

# ALABAMA'S CHILDREN 2009

## Alabama's Children At a Glance\*

State Population <sup>1</sup> .....	4,627,851
Population, Children Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....	1,123,537
State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....	14.5%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....	22.5%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> .....	24.1%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....	22.3%

\*All statistics are for 2007.

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2006, Alabama had 30,574 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 18,651 reports were referred for investigation.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2006, 9,378 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Alabama, a rate of 8.4 per 1,000 children, representing a 3.9% increase from 2005. Of these children, 3,911 were neglected, 3,666 were physically abused, and 2,448 were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2006, 24 children in Alabama died as a result of abuse or neglect.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2006, 7,157 children in Alabama lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 6,913 children in 2005. In 2006, 29.1% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 24.5% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- Of Alabama children in out-of-home care in 2006, 49.9% were white, 46.1% black, 2.3% Hispanic, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.5% children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>11</sup>

## ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,474 children exiting out-of-home care in Alabama in 2006, 44% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2006, 387 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Alabama, a 19% increase from 324 in 2005.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 7,157 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 1,773 or 24.8% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2007, approximately 58,794 Alabama grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>15</sup>
- Of the 7,157 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 12.5% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>16</sup>
- Of all Alabama children in kinship care in 2006, 56.0% were white, 41.7% were black, 0.9% were Hispanic, 0.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.2% were other races.<sup>17</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Alabama decreased from 41,582 in March 2007 to 40,186 in March 2008, a decrease of 3.4%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2008 was 17,479, a 2.9% decrease from March 2007.<sup>18</sup>



- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Alabama was at 30.3% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2006, Alabama spent \$107,329,981 in TANF funds, including 32.2% on basic assistance, 0.04% on child care, 2.9% on transportation, and 64.8% on nonassistance.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2007, Alabama spent \$74,210,159 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), serving 126,280 participants.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2007, Alabama collected and distributed \$258,198,784 in child support funds, a 4.8% increase from 2006.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2008, the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alabama was \$595 per month. The wage needed to afford this rent was \$11.44 per hour, working a 40-hour week.<sup>23</sup>

## CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2006, Alabama had a monthly average of 28,000 children served by subsidized child care; 27,100 children received subsidized child care in 2005, and 29,200 in 2004.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2008, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Alabama, a family of three could make no more than \$22,300, which is equivalent to 49% of the state's median income.<sup>25</sup>
- As of early 2008, Alabama had 10,131 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2007, Head Start served 16,374 Alabama children, a 0.2% decrease from 2001.<sup>27</sup>

## HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2005, 457,200 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Alabama—48.2% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2005, 7,775 children were enrolled in Medicaid in Alabama on the basis of being in foster care.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2005, of the 7,775 children enrolled in Medicaid on the basis of being in foster care, 4,512 received Targeted Case Management services, and 97 received Rehabilitative Services.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2007, Alabama had 67,715 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 2.8% increase from 2006, when 65,875 children were enrolled.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2007, Alabama had 82,000 uninsured children, representing 7.3% of its child population.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2005, 6,429 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Alabama a rank of 33 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>33</sup>
- In 2005, 568 infants under age 1 died in Alabama, giving it a rank of 33 nationally in terms of infant mortality rates (a rank of 1 being the best and 50 the worst).<sup>34</sup>
- In 2005, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Alabama was 27 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 85. This reflects a total rate of 50 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>35</sup>



- Cumulative through 2006, 8,626 adults and adolescents, as well as 76 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Alabama.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2006, an estimated 27,000 children ages 12–17, and 270,000 adults age 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Alabama.<sup>37</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2006, 174 children aged out of out-of-home care in Alabama.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2007, 26,000 Alabama teens ages 16-19 were high-school dropouts.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2007, 11% of teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not working.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2006, 18% of people ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2006, approximately 14,000 children ages 12–17 in Alabama needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>42</sup>
- In 2006, approximately 19,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>43</sup>
- In 2005, 32 Alabama children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.46 per 100,000 children.<sup>44</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2005, 31 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Alabama, a 55% increase from 20 in 2004.<sup>45</sup>
- In 2007, 12,407 children younger than 18 were arrested in Alabama, a 7.2% increase from 11,577 arrests in 2006. Of those arrests, 697 were for violent crimes and 179 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>46</sup>
- A 2006 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,752 children in juvenile correction facilities in Alabama.<sup>47</sup>

## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

- In 2006, Alabama spent \$299,254,165 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 55% was from federal funds, 44% from state funds, and 0.8% from local funds.<sup>48</sup>
- In 2006, of the \$165,085,484 in federal funds received for child welfare, 18% came from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 9% from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 39% from Medicaid, 19% from the Social Services Block Grant, 12% from TANF, and 4% came from other federal sources.<sup>49</sup>
- Out of 7,157 children in out-of-home care in Alabama in 2006, only 1,877, or 26.2%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>50</sup>



## ALABAMA'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- A 2003 General Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that staff shortages, high caseloads, high worker turnover and low salaries impinge on delivering services to achieve safety, permanence, and well being for children.<sup>51</sup>
- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.<sup>52</sup>
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; these high caseloads contribute to high worker turnover and insufficient services being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.<sup>53</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Alabama was \$26,411; the median income for a family of four in Alabama was \$55,448.<sup>54</sup>

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### NOTES AND REFERENCES

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