

# LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN 2006

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## Louisiana's Children At a Glance

State Population (2004) <sup>1</sup>	4,515,770
Population, Children Under 18 (2004) <sup>2</sup>	1,164,961
State Poverty Rate (2004) <sup>3</sup>	16.7
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) <sup>4</sup>	20.6
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) <sup>5</sup>	17.3

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, 11,432 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Louisiana, a rate of 9.7 per 1,000 children, representing a 4.2% increase from 2002. Of these children, 76.9% were neglected, 22% were physically abused, and 7.4% were sexually abused.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2003, 43 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Louisiana.<sup>7</sup>
- On September 30, 2003, 4,541 children in Louisiana lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 4,829 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 29.9% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 16.1% were 16 or older.<sup>8</sup>
- Of all Louisiana children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 40.3% were white, 56.7% were black, 0.9% were Hispanic, 0.4% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.8% were of other races and ethnicities.<sup>9</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 2,866 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 67.5% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>10</sup>
- In 2003, 497 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Louisiana, a 2.1% increase from 487 in 2002.<sup>11</sup>
- Of the 4,541 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 1,316 or 29% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>12</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 50,230 Louisiana grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 4,541 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 12.7% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>14</sup>
- Of all Louisiana children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 46.1% were white, 51.3% were black, 0.5% were Hispanic, 0.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2% were other races.<sup>15</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Louisiana decreased from 43,426 in March 2004 to 37,009 in March 2005, a decrease of 14.8%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 15,979, an 11.5% decrease from March 2004.<sup>16</sup>
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Louisiana was at 36.1% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2004, Louisiana spent \$252,077,816 in TANF funds, including 25.7% on basic assistance, 2.1% on child care, 0.6% on transportation, and 71.7% on nonassistance.<sup>18</sup>

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- In 2004, Louisiana collected and distributed \$279,621,377 in child support funds, an increase of 2.4% from 2003.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana was \$569 per month, or 69.1% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.<sup>20</sup>

### **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 51,800 of Louisiana's children received subsidized child care; 54,600 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 45,700 in 2002.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Louisiana, a family of three could make no more than \$31,152, which is equivalent to 71% of the state's median income.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2005, Louisiana had no children on a waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2004, Head Start served 21,982 Louisiana children, a 0.6% decrease from 2003.<sup>24</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, 509,300 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 57.5% of the total number of enrollees in Louisiana.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2001, 9,540 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 1.9% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in Louisiana.<sup>26</sup>
- Louisiana spent \$2,407 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2004, Louisiana had 105,580 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 0.6% increase from 2003, when 104,908 children were enrolled.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Louisiana was 30.1 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 92.9 births. This reflects a total rate of 56.0 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>29</sup>
- As of December 2003, 15,519 adults and adolescents, as well as 134 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 35,000 children ages 12–17, and 315,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.<sup>31</sup>

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

- In 2004, 10% of Louisiana teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 9.1% decrease from 2000.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2004, 13% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 17,000 children ages 12–17 in Louisiana needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>34</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 21,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2002, 28 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.1 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>36</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 2002, 36 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Louisiana, a 20% increase from 30 in 2001.<sup>37</sup>

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- In 2004, 35,055 children younger than 18 were arrested in Louisiana, a 0.7% decrease from 35,285 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 1,489 were for a violent crime and 281 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>38</sup>
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 2,456 children in juvenile correction facilities in Louisiana.<sup>39</sup>

### FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, Louisiana spent \$205,212,594 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, 59.1% was from federal funds, and 40.9% was from state funds.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2002, of the \$121,369,877 in federal funds received for child welfare, 48.4% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 10.2% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 35.9% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 0.4% was from TANF, 1.6% came from Supplemental Security Income, 0.9% was from Social Security Survivors Benefits, and 2.5% came from other federal sources.<sup>41</sup>
- Out of 4,541 children in out-of-home care in Louisiana on September 30, 2003, only 2,696 children, or 59.4%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>42</sup>

### LOUISIANA'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>43</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>44</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 provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.<sup>45</sup>
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Louisiana was \$23,899 ; the median income for a family of four in Louisiana was \$52,299.<sup>46</sup>

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