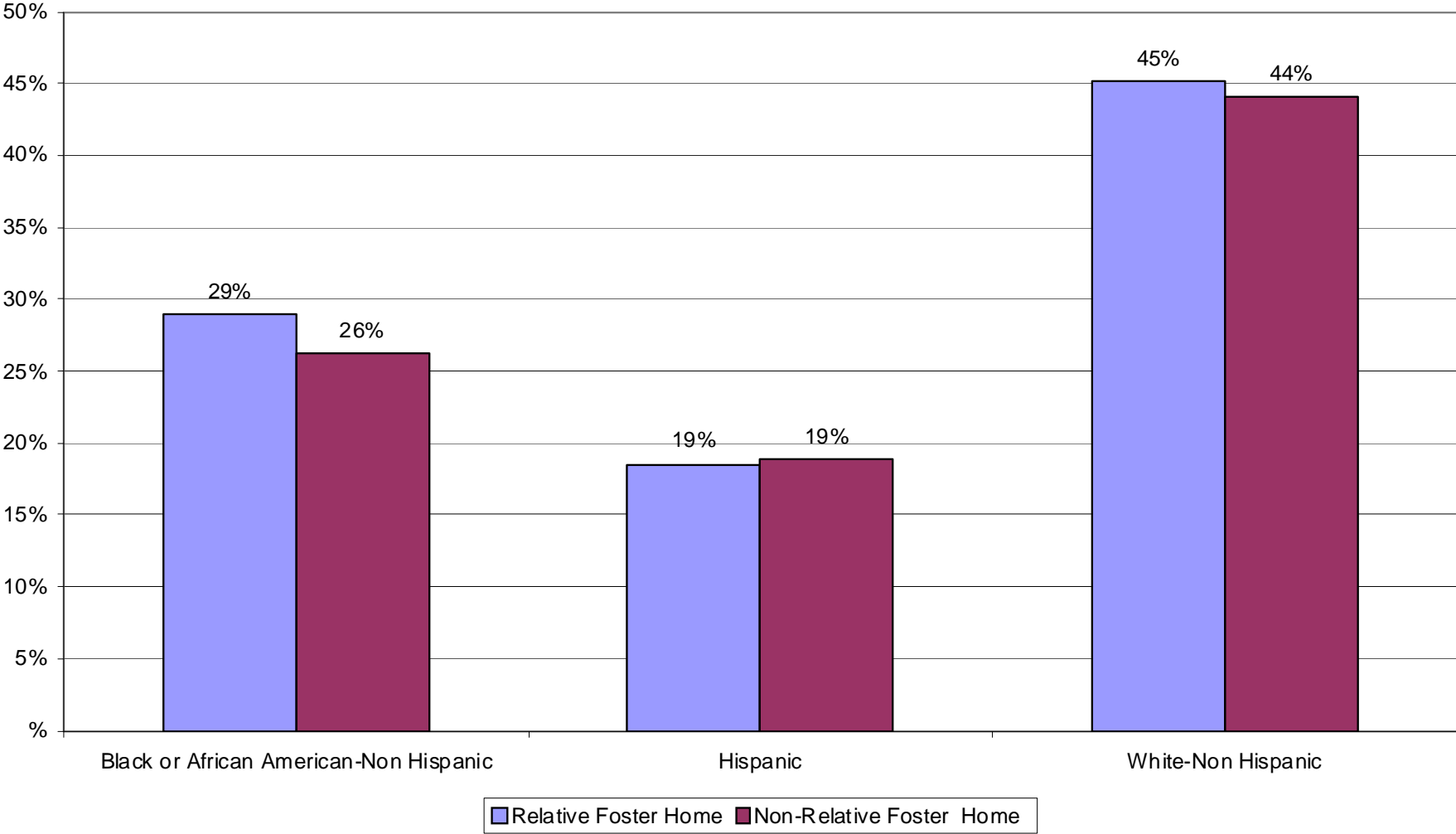


Please consult with author before quoting.

