

## Acknowledgements

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## **Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress Executive Summary**

*Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress* (Report to Congress) is the sixth in a series of annual reports from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Department).<sup>1</sup> The reports are developed in accordance with section 479A of the Social Security Act (as amended by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997) and provide information pertaining to State performance on the following national child welfare outcomes:<sup>2</sup>

- **Outcome 1**—Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- **Outcome 2**—Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- **Outcome 3**—Increase permanency for children in foster care
- **Outcome 4**—Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry
- **Outcome 5**—Reduce time in foster care to adoption
- **Outcome 6**—Increase placement stability
- **Outcome 7**—Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

The Department established these national outcomes in consultation with State and local child welfare agency administrators, child advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, and other experts in the child welfare field. The outcomes reflect widely accepted performance objectives for child welfare practice and adherence to a set of guiding principles.

The purpose of the Report to Congress is to provide information that may lead to improved outcomes for children and families served by the Nation's child welfare system by informing Congress, the States, and the public about State performance on key child welfare outcomes and change in performance over time. To this end, the Report to Congress presents data for each State regarding the following: (1) 12 measures developed to assess the national outcomes listed above, and (2) contextual

factors regarding the number and characteristics of children who are the subject of substantiated child abuse or neglect reports and of children in the State's foster care system. The report also presents key findings across States on the relationship between contextual factors and State performance on the outcome measures. Data pertaining to the measures and the contextual factors come from the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS).

The following table provides information regarding median State performance on key measures pertaining to the seven national outcomes. The States included in the calculation of the median are those that provided acceptable data for a given outcome measure in all 4 years.

<b>Table 1. Median of State performance on key outcomes and measures in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003*</b>				
<b>Outcomes and Measures</b>	<b>Median Performance by Year</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>
Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect				
Measure 1.1—Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period? (N=34 States).	7.9%	7.5%	7.8%	7.7%
Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care				
Measure 2.1—Of all children who were in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage was the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member? (N=27 States)	0.47	0.55	0.52	0.40
Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care				
Measure 3.1—Of all children who exited foster care during the reporting period, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=44 States)	85.7	85.4	86.4	86.7
Measure 3.2—Of all children who exited foster care and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=37 States)	79.6	78.6	79.8	78.2

Measure 3.3—Of all children who exited foster care and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left to either reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship (i.e., were discharged to a permanent home)? (N=40 States)	72.8	72.9	72.0	72.2
Measure 3.4—Of all children exiting foster care to emancipation, what percentage was age 12 or younger at the time of entry into foster care? (N=50 States)	25.3	28.3	26.7	29.6
Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry				
Measure 4.1—Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in less than 12 months from the time of entry into foster care? (N=43 States)	71.5	71.9	68.3	72.1
Measure 4.2—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period, what percentage re-entered care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode? (N=46 States)	10.6	11.2	10.8	9.8
Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption				
Measure 5.1—Of all children who exited foster care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited foster care less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home? (N=34 States)	19.7	20.3	21.9	22.9
Outcome 6: Increase placement stability				
Measure 6.1—Of all children served who had been in foster care for less than 12 months, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period? (N = 51 States)	84.2	83.3	84.3	84.0
Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions				
Measure 7.1—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage was placed in a group home or institution? (N=49 States)	9.6	8.6	8.6	8.3
* In order to depict meaningful change in State performance over time, this table includes only those States that provided acceptable data for each measure in all 4 years. Therefore, the medians reported in this table for State performance in 2003 may be slightly different than those presented in the Report chapters. For example, in 2003, 45 States provided data for outcome measure 1; the median performance of these States was 7.1 percent. However, only 34 States provided data for measure 1.1 in all 4 years (2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003). The median State performance in 2003 for these 34				

States is 7.7 percent. [Back](#)

Changes in median State performance from 2000 to 2003 were assessed by calculating the percent change in the median from 2000 to 2003.<sup>3</sup> There was evidence of considerable **performance improvement** from 2000 to 2003, as indicated by the following findings:

- The median percentage of children in foster care who were maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member (outcome measure 2.1) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-14.8 percent change).
- The median percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (outcome measure 4.2) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-7.5 percent change).
- The median percentage of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care (outcome measure 5.1) increased from 2000 to 2003 (+16.2 percent change).
- The median percentage of children age 12 and younger who were placed in group homes or institutions (outcome measure 7.1) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-13.5 percent change).

There was only one measure in which median performance declined from 2000 to 2003. The median percentage of children emancipated from foster care who were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (outcome measure 3.4) increased from 2000 to 2003 (+17.0 percent change). The median percentages for all other outcome measures did not change from 2000 to 2003 (i.e., the percent change did not exceed 5.0 in either direction).

## **How successful are States in protecting child maltreatment victims from further maltreatment?**

A primary objective of State child welfare systems is to ensure that children who have been found to be victims of maltreatment are protected from further abuse or neglect whether they are in their own homes, in a foster home, or in a residential facility. For the Report to Congress, a child is considered to be a victim of maltreatment if he or she is the subject of a substantiated or indicated allegation of child abuse or neglect. In 2003, State child maltreatment victim rates ranged extensively from 1.6 child victims per 1,000 children in the State's child population in Pennsylvania to 42.2 child victims per 1,000 children in the population in Alaska. The median across States was 10.6 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.

The Department established the following safety-related national outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to protecting child victims from further abuse or neglect:

### **Outcome 1—Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect**

*Outcome measure 1.1—Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?<sup>4</sup>*

### **Outcome 2—Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care**

*Outcome measure 2.1—Of all children who were in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage was the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member?*

The findings of the data analyses indicate that some States appear to be more effective than others in protecting child maltreatment victims from further maltreatment. In 2003, for the 45 States reporting data to NCANDS pertaining to outcome measure 1, the percent of children in a State who experienced a recurrence of maltreatment ranged from 2.1 to 14.4, with a median of 7.1 percent. In 35 of the 45 States at least 5 percent of the children who were victims of child maltreatment in the first 6 months of the reporting year were victims of another maltreatment incident within a 6-month period. For 29 percent of the 45 States, the incidence of maltreatment recurrence increased from 2000 to 2003. However, in 53 percent of the 45 States, the percent of children experiencing maltreatment recurrence decreased from 2000 to 2003.

Understanding differences among States with regard to the incidence of maltreatment recurrence requires a consideration of various contextual factors. For example, a substantial positive correlation (Pearson's  $r = 0.63$ ) was found between a State's child maltreatment victim rate in 2003 and the percentage of children in the State who experienced maltreatment recurrence. In general, States with a relatively high victim rate also tended to have a relatively high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period. This suggests that differences in State statutes and policies regarding definitions of child maltreatment and evidentiary requirements for substantiation of a child maltreatment allegation may contribute to State variation in the incidence of maltreatment recurrence.

Differences in State practices regarding investigating maltreatment allegations also may contribute to State variation in the incidence of maltreatment recurrence. For example, in some States, the percent of maltreatment recurrence reported to NCANDS may be less than the actual percent because maltreatment allegations involving children in child protective services cases already open for services often are reported to the current caseworker and supervisor rather than being formally investigated to determine the validity of the allegation. Because there is no disposition, these children are not included in the NCANDS Child File, which is the data source for the measure of maltreatment recurrence (outcome measure 1.1). As another example, many States are adopting an alternative response approach to responding to maltreatment allegations. In these States, maltreatment allegations that are determined to involve very low risks for child safety are not formally investigated. Instead, the allegation is referred for a family assessment and no disposition is reached regarding the validity of the maltreatment allegation. Again, because there is no disposition, States do not submit the NCANDS Child File for children who are the subject of these allegations.

The data analyses also found that State variation in performance on the measure of maltreatment recurrence was moderately related to the types of maltreatment experienced by child victims. In 2003, States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of sexual abuse tended to have a relatively low incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's  $r = -0.40$ ). In comparison, States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect in 2003 tended to have a relatively high incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's  $r = 0.40$ ). Although additional information is necessary for a meaningful interpretation of these findings, one possible explanation may be that child welfare agencies typically respond differently to substantiated sexual abuse and neglect allegations. A substantiated allegation of sexual abuse, for example, often involves legal action against the perpetrator and action to ensure that the perpetrator does not have contact with the child, which may include placement of the child in foster care. These efforts may be effective in preventing the recurrence of sexual abuse within a 6-month period. In contrast, a child welfare agency response to a substantiated allegation of neglect usually does not involve legal action against the perpetrator (unless it is severe neglect or medical neglect), and usually does not prohibit contact between the child and the perpetrator. Consequently, there may be a greater opportunity for recurrence of neglect within a 6-month period.

States also varied in 2003 in their effectiveness in protecting children in foster care from maltreatment

by their foster parents or a facility staff member (as assessed by measure 2.1). In 2003, for the 41 States that provided data to NCANDS for this measure, the percent of children in foster care who were victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member ranged from 0.02 to 1.53, with a median of 0.39 percent. There were only four States in which more than one percent of the children in foster care were reported to be victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member. In addition, most States (73 percent) exhibited improvement in this area from 2000 to 2003; only 19 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure.

## **How successful are States in achieving permanency for children in foster care?**

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 emphasized permanency as a primary goal for children in foster care and provided guidelines for achieving this goal in a timely manner. A child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) the child is discharged from foster care to a reunification with his or her family, either a parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged from foster care to a legally finalized adoption; or (3) the child is discharged from foster care to the care of a legal guardian. The Department established the following national outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care:

### **Outcome 3—Increase permanency for children in foster care**

*Outcome measure 3.1—Of all children who exited foster care during the reporting period, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.2—Of all children who exited foster care and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.3—Of all children who exited foster care and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into foster care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.4—Of all children who exited foster care to emancipation, what percentage was age 12 or younger at the time of entry into foster care?*

*Outcome measure 3.5—Of all children who exited foster care, what percentage by racial/ethnic category left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

The data analyses findings suggest that most States were successful in achieving permanency for the majority of children exiting foster care in 2003.<sup>5</sup> The percent of all children exiting foster care in 2003 who were discharged to a permanent home ranged across States (N = 51 States) from 71.9 to 96.1, with a median of 86.3 percent (measure 3.1). For 67 percent of the 51 States, there was no change from 2000 to 2003 in the percentage of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home; performance on this measure was already quite high in 2000. Only seven percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure.

The range of State performance was greater when the assessment of permanency focused on children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2). For the 48 States included in this analysis, the percent of children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home ranged from 36.4 to 96.5 with a median of 79.5 percent. In addition, 41 percent of these States showed a decline in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003; only 24 percent of the States exhibited improved performance on this measure.

Many States also appeared to experience challenges with regard to achieving permanency for children

who are older than age 12 when they enter foster care (measure 3.3). For the 48 States included in this analysis, the percent of children exiting foster care who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 and who were discharged to a permanent home ranged from 37.8 to 90.9, with a median of 72.2 percent. For 49 percent of these States, there was no change in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003. However, 31 percent of these States exhibited improvement in performance from 2000 to 2003.

States varied considerably with regard to their success in ensuring that children do not grow up in foster care (measure 3.4). For the 52 States included in this analysis, the percent of all children who emancipated (including legal emancipation and children reaching the age of majority) from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger ranged from 5.1 to 65.1, with a median of 29.6 percent. In 10 States, more than 40 percent of the children who emancipated from foster care in 2003 were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care. In addition, for 51 percent of the States, there was a decline in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003. However, 34 percent of the States exhibited performance improvement over that time period.

In most States, the percentages of children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home did not vary as a function of children's race or ethnicity. In almost all of the States, Black (non-Hispanic) children, Hispanic children, Alaskan Native/American Indian children, and White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care were about equally likely to be discharged to a permanent home.<sup>6</sup>

## **How successful are States in achieving permanency for children in a timely manner?**

State child welfare agencies are responsible not only for achieving permanency for children in foster care, but also for ensuring that children are discharged to a permanent home as soon as possible after entering foster care. The Department established the following national outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care:

### **Outcome 4—Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry**

*Outcome measure 4.1—Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in the following time periods?*

- (1) less than 12 months
- (2) at least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (3) at least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (4) at least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (5) 48 or more months

*Outcome measure 4.2—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period, what percentage re-entered care:*

- (1) within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?
- (2) 12 months or more after a prior foster care episode?

### **Outcome 5—Reduce time in foster care to adoption**

*Outcome measure 5.1—Of all children who exited foster care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in the following time periods?*

- (1) less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home

- (2) at least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (3) at least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (4) at least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (5) 48 or more months

Outcome 4 reflects the Department's emphasis on timely reunification of children who are able to be returned to their families. The results of the data analysis indicate that in 2003, States varied considerably with regard to their success in achieving reunifications within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care (measure 4.1). Of the 51 States included in this analysis, the percent of reunifications that occurred within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care ranged from 40.6 to 92.3, with a median of 72.0 percent. In five States, less than 50 percent of the reunifications occurred within 12 months of entry into foster care; in five other States, 85 percent or more of the reunifications occurred within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care. The assessment of change in performance on this measure included 43 States. Most of these States did not change from 2000 to 2003 with regard to their performance on this measure (49 percent), although almost one-third of the States showed improvement.

Understanding differences in State performance with regard to the timeliness of reunifications requires a consideration of State statutes, policies, and practices that may affect performance. For example, some States, either by law, policy, or practice, require the child welfare agency to maintain its placement and care responsibilities for a period of time (usually between 3 to 6 months) after a child is physically reunified with his or her family. Because this practice means that the child continues to be reported to AFCARS as being in foster care, it affects performance on the outcome measure pertaining to time in foster care prior to reunification.

Outcome 4 also addresses the Department's emphasis that reunifications must occur in a manner that promotes the "permanency" of the reunification and prevents children from re-entering foster care. The findings reported in [chapter III](#) raise concerns about the permanency of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care. One key finding is that 50 percent of the States exhibiting an increase from 2000 to 2003 in the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care (measure 4.1) also exhibited an increase in the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (measure 4.2). Only four States exhibited improved performance on both measures (Arizona, Illinois, Tennessee, and Vermont). Another key finding is that in 2003, States with a relatively high percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care also tended to have a relatively high percentage of entries into foster care of children re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (Pearson's  $r = 0.49$ ). Taken together, these findings suggest that some children are being reunified before sufficient changes have occurred in the family or the child to prevent another removal episode and/or that insufficient post-reunification services were provided to assist families in the reintegration process.

The findings reported in [chapter III](#) also indicate that the relationship between reunification and re-entry reported in the prior paragraph may be particularly relevant for children who enter foster care as older adolescents. In general, States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were age 16 or older tended to have a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Pearson's  $r = 0.52$ ). Almost all of the States with a high percentage of children age 16 and older entering foster care are States in which children can enter foster care through the juvenile justice system or through the courts as "children in need of supervision." Because these children do not enter foster care as victims of maltreatment, and therefore are viewed as not having safety concerns, child welfare agencies may experience challenges in meeting their treatment needs.

Outcome 5 addresses the Department's focus on expediting adoptions for those children who cannot be returned to their families. States are generally less successful in achieving adoptions in a timely manner than they are in achieving reunifications in a timely manner. In 2003, for the 47 States included in this analysis, the percent of adoptions finalized within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care ranged from 5.0 to 75.8, with a median of 23.9 percent. The percent of adoptions that were finalized after a child had been in foster care for at least 48 months had a somewhat similar range (3.2 percent to 65.6 percent), and a similar median (21.9 percent).

The analysis of change in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003 included only 34 States. Many States were excluded from the analysis because of data quality issues in the 2000 data. Although most of these States corrected these issues in the 2003 data, it was not feasible to include them in the analysis of change over time. A key finding with regard to the timeliness of adoptions is that 70 percent of these States exhibited improved performance on this measure, and for many of these States, the improvement was substantial. Only 18 percent of the 34 States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure.

