

THE NATION'S CHILDREN 2009

America's Children: A Snapshot

Child population under age 18 (2007)	73,901,733
White children under 18 (not Hispanic, 2007)	57.0%
Nonwhite children under 18 (2007)	43.0%
Children and youth (under 14, 2007)	76.7%
Children and youth (ages 14–17, 2007)	23.3%

America's Most Vulnerable Children: A Snapshot

Estimate of referrals of possible child abuse and neglect (2006)	3,300,000
Children substantiated/indicated as abused or neglected (2006)	905,000
Children who died as a result of abuse or neglect (2006)	1,530
Children living in out-of-home care (2006)	510,885
Children adopted from the public foster care system (2006)	50,705
Children waiting to be adopted (2006)	139,064
Children living in poverty (2007)	13,247,238
Children living in low-income families (2007)	28,803,055
National Poverty Rate (2007)	12.5%
National Poverty Rate, children under age 18, (2007)	18.0%
National Poverty Rate, children ages 5–17 (2007)	16.8%
National Poverty Rate, children under age 5 (2007)	21.2%

Child Abuse and Neglect

- In 2006, approximately 3.3 million allegations of child abuse and neglect including 6 million children were made to CPS agencies. Of those, 2,271,160 reports were referred for investigation, as reported by 42 states.
- During federal fiscal year 2006, an estimated 905,000 children in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico were determined to be victims of abuse or neglect. Of these children, 64.1% were neglected, 16% were physically abused, and 8.8% were sexually abused. The victimization rate was 12.1 per 1,000 children, a 3.2% decrease from 2001.
- Of the children substantiated as abused and neglected, only 58.9% received follow-up services. Of those reported as abused and neglected but not substantiated, 30.3% received follow-up services. One-fifth (21.5%) of children

substantiated as abused or neglected were placed in foster care as a result of an investigation.

- In 2006, 1,530 children died as a result of abuse or neglect.
- In 2006, 510,885 children in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 506,483 children in 2005. Of these children, 33% were age 5 or younger, and 20.4% were 16 or older.
- Of the children living in out-of-home care in 2006, 40% were white, 34% black, 18% Hispanic, 2% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 7% children of other races and ethnicities.

Permanent Families for Children

- Of the 286,170 children exiting out-of-home care in the United States in 2006, 53% were reunited with their parents or other family members.
- In 2006, approximately 50,703 children were legally adopted through public child welfare agencies, a 1.1% decrease from 51,278 in 2005.
- Of the 510,885 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 129,311, or 25.3%, were waiting to be adopted.

Kinship Support

- In 2007, approximately 2,514,256 grandparents nationwide had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.
- Of the 510,885 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 23.9% were living with relatives while in care.
- Of all children in kinship care in 2006, 47.4% were white, 26.3% black, 14.1% Hispanic, 2.2% Native American, and 10% other races.

Child Poverty and Income Support

- The percent of children under 18 living in poverty increased from 16.2% in 2000 to 18.0% in 2007.
- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the United

States declined from 4,230,951 in March 2006 to 3,787,626 in March 2008, a decrease of 11.7%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2008 was 1,629,835, a 9.8% decrease from 1,807,823 in 2006.

- In 2007, approximately \$5.4 billion was spent on the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Child, serving 8.285 million participants.
- In 2007, nearly \$24.8 billion in child support funds were collected and distributed in the United States, an increase of 3.8% from 2006.

Child Care and Head Start

- In 2006, an estimated monthly average of 1,770,100 of the nation's children received subsidized child care; 1,746,100 children were served in 2005, and 1,732,500 in 2004.
- In 2007, Head Start served 908,412 children, a 0.1% decrease from 2006, and a 0.43% decrease from 2002 when 912,345 children were enrolled in Head Start.
- In 2007, federal funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant was \$4.979 billion. The amount of TANF funds used for child care, however, has declined steadily from its peak of \$4 billion in 2000 to \$3.1 billion in 2007.
- Child care subsidies fall far short of meeting the need. Without an increase in funding, 200,000 children are expected to lose child care assistance between 2007 and 2009.
- Income eligibility limits for obtaining child care assistance remained low in 2008. More than three-quarters of states capped eligibility at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL). In most communities, a family needs an income equal to at least 200% of FPL (\$35,200 a year for a family of 3 in 2008) to meet its basic needs, including housing, food, child care, transportation, health care, and other necessities.
- As of early 2008, an estimated 380,240 children nationwide were on the waiting list for subsidized child care, an increase of 4% from 2007.
- In 2008, a family at 150% FPL in 31 states had to pay a copayment of more than \$141 per month (6.4% of income). In six states, a family at this income level was not even eligible for child care assistance.
- In 2008, only 10 states paid child care providers at the 75th percentile of current market rates, compared with 22 states in 2001.

