

Adoptions in California

Agency, Independent, and
Intercountry Adoption Programs

Annual Statistical Report
July 1, 1998 – June 30, 1999



CDSS
CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES

Executive Summary

May 2001



Research and Development Division

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**Agency, Independent, and
Intercountry Adoption Programs**

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Additional copies of this summary as well as the expanded publication
may be obtained on the California Department of Social Services web site at
<http://www.dss.cahwnet.gov/research>

Adoptions in California

Background:

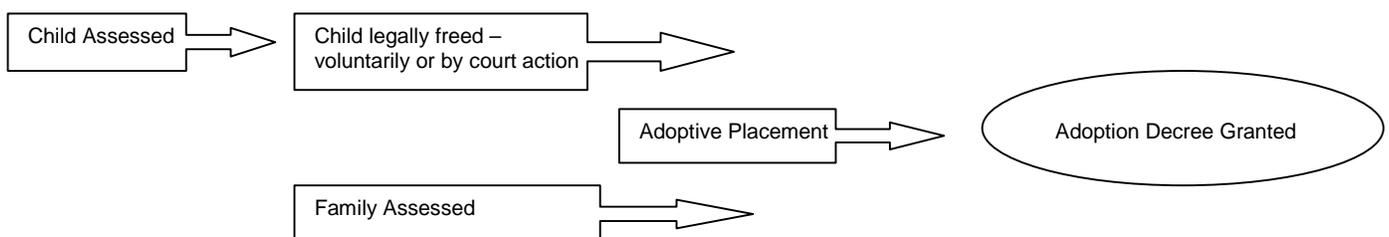
Adoption is a social/legal process that creates a new parent-child relationship by transferring parental rights and responsibilities from one adult, usually one pair of adults, to another. There are five types of adoption in California: Adult, Stepparent, Agency, Independent, and Intercountry. CDSS is responsible for regulating and maintaining records for the latter three types of adoption.

The *Adoptions in California* publication is a part of our record-keeping function. It provides basic aggregate program data about the three adoption programs supervised by CDSS including both public and private Agency Adoptions, Independent Adoptions, and Intercountry Adoptions. *Adoptions in California* actually reports on adoption agency activity, and the counts of these activities reported in the publication allow us to draw conclusions about the number and types of adoptions.

Superficially, all adoptions have three general events in common: a child becomes available, studies to determine proper placement are performed, and an adoption is successfully completed. However, the degree of involvement by the different adoption agencies and legal responsibility for the child is markedly different between the three types of adoptions regulated by CDSS.

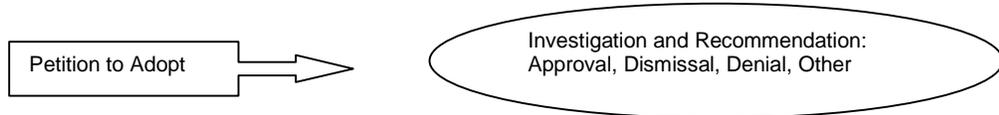
Agency Adoptions:

- Most common type of adoption
- Five CDSS District Offices, 28 licensed county adoption agencies and most licensed private adoption agencies perform Agency Adoptions
- A typical public agency child is from foster care and has special needs
- From the time a child is freed until the child is adopted, the adoption agency assumes full legal responsibility for the child
- Significant events in the Agency Adoption process include the child being freed, being placed, and the finalization of the adoption
- Approximately one-fifth of all Agency Adoptions are “cooperative placements” where one agency studies the child and another studies the prospective adoptive home, including adoptions between states
- Source document is the Agency Adoption Program Quarterly Statistical Report (AD 56A)



Independent Adoptions:

- Second most common form of adoption
- Seven CDSS District Offices and three licensed counties investigate Independent Adoptions
- A typical child is a healthy infant
- The birth parents retain full legal responsibility for the child until the adoption is granted by the court
- Significant events in an Independent Adoption include the Petition to Adopt and the Investigation and Recommendation to the court – which the court usually, but not always, follows
- Source document is the Independent Adoption Program and Adoption Set Asides Quarterly Statistical Report (AD 56D)