**Percentage of Children Exiting Care From an Inter-State Placement  
from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**

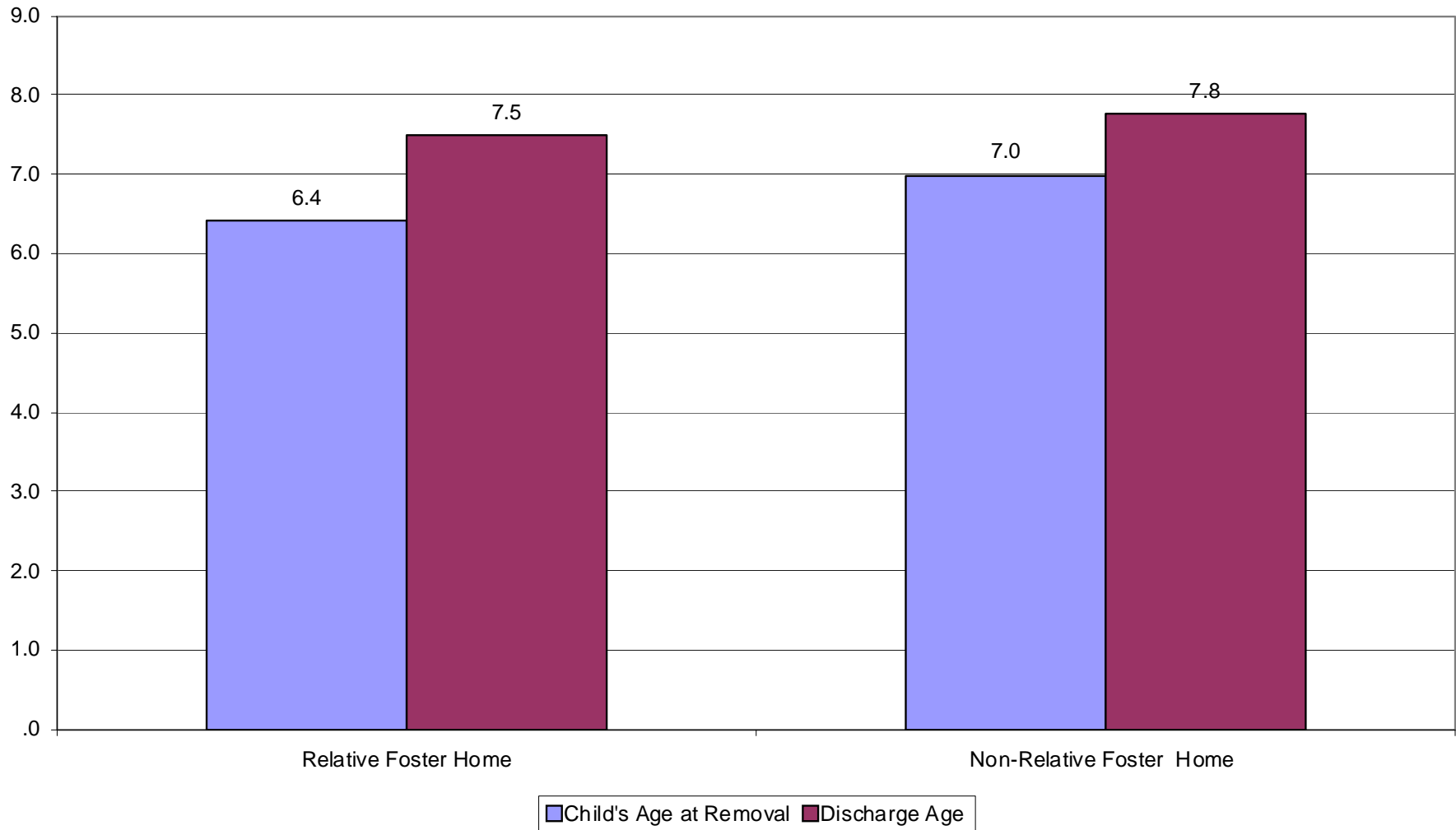


**Distribution of Largest Racial/Ethnic Groups Exiting Care from  
Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**



