

NEBRASKA'S CHILDREN 2006

Nebraska's Children At a Glance

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|---|-----------|
| State Population (2004) ¹ | 1,747,214 |
| Population, Children Under 18 (2004) ² | 434,566 |
| State Poverty Rate (2004) ³ | 9.4 |
| Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) ⁴ | 10.2 |
| Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) ⁵ | 8.4 |

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, there were 13,784 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of these, 7,160 reports were referred for investigation.⁶
- In 2003, 3,875 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Nebraska, a rate of 8.8 per 1,000 children, representing a 0.9% decrease from 2002. Of these children, 72.7% were neglected, 21.2% were physically abused, and 10% were sexually abused.⁷
- In 2003, 16 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Nebraska.⁸
- On September 30, 2003, 6,091 children in Nebraska lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 6,430 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 22.8% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 30% were 16 or older.⁹
- Of all Nebraska children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 65.1% were white, 15.4% were black, 7.9% were Hispanic, 8.8% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.9% were of other races and ethnicities.¹⁰

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,137 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 76% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹¹
- In 2003, 274 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Nebraska, an 11% decrease from 308 in 2002.¹²
- Of the 6,091 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 914 or 15% were waiting to be adopted.¹³

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 12,983 Nebraska grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 6,091 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 12.7% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Nebraska children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 67.4% were white, 15% were black, 6.6% were Hispanic, 9.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.9% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Nebraska decreased from 27,799 in March 2004 to 23,300 in March 2005, a decrease of 16.2%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 9,787, a 14.2% decrease from March 2004.¹⁷
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Nebraska was at 40.4% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸
- In 2004, Nebraska spent \$88,944,672 in TANF funds, including 72.4% on basic assistance and 27.6% on nonassistance.¹⁹

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- In 2004, Nebraska collected and distributed \$153,576,166 in child support funds, an increase of 4.7% from 2003.²⁰
- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Nebraska was \$576 per month, or 69.9% 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 13,400 of Nebraska's children received subsidized child care; 12,000 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 12,300 in 2002.²²
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Nebraska, a family of three could make no more than \$18,804, which is equivalent to 37% of the state's median income.²³
- In 2005, Nebraska had no children on a waiting list for child care assistance.²⁴
- In 2004, Head Start served 5,080 Nebraska children, a 2.4% 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, 149,200 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 59.9% of the total number of enrollees in Nebraska.²⁶
- In 2001, 10,120 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 6.8% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in Nebraska.²⁷
- Nebraska spent \$5,609 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.²⁸
- In 2004, Nebraska had 33,314 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 26.8% decrease from 2003, when 45,490 children were enrolled.²⁹
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Nebraska was 18.5 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 61.0 births. This reflects a total rate of 36.0 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³⁰
- As of December 2003, 1,286 adults and adolescents, as well as 10 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Nebraska.³¹
- In 2003, an estimated 18,000 children ages 12–17, and 139,000 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, 6% of Nebraska teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, the same as in 2000.³³
- In 2004, 6% 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 8,000 children ages 12–17 in Nebraska needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁵
- In 2003, an estimated 13,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.³⁶
- In 2002, 14 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.82 per 100,000 children in the population.³⁷

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, 4 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Nebraska, a 33.3% increase from 3 in 2001.³⁸

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- In 2004, 14,577 children younger than 18 were arrested in Nebraska, a 9.8% increase from 13,273 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 219 were for a violent crime and 182 were for possession of a weapon.³⁹
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 718 children in juvenile correction facilities in Nebraska.⁴⁰

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR NEBRASKA'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, Nebraska spent \$143,945,744 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, 44.1% was from federal funds, and 56% was from state funds.⁴¹
- In 2002, of the \$63,422,608 in federal funds received for child welfare, 43.8% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 5.7% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 47.4% was from Medicaid, and 3.1% came from Supplemental Security Income.⁴²
- Out of 6,091 children in out-of-home care in Nebraska on September 30, 2003, only 1,337 children, or 22%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴³

NEBRASKA'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 Nebraska was \$28,681 ; the median income for a family of four in Nebraska was \$60,129.⁴⁷

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