

# WEST VIRGINIA'S CHILDREN 2004

## West Virginia's Children At a Glance

State Population (2002) <sup>1</sup> .....	1,801,873
State Population, Children	
Under 18 (2001) <sup>2</sup> .....	399,000
State Poverty Rate (2002) <sup>3</sup> .....	16.8%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Under 18 (2002) <sup>4</sup> .....	25.1%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Ages 5-17 (2002) <sup>5</sup> .....	23.8%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Birth to Age 4 (2002) <sup>6</sup> .....	28.6%

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2001, 16,467 children were reported as abused or neglected and referred for investigation in West Virginia, a rate of 41.3 per 1,000 children.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2001, 7,907 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in West Virginia, a rate of 19.8 per 1,000 children, representing a 4% decrease from 2000. Of every 1,000 children, 9.3 were neglected, 5.7 were physically abused, and 1.4 were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2001, 16 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in West Virginia.<sup>9</sup>
- On September 30, 2001, 3,298 children in West Virginia lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 3,388 children on September 30, 2000. In 2001, 20.7% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 26.3% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- On September 30, 2001, 2,782 white children, 263 black children, 36 Hispanic children, 1 American Indian/Alaskan Native child, and 252 children of other races and ethnicities were in out-of-home care in the state.<sup>11</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,340 children leaving out-of-home care in 2001, 38% were reunited with their families.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2001, 362 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in West Virginia, a 65% increase from 220 in 1997.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 3,298 children in out-of-home care in 2001, 1,107 or 34% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>
- Of the 3,298 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2001, 4% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>15</sup>
- In 2002, more than 16,058 West Virginia grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>16</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The number of people receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in West Virginia declined from 43,111 in March 2002 to 41,478 in March 2003, a decrease of 3.8%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2003 was 16,001, a 1.7% decrease from March 2002.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and Food Stamp benefits in West Virginia was 45% below the federal poverty guideline.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2002, West Virginia spent \$214,194,483 in TANF funds, including 33.1% on cash assistance, 2.5% on child care, 14.0% on transportation and support activities, and 50.3% on nonassistance.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2001, West Virginia collected and distributed \$137,233,085 in child support funds, an increase of 14.0% from 2000.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in West Virginia was \$457 per month, or 55% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.<sup>21</sup>

## **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 7,800 of West Virginia's children received subsidized child care, a decrease from 11,100 in 2000 and 13,200 in 1999.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 74.54% of the West Virginia's median income, or \$28,296, to be eligible for subsidized child care.<sup>23</sup>
- Due to the state budget shortfall, West Virginia has implemented several policy changes, reducing the eligibility standard from 200% of the 2000 federal poverty level to 150% for new families, eliminating subsidies for 1,200 families and children, and eliminating funding for before- and afterschool child care programs.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2002, Head Start served 7,650 West Virginia children, a 0.8% increase from 2001.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2000, 78% of all 18- to 24-year-olds in West Virginia had at least a high school degree or equivalent.<sup>26</sup>

## **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, 186,253 children younger than 18 were enrolled in Medicaid in West Virginia, representing 46.2% of West Virginia's total enrollees.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2002, West Virginia had 35,949 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, an 8.5% increase from 2001, when 33,144 children were enrolled.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2001, 29 babies in West Virginia were born to girls younger than 15. In 2001, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 2,683—a rate of 46 births per 1,000 girls.<sup>29</sup>
- As of December 2002, 1,252 adults and adolescents, as well as 10 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in West Virginia.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2002, eight West Virginia children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 1.8 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2001, an estimated 7,000 children ages 12–17, and 23,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.<sup>32</sup>

## **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, three children younger than 18 were killed in firearm homicides in West Virginia, a 25% decrease from four in 2000.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2002, 1,739 children younger than 18 were arrested in West Virginia, a 76% decrease from 7,356 arrests in 1998. Of the arrests in 2002, 566 were for violent crimes and 21 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>34</sup>
- A 1999 census of juvenile offenders showed 388 children in juvenile correction facilities in West Virginia.<sup>35</sup>

## **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 W E S T V I R G I N I A ' S C H I L D R E N**

- In 2000, West Virginia spent \$137,026,251 for child welfare services—all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.<sup>36</sup> Of this amount, 59% came from federal funds, and 41% from state funds; none came from local funds.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2000, of the \$80,475,199 in federal funds received for child welfare, 26% came from the Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program, 6% from the Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families programs, 23% from the Social Services Block Grant, 44% from TANF, and 1% from other federal sources.<sup>38</sup>
- Of the 3,298 children in out-of-home care in West Virginia on September 30, 2001, only 912, or 27.7%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>39</sup>

## WEST VIRGINIA'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- The child welfare workforce is facing challenges in every state. A combination of high case-loads, 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.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2000, a caseworker in West Virginia responsible for investigating and assessing child abuse and neglect carried an estimated caseload of 16 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.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2000, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of child abuse and neglect in West Virginia was \$19,764.<sup>42</sup>
- In 2002, the median income in West Virginia for a family of four was \$46,270.<sup>43</sup>

**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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