



FACTS ABOUT FOSTER KIDS

Bamberg 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 Bamberg County the number of foster care children reviewed for the previous three years has remained consistent, as has the number of children entering care. The only significant change in 2004 is the decrease in the number of children leaving care.

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

Characteristics of Children in Foster Care, 2004, Bamberg County						
	Children Reviewed		Children Entering		Children Leaving	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
ALL CHILDREN	21	100%	4	100%	4	100%
Race						
African-American	20	95.2%	4	100%	4	100%
Caucasian	1	4.8%				
Other	0					
Gender						
Male	7	33.3%	1	25%		
Female	14	66.7%	3	75%	4	100%
Age						
5 and Younger	2	9.5%	1	25%	1	25%
6 to 9	0					
10 to 15	13	61.9%	2	50%	2	50%
16 and older	6	28.6%	1	25%	1	25%

AREAS OF CONCERN

In 2004, Review Board members held 10 meetings and 36 reviews. Of the 36 reviews held, 10 had at least one area of concern cited by the local Review Board. This is a significant decrease from the previous two 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 two areas of program violations cited were *Incomplete/Inappropriate Case Plan* and *No Advance Packets*.

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

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 Bamberg County the average length of time in care has decreased to 5.5 years in 2004.

NUMBER OF PLACEMENTS:

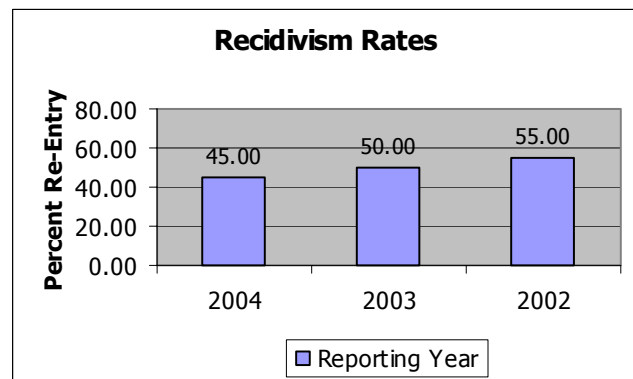
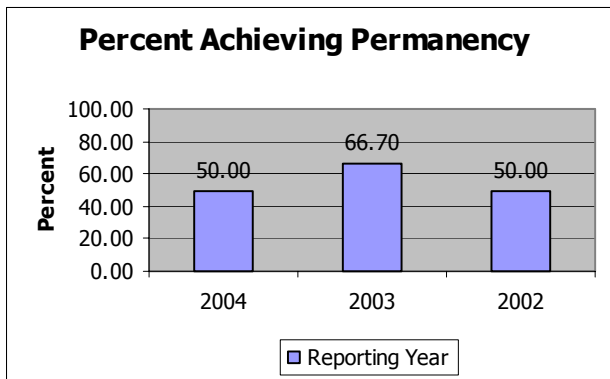
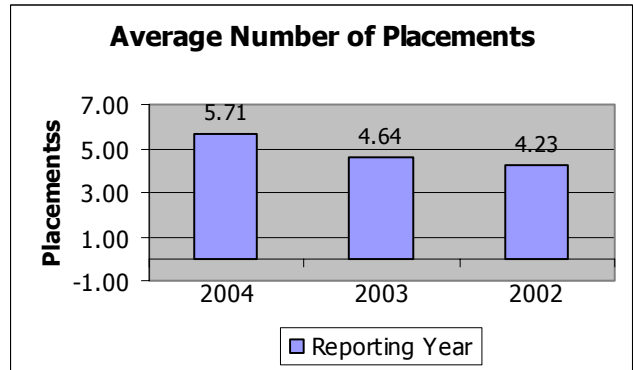
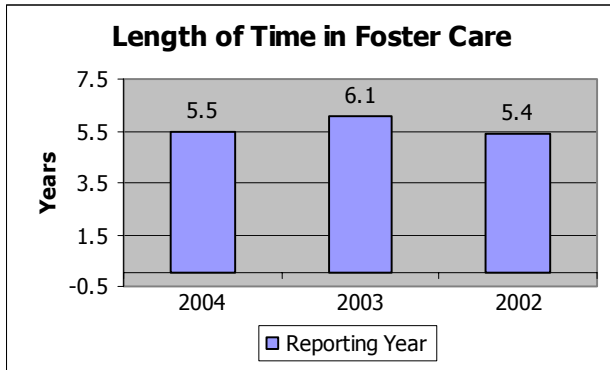
Research shows the initial placement in foster care is extremely traumatic for a child. Additional changes in placement once in the foster care system can be detrimental to children's development, affecting their ability to learn, establish relationships and develop as stable, secure individuals. In 2004, Bamberg County's average number of placements was 5.71, an increase from both 2003 and 2002.

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, 50% of the children leaving care 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, 2 of the 4 children entering foster care in Bamberg County had previously been in custody. For children re-entering foster care, the previous location matters. Last year, both 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.govoep.state.sc.us/children/foster.htm>