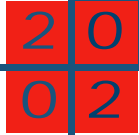


MAKING CHILDREN A NATIONAL PRIORITY 2002

Children, Youth, and Families in the United States



AMERICA'S CHILDREN AT A GLANCE

	NUMBER OF CHILDREN
Referrals of possible child abuse and neglect, 1999 ¹	2,974,000*
Children substantiated/indicated as abused or neglected, 1999 ²	826,162*
Children who died as a result of abuse or neglect, 1999 ³	1,137*
Children in foster care on March 31, 2000 ⁴	588,000*
Number of children waiting to be adopted on March 31, 2000 ⁵	134,000*
Number of children and youth in juvenile detention facilities, 1999 ⁶	108,931
Children and youth fatalities as a result of gun violence, 2000 ⁷	616
Number of children lacking medical insurance, 1998 ⁸	5.2 million*
Number of children under age 6 below the poverty level, 1999 ⁹	4.2 million*

*Number of children estimated

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CHILDREN NEED PROTECTION AND CARE

Child Abuse and Neglect

- An estimated 826,162 children were victims of abuse or neglect in 1999. More than half (56.5%) suffered neglect, 21.3% were physically abused, and 11.3% were sexually abused. Children also experienced emotional abuse, medical neglect, and other forms of maltreatment.¹⁰
- Children under 3 years of age had the highest rate of maltreatment in 1999 (13.9 per 1,000 children).¹¹

Foster Care and Adoption

- Between October 1999 and March 2000, 60% of children exiting foster care returned to their birthfamilies after an average stay of 21 months.¹²
- The average age of children in foster care is 10 years. The average time the children had been in foster care is 33 months.¹³
- Thirty-five percent of the children in foster care are white non-Hispanic, 38% are black non-Hispanic, and 15% are Hispanic. Nearly half of the children waiting to be adopted are black non-Hispanic, 32% are white non-Hispanic, and 12% are Hispanic.¹⁴
- Children under age 6 represent 28% of the children in foster care. Youth age 16 and older represent 18% of children in care.¹⁵
- Returning home is not an option for approximately 127,000 children in the foster care system who are free for adoption. Almost 60% of these children are children of color.¹⁶
- Nearly 50,000 children were adopted from the public child welfare system in 2000, a 10% increase from the 46,000 adopted in 1999.¹⁷
- Children comprised 27% of the homeless population in 1999; unaccompanied youth represented 7%.¹⁸ Among homeless adults in 1996, 29% reported one or more abuse or neglect experiences before age 18; 27% reported having lived in foster care, a group home, or another institutional setting for part of their childhood.¹⁹

Child Care

- Only 12% of the 15 million children eligible for federal child care subsidies in 1999 received care. The 1.8 million children in subsidized care that year was a slight increase from the 1.5 million children served in 1998.²⁰
- Of the \$7.5 billion in federal funds spent on subsidized child care in FY 2000, more than 50% came from the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.²¹
- Sixty-two percent of mothers with children under age 6, and 75% of mothers with children ages 6–17, are in the labor force.²²

Health Care

- Nearly eight million low-income children were uninsured during 1999. More than three-quarters of all uninsured children are now estimated to be eligible for coverage under public programs—mostly through Medicaid, but also through the State Children's Health Insurance Program.²³

continued

- One in 10 children and adolescents suffer from mental illness severe enough to cause some level of impairment.²⁴
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates that 75% to 80% of children who need mental health services do not receive it.²⁵ Studies show that more than 80% of children in foster care had developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems. Mental health services are repeatedly identified as their number one health care need.²⁶
- Teen pregnancy rates have declined steadily, 19% between 1991 and 1997, from 116.5 pregnancies per 1,000 girls ages 15–19 to 94.3. Still, nearly 4 in 10 young women become pregnant at least once before age 21—one million per year.²⁷
- Twenty-five percent of all new cases of HIV infection in the United States are estimated to occur in young people under age 21.²⁸ Every day, 27–54 young people under age 20 are infected with HIV.²⁹

