



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

Marion 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 Marion County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased in 2004 by 27%. The number of children entering care and the number leaving care decreased in 2004.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2004, Marion County				
	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	62	79	69	70
Change from Prior Year	-17	+10		
Number Entering	11	18	26	18
Number Leaving	26	27	26	26

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2004, Marion County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	62	100%	11	100%	26	100%
<u>Race</u>						
African-American	50	81%	8	73%	15	58%
Caucasian	11	18%	3	27%	10	38%
Other	1	1%	0	0%	1	4%
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	29	47%	3	27%	10	38%
Female	33	53%	8	73%	16	62%
<u>Age</u>						
5 and Younger	14	23%	3	27%	6	23%
6 to 9	9	15%	3	27%	7	27%
10 to 15	24	39%	4	36%	5	19%
16 and older	15	23%	1	10%	8	31%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2004, Review Board members held 8 meetings and 112 reviews. Of the 112 reviews held, 60 (54%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *Other Statutory Violations*. The most often cited program violation was *Lack of Progress in Permanency Planning*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2004, Marion County			
	2004	2003	2002
Legal:			
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	7	12	2
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing	2	9	2
No Timely Merits Hearing	6	22	14
No Face to Face Contact	0	3	0
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	4	11	6
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	7	7	4
Other Statutory Violations	28	10	19
Program:			
No Progress Report	5	16	3
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	9	8	4
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	7	18	8
Interested Parties Not Invited	1	4	0
No Timely FCRB Hearing	1	0	0
No Advance Packet	1	4	0
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	6	10	4
TOTAL	84	134	66
Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern	54%	62%	43%

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, the average length of time in Marion County increased to 2.3 years.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

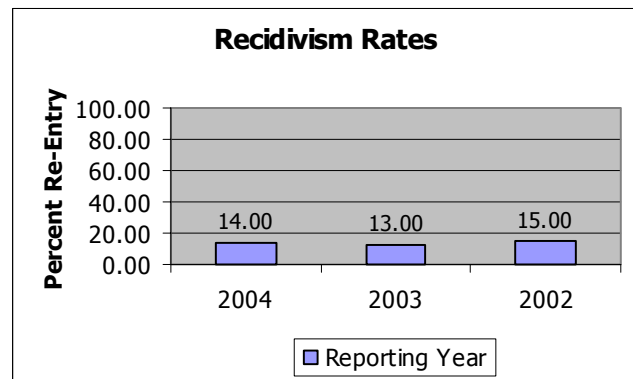
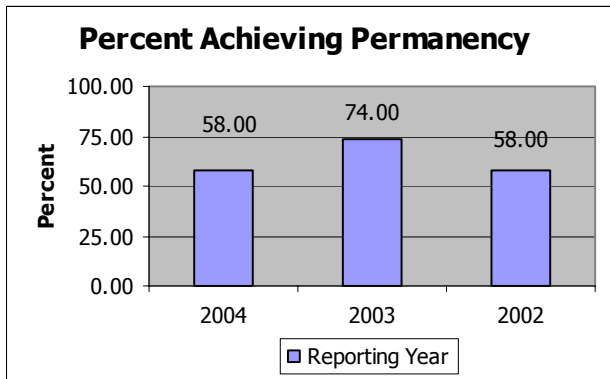
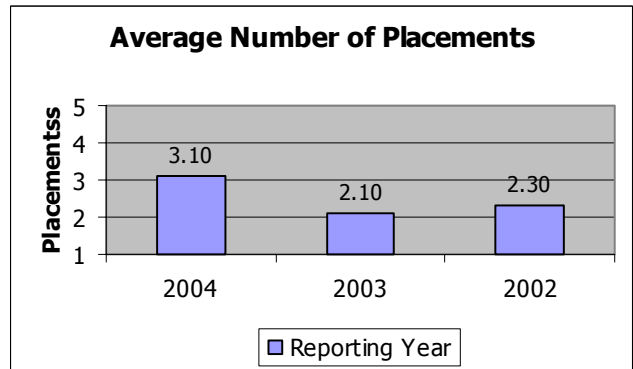
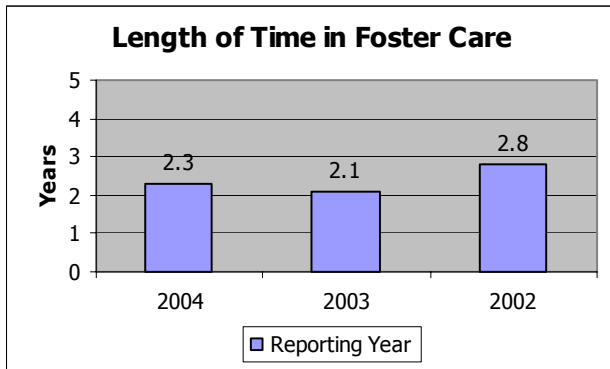
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2004, Marion County's average number of placements increased to 3.1.

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 26 children leaving care, none were adopted and 15 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 the custody of DSS more than once. In 2004, 14% of the children entering foster care in Marion County had previously been in custody.



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>