## **How successful are States in achieving stable placements for children in foster care and appropriate placements for young children?**

It is the responsibility of a State child welfare agency to ensure that children are in stable placements while they are in foster care. An additional agency responsibility is to ensure that children are in placements appropriate to their age. For many young children (i.e., age 12 years or younger), an appropriate placement is a family setting rather than a group home or institution. The Department established the following outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to meeting these responsibilities.

### **Outcome 6—Increase placement stability**

*Outcome measure 6.1—Of all children served during the reporting period who had been in foster care for the time periods listed below, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period?*

- (1) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (2) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (3) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (4) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (5) 48 or more months

### **Outcome 7—Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions.**

*Outcome measure 7.1—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage was placed in a group home or institution?*

The analysis of outcome measure 6.1 found that States were generally effective in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months. In 2003, the median percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experience two or fewer placement settings was 84.2. For 74 percent of the States, performance on this measure did not change substantively from 2000 to 2003, primarily because most States were already at a high level of performance in 2000.

The analyses also found that children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months are

less likely to experience placement stability than children in foster care for less than 12 months. In 2003, the median percent of children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months who experienced two or fewer placement settings was 59.1, more than 25 percentage points less than the median performance on placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months.

State child welfare agencies also are responsible for ensuring that children are placed in foster care settings that are age-appropriate. For the 49 States included in this analysis, the percent of children entering foster care in 2003 at age 12 or younger who were placed in a group home or institution ranged from 1.4 to 28.8, with a median of 8.3 percent. Fifty-five percent of these States exhibited improvement on this measure from 2000 to 2003. However, there are a few States that have not been successful in ensuring that young children are not routinely placed in group homes or institutions. In six States, for example, 20 percent or more of the children age 12 and younger who entered foster care in 2003 were placed in group homes or institutions. In addition, 37 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003.

## Summary

Overall, State performance with regard to keeping children safe generally improved from 2000 to 2003, particularly with regard to maltreatment of children in foster care. However, the data indicate that greater efforts are needed to ensure that child victims do not experience additional maltreatment, whether they are in their own homes, in the home of a foster family, or in a group home or institution.

State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children was more variable than it was for keeping children safe. The strongest area of improvement from 2000 to 2003 pertained to adoptions within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care. Although the percentage of adoptions finalized within this time period continues to be somewhat low (median = 23.9 percent), 70 percent of the States exhibited improved performance on this measure.

Many States (33 percent) also improved with respect to achieving reunifications within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care. However, there is some indication that expediting reunifications may be related to increased rates of re-entry, particularly for children who enter foster care as older adolescents.

States continued to experience challenges in 2003 with regard to achieving permanency for children who enter foster care as adolescents (i.e., older than age 12). In the majority of States, the percentage of these children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was substantially lower than the percentage of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home. Finally, in many States, more than one-third of the children emancipated from foster care had entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger; the median for this measure across States was close to 30 percent.

The findings regarding State performance pertaining to placement stability raise serious concerns about children in foster care for 12 months or longer. Although most children in foster care for less than 12 months generally experience two or fewer placement settings, this is not true for children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months.

Finally, in most States, the majority of young children entering foster care are placed in family settings rather than in group homes or institutions. However, there is room for improvement in this area in several States.

The findings reported in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress* suggest that, for the most part, States are exhibiting improvements in achieving positive outcomes for children who come into contact with public child welfare systems. However, there continue to be many areas in

which additional improvements are needed and some in which State performance is declining. As States complete their program improvement plans resulting from the Department's first round of Child and Family Services Reviews, the Department will be able to gather more specific information to identify the direction of change and the strategies associated with positive change.

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<sup>1</sup> The unit of the Department that has primary responsibility for this report is the Children's Bureau within the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, in the Administration for Children and Families. [Back](#)

<sup>2</sup> In the Report to Congress, the designation of "State" includes the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. Therefore the Report provides information on 52 "States." [Back](#)

<sup>3</sup> Change in performance across years was assessed by calculating the percent change. This is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing by "old" data and multiplying by 100. In this report, a percent change in performance on any measure from 2000 to 2003 that is less than 5.0 in either direction (i.e., positive or negative) is considered to reflect "no change" in performance. Because the outcome measures are assessed using percentages, small fluctuations across years are to be expected. Rather than identifying any percent change as a performance change, it was decided that a percent change greater than 5.0 would be a practical indicator of actual performance change. [Back](#)

<sup>4</sup> The Child File of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (which is the data source for the measure of maltreatment recurrence) cannot track children from one year to the next. Therefore, a 6-month time frame for maltreatment recurrence was established to ensure that the measure captured the actual incidence of maltreatment recurrence rather than estimating the incidence. In addition, multiple research findings indicate that the highest incidence of maltreatment recurrence tends to occur within 6 months of a prior incident. Therefore, the Department determined that the 6-month time frame was sufficient to assess State performance in this area. [Back](#)

<sup>5</sup> The number of States varies for each analysis. States were excluded from an analysis if they did not report the necessary data or if there were substantive data quality issues in any given year, usually related to missing data or data discrepancies. [Back](#)

<sup>6</sup> This applies only to those States in which a particular racial/ethnic category accounted for at least 10 percent of the children exiting foster care.

## **I. Introduction**

*Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress* (Report to Congress) is the sixth in a series of annual reports prepared by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (the Department). The Department is responsible for monitoring programs and services that address the needs of children and families who come into contact with public child welfare systems. The Children's Bureau, an agency within the Department's Administration for Children and Families, carries out these responsibilities and prepares the Reports to Congress.

The Reports to Congress are prepared in accordance with section 479A of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997. ([Appendix A](#) provides the specifications of section 479A.) As indicated in section 479A, the primary purpose of the reports is ". . . to assess the performance of States in operating child protection and child welfare programs . . ." To achieve this purpose, the Department consulted with State and local child welfare agency administrators, child

advocacy organizations, child welfare researchers, and other experts in the child welfare field to identify outcomes and measures reflecting widely accepted performance objectives for child welfare practice. The Department established the following national outcomes based on information from this consultation process:

- **Outcome 1**—Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect
- **Outcome 2**—Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care
- **Outcome 3**—Increase permanency for children in foster care
- **Outcome 4**—Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry
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- **Outcome 6**—Increase placement stability
- **Outcome 7**—Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions

The Department developed 12 measures (presented in [appendix B](#)) to assess performance on these national outcomes. The Report to Congress provides information about each State's performance on each measure in a given year.<sup>1</sup> To enhance interpretation of a State's performance on the measures, the Report to Congress includes the following context information for each State:

- The number and race/ethnicity of children (younger than age 18) in the State's population.
- The number and characteristics (age, race/ethnicity, and type of maltreatment) of child maltreatment victims (defined as children who are the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation).<sup>2</sup>
- The number and characteristics (age and race/ethnicity) of children in foster care at the start of the fiscal year and of children who entered and exited foster care during the fiscal year.<sup>3</sup>
- The median length of stay of children in foster care.
- The number and characteristics (age and race/ethnicity) of children "waiting for adoption".<sup>4</sup>
- The number and characteristics (age and race/ethnicity) of children for whom an adoption was finalized during the fiscal year.

Data on the number and race/ethnicity of children in the State population come from the U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey. The data for the outcome measures and context information come from the Department's Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). The specific NCANDS and AFCARS data elements used for the Report to Congress are provided in [appendix C](#).

## **The Report to Congress and the Child and Family Services Review**

The Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) is the Department's results-oriented, comprehensive monitoring system, implemented in fiscal year 2001. The CFSR was developed in response to a mandate in the Social Security Amendments of 1994 requiring the Department to promulgate regulations for reviews of State child and family services programs under titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act.

Both the Report to Congress and the CFSR are designed to assess State performance with regard to child welfare practices and outcomes. However, they are separate activities within the Department and differ with regard to the performance assessment process. One key difference is that information about State performance in the Report to Congress comes only from NCANDS and AFCARS. In comparison, information about State performance in the CFSR comes from a range of information sources in addition to AFCARS and NCANDS. These additional sources include intensive case reviews, interviews and focus groups with stakeholders in each State, and State self-assessment reports. Consequently, the CFSR provides more comprehensive information about State performance than does

the Report to Congress.

Despite their differences, the Report to Congress and the CFSR share the following goals: (1) to inform Congress, the Department, the States, and the public about State performance with regard to achieving desired outcomes for children who come into contact with public child welfare systems; and (2) to identify areas needing improvement so that targeted technical assistance can be provided to States.

[Appendix D](#) provides a listing and description of the training and technical assistance resource centers established by the Department to provide this assistance.

To achieve these goals and connect the CFSR and the Report to Congress outcomes, the Department adopted six of the Report to Congress outcome measures for use in the CFSR and established national performance standards for these measures. These standards were used in the initial implementation of the CFSR as part of the Department's determination of a State's substantial conformity with specific CFSR outcomes. Additional information about the CFSR and the national standards established for the six outcome measures is provided in [appendices E](#) (CFSR information) and [F](#) (national standards information).

## **Organization of the Report to Congress**

*Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress* provides data for each State on each of the 12 outcome measures and context variables. The report also presents and discusses key findings regarding State performance on each of the outcomes and measures.<sup>5</sup> The specific focus of each subsequent chapter is described below.

**[Chapter II: Achieving Safety-Related Outcomes.](#)** This chapter presents findings pertaining to (1) State performance on the national outcomes related to children's safety, and (2) the relationships between State performance on these outcomes and the number and characteristics of State child maltreatment victims.<sup>6</sup>

**[Chapter III: Achieving Permanency-Related Outcomes for Children in Foster Care.](#)** This chapter provides key findings regarding (1) State performance on the national outcomes related to achieving permanency for children, and (2) the relationships between State performance on these outcomes and the characteristics of State foster care populations.<sup>7</sup>

**[Chapter IV: Achieving Outcomes Related to Placement Stability and Appropriate Placements for Young Children in Foster Care.](#)** This chapter reports key findings pertaining to State performance in achieving placement stability for children in foster care and preventing the placement of young children in group homes or institutions. The chapter also reports findings regarding the relationships between State performance on these outcomes and the characteristics of State foster care populations.

**[Chapter V: State Performance on the Seven National Child Welfare Outcomes.](#)** This chapter provides an overall discussion of the findings and their implications for understanding State performance with regard to achieving the national outcomes.

**[Chapter VI: State Data Pages.](#)** This chapter presents the data pages for each State. The data pages also include: (1) any comments submitted by a State regarding its data<sup>8</sup>, and (2) a Federal Comment section providing a brief analysis of a State's performance. Data are presented for 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Report to Congress references particular years without a designation of calendar year or fiscal year for ease of reading. Some of the data from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System are based on calendar year data, while other data from that system reflect fiscal year data. All data from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System are on a fiscal year basis. [Back](#)

<sup>2</sup> *Child Maltreatment 2003* provides the following definitions: (1) *Substantiation* refers to a type of investigation disposition that concludes that the allegation of maltreatment or risk of maltreatment was supported or founded by State law or State policy; (2) *Indicated* refers to an investigation disposition that concludes that maltreatment cannot be substantiated under State law or policy, but there was reason to suspect that the child may have been maltreated or was at risk of maltreatment. This is applicable only to States that distinguish between substantiated and indicated dispositions. [Back](#)

<sup>3</sup> The term "foster care" as it is used in the Report to Congress refers to a variety of out-of-home placement settings, including foster family homes, group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and similar placements for children who are in the State's placement and care responsibility for a period of 24 hours or more. [Back](#)

<sup>4</sup> There is no Federal definition of children waiting to be adopted. For analytical purposes, the Department has defined children waiting to be adopted as children who have a goal of adoption and/or whose parental rights have been terminated. Children 16 years of age and older who have a goal of emancipation and whose parents have had their parental rights terminated are excluded from this population. State definitions of children waiting for adoption may differ from the Department's definition. [Back](#)

<sup>5</sup> The term "State" in the Report to Congress includes Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia as well as the 50 States. Consequently, up to 52 "States" may be included in the discussion of findings. [Back](#)

<sup>6</sup> For purposes of the Report to Congress, a victim of child abuse or neglect is defined as a child for whom an allegation of abuse or neglect has been substantiated or indicated by an investigation or assessment. This definition is from *Child Maltreatment 2003*. [Back](#)

<sup>7</sup> For purposes of the Report to Congress, a child is considered to be in foster care if the child is under the care and placement responsibility of the State or county child welfare agency for at least 24 hours. [Back](#)

<sup>8</sup> Prior to publication of the Report to Congress, the Department disseminates each State's data pages to State child welfare agency administrators and data system managers. Based on this review, the State may resubmit data and/or provide formal comments to clarify various aspects of the data. These comments are included in the report with the [State's data pages](#).

<sup>9</sup> A decision was made to exclude 1999 data in this report because several States had substantive data quality issues in that year that were corrected in 2000.

## **II. Achieving Safety-Related Outcomes**

A primary objective of State child welfare systems is to ensure that children who have been found to be victims of abuse or neglect are protected from further abuse or neglect, whether they remain in their own homes or are placed by the State child welfare agency in a foster care setting. The Department established the following safety-related national outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to protecting child victims from further abuse or neglect:

## **Outcome 1—Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect**

*Outcome measure 1.1—Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?*<sup>10</sup>

## **Outcome 2—Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care**

*Outcome measure 2.1—Of all children who were in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage was the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member?*

The Department established the following national standards for these outcome measures for use in its national child welfare monitoring system, the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR). ([Appendices E](#) and [F](#) provide additional information on the CFSR and the national standards.):

- Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the period under review, *6.1 percent or fewer* children had another substantiated or indicated report within 6 months of the first report.
- Of all children in foster care in the State during the period under review, *0.57 percent or fewer* were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member.

This chapter presents the following information:

- State performance in 2003 on the safety-related outcome measures.<sup>11</sup>
- The change in State performance from 2000 to 2003 on the safety-related outcome measures.
- The relationship between State performance on the safety-related outcome measures and the number and characteristics of child maltreatment victims.

For the most part, data reported in this chapter come from the Department's National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS). Through NCANDS, the Department collects and analyzes data on children who come into contact with public child protective services (CPS) agencies as alleged victims of child abuse or neglect. The Department prepares an annual report on NCANDS data entitled *Child Maltreatment*. The highlights of findings from *Child Maltreatment 2003* are presented in [appendix G](#).

The number of States included in each analysis varies because NCANDS is a voluntary system and not all States submit the relevant data to NCANDS. The primary data source for the Report to Congress safety-related outcome measures is the NCANDS Child File. The Child File is a data file that States submit to NCANDS on a periodic basis that contains detailed case information about children who are the subjects of an investigation or assessment in response to a maltreatment allegation. The Child File includes only those children for whom there has been a disposition (i.e., a "finding") pertaining to the maltreatment allegation. The Department has strongly encouraged participation in this data system and provides technical assistance to States to assist them in collecting and reporting the relevant data. Participation in the NCANDS Child File has increased considerably over the past 5 years; 45 States participated in the NCANDS Child File in 2003 compared to 29 States in 1999.

A comprehensive understanding of State performance on the safety-related outcome measures requires a consideration of State statutes, policies, and practices pertaining to child maltreatment that may affect performance. For example, with regard to maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (outcome measure 1.1), in several States, it is a child welfare agency policy or an agency-wide practice that when a maltreatment allegation is received on a family currently being served by the CPS system, the allegation is referred to the current caseworker and/or supervisor for follow up rather than being

referred for a formal investigation or assessment. In this situation, information on the child who is the subject of the allegation is not reported to the NCANDS Child File because there is no formal investigation or assessment of the allegation and no formal disposition. Consequently, the allegation is not "counted" as a possible incident of maltreatment recurrence.

In addition, some States have implemented an "alternative response" approach to maltreatment allegations. In many of these States, maltreatment allegations that are determined to involve very low risks for child safety are not formally investigated. Instead, the allegation is referred for a family assessment and no disposition is reached regarding the validity of the maltreatment allegation. Because there is no disposition, States do not submit an NCANDS Child File for the children who are the subject of allegations that are referred for an alternative response. States that have implemented this approach may show declines in the percentage of children experiencing maltreatment recurrence and may have lower incidences of maltreatment recurrence than States that have not implemented an alternative response approach. Other examples of the factors that may affect performance on the measure of maltreatment recurrence are State definitions of child maltreatment and State requirements concerning the level of evidence necessary to substantiate a maltreatment allegation.