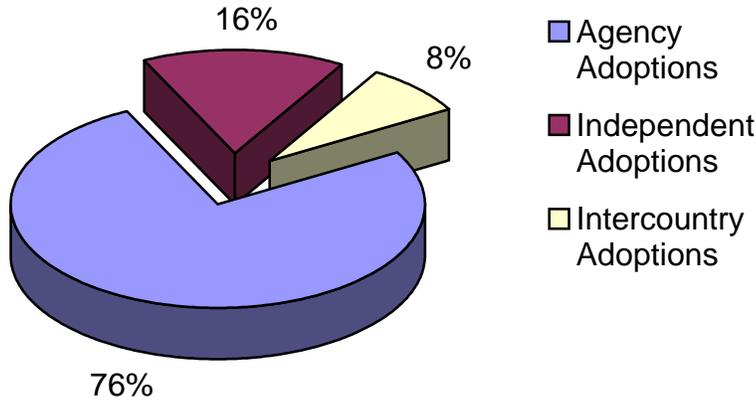


Intercountry Adoptions:

- Least common form of adoption
- 22 licensed private adoption agencies in California performed Intercountry Adoptions in FY 1998-99 (Public agencies do not provide Intercountry Adoption services.)
- A typical child is orphaned or abandoned in foreign country
- A court in California may finalize the adoption; a court in the child's country of origin may finalize it; or, it may be finalized in both places
- Source document is the Intercountry Adoption Program Quarterly Statistical Report (AD 202B)



Total Adoptions in California July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999



Completed Agency Adoptions:

	Number	Percent	
Licensed Counties	4,841	62%	
CDSS Adoption District Offices	370	5%	
Licensed Private Agencies	<u>691</u>	<u>9%</u>	
Subtotal	5,902		76%

Recommended Independent Adoptions:

Licensed Counties	474	6%	
CDSS Adoption District Offices	<u>751</u>	<u>10%</u>	
Subtotal	1,225		16%

Finalized Intercountry Adoptions:

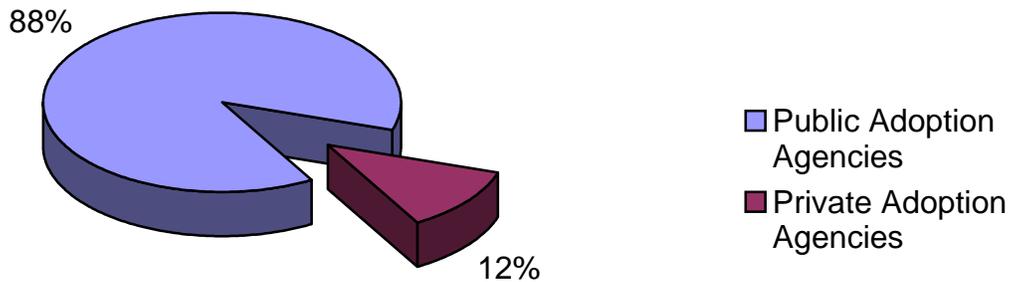
Licensed Private Agencies	<u>616</u>	<u>8%</u>	
Subtotal	<u>616</u>		<u>8%</u>

Total Adoptions in California:	7,743		100%
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- > **Agency Adoptions are the most common type of adoption**
 - Typical public agency child is from foster care and has special needs
 - Typical private agency child is a healthy newborn, voluntarily relinquished
 - Adoption agency assumes legal responsibility for child
- > **Independent Adoptions are the second most common type of adoption**
 - Child placed directly with prospective adoptive parents by the birth parents
 - Adoption agency acts as agent of the court
- > **Intercountry Adoptions are the least common type of adoption**
 - Child typically abandoned or orphaned in country of origin
 - Only private adoption agencies perform home studies

SOURCE: Agency Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56A)
 Independent Adoption Program and Adoption Set Asides - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56D)
 Intercountry Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD202B)

Completed Agency Adoptions Public Agency vs. Private Agency Adoption Ratios July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

