



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS Anderson 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 Anderson County, the number of foster care children reviewed increased by 30 in 2004. In 2004 the number of children entering increased by 34%. The number leaving care has remained constant for the last three years.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2004, Anderson County

	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	324	294	277	298
Change from Prior Year	+30	+17		
Number Entering	140	93	94	109
Number Leaving	72	73	73	73

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2004, Anderson County

	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	324	100%	140	100%	72	100%
Race						
African-American	77	24%	38	27%	16	22%
Caucasian	231	71%	97	69%	56	78%
Other	16	5%	5	4%	0	
Gender						
Male	153	47%	58	41%	31	43%
Female	171	53%	82	59%	41	57%
Age						
5 and Younger	118	36%	60	43%	25	35%
6 to 9	54	17%	28	20%	9	12%
10 to 15	94	29%	46	33%	20	28%
16 and older	58	18%	6	4%	18	20%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2004, Review Board members held 25 meetings and 555 reviews. Of the 555 reviews held, 409 (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 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 Copy of Pleadings*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2004, Anderson County			
	2004	2003	2002
Legal:			
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	142	138	107
No Timely Merits Hearing	106	81	111
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	19	17	5
No Face to Face Contact	51	65	61
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	49	84	56
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	46	11	22
Other Statutory Issues	57	33	27
Program:			
No Progress Report	66	87	68
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	68	68	92
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	70	58	23
No Advance Packets	15	108	15
Interested Parties Not Invited	30	38	21
No Timely FCRB Hearing	20	46	0
No Copy of Pleadings	76	28	8
Other Policy/Procedure Violation	22	34	14
TOTAL	837	896	630

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, Anderson County decreased the average length of time in care to 2.6 years.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

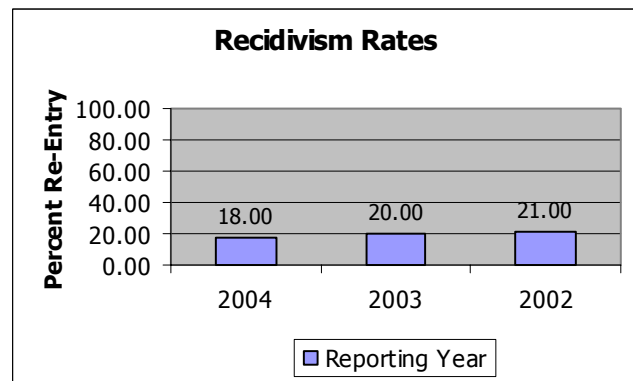
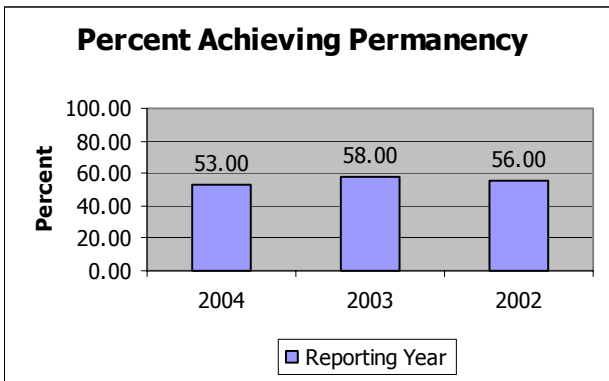
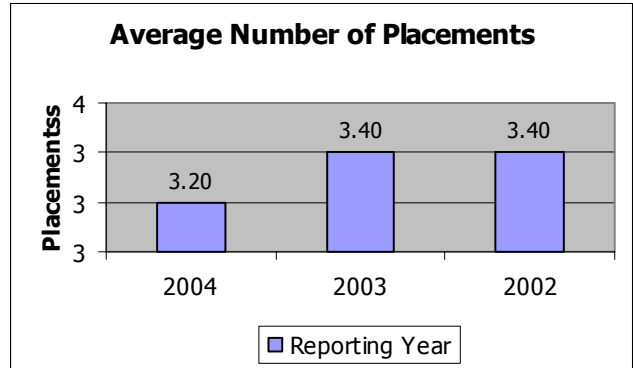
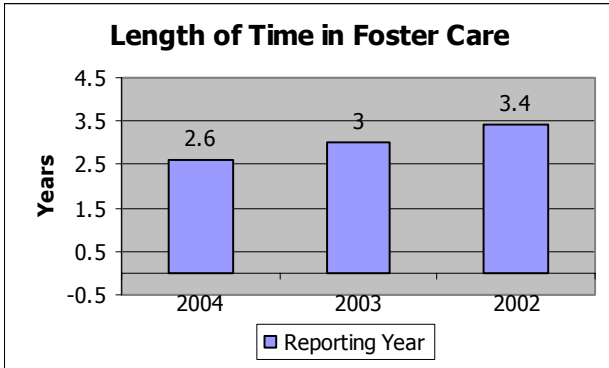
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2004, Anderson County's average number of placements was 3.2, a slight decrease from 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 72 children leaving care, six were adopted and 32 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 2004, 18% of children entering foster care in Anderson County had previously been in custody. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. Last year, 96% 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.govoepp.state.sc.us/children/foster.htm>