

Child Abuse and Neglect: A Statistics Snapshot: 2008

Los Angeles

Each year in Los Angeles, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) receives more than 167,000 referrals alleging that children have been abused or neglected. More than 27,000 children were found to be victims of abuse and neglect in 2007. Thirty-eight percent of California's foster care population is in Los Angeles County.

53% of all victims are Hispanic, in comparison, with the general population of LA County, which is 45% Hispanic. Caucasians make up 13% of children in foster care, but are 33% of the general population. African American children are significantly over-represented in foster care, making up just 9% of the general population, but 31% of children in foster care. Of other ethnicities, 2% of children in foster care are American Indian/Alaska Natives, and Asian-Pacific Islanders account for 4%.

Children who were identified as victims in the past were 42% more likely to be abused and neglected again. The youngest children (from birth through age three) were most likely to experience a recurrence of maltreatment.

As of January 2008, there were more than 27,000 children in foster care in Los Angeles County. Of the children currently in foster care, 1400 are currently awaiting adoptive families.

Of children who emancipate from foster care without a permanent family face:

- Unemployment
- Lower Educational Attainment
- Incarceration
- Dependence on public assistance
- Substance abuse
- Non-marital childbirth
- Other high-risk behaviors.

California

In 2007, the latest year for which statistics are available, there were 76,126 children in foster care. The average length of stay in foster care was 36.7 months.

Statewide, the ethnicities of foster children are:

- 26% Caucasian
- 28% African American
- 42% Hispanic
- 1% American Indian/Alaskan Native
- 3% other ethnicities

United States

In 2005, child protection agencies received an estimated 3.3 million allegations of child abuse and neglect involving 6 million children. Of those, 2,176,425 reports were referred for investigation, as reported by 39 states.

During federal fiscal year 2005, an estimated 899,000 children in all 50 states and the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico were substantiated or indicated to be victims of abuse or neglect. Of these children, 62.8% were neglected, 16.6% were physically abused, and 9.3% were sexually abused. The victimization rate was 12.1 per 1,000 children, representing a 3.2% decrease from 2001.

Of the children substantiated as abused and neglected, only 60.4% received follow-up services. Of the children reported as abused and neglected but not substantiated, 26.9% received follow-up services. One-fifth of victims (21.7%) were placed in foster care as a result of an investigation.

In 2005, 1,371 children died as a result of abuse or neglect.

Nationwide, the ethnicities of foster children are:

- 41% Caucasian
- 32% African American
- 18% Hispanic
- 2% American Asian/Alaska Native
- 3% other ethnicities

In 2005, 506,483 children lived apart from their families in out-of-home care, compared with 509,662 children in 2004. Of the children living apart from their families, 32% were age 5 or younger, and 20.4% were 16 or older.ⁱ

ⁱ http://cssr.berkeley.edu/ucb_childwelfare/Entries.aspx
<http://lacdcfs.org/aboutus/factsheets.html>
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#afcars
<http://www.ballantinesbiz.com/everychild/emancipatingfosteryouthstatistics.htm>
<http://kidsarewaiting.org/publications/statefacts?id=0006>
<http://www.fostercaremonth.org/AboutFosterCare/StatisticsAndData/Documents/CA-Facts-FCM07.pdf>
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report13.htm
<http://www.cwla.org/advocacy/nationalfactsheet08.htm>