



# FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

## Charleston 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 Charleston County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased only slightly in 2005. In 2005, the number of children entering care decreased by 25%, and the number leaving care increased by 3.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Charleston County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	519	522	493	513	512
Change from Prior Year	-3	+29	-20		
Number Entering	66	83	59	70	70
Number Leaving	131	128	126	141	131

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Charleston County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>	519	100%	66	100%	131	100%
<b>Race</b>						
African-American	365	70%	45	68%	85	65%
Caucasian	130	25%	17	26%	39	30%
Other	24	5%	4	6%	7	5%
<b>Gender</b>						
Male	248	48%	24	36%	56	43%
Female	271	52%	42	64%	75	57%
<b>Age</b>						
5 and Younger	151	29%	27	41%	43	33%
6 to 9	73	14%	9	14%	17	13%
10 to 15	167	32%	26	39%	28	21%
16 and older	128	25%	4	6%	43	33%

## AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 36 meetings and 884 reviews. Of the 884 reviews held, 693 (78%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *No Court Order/Non-Compliance with Court Order*. The most often cited program violation was *No Current/Inappropriate Case Plan*.

<b>Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Charleston County</b>				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
<b>Legal:</b>				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	76	137	167	208
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	24	63	47	39
No Timely Merits Hearing	87	84	87	109
No Face to Face Contact	30	149	133	119
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	172	198	142	23
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	29	26	26	30
Other Statutory Violations	79	115	99	124
<b>Program:</b>				
No Progress Report	256	193	120	62
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	160	221	245	111
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	273	200	89	156
Interested Parties Not Invited	75	46	36	31
No Timely FCRB Hearing	26	13	6	20
No Advance Packet	48	99	122	59
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	104	241	234	56
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,785</b>	<b>1,553</b>	<b>1,147</b>
<b>Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>79%</b>	<b>65%</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 was 3.3 years, a slight increase from 2004.

### NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

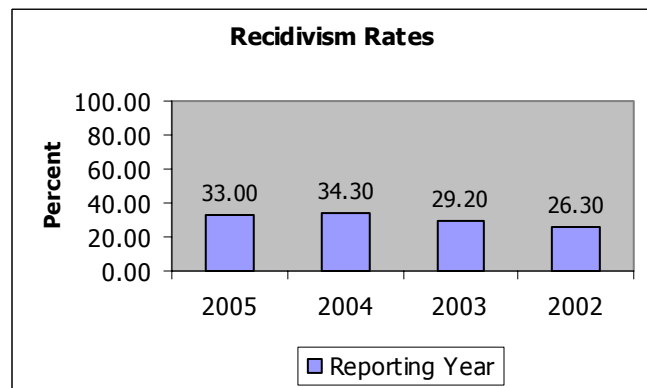
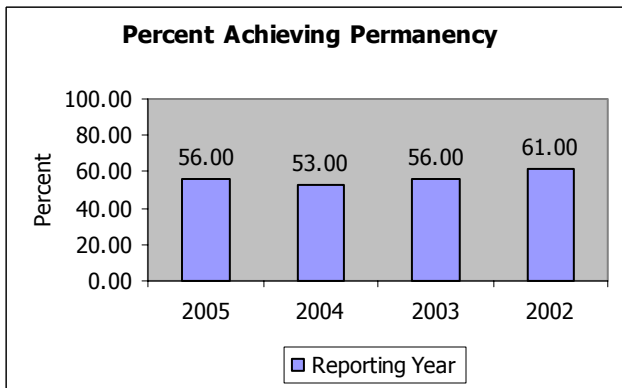
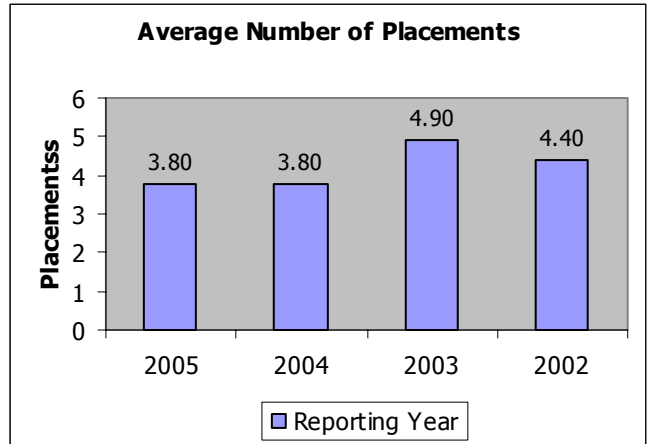
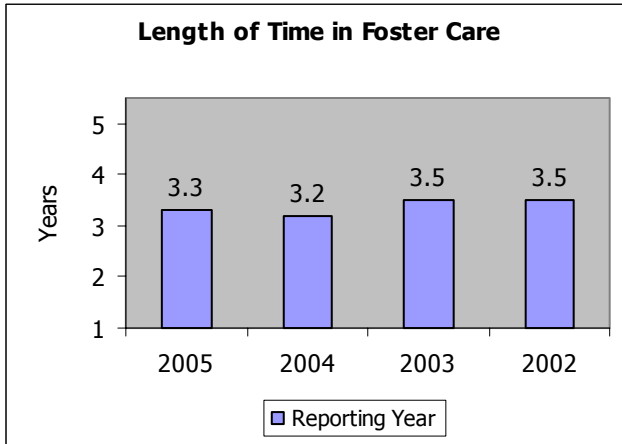
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, children in foster care averaged 3.8 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 of the 131 children leaving care, 44 were adopted and 30 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, 33% of the children entering foster care in Charleston County had previously been in custody. This is a slight decrease from 34% 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:  
 Lisa Vosburgh, Data and Research Manager or to Denise Barker, Division Director  
 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>