

THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA'S CHILDREN 2009

The District of Columbia's Children At a Glance*

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| State Population ¹ | 588,292 |
| Population, Children Under 18 ² | 113,720 |
| State Poverty Rate ³ | 18.0% |
| Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 ⁴ | 29.2% |
| Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 ⁵ | 8.2% |

*All statistics are for 2007.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2006, the District of Columbia (DC) had 5,644 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 5,077 reports were referred for investigation.⁶
- In 2006, 2,759 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in DC, a rate of 24.0 per 1,000 children, representing a 2.9% decrease from 2005. Of these children, 1,595 were neglected, 405 were physically abused, and 152 were sexually abused.⁷
- In 2006, two children in DC died as a result of abuse or neglect.⁸
- In 2006, 2,368 children in DC lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 2,505 children in 2005. In 2006, 18.9% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 35.3% were 16 or older.⁹
- Of DC children in out-of-home care in 2006, 0.5% were white, 90.0% black, 3.8% Hispanic, and 5.7% children of other races and ethnicities.¹⁰

ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 941 children exiting out-of-home care in DC in 2006, 39% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹¹
- In 2006, 179 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in DC, a 42% decrease from 310 in 2005.¹²
- Of the 2,368 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 630 or 26.6% were waiting to be adopted.¹³
- In 2007, approximately 6,164 DC grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 2,368 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 15.8% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all DC children in kinship care in 2006, 0.8% were white, 93.8% were black, 0.5% were Hispanic, and 4.9% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in DC decreased from 13,080 in March 2007 to 11,965 in March 2008, a decrease of 8.5%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2008 was 5,385, a 6.3% decrease from March 2007.¹⁷
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in DC was at 39.9% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸



- In 2006, DC spent \$193,357,600 in TANF funds, including 32.1% on basic assistance, and 67.9% on nonassistance.¹⁹
- In 2007, DC spent \$7,171,835 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), serving 15,190 participants.²⁰
- In 2007, DC collected and distributed \$49,904,765 in child support funds, a 3.0% increase from 2006.²¹
- In 2008, the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in DC was \$1,324 per month. The wage needed to afford this rent was \$25.46 per hour, working a 40-hour week.²²

CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2006, DC had a monthly average of 3,700 children served by subsidized child care; 3,800 children received subsidized child care in 2005, and 4,500 in 2004.²³
- In 2008, to be eligible for subsidized child care in DC, a family of three could make no more than \$40,225, which is equivalent to 95% of the state's median income.²⁴
- As of early 2008, DC had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²⁵
- In 2007, Head Start served 3,403 DC children, a 1.8% increase from 2001.²⁶

HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2005, 80,300 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in DC—48.5% of the total number of enrollees.²⁷
- In 2005, 4,624 children were enrolled in Medicaid in DC on the basis of being in foster care.²⁸
- In 2005, of the 4,624 children enrolled in Medicaid on the basis of being in foster care, none received Targeted Case Management services, but 16 received Rehabilitative Services.²⁹
- In 2007, DC had 5,146 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, an 8.3% increase from 2006, when 4,750 children were enrolled.³⁰
- In 2007, DC had 7,000 uninsured children, representing 6.2% of its child population.³¹
- In 2005, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in DC was 40 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 100. This reflects a total rate of 63 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³²
- Cumulative through 2006, 17,372 adults and adolescents, as well as 189 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in DC.³³
- In 2006, an estimated 2,000 children ages 12–17, and 46,000 adults age 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in DC.³⁴

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2006, 166 children aged out of out-of-home care in DC.³⁵
- In 2007, 3,000 DC teens ages 16-19 were high-school dropouts.³⁶
- In 2007, 11% of teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not working.³⁷



- In 2006, 14% of people ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.³⁸
- In 2006, approximately 1,000 children ages 12–17 in DC needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.³⁹
- In 2006, approximately 1,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.⁴⁰
- In 2005, one DC child younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 0.69 per 100,000 children.⁴¹

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2005, 19 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in DC, a 32% decrease from 28 in 2004.⁴²
- In 2007, 479 children younger than 18 were arrested in DC, a 9.6% increase from 437 arrests in 2006. Of those arrests, 66 were for violent crimes and 5 were for possession of a weapon.⁴³
- A 2006 census of juvenile offenders showed 339 children in juvenile correction facilities in DC.⁴⁴

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR DC'S CHILDREN

- In 2006, District of Columbia spent \$267,136,644 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 38% was from federal funds, and was 62% from state funds.⁴⁵
- In 2006, of the \$100,453,651 in federal funds received for child welfare, 24% came from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 2% from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 70% from Medicaid, 1% from the Social Services Block Grant, 2% from TANF, and 2% from other federal sources.⁴⁶
- Out of 2,368 children in out-of-home care in District of Columbia in 2006, only 709, or 29.9%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴⁷

DC'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.⁴⁸
- 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.⁴⁹



- 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.⁵⁰
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in District of Columbia was \$41,440; the median income for a family of four in District of Columbia was \$56,067.⁵¹

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