



# FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

## Greenville County

### 2005

(2004 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 2005 edition includes complete information about children who were reviewed at least once in 2004. It also includes demographics on those children who entered foster care late in the year and were not reviewed until 2005, but does not yet incorporate them into progress measures or areas of concern.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

For Greenville County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased by 42% between 2004 and 2002. In 2004, the number of children entering care increased to 164 (41%) over the previous year, and the number leaving care decreased by 14.

**Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2004, Greenville County**

	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	301	384	426	370
Change from Prior Year	-83	-42		
Number Entering	164	96	107	122
Number Leaving	104	118	131	118

**Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2004, Greenville County**

	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>	301	100%	164	100%	104	100%
<b>Race</b>						
African-American	146	48.5%	61	37%	50	48.1%
Caucasian	127	42.2%	67	41%	42	40.4%
Other	28	9.3%	36	22%	12	11.5%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	164	54.5%	76	46%	48	46.2%
Female	137	45.5%	83	54%	56	53.8%
<b>Age</b>						
5 and Younger	75	24.9%	78	47.6%	18	17.3%
6 to 9	39	12.6%	24	14.6%	7	6.7%
10 to 15	100	33.2%	50	30.5%	30	28.8%
16 and older	87	29.3%	12	7.3%	49	47.2%

## AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2004, Review Board members held 30 meetings and 514 reviews. Of the 514 reviews held, 312 (60%) 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*. Failure to hold permanency planning hearings according to time frames outlined by state and federal law unnecessarily lengthens the time children remain in foster care.

<b>Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2004, Greenville County</b>			
	2004	2003	2002
<b>Legal:</b>			
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing		3	6
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	105	105	107
No Timely Merits Hearing	13	62	79
No Face to Face Contact	25	18	50
No Court Order at Review	7	26	44
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	39	23	25
Other Statutory Issues	35	47	47
<b>Program:</b>			
No Progress Report	110	183	179
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	44	67	72
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	52	96	91
No Advance Packets	22	39	59
Interested Parties Not Invited	15	32	71
No Timely FCRB Hearing	30	29	49
Other Policy/Procedure Violations	31	54	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>528</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>929</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 three 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 2004, Greenville County increased the average length of time in care to 3.5 years.

### NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

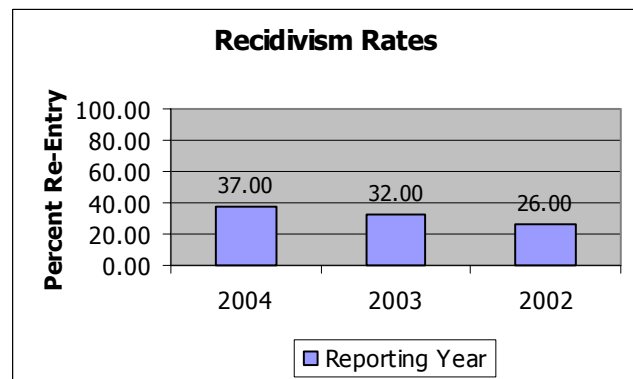
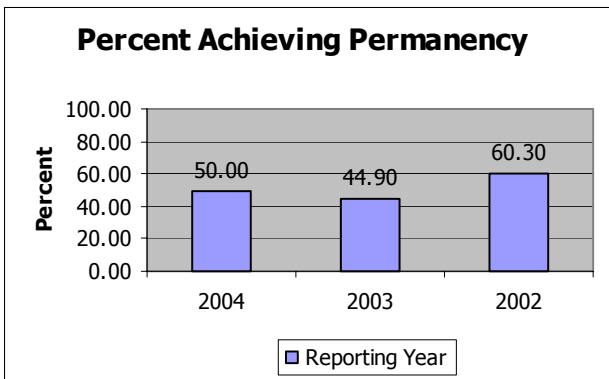
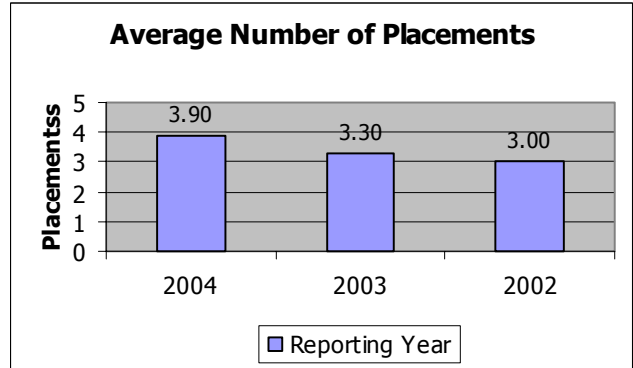
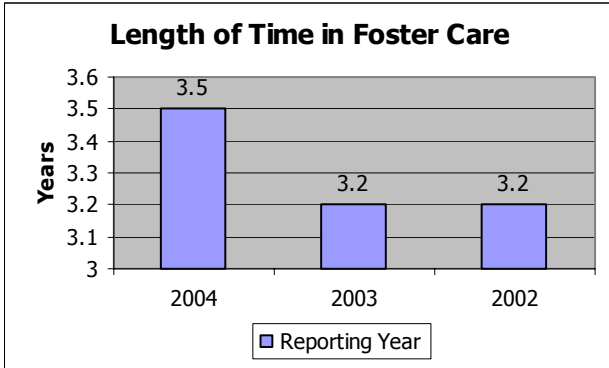
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2004, Greenville County's average number of placements was 3.9, an increase from 3.3 in 2003.

### 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 2004 of the 50% of the children leaving care were either adopted or returned home to their natural parent. This is an increase from 45% in 2003.

**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 2004, 37% of children entering foster care in Greenville County had previously been in custody. This is an increase from 32% in 2003. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. In 2004, 76% of the children re-entering care were in the custody of their 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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 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>