

# FOSTER CARE ADMISSIONS & DISCHARGES

## DEFINITIONS:

*Foster Care Admissions:* Number of new foster care cases in State Fiscal Year 2007 (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007).

*Case Closures (All Causes):* Total number of foster care case closures in State Fiscal Year 2007. Reasons for a case closure include a child's "aging out" (turning 18 years old), returning to home of parents, moving to a relative's home, being adopted, being emancipated/married, or deceased.

*Case Closures Due to Age:* Total number of foster care case closures due to a child reaching age 18 in State Fiscal Year 2007.

## SIGNIFICANCE

All young people deserve a loving, safe, and stable home. Unfortunately, some children live in families that are unable to meet their basic needs. This happens for a variety of reasons, including illness, inadequate housing, substance abuse, poverty, domestic violence, and mental health issues. In the most extreme circumstances, the Department of Social Services deems it necessary to remove a child from her home in order to ensure her safety. While this may ensure a child's physical safety, it can also be emotionally traumatic for the child and the family. Many children enter the foster care system with mental and physical health issues due to the circumstances that caused them to be placed in foster care and/or the trauma of changes in their living arrangements. In fact, almost half of school-age children in foster care exhibit a clinical level of behavioral and emotional problems.<sup>1</sup>

Most young adults today continue to receive emotional and financial support from their families long after they turn 18. Each year, throughout the country, too many children leave foster care without connections to stable support systems that will help them succeed. In FY 2007, 278 Louisiana children "aged out" of the foster care system. Louisiana children become ineligible for foster care services when they turn 18. This means that, unlike most 18 year-olds, foster care alumni are responsible for finding and paying for their own food, clothing, housing, health care, transportation, et cetera. While many foster care alumni do experience successful outcomes, national studies show that youth who age out are more likely to drop out of high school, be involved with the criminal justice system, and experience homelessness.<sup>2</sup> Many children who age out of the foster care system are able to access educational and housing assistance through Louisiana DSS' Young Adult Program. The Young Adult Program provides continued support for youth who are working and enrolled in an educational program. DSS also offers the Independent Living Program, which works to help older youth in the foster care system gain life skills before they exit the system.



In FY 2007, nearly as many children exited the foster care system as entered it in Louisiana. Some parishes—including Caddo, East Baton Rouge, Lafayette, Orleans, and Ouachita—had significantly more children leave foster care than enter it in FY 2007. Other parishes—including Calcasieu, Iberia, Jefferson, Livingston, Sabine, Vernon, Washington, and Webster—saw considerably more children enter the foster care system than exit.

## DATA SOURCE

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

<sup>1</sup> Sharon Vandivere, M.P.P., Rosemary Chalk, and Kristin Anderson Moore, Ph.D., "Children in Foster Homes: How Are They Faring?," *Child Trends*, 2003, retrieved from [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org) on 7/1/2009.

<sup>2</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation *2007 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, (Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2007), 8.

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FY 2007	ADMISSIONS		CASE CLOSURES (ALL CAUSES)		FOSTER CARE CASE CLOSURES DUE TO AGE	
		No.		No.		No.
<b>LOUISIANA</b>		<b>3,415</b>		<b>3,338</b>		<b>278</b>
Acadia		41		32		<5
Allen		16		25		<5
Ascension		59		62		<5
Assumption	<i>see Lafourche Parish</i>					
Avoyelles		38		37		0
Beauregard		46		37		<5
Bienville	<i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Bossier		89		98		<5
Caddo		216		283		21
Calcasieu		281		231		12
Cameron	<i>see Ouachita Parish</i>					
Caldwell	<i>see Calcasieu Parish</i>					
Catahoula						
La Salle		13		11		0
Claiborne	<i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Concordia		16		13		<5
De Soto		52		36		<5
East Baton Rouge		188		242		32
East Carroll		<5		<5		<5
East Feliciana		5		<5		0
West Feliciana						
Evangeline		17		29		<5
Franklin		22		<5		0
Grant		27		31		<5
Iberia		45		26		<5
Iberville		39		37		<5
West Baton Rouge	<i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Jackson	<i>see Webster Parish</i>					
Jefferson		235		198		22
Jefferson Davis		25		22		<5
Lafayette		147		226		21
Lafourche		74		71		5
Assumption	<i>see Catahoula Parish</i>					
La Salle	<i>see Catahoula Parish</i>					
Lincoln		21		23		11
Livingston		205		161		<5
Madison		15		12		<5
Morehouse		14		13		<5
Natchitoches		56		59		5
Red River		147		178		28
Orleans		72		109		7
Ouachita		0		0		0
Caldwell		8		6		0
Plaquemines		134		149		9
Pointe Coupee		23		11		0
Rapides		53		30		<5
Red River	<i>see Natchitoches Parish</i>					
Richland		53		30		<5
Sabine		<5		5		<5
St. Bernard						
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		52		46		9
St. Charles		70		59		10
St. James		55		40		<5
St. Landry		41		53		<5
St. Martin		203		204		20
St. Mary		89		103		10
St. Tammany		0		0		0
Tangipahoa		19		23		0
St. Helena		6		5		<5
Tensas		66		86		<5
Terrebonne		90		64		5
Union		191		104		<5
Vermilion						
Vernon		78		35		<5
Washington						
Webster						
Bienville						
Claiborne						
Jackson						
West Baton Rouge	<i>see Iberville Parish</i>					
West Carroll		0		0		0
West Feliciana	<i>see East Feliciana Parish</i>					
Winn		10		6		<5