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FACTS ABOUT FOSTER Lee County

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FACTS ABOUT FOSTER Lee 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 Lee County, the number of foster care children reviewed decreased by one in 2005. The number of children entering care increased, and the number leaving care also increased in 2005.

Children in Foster Care, 2002 – 2005, Lee County					
	2005	2004	2003	2002	Average
Number of Children Reviewed	28	29	32	33	31
Change from Prior Year	-1	-3	-1		
Number Entering	7	2	7	3	5
Number Leaving	7	6	6	8	7

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2005, Lee County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	28	100%	7	100%	7	100%
<u>Race</u>						
African-American	22	79%	6	86%	5	71%
Caucasian	6	21%	1	14%	2	29%
Other						
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	20	71%	3	43%	4	57%
Female	8	29%	4	57%	3	43%
<u>Age</u>						
5 and Younger	6	21%	3	43%		
6 to 9	8	29%	3	43%	2	29%
10 to 15	5	18%	1	14%	1	14%
16 and older	9	32%			4	57%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2005, Review Board members held 13 meetings and 46 reviews. Of the 46 reviews held, 18 (39%) had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. The most often cited legal violation was *No Timely Merits Hearing*. The most often cited program violation was *No Current/Incomplete or Inappropriate Case Plan*.

Frequently Cited Areas of Concern, 2002 - 2005, Lee County				
	2005	2004	2003	2002
Legal:				
No Timely Permanency Plan Hearing	1	3		3
No Timely Probable Cause Hearing		1		
No Timely Merits Hearing	5	3	1	
No Face to Face Contact		1		
No Court Order at Review/Non-Compliance w/Court Order	1	0		
No Thorough Adoption Assessment/Specific Child Recruitment	3	7	2	2
Other Statutory Violations	1	6	2	1
Program:				
No Progress Report	2	7	8	3
Lack of Progress Permanency Plan	3	2	1	
No Current/Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan	7	14	3	5
Interested Parties Not Invited	2	2		3
No Timely FCRB Hearing	2		1	1
No Advance Packet	2	1	7	4
Other Policy/Procedure Issues	1	13	1	12
TOTAL	30	60	26	34
Percent of Reviews with Areas of Concern	39%	49%	36%	39%

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 in Lee County decreased to three years.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

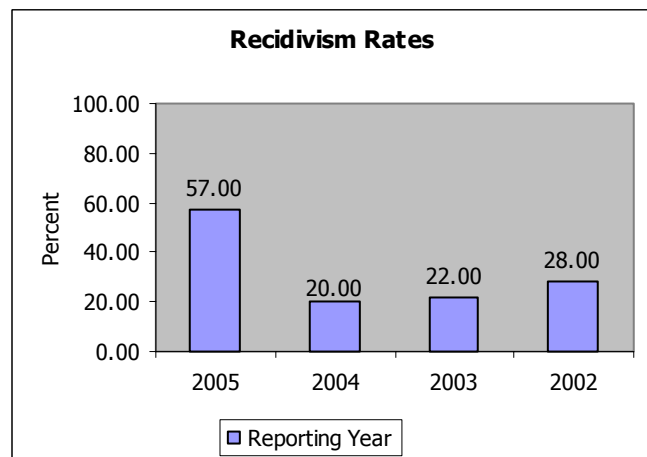
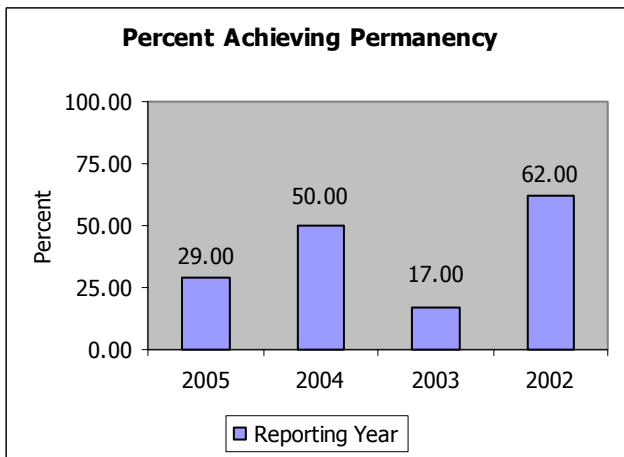
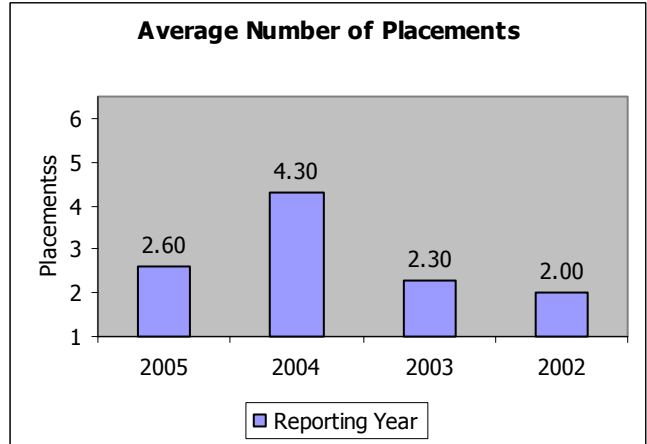
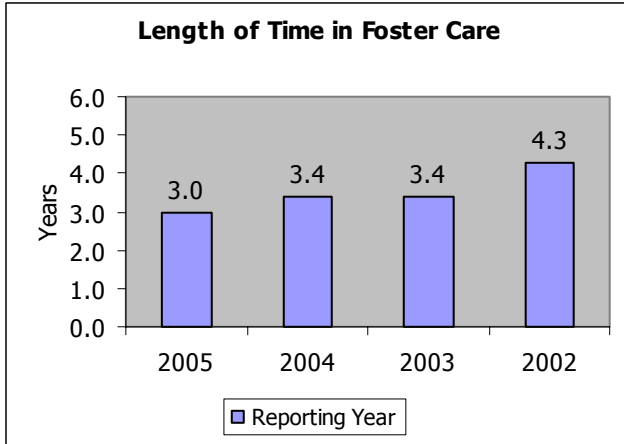
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2005, Lee County's average number of placements decreased to 2.6.

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 seven children leaving care, none were adopted and two 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 2005, 57% of the children entering foster care in Lee County had previously been in custody. This is a significant increase from 20% 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 adoptive or natural 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>