The History of Foster Homes
The first state back foster homes in the US weren't created until the Children's Aid Society in 1853, where children were removed from homes and became indentured servants for family farms. Then in 1909, Theodore Roosevelt created a publicly funded volunteer organization that would "establish and publicize standards of child care."
This is the commonly held history of foster homes, but this is only one aspect of the history – the darker side is one steeped in a eugenics plan created by British and American Aristocrats to prevent the “scourge of savages” which were beginning to bloom in the United States due to the creation of prosperity through the industrial revolution. This led to Hispanic, Black, and Native American families having their children removed from their home and dumped into white foster homes for re-education. They double downed on efforts to prevent the “scourge of savages” coming to the United States by forcibly sterilizing over 100,000 people in the United States. See the “true history of eugenics” interview with James Corbett to get a more thorough history of this.

Current Foster Homes
Though the current foster home system does not emphasize these drastic measures to reduce population size, the current practices have been disastrous to say the least. Before we delve into the grim statistics of foster homes, it must understood that over 85% of removals are not for physical or sexual abuse, and this must be kept in mind when looking at the comparison between how a child was cared for before and after being placed in a foster home.
When looking at these statistics and studies, an individual may bring up the fact that correlation and causation is not the same thing; as in, the harmful effects of these foster homes were simply a result of what the child had experience before being placed and not because of the foster homes. Now again, the abuse that was occurring in their home is not what most would consider abuse, and there was a fascinating MIT study that worked to separate these variables that came up with some startling facts.

The study entitled “Child Protection and Child Outcomes: Measuring the Effects of Foster Care” by Joseph J. Doyle, Jr. discovered that after removing variables which could have deviated or confused the data, Doyle finds that an abused child placed in foster care is 10%-20% more likely to be arrested, 10-20% more likely to become pregnant as a teenager, and 10% less likely to be working when they become an adult than the abused child who was not placed in foster care. That kind of outlines what I’m discussing here.

Abuse in Foster Homes
So let’s take a look at how much abuse actually occurs in these foster homes: first, there are approximately 400,000 children in out-of-home care, in the United States. Almost 10% of children in foster care have stayed in foster care for five or more years. Nearly half of all children in foster care have chronic medical problems. Children in foster care experience high rates of child abuse, emotional deprivation, and physical neglect.
In one study in the United Kingdom "foster children were 7–8 times, and children in residential care 6 times more likely to be abused than a child in the general population". Let me reiterate that, children are 7-8 times more likely to be abused in foster care than children in the general public.
A study of foster children in Oregon and Washington State found that nearly one third reported being abused by a foster parent or another adult in a foster home. 
Mental Health & Foster Children
Keeping in mind that only 15% of removals are for physical or sexual abuse, it is startling how much actual abuse is occurring in these foster homes. Let’s take a look at the mental health of these children. In the Casey Family Programs Harvard study, "More than half the study participants reported clinical levels of mental illness after being in a foster home, compared to less than a quarter of the general population".

Post-traumatic stress Disorder
Post-traumatic stress disorder – known as “Shell Shock” during WWI- is also an incredibly common result of foster homes; for those who've not studied the subject, Post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD is an anxiety disorder that may develop after a person is exposed to one or more traumatic events, such as sexual assault, serious injury, or the threat of death. The diagnosis may be given when a group of symptoms such as disturbing recurring flashbacks, avoidance or numbing of memories of the event, and (high levels of anxiety) continue for more than a month after the traumatic event. PTSD causes biochemical changes in the brain and body that differ from other psychiatric disorders such as major depression. There are actual detriment physical issues that occur in the brain, namely alterations in the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, and hippocampus of these individuals, in some cases these changes are permanent, and have a slew of side effects as a result.

In one study, 60% of children who had experienced sexual abuse in foster homes had PTSD, and 42% of those who had been physically abused while in foster homes fulfilled the PTSD criteria. PTSD occurring to people who’ve been abused may not seem rare, but they’re not the only ones who are dealing with it in these homes. PTSD was also found in 18% of the children who were not abused. These children may have developed PTSD due to witnessing violence in the home. I must reiterated, 18% of children who were not physically or sexually abused in foster homes had PTSD just from things they witnessed in these foster homes, and keeping in mind the fact that children are 7-8 times more likely to be abused in these foster homes, kids who aren’t abused are quite rare. In a study conducted in Oregon and Washington state, the rate of PTSD in adults who were in foster care for one year between the ages of 14–18 was found to be higher than that of combat veterans, with 25% of those in the study meeting the diagnostic criteria as compared to 12–13% of Iraq war veterans and 15 percent of Vietnam war veterans, and a rate of 4% in the general population.

The recovery rate for foster home alumni was 28.2% as opposed to 47% in the general population. Keep in mind, these are just the individuals who were in foster care for one year. Now this is in no way to speak badly about soldiers, but in the cases in the modern era – i.e. post draft – these troops chose to throw themselves in harms way. Now whether they did that to “fight for freedom” or “fight for a pay check” there was still a choice. These children had no choice whatsoever.

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