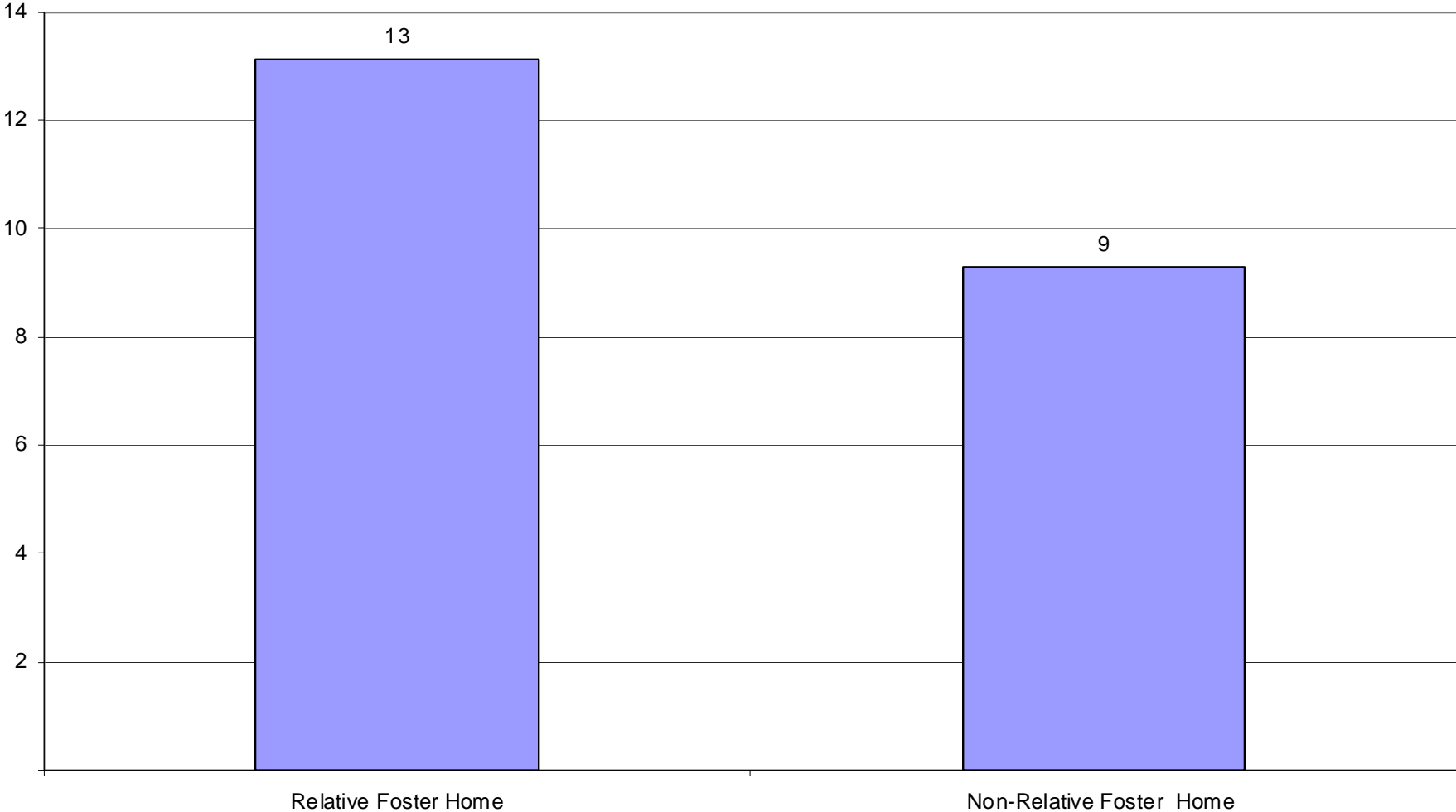
Please consult with author before quoting.

**Mean Age at Removal and Discharge for Children Exiting Care  
from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**

