



# FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

## Horry 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 Horry County, the number of foster care children reviewed increased by 21 in 2005. In 2005, the number of children entering care and the number leaving care both increased.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Horry County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	270	249	246	268	258
Change from Prior Year	+21	+3	-22		
Number Entering	65	50	54	64	58
Number Leaving	87	83	85	81	84

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Horry County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>ALL CHILDREN</b>	270	100%	65	100%	87	100%
<b><u>Race</u></b>						
African-American	76	28%	16	25%	49	56%
Caucasian	160	59%	38	58%	31	36%
Other	34	13%	11	17%	7	8%
<b><u>Gender</u></b>						
Male	141	52%	33	51%	43	49%
Female	129	48%	32	49%	44	51%
<b><u>Age</u></b>						
5 and Younger	106	39%	37	57%	34	39%
6 to 9	31	12%	9	14%	13	15%
10 to 15	78	29%	15	23%	12	14%
16 and older	55	20%	4	6%	28	32%

## AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 28 meetings and 418 reviews. Of the 418 reviews held, 322 (77%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *No Timely Permanency Planning 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 Progress Reports*.

<b>Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Horry County</b>				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
<b>Legal:</b>				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	102	57	46	30
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	13	2	3	1
No Timely Merits Hearing	33	46	68	51
No Face to Face Contact	12	5	10	25
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	40	53	50	18
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	37	40	18	17
Other Statutory Violations	77	80	65	34
<b>Program:</b>				
No Progress Report	103	68	66	41
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	10	35	46	32
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	44	62	47	49
Interested Parties Not Invited	8	8	14	3
No Timely FCRB Hearing	13	7	6	3
No Advance Packet	59	39	17	25
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	31	42	48	57
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>582</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>54%</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 2.4 years.

### NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

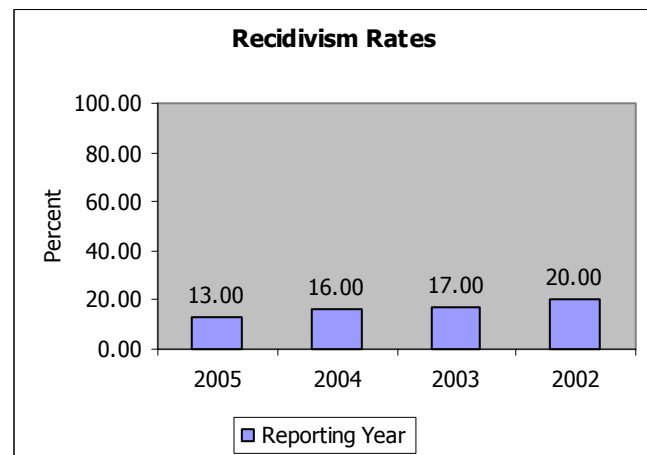
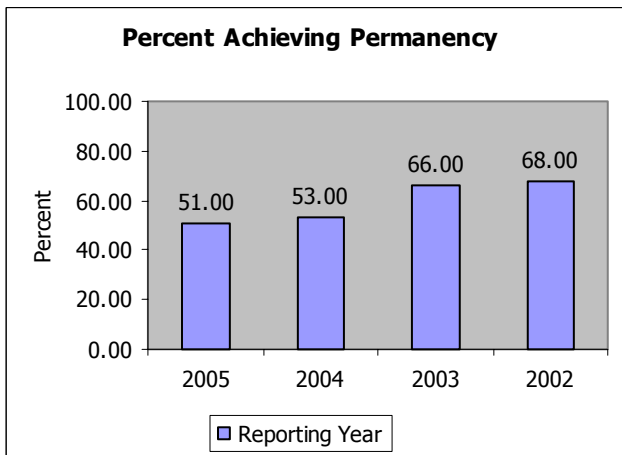
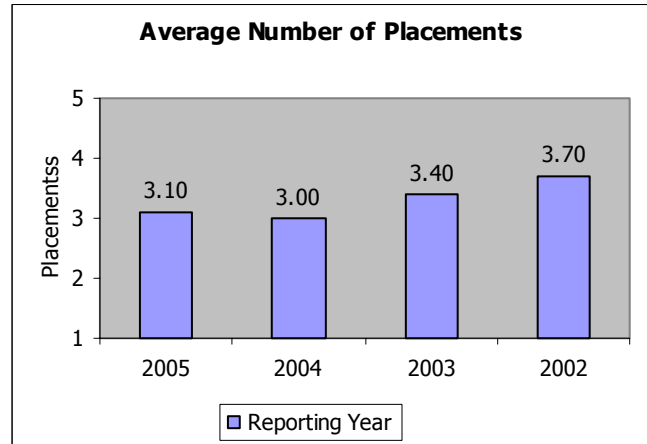
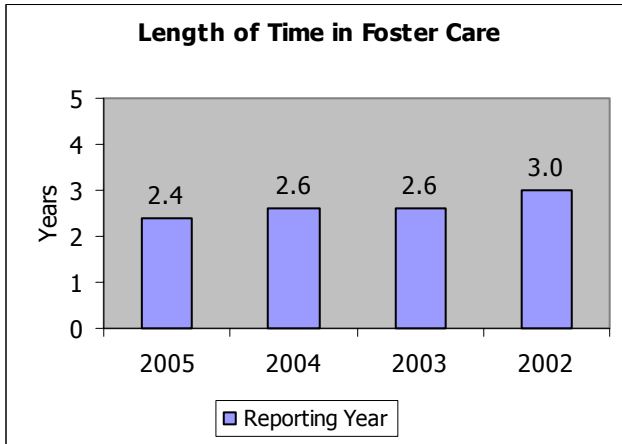
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, children in foster care averaged 3.1 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 87 children leaving care, nine were adopted and 35 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 2004, 13% of the children entering foster care in Horry County had previously been in custody. 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>