

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

DEFINITION: Number of children in foster care in FY 2007, disaggregated by race. Note that percentages reflect the percentage of children in foster care who identify as black or white.

SIGNIFICANCE

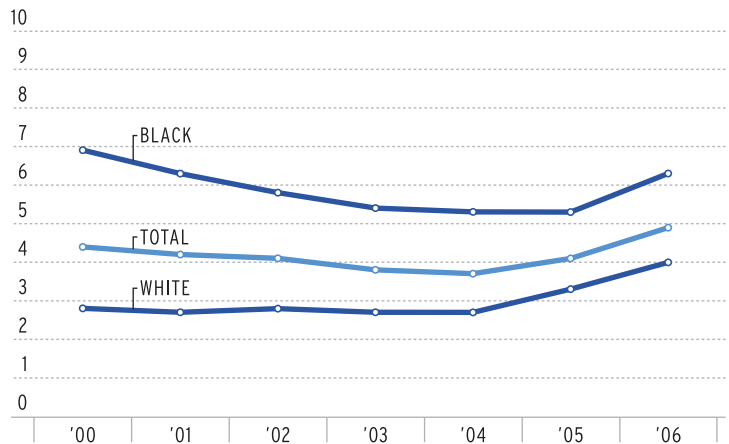
All children deserve to live with safe, loving families and to be free from harm. Children are placed in foster care when the Department of Social Services determines that a child is in danger of serious harm or when a child's parents are unable to care for them. Nationally, 15% of substantiated victims of abuse and neglect are placed in foster care, while the remaining 85% receive services in their homes.¹ Children in foster care may be placed with relatives, with a licensed foster family, in a residential group home, an institution, or a supervised independent living program. Children who are in pre-adoptive homes, on trial home visits, or who have run away from their foster home are also included in foster care data. As of September 30, 2006, the most common foster care placement in Louisiana was a non-relative foster home (53%), followed by relative foster home (22%), institution (11%), and group home (5%).²

In 2006, the Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services unveiled an effort called Louisiana LIFTS, a series of initiatives to strengthen families and to ensure children safe, permanent solutions. These initiatives are designed to build on family strengths, reduce the number of children removed from their homes, ensure that families have access to community based resources, better support foster and adoptive families, reduce the number of children placed in residential treatment facilities, and provide stronger supports for children aging out of foster care. While these efforts are still relatively new, there are already signs of progress. In May 2008, just 10% of children in foster care were placed in a residential facility, a sharp decline from 18% in 2003.³

RACIAL DISPARITIES

Every child deserves safe, permanent connections with loving adults. Unfortunately, research shows that children of color receive differential treatment at virtually every stage of the child welfare decision-making process.⁴ In Louisiana, black children are overrepresented in the foster care system. While black children made up 39% of the child population in 2007, they made up 47% of children in the foster care in FY 2007. As the chart demonstrates, the

RATE OF CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE PER 1,000 CHILDREN YOUNGER THAN 18 YEARS OF AGE IN LOUISIANA 2000-2006



gap between the rates of black and white children in out-of-home care (OHC) in Louisiana narrowed considerably between 2000 and 2006. The disparity was reduced not only because the number of black children in OHC per 1,000 black children declined, but also because the corresponding rate for white children increased.

CHART DATA SOURCE

Foster Care Data: Child Welfare League of America. Number of Children in Foster Care. Special tabulation of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System. Washington, D.C.: Child Welfare League of America. Retrieved from <http://ndas.cwla.org/> on 8/1/09. Note that this data reflects a census of the population of children under 18 in out of home care on Sept. 1 of a given year, and therefore does not reflect the total number of children who were in out-of-home care in a given year. Population Data: Population Estimates Program, Population Division, U.S. Census Bureau Washington D.C. Release Date: August 9, 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/popest/estimates.php> on 8/1/2008.

DATA SOURCE

Department of Social Services, Office of Community Services, by special request.