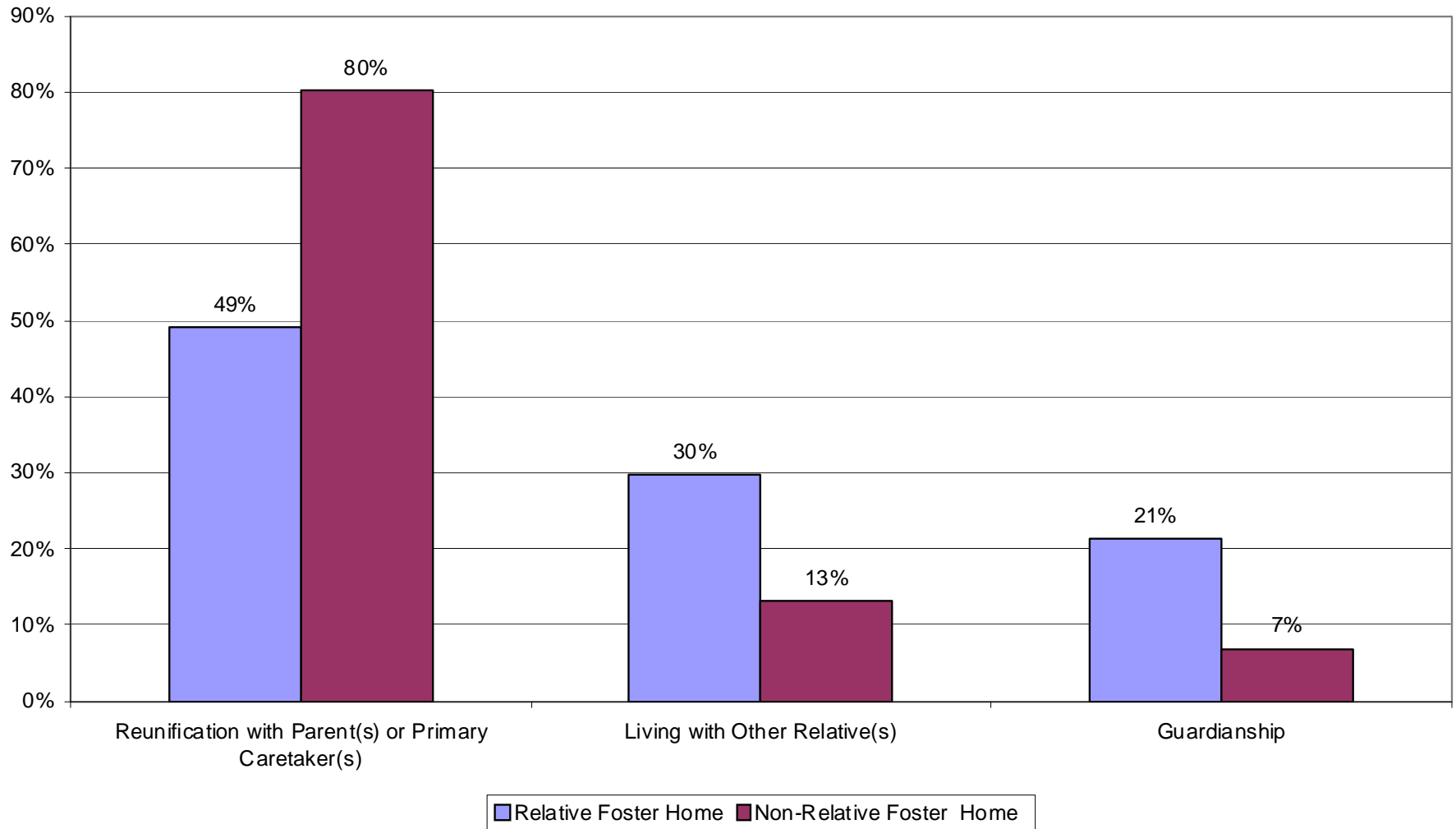


Please consult with author before quoting.

**Mean Months in Care for Children Exiting Care from  
Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Family Care  
(FY 2007)**



**Distribution of Three Permanency Outcomes for Children Exiting Care  
from Relative vs. Non-Relative Foster Homes  
(FY 2007)**



Please consult with author before quoting.

# What to Remember

1. The decline in the number of children in foster care and the foster care rate has resumed, mostly as a result of the decline in entries.
2. The percentage of entries who are Hispanic, less than 1 year old, and have neglect or parental drug abuse as a circumstance of removal is increasing. Among children in foster care on September 30, the percentage who are African-American is decreasing, the percentage of Hispanic children is increasing, and the percentage with a goal of reunification is increasing.
3. Among children exiting foster care, there has been a decline in the percentage who reunify, an increase in the percentage who went to guardianship and who emancipated, and a small decline in their length of stay.
4. There are very few substantial differences between children's demographic or case characteristics between those who exited care from a relative foster home vs. a non-relative foster home to reunification, a relative, or guardianship. Among the notable ones are:
  1. Of those children exiting from a relative foster home, almost one half (49%) were reunified, 30% stayed with the relative and more than one in five (21%) were discharged to guardianship compared to those exiting from a non-relative foster home at 80%, 13% and 7% respectively.
  2. Children exiting from relative foster homes compared to those exiting from non-relative foster homes are 4 times more likely to be exiting from an inter-state placement, and have stayed in care much longer, and average of 13 vs. 9 months.
  3. Children exiting from relative foster homes compared to non-relative foster homes are more likely to have parental drug abuse as a circumstance of removal, less likely to have parent inability to cope as circumstance of removal, more frequently were removed from unmarried couples