

LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN 2009

Louisiana's Children At a Glance*

State Population ¹	4,293,204
Population, Children Under 18 ²	1,079,560
State Poverty Rate ³	16.1%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 18 ⁴	22.7%
Poverty Rate, Children Ages 5-17 ⁵	20.2%
Poverty Rate, Children Under 5 ⁶	23.4%

*All statistics are for 2007.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- In 2006, 12,472 children were substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected in Louisiana, a rate of 11.4 per 1,000 children, representing a 0.9% increase from 2005. Of these children, 9,845 were neglected, 3,179 were physically abused, and 903 were sexually abused.⁷
- In 2006, 37 children in Louisiana died as a result of abuse or neglect.⁸
- In 2006, 5,213 children in Louisiana lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 4,833 children in 2005. In 2006, 37.2% of the children living apart from their families were age 5 or younger, and 13.5% were 16 or older.⁹
- Of Louisiana children in out-of-home care in 2006, 47.2% were white, 49.9% black, 1.0% Hispanic, 0.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.7% children of other races and ethnicities.¹⁰

ADOPTION, KINSHIP CARE, AND PERMANENT FAMILIES FOR CHILDREN

- Of the 3,386 children exiting out-of-home care in Louisiana in 2006, 48% were reunited with their parents or other family members.¹¹
- In 2006, 466 children were legally adopted through the public child welfare agency in Louisiana, a 1% decrease from 469 in 2005.¹²
- Of the 5,213 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 1,080 or 20.7% were waiting to be adopted.¹³
- In 2007, approximately 60,671 Louisiana grandparents had primary responsibility caring for their grandchildren.¹⁴
- Of the 5,213 children in out-of-home care in 2006, 21.8% were living with relatives while in care.¹⁵
- Of all Louisiana children in kinship care in 2006, 56.2% were white, 40.4% were black, 1.1% were Hispanic, 0.4% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 1.9% were other races.¹⁶

CHILD POVERTY AND INCOME SUPPORT

- The total number of individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in Louisiana decreased from 23,591 in March 2007 to 22,262 in March 2008, a decrease of 5.6%. The number of families receiving TANF in March 2008 was 10,306, a 4.0% decrease from March 2007.¹⁷
- In 2003, a family of three receiving only TANF and food stamp benefits in Louisiana was at 36.6% of the federal poverty guideline.¹⁸



- In 2006, Louisiana spent \$183,403,367 in TANF funds, including 24.4% on basic assistance, 0.8% on transportation, and 74.8% on nonassistance.¹⁹
- In 2007, Louisiana spent \$67,801,639 on WIC (the Special Supplement Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children), serving 128,914 participants.²⁰
- In 2007, Louisiana collected and distributed \$309,513,137 in child support funds, a 5.8% increase from 2006.²¹
- In 2008, the fair-market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in Louisiana was \$746 per month. The wage needed to afford this rent was \$14.34 per hour, working a 40-hour week.²²

CHILD CARE AND HEAD START

- In 2006, Louisiana had a monthly average of 39,100 children served by subsidized child care; 51,800 children received subsidized child care in 2005, and 51,800 in 2004.²³
- In 2008, to be eligible for subsidized child care in Louisiana, a family of three could make no more than \$31,836, which is equivalent to 68% of the state's median income.²⁴
- As of early 2008, Louisiana had no children on its waiting list for child care assistance.²⁵
- In 2007, Head Start served 21,592 Louisiana children, a 1.7% decrease from 2001.²⁶

HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- In 2005, 700,500 children younger than 19 were enrolled in Medicaid in Louisiana—60.8% of the total number of enrollees.²⁷
- In 2005, 9,768 children were enrolled in Medicaid in Louisiana on the basis of being in foster care.²⁸
- In 2005, of the 9,768 children enrolled in Medicaid on the basis of being in foster care, 370 received Targeted Case Management services, and 434 received Rehabilitative Services.²⁹
- In 2007, Louisiana had 107,828 children enrolled in its State Children's Health Insurance Program, compared with 107,777 in 2006.³⁰
- In 2007, Louisiana had 137,000 uninsured children, representing 12.5% of its child population.³¹
- In 2005, 6,987 babies were born weighing less than 2,500 grams, giving Louisiana a rank of 36 nationally in percent of low-weight births (1 being the best, and 50 the worst).³²
- In 2005, 613 infants under age 1 died in Louisiana, giving it a rank of 36 nationally in terms of infant mortality rates (a rank of 1 being the best and 50 the worst).³³
- In 2005, the birth rate for teens 15–17 in Louisiana was 26 births per 1,000 girls; for teens 18–19, the rate was 83. This reflects a total rate of 49 births per 1,000 girls ages 15–19.³⁴
- Cumulative through 2006, 17,612 adults and adolescents, as well as 128 children younger than 13, were reported as having HIV/AIDS in Louisiana.³⁵



- In 2006, an estimated 29,000 children ages 12–17, and 298,000 adults age 26 and older, were dependent on or abusing illicit drugs or alcohol in Louisiana.³⁶

VULNERABLE YOUTH

- In 2006, 293 children aged out of out-of-home care in Louisiana.³⁷
- In 2007, 26,000 Louisiana teens ages 16-19 were high-school dropouts.³⁸
- In 2007, 12% of teens ages 16-19 were not enrolled in school and were not working.³⁹
- In 2006, 20% of people ages 18–24 were not enrolled in school, were not working, and had no degree beyond high school.⁴⁰
- In 2006, approximately 17,000 children ages 12–17 in Louisiana needed but had not received treatment for illicit drug use in the past year.⁴¹
- In 2006, approximately 16,000 children ages 12–17 needed but had not received treatment for alcohol use in the past year.⁴²
- In 2005, 55 Louisiana children younger than 20 committed suicide, a rate of 4.01 per 100,000 children.⁴³

JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

- In 2005, 45 children under age 18 were killed in firearm homicides in Louisiana, a 50% increase from 30 in 2004.⁴⁴
- In 2007, 24,445 children younger than 18 were arrested in Louisiana, a 9.4% increase from 22,355 arrests in 2006. Of those arrests, 1,100 were for violent crimes and 342 were for possession of a weapon.⁴⁵
- A 2006 census of juvenile offenders showed 1,200 children in juvenile correction facilities in Louisiana.⁴⁶

FUNDING CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR LOUISIANA'S CHILDREN

- In 2006, Louisiana spent \$222,485,703 for child welfare services. Child welfare services are all direct and administrative services the state agency provides to children and families. Of this amount, 60% was from federal funds, and 40% from state funds.⁴⁷
- In 2006, of the \$132,434,518 in federal funds received for child welfare, 47% came from Title IV-E Foster Care and Adoption Assistance, 12% from Title IV-B Child Welfare Services and Promoting Safe and Stable Families, 35% from the Social Services Block Grant, and 6% from other federal sources.⁴⁸
- Out of 5,213 children in out-of-home care in Louisiana in 2006, only 2,635, or 50.5%, received Title IV-E federal foster care assistance.⁴⁹



LOUISIANA'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.⁵⁰
- 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.⁵¹
- 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.⁵²
- In 2004, the minimum annual salary for a caseworker responsible for investigating reports of abuse and neglect in Louisiana was \$23,280; the median income for a family of four in Louisiana was \$50,529.⁵³

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