



# FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

## Berkeley 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 Berkeley County, the number of foster care children reviewed has increased by 26% since 2002. In 2005, the number of children entering care increased by 16, and the number leaving care increased by six.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Berkeley County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	284	229	220	210	236
Change from Prior Year	+55	+9	+10		
Number Entering	112	96	76	86	93
Number Leaving	88	82	64	82	79

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Berkeley County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>	284	100%	112	100%	88	100%
<b><u>Race</u></b>						
African-American	150	53%	55	49%	53	60%
Caucasian	121	43%	43	38%	31	35%
Other	13	4%	14	13%	4	5%
<b><u>Gender</u></b>						
Male	159	56%	63	56%	49	57%
Female	125	44%	49	44%	39	43%
<b><u>Age</u></b>						
5 and Younger	84	30%	49	44%	31	35%
6 to 9	61	21%	25	22%	19	22%
10 to 15	87	31%	32	29%	17	19%
16 and older	52	18%	6	5%	21	24%

## AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 21 meetings and 453 reviews. Of the 453 reviews held, 320 (71%) 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 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. The most often cited program violation was *No Advance Packet*.

<b>Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 – 2005, Berkeley County</b>				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
<b>Legal:</b>				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	99	95	126	76
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	30	19	30	25
No Timely Merits Hearing	77	59	70	85
No Face to Face Contact	32	45	46	56
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	50	45	15	12
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	4	21	19	17
Other Statutory Violations	7	14	23	20
<b>Program:</b>				
No Progress Report	93	90	72	115
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	8	66	69	22
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	38	55	26	45
Interested Parties Not Invited	4	23	15	21
No Timely FCRB Hearing	16	17	10	17
No Advance Packet	107	45	18	27
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	44	48	28	25
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>609</b>	<b>642</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>563</b>
<b>Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern</b>	<b>71%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>80%</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 a child spent in care decreased to 2.2 years.

### NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

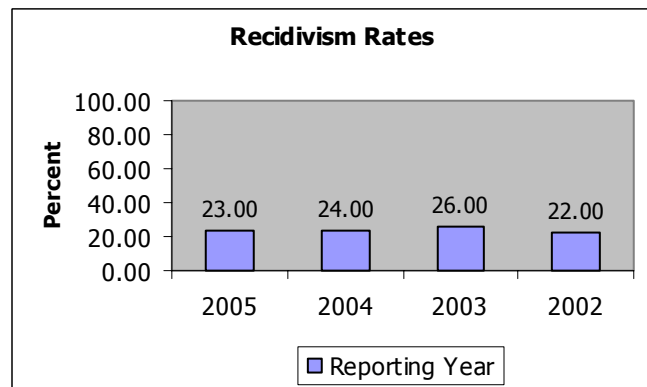
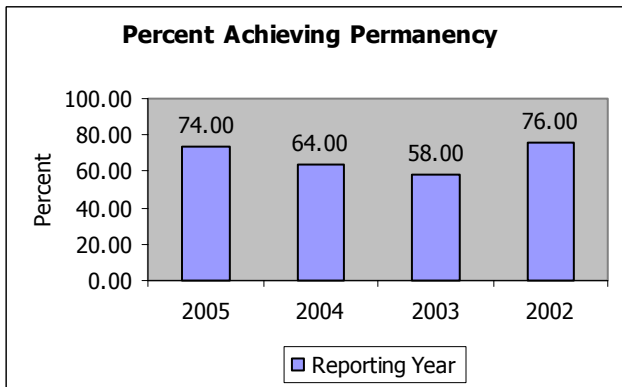
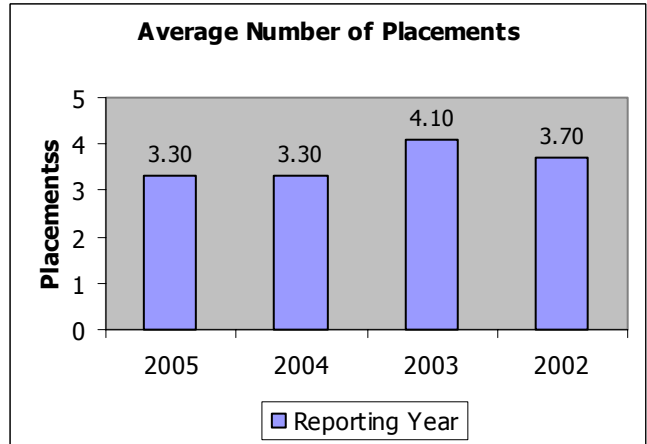
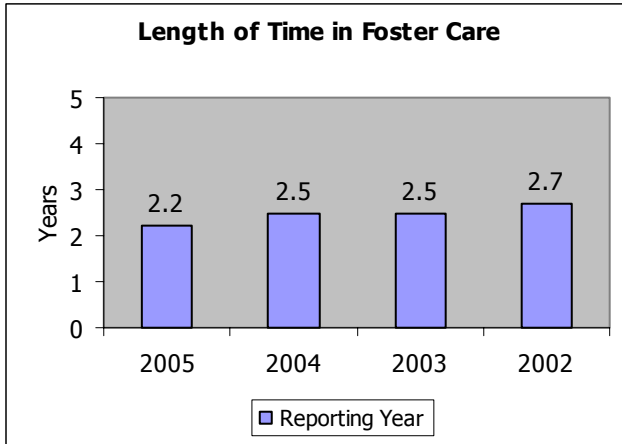
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, children in foster care averaged 3.3 placements.

### 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, 74% of the 88 children leaving care achieved permanency; 15 were adopted and 50 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, 23% of the children entering foster care in Berkeley County had previously been in custody. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. Last year, all but one 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>