

FACTS

ARIZONA'S ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN

June 2007

Arizona ranks 37th in the nation on indicators of child well being – indicators such as health, poverty and educational attainment.

CHILD DEATHS FROM MALTREATMENT

- ◆ There were 50 child deaths in 2005 that were due to child maltreatment.¹
- ◆ Drug or alcohol abuse was a factor in 62% of the deaths of children due to maltreatment. Methamphetamine was identified as a factor in 32% of maltreatment deaths.
- ◆ In 40% of the maltreatment deaths, there was a history of maltreatment. Prior family involvement with CPS was identified in 46% of the maltreatment deaths, and 14 of these 23 CPS cases were open at the time of the child's death.

CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- ◆ Since the program began in 2002, 13 newborn babies have been abandoned to safe haven providers, such as hospitals and fire stations.
- ◆ From October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006, there were 34,178 reports of child maltreatment made to CPS, an 8% reduction from the same time period in 2004-2005.
- ◆ Three out of every five reports are classified as neglect (61%), while almost one third are related to physical abuse (32%). Other reports alleged sexual abuse (10%) or emotional abuse (2%).
- ◆ In Fiscal Year 2006, 3,553 dependency petitions were filed in Arizona juvenile courts, a 1.6% decrease from the previous year. However, the number of children with open petitions (12,050) on June 30, 2006, was 6.1% higher than the previous year.

- ◆ During the reporting period of April 1, 2006 to September 30, 2006, 7% of CPS investigations resulted in a substantiated finding (excluding all reports of potential maltreatment). After a time period to allow for a family to appeal a substantiated report finding, CPS provided an adjusted substantiation rate for October 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006 of 9%, up from the 8% initially reported. Nationally, 30% of all investigations result in a substantiated or indicated finding.

CHILDREN IN OUT-OF-HOME CARE

- ◆ 11% of all CPS investigations result in the placement of at least one child.²
- ◆ From October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006, 7,526 children entered the foster care system, a 2% decrease from the previous year.
- ◆ The percentage of children in out-of-home care by ethnicity was:
 - 43 percent (4,225) White (non-Hispanic)
 - 34 percent (3,361) Hispanic
 - 12 percent (1,180) African-American
 - 7 percent (695) American Indian
 - 1 percent (61) Asian
 - 3 percent (311) other
- ◆ There is an over representation of African-American children in foster care than in the overall child population in Arizona (12% and 4%, respectively).
- ◆ On September 30, 2006, there were 9,833 children in out-of-home care, a decrease of 1% compared to this same time the previous year. Of children in out-of-home care:
 - 34 percent (3,308) are placed with relatives who are not licensed foster parents.
 - 42 percent (4,117) are placed in licensed foster homes.
 - 18 percent (1,744) are placed in group homes or residential care settings.
 - 3 percent (297) of youth have run away from foster care.
- ◆ The number of children (1,744) in congregate care placements (group homes, residential treatment centers, or shelters) decreased by 14% from September 2005 to September 2006.
- ◆ The total number of children age 6 and under in group home care was 39 in December 2006, a 64% decline from the 108 that were in group home care in December 2005.³
- ◆ The total number of children age 3 and under in shelter care was 36 in December 2006, down 27% from the 49 that were in shelter in December 2005.⁴

- ◆ From April 1, 2006 to September 30, 2006, there were 744 children who remained in a shelter or receiving home for more than 21 consecutive days, a 28% decrease from the same period the previous year. Of these, 177 were age 5 or younger, a 55% decrease from the same period the previous year, and a 76% decrease from the same period two years before.
- ◆ On September 30, 2006, 1,623 children in out-of-home care (17%) had a case goal of long-term foster care or independent living. This means they will likely grow up in foster care, and as young adults, leave foster care to live on their own.
- ◆ The number of children age 18 and older in out of home care was 402 (4% of total) as of September 30, 2006, a 25% increase from a year before.

PERMANENCY AND ADOPTION

- ◆ From October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006, 7,101 children left the custody of DES, 14% more than during the same period the previous year.
- ◆ From October 1, 2005 to September 30, 2006, 58% of foster children who left care did so within one year.
- ◆ 52% (5,071) of the children in out-of-home care have been in care for more than one year, and 26% (2,575 children) have been in the state's care for more than 2 years.
- ◆ Of the 7,101 children who left DES custody:
 - 51% were reunified with their parents or primary caretaker
 - 4% left to live with other relatives
 - 19% were adopted
 - 14% were placed in a guardianship relationship
 - 7% aged out of foster care (over age 18)
 - 4% were transferred to another agency
 - 1% ran away from care and DES custody was dismissed
- ◆ The typical child leaving foster care is 7 years old, has had 1 foster placement and had been in care approximately 10 months.
- ◆ On the average, youth who leave care after reaching age 18 have lived in more than 7 placements and had been in care for nearly 4 years.
- ◆ In September 2006, there were 208 children with a case plan of adoption not placed in a prospective adoptive home. Of these children:
 - 50% are White
 - 29% are Hispanic
 - 13% are African-American
 - 3% are American Indian
 - 51% are between the ages of 6 and 12.

- ◆ In March 2007, there were 9,979 children whose families were receiving adoption subsidies, and 1,791 children whose families were receiving guardianship subsidies.

RESOURCES

- ◆ Although caseworkers and other professionals are legally required to meet personally with children in out-of-home care a minimum of once a month, 3,396 children in foster care (35%) did not receive a visit in September 2006. This is a slight improvement from 39% of children not receiving their required visit in September 2005.
- ◆ When a child's case plan is family reunification, caseworkers are required to meet personally with parents at least once a month, but in September 2006, 1,054 parents (49%) did not receive their required visitation. This is a slight improvement from 52% of parents not receiving the required visitation in September 2005.
- ◆ The ability to provide timely, appropriate and required services to children and families involved with the child welfare system depends largely on the caseloads of direct service staff. In December 2006, CPS investigation staff averaged 15 cases per filled full time employee (FTE) position, 25% above the national caseload standard of 12 cases per FTE. In-home service caseloads were 61% above the national standard and out-of-home service caseloads were 54% over the national standard^{5 6}.
- ◆ The annualized turnover rate for CPS Specialists is 29%. ⁷
- ◆ The number of licensed foster homes decreased by 42% from 2,288 in September 2005 to 3,256 in September 2006, and the number of spaces available in these foster homes increased 32% from 4,905 to 6,469.
- ◆ As reported in September 2006, 45% of the foster homes (1,466 homes) did not receive the required quarterly visitation by their licensing worker. This is a sharp increase from 27% of foster homes (616) not receiving their required visitation one year before.

Unless otherwise noted, all data are from the period between October 1, 2005 and September 30, 2006. All data represent the latest information available.

¹ Arizona Child Fatality Review Program's 13th Annual Report, issued November 2006.

² Arizona Specific Child Welfare Caseloads Standards, Final Report; Department of Economic Security to Senator Karen Johnson, Joint Legislative Committee on Children and Family Services, August 10, 2005.

³ Department of Economic Security's February 2007 bi-annual report on Child Protective Services.

⁴ Department of Economic Security's February 2007 bi-annual report on Child Protective Services.

⁵ National Child Welfare League of America Standards recommends caseloads of no more than 12 active intake investigations per month, 17 families for an in-home services caseload or a caseload of 15 children in foster care.

⁶ Department of Economic Security's February 2007 bi-annual report on Child Protective Services.

⁷ Department of Economic Security's February 2007 bi-annual report on Child Protective Services.