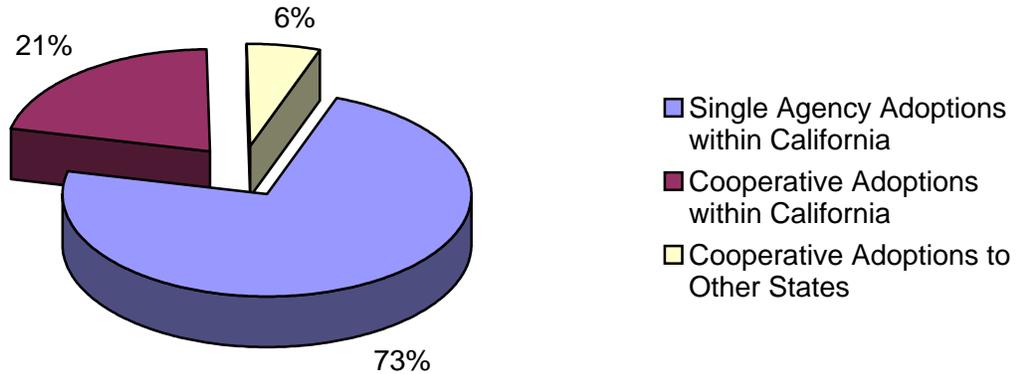


	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	
Public Adoption Agencies:			
Licensed Counties (w/out LA)	3,355	57%	
Los Angeles County	1,486	25%	
CDSS Adoption District Offices	<u>370</u>	<u>6%</u>	
Subtotal	5,211		88%
Private Adoption Agencies:			
Licensed Private Agencies	<u>691</u>		
Subtotal	<u>691</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>12%</u>
Total Completed Agency Adoptions:	5,902		100%

> Two-thirds (5,211) of all adoptions (7,743) were public Agency Adoptions of children from the foster care system.

SOURCE: Agency Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56A)

Completed Agency Adoptions Cooperative vs. Single Agency Adoptions July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

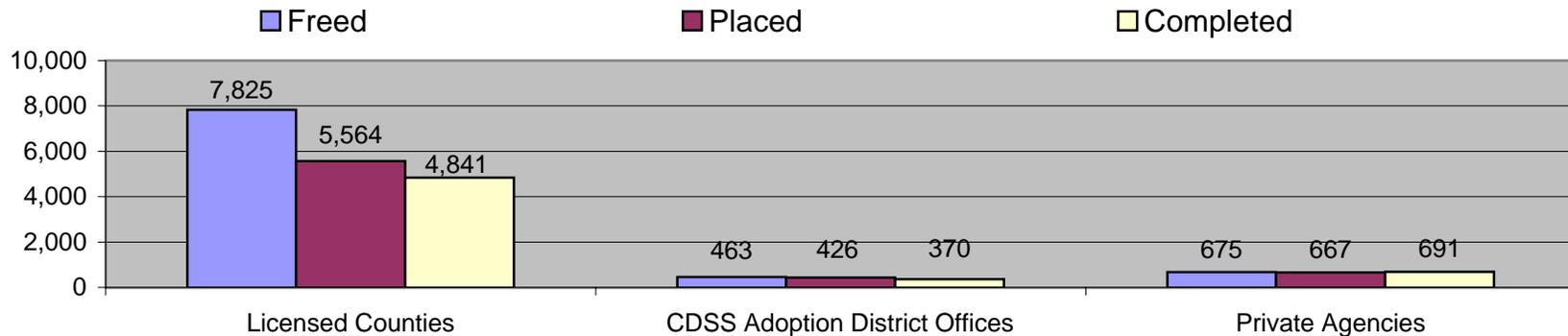


	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single Agency Adoptions within California	4,308	73%
Cooperative Adoptions within California	1,253	21%
Cooperative Adoptions to Other States	<u>341</u>	<u>6%</u>
Total Completed Agency Adoptions:	5,902	100%

- > **Single agency adoptions (4,308), where both the child and the family were studied by the same adoption agency, was the most common practice within Agency Adoptions.**
- > **Cooperative adoptions, where the child and the family were studied by different adoption agencies, occurred in one-fifth (1,253) of all Agency Adoptions (5,902). Frequently, these adoptions represent public-private partnerships.**
- > **California placed more children in other states (341) than it received from other states (200).**

SOURCE: Agency Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56A)

Agency Adoption Activities Freed, Placed, and Completed July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999



> For the child, the Agency Adoption process includes three significant events:

- The child is freed, i.e. all birth parent(s)' rights are terminated either by voluntary relinquishment to an adoption agency or by court action.
- The child is formally placed for adoption with the prospective adoptive parents - an administrative action.
- The adoption is completed by the court.

