

ARKANSAS'S CHILDREN 2004

Arkansas's Children At a Glance

State Population (2002) ¹	2,710,079
State Population, Children	
Under 18 (2001) ²	683,000
State Poverty Rate (2002) ³	19.8%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Under 18 (2002) ⁴	31.2%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Ages 5-17 (2002) ⁵	27.7%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Birth to Age 4 (2002) ⁶	24.2%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2001, 18,504 children were reported as abused or neglected and referred for investigation in Arkansas, a rate of 27.1 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2001, 6,927 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Arkansas, a rate of 10.1 per 1,000 children, representing a 7% decrease from 2000. Of every 1,000 children, 4.8 were neglected, 2.7 were physically abused, and 3.1 were sexually abused.⁸
- In 2001, 22 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Arkansas.⁹
- On September 30, 2001, 2,959 children in Arkansas lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 3,045 children on September 30, 2000. In 2001, 27.7% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 20.8% were 16 or older.¹⁰
- On September 30, 2001, 1,764 white children, 1,037 black children, 59 Hispanic children, 9 American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 109 children of other races and ethnicities were in out-of-home care in the state.¹¹

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,244 children leaving out-of-home care in 2001, 71% were reunited with their families.¹²
- In 2001, 362 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Arkansas, a 148% increase from 146 in 1997.¹³
- Of the 2,959 children in out-of-home care in 2001, 1,198 or 40% were waiting to be adopted.¹⁴
- Of the 2,959 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2001, 4% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- In 2002, more than 43,756 Arkansas grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The number of people receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Arkansas declined from 28,291 in March 2002 to 25,382 in March 2003, a decrease of 10.3%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2003 was 11,640, an 8.8% decrease from March 2002.¹⁷
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and Food Stamp benefits in Arkansas was 55% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2002, Arkansas spent \$69,753,845 in TANF funds, including 37.6% on cash assistance and 62.4% on nonassistance.¹⁹
- In 2001, Arkansas collected and distributed \$122,150,043 in child support funds, an increase of 1.4% from 2000.²⁰
- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Arkansas was \$470 per month, or 57% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²¹

C H I L D C A R E A N D H E A D S T A R T

- In 2001, an estimated monthly average of 9,300 of Arkansas's children received subsidized child care, a decrease from 10,900 in 2000 and 11,200 in 1999.²²
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 60% of Arkansas's median income, or \$23,520, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²³
- In 2001, Arkansas had 853 children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁴
- Due to the state budget shortfall, Arkansas passed a dedicated 3% excise tax on beer to generate funds for assistance; however, the tax was abolished in 2003.²⁵
- In 2002, Head Start served 10,930 Arkansas children, a 1% increase from 2001.²⁶
- In 2000, 75% of all 18- to 24-year-olds in Arkansas had at least a high school degree or equivalent.²⁷

H E A L T H , M E N T A L H E A L T H , A N D S U B S T A N C E A B U S E

- In 2000, 267,858 children younger than 18 were enrolled in Medicaid in Arkansas, representing 41% of Arkansas's total enrollees.²⁸
- In 2002, Arkansas had 1,912 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 33.7% decrease from 2001, when 2,884 children were enrolled.²⁹
- In 2001, 109 babies in Arkansas were born to girls younger than 15. In 2001, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 5,941—a rate of 64 births per 1,000 girls.³⁰
- As of December 2002, 3,355 adults and adolescents, as well as 38 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Arkansas.³¹
- In 2002, 24 Arkansas children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 3.16 per 100,000 children in the population.³²
- In 2001, an estimated 11,000 children ages 12–17, and 41,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.³³

J U V E N I L E J U S T I C E A N D D E L I N Q U E N C Y P R E V E N T I O N

- In 2001, 9 children younger than 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Arkansas, a 10% decrease from 10 in 2000.³⁴
- In 2002, 9,410 children younger than 18 were arrested in Arkansas, a 50% decrease from 18,884 arrests in 1998. Of the arrests in 2002, 2,517 were for violent crimes and 99 were for possession of a weapon.³⁵
- A 1999 census of juvenile offenders showed 705 children in juvenile correction facilities in Arkansas.³⁶

F U N D I N G C H I L D W E L F A R E S E R V I C E S F O R A R K A N S A S ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2000, Arkansas spent \$74,726,779 for child welfare services—all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.³⁷ Of this amount, 62% came from federal funds, and 38% from state funds; none came from local funds.³⁸
- In 2000, of the \$46,027,728 in federal funds received for child welfare, 78% came from the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program, 11% from the Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families programs, 3% from the Social Services Block Grant, and 7% from TANF.³⁹
- Of the 2,959 children in out-of-home care in Arkansas on September 30, 2001, only 1,387, or 46.9%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴⁰

ARKANSAS'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- The child welfare workforce is facing challenges in every state. A combination of high caseloads, high worker turnover, and low salaries impinges on the delivery of services to achieve safety, permanency, and child well-being.
- In 2000, the national average starting salary for child protective service workers was \$26,900; for direct service workers, \$27,500. The yearly turnover rate for these workers was 15.6% and 19.5%, respectively.⁴¹
- In 2000, a caseworker in Arkansas responsible for investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect carried an estimated caseload of 15 families. A caseworker responsible for providing in-home services carried an estimated caseload of 15 families. In-home services include parent support programs, child day care, community-based counseling, and other services to enable children to live safely in their own homes.⁴²
- In 2000, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of child abuse and neglect in Arkansas was \$22,579.⁴³
- In 2002, the median income in Arkansas for a family of four was \$44,537.⁴⁴

Additional child welfare statistics, references, and pertinent notes are available on CWLA's National Data Analysis System at <http://ndas.cwla.org>.

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CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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