

ARKANSAS'S CHILDREN 2006

Arkansas's Children At a Glance

State Population (2004) ¹	2,752,629
Population, Children Under 18 (2004) ²	676,550
State Poverty Rate (2004) ³	15.1
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) ⁴	21.8
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) ⁵	19.7

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, there were 30,947 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of these, 19,747 reports were referred for investigation.⁶
- In 2003, 7,232 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Arkansas, a rate of 10.6 per 1,000 children, representing a 1% decrease from 2002. Of these children, 54.5% were neglected, 18.9% were physically abused, and 29.2% were sexually abused.⁷
- In 2003, 10 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Arkansas.⁸
- On September 30, 2003, 3,000 children in Arkansas lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 2,971 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 30.9% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 19.5% were 16 or older.⁹
- Of all Arkansas children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 57.4% were white, 31.1% were black, 3.4% were Hispanic, 0.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7.9% were of other races and ethnicities.¹⁰

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,407 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 80.4% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹¹
- In 2003, 385 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Arkansas, a 29.6% increase from 297 in 2002.¹²
- Of the 3,000 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 986 or 32.9% were waiting to be adopted.¹³

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 38,964 Arkansas grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 3,000 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 3.4% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Arkansas children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 36.6% were white, 51.5% were black, 3% were Hispanic, and 8.9% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Arkansas decreased from 22,501 in March 2004 to 18,845 in March 2005, a decrease of 16.2%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 8,660, a 14.1% decrease from March 2004.¹⁷
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Arkansas was at 34.4% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2004, Arkansas spent \$41,521,107 in TANF funds, including 40.6% on basic assistance, and 59.4% on nonassistance.¹⁹

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- In 2004, Arkansas collected and distributed \$144,740,929 in child support funds, an increase of 6.9% from 2003.²⁰
- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Arkansas was \$501 per month, or 60.8% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state 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 14,700 of Arkansas's children received subsidized child care; 12,900 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 10,400 in 2002.²²
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Arkansas, a family of three could make no more than \$25,311, which is equivalent to 61% of the state's median income.²³
- In 2005, Arkansas had 517 families children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²⁴
- In 2004, Head Start served 10,879 Arkansas children, a 0.3% 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, 273,200 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 49.6% of the total number of enrollees in Arkansas.²⁶
- In 2001, 5,913 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 2.2% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in Arkansas.²⁷
- Arkansas spent \$6,539 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.²⁸
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Arkansas was 30.5 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 101.1 births. This reflects a total rate of 59.0 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.²⁹
- As of December 2003, 3,543 adults and adolescents, as well as 38 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Arkansas.³⁰
- In 2003, an estimated 21,000 children ages 12–17, and 181,000 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 2004, 7% of Arkansas teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 41.7% decrease from 2000.³²
- In 2004, 8% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³³
- In 2003, an estimated 11,000 children ages 12–17 in Arkansas needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁴
- In 2003, an estimated 14,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.³⁵
- In 2002, 21 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.76 per 100,000 children in the population.³⁶

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 2002, 10 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Arkansas, an 11.1% increase from 9 in 2001.³⁷

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- In 2004, 9,358 children younger than 18 were arrested in Arkansas, a 2.5% increase from 9,128 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 234 were for a violent crime and 103 were for possession of a weapon.³⁸
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 652 children in juvenile correction facilities in Arkansas.³⁹

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ARKANSAS'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, Arkansas spent \$68,005,126 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, 66.3% was from federal funds, and 33.7% was from state funds.⁴⁰
- In 2002, of the \$45,108,952 in federal funds received for child welfare, 78% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 12.2% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 0.2% was from Medicaid, 4.4% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 3.8% was from TANF, and 1.4% came from other federal sources.⁴¹
- Out of 3,000 children in out-of-home care in Arkansas on September 30, 2003, only 1,364 children, or 45.5%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴²

ARKANSAS'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.⁴³
- 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.⁴⁴
- 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.⁴⁵
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Arkansas was \$23,166 ; the median income for a family of four in Arkansas was \$49,551.⁴⁶

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