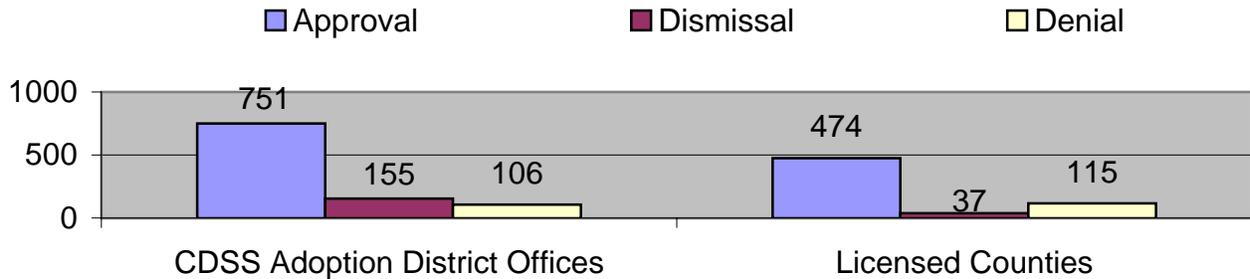
> Due to the time lag between events, the numbers do not track a cohort.

> The number of children freed for adoption by public agencies exceeded the number placed because FY 1998-99 was the midpoint of the Adoption Initiative which resulted in a rapid expansion of adoption activity, in part because Initiative funding was tied to placement activity.

SOURCE: Agency Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56A)

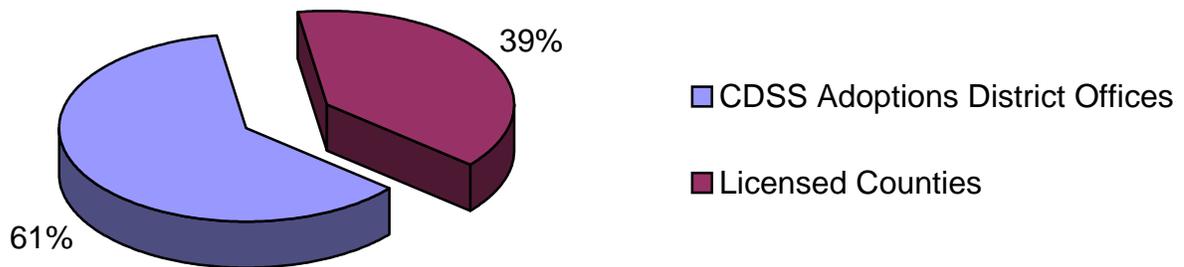
Independent Adoption Activities July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

Recommendations to Court



	<u>Approval</u>	<u>Dismissal</u>	<u>Denial</u>
CDSS Adoption District Offices	751	155	106
Licensed Counties	<u>474</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>115</u>
Total Recommendations:	1,225	192	221

Independent Adoption Approval Ratios



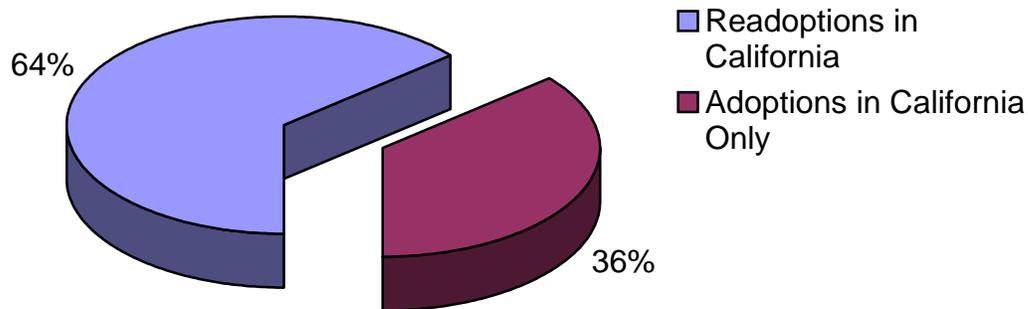
	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
CDSS Adoption District Offices	751	61%
Licensed Counties	<u>474</u>	<u>39%</u>
Total Independent Adoption Approvals:	1,225	100%

> Recommendations to the court are usually, but not always, followed by the court in their final determinations.

