

ALASKA'S CHILDREN 2009

Alaska's Children At a Glance*

State Population ¹	683,478
Population, Children Under 18 ²	182,218
State Poverty Rate ³	7.6%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 ⁴	8.5%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 ⁵	7.3%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 ⁶	17.0%

*All statistics are for 2007.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2006, Alaska had 10,038 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 5,755 reports were referred for investigation.⁷
- In 2006, 3,481 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Alaska, a rate of 19.2 per 1,000 children, representing a 29.3% increase from 2005. Of these children, 2,007 were neglected, 496 were physically abused, and 158 were sexually abused.⁸
- In 2006, two children in Alaska died as a result of abuse or neglect.⁹
- In 2006, 2,017 children in Alaska lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 1,791 children in 2005. In 2006, 36.4% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 13.8% were 16 or older.¹⁰
- Of Alaska children in out-of-home care in 2006, 26.9% were white, 5.4% black, 4.3% Hispanic, 49.8% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 13.6% children of other races and ethnicities.¹¹

ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 689 children exiting out-of-home care in Alaska in 2006, 57% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹²
- In 2006, 212 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Alaska, a 4% increase from 204 in 2005.¹³
- Of the 2,017 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 797 or 39.5% were waiting to be adopted.¹⁴
- In 2007, approximately 5,953 Alaska grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁵
- Of the 2,017 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 29.1% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁶
- Of all Alaska children in kinship care in 2006, 23.2% were white, 5.6% were black, 3.1% were Hispanic, 53.2% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 14.9% were other races.¹⁷

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Alaska decreased from 8,996 in March 2007 to 8,466 in March 2008, a decrease of 5.9%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2008 was 3,203, a 5.1% decrease from March 2007.¹⁸



- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Alaska was at 61.8% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁹
- In 2006, Alaska spent \$69,846,279 in TANF funds, including 52.1% on basic assistance, 8.41% on child care, 1.0% on transportation, and 38.5% on nonassistance.²⁰
- In 2007, Alaska spent \$14,830,199 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), serving 25,205 participants.²¹
- In 2007, Alaska collected and distributed \$90,888,031 in child support funds, a 5.2% increase from 2006.²²
- In 2008, the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Alaska was \$970 per month. The wage needed to afford this rent was \$18.65 per hour, working a 40-hour week.²³

CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2006, Alaska had a monthly average of 4,900 children served by subsidized child care; 4,700 children received subsidized child care in 2005, and 4,400 in 2004.²⁴
- In 2008, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Alaska, a family of three could make no more than \$46,243, which is equivalent to 72% of the state's median income.²⁵
- As of early 2008, Alaska had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²⁶
- In 2007, Head Start served 1,583 Alaska children, a 0.2% decrease from 2001.²⁷

HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2005, 80,400 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Alaska—61.8% of the total number of enrollees.²⁸
- In 2005, 2,844 children were enrolled in Medicaid in Alaska on the basis of being in foster care.²⁹
- In 2005, of the 2,844 children enrolled in Medicaid on the basis of being in foster care, 20 received Targeted Case Management services, and 338 received Rehabilitative Services.³⁰
- In 2007, Alaska had 7,793 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, an 18.7% decrease from 2006, when 9,582 children were enrolled.³¹
- In 2007, Alaska had 21,000 uninsured children, representing 11.4% of its child population.³²
- In 2005, 635 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Alaska a rank of 4 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).³³
- In 2005, 62 infants under age 1 died in Alaska, giving it a rank of 4 nationally in terms of infant mortality rates (a rank of 1 being the best and 50 the worst).³⁴
- In 2005, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Alaska was 17 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 69. This reflects a total rate of 37 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³⁵
- Cumulative through 2006, 648 adults and adolescents, as well as 7 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Alaska.³⁶



- In 2006, an estimated 6,000 children ages 12–17, and 46,000 adults age 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Alaska.³⁷

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2006, 52 children aged out of out-of-home care in Alaska.³⁸
- In 2007, 3,000 Alaska teens ages 16-19 were high-school dropouts.³⁹
- In 2007, 11% of teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not working.⁴⁰
- In 2006, 18% of people ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.⁴¹
- In 2006, approximately 3,000 children ages 12–17 in Alaska needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.⁴²
- In 2006, approximately 4,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.⁴³
- In 2005, 18 Alaska children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 8.47 per 100,000 children.⁴⁴

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2005, four children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Alaska, a 33% decrease from six in 2004.⁴⁵
- In 2007, 4,161 children younger than 18 were arrested in Alaska, a 0.6% increase from 4,136 arrests in 2006. Of those arrests, 182 were for violent crimes and 56 were for possession of a weapon.⁴⁶
- A 2006 census of juvenile offenders showed 363 children in juvenile correction facilities in Alaska.⁴⁷

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ALASKA'S CHILDREN

- In 2006, Alaska spent \$107,202,991 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 43% was from federal funds, and 57% from state funds.⁴⁸
- In 2006, of the \$46,037,391 in federal funds received for child welfare, 52% came from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 4% from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 18% from Medicaid, 20% from the Social Services Block Grant, and 7% from other federal sources.⁴⁹
- Out of 2,017 children in out-of-home care in Alaska in 2006, only 719, or 35.6%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁵⁰



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.⁵¹
- 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.⁵²
- 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.⁵³
- 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 in Alaska was \$72,110.⁵⁴

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