

# ARKANSAS'S CHILDREN 2007

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## Arkansas's Children At a Glance

State Population <sup>1</sup> .....	2,779,154
Population, Children Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....	675,622
State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....	13.8
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....	24.9
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> .....	23.0
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....	27.9

*All statistics are for 2005.*

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2004, Arkansas had 32,122 total referrals of child abuse and neglect. Of those, 20,076 reports were referred for investigation.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2004, 7,276 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Arkansas, a rate of 10.8 per 1,000 children, and representing a 0.6% increase from 2003. Of these children, 56.8% were neglected, 18.4% were physically abused, and 27.8% were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2004, 12 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Arkansas.<sup>9</sup>
- On September 30, 2004, 3,097 children in Arkansas lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 3,000 children on September 30, 2003. In 2004, 31.7% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 20.3% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- Of the children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 58.2% were white, 28.5% were black, 4.1% were Hispanic, 0.1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 9.1% were children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>11</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,264 children exiting out-of-home care in 2004, 79.8% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2004, 331 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Arkansas, a 16.3% decrease from 385 in 2003.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 3,097 children in out-of-home care in 2004, 943 or 30.4% were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2005, approximately 35,423 Arkansas grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>15</sup>
- Of the 3,097 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2004, 3.6% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>16</sup>
- Of all Arkansas children in kinship care on September 30, 2004, 41.1% were white, 43.8% were black, 3.6% were Hispanic, and 11.6% were of other races.<sup>17</sup>

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# CHILD WELFARE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

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## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Arkansas decreased from 18,845 in March 2005 to 17,770 in March 2006, a decrease of 6.0%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2006 was 8,194 , a 5.7% decrease from March 2005.<sup>18</sup>
- In 2002, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Arkansas was at 34.4% of the federal poverty guideline.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2004, Arkansas spent \$41,521,107 in TANF funds, including 40.6% on basic assistance and 59.4% on nonassistance.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2005, Arkansas collected and distributed \$155,100,806 in child support funds, an increase of 7.2% from 2004.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2005, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Arkansas was \$520 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$9.99 per hour, working a 40-hour week.<sup>22</sup>

## CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2005, Arkansas had an estimated monthly average of 10,300 children served by subsidized child care; 14,700 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 12,900 in 2003.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2006, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Arkansas, a family of three could make no more than \$26,174, which is equivalent to 64% of the state's median income.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2006, Arkansas had 1761 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2005, Head Start served 10,942 Arkansas children, a 0.6% increase from 2004.<sup>26</sup>

## HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2002, 310,600 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Arkansas, representing 51.1% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2001, 5,913 foster and adopted children were enrolled in Medicaid in Arkansas, representing 2.2% of all children in Medicaid.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2001, Arkansas spent \$38,663,242 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$6,539 on Medicaid services per foster care enrollee.<sup>29</sup>
- Arkansas reported spending \$3,716,980.00 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2001 on targeted case management services for foster children.<sup>30</sup>
- Arkansas reported spending \$76,235.00 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2001 on rehabilitative services for foster children.<sup>31</sup>

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- In 2005, Arkansas had 1,214 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 51.9% increase from 2004, when 799 children were enrolled.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2003, 3,348 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Arkansas a ranking of 22 nationally in number of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>33</sup>
- In 2003, 327 infants younger than 1 year died in Arkansas, giving the state a ranking of 23 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>34</sup>
- In 2004, the birth rate for teens age 15–17 in Arkansas was 30.7 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 104.1. This reflects a total rate of 60.3 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>35</sup>
- Cumulative through 2004, 3,451 adults and adolescents, as well as 36 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Arkansas.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2004, an estimated 20,000 children age 12–17, and 104,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Arkansas.<sup>37</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2004, 199 children aged-out of out-of-home care in Arkansas.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2004, 10,000 Arkansas teens age 16–19 were high school dropouts.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2004, 8% of teens age 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2004, approximately 11,000 children age 12–17 in Arkansas needed, but had not received, treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2004, approximately 13,000 children age 12–17 needed, but had not received, treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>42</sup>
- In 2003, 14 children and youth younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 1.85 per 100,000 children.<sup>43</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2003, 6 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Arkansas, a 40% decrease from 10 in 2002.<sup>44</sup>
- In 2005, 12,380 children younger than 18 were arrested in Arkansas, a 32.3% increase from 9,358 arrests in 2004. Of the arrests in 2005, 477 were for violent crimes and 160 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>45</sup>
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 675 children in juvenile correction facilities in Arkansas.<sup>46</sup>

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## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ARKANSAS'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, Arkansas spent \$98,705,298 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.<sup>47</sup> Of this amount, 62% was from federal funds, and 38% was from state funds.<sup>48</sup>
- In 2004, of the \$61,135,611 in federal funds received for child welfare, 73% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 23% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 1% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 2% was from TANF, and 1% came from other federal sources.<sup>49</sup>
- Out of 3,097 children in out-of-home care in Arkansas on September 30, 2004, only 1,697, or 54.8%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>50</sup>

## ARKANSAS'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>51</sup>
- 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.<sup>52</sup>
- 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.<sup>53</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Arkansas was \$23,768; the median income for a family of four was \$48,353.<sup>54</sup>

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