

National Fact Sheet 2003

America's Children At-a-Glance

	Number of Children*
Children referred for possible child abuse and neglect, 2000 ¹	2,796,000
Children substantiated or indicated as abused or neglected, 2000 ²	879,000
Children who died as a result of abuse or neglect, 2000 ³	1,236
Children in foster care on September 30, 2000 ⁴	547,415
Children waiting to be adopted on September 30, 2000 ⁵	133,057
Grandparents raising grandchildren, 2000 ⁶	2,431,349
Children who ran away from a foster care placement, 2000 ⁷	15,811
Children who ran away from home, 1999 ⁸	1,682,900
Children lacking medical insurance, 2001 ⁹	8,500,000
Children younger than 6 below the poverty level, 2000 ¹⁰	4,000,000

* Number of children estimated

Children Need Protection and Care

Child Abuse and Neglect

- An estimated 879,000 children were victims of abuse and neglect in 2000; 62.8% of victims suffered neglect, 19.3% were physically abused, 10.1% were sexually abused, and 7.7% were emotionally or psychologically maltreated. ¹¹
- Children younger than 3 had the highest rate of maltreatment in 2000-15.7 per 1,000 children. ¹²
- Studies show that child abuse occurs in 30%-60% of domestic violence cases that involve families with children. ¹³

Foster Care and Adoption

- Of the 556,000 children in foster care in 2000, approximately 24% lived with their relatives while in care. Ten percent of the children exiting foster care (26,000) went to live with relatives. Nearly 10,600, or 21%, of adopted children were adopted by relatives. ¹⁴
- An estimated 57% of the children in foster care in 2000 were reunited with their parents or principal caregivers after an average stay in out-of-home care of 22.7 months. ¹⁵
- In 2000, the average age of children in foster care was 10 years. The average length of time in foster care was 33 months. ¹⁶
- Forty percent of the children in foster care are black non-Hispanic, 38% are white non-Hispanic, 15% are Hispanic, and 2% are Native American. More than 40% of the children waiting to be adopted are black non-Hispanic, 34% are white non-Hispanic, 13% are Hispanic, and 2% are Native American. ¹⁷
- Children younger than 6 represent 28% of the children in foster care. Youth age 16 and older make up 18% of children in care. ¹⁸
- Returning home is not an option for approximately 131,000 children in the foster care system who were free for adoption in 2000. Almost 50% of these children are children of color. ¹⁹
- In 2000, 51,000 children were adopted from the public child welfare system, a 10% increase from the 46,000 adopted in 1999. ²⁰

Domestic Violence

- Between 1.5 million and 3.3 million children witness some form of violence at home each year. ²¹
- Children from violent homes exhibit more aggressive and delinquent behavior than do children from nonviolent homes. ²²
- Between 50% and 70% of men who abuse their female partners also abuse their partners' children. ²³

Children Need Strong Families

Child Care and Head Start

- In 2001, 68% of single mothers with children younger than 6, and 60% of married mothers with children younger age 6, were in the labor force; 79% of single mothers with children ages 6-17, and 74% of married mothers with children ages 6-17, were in the labor force. ²⁴

- Only 14% of the 15.7 million children eligible for federal child care subsidies in 2000 received care. In 2000, almost 6 million low-income children, whose family's income was below 85% of their state's median income, were ineligible for child care assistance-primarily because of low state income eligibility limits. ²⁵
- Nearly 16 million children younger than 13 living in low-income working families are likely to need child care. But only one in seven children eligible for child care assistance under federal law receives it. ²⁶
- Because the demand for child care is so great, most states do not keep waiting lists of families eligible to receive assistance. Of the 19 states that do, thousands of families have been added to these lists in the last two years. Most state child care programs could not serve all the families who needed help even before the current budget crises. ²⁷
- In 20 states, a family of three earning just \$25,000 a year does not qualify for child care assistance. ²⁸
- Since 1965, Head Start has served more than 18 million children and their families, providing preschool-age children with education, nutritious meals, and access to health, mental health, and social services that support their early development. ²⁹
- Head Start received \$6.5 billion in 2002, a 5% increase from 2001. ³⁰

Kinship Care

- In 1999, 2.3 million children lived in relatives' homes without their parents in what is known as kinship care. Nearly 57% of these children were cared for by grandparents, 22% by an aunt or uncle. ³¹
- Teenagers represent the largest proportion of children in kinship care (44%). Of children in kinship care, 44% are black non-Hispanic, 38% are white non-Hispanic, 15% are Hispanic, and 3% are of another ethnicity. ³²
- Almost two-thirds-64%-of children in kinship care live in families with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level; nearly one-third, 31%, live in families with incomes below 100% of federal poverty level. ³³

