



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

Bamberg 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 Bamberg County the number of foster care children reviewed in 2005 decreased slightly from previous years. In 2005 the number of children entering and leaving care increased.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Bamberg County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	19	21	21	22	21
Change from Prior Year	-2	0	-1		
Number Entering	6	4	4	5	5
Number Leaving	6	4	6	2	5

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Bamberg County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	19	100%	6	100%	6	100%
<u>Race</u>						
African-American	17	89%	6	100%	3	50%
Caucasian	2	11%	0	0	3	50%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	8	42%	2	33%	2	33%
Female	11	58%	4	67%	4	67%
<u>Age</u>						
5 and Younger	1	5%	2	33%	0	%
6 to 9	0	0	3	50%	1	17%
10 to 15	7	37%	0	0	2	33%
16 and older	11	58%	1	17%	3	50%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 10 meetings and 37 reviews. Of the 37 reviews held, 6 (16%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. This is a significant decrease from the previous three years. 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 cited program violations were *No Advance Packets and Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Bamberg County				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
Legal:				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	3	4	3	1
No Timely Merits Hearing		1		3
No Face to Face Contact	1	1		
No Court Order at Review	1		2	1
No Thorough Adoption Assessment				
Other Statutory Issues			1	2
Program:				
No Progress Report			3	3
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan			3	3
Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	3	2	2	5
No Advance Packets	3	2	2	
Interested Parties Not Invited			1	1
No Timely FCRB Hearing	1			
TOTAL	12	10	17	19
Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern	16%	28%	25%	25%

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 Bamberg County the average length of time in care has increased to 6.5 years in 2005.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

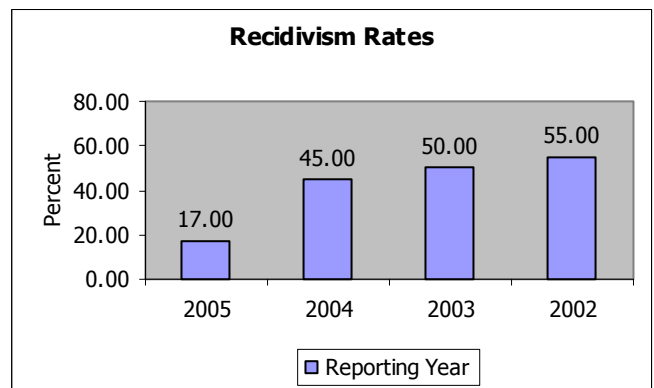
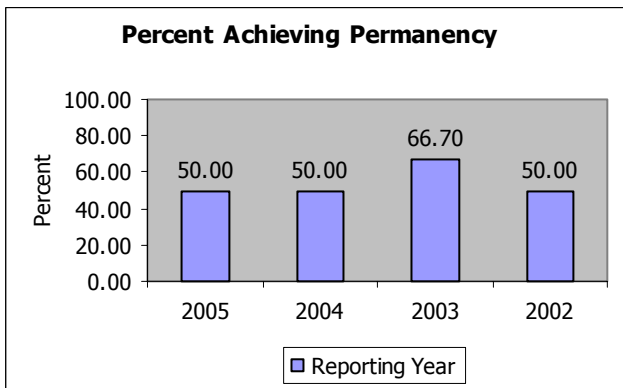
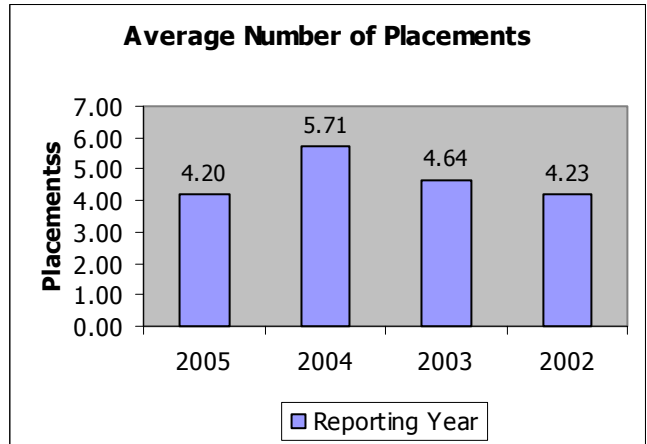
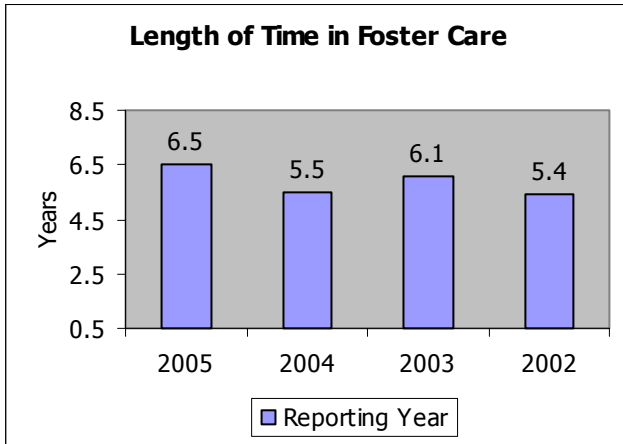
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, Bamberg County's average number of placements was 4.2, a significant decrease from 2004.

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, two of the children leaving care were adopted and one 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 2005, one of the six children entering foster care in Bamberg County had previously been in custody. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. Last year, the child re-entering care was 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.govoep.state.sc.us/children/foster.htm>