RATE CALCULATION

$(100 * \text{number of black children in foster care} \div \text{total number of children in foster care})$

$(100 * \text{number of white children in foster care} \div \text{total number of children in foster care})$

¹ Robert B. Hill, Ph.D., "Synthesis of Research on Disproportionality in Child Welfare: An Update," Casey-CSSP Alliance for Racial Equity in the Child Welfare System, 2007, retrieved from www.racemattersconsortium.org/ on 5/1/2009.

² Child Welfare League of America, "Number of Children in Foster Care," Special tabulation of the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis Reporting System, Child Welfare League of America, retrieved from <http://ndas.cwla.org/> on 9/20/08.

³ Louisiana Department of Social Services, "Louisiana LIFTS Residential Timeline," Louisiana Department of Social Services, 2007, retrieved from www.dss.la.us on 2/1/2009.

⁴ The Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Race Matters: Unequal Opportunity within the Child Welfare System," The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2006.

CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

FY 2007	TOTAL	BLACK		WHITE	
	No.	No.	%	No.	%
LOUISIANA	5,140	2,439	47	2,563	50
Acadia	52	12	23	39	75
Allen	33	7	21	26	79
Ascension	52	22	42	29	56
Assumption <i>see Lafourche Parish</i>					
Avoyelles	45	6	13	33	73
Beauregard	52	13	25	39	75
Bienville <i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Bossier	91	46	51	44	48
Caddo	205	119	58	80	39
Calcasieu	334	142	43	178	53
Cameron <i>see Ouachita Parish</i>					
Cameron <i>see Calcasieu Parish</i>					
Catahoula	42	11	23	26	62
La Salle					
Claiborne <i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Concordia	20	<5	LNE	17	85
De Soto	86	46	53	40	47
East Baton Rouge	285	219	77	63	22
East Carroll	<5	<5	LNE	0	n.a.
East Feliciana	11	8	23	<5	LNE
West Feliciana					
Evangeline	<5	<5	LNE	<5	LNE
Franklin	35	21	60	14	40
Grant	32	5	LNE	25	78
Iberia	78	49	63	28	36
Iberville	62	38	61	22	35
West Baton Rouge					
Jackson <i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Jefferson	418	212	51	195	47
Jefferson Davis	18	7	39	11	61
Lafayette	389	226	58	158	41
Lafourche	158	55	35	94	59
Assumption <i>see Catahoula Parish</i>					
La Salle					
Lincoln	84	45	54	39	46
Livingston	223	18	8	196	88
Madison	31	29	94	<5	LNE
Morehouse	20	12	60	7	35
Natchitoches	44	28	64	14	59
Red River					
Orleans	241	218	90	21	9
Ouachita	235	118	50	112	48
Caldwell					
Plaquemines	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.
Pointe Coupee	10	<5	LNE	6	60
Rapides	268	150	56	111	41
Red River <i>see Natchitoches Parish</i>					
Richland	22	<5	LNE	13	59
Sabine	38	14	37	23	61
St. Bernard	<5	0	n.a.	<5	LNE
St. Charles <i>see St. John the Baptist Parish</i>					
St. Helena <i>see Tangipahoa Parish</i>					
St. James <i>see St. John the Baptist Parish</i>					
St. John the Baptist					
St. Charles	88	41	47	43	49
St. James					
St. Landry	118	56	47	61	52
St. Martin	50	25	50	24	48
St. Mary	30	16	LNE	14	LNE
St. Tammany	352	109	31	239	68
Tangipahoa	169	89	53	76	45
St. Helena					
Tensas	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.
Terrebonne	52	16	LNE	31	60
Union	11	6	LNE	<5	LNE
Vermilion	94	20	21	71	76
Vernon	91	18	LNE	65	71
Washington	228	78	34	143	63
Webster					
Bienville	113	49	43	63	56
Claiborne					
Jackson					
West Baton Rouge <i>see Iberville Parish</i>					
West Carroll	0	0	n.a.	0	n.a.
West Feliciana <i>see East Feliciana Parish</i>					
Winn	20	<5	LNE	17	85

LNE Percentages were not calculated for any number less than five.