Health

Pregnancy and Parenting

- In 2006, 6,405 babies were born to girls younger than 15, a slight decline from 2005. Another 435,427 babies were born to girls ages 15 to 19 in 2005—a rate of 41.9 births per 1,000 for that age group. This is a 3% decline from 2005.

- Females who have been in foster care also have higher birth rates than those who have not been in foster care (31.6% vs. 12.2%) and higher subsequent pregnancy rates (46% vs. 29%). By age 19, nearly half of surveyed females in foster care report ever having been pregnant, whereas only 20% of females never in foster care have ever been pregnant.
- Teen childbearing costs taxpayers \$9.1 billion annually, with \$2.3 billion falling on the child welfare system, because children born to teen mothers are at increased risk of ending up in foster care and child protective services.

Newborn Health and Infant Mortality

- Nationally, in 2005, 338,565 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams. Low-birthweight babies accounted for 8.2% of all births in 2004, compared with 7.6% in 2000.
- During 2005, 28,440 infants younger than 1 year died in the United States, amounting to about 78 infant deaths each day. The U.S. infant mortality rate was 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2005.

HIV/AIDS

- From the beginning of the epidemic through 2006, 1,014,797 adults and adolescents, as well as 9,156 children younger than 13, and 15,860 young people under the age of 20, were diagnosed as having HIV/AIDS in the United States.

Child and Youth Mental Health

- Recent estimates show approximately 1 in 5 children with a diagnosable mental disorder and 1 in 10 with a severe emotional or behavioral disorder causing significant impaired functioning at home, at school, or in the community.
- In 2007, 3.1 million youths (12.5% of the population) received treatment or counseling for emotional or behavior problems in the year prior.
- Co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders are increasingly prevalent for youth treated for substance abuse disorders, with 80%–85% also having a mental health disorder.
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death in youth ages 15–24. In 2005, 4,212 youth in this age range committed suicide in the United States, a rate of 10 per 100,000 adolescents in the population.
- Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14, and 75% have begun by age 24; thus, mental disorders are really the chronic diseases of the young.
- In any given year, only 20% of children with mental disorders are identified and receive mental health services.

Foster Care and Mental Health

- Between one-half and three-fourths of children entering foster care exhibit behavior or social competency problems that warrant mental health care.



THE NATION'S CHILDREN 2009

- Eighty-five percent of foster care youth are estimated to have an emotional disorder and/or substance abuse problem; 30% have severe behavioral, emotional, or developmental problems.
- More than half (54.4%) of adult participants who were placed in foster care as children have experienced symptoms of one or more mental health problems in the last 12 months, and 25% suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, a rate nearly double that of U.S. war veterans.
- Three out of four youth in child welfare who meet a stringent criterion for need do not receive mental health care within 12 months after a child abuse and neglect investigation.

Foster Care and Medicaid

- In 2005, 953,351 children were enrolled in Medicaid on the basis of being in foster care, representing approximately 3.1% of all children enrolled in Medicaid.
- Of the 953,351 children enrolled in Medicaid in 2005, 118,411, received targeted case management (TCM) services, and 108,110 received rehabilitative services.
- Children in foster care receiving TCM services are more likely to receive other important services, such as physician, prescription drug, dental, and home health services, than are children in foster care who do not receive TCM services.
- Although children in foster care represent only 3.7% of the nondisabled children enrolled in Medicaid, they account for 12.3% of expenditures for the same group.
- Although children in foster care represent a very small percentage of Medicaid enrollees, they account for 25%–41% of Medicaid mental health expenditures.

Substance Abuse

- In 2007, 23.2 million people age 12 or older needed treatment for illicit drug or alcohol use problems (9.4% of the population age 12 or older).
- In 2007, 2.4 million people age 12 or older (10.4% of those needing treatment) received treatment at a specialty facility for a problem related to the use of alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Parental addiction is a significant factor in child abuse and neglect. Studies suggest 40%–80% of families in the child welfare system are affected by it.
- The 2005 National Study on Child and Adolescent Well-Being found that among children who were in out-of-

home care, prior to removal, 46.1% of their caregivers had a problem with alcohol or drugs, according to the child welfare worker assessment.

