

NEBRASKA'S CHILDREN 2005

Nebraska's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) ¹	1,739,291
State Population, Children	
Under 18 (2003) ²	440,840
State Poverty Rate (2003) ³	10.8%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Under 18 (2003) ⁴	13.0%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Ages 5-17 (2003) ⁵	10.2%
Poverty Rate, Children	
Birth to Age 4 (2003) ⁶	16.7%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2002, 12,262 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in Nebraska, a rate of 27.7 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2002, 3,909 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Nebraska, a rate of 8.9 per 1,000 children, representing an 18% increase from 2000. Of these children, 71.7% were neglected, 22.1% were physically abused, and 9.6% were sexually abused.⁸
- In 2002, 13 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Nebraska.⁹
- On September 30, 2002, 6,430 children in Nebraska lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 6,254 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 22.2% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 31.1% were 16 or older.¹⁰
- On September 30, 2002, 66.0% white children, 16.5% black children, 7.9% Hispanic children, 7.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 2.5% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in Nebraska.¹¹

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,807 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 73.6% were reunited with their birthfamilies.¹²
- In 2002, 308 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Nebraska, a 5.5% increase from 292 in 2001.¹³
- Of the 6,430 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 406 or 6.3% were waiting to be adopted.¹⁴

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2003, more than 8,404 Nebraska grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.¹⁵
- Of the 6,430 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 12.3% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁶
- Of all Nebraska children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 66.5% were white, 20.9% were black, 4.8% were Hispanic, 5.0% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.8% were other races.¹⁷

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Nebraska increased from 25,709 in March 2002 to 27,079 in March 2003, an increase of 5.3%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 11,132, a 7.0% increase from March 2002.¹⁸
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in Nebraska was 42% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁹
- In 2003, Nebraska spent \$78,906,035 in TANF funds, including 74.3% on cash assistance and 25.7% on nonassistance.²⁰
- In 2002, Nebraska collected and distributed \$143,218,162 in child support funds, a decrease of 10.4% from 2001.²¹

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- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Nebraska was \$535 per month, or 65% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²²

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

- In 2001, Nebraska served an estimated monthly average of 12,800 children with subsidized child care, an increase from 2000, when 12,400 children were served, and in 1999, when 12,100 children were served.²³
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 37% of Nebraska's median income, or \$25,260, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²⁴
- In 2001, Nebraska had no children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁵
- In 2003, 5,203 Nebraska children were served by Head Start, a 0.9% decrease from 2002.²⁶

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, 143,081 Nebraska children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 58.9% of the total number of enrollees.²⁷
- In 2003, Nebraska had 45,490 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 180.3% increase from 2002, when 16,227 children were enrolled.²⁸
- In 2002, 79 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in Nebraska. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 2,394, reflecting a rate of 37.0 births per 1,000 girls.²⁹
- As of December 2002, 1,227 adults and adolescents, as well as 10 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Nebraska.³⁰
- In 2001, 19 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 3.82 per 100,000 children in the population.³¹
- In 2002, an estimated 17,000 children ages 12–17, and 144,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.³²

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

- In 2003, 7% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 1% increase from 2000.³³
- In 2002, 10% of young adults ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³⁴

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 under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Nebraska, compared with seven in 2000.³⁵
- In 2003, 13,273 children under age 18 were arrested in Nebraska, a 16% decrease from 15,772 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 167 were for violent crimes and 144 were for possession of weapons.³⁶
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 718 children in juvenile correction facilities in Nebraska.³⁷

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 N E B R A S K A ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2002, Nebraska spent \$143,945,744 for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.³⁸ Of this amount, 44% was from federal funds and 56% was from state funds.³⁹

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- In 2002, of the \$143,945,744 spent for child welfare, 19% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 2% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 21% was from Medicaid, and 1% was from Supplemental Security Income. The remaining funds (56%) came from state and local sources.⁴⁰
- Out of 6,430 children in out-of-home care in Nebraska on September 30, 2002, only 1,416 or 22% received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴¹

N E B R A S K 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.⁴²
- 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.⁴³
- 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.⁴⁴
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Nebraska was \$28,681 ; the median income for a family of four in Nebraska was \$60,129.⁴⁵

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