

# NEW MEXICO'S CHILDREN 2005

## New Mexico's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) <sup>1</sup> .....	1,874,614
State Population, Children Under 18 (2003) <sup>2</sup> .....	502,034
State Poverty Rate (2003) <sup>3</sup> .....	18.6%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2003) <sup>4</sup> .....	25.6%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2003) <sup>5</sup> .....	23.3%
Poverty Rate, Children Birth to Age 4 (2003) <sup>6</sup> .....	30.1%

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2002, 22,997 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in New Mexico, a rate of 45.8 per 1,000 children.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2002, 6,273 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in New Mexico, a rate of 12.5 per 1,000 children, representing a 9% decrease from 2000. Of these children, 67.7% were neglected, 33.9% were physically abused, and 6.1% were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2002, three children died as a result of abuse or neglect in New Mexico.<sup>9</sup>
- On September 30, 2002, 1,885 children in New Mexico lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 1,757 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 34.2% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 14.2% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- On September 30, 2002, 28.2% white children, 5.8% black children, 52.5% Hispanic children, 9.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 4.4% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in New Mexico.<sup>11</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 1,606 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 67.7% were reunited with their birthfamilies.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2002, 275 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in New Mexico, a 25.5% decrease from 369 in 2001.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 1,885 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 514 or 27.3% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2003, more than 20,143 New Mexico grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.<sup>15</sup>
- Of the 1,885 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 18.7% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>16</sup>
- Of all New Mexico children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 21.5% were white, 2.5% were black, 51.8% were Hispanic, 17.6% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 6.5% were other races.<sup>17</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in New Mexico declined from 47,952 in March 2002 to 42,999 in March 2003, a decrease of 10.3%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 16,284, a 4.8% decrease from March 2002.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in New Mexico was 36% below the federal poverty guideline.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2003, New Mexico spent \$123,013,102 in TANF funds, including 63.3% on cash assistance, 0.6% on transportation and support activities, and 36.1% on nonassistance.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2002, New Mexico collected and distributed \$51,872,707 in child support funds, an increase of 19.0% from 2001.<sup>21</sup>

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- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New Mexico was \$579 per month, or 70% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.<sup>22</sup>

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

- In 2001, New Mexico served an estimated monthly average of 22,800 children with subsidized child care, an increase from 2000, when 17,600 children were served, and in 1999, when 16,600 children were served.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 72% of New Mexico's median income, or \$29,256, to be eligible for subsidized child care.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2001, New Mexico did not maintain a waiting list for subsidized child care.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2003, 7,651 New Mexico children were served by Head Start, a 1.3% decrease from 2002.<sup>26</sup>

#### 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, 252,555 New Mexico children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 66.6% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2003, New Mexico had 18,841 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 5.5% decrease from 2002, when 19,940 children were enrolled.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2002, 51 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in New Mexico. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 4,513, reflecting a rate of 62.4 births per 1,000 girls.<sup>29</sup>
- As of December 2002, 2,269 adults and adolescents, as well as 8 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in New Mexico.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2001, 24 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 4.29 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2002, an estimated 18,000 children ages 12–17, and 145,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.<sup>32</sup>

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

- In 2003, 10% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 6% decrease from 2000.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2002, 18% of young adults ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>34</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, 10 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in New Mexico, compared with 14 in 2000.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2003, 8,126 children under age 18 were arrested in New Mexico, a 12% decrease from 9,201 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 285 were for violent crimes and 226 were for possession of weapons.<sup>36</sup>
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 837 children in juvenile correction facilities in New Mexico.<sup>37</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 N E W M E X I C O ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2002, New Mexico spent \$77,273,580 for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.<sup>38</sup> Of this amount, 57% was from federal funds, and 43% was from state funds.<sup>39</sup>

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## 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 \$77,273,580 spent for child welfare, 33% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 5% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 11% was from Medicaid, 5% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 1% was TANF, 1% was from Supplemental Security Income, and 1% was from other federal sources. The remaining funds (43%) came from state and local sources.<sup>40</sup>
- Out of 1,885 children in out-of-home care in New Mexico on September 30, 2002, only 1,158 or 61% received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>41</sup>

## NEW MEXICO'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.<sup>42</sup>
- 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.<sup>43</sup>
- 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.<sup>44</sup>

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