- In a survey by the National Center on Child Abuse Prevention Research, 85% of states reported substance abuse was one of the two major problems exhibited by families in which maltreatment was suspected.
- Abused and neglected children from substance abusing families are more likely to be placed in foster care and are more likely to remain there longer than are maltreated children from nonsubstance abusing families.
- Of sheriffs responding to a 2007 National Association of Counties survey, 40% reported increases in domestic violence and child abuse and endangerment due to parental methamphetamine use in the past year.
- Between 2002 and 2005, 12,077 children were residing or visiting when a methamphetamine lab was seized by local or federal law enforcement.

Vulnerable Youth

- In 2006, 26,154 children aged out of out-of-home care.
- In 2007, 7% of teenagers age 16–19 (or 1,172,000) were high school dropouts, an 18% decrease from 2001. It represents a 2% increase, however, from 2006.
- In 2007, 8% of teenagers age 16–19 were not enrolled in school and not working.
- Among youth ages 12–17, 1.1 million (4.5%) needed treatment for illicit drug use problems in 2007. Of this group, only 111,000 received treatment at a specialty facility (9.9% of those who needed treatment), leaving 1 million youth who needed treatment but did not receive it at a specialty facility.
- In 2005, 1,885 children under age 20 committed suicide in the United States, a rate of 2.31 per 100,000 children in the population.
- A multiyear study in one state showed that among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in grades 9–12, 34% were threatened or injured at school, compared with 7% of heterosexual students; 25% skipped school because they felt unsafe, compared with 5% of heterosexual students; and 45% attempted suicide, compared with 8% of heterosexual students.
- A study of young adults who had spent a year or more in foster care between the ages of 14 and 18 found that 25% experience post-traumatic stress, compared with 4% of the general adult population.



THE NATION'S CHILDREN 2009

Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

- In 2005, 1,993 children age 19 and younger were killed in firearm homicides nationwide, an 8% increase from 1,844 in 2004.
- In 2007, 1,626,523 children under age 18 were arrested, a 1.4% increase from 1,626,523 arrests in 2006. Of the arrests in 2007, 73,427 were for violent crimes and 33,187 were for possession of a weapon.
- A 2006 census of juvenile offenders showed 92,854 children in juvenile correction facilities in the United States, a 4% decrease from 96,655 children in 2003.

Funding Child Welfare Services

- In 2006, the United States spent \$25.7 billion for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 48% was from federal funds, 41% was from state funds, and 11% was from local funds.
- In 2006, of the \$12.4 billion federal dollars spent for child welfare, 48% was Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 5% was from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 13% was Medicaid, 12% was from the Social Services Block Grant, 19% was TANF, and 3% was from other federal sources, including Supplemental Security Income and Social Security Survivor Benefits.
- Out of 504,224 children in out-of-home care in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in 2006, only 205,265 children, or 41%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.

Child Welfare Workforce

- A 2003 General Accounting Office (GAO) report documented that staff shortages, high caseloads, high worker turnover, and low salaries impinge on the delivery of services to achieve safety, permanence, and well-being for children.
- The GAO report cited the average caseload for a child welfare/foster care caseworker was 24–31 and that these high caseloads contributed to high worker turnover rates and insufficient services being provided to children and families.
- According to a 2005 child welfare workforce survey, the average caseload size, where a child is defined as the case, was 26.3 for child protective service workers. CWLA recommends a CPS caseworker responsible for

initial assessment and investigation have no more than 12 active cases per month.

- The average minimum salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect was \$32,438.50 in 2004; the median income for a family of four in the U.S. was \$75,319.60.
- The average vacancy rate for child protective service workers at public agencies was 8.5% in 2004, down from 9.3% in 2000. The average time required to fill a vacant child protective service position was 10 weeks.
- The turnover rate for child protective workers increased from 19.9% in 2000 to 22.1% in 2004.
- The findings of the federal Child and Family Service Reviews have clearly demonstrated the more time a caseworker spends with a child and family, the better the outcomes for that child and family.

Sources for statistical information are provided in the online version of this fact sheet. See www.cwla.org/advocacy/2009legagenda.htm.