

LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN 2005

Louisiana's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) ¹	4,496,334
State Population, Children Under 18 (2003) ²	1,177,555
State Poverty Rate (2003) ³	20.3%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2003) ⁴	29.8%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2003) ⁵	28.1%
Poverty Rate, Children Birth to Age 4 (2003) ⁶	33.7%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2002, 37,825 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in Louisiana, a rate of 31.9 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2002, 37 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Louisiana.⁸
- On September 30, 2002, 4,829 children in Louisiana lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 5,024 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 26.9% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 16.5% were 16 or older.⁹
- On September 30, 2002, 39.7% white children, 57.6% black children, 0.8% Hispanic children, 0.4% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 1.6% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in Louisiana.¹⁰

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,996 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 55.2% were reunited with their birthfamilies.¹¹
- In 2002, 487 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Louisiana, a 3.6% increase from 470 in 2001.¹²
- Of the 4,829 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 1,471 or 30.5% were waiting to be adopted.¹³

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2003, more than 66,588 Louisiana grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 4,829 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 12.7% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Louisiana children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 46.0% were white, 52.7% were black, 0.8% were Hispanic, none were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.5% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Louisiana declined from 60,367 in March 2002 to 56,157 in March 2003, a decrease of 7.0%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 22,333, a 5.3% decrease from March 2002.¹⁷
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in Louisiana was 56% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2003, Louisiana spent \$267,268,982 in TANF funds, including 25.1% on cash assistance, 2.0% on child care, 0.2% on transportation and support activities, and 72.8% on nonassistance.¹⁹
- In 2002, Louisiana collected and distributed \$260,352,264 in child support funds, an increase of 11.5% from 2001.²⁰
- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana was \$538 per month, or 65% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²¹

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

- In 2001, Louisiana served an estimated monthly average of 38,700 children with subsidized child care, a decrease from 2000, when 40,300 children were served, and in 1999, when 39,000 children were served.²²
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 75% of Louisiana's median income, or \$24,924, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²³
- In 2001, Louisiana had no children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁴
- In 2003, 22,108 Louisiana children were served by Head Start, a 0.1% decrease from 2002.²⁵

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

- In 2001, 447,969 Louisiana children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 55.6% of the total number of enrollees.²⁶
- In 2003, Louisiana had 104,763 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 19.5% increase from 2002, when 87,675 children were enrolled.²⁷
- In 2002, 146 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in Louisiana. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 10,056, reflecting a rate of 58.1 births per 1,000 girls.²⁸
- As of December 2002, 14,494 adults and adolescents, as well as 130 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.²⁹
- In 2001, 37 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.75 per 100,000 children in the population.³⁰
- In 2002, an estimated 32,000 children ages 12–17, and 307,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.³¹

V U L N E R A B L E Y O U T H

- In 2003, 12% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 1% increase from 2000.³²
- In 2002, 21% of young adults ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.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, 30 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Louisiana, compared with 37 in 2000.³⁴
- In 2003, 35,285 children under age 18 were arrested in Louisiana, a 1% decrease from 35,560 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 1,403 were for violent crimes and 242 were for possession of weapons.³⁵
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 2,456 children in juvenile correction facilities in Louisiana.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 L O U I S I A N A ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2002, Louisiana spent \$205,212,594 for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.³⁷ Of this amount, 59% was from federal funds and 41% was from state funds.³⁸
- In 2002, of the \$205,212,594 spent for child welfare, 29% was for Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 6% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 21% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 1% was from Supplemental Security Income, 1% came from Survivors Benefits, and 2% was from other federal sources. The remaining funds (41%) came from state and local sources.³⁹

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- Out of 4,829 children in out-of-home care in Louisiana on September 30, 2002, only 2,561 or 53% received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴⁰

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

- 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.⁴¹
- 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.⁴²
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children and that 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.⁴³
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Louisiana was \$23,899 ; the median income for a family of four in Louisiana was \$52,299.⁴⁴

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