

MISSISSIPPI'S CHILDREN 2005

Mississippi's Children At a Glance

State Population (2003) ¹	2,881,281
State Population, Children Under 18 (2003) ²	761,268
State Poverty Rate (2003) ³	19.9%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 (2003) ⁴	28.6%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 (2003) ⁵	27.0%
Poverty Rate, Children Birth to Age 4 (2003) ⁶	31.8%

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2002, 18,009 children were referred for investigation of child abuse and neglect in Mississippi, a rate of 23.6 per 1,000 children.⁷
- In 2002, 4,003 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Mississippi, a rate of 5.3 per 1,000 children, representing a 12% decrease from 2000. Of these children, 54.0% were neglected, 20.7% were physically abused, and 16.8% were sexually abused.⁸
- In 2002, seven children died as a result of abuse or neglect in Mississippi.⁹
- On September 30, 2002, 2,686 children in Mississippi lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 3,261 children on September 30, 2001. In 2002, 29.4% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 19.3% were 16 or older.¹⁰
- On September 30, 2002, 41.9% white children, 52.7% black children, 0.9% Hispanic children, 0.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native children, and 4.4% children of other races and ethnicities were living in out-of-home care in Mississippi.¹¹

PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 1,510 children exiting out-of-home care in 2002, 63.4% were reunited with their birthfamilies.¹²
- In 2002, 227 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Mississippi, a 14.7% decrease from 266 in 2001.¹³
- Of the 2,686 children in out-of-home care in 2002, 816 or 30.4% were waiting to be adopted.¹⁴

KINSHIP SUPPORT

- In 2003, more than 45,776 Mississippi grandparents had primary responsibility for caring for their grandchildren.¹⁵
- Of the 2,686 children in out-of-home care on September 30, 2002, 12.2% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁶
- Of all Mississippi children in kinship care on September 30, 2002, 47.0% were white, 49.7% were black, 0.6% were Hispanic, none were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 2.7% were other races.¹⁷

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of *individuals* receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Mississippi increased from 39,882 in March 2002 to 45,191 in March 2003, an increase of 13.3%. The number of *families* receiving TANF in March 2003 was 19,597, a 13% decrease from March 2002.¹⁸
- In 2001, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamps in Mississippi was 58% below the federal poverty guideline.¹⁹
- In 2003, Mississippi spent \$120,011,403 in TANF funds, including 30.4% on cash assistance, 6.0% on child care, 19.6% on transportation and support activities, and 44.0% on nonassistance.²⁰
- In 2002, Mississippi collected and distributed \$169,034,476 in child support funds, an increase of 6.9% from 2001.²¹

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- In 2003, the fair market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Mississippi was \$472 per month, or 57% of the average monthly income for a worker earning the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour.²²

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

- In 2001, Mississippi served an estimated monthly average of 8,400 children with subsidized child care, a decrease from 2000, when 11,000 children were served, and in 1999, when 17,900 children were served.²³
- In 2003, a family of three could make no more than 85% of Mississippi's median income, or \$30,156, to be eligible for subsidized child care.²⁴
- In 2001, Mississippi had 11,200 children on the waiting list for subsidized child care.²⁵
- In 2003, 26,762 Mississippi children were served by Head Start, a 0.1% increase from 2002.²⁶

H E A L T H A N D S U B S T A N C E A B U S E

- In 2001, 368,758 Mississippi children under age 19 were enrolled in Medicaid, representing 52.1% of the total number of enrollees.²⁷
- In 2003, Mississippi had 75,010 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, a 15.7% increase from 2002, when 64,805 children were enrolled.²⁸
- In 2002, 107 babies were born to girls younger than 15 in Mississippi. In 2002, the number of babies born to teens ages 15–19 was 6,961, reflecting a rate of 64.7 births per 1,000 girls.²⁹
- As of December 2002, 5,236 adults and adolescents, as well as 57 children under age 13, had been diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in Mississippi.³⁰
- In 2001, 22 children under age 20 committed suicide, a rate of 2.57 per 100,000 children in the population.³¹
- In 2002, an estimated 16,000 children ages 12–17, and 178,000 adults 18 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol.³²

V U L N E R A B L E Y O U T H

- In 2003, 11% of teens ages 16–19 were high school dropouts, a 4% decrease from 2000.³³
- In 2002, 19% of young adults ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³⁴

J U V E N I L E J U S T I C E A N D D E L I N Q U E N C Y P R E V E N T I O N

- In 2001, 5 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Mississippi, compared with 13 in 2000.³⁵
- In 2003, 11,403 children under age 18 were arrested in Mississippi, a 19% decrease from 14,003 arrests in 2002. Of the 2003 arrests, 226 were for violent crimes and 116 were for possession of weapons.³⁶
- A 2001 census of juvenile offenders showed 693 children in juvenile correction facilities in Mississippi.³⁷

F U N D I N G C H I L D W E L F A R E S E R V I C E S F O R M I S S I S S I P P I ' S C H I L D R E N

- In 2002, Mississippi spent \$56,899,368 for child welfare services. Child welfare services refer to all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families.³⁸ Of this amount, 60% was from federal funds, 37% was from state funds, and 3% was from local funds.³⁹

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- In 2002, of the \$56,899,368 spent for child welfare, 26% was from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 11% came from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 18% came from the Social Services Block Grant, 5% was from TANF, and 1% was from other federal sources. The remaining funds (40%) came from state and local sources.⁴⁰

M I S S I S S I P P I ' S C H I L D W E L F A R E W O R K F O R C E

- 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.⁴¹
- 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.⁴²
- According to the 2003 GAO report, the average caseload for child welfare/foster care caseworkers is 24–31 children and that 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.⁴³
- In 2002, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Mississippi was \$25,183 ; the median income for a family of four in Mississippi was \$47,847.⁴⁴

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