> Independent Adoptions comprised 16% (1,225) of all adoptions (7,743).

SOURCE: Independent Adoption Program and Adoption Set Asides - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56D)

Intercountry Adoptions July 1, 1998 - June 30, 1999

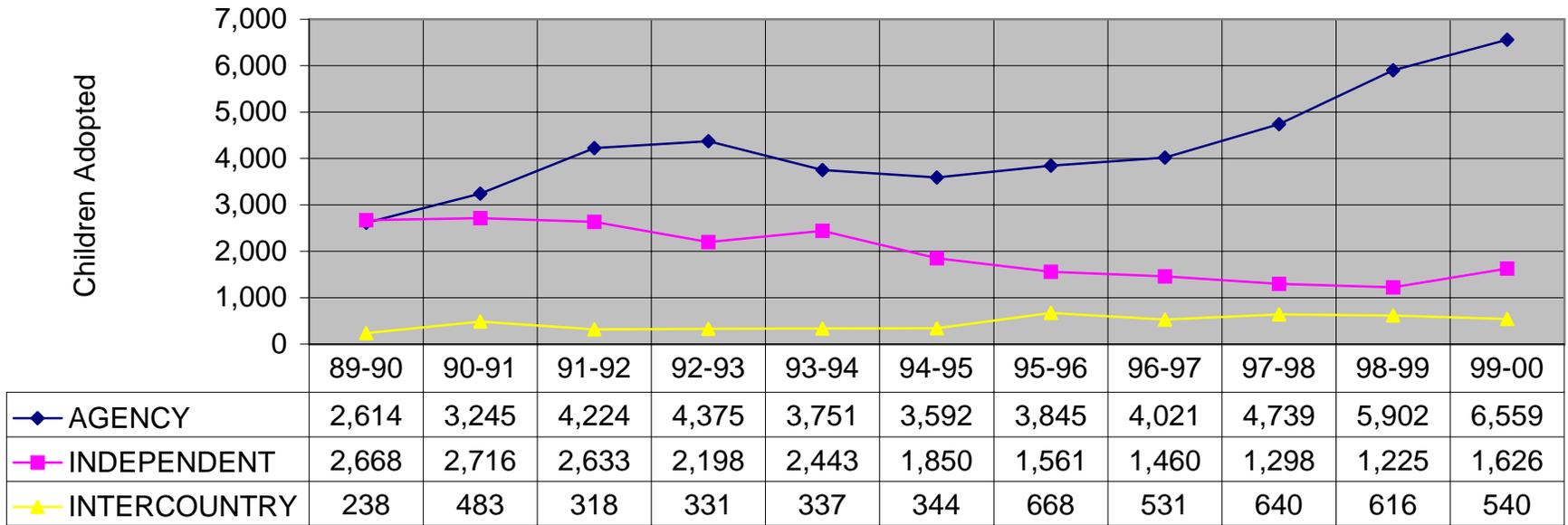


	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Readoptions in California	393	64%
Adoptions in California Only	<u>223</u>	<u>36%</u>
Total Intercountry Adoptions:	616	100%

- > **Intercountry Adoptions in FY 1998-99 represented only 8% (616) of all adoptions (7,743).**
- > **Intercountry Adoptions may be finalized in the child's country of origin and/or they may be finalized in California.**

Source: Intercountry Adoption Program- Quarterly Statistical Report (AD 202B)

