

# NEW JERSEY'S CHILDREN 2008

## New Jersey's Children At a Glance

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|--|-----------|
| State Population <sup>1</sup> .....                    | 8,724,560 |
| Population, Children<br>Under 18 <sup>2</sup> .....    | 2,161,801 |
| State Poverty Rate <sup>3</sup> .....                  | 8.8       |
| Poverty Rate,<br>Children Under 18 <sup>4</sup> .....  | 12.5      |
| Poverty Rate,<br>Children Ages 5-17 <sup>5</sup> ..... | 11.1      |
| Poverty Rate,<br>Children Under 5 <sup>6</sup> .....   | 13.2      |

*All statistics are for 2006.*

## CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2005, 6,796 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in New Jersey, a rate of 4.5 per 1,000 children, and representing a 15.6% increase from 2004. Of these children, 49.6% were neglected, 33.4% were physically abused, and 8.8% were sexually abused.<sup>7</sup>
- In 2005, 30 children died as a result of abuse or neglect in New Jersey.<sup>8</sup>
- In 2005, 12,042 children in New Jersey lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 12,702 children in 2004. In 2005, 37.4% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 15.6% were 16 or older.<sup>9</sup>
- Of the children in out-of-home care in 2005, 25% were white, 56.8% black, 6.5% Hispanic, 0.2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 11.5% children of other races and ethnicities.<sup>10</sup>

## PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 7,599 children exiting out-of-home care in 2005, 65.7% were reunited with their parents or other family members.<sup>11</sup>
- In 2005, 1,377 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in New Jersey, a 3.5% increase from 1328 in 2004.<sup>12</sup>
- Of the 12,042 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 5,446, or 45.2%, were waiting to be adopted.<sup>13</sup>

## KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2005, approximately 53,859 New Jersey grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.<sup>14</sup>
- Of the 12,042 children in out-of-home care in 2005, 25.3% were living with relatives while in care.<sup>15</sup>
- Of all New Jersey children in kinship care in 2005, 26% were white, 57.5% were black, 5.7% were Hispanic, 0.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 10.7% were other races.<sup>16</sup>

## CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in New Jersey decreased from 98,344 in March 2006 to 80,849 in March 2007, a decrease of 16.4%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2007 was 34,303, a 19.2% decrease from March 2006.<sup>17</sup>
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in New Jersey was at 42.7% of the federal poverty level.<sup>18</sup>

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- In 2006, New Jersey spent \$585,503,366 in TANF funds, including 13.3% on basic assistance, 2.6% on child care, 1.8% on transportation, and 82.3% on nonassistance.<sup>19</sup>
- In 2006, New Jersey collected and distributed \$962,286,549 in child support funds, an increase of 5.1% from 2005.<sup>20</sup>
- In 2006, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in New Jersey was \$1,103 per month. The wage necessary to afford this two-bedroom apartment was \$21.21 per hour working a 40-hour week.<sup>21</sup>

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

- In 2005, New Jersey had an estimated monthly average of 37,800 children served by subsidized child care; 38,300 children received subsidized child care in 2004, and 37,500 in 2003.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2007, to be eligible for subsidized child care in New Jersey a family of three could make no more than \$33,200, which is equivalent to 44% of the state's median income.<sup>23</sup>
- In 2007, New Jersey had 4,600 children on its waiting list for child care assistance.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2006, Head Start served 14,582 New Jersey children, a 0.9% increase from 2005.<sup>25</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, 574,000 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in New Jersey, representing 52.5% of the total number of enrollees.<sup>26</sup>
- In 2004, 2,642 children were enrolled in Medicaid in New Jersey on the basis of being in foster care.<sup>27</sup>
- In 2004, New Jersey spent \$32,360,713 on Medicaid services for children in foster care, and \$12,249 per foster care enrollee on Medicaid services.<sup>28</sup>
- New Jersey reported none of its total Medicaid spending in 2004 for children in foster care was for targeted case management services.<sup>29</sup>
- New Jersey reported spending \$249,692 of its total Medicaid expenditures in 2004 for foster children on rehabilitative services.<sup>30</sup>
- In 2006, New Jersey had 120,884 children enrolled in its Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), a 7.2% decrease from 2005, when 129,591 children were enrolled.<sup>31</sup>
- In 2004, 9,528 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving New Jersey a rank of 30 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>32</sup>
- In 2004, 651 infants younger than age 1 died in New Jersey, giving it a rank of 12 nationally in infant mortality rates (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).<sup>33</sup>
- In 2004, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in New Jersey was 12.5 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 42.7. This reflects a total rate of 24.1 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.<sup>34</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, 32,157 adults and adolescents, as well as 321 children under the age of 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in New Jersey.<sup>35</sup>
- In 2005, an estimated 63,000 children ages 12–17, and 335,000 adults 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in New Jersey.<sup>36</sup>

## VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2005, 467 children aged out of out-of-home care in New Jersey.<sup>37</sup>
- In 2005, 25,000 New Jersey teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts.<sup>38</sup>
- In 2005, 14% of teens ages 16–19 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.<sup>39</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 37,000 children ages 12–17 in New Jersey needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.<sup>40</sup>
- In 2005, approximately 42,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.<sup>41</sup>
- In 2004, 39 children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 1.67 per 100,000 children.<sup>42</sup>

## JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2004, 41 children younger than 18 were killed in firearm homicides in New Jersey, a 242% increase from 12 in 2003.<sup>43</sup>
- In 2006, 60,840 children younger than 18 were arrested in New Jersey, a 2.85% decrease from 59,154 arrests in 2005. Of the arrests in 2006, 3,402 were for violent crimes and 2,039 were for possession of a weapon.<sup>44</sup>
- A 2003 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,941 children in juvenile correction facilities in New Jersey.<sup>45</sup>

## FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR NEW JERSEY'S CHILDREN

- In 2004, New Jersey spent \$507,810,949 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 34% was from federal funds, and 66% was from state funds.<sup>46</sup>
- In 2004, of the \$171,649,949 in federal funds received for child welfare, 52% 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, 18% was from Medicaid, 12% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 7% was from TANF, and 3% came from other federal sources.<sup>47</sup>
- Out of 12,042 children in out-of-home care in New Jersey in 2005, only 2,316 children, or 19.2%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.<sup>48</sup>

## 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.<sup>49</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>50</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>51</sup>
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in New Jersey was \$35,334; the median income for a family of four was \$87,412.<sup>52</sup>

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