Child Maltreatment

In 2020, Mississippi had 32,000 total referrals for child abuse and neglect. Of those, 24,405 were referred for investigation.¹

There were 8,136 child victims of abuse or neglect in Mississippi in 2020, at a rate of 11.7 children per 1,000. This translates to a 20.1% decrease since 2016.²

Of the 8,136 children, 7,145 were first time victims.³

The largest age group of victims was children under one, representing 1,175 of the 8,136 cases.⁴

Types of Maltreatment Victims, 2020

- 71% of child maltreatment perpetrators in 2020 were parents of the child. 29% were non-parents or had an unknown relationship.⁵
- 53% of Mississippi’s child victims in 2020 were female while 46% were male.⁶

Plans of Safe Care

- In 2020, zero infants were screened-in with prenatal substance abuse exposure.⁷
- Mississippi reported zero plans of safe care for screened-in infants.⁸
**Foster Care and Adoptions**

- **5,884** total children were served by the foster care system in FY 2020.
- **3,594** were in care on the day of September 30th, 2020.
- **1,800** children entered care during the 2020 FY while **2,307** exited during the same year.
- **597** of Mississippi’s children were adopted while **1,384** were waiting to be adopted.\(^{xv}\)

There was a **13.6%** decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system also decreased **17.0%** from 2019.\(^{xvi}\)

**72** children in Mississippi aged out and exited foster care in 2019. This is an increase from **68** in 2018 and represents a **5.88%** increase.\(^{xvii}\)

- Children in foster care in 2020 spent an average of **23.2** months in care.\(^{xviii}\)
- The average length of stay in Mississippi for children waiting to be adopted from foster care is **35.3** months.\(^{xix}\)
- The average age of children waiting to be adopted in 2020 was **7.5** years old.\(^{xx}\)
- The average age of adopted children was **7.2** years old.\(^{xxi}\)

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\(^{xi}\) Child fatalities increased in 2020 from **35** in 2019 to **38** in 2020.

\(^{xii}\) Mississippi had **11** reports of child victims of sex trafficking.

\(^{xiii}\) **4,239** victims received post-response services while **2,597** non-victims received post-response services as well.

\(^{xiv}\) There was a **13.6%** decrease in the number of children in care between 2019 and 2020. Adoptions from the system also decreased **17.0%** from 2019.

\(^{xv}\) 5.88% Increase since 2018 in children aging out of foster care.
Data from 2019 shows that 2,138 children in foster care within Mississippi were living with non-relatives while 1,273 stayed with a relative (See Pie Chart). xxvii

294 children were staying in group homes while 17 children were classified as runaways. xxiii

6% of households in Mississippi 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 13.7 months. xxv

Child Poverty
Mississippi had 238,000 children in 2019 who lived with parents who lacked secure employment, representing 34% of all children. xxvi

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Child Poverty Over Time

Poverty, Children Under 18

Poverty, Children Aged 6-17

Poverty, Children Aged 0-5

26% of Mississippi’s children lived in households with a high housing cost burden. xxviii

The average number of individuals receiving TANF fell from 6,612 in 2019 to 4,767 in 2020. This represents a 27.9% decrease. xxix xxx

The state spent $43,899,701 on WIC in 2021, serving 72,826 people. This represents a 6.1% decrease in total participants and a 23.4% decrease in spending. xxxi

550,370 people in Mississippi were food insecure in 2019, including 155,560 children who struggled with hunger. xxii

47.7% of households receiving SNAP benefits in Mississippi in 2019 had children. xxxiii
Health

Mississippi had 4,510 low birth-weight babies born in 2019 which is constituted as babies weighing less than 5.5 pounds. This translates to 12.3% of infants born in Mississippi in 2019.xxxiv

Mississippi had a total of 5,340 preterm births in 2019, meaning less than 37 completed weeks of gestation. 12.39% of all white babies were born premature while 17.81% of black babies arrived prematurely in 2019. The total premature birth rate was 14.58%.xxxv

There were 2,869 births to mothers aged 15-19 in Mississippi in 2019, representing a rate of 29 in every 1,000 teen girls.xxxvi

322 infants under one died in Mississippi in 2019, representing an infant mortality rate of 8.8 per 1,000.xxxvii

6.1% of Mississippi’s children had no health insurance in 2019. This represents 46,000 children.xxxix

395,469 children in Mississippi were enrolled in Medicaid in 2020. This represents a 1.5% decrease from 2019.xi

84,459 children in Mississippi were in the state Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) in 2020. This represents a 2.35% decrease from 2019.xii
Juvenile Justice System
- There were 2,719 total arrests for children under 18 in Mississippi in 2019.
- 362 of these arrests were for Disorderly Conduct.
- 596 arrests were made for Property Crimes.
- 214 were arrested under the charge of Drug Abuse Violations.
- 198 children lived in juvenile correction facilities in Mississippi in 2019. This is a decrease from 273 kids in 2017, representing a 27.5% increase.

Teens & Youth
- 18,000 (10%) of Mississippi’s youth were both not in school and not working in 2019.
- In 2020, there were zero reports of children in Mississippi aged 10-14 committing suicide, and 15 reports of suicide among children aged 15-19.
- 86 children under age 19 were killed by a firearm in Mississippi in 2020.

Child Welfare Services Funding
- Mississippi spent $196,471,044 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.
- $98,501,721 were allocated from the federal government and $97,969,323 came from state and local funds.

Federal Funding Sources

The breakdown of the $98,501,721 in federal funding received in Mississippi in 2018:
- $28,554,391 as part of the Title IV-E Foster Care Program.
- $13,118,517 as part of the Title IV-E Adoption Assistance Program.
- Mississippi’s sum of expenditures for Social Service Block Grants in 2020 was $11,905,002.
Mississippi’s Children 2022


xvi Based on Calculations from the CWLA


xxi Ibid.

xxii Ibid.


xxv Ibid.


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Ibid.


Ibid.