In-Home Services

- In 1999, some 550,000 children participated in home visiting programs nationwide. Several studies of a national voluntary home visiting program

showed that at least 95% of participants had no reports of child maltreatment 12-18 months after completing the program. ³⁴

- In 2000, family preservation programs served 314,766 children in 27 states and 163,952 families in 29 states, and family support programs served 380,507 children in 22 states and 343,067 families in 27 states. ³⁵

Families Face Serious Problems

Substance Abuse

- In 1996, approximately 8.3 million children lived with parents who abused alcohol and other drugs. ³⁶
- In 2000, 19 million children (28.6%) birth to 17 years-approximately one in four-had been exposed to alcoholism, alcohol abuse, or both in their families at some time in their lives. ³⁷
- Seven out of 10 cases of child abuse and neglect are exacerbated by a parent's abuse of alcohol or other drugs. In most cases, the parent's substance abuse is a longstanding problem of at least five years' duration. ³⁸
- Approximately 67% of parents with children in the child welfare system require substance abuse treatment, but child welfare agencies are able to provide treatment for only 31%. ³⁹
- Children whose parents abuse drugs and alcohol are almost three times as likely to be abused and four times likely to be neglected than are children of parents who are not substance abusers. ⁴⁰
- Children whose families do not receive appropriate treatment for alcohol and other drug abuse are more likely to end up in foster care, remain in foster care longer, and reenter foster care once they have returned home than are children whose families do receive treatment. ⁴¹
- Women who stayed in comprehensive substance abuse treatment longer than three months were more likely to remain alcohol and drug free than were those who left within the first three months of treatment (68% vs. 48%). ⁴²
- Of mothers who received comprehensive substance abuse treatment, 75% had physical custody of one or more children six months after discharge from treatment, compared with 54% who had custody of any children shortly before entering treatment. ⁴³

Health Care

- Of the 40 million people enrolled in Medicaid, more than half are children. One in four children receive Medicaid services. ⁴⁴
- Although 20.7 million children received Medicaid coverage in 1998, they accounted for only 14.9% of the program's expenditures. ⁴⁵
- The number of children enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program grew from 3.3 million in 2000 to 4.6 million in FY 2001, an increase of 1.3 million or 38%. ⁴⁶
- From 1980 to 2000, the U.S. infant mortality rate dropped 46%, from 12.6 to 6.8 per 1,000 live births. Compared with 24 other economically developed nations and the European Union, however, the United States had the second highest infant mortality rate. ⁴⁷
- Through December 2001, 9,074 children younger than 13 were reported as having AIDS. Of these children, 5,257 (58%) were reported to have died. ⁴⁸

Mental Health

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services estimates 75%-80% of children who need mental health services do not receive it. ⁴⁹
- More than 80% of children in foster care have developmental, emotional, or behavioral problems. Mental health services are repeatedly identified as their number one health care need. ⁵⁰
- Suicide is the third leading cause of death among teens and young adults. In 2000, 3,994 teens and young adults age 15-24 committed suicide-one teen or young adult every 2 hours and 12 minutes. ⁵¹
- Severe mental illness is highly correlated with alcohol and other drug dependence or abuse. Among adults with severe mental illnesses in 2001, 20.3% were dependent on or abused alcohol or other drugs. The rate among adults without severe mental illness was only 6.3%. ⁵²
- In 1996, nearly 21% of children ages 9-17 had a diagnosable mental or substance abuse disorder associated with at least minimal impairment. ⁵³
- In 1996, 4 million youth suffered from a major mental illness that resulted in significant impairments at home, at school, and with peers. ⁵⁴
- Detained youth are among those with the highest risk for mental illness. A recent federal study of teens in juvenile detention in Cook County (Chicago), Illinois, found that almost 66% of boys and nearly 75% of girls have one or

more psychiatric disorders. About half of these youth also abused or were addicted to drugs, and more than 40% had disruptive behavioral disorders. ⁵⁵

Teen Pregnancy

- Nearly 4 out of 10 young women get pregnant at least once before age 20-1 million girls a year. ⁵⁶
- The national teen birthrate in 2000 was 48.5 births per 1,000 women ages 15-19, the lowest rate ever recorded in the United States, yet the highest teen birthrate among developed countries. ⁵⁷

Parents Who Are Incarcerated

- More than 1 million parents were incarcerated in prisons or local jails in 2000, affecting 2.3 million children. ⁵⁸
- From 1991 to 2000, the number of mothers in prison grew by 87%, while the number of incarcerated fathers increased by 61%. ⁵⁹
- Most fathers (57%) and mothers (54%) in state prisons say they have never had a visit from their children. ⁶⁰