The policies and practices pertaining to the types of information submitted to the NCANDS Child File also may affect State performance regarding the percentage of children in foster care who are maltreated by their foster parents or a facility staff member. For example, some States submit an NCANDS Child File for all children who are found to be victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member, even if the child is not under the placement and care responsibility of the State child welfare system (e.g., the child is in the mental health system, juvenile justice system, or in a private care facility such as a mental health or substance abuse treatment facility). Although this is likely to involve only a small number of children, it can affect the calculation of the measure. That is, for these States, the calculation of State performance on the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care would include children in the numerator (number of children maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member) who are not in the denominator (number of children in foster care during the reporting period).

The Department recently addressed this issue by instituting a system for identifying those child victims reported to the NCANDS Child File who also are reported to AFCARS as being in foster care. However, because in 2003, this system was not yet implemented by States in a consistent manner, for some States, the percentage of children reported as maltreated while in foster care in 2003 continues to be affected by this issue.

Because of the potential effect of State statutes and policies on performance, this report presents the findings regarding State performance in 2003 on the safety-related outcomes to depict the variation that exists among States rather than to compare the performance of States. Information regarding the change in performance on the outcome measures from 2000 to 2003 is provided to demonstrate the extent and direction of change occurring within individual States.

## **State Performance in 2003 on the Safety-Related Outcome Measures**

Table II-1 presents key findings regarding State performance in 2003 on the safety-related outcome measures. In 2003, 45 States provided sufficient data for outcome measure 1.1, compared to only 34 States in 2000; 41 States submitted sufficient data in 2003 for outcome measure 2.1, compared to only 30 States in 2000.

<b>Table II-1:</b> State performance in 2003 on measures pertaining to outcome 1 (Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect) and outcome 2 (Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in
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foster care)*-			
Outcome Measures	Performance Variables		
	Range	Mean percent	Median percent
<b>1.1: Percent of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period (N=45 States)</b>	2.1-14.4%	7.3%	7.1%
<b>2.1: Percent of children in foster care who were victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (N=41 States)</b>	0.02-1.53	0.44	0.39
* The number of States identified for each measure reflects those that provided sufficient data to NCANDS to calculate the measure. <a href="#">Back</a>			

Figures II-1 and II-2 depict 2003 State performance on the safety-related measures. States not included in figure II-1 are Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, North Dakota, Oregon, Wisconsin, and Puerto Rico. States not included in figure II-2 are Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Georgia, Louisiana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Puerto Rico.

As shown in Figure II-1, States varied in the percent of children experiencing maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period. At the low end, seven States had recurrence rates of 4.0 percent or less (Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia). At the high end, eight States had recurrence rates of 10 percent or more (Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Washington, and West Virginia).



Figure II-2 indicates that States also varied with regard to the percent of children in foster care who were maltreated by foster parents or facility staff members in 2003, although the percentages are quite small for this measure. In five States, less than 0.10 percent of children in foster care were reported to NCANDS as victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (Maine, Maryland, Nevada, Vermont, and Wyoming). In four States, more than one percent of the children in foster care were reported to be victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Mexico, and Rhode Island).

## **Change in State Performance from 2000 to 2003 on the Safety-Related Outcome Measures**

Change in State performance on a particular outcome measure was assessed by calculating the percent change from 2000 to 2003.<sup>12</sup> Using a percent change calculation permits an assessment of the extent of change occurring over time by taking into account the size of the percentages being compared. For example, a change from 6 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2003 represents a change of only 1 percentage point; however, it reflects a +16.7 percent change. In contrast, a change from 75 percent to 80 percent represents a change of 5 percentage points, but only a +6.7 percent change. For purposes of the analyses presented in this chapter, if the percent change in performance from 2000 to 2003 was less than 5.0 in either direction (i.e., positive or negative), a determination was made that there was "no change" in performance. Because the outcome measures are assessed using percentages, small fluctuations across years are to be expected. Rather than identifying any percent change as a performance change, it was decided that a percent change greater than 5.0 would be a practical indicator of actual performance change.

Table II-2 presents key findings regarding the change in State performance from 2000 to 2003 on measures pertaining to children's safety. The analyses included only those States that provided data for the measures in both years. Because the outcomes assessed focus on the *reduction* of recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect (outcome 1) and the *reduction* of the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care (outcome 2), a negative percent change represents an improvement in performance while a positive percent change represents a performance decline.

<b>Table II-2: Number and percent of States exhibiting improvement, decline, or no change in performance from 2000 to 2003 with regard to safety-related outcome measures*</b>			
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Change in Performance from 2000 to 2003</b>		
	<b>Improved performance (number and percent of States)</b>	<b>Declined performance (number and percent of States)</b>	<b>No change in performance (number and percent of States)</b>
<b>Measure 1.1: Percent of child victims experiencing a recurrence of child maltreatment within a 6-month period (N=34 States)</b>	18 (53%)	10 (29%)	6 (18%)
<b>Measure 2.1: Percent of children in foster care who were victims of maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (N=26 States)</b>	19 (73%)	5 (19%)	2 (8%)
* The number of States for each measure (N) includes those States that submitted sufficient data to calculate the measure in both 2000 and 2003. <a href="#">Back</a>			

Figures II-3 and II-4 depict the extent of change of individual States in performance on these safety-related measures. States excluded from Figure II-3 are Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, and Wisconsin. States excluded from figure II-4 are Alabama, Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Idaho, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

As shown in Figure II-3, four States had more than a -25.0 percent change on the measure of maltreatment recurrence, reflecting a substantial performance improvement (Arizona, Montana, New Hampshire, and Vermont). In contrast, four States had at least a +40.0 percent change, reflecting a considerable decline in performance (Maine, Michigan, Missouri, and West Virginia).



Similar results were found for the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care. As shown in figure II-4, there was a substantial improvement in performance in four States (Arizona, New Jersey, Vermont, and Wyoming) and a substantial decline in performance in four States (Arkansas, Florida, Minnesota, and Nebraska). However, because most of the percentages for this measure are less than 1.0, differences in percentage points that are quite small can result in a fairly large percent change.

## **Relationships Between State Performance on Safety-Related Outcome Measures and the Number and Characteristics of Child Victims**

Analyses were conducted to examine the relationships between State performance in 2003 on the safety-related outcome measures and the following:

- Child maltreatment victim rates
- Age of child victims
- Race/ethnicity of child victims
- Types of maltreatment experienced by child victims

### **Child maltreatment victim rates**

A State's child maltreatment victim rate is the number of child victims per 1,000 children in the State's population, with "victim" defined as a child reported to NCANDS who is the subject of a substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation.<sup>13</sup> In 2003, child victim rates varied considerably across States, from 1.6 in Pennsylvania<sup>14</sup> to 42.2 in Alaska, with a median of 10.6. In seven States, there were fewer than five child victims per 1,000 children in the population (Arizona, Idaho, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington). In contrast, in six States, there were more than 20 child victims per 1,000 children in the population (Alaska, District of Columbia, Florida, Massachusetts, South Dakota, and West Virginia); in two of these six States (Alaska and Florida), there were more than 35 child victims per 1,000 children in the population.

A relationship was found between State victim rates in 2003 and the percent of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period in 2003 (Pearson's  $r = 0.63$ ). As shown in Figure II-5, States with a relatively high percent of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period also tended to have a

relatively high child victim rate. States not included in figure II-5 are Alabama, Alaska, Georgia, North Dakota, Oregon, Puerto Rico, and Wisconsin.

An additional finding was that 23 (82 percent) of the 28 States that exhibited a change (either positive or negative) from 2000 to 2003 in performance on the measure of maltreatment recurrence also exhibited a change in the child victim rate in the same direction. That is, if the maltreatment recurrence percentage increased, the victim rate also increased and vice versa. The relationship between victim rates and maltreatment recurrence is discussed further in [chapter V](#).



### Child maltreatment victim characteristics

Table II-3 presents information pertaining to the age, type of maltreatment experienced, and race/ethnicity of child maltreatment victims. As shown in the table, the characteristics of child victims varied across States.

<b>Table II-3: Characteristics of child victims in 2003</b>		
<b>Characteristics of Child Victims</b>	<b>Percent range across States</b>	<b>Median percent across States</b>
<b>Age of children at time of maltreatment report</b>		

<b>Not yet 1 year old</b>	5.4 - 16.0 %	9.7 %
<b>At least 1 but not yet 6 years old</b>	20.2 - 37.2	30.9
<b>At least 6 years old, but not yet 11 years old</b>	24.1 - 31.5	27.6
<b>At least 11 years old, but not yet 16 years old</b>	18.3 - 37.6	24.7
<b>At least 16 years old</b>	3.2 - 12.1	5.3
<b>Type of maltreatment experienced*</b>		
<b>Neglect (not medical neglect)</b>	3.9 - 90.4	64.8
<b>Physical abuse</b>	3.1 - 59.1	20.8
<b>Psychological/emotional abuse</b>	0 - 58.0	2.5
<b>Sexual abuse</b>	3.0 - 57.2	9.3
<b>Medical neglect</b>	0 - 12.5	2.0
<b>Other</b>	0 - 88.2	0.1
<b>Children's race/ethnicity</b>		
<b>Alaska Native/American Indian</b>	<0.1 - 46.8	0.3
<b>Asian</b>	<0.1 - 11.5	0.5
<b>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	<0.1 - 19.8	0.1
<b>Black (non-Hispanic)</b>	0.8 - 55.9	15.5
<b>Hispanic (of any race)</b>	0.3 - 46.6	4.7
<b>White (non-Hispanic)</b>	0.4 - 94.6	53.2
<b>Multiple Races</b>	<0.1 - 26.2	1.2

\* Variations in types of maltreatment experienced may be attributed to differences in State definitions of maltreatment. For example, in some States but not others, psychological or emotional abuse is included in the State definition of child abuse and neglect. [Back](#)

The following relationships were found between State variation in the characteristics of child victims and State performance on the safety-related outcome measures:

- States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of sexual abuse tended to have a relatively low percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period and vice versa (Pearson's  $r = -0.40$ ).
- States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect tended to have a relatively high percentage of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period and vice versa (Pearson's  $r = 0.40$ ).

No relationships were found between State performance on the safety-related outcome measures and State variation with regard to the age of child victims. Also, no relationships were found between State performance on the safety-related outcome measures and State variation with regard to the race/ethnicity of child victims. However, in many States, the percentage of children of color in the child victim population was considerably higher than their percentage in the State's child population. The differences were particularly large for Black children and Alaska Native/American Indian children. Specific information regarding these differences is presented in table II-4.

<b>Table II-4: The relationships between the race/ethnicity of child victims in 2003 and the race/ethnicity of children in the State's child population in 2003 (N = 50 States*)</b>				
<b>Relationship**</b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity of Children</b>			
	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Alaska Native/ American Indian</b>
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of child victims exceeded the percent of children in the State's population</b>	9 (18%)	0	41 (82%)	21 (42%)
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of child victims was about equal to the percent of children in the State's population</b>	27 (54%)	40 (80%)	9 (18%)	10 (20%)
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of child victims was less than the percent of children in the State's population</b>	14 (28%)	10 (20%)	0	19 (38%)
<b>Total</b>	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)	50 (100%)

\* Data are not available for Puerto Rico or Pennsylvania. Pennsylvania is not included because State law does not permit reporting of the race/ethnicity of child victims. Puerto Rico does not submit these data to NCANDS. [Back](#)

\*\* The following approach was used to determine the nature of the relationship: A determination of "Exceeded" was made if the percent of child victims of a particular race/ethnicity was at least 1.3 times the percent in the State's child population. A determination of "less-than" was made if the percent of child victims of a particular race/ethnicity was less than 0.7 times the percent in the State's child population. [Back](#)

The following findings indicate that the over-representation of a particular race/ethnicity in the child victim population in 2003 was quite large in some States:

- In Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota the percent of child victims who were Hispanic was at least twice the percent of Hispanic children in the population.
- In Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington, the percent of child victims who were Native American was more than four times the percent of Native American children in the population.
- In Iowa, Minnesota, North Dakota, Utah, and Wyoming, the percent of Black child victims was more than three times the percent of Black children in the State population.

It has been a consistent finding in the Reports to Congress and in the research field that Black children and Alaska Native/American Indian children are over-represented in the child victim population in many States and White children are under-represented in the child victim populations in all States. The causes and implications of both the over-representation and the under-representation are not clearly understood at this time.

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<sup>10</sup> The Child File of the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System cannot track children from one year to the next. Therefore, a 6-month time frame for maltreatment recurrence was established to ensure that the measure captured the actual incidence of maltreatment recurrence rather than estimating the incidence. In addition, multiple research findings indicate that the highest incidence of maltreatment recurrence tends to occur within 6 months of a prior incident. Therefore, the Department determined that the 6-month time frame was sufficient to assess State performance in this area. [Back](#)

<sup>11</sup> NCANDS data were collected and reported on a calendar year basis through 2002. Beginning in 2003, they were reported on a Federal Fiscal Year basis (October 1 through September 30) to be consistent with AFCARS data. [Back](#)

<sup>12</sup> Percent change is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing by "old" data and multiplying by 100. For example, if maltreatment recurrence was 9.2 in 2000 and 7.6 in 2003, the percent change would be  $[(7.6-9.2)/9.2] \times 100 = -17.4$  percent change. [Back](#)

<sup>13</sup> A child who is the subject of more than one substantiated or indicated maltreatment allegation may be counted more than once. [Back](#)

<sup>14</sup> Pennsylvania's low victim rate is due to the fact that reports of child neglect (unless determined to be "severe") are not handled by the child protective services system. Therefore, the State does not report

child neglect to NCANDS unless it is severe neglect.

### **III. Achieving Permanency-Related Outcomes for Children in Foster Care**

The Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) of 1997 emphasized permanency as a primary goal for children in foster care and provided guidelines for achieving this goal in a timely manner. A key concern addressed by ASFA is that too many children "grow up" in foster care. That is, they spend too many of their formative years in a foster care placement rather than in a permanent home. Federal law and policy direct that, if it is necessary to remove children from their homes, concerted efforts must be made either to return them to their families quickly and safely or to quickly find another permanent home for them.

A child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) the child is discharged from foster care to a reunification with his or her family, either a parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged from foster care to a legally finalized adoption; or (3) the child is discharged from foster care to the care of a legal guardian. The Department established the following national outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care:

#### **Outcome 3—Increase permanency for children in foster care**

*Outcome measure 3.1—Of all children who exited foster care during the reporting period, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.2—Of all children who exited foster care and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.3—Of all children who exited foster care and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into foster care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

*Outcome measure 3.4—Of all children who exited foster care to emancipation, what percentage was age 12 or younger at the time of entry into foster care?*

*Outcome measure 3.5—Of all children who exited foster care, what percentage by racial/ethnic category left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?*

#### **Outcome 4—Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry**

*Outcome measure 4.1—Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in the following time periods?*

- (1) less than 12 months
- (2) at least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (3) at least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (4) at least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (5) 48 or more months

*Outcome measure 4.2—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period, what percentage re-entered care:*

- (1) *within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?*
- (2) *12 months or more after a prior foster care episode?*

## **Outcome 5—Reduce time in foster care to adoption**

*Outcome measure 5.1—Of all children who exited foster care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in the following time periods?*

- (1) *less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home*
- (2) *at least 12 months but less than 24 months*
- (3) *at least 24 months but less than 36 months*
- (4) *at least 36 months but less than 48 months*
- (5) *48 or more months*

The Department also adopted parts of outcome measures 4.1, 4.2, and 5.1 for the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and established national standards for these measures. The standards were used as part of the assessment of a State's substantial conformity with particular CFSR outcomes. (See [appendices E](#) and [F](#) for more information on the CFSR and the national standards.) The following are the measures and standards adopted for the CFSR:

- Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, *76.2 percent or more* were reunified in less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home (adopted from outcome measure 4.1).
- Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period, *8.6 percent or less* re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (adopted from outcome measure 4.2).
- Of all children who exited foster care to a finalized adoption, *32 percent or more* exited foster care in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home (adopted from outcome measure 5.1).

