



The above chart details the average monthly number of children in foster care in Montana by fiscal year (FY). The Child and Family Services Division (CFS) has experienced unprecedented caseload growth over the last few years. The information in this Chart of the Week is from the [Legislative Fiscal Division's 2019 Biennium Outlook](#).

Caseloads

Caseloads were at a monthly average of 1,548 kids in FY 2009, and have grown to a monthly average of 2,876 to date in FY 2016. The number of children in foster care has increased in every month of FY 2016 from 2,664 in July to 3,179 in April, showing no indication of slowing. The chart to the right illustrates this growth, which started accelerating around FY 2013 and has continued to accelerate in FY 2016.

Subsidized Adoption and Guardianship

Though the caseload addressed above references only children in foster care, Montana also subsidizes some adoptions and permanent guardianship placements. Subsidized adoption is assumed to grow at 5% annually, and foster care at 10%. Based on growth so far in FY 2016, there is a risk that these growth rates may be low. The total general fund impact of this growth is about \$4.8 million for the 2019 biennium.