Homelessness and Housing

- In 2002, families with children accounted for 41% of the overall homeless population. ⁶¹
- From 2001 to 2002, requests for emergency shelter by homeless families with children increased 20%. ⁶²
- An estimated 2.3 million people experience homelessness at some point each year, including nearly 1 million children. Almost three-quarters of the homeless population live in urban areas. ⁶³
- Of the children with a homeless parent, 53% are male, and 47% are female. More than 60% of these children are 8 years old or younger. ⁶⁴
- Approximately 12% of homeless children wind up in the foster care system. ⁶⁵

Youth Need Opportunities for Positive Development Afterschool Supervision and Juvenile Delinquency

- Students who spend at least one to four hours a week in extracurricular activities are 60% less likely to drop out of school by 12th grade than are their peers who do not participate in such programs. ⁶⁶
- Children who attend quality afterschool programs have better grades, peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, and conduct in school than do their peers who are not in afterschool programs. ⁶⁷
- Four million children ages 13-14 spend time unsupervised on a regular basis. ⁶⁸
- Most juvenile violence occurs after school from 3:00 PM to 7:00 PM. ⁶⁹
- The juvenile murder arrest rate fell 74% from its peak in 1993 to 2000, when it reached its lowest level since at least the 1960s. ⁷⁰
- Between 1980 and 2000, the arrest rate for all offenses reflected a 35% increase for juvenile females and a decline of 11% for juvenile males. ⁷¹

Homeless and Runaway Youth

- The homeless youth population is 300,000 each year. ⁷²
- In 1999, 150,700 youth were arrested for running away from home. Females account for most juvenile arrests for running away (59%). ⁷³
- In 1998, some 75,000 youth were served by programs under the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act, including shelters, transitional living programs, and street outreach. ⁷⁴
- In 1999, one agency study indicated that 80% of homeless mothers who are minors were unable to find long-term stable living arrangements and could need a Second Chance Home or similar living arrangement. ⁷⁵

Child Poverty Remains High

Child Poverty

- In 2001, 16.3% of all children younger than 18 lived in poverty-more than any other age group of Americans. ⁷⁶
- In 2001, the child poverty rate for black and Hispanic children younger than 6 was twice that of white children. White children had a rate of 15% in poverty; black children, 35%; and Hispanic children, 29%. ⁷⁷

- Of the 11.7 million children living below the poverty level in 2001, 64% were white and 30% were black; 31% were Hispanic, which includes both black and white. ⁷⁸
- In 2001, 1.3 million more people were poor than in 2000-32.9 million versus 31.6 million. The number of poor families increased from 6.4 million in 2000 (8.7% of all families) to 6.8 million in 2001 (9.2%). ⁷⁹
- In 2000, 7% of America's children lived in extreme poverty, in families with incomes below half the poverty line (\$7,134 for a family of three). ⁸⁰
- More than one in four families with young children earn less than \$25,000 a year; a family with both parents working full-time at the minimum wage earns only \$21,400 a year. ⁸¹
- In 1999, 3.8% of children lived in households experiencing food insecurity with moderate or severe hunger, 3.3% experienced food insecurity with moderate hunger, and 0.5% experienced severe hunger. ⁸²
- From 1999 to 2001, the prevalence of food insecurity rose from 10.1% to 10.7%, and the prevalence of food insecurity with hunger rose from 3.0% to 3.3%. ⁸³
- In 2001, the National School Lunch Program provided lunches to an average of 27 million children each school day. About 57% of the lunches served were free or at a reduced price. ⁸⁴

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

- In 2002, 2,024,875 families received cash assistance through TANF-including 5,008,034 individual recipients, most of whom were children. ⁸⁵
- In 2002, about 5 million individuals and 2 million families received TANF benefits, a decline of 5.1% and 3.6%, respectively, from the previous year. ⁸⁶
- Relatives caring for children comprise 9% of the TANF caseload. ⁸⁷
- The value of the federal TANF block grant has eroded more than 11% since its creation in 1996 because funding has not been adjusted for inflation. ⁸⁸
- Since the welfare reform law was enacted in 1996, the number of individual welfare recipients has declined by 56%; the number of families has decreased by 52%. ⁸⁹

Also available:

- This document in [PDF format](#). (Requires [Adobe Acrobat Reader](#))
- The National Fact Sheet from [2002](#).
- The National Fact Sheet from [2001](#).
- The National Fact Sheet from [2000](#).

For more child welfare statistics, visit the National Data Analysis System at <http://ndas.cwla.org>.

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