This chapter provides the following information:

- State performance in 2003 on the permanency-related outcome measures.
- The change in State performance from 2000 to 2003 on select permanency-related outcome measures.
- The relationship between State performance in 2003 on permanency-related outcome measures and the number and characteristics of children in foster care.

The data reported in this chapter are from the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). AFCARS is the Department's national system for collecting, analyzing, and reporting data on children who are served by State and local foster care systems.<sup>15</sup> The annual AFCARS report for 2003 is presented in [appendix H](#).

The number of States varies for the findings presented in this chapter. States were excluded from an analysis if they did not report the necessary data or if there were substantial data quality issues in a given year, usually related to missing data or data discrepancies.<sup>16</sup>

Understanding State performance on the permanency-related outcome measures requires a consideration of State statutes, policies, and practices that may affect performance. For example, some States, by law, policy, or practice, require the child welfare agency to maintain its placement and care responsibilities for a period of time (usually between 3 to 6 months) after a child is physically reunified with his or her family. The fact that these children continue to be reported to AFCARS as being in

foster care affects State performance on the outcome measure pertaining to time in foster care prior to reunification.

Because of the potential effect of State statutes and policies on performance on the outcome measures, the information regarding State performance in 2003 on the permanency-related outcome measures is provided to demonstrate the variation across States rather than to compare performance among States. Information regarding the change in performance from 2000 to 2003 is presented to depict the extent of change in performance for individual States.

## State Performance in 2003 on Permanency-Related Outcome Measures

### Achieving permanency

Outcome 3 (increase permanency for children in foster care) targets State performance in achieving permanency for children exiting foster care, with permanency defined as reunification (including living with relative), adoption, or legal guardianship. Under AFCARS, children exiting foster care who are not discharged to a permanent home may exit for the following reasons: (1) Emancipation; (2) Transfer to Other Agency, or (3) Death. The latter category is a fairly rare occurrence.

Table III-1 presents key findings with regard to State performance in 2003 on the permanency-related measures developed for outcome 3.

<b>Table III-1: State performance in 2003 on the permanency-related measures pertaining to outcome 3 —increase permanency for children in foster care*</b>			
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Performance Variables</b>		
	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean percent</b>	<b>Median percent</b>
<b>Measure 3.1: Percent of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home** (N=51 States)</b>	71.9-96.1%	85.9%	86.3%
<b>Measure 3.2: Percent of all children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=48 States)</b>	36.4-96.5	77.6	79.5
<b>Measure 3.3: Percent of all children exiting foster care who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 who were discharged to a permanent home (N=48 States)</b>	37.8-90.9	71.2	72.2
<b>Measure 3.4: Percent of all children who were emancipated from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger (N=52 States)</b>	5.1-65.1	29.2	29.6
<b>Measure 3.5a: Percent of all White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home</b>	69.2-94.1	85.7	85.7

<b>(N=50 States)<sup>***</sup></b>				
<b>Measure 3.5b: Percent of all Black (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=36 States)<sup>***</sup></b>	68.1-94.9	84.4	85.6	
<b>Measure 3.5c: Percent of all Hispanic children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=15 States)<sup>***</sup></b>	82.4-95.9	88.4	87.3	
<b>Measure 3.5d: Percent of all Alaska Native/American Indian children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=7 States)<sup>***</sup></b>	69.0-92.4	80.7	82.0	
<p>* The number of States (N) varies because States were excluded if the reason for discharge was missing for at least 15 percent of the children exiting foster care. <a href="#">Back</a></p> <p>** A discharge to a permanent home is a discharge to reunification (including living with relative), adoption, or guardianship. <a href="#">Back</a></p> <p>*** The number of States for this measure includes only those in which at least 10 percent of the exits from foster care were of the particular race/ethnicity identified in the measure—i.e., White (non-Hispanic), Black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, or Alaska Native/American Indian.</p>				

As shown in table III-1, the median percentage across States for outcome measure 3.1 was 86.3, and the lowest percentage for any State was 71.9. Figure III-1 demonstrates the narrow range across States regarding performance on this measure (Mississippi is excluded from the figure).



These findings indicate that most children exiting foster care in 2003 were discharged to a permanent home. The discharge reason for most of these children was either adoption or reunification. There were only four States in which guardianship accounted for 10 percent or more of the exits to permanency (Arizona, Hawaii, Missouri, and North Carolina). In six States, no child was reported as discharged from foster care to guardianship (Alabama, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Virginia).

The data in table III-1 also indicate that although States were generally effective in 2003 in achieving permanency for children exiting foster care, they were less effective in achieving permanency when the children exiting foster care had a diagnosed disability (outcome measures 3.2) or were older than age 12 when they entered foster care (outcome measure 3.3). The median percents for these measures are substantially lower than they are for outcome measure 3.1.

Figure III-2 depicts the range in State performance for outcome measure 3.4—the percentage of children who emancipated from foster care in 2003 and who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger. For one-half of the States, at least 30 percent of the children emancipated from foster care were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care. In 10 States, more than 40 percent of the children exiting foster care due to emancipation were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care.

With respect to outcome measure 3.5 (discharges to permanency of children of different races/ethnicity), for most States for which the analyses applied, there was little difference between the percentages of children of different races/ethnicity who were discharged to a permanent home in 2003.<sup>17</sup> In these States, Black children, White children, Hispanic children, and Alaska Native/American Indian children exiting foster care were equally likely to exit to a permanent home. However, there were a few States in which achieving permanency appeared to vary as a function of the race/ethnicity of the child. These findings are presented below for the States included in the analyses.

- *Exits to permanency for White (non-Hispanic) children compared to Black (non-Hispanic) children (N= 36 States).* In seven of the 36 States, the percent of White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was at least five percentage points higher than the percent of Black (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (Alabama, California, Illinois, Kentucky, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia).
- *Exits to permanency for White (non-Hispanic) children compared to Hispanic children (N = 15 States).* In one of the 15 States, the percent of White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was at least five percentage points higher than the percent of Hispanic children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (New York). In comparison, in two of the 15 States, the percent of White (non- Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was at least five percentage points lower than the percent of Hispanic children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (Nevada and Oregon).

- *Exits to permanency of Alaska Native/American Indian children compared to White (non-Hispanic) children (N = 7 States).* In two of the seven States, the percent of White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was considerably larger than the percent of Alaska Native/American Indian children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (in New Mexico, there was a difference of 22 percentage points; in Oklahoma, there was a difference of 11.5 percentage points).
- *Exits to permanency of Black (non-Hispanic) children compared to Hispanic children (N=9 States).* In two of the nine States, the percent of Hispanic children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was at least five percentage points higher than the percent of Black (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (California and Nevada).

### Achieving permanency in a timely manner

While outcome 3 assesses a State's effectiveness in achieving permanency for children in foster care, outcome 4 (Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry) and outcome 5 (Reduce time in foster care to adoption) assess a State's effectiveness in achieving permanency in a timely manner. Table III-2 presents State performance in 2003 on key measures relevant to these outcomes.

<b>Table III-2:</b> State performance in 2003 on the measures pertaining to outcome 4 (reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry) and outcome 5 (reduce time in foster care to adoption)*			
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Performance Variables</b>		
	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean percent</b>	<b>Median percent</b>
<b>Measure 4.1a: Percent of children discharged to reunification who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care (N=51 States)</b>	40.6-92.3%	69.5%	72.0%
<b>Measure 4.1b: Percent of children discharged to reunification who were in foster care for at least 36 months before reunification (N=51 States)</b>	0.5-16.4	5.0	3.5
<b>Measure 4.2: Percent of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (N=52 States)</b>	0.7-26.4	10.7	9.5
<b>Measure 5.1a: Percent of children discharged to adoption within 24 months of entry into foster care (N=47 States)</b>	5.0-75.8	27.2	23.9

<b>Measure 5.1b: Percent of children discharged to adoption who were in foster care for at least 48 months before the adoption (N=47 States)</b>	3.2-65.6	25.8	21.9
* The number of States (N) included in the analyses for each measure varies because States were excluded if at least 15 percent of the exits from foster care did not have a discharge reason or if there were other substantive data quality issues. <a href="#">Back</a>			

Figure III-3 depicts the range in State performance in 2003 for the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care (outcome measure 4.1). The figure does not include Mississippi. In five States, less than 50 percent of the reunifications occurred within 12 months of entry into foster care (Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, and Nebraska). In contrast, in five States, 85 percent or more of the reunifications occurred within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care (Arizona, Arkansas, Delaware, Minnesota, and New Mexico).





The data in table III-2 also indicate that the vast majority of children who exited foster care to reunification were in foster care for less than 36 months. There were only five States in which more than 10 percent of the children discharged to reunification were in foster care for at least 36 months prior to the reunification (District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Nebraska, and New York).

Figure III-4 demonstrates the variation in State performance in 2003 concerning the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode. At the low end, there were eight States in which less than 5 percent of the children entering foster care were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Kansas, Maine, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, Texas, and Wyoming). At the high end, in six States, at least 20 percent of the children entering foster care were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Delaware, Iowa, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wisconsin).

A key finding regarding State performance in 2003 on outcome 4 (Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry) is that States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (measure 4.2) also tended to have a relatively high percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care (measure 4.1) (Pearson's  $r = 0.49$ ). This relationship is depicted in figure III-5.



The range in State performance in 2003 concerning the percent of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care is presented in figure III-6. The figure does not include the States of Maine, Mississippi, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, and Wisconsin. In four States, more than 50 percent of the children adopted had been in foster care for less than 24 months (Colorado, Iowa, Rhode Island, and Utah).



In comparison, in six States, less than 15 percent of the children adopted in 2003 had been in foster care for less than 24 months (Connecticut, District of Columbia, Illinois, New York, Oregon, and Tennessee).

A key finding regarding State performance in 2003 with regard to outcome 5 (Reduce time in foster care to adoption) was that States that had a relatively high percentage of children adopted within 24 months of entry into foster care tended to have a relatively low percentage of children adopted who were in foster care for at least 48 months (Pearson's  $r = -0.79$ ). This relationship is depicted in figure III-7. Because the measure specifies two other possible time frames for an adoption to occur, i.e., (1) in at least 24 months but less than 36 months, and (2) in at least 36 months, but less than 48 months, an increase in adoptions within 24 months will not result automatically in a decrease in adoptions within 48 months. In fact, as shown by the correlation, in several States, this relationship did not occur.



**Change in State Performance from 2000 to 2003 on the Permanency-Related Outcome Measures**

Changes in State performance were assessed by calculating the percent change from 2000 to 2003.<sup>18</sup> If the percent change resulting from the calculation was less than 5.0 in either direction (i.e., positive or negative), a determination was made of "no change" in performance.

Table III-3 presents findings regarding the change in State performance from 2000 to 2003 on key measures pertaining to achieving permanency for children in foster care. The analyses included only those States that provided data for a measure in both years. Because of the wording of the outcome measures, for measures 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1 and 5.1, a positive percent change reflects an improvement in performance. In contrast, for measures 3.4 and 4.2, a positive percent change reflects a decline in performance.

<b>Table III-3:</b> Number and percent of States exhibiting improvement, decline, or no change in performance from 2000 to 2003 with regard to selected permanency-related outcome measures*			
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Change in Performance from 2000 to 2003</b>		
	<b>Improved</b>	<b>Declined</b>	<b>No change in</b>

	performance (number and percent of States)	performance (number and percent of States)	performance (number and percent of States)
<b>Measure 3.1: Percent of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=43 States)</b>	11 (26%)	3 (7%)	29 (67%)
<b>Measure 3.2: Percent of all children with a diagnosed disability exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (N=37 States)</b>	9 (24%)	15 (41%)	13 (35%)
<b>Measure 3.3: Percent of all children who entered foster care when they were older than age 12 who were discharged to a permanent home (N=39 States)</b>	12 (31%)	8 (21%)	19 (49%)
<b>Measure 3.4: Percent of all children emancipated from foster care who entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger (N=47 States)</b>	16 (34%)	24 (51%)	7 (15%)
<b>Measure 4.1: Percent of all children discharged to reunification who were reunified within 12 months of entry into foster care (N=43 States)</b>	14 (32%)	8 (19%)	21 (49%)
<b>Measure 4.2: Percent of all children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (N=46 States)</b>	17 (37%)	18 (39%)	11 (24%)
<b>Measure 5.1: Percent of all children discharged to adoption who were adopted within 24 months of entry into foster care (N=34 States)</b>	24 (70%)	6 (18%)	4 (12%)
* States were excluded if there were substantial data quality issues in either 2000 or 2003. <a href="#">Back</a>			

The following are noteworthy findings pertaining to a change in performance relevant to outcome 3— increase permanency for children in foster care:

- For 67 percent of the States, there was "no change" from 2000 to 2003 in the percentage of children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (outcome measure 3.1). This is not unexpected because most States performed at a very high level on this measure in 2000.
- For 49 percent of the States, there was no change in the percentage of children discharged to a permanent home who were older than age 12 when they entered foster care (outcome measure

3.3).

- For 41 percent of the States, there was a decline in performance regarding the percentage of children with a diagnosed disability who were discharged to a permanent home (outcome measure 3.2).
- For 51 percent of the States, there was a decline in performance regarding the percentage of children emancipated from foster care who were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care (outcome measure 3.4). The data presented in figure III-8 indicate that performance decline (represented by a positive percent change) on this measure was extensive for several States. Figure III-8 does not include Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, and Puerto Rico.



Key findings pertaining to a change in performance with regard to outcome 4 (reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry) and outcome 5 (reduce time in foster care to adoption) are presented below:

- Most of the 47 States included in the analysis of change in performance on outcome measure 4.1 either improved performance on the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care (32 percent) or did not change in their performance on this measure (49 percent); only 19 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure. Figure III-9 demonstrates the extent of change on this measure. The figure does not include Alaska, Maine, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, Texas, West Virginia, or Puerto Rico.



- For 39 percent of the 46 States included in the analysis of change in performance on outcome

measure 4.2, there was a decline in performance regarding the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode. Figure III-10 depicts the extent of change on this measure. This figure excludes the District of Columbia, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, West Virginia, and Puerto Rico.

- For 70 percent of the 34 States included in the analysis of change in performance on outcome measure 5.1, there was an improvement in performance on the measure of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care. As shown in figure III-11, for many of these States, the extent of improvement was substantial. This figure excludes Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, District of Columbia, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Texas, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. The majority of exclusions are due to data quality issues in 2000.



## **Relationships Between State Performance on Permanency-Related Outcome Measures and the Number and Characteristics of State Foster Care Populations**

The following sections present findings pertaining to the relationships between State performance on the permanency-related outcome measures and the following:

- Foster care entry rate
- Age of children at entry into foster care
- Race/ethnicity of children in foster care

### **Foster care entry rate**

A State's foster care entry rate is represented by the number of children entering foster care per 1,000 children in the State's population. In 2003, the foster care entry rate ranged from 1.7 in Illinois to 7.6 in

Wyoming, with a median of 4.2. There were no substantive relationships (i.e., correlations of 0.40 or higher) between a State's foster care entry rate and performance on the permanency-related outcome measures.

### Characteristics of the foster care population

Table III-4 presents information pertaining to the age of children at entry into foster care and the race/ethnicity of children in foster care in 2003. As shown in the table, the characteristics of foster care populations varied across States.

