

# MISSISSIPPI'S CHILDREN 2006

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## Mississippi's Children At a Glance

State Population (2004) <sup>1</sup>	2,902,966
Population, Children Under 18 (2004) <sup>2</sup>	749,569
State Poverty Rate (2004) <sup>3</sup>	18.6
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) <sup>4</sup>	26.6
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) <sup>5</sup>	26.6

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, there were 21,331 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of these, 15,998 reports were referred for investigation.<sup>6</sup>
- In 2003, 5,940 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Mississippi, a rate of 7.8 per 1,000 children, representing a 48.4% increase from 2002. Of these children, 55% were neglected, 22.8% were physically abused, and 15.1% were sexually abused.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2003, 13 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Mississippi.<sup>8</sup>
- On September 30, 2003, 2,812 children in Mississippi lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 2,686 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 29.4% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 19.5% were 16 or older.<sup>9</sup>
- Of all Mississippi children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 40.2% were white, 50.9% were black, 1% were Hispanic, 0.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7.8% were of other races and ethnicities.<sup>10</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 1,527 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 55.2% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2003, 182 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Mississippi, a 19.8% decrease from 227 in 2002.<sup>12</sup>
- Of the 2,812 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 833 or 29.6% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>13</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 49,977 Mississippi grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>14</sup>
- Of the 2,812 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 14.3% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>15</sup>
- Of all Mississippi children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 48.9% were white, 47.6% were black, 0.5% were Hispanic, and 2.9% were other races.<sup>16</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Mississippi decreased from 41,953 in March 2004 to 33,795 in March 2005, a decrease of 19.4%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 15,763, a 15.3% decrease from March 2004.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Mississippi was at 27.4% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2004, Mississippi spent \$102,733,025 in TANF funds, including 31.3% on basic assistance, 4.3% on child care, and 106.7% on nonassistance.<sup>19</sup>

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- In 2004, Mississippi collected and distributed \$182,008,930 in child support funds, an increase of 4% from 2003.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Mississippi was \$509 per month, or 61.8% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.<sup>21</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 25,100 of Mississippi's children received subsidized child care; 23,300 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 19,900 in 2002.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Mississippi, a family of three could make no more than \$34,999, which is equivalent to 87% of the state's median income.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2005, Mississippi had 478 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2004, Head Start served 26,754 Mississippi children, the same as in 2003.<sup>25</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, 372,900 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 54.7% of the total number of enrollees in Mississippi.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2001, 3,224 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 0.9% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in Mississippi.<sup>27</sup>
- Mississippi spent \$2,387 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2004, Mississippi had 82,900 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 10.5% increase from 2003, when 75,010 children were enrolled.<sup>29</sup>
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Mississippi was 35.3 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 101.9 births. This reflects a total rate of 62.5 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>30</sup>
- As of December 2003, 5,742 adults and adolescents, as well as 57 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Mississippi.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 16,000 children ages 12–17, and 167,000 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 2004, 10% of Mississippi teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 33.3% decrease from 2000.<sup>33</sup>
- In 2004, 12% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>34</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 10,000 children ages 12–17 in Mississippi needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2003, an estimated 9,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2002, 29 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 3.41 per 100,000 children in the population.<sup>37</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, 13 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Mississippi, a 160% increase from 5 in 2001.<sup>38</sup>

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- In 2004, 12,514 children younger than 18 were arrested in Mississippi, a 9.7% increase from 11,403 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 219 were for a violent crime and 176 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>39</sup>
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 693 children in juvenile correction facilities in Mississippi.<sup>40</sup>

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

- In 2002, Mississippi spent \$56,899,368 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, 60.5% was from federal funds, 37% was from state funds, and 2.5% was from local funds.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2002, of the \$34,410,873 in federal funds received for child welfare, 43.2% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 17.4% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 29.9% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 8.2% was from TANF, and 1.2% came from other federal sources.<sup>42</sup>
- Out of 2,812 children in out-of-home care in Mississippi on September 30, 2003, none received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>43</sup>

### MISSISSIPPI'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>44</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>45</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>46</sup>
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Mississippi was \$25,183 ; the median income for a family of four in Mississippi was \$47,847.<sup>47</sup>

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