



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

Colleton 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 Colleton County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased in 2005. The number of children entering care decreased by 10, and the number leaving care increased in 2005.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Colleton County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	69	71	79	69	72
Change from Prior Year	-2	-8	+10		
Number Entering	5	15	16	9	11
Number Leaving	25	19	30	24	25

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Colleton County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	69	100%	5	100%	25	100%
<u>Race</u>						
African-American	33	48%	1	20%	13	52%
Caucasian	35	51%	4	80%	12	48%
Other	1	1%				
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	37	54%	2	40%	16	64%
Female	32	46%	3	60%	9	36%
<u>Age</u>						
5 and Younger	20	29%	3	60%	3	12%
6 to 9	17	25%	1	20%	9	36%
10 to 15	18	26%	1	20%	7	28%
16 and older	14	20%			6	24%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 10 meetings and 128 reviews. Of the 128 reviews held, 95 (74%) 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 *Other Policy/Procedure Issues*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Colleton County				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
Legal:				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	26	24	32	23
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing			5	1
No Timely Merits Hearing	22	11	25	28
No Face to Face Contact	7	3	2	1
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	16	19	18	14
No Thorough Adoption Assessment	13	21	13	10
Other Statutory Issues	3	4	7	10
Program:				
No Progress Report	16	27	23	33
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	31	29	13	10
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	39	32	21	25
Interested Parties Not Invited	2	7	12	3
No Timely FCRB Hearing	6	4	5	10
No Advance Packets	2	3	2	7
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	21	42	16	21
TOTAL	204	226	194	196
Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern	74%	74%	70%	89%

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 slightly to 3.7 years.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

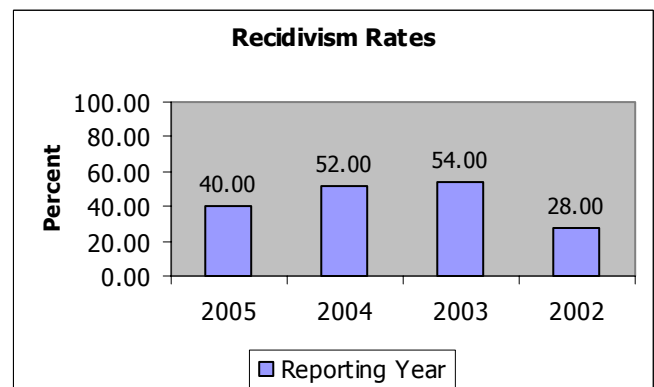
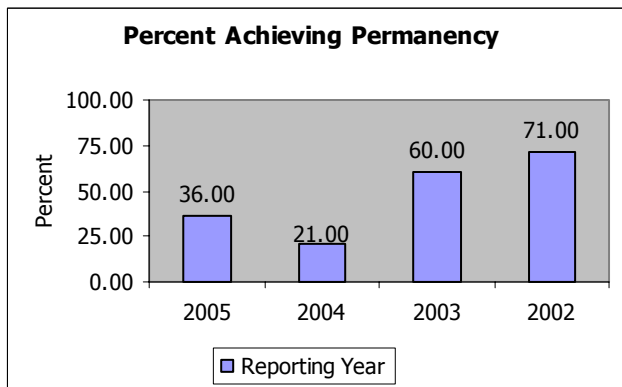
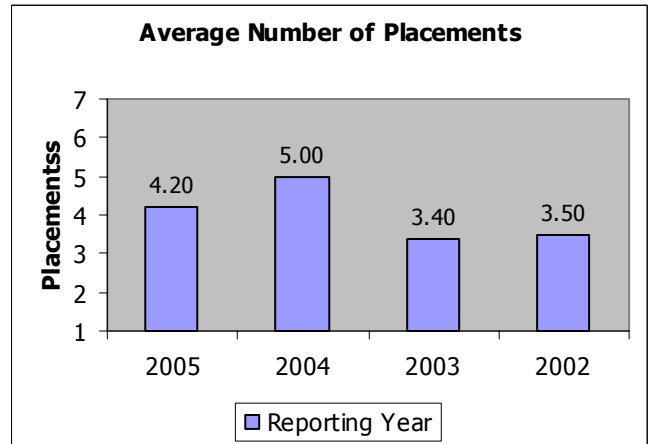
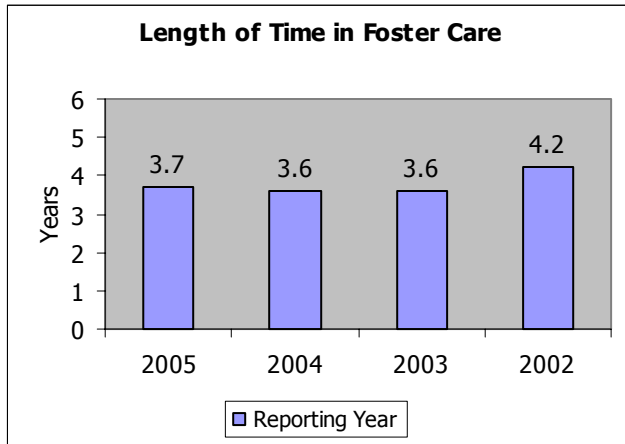
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, Colleton County's average number of placements decreased to 4.2.

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 25 children leaving care, none were adopted and nine 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, 40% of children entering foster care in Colleton County had previously been in custody. This is a decrease from 52% 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 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>