

ALASKA'S CHILDREN 2007

Alaska's Children At a Glance

State Population ¹	663,661
Population, Children Under 18 ²	188,324
State Poverty Rate ³	10.0
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 ⁴	14.5
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 ⁵	13.8
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 ⁶	13.6

All statistics are for 2005.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- On September 30, 2004, 1,825 children in Alaska lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 2,040 children on September 30, 2003. In 2004, 32.3% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 14.7% were 16 or older.⁷
- Of the children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 27.6% were white, 7.8% were black, 1.8% were Hispanic, 61.5% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.3% were children of other races and ethnicities.⁸

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 715 children exiting out-of-home care in 2004, 62.5% were reunited with their parents or other family members.⁹
- In 2004, 182 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Alaska, a 14.3% decrease from 208 in 2003.¹⁰
- Of the 1,825 children in out-of-home care in 2004, 660 or 36.2% were waiting to be adopted.¹¹

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2005, approximately 6,869 Alaska grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹²
- Of the 1,825 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 29.5% were living with relatives while in care.¹³
- Of all Alaska children in kinship care on September 30, 2004, 22.9% were white, 8.4% were black, 2.8% were Hispanic, 64.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.9% were of other races.¹⁴

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Alaska decreased from 13,342 in March 2005 to 10,737 in March 2006, a decrease of 24.3%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2006 was 3,883, a 24.0% decrease from March 2005.¹⁵
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Alaska was at 64.7% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁶

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- In 2004, Alaska spent \$76,236,599 in TANF funds, including 56.9% on basic assistance, 9.4% on child care, 0.8% on transportation, and 33.0% on nonassistance.¹⁷
- In 2005, Alaska collected and distributed \$85,090,915 in child support funds, an increase of 3.6% from 2004.¹⁸
- In 2005, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alaska was \$905 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$17.40 per hour, working a 40-hour week.¹⁹

C H I L D C A R E A N D H E A D S T A R T

- In 2005, Alaska had an estimated monthly average of 4,700 children served by subsidized child care; 4,400 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 5,300 in 2003.²⁰
- In 2006, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Alaska, a family of three could make no more than \$46,243, which is equivalent to 76% of the state's median income.²¹
- In 2006, Alaska had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²²
- In 2005, Head Start served 1,725 Alaska children, a 5.6% increase from 2004.²³

H E A L T H A N D S U B S T A N C E A B U S E

- In 2002, 75,900 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Alaska, representing 62.6% of the total number of enrollees.²⁴
- In 2001, 1,596 foster and adopted children were enrolled in Medicaid in Alaska, representing 2.5% of all children in Medicaid.²⁵
- In 2001, Alaska spent \$14,288,202 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$8,953 on Medicaid services per foster care enrollee.²⁶
- Alaska reported spending \$31,788.00 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2001 on rehabilitative services for foster children.²⁷
- In 2005, Alaska had 22,322 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 1.6% increase from 2004, when 21,966 children were enrolled.²⁸
- In 2003, 600 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Alaska a ranking of 4 nationally in number of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).²⁹
- In 2003, 71 infants younger than 1 year died in Alaska, giving the state a ranking of 6 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).³⁰
- In 2004, the birth rate for teens age 15–17 in Alaska was 17.2 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 71.9. This reflects a total rate of 38.9 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³¹

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- Cumulative through 2004, 590 adults and adolescents, as well as seven children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Alaska.³²
- In 2004, an estimated 6,000 children age 12–17, and 28,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Alaska.³³

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2004, 30 children aged-out of out-of-home care in Alaska.³⁴
- In 2004, 2,000 Alaska teens age 16–19 were high school dropouts.³⁵
- In 2004, 12% of teens age 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³⁶
- In 2004, approximately 4,000 children age 12–17 in Alaska needed, but had not received, treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁷
- In 2004, approximately 4,000 children age 12–17 needed, but had not received, treatment for alcohol use in the past year.³⁸
- In 2003, 23 children and youth younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 10.84 per 100,000 children.³⁹

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2003, six children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Alaska, as compared with five in 2002.⁴⁰
- In 2005, 4,532 children younger than 18 were arrested in Alaska, a 0.3% increase from 4,520 arrests in 2004. Of the arrests in 2005, 205 were for violent crimes and 68 were for possession of a weapon.⁴¹
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 336 children in juvenile correction facilities in Alaska.⁴²

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ALASKA'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, Alaska spent \$85,368,304 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.⁴³ Of this amount, 44% was from federal funds, and 56% was from state funds.⁴⁴
- In 2004, of the \$37,786,604 in federal funds received for child welfare, 54% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 3% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 19% was from Medicaid, 19% came from the Social Services Block Grant, and 6% came from other federal sources.⁴⁵

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ALASKA'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.⁴⁶
- The federal Child and Family Service Reviews have demonstrated clearly that the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for those children and families.⁴⁷
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/ foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children; 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.⁴⁸
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Alaska was \$36,969; the median income for a family of four was \$72,110.⁴⁹

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