Domestic Violence

- Between 1.5 million and 3.3 million children witness some form of violence in the home each year.³⁰
- Children from violent homes exhibit more aggressive and delinquent behavior compared with children from nonviolent homes.³¹
- Between 50% and 70% of men who abuse their female partners also abuse their children.³²

MANY FAMILIES HAVE SERIOUS SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROBLEMS

- Seven out of 10 cases of child abuse and neglect are exacerbated by a parents abuse of alcohol and other drugs.³³ In most cases, the parents substance abuse is a long-standing problem of at least five years' duration.³⁴
- Approximately 67% of parents with children in the child welfare system require substance abuse treatment, but child welfare agencies are able to provide treatment for only 31%.³⁵
- Children whose parents abuse drugs and alcohol are almost three times more likely to be abused and four times more likely to be neglected than are children of parents who are not substance abusers.³⁶
- Children whose families do not receive appropriate treatment for alcohol and other drug abuse are more likely to end up in foster care, remain in foster care longer, and reenter once they have returned home than are children whose families do receive treatment.³⁷
- Women who stayed in comprehensive substance abuse treatment longer than three months were more likely to remain alcohol and drug free (68% vs. 48%) compared with those who left within the first three months of treatment.³⁸
- Seventy-five percent of mothers receiving comprehensive substance abuse treatment had physical custody of one or more children six months after discharge from treatment, compared with 54% who had custody of any children shortly before entering treatment.³⁹

VIOLENCE AND INCARCERATION REMAIN SERIOUS ISSUES

- In 1999, homicide was the leading cause of death for youth 15–24 years of age. That year, 1,708 children ages 15–19 died of firearm homicide.⁴⁰
- Precursors to serious violent juvenile offenses among 6- to 11-year-olds include substance abuse in the family, low family socioeconomic status, and aggression. Serious violent offenders are disproportionately victims of violence themselves.⁴¹
- In 1999, 4,210 children under age 12 were placed in juvenile detention facilities.⁴²
- Of the 108,931 children held in juvenile facilities in 1999, 37.8% were white, 39.4% were black, and 18.3% were Hispanic.⁴³
- Nearly 59% of women in federal prisons, and 65% of women in state prisons, are mothers of children under age 18; 63% of men in federal prisons, and more than half of men in state prisons, are fathers of children under age 18.⁴⁴

YOUTH NEED OPPORTUNITIES FOR POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Most juvenile violence occurs during the afterschool hours of 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM.⁴⁵
- Four million children ages 13–14 spend time unsupervised on a regular basis.⁴⁶

- Students who spend one to four hours per week in afterschool extracurricular activities are 49% less likely to use drugs and 37% less likely to become teen parents than are students who do not participate in extracurricular activities.⁴⁷
- Research indicates that children who attend high-quality programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and conduct in school than do their peers who are not in afterschool programs.⁴⁸

CHILD POVERTY REMAINS HIGH

Child Poverty

- Americas children are more likely to live in poverty than Americans in any other age group.⁴⁹
- In 1999, more than 12 million children under age 18 years lived in poverty.⁵⁰
- The child poverty rate for children under age 6 is 37% for African American children, 31% for Latino children, and 10% for white children. By international standards, the United States has the highest rate of child poverty for all children—33% African American, 30% Latino, and 9% white.⁵¹
- In 1999, 7% of Americas children lived in extreme poverty, with family incomes below 50% of the federal poverty line.⁵²
- More than one in four families with young children earns less than \$25,000 a year; a family with both parents working full-time at the minimum wage earns only \$21,400 a year.⁵³

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- In 2000, 2.2 million families received cash assistance through TANF, including 5.7 million children.⁵⁴
- Although TANF caseloads decreased 52% between 1994 and 1999, the child poverty rate remained at more than 16% in 2000.⁵⁵
- The poverty rate for families who stopped receiving assistance ranged from an estimated 41% to 58%.⁵⁶
- Nine percent of the TANF caseload supports relatives caring for children.⁵⁷
- Because funding has not been adjusted for inflation, the value of the federal TANF block grant has eroded more than 11% since its creation in 1996.⁵⁸

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