

ALABAMA'S CHILDREN 2006

Alabama's Children At a Glance

State Population (2004) ¹	4,530,182
Population, Children Under 18 (2004) ²	1,094,533
State Poverty Rate (2004) ³	16.9
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) ⁴	24.2
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) ⁵	22.1

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, there were 18,557 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of these, 18,150 reports were referred for investigation.⁶
- In 2003, 9,290 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Alabama, a rate of 8.4 per 1,000 children, representing a 6.2% decrease from 2002. Of these children, 39.6% were neglected, 38.6% were physically abused, and 24.7% were sexually abused.⁷
- In 2003, 22 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Alabama.⁸
- On September 30, 2003, 6,079 children in Alabama lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 5,883 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 24.9% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 22.7% were 16 or older.⁹
- Of all Alabama children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 47.6% were white, 49.9% were black, 1.5% were Hispanic, 0.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.9% were of other races and ethnicities.¹⁰

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,818 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 75.7% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹¹
- In 2003, 329 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Alabama, a 32.1% increase from 249 in 2002.¹²
- Of the 6,079 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 1,618 or 26.6% were waiting to be adopted.¹³

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 58,215 Alabama grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 6,079 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 12.8% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Alabama children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 51.4% were white, 46.3% were black, 1.4% were Hispanic, and 0.8% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Alabama increased from 44,824 in March 2004 to 48,117 in March 2005, an increase of 7.3%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 20,214, a 6.8% increase from March 2004.¹⁷
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Alabama was at 29.7% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2004, Alabama spent \$114,194,976 in TANF funds, including 39.3% on basic assistance, 3.5% on transportation, and 57.2% on nonassistance.¹⁹

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- In 2004, Alabama collected and distributed \$226,484,276 in child support funds, an increase of 1.4% from 2003.²⁰
- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alabama was \$512 per month, or 62.1% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²¹

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

- In 2004, an estimated monthly average of 29,200 of Alabama's children received subsidized child care; 30,400 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 32,300 in 2002.²²
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Alabama, a family of three could make no more than \$19,836, which is equivalent to 44% of the state's median income.²³
- In 2005, Alabama had 13,260 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²⁴
- In 2004, Head Start served 16,374 Alabama children, a 0.8% decrease from 2003.²⁵

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, 382,800 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 49% of the total number of enrollees in Alabama.²⁶
- In 2001, 5,676 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 1.5% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in Alabama.²⁷
- Alabama spent \$10,508 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.²⁸
- In 2004, Alabama had 79,407 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 1.1% increase from 2003, when 78,554 children were enrolled.²⁹
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Alabama was 28.9 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 87.1 births. This reflects a total rate of 52.4 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³⁰
- As of December 2003, 7,531 adults and adolescents, as well as 76 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Alabama.³¹
- In 2003, an estimated 27,000 children ages 12–17, and 246,000 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 2004, 7% of Alabama teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 46.2% decrease from 2000.³³
- In 2004, 8% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³⁴
- In 2003, an estimated 16,000 children ages 12–17 in Alabama needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁵
- In 2003, an estimated 18,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.³⁶
- In 2002, 31 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.5 per 100,000 children in the population.³⁷

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JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2002, 15 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Alabama, a 7.1% increase from 14 in 2001.³⁸
- In 2004, 13,596 children younger than 18 were arrested in Alabama, a 4.4% increase from 13,018 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 557 were for a violent crime and 134 were for possession of a weapon.³⁹
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,617 children in juvenile correction facilities in Alabama.⁴⁰

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, Alabama spent \$271,997,873 for child welfare services. *Child welfare services* refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this number, 64.5% was from federal funds, 34.9% was from state funds, and 0.6% was from local funds.⁴¹
- In 2002, of the \$175,368,538 in federal funds received for child welfare, 17.7% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 6.6% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 43% was from Medicaid, 20.1% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 12.1% was from TANF, and 0.4% came from other federal sources.⁴²
- Out of 6,079 children in out-of-home care in Alabama on September 30, 2003, only 1,318 children, or 21.7%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴³

ALABAMA'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.⁴⁴
- 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.⁴⁵
- 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 provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.⁴⁶
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Alabama was \$29,411 ; the median income for a family of four in Alabama was \$53,754.⁴⁷

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