



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

Union County

2006

(2005 Data)

A Publication of the South Carolina Governor's Office – Division of Foster Care Review

OVERVIEW

Facts About Foster Kids is intended to provide annual data about children in foster care for every county in South Carolina. It covers: **Demographics** -- how many children there are in foster care, their characteristics and whether their prevalence is increasing or decreasing; **Areas of Concern** -- legal and program shortcomings identified at monthly citizen reviews; and **Progress Measures** -- length of time in care, number of placements, achieving permanency, and recidivism rates. Information is collected from local volunteer citizen review boards that review the cases of all children who have been in foster care at least four months; each case is then reviewed every six months thereafter until the child leaves care. The 2006 edition includes complete information about children who were reviewed at least once in 2005. It also includes demographics on those children who entered foster care late in the year and were not reviewed until 2006, but does not yet incorporate them into progress measures or areas of concern.

DEMOGRAPHICS

For Union County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased in 2005. The number of children entering care and the number leaving care also decreased in 2005.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Union County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	10	14	15	8	12
Change from Prior Year	-4	-1	+7		
Number Entering	2	3	8	2	4
Number Leaving	2	5	3	0	3

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Union County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	10	100%	2	100%	2	100%
<u>Race</u>						
African-American	5	50%			1	50%
Caucasian	4	40%	1	50%	1	50%
Other	1	10%	1	50%		
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	6	60%	2	100%	2	100%
Female	4	40%				
<u>Age</u>						
5 and Younger	1	10%	1	50%		
6 to 9						
10 to 15	5	50%	1	50%	1	50%
16 and older	4	40%			1	50%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held eight meetings and 18 reviews. Of the 18 reviews held, 14 (78%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing*. The most often cited program violation was *Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Union County				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
Legal:				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	7	4	4	1
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing			6	
No Timely Merits Hearing	1	1	7	2
No Face to Face Contact			1	
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	3	1	2	
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	1	1		
Other Statutory Issues	2	2	1	1
Program:				
No Progress Report	3	3	9	2
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan		2		
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	2	9	1	
Interested Parties Not Invited		1		1
No Timely FCRB Hearing	2	1		
No Advance Packets	2	3	1	
Other Policy/Procedure Issues		5	1	
TOTAL	23	33	33	7
Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern	78%	65%	75%	54%

PROGRESS MEASURES

Four main indicators are used to measure progress towards better outcomes for children in foster care. For each, comparison data for the previous four years are provided.

LENGTH OF TIME IN CARE:

The longer a child is away from their home or a nurturing family environment, the more damaging it can be to the normal development of the child. For this reason, a major goal of the Review Board is to ensure that children achieve permanency as quickly as possible. In 2005, the average length of time a child spent in care increased to 3.2 years.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

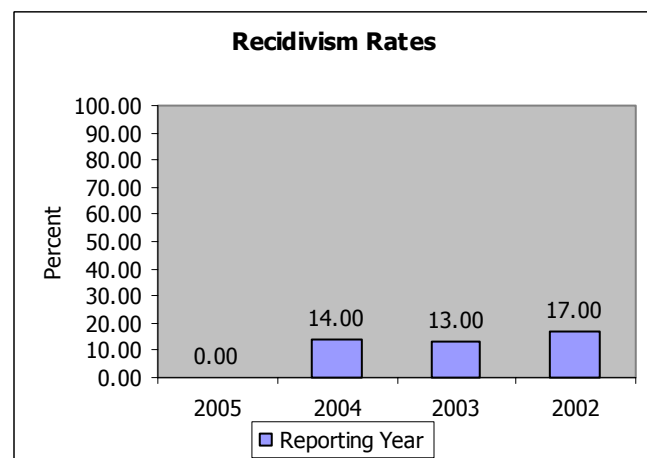
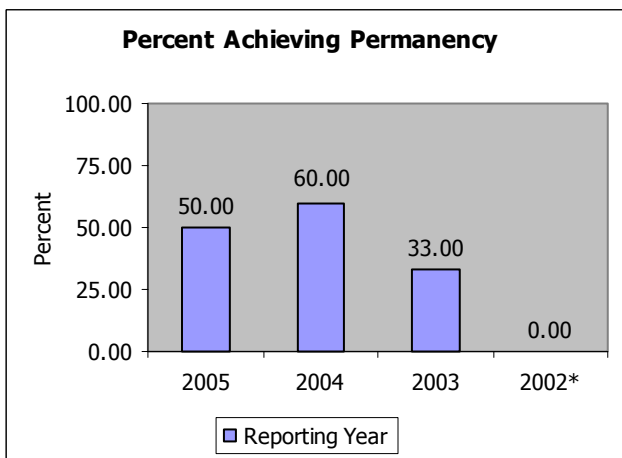
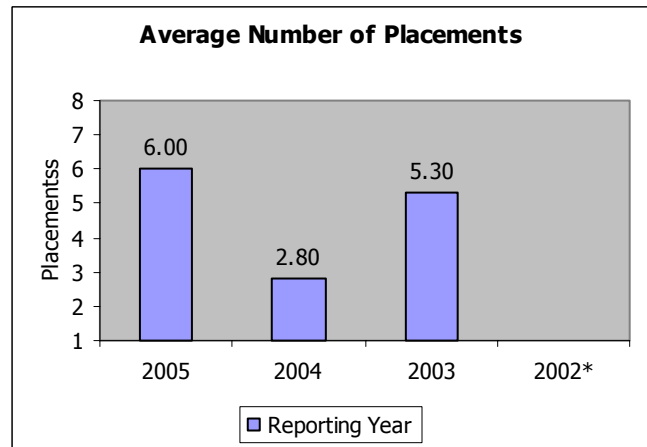
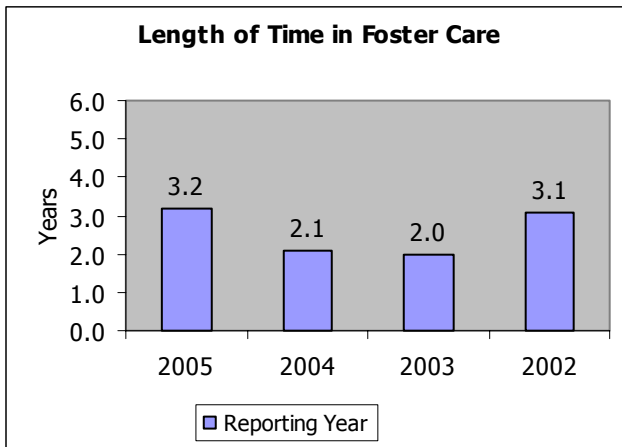
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, Union County's average number of placements increased to six.

PERCENT ACHIEVING PERMANENCY:

Permanency for a child means placement with a "forever family." A child can achieve legal permanency upon leaving the foster care system either by returning home to their natural parent or by being adopted. In 2005 of the two children leaving care, one was adopted and none were returned home to their natural parent.

RECIDIVISM RATES:

Children who re-enter care are some of the most vulnerable children in foster care because they have been in custody more than once. In 2005, none of children entering foster care in Union County had previously been in custody.



2002* - No Closures in Year 2002

Inquiries about this report and requests for copies of this and other counties' reports should be made to:
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 Division of Foster Care Review, 1205 Pendleton St., Columbia, SC 29201 Phone: (803) 734-0480 Fax: (803) 734-1223.
 Comparable reports for other counties and for the state can also be found on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.govoep.state.sc.us/children/foster.htm>