



# FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

## Lancaster 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 Lancaster County, the number of foster care children reviewed increased in 2005. The number of children entering care and the number leaving care also increased in 2005.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Lancaster County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	55	45	61	60	55
Change from Prior Year	+10	-16	+1		
Number Entering	21	7	10	8	12
Number Leaving	10	9	18	14	13

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Lancaster County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>	55	100%	21	100%	10	100%
<b><u>Race</u></b>						
African-American	26	47%	9	43%	5	50%
Caucasian	26	47%	12	57%	5	50%
Other	3	6%				
<b><u>Gender</u></b>						
Male	25	45.5%	12	57%	2	20%
Female	30	54.5%	9	43%	8	80%
<b><u>Age</u></b>						
5 and Younger	14	25%	13	62%		
6 to 9	10	18%	4	19%		
10 to 15	18	33%	4	19%	4	40%
16 and older	13	24%			6	60%

## AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 12 meetings and 78 reviews. Of the 78 reviews held, 29 (37%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *No Timely Probable Cause Hearing*. The most often cited program violation was *No Current/Incomplete or Inappropriate Case Plan*.

<b>Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Lancaster County</b>				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
<b>Legal:</b>				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing		6	10	12
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	3		2	
No Timely Merits Hearing	1		9	3
No Face to Face Contact		3	1	
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	2	10	7	7
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	1	7		
Other Statutory Violations		2	7	5
<b>Program:</b>				
No Progress Report	9	15	4	6
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan		6	1	
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	17	12	2	6
Interested Parties Not Invited	2	4		3
No Timely FCRB Hearing	2			
No Advance Packet	3	1		2
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	7	6	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>
<b>Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>37%</b>

## 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 in Lancaster County decreased to 2.5 years.

### NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

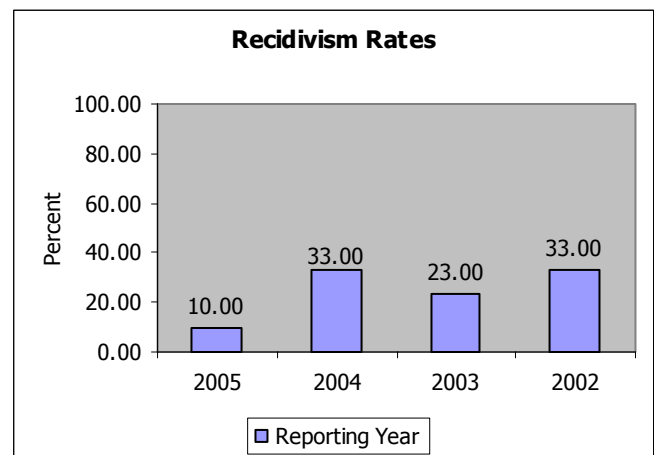
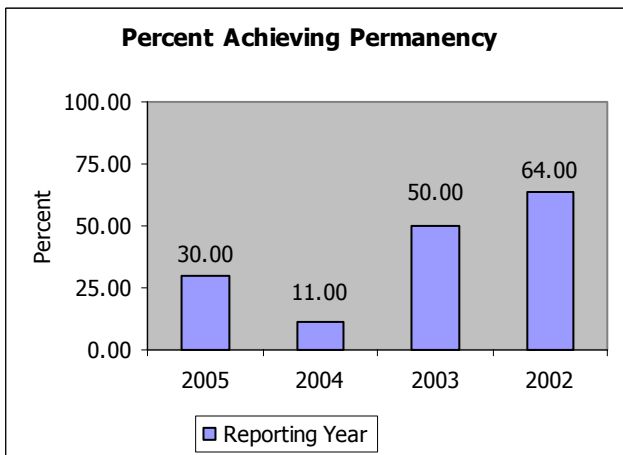
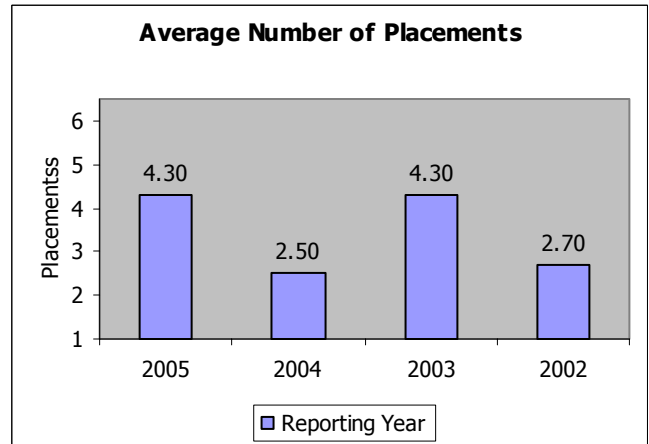
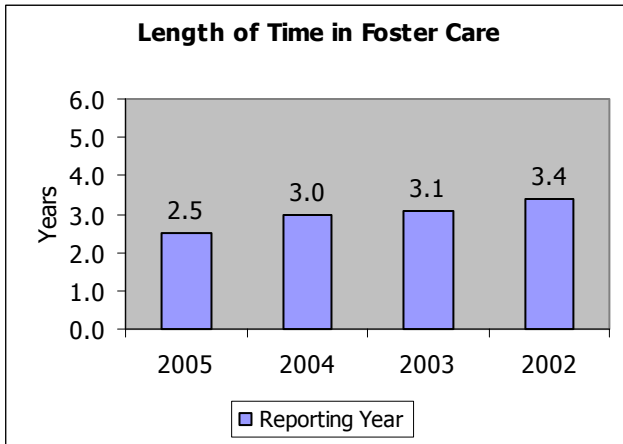
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, Lancaster County's average number of placements increased to 4.3.

### 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 10 children leaving care, none were adopted and three 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 the custody of DSS more than once. In 2005, 10% of the children entering foster care in Lancaster County had previously been in custody. This is a decrease from 33% in 2004. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. Last year all of the children re-entering care were in the custody of their adoptive or natural parents or another relative.



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>