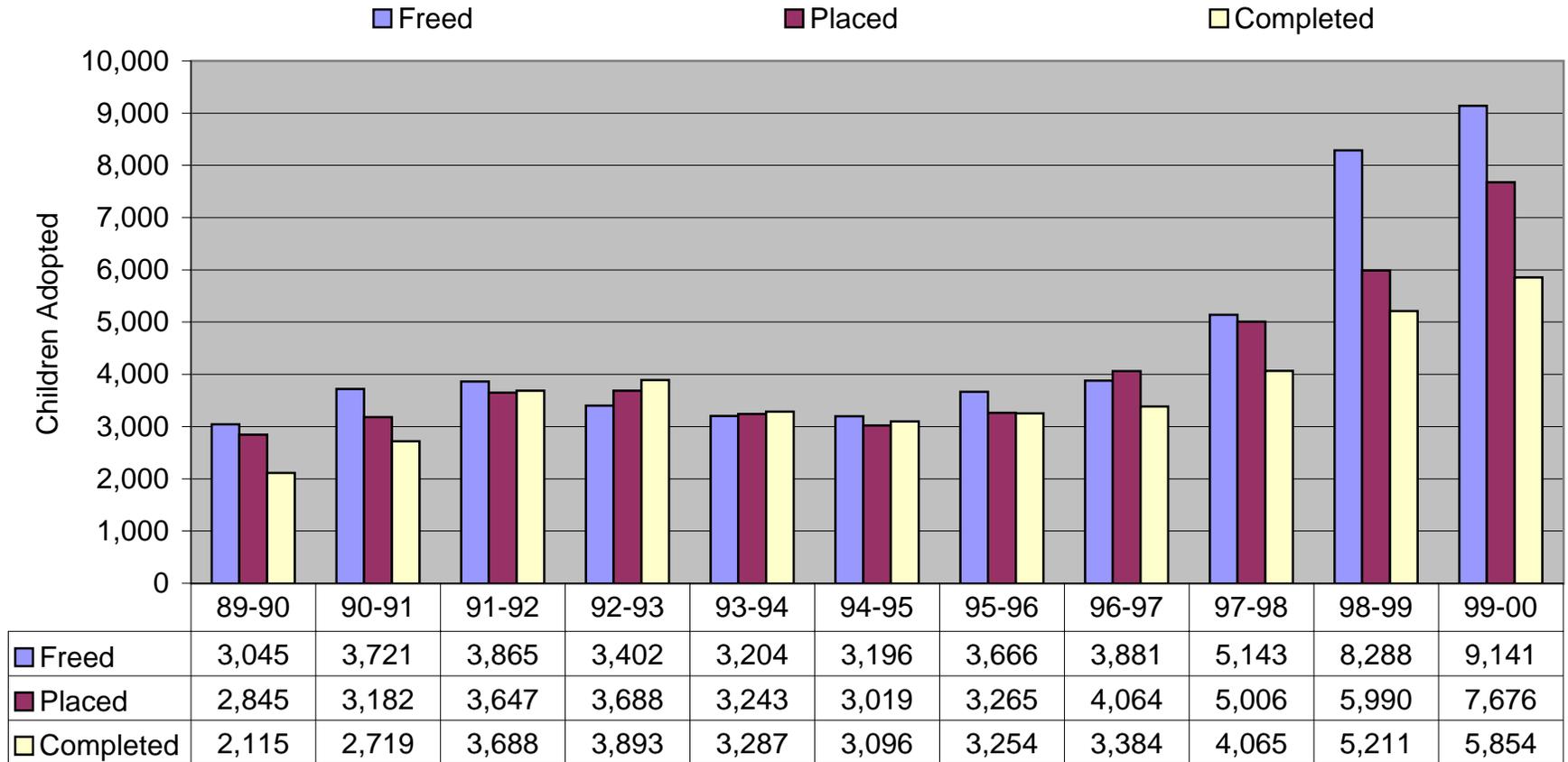
Trends in Adoption Finalizations FY 1989-90 through FY 1999-00



- > The number of Agency Adoptions finalized has more than doubled since FY 1989-90.
- > The number of Independent Adoptions finalized has decreased almost 40% since FY 1989-90.
- > The number of Intercountry Adoptions consistently represents a small percentage of adoptions overall.

SOURCE: Agency Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56A)
 Independent Adoption Program and Adoption Set Asides - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD56D)
 Intercountry Adoption Program - Quarterly Statistical Report (AD202B)

Public Agency Adoption Trends FY 1989-90 through FY 1999-00



> **The number of children freed for adoption, placed for adoption, and finally adopted has been increasing as a direct result of the Adoption Initiative, which began July 1, 1996.**

> **Because the adoption process requires time, the number of completed adoptions in one year reflects freeing actions and adoptive placements in prior years.**