Child Maltreatment

In 2020, the District of Columbia had 12,797 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 4,283 were referred for investigation.

There were 1,568 child victims of maltreatment in the District of Columbia in 2020, at a rate of 12.1 children per 1,000. This translates to an 16.6% decrease since 2016.

Of the 1,568 children, 1,169 were first time victims.

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 195 of the 1,568 cases.

Child Victims by Race or Ethnicity, 2020

- African American
- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Asian
- Hispanic
- Multiple Race
- Pacific Islander
- White
- Unknown

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2020

- Medical Neglect
- Neglect
- Other
- Physical Abuse
- Psychological Maltreatment
- Sexual Abuse
- Sex Trafficking
- Unknown

- 93% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2020 were parents of the child. 7% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.

- 52% of the District of Columbia’s child victims in 2020 were female while 48% were male.

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2020, the District of Columbia had 166 infants who were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.

- The District of Columbia reported 145 plans of safe care for screened-in infants.
Child fatalities increased in 2020 from 3 in 2019 to 4 in 2020.\textsuperscript{xii}

The District of Columbia reported 25 total child victims of sex trafficking.\textsuperscript{xi}

247 victims received post-response services while 269 non-victims received post-response services as well.\textsuperscript{xi}

Foster Care and Adoptions

- 875 total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2020.
- 577 were in care on the day of September 30\textsuperscript{th}, 2020.
- 212 children entered care during the 2020 FY while 298 exited during the same year.
- 98 of the District of Columbia’s children were adopted while 162 were waiting to be adopted.\textsuperscript{xx}

There was a 14.1\% decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system remained at 0\% from 2019.\textsuperscript{xv}

60 children in the District of Columbia aged out and exited foster care in 2019. This is a 22.4\% increase since 2018.\textsuperscript{xxi}

- Children in foster care in 2020 spent an average of 24.6 months in care.\textsuperscript{xxxviii}
- The average length of stay in the District of Columbia for children waiting to be adopted from foster care is 39.7 months.\textsuperscript{xxxix}
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2020 was 7.9 years old.\textsuperscript{xx}
- The average age of adopted children was 6.2 years old.\textsuperscript{xxi}
Data from 2019 shows that 301 children in foster care within the District were living with non-relatives while 176 stayed with a relative. xxii

68 children were staying in group homes while 19 children were classified as runaways. xxiii

3% of households in the District of Columbia in 2020 had a grandparent living with a grandchild. xxiv

The average length of time a child in care spent living with their current relative foster family was 12.0 months. xxv

Child Poverty
The District of Columbia had 41,000 children in 2019 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 32% of all children. xxvi

34% of the District’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden. xxvii

The average number of individuals receiving TANF fell from 21,982 in 2020 to 21,763 in 2021. This represents a 1% decrease. xxviii xxix

The state spent $4,660,202 on WIC in 2021, serving 13,990 people. This represents a 4.4% increase in total participants and a 2.8% decrease in spending. xxx

70,480 people in the District of Columbia were food insecure in 2019, including 19,250 children who struggled with hunger. xxxi

28.9% of households in the District that received SNAP benefits in 2019 had children. xxxii
Health
The District of Columbia had 896 low birth-weight babies born in 2019 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 9.0% of infants born in the District in 2019. xxxiii

The District of Columbia had a total of 945 preterm births in 2019, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 7.3% of all white babies were born premature while 13.8% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2019. The total premature birth rate was 10.4%. xxxiv

There were 323 births to mothers aged 15-19 in the District in 2019, representing a rate of 17 in every 1,000 teen girls. xxxv

44 infants under 1 died in the District in 2019, representing an infant mortality rate of 4.8 per 1,000. xxxvi

3.5% of the District’s children had no health insurance in 2019. The District of Columbia has accepted Medicaid expansion. xxxvii

81,450 children in the District were enrolled in Medicaid in 2020. This represents a 5.9% increase from 2019. xxxix

18,186 children in the District were in the state Child Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020. This represents an 5.7% increase from 2019. xl
Juvenile Justice System
- There were 807 total arrests for children under 18 in the District of Columbia in 2019.
- 73 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 65 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 10 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.xli
- 117 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in the District of Columbia in 2019. This is a increase from 93 kids in 2017, representing a 25.8% increase.xlii

Teens & Youth
- 3,000 (8%) of the District of Columbia’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2019.xliii
- In 2020, there were zero reports of children in the District aged 10-14 committing suicide, and zero reports of suicide among children aged 15-24.xliv
- 25 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in the District in 2020.xlv

Child Welfare Services Funding
- The District of Columbia spent $210,455,958 on child welfare services in 2018. Child welfare services are all of the direct and administrative services that state agencies provide to children and families.
- $51,415,014 were allocated from the federal government and $157,590,323 came from state and local funds.xlvi

The breakdown of the $51,415,014 in federal funding received in the District in 2018.xlvii
- 0 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program
- $9,995,713 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program xlviii
- The District of Columbia’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2020 was $49,468,402.xlix


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xx Ibid.

xxi Ibid.


xxiv  Ibid.


xxvii  Ibid.


xxxi  Ibid.

xxxii  Ibid.