<b>Table III-4: Characteristics of children in foster care in 2003</b>		
<b>Child Characteristics</b>	<b>Percent range across States</b>	<b>Median percent across States</b>
<b>Age of Children at Entry into Foster Care</b>		
<b>Birth to age 5</b>	22.2 - 57.8 %	40.6 %
<b>Age 6 to 12</b>	16.3 - 36.8	28.3
<b>Age 13 to 15</b>	10.8 - 36.7	19.6
<b>Age 16 and older</b>	3.4 - 33.0	9.7
<b>Children's race/ethnicity</b>		
<b>Alaska Native/American Indian</b>	0 - 63.7	0.5
<b>Asian</b>	0 - 14.3	0.3
<b>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</b>	0 - 29.2	0.1
<b>Black (non-Hispanic)</b>	0.2 - 85.1	22.6
<b>Hispanic (of any race)</b>	0.7 - 99.1	5.8
<b>White (non-Hispanic)</b>	0.2 - 96.2	47.0
<b>Multiple Races</b>	0.2 - 36.3	2.5

The following are key findings regarding the relationships between the characteristics of the foster care population and State performance on the permanency-related outcome measures.

- States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care at age 5 or younger tended to have a relatively low percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Pearson's  $r = -0.46$ ).
- States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care at age 16 and older tended to have a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Pearson's  $r = 0.52$ ).
- States with a relatively high percentage of Black (non-Hispanic) children entering foster care tended to have a relatively low percentage of adoptions within 24 months (Pearson's  $r = -0.47$ ).

The analyses of the race/ethnicity data of children in foster care found that in 2003, the percentage of children who are Black (non-Hispanic), Hispanic, or Alaska Native/American Indian exceeded the percentage of those children in a State's child population in many States. In contrast, the percentage of children in foster care who are White (non-Hispanic) was less than the percentage of these children in the State population. Table III-5 presents these findings.

<b>Table III-5:</b> The relationship between the race/ethnicity of children in foster care in 2003 and the race/ethnicity of children in the State's child population in 2003 (N = 51 States) <sup>*</sup>				
<b>Relationship<sup>**</sup></b>	<b>Race/Ethnicity of Children</b>			
	<b>Hispanic</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black</b>	<b>Alaska Native/ American Indian</b>
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of children in foster care exceeded the percent of children in the State's child population.</b>	14 (27%)	0	50 (98%)	21 (41%)
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of children in foster care was about equal to the percent of children in the State's child population.</b>	23 (46%)	34 (67%)	1 (2%)	13 (26%)
<b>Number and percent of States in which the percent of children in foster care was less than the percent of children in the State's population.</b>	14 (27%)	17 (33%)	0	17 (33%)
<b>Total</b>	51 (100%)	51 (100%)	51 (100%)	51 (100%)

<sup>\*</sup> These data are not available for Puerto Rico. [Back](#)

<sup>\*\*</sup> The following approach was used to determine the nature of the relationship: A determination of "exceeded" was made if the percent of children entering foster care of a particular race/ethnicity was at least 1.3 times the percent in the State's child population. A determination of "less than" was made if the percent of children entering foster care of a particular race/ethnicity was less than 0.7 times the

percent in the State's child population. [Back](#)

In many States, the percentage of children of a particular race/ethnicity in foster care was considerably larger than the percentage of those children in the State's child population. Examples of this are provided below:

- The percent of Hispanic children in foster care was at least twice as large as the percent of Hispanic children in the State's child population in seven States (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, and South Dakota).
- The percent of Black children in foster care was at least three times larger than the percent of Black children in the State's child population in 22 States (California, Connecticut, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming).
- The percent of Black children in the foster care population was at least four times larger than the percent of Black children in the State child population in seven States (California, Iowa, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Utah, and Wisconsin).
- The percent of Alaska Native/American Indian children in foster care was at least three times larger than the percent of these children in the State's child population in 11 States (Alaska, Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, and Washington).
- The percent of Alaska Native/American Indian children in foster care was at least five times greater than the percent of these children in the State's child population in six States (Idaho, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon, and Washington).

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<sup>15</sup> The term "foster care" as it is used in the Report to Congress refers to a variety of out-of-home placement settings, including foster family homes, group homes, shelters, residential treatment facilities, and similar placements for children who are in the State's placement and care responsibility for a period of 24 hours or more. [Back](#)

<sup>16</sup> States were excluded from several analyses if 15 percent or more of the exits from foster care did not have "reason for discharge" information. States also were excluded from the analysis of performance regarding the timeliness of adoptions (outcome measure 5.1) if there was a substantial discrepancy between the number of finalized adoptions submitted to the AFCARS Adoption file and the number of children reported to the AFCARS foster care file as exiting foster care with a discharge reason of adoption. [Back](#)

<sup>17</sup> Comparisons with regard to exits to permanency for children of different races/ethnicity included only those States in which at least 10 percent of the exits from foster care were children of a particular race/ethnicity. As a result, comparisons involving Asian or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander children were not possible because there was only one State in which at least 10 percent of the exiting population were in either of those groups. [Back](#)

<sup>18</sup> Change in performance across years was assessed by calculating the percent change. This is calculated by subtracting "old" data from "new" data, dividing by "old" data and multiplying by 100. Therefore, if reunification within 12 months was 67 percent in 2000, and 73 percent in 2003, the

percent change would be:  $73$  (new 2003 measure) -  $67$  (old 2000 measure) /  $67$  (old 2000 measure) times 100 (for percent) = +8.96 percent change.

#### **IV. Achieving Outcomes Related to Placement Stability and Appropriate Placements for Young Children in Foster Care**

It is the responsibility of a State child welfare agency to ensure that children are in stable placements while they are in foster care. An additional agency responsibility is to ensure that children are in placements appropriate to their age. For many young children (i.e., age 12 years or younger), an appropriate placement is a family setting rather than a group home or institution. The Department established the following outcomes and measures to assess State performance with regard to meeting these responsibilities.

##### **Outcome 6—Increase placement stability**

*Outcome measure 6.1—Of all children served during the reporting period who had been in foster care for the time periods listed below, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period?*

- (1) Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
- (2) At least 12 months but less than 24 months
- (3) At least 24 months but less than 36 months
- (4) At least 36 months but less than 48 months
- (5) 48 or more months

##### **Outcome 7—Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions**

*Outcome measure 7.1—Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage was placed in a group home or institution?*

The Department adopted a component of the measure of placement stability (outcome measure 6.1) for use in the Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and established a national performance standard for the measure. The standard is the following: Of all children who have been in foster care for less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, *86.7 percent or more have had no more than 2 placement settings.*

Data reported in this chapter come from the Federal Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS). The chapter presents the findings with regard to the following:

- State performance in 2003 on the measures pertaining to outcome 6 and outcome 7.
- The change in State performance from 2000 to 2003 on these outcome measures.

This chapter does not include a section on the relationships between State performance on these measures and the characteristics of State foster care populations because no relationships were found.

#### **State Performance in 2003 in Achieving Outcomes Related to Placement Stability and Appropriate Placements for Young Children**

Table IV-1 presents the findings of State performance on key measures of placement stability<sup>19</sup> and placements of young children in group homes or institutions. As shown in the table, most children in foster care in 2003 for less than 12 months experienced no more than two placement settings (outcome

measure 6.1a). There were nine States in which at least 90 percent of the children in foster care for less than 12 months experienced no more than two placement settings (Alabama, Delaware, District of Columbia, Georgia, Iowa, Maryland, New York, Puerto Rico, and Wisconsin).

<b>Table IV-1:</b> State performance in 2003 on measures pertaining to outcome 6 (Increase placement stability) and outcome 7 (Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions)			
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Performance Variables</b>		
	<b>Range</b>	<b>Mean percent</b>	<b>Median percent</b>
<b>Measure 6.1a: Percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experience two or fewer placement settings (N=52 States)</b>	52.3-99.7%	82.5%	84.2%
<b>Measure 6.1b: Percent of children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months who experience two or fewer placement settings (N=52 States)</b>	30.2-99.7	59.3	59.1
<b>Measure 7.1: Percent of children entering foster care at age 12 or younger who are placed in group homes or institutions (N=49 States)*</b>	1.4-28.8	10.1	8.3
* Three States were excluded because of data quality issues <a href="#">Back</a>			

However, the data in table IV-1 also indicate that the percentage of children experiencing no more than two placement settings is substantially different for children in foster care for less than 12 months (median = 84.2 percent) than it is for children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months (median = 59.1 percent). Figure IV-1 depicts this difference for individual States. As shown in the figure, in 10 States there is at least a 30 percentage point difference in placement stability between these groups (Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, New Mexico, Tennessee, Texas, and Utah).



The range in State performance with regard to the placement of children in group homes or institutions is depicted in figure IV-2. At the low end, in 11 States, less than 5 percent of children age 12 and younger entering foster care in 2003 were placed in group homes or institutions (Alaska, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee, and Washington). At the high end, in six States, 20 percent or more of the children entering foster care at age 12 or younger were placed in group homes or institutions (Arizona, District of Columbia, Iowa, Mississippi, South Carolina, and South Dakota).



Performance on outcome measures of placement stability and placements of young children in group homes or institutions was not found to be related to performance on any of the other measures.

### **Change in State Performance from 2000 to 2003 in Placement Stability and Appropriate Placements for Young Children**

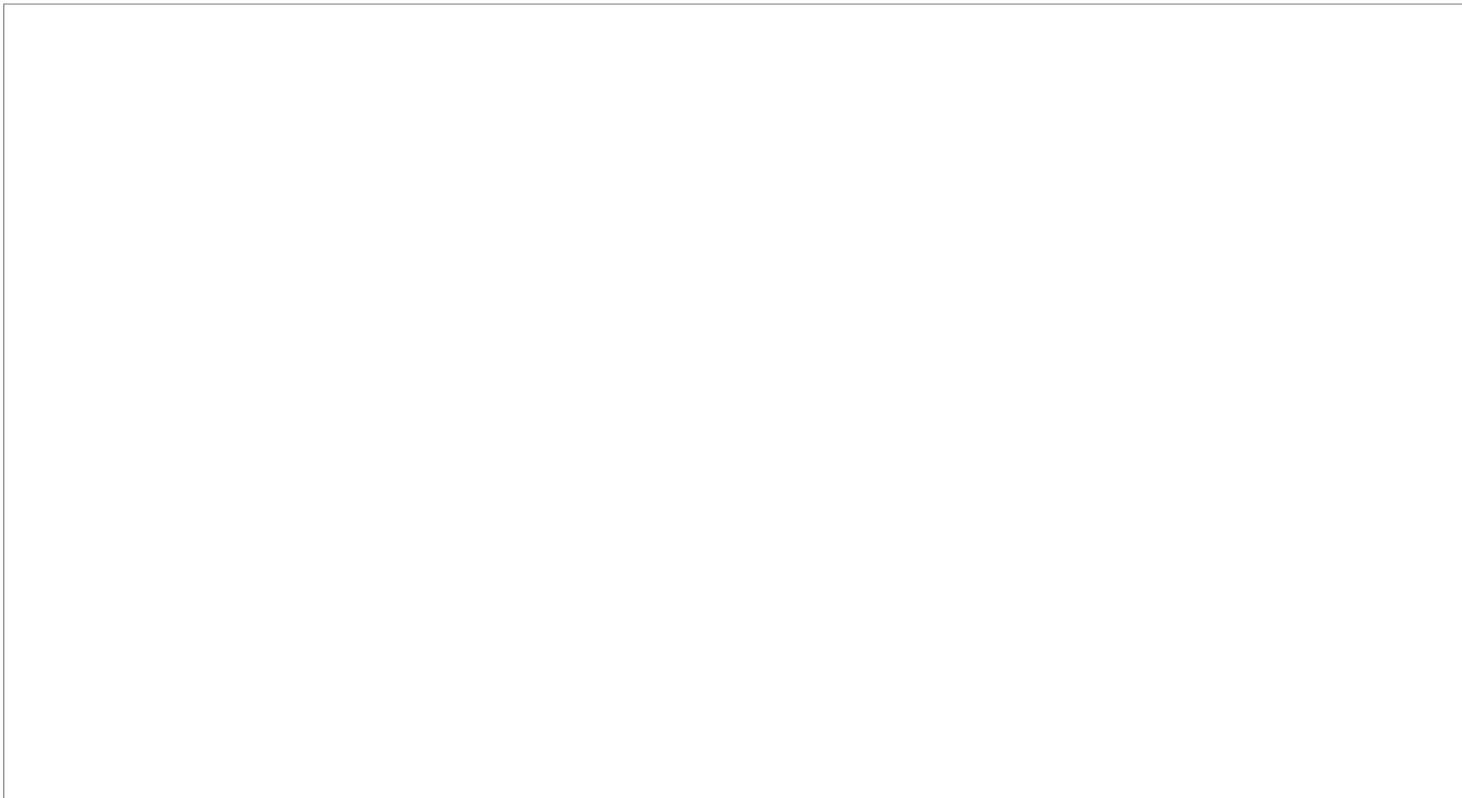
Table IV-2 provides the number and percent of States that improved performance, declined in performance, or exhibited no change in performance with regard to key measures for outcome 6 and outcome 7. A few States were excluded from the analyses either because of missing data or data quality issues associated with a particular measure in either 2000 or 2003. Because outcome 6 focuses on increasing placement stability, a positive percent change represents a performance improvement for the measure of placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months. In comparison, because outcome 7 focuses on reducing placements of young children in group homes or institutions, a positive percent change represents a performance decline for measure 7.1.

<b>Table IV-2: Number and percent of States exhibiting improvement, decline, or no change in performance from 2000 to 2003 with regard to measures pertaining to placement stability (outcome measure 6.1) and appropriate placements of young children (outcome measure 7.1)</b>	
<b>Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Change in Performance from 2000 to 2003</b>

<b>Measure 6.1: Percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced 2 or fewer placement settings (N=50 States)</b>	7 (14%)	6 (12%)	37 (74%)
<b>Measure 7.1: Percent of children entering foster care when they were 12 or younger who were placed in a group home or institution (N=49 States)</b>	27 (55%)	18 (37%)	4 (8%)

As shown in the table, the majority of States did not change from 2000 to 2003 with regard to the percentage of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced no more than two placement settings. This is not surprising given that most States were already performing at a very high level on this measure in 2000.

With regard to the percentage of young children placed in group homes or institutions, 55 percent of the States exhibited improvement in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003 (outcome measure 7.1). Figure IV-3 depicts the percent change in performance on this measure for the 49 States included in the analysis. The figure excludes Florida, Nevada, and Puerto Rico.



As shown in the figure, there were three States in which improved performance from 2000 to 2003 exceeded a 50.0 percent change (Illinois, Michigan, and Tennessee). However, there were five States in which the performance decline from 2000 to 2003 exceeded a 50.0 percent change (Arkansas, Colorado, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin).

<sup>19</sup> For purposes of the Report to Congress measure, placement stability is defined as a child having no more than 2 placement settings while in foster care.

## V. State Performance on the Seven National Child Welfare Outcomes

This chapter provides an overall summary of State performance and discussions of key findings reported in chapters II, III, and IV.

### Summary of State Performance in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003

Table V-1 provides the median across States regarding performance on selected outcome measures in 2000, 2001, 2002, and 2003. The States included in the calculation of the median are those that provided acceptable data for a given outcome measure in all 4 years.<sup>20</sup> Changes in State performance were assessed by calculating the percent change from 2000 to 2003 of the median percent across States.

