

NEW JERSEY'S CHILDREN 2006

New Jersey's Children At a Glance

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| State Population (2004) ¹ | 8,698,879 |
| Population, Children Under 18 (2004) ² | 2,156,059 |
| State Poverty Rate (2004) ³ | 8.0 |
| Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2004) ⁴ | 8.4 |
| Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2004) ⁵ | 7.9 |

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2003, 8,123 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in New Jersey, a rate of 3.8 per 1,000 children, representing a 0.2% increase from 2002. Of these children, 51.9% were neglected, 25.6% were physically abused, and 9.3% were sexually abused.⁶
- In 2003, 34 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in New Jersey.⁷
- On September 30, 2003, 12,801 children in New Jersey lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 11,442 children on September 30, 2002. In 2003, 38.1% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 13.7% were 16 or older.⁸
- Of all New Jersey children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2005, 23.5% were white, 60.5% were black, 6.4% were Hispanic, 0.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 9.2% were of other races and ethnicities.⁹

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 5,437 children exiting out-of-home care in 2003, 68.5% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹⁰
- In 2003, 935 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in New Jersey, a 32.1% decrease from 1,378 in 2002.¹¹
- Of the 12,801 children in out-of-home care in 2003, 6,070 or 47.4% were waiting to be adopted.¹²

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2004, approximately 51,163 New Jersey grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹³
- Of the 12,801 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2003, 3.6% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁴
- Of all New Jersey children in kinship care on September 30, 2003, 23.3% were white, 64.7% were black, 4.5% were Hispanic, 0.4% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7.1% were other races.¹⁵

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in New Jersey decreased from 106,797 in March 2004 to 105,044 in March 2005, a decrease of 1.6%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2005 was 42,935, a 3.5% decrease from March 2004.¹⁶
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in New Jersey was at 42.5% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁷
- In 2004, New Jersey spent \$888,893,039 in TANF funds, including 30.1% on basic assistance, 4.2% on child care, 1.4% on transportation, and 64.7% on nonassistance.¹⁸
- In 2004, New Jersey collected and distributed \$861,917,778 in child support funds, an increase of 5.8% from 2003.¹⁹

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- In 2004, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New Jersey was \$1,058 per month, or 128.5% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the state minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²⁰

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 38,700 of New Jersey's children received subsidized child care; 37,500 children received subsidized child care in 2003, and 43,300 in 2002.²¹
- In 2005, to be eligible for subsidized child care in New Jersey, a family of three could make no more than \$31,340, which is equivalent to 45% of the state's median income.²²
- In 2005, New Jersey had 6,994 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²³
- In 2004, Head Start served 15,130 New Jersey children, a 0.2% increase from 2003.²⁴

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, 455,900 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 49.4% of the total number of enrollees in New Jersey.²⁵
- In 2001, 19,828 children in foster care were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 4.3% of all children enrolled in Medicaid in New Jersey.²⁶
- New Jersey spent \$7,199 per enrollee in 2001 on Medicaid services for children in foster care.²⁷
- In 2004, New Jersey had 127,244 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 6.7% increase from 2003, when 119,272 children were enrolled.²⁸
- In 2003, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in New Jersey was 13.8 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 44.1 births. This reflects a total rate of 25.5 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.²⁹
- As of December 2003, 45,936 adults and adolescents, as well as 767 children younger than 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in New Jersey.³⁰
- In 2003, an estimated 58,000 children ages 12–17, and 479,000 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, 5% of New Jersey teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 37.5% decrease from 2000.³²
- In 2004, 7% 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 33,000 children ages 12–17 in New Jersey needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁴
- In 2003, an estimated 36,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.³⁵
- In 2002, 17 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 0.73 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, 9 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in New Jersey, a 28.6% increase from 7 in 2001.³⁷
- In 2004, 60,443 children younger than 18 were arrested in New Jersey, a 1.6% increase from 59,499 arrests in 2003. Of the arrests in 2004, 3,457 were for a violent crime and 2,086 were for possession of a weapon.³⁸

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- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 2,079 children in juvenile correction facilities in New Jersey.³⁹

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR NEW JERSEY'S CHILDREN

- In 2002, New Jersey spent \$460,389,862 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, 41.2% was from federal funds, and 58.8% was from state funds.⁴⁰
- In 2002, of the \$189,600,334 in federal funds received for child welfare, 46.2% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 7.1% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 15% was from Medicaid, 25.3% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 4.4% was from TANF, 0.5% came from Supplemental Security Income, 0.6% was from Social Security Survivors Benefits, and 1% came from other federal sources.⁴¹
- Out of 12,801 children in out-of-home care in New Jersey on September 30, 2003, only 5,153 children, or 40.3%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴²

NEW JERSEY'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 New Jersey was \$37,648 ; the median income for a family of four in New Jersey was \$82,406.⁴⁶

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