

NEW JERSEY'S CHILDREN 2005

New Jersey's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) ¹	8,638,396
State Population, Children Under 18 (2003) ²	2,131,617
State Poverty Rate (2003) ³	8.4%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2003) ⁴	11.7%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2003) ⁵	10.3%
Poverty Rate, Children Birth to Age 4 (2003) ⁶	14.8%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2002, 70,786 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in New Jersey, a rate of 33.4 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2002, 8,103 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in New Jersey, a rate of 3.8 per 1,000 children, representing a 5% decrease from 2000. Of these children, 53.5% were neglected, 24.1% were physically abused, and 9.2% were sexually abused.⁸
- In 2002, 30 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in New Jersey.⁹
- On September 30, 2002, 11,442 children in New Jersey lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 10,666 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 37.2% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 13.8% were 16 or older.¹⁰
- On September 30, 2002, 23.1% white children, 61.5% black children, 6.3% Hispanic children, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 8.9% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in New Jersey.¹¹

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 5,404 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 64.8% were reunited with their birthfamilies.¹²
- In 2002, 1,378 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in New Jersey, a 34.0% increase from 1,028 in 2001.¹³
- Of the 11,442 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 5,533 or 48.4% were waiting to be adopted.¹⁴

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2003, more than 68,317 New Jersey grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.¹⁵
- Of the 11,442 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 6.7% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁶
- Of all New Jersey children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 23.2% were white, 63.6% were black, 5.6% were Hispanic, 0.6% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7.0% were other races.¹⁷

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in New Jersey declined from 104,064 in March 2002 to 101,854 in March 2003, a decrease of 2.1%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 42,189, a 0.2% decrease from March 2002.¹⁸
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in New Jersey was 37% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁹
- In 2003, New Jersey spent \$841,683,753 in TANF funds, including 26.4% on cash assistance, 4.2% on child care, 1.9% on transportation and support activities, and 67.5% on nonassistance.²⁰
- In 2002, New Jersey collected and distributed \$774,655,477 in child support funds, an increase of 6.9% from 2001.²¹

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- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New Jersey was \$1,026 per month, or 125% 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, New Jersey served an estimated monthly average of 44,200 children with subsidized child care, a decrease from 2000, when 45,800 children were served, and in 1999, when 34,000 children were served.²³
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 58% of New Jersey's median income, or \$36,570, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²⁴
- In 2001, New Jersey had 8,724 children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁵
- In 2003, 15,099 New Jersey children were served by Head Start, a 1.1% 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, 446,856 New Jersey children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 49.7% of the total number of enrollees.²⁷
- In 2003, New Jersey had 119,272 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 1.9% increase from 2002, when 117,053 children were enrolled.²⁸
- In 2002, 56 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in New Jersey. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 7,352, reflecting a rate of 26.8 births per 1,000 girls.²⁹
- As of December 2002, 44,473 adults and adolescents, as well as 764 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in New Jersey.³⁰
- In 2001, 22 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 0.95 per 100,000 children in the population.³¹
- In 2002, an estimated 59,000 children ages 12–17, and 512,000 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, 4% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 4% decrease from 2000.³³
- In 2002, 12% 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, 7 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in New Jersey, compared with 13 in 2000.³⁵
- In 2003, 59,499 children under age 18 were arrested in New Jersey, a 4% decrease from 62,093 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 3,495 were for violent crimes and 1,936 were for possession of weapons.³⁶
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 2,079 children in juvenile correction facilities in New Jersey.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 W J E R S E Y ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2002, New Jersey spent \$460,389,862 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, 41% was from federal funds, and 59% was from state funds.³⁹

C H I L D W E L F A R E L E A G U E O F A M E R I C A

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- In 2002, of the \$460,389,862 spent for child welfare, 19% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 3% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 6% was from Medicaid, 10% came from the Social Services Block Grant, and 2% was from TANF. The remaining funds (59%) came from state and local sources.⁴⁰
- Out of 11,442 children in out-of-home care in New Jersey on September 30, 2002, only 5,193 or 45% received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴¹

NEW JERSEY'S CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE

- 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 New Jersey was \$37,648 ; the median income for a family of four in New Jersey was \$82,406.⁴⁵

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