Outcome measure and number of States included in the analysis	Year			
	2000 (median)	2001 (median)	2002 (median)	2003 (median)
<b>1.1</b> Percent of children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of reporting period who had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period (N=34 States).	7.9%	7.5%	7.8%	7.7%
<b>2.1</b> Percent of children in foster care who were the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member (N=27 States).	0.47	0.55	0.52	0.40
<b>3.1</b> Percent of children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (adoption, legal guardianship, or reunification) (N=44 States).	85.7	85.4	86.4	86.7
<b>3.2</b> Percent of children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability who were discharged to a permanent home (adoption, guardianship, or reunification) (N= 37 States).	79.6	78.6	79.8	78.2

<b>3.3</b>	Percent of children exiting foster care who were older than 12 at the time of entry into foster care who were discharged to a permanent home (adoption, guardianship, or reunification) (N=40 States).	72.8	72.9	72.0	72.2
<b>3.4</b>	Percent of children exiting foster care to emancipation who were age 12 or younger at the time of entry into foster care (N=50 States).	25.3	28.3	26.7	29.6
<b>4.1</b>	Percent of children reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care who were reunified within 12 months from the time of entry into foster care (N=43 States).	71.5	71.9	68.3	72.1
<b>4.2</b>	Percent of children entering foster care who were re-entering care within 12 months of discharge from a prior foster care episode (N=46 States).	10.6	11.2	10.8	9.8
<b>5.1</b>	Percent of children exiting foster care to a finalized adoption who exited within 24 months from the time of the latest removal from home (N=34 States).	19.7	20.3	21.9	22.9
<b>6.1</b>	Percent of children in foster care for less than 12 months who experienced two or fewer placements (N=51 States).	84.2	83.3	84.3	84.0
<b>7.1</b>	Percent of children age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement who were placed in a group home or institution (N=49 States).	9.6	8.6	8.6	8.3

As shown in the table, there is evidence of performance improvement from 2000 to 2003 with regard to several measures. The following are the findings pertaining to improved performance.

- The median percentage of children in foster care who were maltreated by a foster parent or facility staff member (outcome measure 2.1) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-14.8 percent change).
- The median percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (outcome measure 4.2) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-7.5 percent change).
- The median percentage of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care (outcome measure 5.1) increased from 2000 to 2003 (+16.2 percent change).
- The median percentage of children age 12 and younger who were placed in group homes or institutions (outcome measure 7.1) decreased from 2000 to 2003 (-13.5 percent change).

The only measure that exhibited a performance decline from 2000 to 2003 was measure 3.4. For this measure, the median percentage of children emancipated from foster care who were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care increased from 2000 to 2003 (+17.0 percent change). Performance on the remaining outcome measures did not change from 2000 to 2003 (i.e., the percent change did not exceed 5.0 in either direction).

The sections below discuss State performance on the national child welfare outcomes and measures with regard to keeping children safe, achieving permanency for children, and providing stable and age-appropriate placements.

## **Key Findings Regarding Keeping Children Safe**

Outcome 1 (Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect) and outcome 2 (Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care) pertain to State performance with regard to keeping children safe. State performance on these outcomes is summarized and discussed below.

### **Outcome 1—Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect**

Outcome 1 reflects the primary responsibility of State child welfare agencies to protect children who have been found to be victims of abuse or neglect from further harm. The measure developed to assess State performance on this outcome is the following: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?

The findings regarding performance on this outcome measure suggest that, in 2003, protecting child maltreatment victims from further harm was a challenge for many States. In 35 of the 45 States reporting data for the measure, at least five percent of the children who were victims of child maltreatment in the first 6 months of the reporting year experienced another maltreatment incident within a 6-month period. Also, as noted in [chapter II](#), for some States, the incidence of maltreatment reported to the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) Child File may be less than the actual incidence. This is due to the fact that child protective services agencies in these States often do not formally investigate maltreatment allegations involving children in open child protective services case, and therefore they do not report these allegations to the NCANDS Child File.

Despite the continued challenge of preventing maltreatment recurrence, 53 percent of the States achieved outcome 1 because the incidence of maltreatment recurrence declined between 2000 and 2003. For some States this decline was extensive. However, for 29 percent of the States, the incidence of child maltreatment recurrence increased from 2000 to 2003, and for some of these States, the increase was considerable.

The findings indicate that in 2003, State performance on the measure of maltreatment recurrence was not related to the age or race/ethnicity of child victims, but was related to the types of maltreatment experienced by child victims. In 2003, States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of sexual abuse tended to have a relatively low incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's  $r = -0.40$ ). In comparison, States with a relatively high percentage of children who were victims of neglect in 2003 tended to have a relatively high incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's  $r = 0.40$ ).

Although additional information is necessary for a detailed interpretation of these findings, one possible explanation may be found in the different responses that typically occur to substantiated sexual abuse and neglect allegations. A substantiated allegation of sexual abuse, for example, often involves legal action against the perpetrator and legal action to ensure that the perpetrator does not have contact

with the child, which may include placement of the child in foster care. These efforts may be effective in preventing the recurrence of sexual abuse within a 6-month period. In contrast, a child welfare agency response to a substantiated allegation of neglect usually does not involve legal action against the perpetrator and usually does not prohibit contact between the child and the perpetrator. Consequently, there may be a greater opportunity for neglect to recur within a 6-month period.

Understanding differences among States in performance on the measure of maltreatment recurrence requires consideration of the potential effect on performance of State definitions of child abuse and neglect and State laws governing evidentiary requirements for substantiation. For example, in some States, the statutory definition of child maltreatment does not include psychological or emotional abuse; in other States, this type of abuse is part of the definition of child maltreatment. In one State (Pennsylvania), the definition of child maltreatment does not include neglect, unless it is "severe neglect."

Also, in some States, substantiation of a maltreatment allegation requires evidence "beyond a reasonable doubt." In other States substantiation requires a "preponderance of evidence." Elsewhere, an allegation can be substantiated if there is "reasonable suspicion" that the maltreatment occurred or an allegation can be substantiated if the risk of maltreatment is confirmed. These differences affect both the number of children who are found to be victims of maltreatment in a State and the incidence of maltreatment recurrence. A key finding reported in [chapter II](#) relevant to this issue is that, in 2003, States with a relatively high rate of child victims (i.e., the number of child victims per 1,000 children in the population) tended to have a relatively high incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period (Pearson's  $r = 0.63$ ).

### **Outcome 2—Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care**

Outcome 2 reflects the obligation of a State child welfare system to ensure that children who are removed from their homes by the State do not experience maltreatment by their State-appointed caretakers. The measure developed to assess State performance on this outcome is the following: Of all children who were in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage was the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff member?

The findings pertaining to performance on this outcome measure in 2003 indicate that States are reasonably effective in keeping most children in foster care safe from maltreatment by foster parents or a facility staff member. For many States, less than 0.20 percent of children in foster care were maltreated by foster parents or facility staff members in 2003. However, in all States, there were some children who were victims of maltreatment by their State-appointed caretakers, which suggests that there is an ongoing need for improvement in this area.

The findings also indicate that in the majority of States included in the analysis of performance on this measure (73 percent), there was a reduction between 2000 and 2003 in the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect by a foster parent or facility staff member. Only 19 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure over that time period.

State performance on the measure of maltreatment of children in foster care was not found to be related to the age of child victims, their race/ethnicity, or the type of maltreatment they experienced.

### **Achieving Permanency for Children in Foster Care**

Outcome 3 (Increase permanency for children in foster care), outcome 4 (Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry), and outcome 5 (Reduce time in foster care to adoption) were established to assess State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care.

State performance on these outcomes is summarized and discussed below.

### **Outcome 3—Increase permanency for children in foster care**

Outcome 3 reflects the responsibility of State child welfare agencies to ensure that foster care is a temporary situation for children and that when children leave foster care they are discharged to a permanent home. A child in foster care is determined to have achieved permanency when any of the following occurs: (1) the child is discharged from foster care to a reunification with his or her family, either a parent or other relative; (2) the child is discharged from foster care to a legally finalized adoption; or (3) the child is discharged from foster care to the care of a legal guardian.

The measures developed to assess State performance on this outcome emphasize the importance of achieving permanency for all children regardless of their characteristics. Consequently, the measures developed for outcome 3 pertain not only to achieving permanency for all children exiting foster care (measure 3.1), but also to achieving permanency for children with a diagnosed disability (measure 3.2), children who are adolescents when they enter foster care (outcome measure 3.3), and children of all races/ethnicities (measure 3.5). Another measure pertaining to outcome 3 (measure 3.4) is intended to capture the percent of children who "grow up" in foster care and are discharged without having found a permanent home.

The findings presented in [chapter III](#) indicate that most children exiting foster care in 2003 were discharged to a permanent home. However, in the majority of States, children exiting foster care who had a diagnosed disability or who were older than age 12 when they entered care were less likely to be discharged to a permanent home than were all children exiting foster care. These findings suggest that, in many States, achieving permanency for all children in foster care remains a challenge.

An additional finding is that in 2003, in the majority of States, the percentages of children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home did not vary as a function of children's race or ethnicity. In these States, Black (non-Hispanic) children, Hispanic children, Alaskan Native/American Indian children, and White (non-Hispanic) children exiting foster care were about equally likely to be discharged to a permanent home.<sup>21</sup>

The findings reported in [chapter III](#) also demonstrate that, in 2003, there were a substantial number of children in some States who entered foster care when they were younger than age 12 and eventually emancipated from foster care, having never found a permanent home. In fact, in 10 States, more than 40 percent of the children emancipated from foster care in 2003 were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care.

Most States did not achieve outcome 3 in that they did not increase permanency for children in foster care from 2000 to 2003. This finding is not surprising for outcome measure 3.1 (the percent of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home) because most States were already performing at a very high level on this measure in 2000. Of concern, however, are the findings that: (1) 41 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance from 2000 to 2003 with regard to achieving permanency for children with a diagnosed disability and, (2) 51 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance with regard to the percent of children emancipated from foster care who were age 12 or younger when they entered foster care.

### **Outcome 4—Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry**

Outcome 4 reflects the emphasis of the Department and the Adoption and Safe Families Act (ASFA) on reunifying children in a timely manner. The findings reported in [chapter III](#) indicate that, in many States, the majority of children reunified in 2003 were in foster care for less than 12 months at the time

of reunification. However, the median of 72.0 percent across States suggests that for about one-half of the States, there is a need for improvement with regard to timely reunifications. In particular, in five States, less than 50 percent of reunifications occurred within 12 months of the child's entry into foster care.

Outcome 4 also addresses the Department's emphasis that reunifications must occur in a manner that promotes the "permanency" of the reunification and prevents children from re-entering foster care. The findings reported in [chapter III](#) raise concerns about the permanency of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care. One key finding is that 50 percent of the States exhibiting an increase from 2000 to 2003 in the percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of entry into foster care (outcome measure 4.1) also exhibited an increase in the percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (outcome measure 4.2). Only four States exhibited improved performance on both measures (Arizona, Illinois, Tennessee, and Vermont). Another key finding is that in 2003, States with a relatively high percentage of reunifications occurring within 12 months of a child's entry into foster care also tended to have a relatively high percentage of entries into foster care of children re-entering within 12 months of a prior foster care episode (Pearson's  $r = 0.49$ ). Taken together, these findings suggest that some children are being reunified before sufficient changes have occurred in the family or the child to prevent another removal episode and/or that insufficient post-reunification services were provided to assist families in the reintegration process.

The findings reported in [chapter III](#) also indicate that the relationship between reunification and re-entry reported in the prior paragraph may be particularly relevant for children who enter foster care as older adolescents. In general, States with a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were age 16 or older tended to have a relatively high percentage of children entering foster care who were re-entering within 12 months of a prior episode (Pearson's  $r = 0.52$ ). Almost all of the States with a high percentage of children age 16 and older entering foster care are States in which children can enter foster care through the juvenile justice system or through the courts as "children in need of supervision." Because these children do not enter foster care as victims of maltreatment, and therefore are viewed as not having safety concerns, child welfare agencies may experience challenges in meeting their treatment needs. This finding suggests that States experiencing relatively high percentages of children re-entering foster care within 12 months of a prior episode should examine their data to identify the ages of the children who are re-entering in order to determine how to best address the problem.

### **Outcome 5—Reduce time in foster care to adoption**

Outcome 5 is intended to emphasize the responsibility of child welfare agencies to find adoptive families for children who cannot be returned to their families and to finalize the adoption process as quickly as possible. For most States, the percent of adoptions in 2003 that were finalized within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care was not high (median = 23.9 percent), and in some States it was quite low. However, 70 percent of States exhibited improved performance on this measure, suggesting that States are making concerted efforts to expedite the adoption process for children.

One finding reported in [chapter III](#) is somewhat difficult to interpret. In 2003, States with a relatively high percentage of Black (non-Hispanic) children in their foster care populations tended to have a relatively low percentage of adoptions occurring within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care (Pearson's  $r = -0.47$ ). Although it is possible to provide some speculations on the reasons why this relationship may occur, additional information is needed to explore the nature of this relationship.

## **Achieving Stable Placements and Appropriate Placements for Young Children**

### **Outcome 6—Increase placement stability**

This outcome reflects the Department's belief that State child welfare agencies are responsible for ensuring that children who are removed from their homes are placed in settings that are stable. Placement stability is defined as "two or fewer placement settings."

States are generally effective in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for less than 12 months. The median performance in 2003 on this measure was 84.2 percent. Performance on this measure did not change from 2000 to 2003 for 74 percent of the States, primarily because most States were already at a high level of performance in 2000.

In contrast, States are far less effective in achieving placement stability for children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months. The median performance in 2003 on this measure was only 59.1 percent. In 10 States, placement stability declined by 30 percent or more for children in foster care from 12 to 24 months compared to children in foster care for less than 12 months. Additional research is needed to identify the factors associated with this decline in placement stability to help support States in achieving placement stability for children, regardless of how long they are in foster care.

### **Outcome 7—Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions**

In the majority of States, a fairly small percentage of young children are placed in group homes or institutions. Fifty-five percent of the States achieved outcome 7 in that they reduced placements of young children in group homes or institutions. However, for a few States, there is an ongoing need for improvement in this area. In six States, for example, 20 percent or more of the children age 12 and younger who entered foster care in 2003 were placed in group homes or institutions. In addition, 37 percent of the States exhibited a decline in performance on this measure from 2000 to 2003.

## **Summary**

Overall, State performance with regard to keeping children safe generally improved from 2000 to 2003, particularly with regard to maltreatment of children in foster care. However, more efforts are needed to ensure that child victims do not experience additional maltreatment, whether they are in their own homes, in the home of a foster family, or in a group home or institution. The findings suggest that our understanding of State performance with regard to keeping children safe would be enhanced by research pertaining to the following:

- How definitions of child maltreatment and statutory requirements pertaining to substantiation affect the reported incidence of maltreatment recurrence within a 6-month period.
- Why the percentage of child victims who experience neglect appears to be positively related to the incidence of child maltreatment recurrence.
- Why the percentage of child victims who experience sexual abuse appears to be negatively related to the incidence of child maltreatment recurrence.

State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children varied. The strongest area of improvement from 2000 to 2003 pertained to adoptions within 24 months of a child's entry into foster care. Although the percentage of adoptions that are finalized within this time period continues to be somewhat low (median = 23.9 percent), 70 percent of the States exhibited improved performance on this measure.

Many States (33 percent) also improved with respect to achieving reunifications within 12 months of a

child's entry into foster care. However, there is some indication that expediting reunifications may be related to increased re-entry, particularly for children who enter foster care as older adolescents. This suggests that States with high rates of re-entry into foster care with 12 months of a prior episode should examine the ages of those children who are re-entering in order to better understand how to respond to the problem.

States also continued to experience challenges in 2003 in achieving permanency for children who enter foster care as adolescents (i.e., older than age 12). In the majority of States, the percentage of these children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home was substantially lower than the percentage of all children exiting foster care who were discharged to a permanent home. Finally, in many States, more than one-third of the children emancipated from foster care had entered foster care when they were age 12 or younger, and the overall median for this measure was close to 30 percent.

