

# ALABAMA'S CHILDREN 2008

## Alabama's Children At a Glance

State Population <sup>1</sup> .....	4,599,030
Population, Children Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....	1,089,753
State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....	14.3
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....	18.8
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> .....	16.3
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....	26.1

*All statistics are for 2006.*

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2005, Alabama had 30,362 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 18,318 reports were referred for investigation.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005, 6,224 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Alabama, a rate of 8.3 per 1,000 children, and representing a 3.6% decrease from 2004. Of these children, 44.5% were neglected, 40.5% were physically abused, and 23.5% were sexually abused.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2005, 24 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Alabama.<sup>9</sup>
- In 2005, 6,913 children in Alabama lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 5,880 children in 2004. In 2005, 28.1% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 23.5% were 16 or older.<sup>10</sup>
- Of the children in out-of-home care in 2005, 50.2% were white, 46.4% black, 1.9% Hispanic, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.3% children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>11</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,279 children exiting out-of-home care in 2005, 79% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>12</sup>
- In 2005, 324 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Alabama, a 22.8% decrease from 398 in 2004.<sup>13</sup>
- Of the 6,913 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 2,256, or 32.6%, were waiting to be adopted.<sup>14</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2005, approximately 64,660 Alabama grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>15</sup>
- Of the 6,913 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 12.9% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>16</sup>
- Of all Alabama children in kinship care in 2005, 54.7% were white, 42.3% were black, 1.2% were Hispanic, 0.4% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.3% were other races.<sup>17</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Alabama decreased from 42,475 in March 2006 to 40,475 in March 2007, a 2.1% decrease. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2007 was 17,554, a 10.7% decrease from March 2006.<sup>18</sup>

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- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Alabama was at 30.3% of the federal poverty level.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2006, Alabama spent \$107,329,981 in TANF funds, including 32.2% on basic assistance, 4.2% on child care, 2.9% on transportation, and 64.8% on nonassistance.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2006, Alabama collected and distributed \$246,440,868 in child support funds, an increase of 3.8% from 2005.<sup>21</sup>
- In 2006, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alabama was \$549 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$10.55 per hour working a 40-hour week.<sup>22</sup>

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

- In 2005, Alabama had an estimated monthly average of 27,100 children served by subsidized child care; 29,200 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 30,400 in 2003.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2007, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Alabama a family of three could make no more than \$20,916, which is equivalent to 42% of the state's median income.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2007, Alabama had 6,635 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>25</sup>
- In 2006, Head Start served 16,374 Alabama children, the same as in 2005.<sup>26</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 2004, 447,700 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Alabama, representing 48.8% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2004, 2,582 children were enrolled in Medicaid in Alabama on the basis of being in foster care.<sup>28</sup>
- In 2004, Alabama spent \$27,639,700 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$10,705 per foster care enrollee on Medicaid services.<sup>29</sup>
- Alabama reported spending \$47,510 of its total Medicaid spending in 2004 for children in foster care on targeted case management services.<sup>30</sup>
- Alabama reported spending \$43,357 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2004 for foster children on rehabilitative services.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2006, Alabama had 84,257 children enrolled in its Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a 2.85% increase from 2005, when 81,856 children were enrolled.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2004, 6,201 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Alabama a rank of 48 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>33</sup>
- In 2004, 516 infants younger than age 1 died in Alabama, giving it a rank of 45 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>34</sup>
- In 2004, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Alabama was 29.1 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 86.5. This reflects a total rate of 52.4 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>35</sup>

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# C H I L D W E L F A R E L E A G U E O F A M E R I C A

- Cumulative through 2005, 8,404 adults and adolescents, as well as 38 children under the age of 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Alabama.<sup>36</sup>
- In 2005, an estimated 30,000 children ages 12–17, and 181,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Alabama.<sup>37</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2005, 189 children aged out of out-of-home care in Alabama.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2005, 22,000 Alabama teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2005, 19% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 17,000 children ages 12–17 in Alabama needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 20,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>42</sup>
- In 2004, 32 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.59 per 100,000 children.<sup>43</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2004, 31 children younger than 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Alabama, a 107% increase from 15 in 2003.<sup>44</sup>
- In 2006, 11,577 children younger than 18 were arrested in Alabama, a 0.81% decrease from 11,484 arrests in 2005. Of the arrests in 2006, 580 were for violent crimes and 151 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>45</sup>
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,794 children in juvenile correction facilities in Alabama.<sup>46</sup>

## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ALABAMA'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, Alabama spent \$278,097,807 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 62% was from federal funds, 37% was from state funds, and 1% was from local funds.<sup>47</sup>
- In 2004, of the \$173,519,692 in federal funds received for child welfare, 15% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 7% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 46% was from Medicaid, 19% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 13% was from TANF, and 1% came from other federal sources.<sup>48</sup>
- Out of 6,913 children in out-of-home care in Alabama in 2005, only 24 children, or 0.3%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>49</sup>

## ALABAMA'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>50</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>51</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 being provided to children and families. CWLA recommends that foster care caseworkers have caseloads of 12–15 children.<sup>52</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Alabama was \$26,411; the median income for a family of four was \$55,448.<sup>53</sup>

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