

Children's Ages and Lengths of Stay

How old were the children when they were admitted to the Home?

As shown in Table 1 below, half of all children admitted to the Home (811 of 1623 children) were between the ages of 5 and 10; the overall average age at admission was 7 years. When viewed two decades at a time, the data in Table 1 reveal a slight increase in age of admission from slightly less than 7 years to 8 years. The data also demonstrate that the Home did not adhere to a strict minimum or maximum age for admissions: it admitted 141 children (8.6%) ages 2 and younger, including 51 infants. In this regard, the Home differed from many other Jewish and non-Jewish orphanages which did not admit children under 5 years old. Prior to the 1920s, when the Board imposed a maximum age limit for admission (from which it occasionally made exceptions), it also admitted 33 children (2%) ages 14 and older, including 15 children ages 15 through 21.

Decades	Avg. Age	Total # Admitted	#Under age 5		#Ages 5-10	
1856-1876	6.9	339	89	26%	145	42%
1877-1900	6.5	558	176	31%	280	50%
1901-1923	7.1	547	123	22%	291	53%
1924-1946	8.0	179	31	17%	95	53%
TOTAL						
1856-1946	7.0	1623	419	26%	811	50%

How long did the children live in the Home?

In general, discharge from the Home, as determined by the board, was dependent upon the availability of a parent, relative, or other suitable guardian to assume responsibility for the child, or the child's attainment of self-sufficiency.

Throughout the Home's 90 years, this standard for discharge translated into an average length of stay of 6 years, ranging for some children from less than 1 year to as long as 20 years.¹ As shown in Table 2, shorter increments in the Home's history, however, reveal changes in the

average length of stay; during the first 20 years of the Home’s operation, children stayed an average of less than 5 years, and by the first two decades of the twentieth century the average stay rose to slightly more than 7 years.

<u>Decades</u>	<u>Average Stay in Years</u>
1856-1876	4.7
1877-1900	6.4
1901-1924	7.1
<u>1925-1946</u>	<u>5</u>
TOTAL	
1856-1946	6.0

Of particular note is the relatively large number of children throughout the Home’s operation who stayed most of their childhood. Of the Home’s total reported population (1544), more than half of the children (59%) lived there 5 or more years, while one out of every five children (20%) lived there 10 or more years. Notably, 48 children (3%) lived in the Home for 15 or more years.

To the extent comparable data are readily available, the Home’s average length of stay appears slightly higher than other Jewish orphanages. At the Cleveland Jewish Orphan Asylum, for example, the average length of stay in 1885 was less than six years and by 1898 increased to six years; the Home’s average length of stay for this same time was 6.4 years. Similarly, the Home’s average length of stay for 1901-1924 combined was 7.1 years, while the average length of stay at the CJOA in 1922 was a little over five years. A 1924 study of Philadelphia’s Jewish Foster Home reported an average length of approximately 4.5 years. ²

¹ The five Aschaffenburg children, for example, were admitted in 1887 for 9 months after which time they returned to their parents. In contrast, Lena Barnett was admitted in 1878 at 2 months old and, after living in the Home for 20 years, was hired as its teacher.

² Friedman, *These Are Our Children*, 48, 88, 169.