Additional information in the following areas would enhance understanding of State performance with regard to achieving permanency for children in foster care and help identify strategies for improving performance in this area:

- How State differences with regard to policies and practices governing reunification and adoption affect performance on the outcome measures.
- The factors associated with very long-term stays in foster care.
- The reasons for entry into foster care for children age 13 and older and the factors associated with attaining permanency for these children.
- Why a high percentage of older adolescents entering foster care is associated with a high percentage of re-entry into foster care.
- The nature of the relationship between reunifications within 12 months and re-entries within 12 months in individual States.

The findings regarding State performance pertaining to placement stability raise serious concerns about children in foster care for 12 months or longer. Although most children in foster care for less than 12 months generally experience two or fewer placement settings, this is not true for children in foster care for at least 12 months but less than 24 months. Additional research is needed to understand why this decline in placement stability occurs. This information would assist in identifying strategies for increasing placement stability for all children.

For most States, the majority of young children entering foster care are placed in family settings rather than in group homes or institutions. However, there are a few States where this is an area needing ongoing improvement.

The findings reported in *Child Welfare Outcomes 2003: Annual Report to Congress* suggest that for the most part States are exhibiting improvements in achieving positive outcomes for children who come into contact with public child welfare systems. However, there continue to be many areas in which additional improvements are needed and some in which State performance is declining. As States complete their program improvement plans resulting from the first round of Child and Family Services Reviews, the Department will be able to gather more specific information to identify the direction of change and the strategies associated with positive change.

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<sup>20</sup> Because this table includes only States that provided acceptable data for each measure in all 4 years, the medians reported in this table for State performance in 2003 may be slightly different than those reported in earlier chapters. For example, as shown in [table II-1](#) in chapter II, in 2003, 45 States

provided data for outcome measure 1.1. The median across these States was 7.1 percent. Because only 34 States provided data for this measure in all 4 years, in table V-1 above, the median is 7.7. [Back](#)

<sup>21</sup> This applies only to those States in which at a particular racial/ethnic category accounted for at least 10 percent of the children exiting foster care.

## VI. State Data Pages

<a href="#">Alabama</a>	<a href="#">Hawaii</a>	<a href="#">Michigan</a>	<a href="#">North Carolina</a>	<a href="#">Texas</a>
<a href="#">Alaska</a>	<a href="#">Idaho</a>	<a href="#">Minnesota</a>	<a href="#">North Dakota</a>	<a href="#">Utah</a>
<a href="#">Arizona</a>	<a href="#">Illinois</a>	<a href="#">Mississippi</a>	<a href="#">Ohio</a>	<a href="#">Vermont</a>
<a href="#">Arkansas</a>	<a href="#">Indiana</a>	<a href="#">Missouri</a>	<a href="#">Oklahoma</a>	<a href="#">Virginia</a>
<a href="#">California</a>	<a href="#">Iowa</a>	<a href="#">Montana</a>	<a href="#">Oregon</a>	<a href="#">Washington</a>
<a href="#">Colorado</a>	<a href="#">Kansas</a>	<a href="#">Nebraska</a>	<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	<a href="#">West Virginia</a>
<a href="#">Connecticut</a>	<a href="#">Kentucky</a>	<a href="#">Nevada</a>	<a href="#">Puerto Rico</a>	<a href="#">Wisconsin</a>
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	<a href="#">New Hampshire</a>	<a href="#">Rhode Island</a>	<a href="#">Wyoming</a>
<a href="#">District of Columbia</a>	<a href="#">Maine</a>	<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	<a href="#">South Carolina</a>	
<a href="#">Florida</a>	<a href="#">Maryland</a>	<a href="#">New Mexico</a>	<a href="#">South Dakota</a>	
<a href="#">Georgia</a>	<a href="#">Massachusetts</a>	<a href="#">New York</a>	<a href="#">Tennessee</a>	

## Appendix A: Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997

### (Public Law 105-89)

#### Section 203A

#### SEC. 203. Performance of States in Protecting Children.

(a) ANNUAL REPORT ON STATE PERFORMANCE.—Part E of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 670 et seq.) is amended by addition at the end of the following:

SEC.479A. Annual Report.

The Secretary, in consultation with Governors, State legislatures, State and local public officials responsible for administering child welfare programs, and child welfare advocates, shall:

- (1 develop a set of outcome measures (including length of stay in foster care, number of foster care ) placements, and number of adoptions) that can be used to assess the performance of States in operating child protection and child welfare programs pursuant to parts B and E to ensure the safety of children;
- (2 to the maximum extent possible, the outcome measures should be developed from data available ) from the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System;
- (3 develop a system for rating the performance of States with respect to the outcome measures and ) provide to the States an explanation of the rating system and how scores are determined under the rating system;
- (4 prescribe such regulations as may be necessary to ensure that States provide to the Secretary the data ) necessary to determine State performance with respect to each outcome measure, as a condition of the State receiving funds under this part; and

(5 on May 1, 1999, and annually thereafter, prepare and submit to the Congress a report on the ) performance of each State on each outcome measure, which shall examine the reasons for high performance and low performance and, where possible, make recommendations as to how State performance could be improved.

## **Appendix B: Child Welfare Outcomes and Measures**

### **Child Welfare Outcome 1: Reduce recurrence of child abuse and/or neglect**

Measure 1.1: Of all children who were victims of substantiated or indicated child abuse and/or neglect during the first 6 months of the reporting period, what percentage had another substantiated or indicated report within a 6-month period?

### **Child Welfare Outcome 2: Reduce the incidence of child abuse and/or neglect in foster care**

Measure 2.1: Of all children who were in foster care during the reporting period, what percentage was the subject of substantiated or indicated maltreatment by a foster parent or facility staff?

*Note: The reporting period for this measure is January 1 to September 30 (9 months).*

### **Child Welfare Outcome 3: Increase permanency for children in foster care**

Measure 3.1: Of all children who exited foster care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.2: Of all children who exited foster care and were identified as having a diagnosed disability, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.3: Of all children who exited foster care and were older than age 12 at the time of their most recent entry into care, what percentage left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

Measure 3.4: Of all children exiting foster care to emancipation, what percentage was age 12 or younger at the time of entry into care?

Measure 3.5: Of all children who exited foster care, what percentage by racial/ethnic category left either to reunification, adoption, or legal guardianship?

### **Child Welfare Outcome 4: Reduce time in foster care to reunification without increasing re-entry**

Measure 4.1: Of all children who were reunified with their parents or caretakers at the time of discharge from foster care, what percentage was reunified in the following time periods?

1. Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
2. At least 12 months, but less than 24 months
3. At least 24 months, but less than 36 months
4. At least 36 months, but less than 48 months
5. 48 or more months

Measure 4.2: Of all children who entered foster care during the reporting period, what percentage re-entered care:

1. Within 12 months of a prior foster care episode?
2. More than 12 months after a prior foster care episode?

**Child Welfare Outcome 5: Reduce time in foster care to adoption**

Measure 5.1: Of all children who exited foster care to a finalized adoption, what percentage exited care in the following time periods?

1. Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
2. At least 12 months, but less than 24 months
3. At least 24 months, but less than 36 months
4. At least 36 months, but less than 48 months
5. 48 or more months

**Child Welfare Outcome 6: Increase placement stability**

Measure 6.1: Of all children served who had been in foster care for the time periods listed below, what percentage had no more than two placement settings during that time period?

1. Less than 12 months from the time of latest removal from home
2. At least 12 months, but less than 24 months
3. At least 24 months, but less than 36 months
4. At least 36 months, but less than 48 months
5. 48 or more months

**Child Welfare Outcome 7: Reduce placements of young children in group homes or institutions**

Measure 7.1: For all children who entered foster care during the reporting period and were age 12 or younger at the time of their most recent placement, what percentage was placed in a group home or an institution?

**Appendix C: Child Welfare Outcomes: Data Sources and Elements**

CONTEXT INFORMATION	
Items	Data Sources and Elements
<b>Section A. Key Context Statistics</b>	
<b>Total Children Under 18 Years</b>	U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census
<b>Child Population in Poverty</b>	U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census

**Section B. Child Maltreatment Data (National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System)**

<p><b>Children Subject of an Investigated Report Alleging Child Maltreatment</b></p>	<p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF/ACYF, Children's Bureau, National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)</p> <p>For 2000 there were three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC: Elements 21, 23, 25, 27, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC: Item 3.1, Children Subject of a CPS Investigation or Assessment by Disposition.</p> <p>For 2001-2003, there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS SDC: Item 3.1, Children Subject of a CPS Investigation or Assessment by Disposition.</p>
<p><b>Child Maltreatment Victims</b></p>	<p>For 2000, there were three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Element 21, 23, 25, 27, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC, 2000: Sum of Item 3.1A, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Substantiated; 3.1B, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Indicated; and 3.1C, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Given an Alternative Response that Identified Child Victim(s).</p> <p>For 2001-2003, there were two possible data sources:</p>

	<p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 27, 29, 31, 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS SDC: Sum of Item 3.1A, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Substantiated; 3.1B, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Indicated; and 3.1C, Children for Whom the Allegation of Maltreatment was Given an Alternative Response that Identified Child Victim(s).</p>
<p><b>Child Fatalities</b></p>	<p>For 2000, there were three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Element 34, Maltreatment Death;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Element 28, Maltreatment Death; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC, 2000: Item 5.1, Child Victims who Died as a Result of Maltreatment.</p> <p>For 2001-2003, there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Element 34, Maltreatment Death; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS SDC: Item 5.1, Child Victims who Died as a Result of Maltreatment.</p>
<p><b>Age of Child Victims</b></p>	<p>For 2000, there were three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Element 12, Child Age at Report, or a combination of Element 6, Report Date and Element 13, Child Date of Birth;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Element 11, Child Age at Report, or a combination of Element 6, Report Date and Element 12, Child Date of Birth; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC, 2000: Item 4.2, Child Victims By Age.</p> <p>For 2001-2003, there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Element 12, Child Age at Report, or a combination of Element 6, Report Date and Element 13, Child Date of Birth; or</p>

	(2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.2, Child Victims By Age.
<b>Race/Ethnicity of Child Victims</b>	<p>For 2000, there were three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Elements 15 through 20, Child Race, and Element 21, Child Ethnicity;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Element 14, Child Race, and Element 15, Child Ethnicity; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC, 2000: Item 4.4, Child Victims by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Item 4.5, Child Victims by Race.</p> <p>For 2001-2003, there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 15 through 20, Child Race, and Element 21, Child Ethnicity; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.4, Child Victims by Hispanic or Latino Ethnicity, and Item 4.5, Child Victims by Race.</p>
<b>Maltreatment Type of Child Victims</b>	<p>For 2000, there are three possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Elements 26 through 33, Maltreatment Type, Maltreatment Disposition Level;</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Elements 20 through 27, Maltreatment Type, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(3) NCANDS SDC, 2000: Item 4.1, Child Victims by Type of Maltreatment.</p> <p>For 2001 - 2003 there are two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Elements 26 through 33, Maltreatment Type, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS SDC: Item 4.1, Child Victims by Type of Maltreatment.</p>
<b>Section C. Children in Foster Care (Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System)</b>	

<p><b>Children (for each FY)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Care On 10/1</li> <li>• Entered Care</li> <li>• Exited Care</li> <li>• In Care On 9/30</li> <li>• Total Served (FY)</li> </ul>	<p>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ACF/ACYF, Children's Bureau, Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS)</p> <p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care.</p>
<p><b>Children's Median Length of Stay (for each FY)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Care On 10/1</li> <li>• Exited Care</li> <li>• In Care On 9/30</li> </ul>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care.</p>
<p><b>Age of Children (for each FY)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entered Care</li> <li>• Exited Care</li> <li>• In Care On 9/30</li> </ul>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care.</p>
<p><b>Race/Ethnicity of Children (for each FY)</b></p> <p><b>In Care On 9/30</b></p>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; and Element 9, Hispanic Origin</p>
<p><b>Section D. Children Waiting to be Adopted on 9/30 (AFCARS)</b></p>	
<p><b>Children Waiting to be Adopted</b></p>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights.</p>
<p><b>Children Whose Parents' Rights Have Been Terminated</b></p>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; and Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights.</p>
<p><b>Age of Waiting Children</b></p>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care file: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights.</p>
<p><b>Race/Ethnicity of Waiting Children</b></p>	<p>AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; and Element 9, Hispanic Origin; Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 35, Death of Parent; Element 43, Most Recent Case Plan Goal; Element 47, Date of Mother's Termination of Parental Rights; Element 48, Date of Father's Termination of Parental Rights.</p>

**Section E. Children Adopted (AFCARS)**

<b>Age of Children Adopted</b>	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; and Element 5, Child's Date of Birth
<b>Race/Ethnicity of Children Adopted</b>	AFCARS Adoption File: Element 4, State Involvement; Element 7, Race; and Element 8, Hispanic Origin.

**OUTCOME INFORMATION**

<b>Child Welfare Outcome Measures</b>	<b>Data Sources and Elements</b>
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**Outcome 1. Reduce Recurrence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect (NCANDS)**

<b>1.1 Recurrence of Maltreatment</b>	<p>For 2000 there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File, 2000: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID; Element 6, Report Date; and Elements 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level; or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC, 2000: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID; Element 6, Report Date; and Elements 21, 23, 25, and 27, Maltreatment Disposition Level.</p> <p>For 2001 to 2003, the data source was:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID; Element 6, Report Date; and Elements 27, 29, 31, and 33, Maltreatment Disposition Level.</p>
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**Outcome 2. Reduce the Incidence of Child Abuse and/or Neglect in Foster Care (NCANDS and AFCARS)**

<b>2.1 Maltreatment In Foster Care</b>	<p>AFCARS Annual Foster Care Database, Element 21, Date of Latest Removal, and Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care</p> <p>For 2000 there were two possible data sources:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File 2000: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID; and Elements 89, 108, and 127, Perpetrator Relationship;</p>
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	<p>or</p> <p>(2) NCANDS DCDC 2000: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID, Elements 80, 93, and 106, Perpetrator Relationship.</p> <p>For 2001 - 2003 the data source was:</p> <p>(1) NCANDS Child File: Element 3, Report ID; Element 4, Child ID; and Elements 89, 108, and 127, Perpetrator Relationship.</p>
<b>Outcome 3. Increase Permanency for Children in Foster Care (AFCARS)</b>	
<b>3.1 Exits from Foster Care</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
<b>3.2 Exits of Disabled Children</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 10, Child Diagnosed with Disabilities; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge
<b>3.3 Exits of Children Age 12 or Older at entry</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge.
<b>3.4 Exits to Emancipation</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge.
<b>3.5 Exits by Race/Ethnicity</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 8, Race; Element 9, Hispanic Origin; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge.
<b>Outcome 4. Reduce Time to Reunification Without Increasing Re-entry (AFCARS)</b>	
<b>4.1 Time to Reunification</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge.
<b>4.2 Re-entries of Children Who Entered Foster Care During Fiscal Year</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 19, Total Number of Removals; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; and Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care.
<b>Outcome 5. Reduce Time in Foster Care to Adoption (AFCARS)</b>	
<b>5.1 Time to Adoption</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care; and Element 58, Reasons for Discharge.

<b>Outcome 6. Increase Placement Stability (AFCARS)</b>	
<b>6.1 Number of Placements by Time in Care</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 24, Number of Previous Settings in Episode; and Element 56, Date of Discharge from Foster Care.
<b>Outcome 7. Reduce Placements of Young Children in Group Homes or Institutions (AFCARS)</b>	
<b>7.1 Placement Settings of Children Age 12 or Younger Who Entered Care During FY</b>	AFCARS Foster Care File: Element 6, Date of Birth; Element 21, Date of Latest Removal; Element 23, Placement Date in Current Setting; Element 41, Current Placement Setting.

## **Appendix D: Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance Network**

### **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement**

#### **Who We Are**

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement strengthens and supports State and Tribal agencies committed to the welfare of children, youth, and families through training, technical assistance, and evaluation. The aim is to improve management and operations, bolster organizational capacity, promote service integration, and develop supervisory and management systems, resulting in improved outcomes for children and families.

The Center also coordinates, facilitates and evaluates onsite training and technical assistance across the network of seven National Resource Centers and AdoptUSKids. The Center facilitates the intake and assessment of State requests, assists in the development of work plans, and evaluates the impact of network services. States can contact the Center for assistance in identifying appropriate Centers to meet their technical assistance needs.

#### **How We Can Help**

The Center offers technical assistance, training, and publications to assist states in the areas of:

##### **Strategic Planning**

The Center can help States with all aspects of strategic planning, including developing CFSR Statewide Assessments and Program Improvement Plans (PIPs); assessing community needs and resources; developing and implementing comprehensive strategic plans across the State agency; integrating strategic plans; and developing annual progress and services reports.

##### **Implementing Quality Improvement**

The Center has experience developing quality improvement systems to monitor performance for both child welfare agencies and courts. Center staff can help train administrators and staff on how to develop and implement such systems and how to integrate CFSR requirements into quality improvement systems.

##### **Evaluating Outcomes**

**Center staff can assist States with developing targeted performance outcomes, using outcome data, and making data-driven decisions at all agency levels.**

### **Facilitating Stakeholder Involvement**

The Center helps States develop collaborative strategies and involve stakeholder agencies in the CFSR process and other ongoing agency activities, particularly in the areas of domestic violence and substance abuse services, court and legal systems, and community programs. Staff also can help agencies work collaboratively with other community and public agencies to expand the array of targeted services for children and families.

### **Training Systems and Workforce Development**

The Center helps State agencies assess and improve their comprehensive training systems for new and ongoing workers. The Center also helps States implement innovative strategies related to recruitment, retention and other workforce issues.

### **Teleconferences and Publications**

The Center offers numerous, free teleconferences and publications to help States with organizational improvement and the CFSR process, including:

#### Teleconference Sessions

- Program Improvement Planning: An Overview.
- Actively Engaging Stakeholder and Community Partners on the CFSR Process.
- A Framework for Quality Assurance.
- Leadership, Systemic Change and Change Management.
- Creating Innovative Partnerships to Drive Resource Development.

#### Print and Web Publications

- Strategic Planning for Child Welfare Agencies
- A Framework for Quality Assurance in Child Welfare.
- Financing Strategies to Support Comprehensive Community-Based Services for Children and Families.
- Implementing Concurrent Planning: A Handbook for Child Welfare Administrators.

#### Newsletters

- Implementing Program Improvement Plans
- Effective Strategies for Leaders: Interviews with Departing Directors
- Using Information Management to Support the Goals of Safety, Permanency, and Well-Being.
- Supervisors as Managers: Understanding and Using Outcome Data.

### **For More Information**

Muskie School—USM  
Address: P.O. Box 15010  
400 Congress Street  
Portland, ME 04112-5010

Phone: (800) HELP KID or (207) 780-5810

Fax: (207) 780-5817

E-Mail: [helpkids@usm.maine.edu](mailto:helpkids@usm.maine.edu)

Web site: [www.nrcoi.org](http://www.nrcoi.org)

Contact: Peter Watson, Director

## **National Resource Center for Child Protective Services**

### **Who We Are**

The National Resource Center for Child Protective Services (NRCCPS) provides expert consultation, technical assistance and training in the area of child protective services (CPS). The NRCCPS helps to build the capacity of State, local, Tribal and other publicly administered or supported child welfare agencies to achieve safety, permanency, and well-being for children and families.

The specific focus of the National Resource Center for Child Protective Services is to develop and integrate policies and practices that improve the prevention, reporting, assessment and treatment of child abuse and neglect.

### **How We Can Help**

The NRCCPS can help to build State, local and Tribal capacity through the following key activities:

- The planning and implementing of systemic changes as defined in the States' Program Improvement Plan (PIP).
- The provision of technical assistance and consultation directly on-site as well as through state-of-the-art communication and technology-based methods.
- The development and delivery of training curricula, guidelines and training materials which address identified needs of State, local, and Tribal agencies and courts.
- Seeking out and disseminating evidence-based practices which will likely contribute to the achievement of PIP strategies.
- Providing expertise on family-centered practices including healthy marriage, community collaboration, and individualized services.
- Providing expertise on substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health and the impact of these on child maltreatment and on CPS intervention strategies.
- Providing expertise on the CAPTA, ASFA, and ICWA requirements which must be addressed to meet legislated prevention, reporting, investigation, and treatment requirements.
- Supporting and coordinating communication among and between the State Liaison Officers (SLO) and the Children's Bureau.

### **Strengthening Programs to Improve Outcomes**

The NRCCPS can help States identify and implement program improvement strategies at intake, investigation, assessment, case disposition, and case planning. Staff can assist with designing safety, risk, and family assessments, differential response approaches, and family reunification protocols for improved decision-making and outcome achievement.

### **CAPTA Requirements**

NRCCPS is especially equipped to help States address the eligibility requirements for the CAPTA State grant, including the recent requirements resulting from the 2003 reauthorization.

### **SLO Support and Communication**

The NRCCPS provides support to the State Liaison Officers through an annual survey of their needs, followed by teleconferences to provide training and information and an SLO newsletter that provides information on CAPTA, ASFA and ICWA implementation, challenges, and issues. NRCCPS also assists the Children's Bureau in planning an annual SLO conference to further build State capacity.

### **Collaboration and Coordination**

The NRCCPS works as a member of the Children's Bureau Training and Technical Assistance Network. Collaboration includes working on technical assistance, training and other capacity building activities in collaboration with other National Resource Centers and AdoptUSKids and participating with the National Child Welfare Resource Center on Organizational Improvement on the evaluation NRCCPS services.

### **For More Information**

Address: 925 #4 Sixth Street NW  
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102

Phone: (505) 345-2444

Fax: (505) 345-2626

E-Mail: [e-mail@nrccps.org](mailto:e-mail@nrccps.org)

Web site: [www.nrccps.org](http://www.nrccps.org)

Theresa Costello, Director  
(505) 301-3105 mobile

Contact: Reed Holder, Coordinator of Communications and Quality  
Control  
(303) 369-8008

## **National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues**

### **Who We Are**

The National Child Welfare Resource Center on Legal and Judicial Issues (RCLJI) provides expertise to State and Tribal agencies and courts on legal and judicial aspects of child welfare. The Resource Center is dedicated to achieving safety, permanence and well-being for abused and neglected children through improved laws and judicial decision-making. Areas of focus include: permanency decision-making, adherence to ASFA and other federal laws, the court's role in the CFSR and child welfare reform, high quality legal representation for all parties, judicial and attorney workloads, quality assurance for courts and legal offices, effective forensic performance by agencies, the impact of ASFA on youth in the juvenile justice system, education needs of children in foster care, legal ethics, and the interplay of domestic violence and child welfare.

### **How We Can Help**

RCLJI offers States the following assistance with their Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSR):

### **Collecting and Analyzing Data**

RCLJI can help coordinate focus groups as a method of collecting data from judges, lawyers, and other stakeholders for the CFSR. Staff can also help analyze data the State is collecting to determine how effectively the courts are achieving safety, permanence, and well-being for children.

### **Legal and Judicial Issue Analysis**

RCLJI staff can help by reviewing CFSR Statewide Assessments, final reports, and Program Improvement Plans (PIPs); identifying legal barriers to best practice; and recommending strategies to overcome barriers. RCLJI can also meet with the agency and/or court to help pinpoint underlying factors of legal system issues.

### **Promoting Stakeholder Involvement**

The courts need to feel they are part of the child welfare system, and the agency needs to be able to approach and work with the courts. RCLJI can assist in making these connections and fostering a team attitude. Staff can help States identify and engage all the most appropriate legal system participants—including representatives of the Court Improvement Project—and help ensure they will stay involved throughout the process, from Statewide Assessment through implementation of the PIP.

### **Action Planning**

In coordination with the National Resource Center on Organizational Improvement, RCLJI staff can meet with the agency and/or court to help develop specific, realistic strategies to address issues identified in the final report, such as case planning and quality assurance. This can happen before or after the creation of the PIP.

### **PIP Implementation**

The Resource Center offers training and technical assistance tailored to your needs as determined by the PIP. Examples include:

- Improving legal representation of the agency and other parties.
- Improving the timeliness of judicial decision-making.
- Developing judicial performance measurement and quality assurance.
- ASFA nuts and bolts implementation for judges.
- Analysis of State statutes and court rules.
- Analysis of judicial and attorney workloads with strategies for improvement.

### **Other Training and Technical Assistance**

The Center has new workshops that may be helpful to States and Tribes in the CFSR process, including

- *Best Practices to Implement ASFA: Creative Strategies for Permanence.*
- *Making it Permanent: Efforts to Finalize Permanency Plans for Children in Foster Care.*
- *Meeting Educational Needs of Children in Foster Care.*

### **For More Information**

Address: 740 15th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-1019

Phone: (800) 285-2221

Fax: (202) 662-1755

E-Mail: [mark.hardin@staff.abanet.org](mailto:mark.hardin@staff.abanet.org)

Web site: [www.abanet.org/child/rclji](http://www.abanet.org/child/rclji)

Mark Hardin, Director  
Mimi Laver, Assistant  
Director

Contact: Jennifer Renne for TA  
requests  
(202) 662-1731  
[rennej@staff.abanet.org](mailto:rennej@staff.abanet.org)

## **National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning**

### **Who We Are**

The National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning focuses on increasing the capacity and resources of the State, Tribal, and other publicly supported child welfare agencies to promote family-centered practices that support the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while meeting the needs of their families. The NRCFCPPP helps States and Tribes to implement strategies to expand knowledge, increase competencies, and change attitudes of child welfare professionals at all levels, with the goal of infusing family-centered principles and practices in their work with children, youth and families who enter the child welfare system. The NRCFCPPP builds states knowledge of foster care issues including placement stability and other foster care issues.

### **How We Can Help**

#### **On Site Training and Technical Assistance**

The NRCFCPPP offers on site training and technical assistance to States, Territories, Tribes, and other publicly supported child welfare agencies on a wide range of issues which promote sustainable systemic reform in child welfare. The NRCFCPPP is particularly focused on working with states throughout all stages of the Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs), including the development and implementation of the States' Program Improvement Plan (PIP).

Sample areas of technical assistance include:

- Supporting practices such as family group conferencing and family group decision making that engage families in assessment, case planning, case review, and timely decision making about reunification, adoption, guardianship, kin placement or appropriate use of APPLA
- Strategies to engage parents, courts, legal personnel and community partners in the provision of safety focused, family-centered services to children, youth, and families
- Promoting quality goal-oriented worker/child visiting, worker/parent (foster & birth) visiting and goal-oriented visitation between children and youth in care and their parents
- Permanency planning, effective concurrent planning and goal achievement for all children and adolescents
- Supporting recruitment and retention of resource families and dual licensure issues
- Foster care issues including increasing placement stability, reducing disproportional representation of children and youth of color in foster care and development of effective post permanency services
- Building relationships between tribes and states including promoting cultural competency to increase understanding of Indian culture and improving state compliance with ICWA

- Facilitating IV-E Agreements between states and tribes
- Engaging fathers and paternal resources in permanency planning
- Consideration of sibling issues
- Working with birth families to promote reunification
- Service enhancement including developing and strengthening home-based services to preserve families and supporting child welfare practice that addresses substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues for families and health and mental health care issues for children and youth in foster care

### **Information Services**

The NRCFCPPP also offers information services to State, Tribal, and other publicly supported child welfare agencies to promote family-centered practices that support the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while meeting the needs of their families. Information is provided in the following formats:

- NRCFCPPP Weekly Update
- NRCFCPPP Web-Based Information Services
- Publications, Curriculums in English/Spanish
- NRCFCPPP Quarterly Webcasts
- NRCFCPPP Semi-Annual Newsletter
- NRCFCPPP Teleconference Series
- Response to State/Tribe Requests for Information

### **For More Information**

Hunter College School of Social Work  
 Address: 129 East 79th Street, Suite 801  
 New York, NY 10021

Phone: (212) 452-7053

Fax: (212) 452-7475

E-Mail: [gmallon@hunter.cuny.edu](mailto:gmallon@hunter.cuny.edu)

Web site: [www.nrcfcppp.org](http://www.nrcfcppp.org)

Contact: Gerald P. Mallon, DSW, Executive  
 Director

## **National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology**

### **Who We Are**

The National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRC-CWDT) provides assistance to States to develop, implement, and improve effective case management and data collection systems and to use data to enable State child welfare agencies, courts and tribes to manage child welfare programs in order to improve outcomes for children and families. The NRC-CWDT provides technical assistance in the use of data to meet the reporting requirements of the Adoption and Foster

Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and to meet the goals of the Adoption and Safe Families Act, the Child and Family Services Reviews, and other Federal, State, and local legislative requirements, policies and initiatives. The Center, through our website and other means, also provides for the dissemination of best practices around automation issues such as the development and implementation of Statewide Automated Child Welfare Information Systems (SACWIS). NRC-CWDT, as a service of the Children's Bureau, helps States, Tribes and courts to assure the quality of data collected, provide staff at all levels with appropriate information, and build the capacity to use the information for decision-making in daily practice.

## **How We Can Help**

The Center addresses a broad range of program and technical issues, including assisting States with their Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process, Program Improvement Plans, Tribal and court child welfare issues, and other areas related to data and automation. Assistance may include:

### **Training**

The Center provides training on data use and data management at all levels. This includes the development of customized training curricula and materials, the delivery of training to key staff, and training of trainers to promote system-wide improvements in understanding and using data in policy and practice.

### **Administrative Use of Data**

Administrative staff may need to analyze and use data in planning, evaluation, and system improvement efforts and to respond to numerous stakeholder groups. Staff from the Center can assist States in developing their capacity to analyze data for administrative use.

### **AFCARS Toolkit**

The AFCARS Toolkit, which is available on-line at [www.nrccwdt.org](http://www.nrccwdt.org) or free of charge as a CD-ROM, provides links to key materials and documents related to the collection of quality adoption and foster care data that can be used to address policy development and program management issues at the State and Federal level.

### **AFCARS Assistance**

The Center provides assistance around AFCARS, which can be tailored according to States' needs. This can entail a full Program Logic and/or Mapping Documentation Review or a more administrative level AFCARS Overview and Review of Federal Definitions and Policy Guidance.

### **Coordinating Peer Consultation**

The Center can coordinate consultation among States with similar issues. This can take place through informal exchange of information or through a structured process involving on-site, facilitated meetings. More information about peer consultation can also be found on our website [www.nrccwdt.org](http://www.nrccwdt.org).

### **Supporting States in the CFSR Process**

The Resource Center is able to help in a number of ways, including: preparation for and use of the State Data Profile; resolution of data sources, quality and interpretation related to outcome measures; evaluating enhancements required to information systems in the context of the PIP; and consultation on benchmarks and improvement measures during PIP development and implementation.

## **For More Information**

Address: National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and  
Technology

50 F Street, NW  
6th Floor  
Washington, DC 20001-2085

Phone: (877) 672-4829 (toll free)

Fax: (202) 737-3687

E-Mail: [nrccwdt@cwla.org](mailto:nrccwdt@cwla.org)

Web site: [www.nrccwdt.org](http://www.nrccwdt.org)

## **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption**

### **Who We Are**

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Adoption works with States, Tribes, and agencies to increase States' capacity in adoption. We work to improve the effectiveness and quality of adoption and post-adoption services provided to children and their families.

### **How We Can Help**

The Center is available to partner with States, Tribes, and other members of the Children's Bureaus' Training and Technical Assistance Network to work with staff and stakeholders in all phases of their Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process. We help to identify strengths, needs, and actions that can be taken to improve outcomes for children. Assistance includes:

#### **Analyzing Adoption and Permanency Options**

The Center will review CFSR Statewide Assessments, Final Reports, and Program Improvement Plans (PIPs). The Center will also provide feedback on how it might provide technical assistance, training, tools, and materials to help States and Tribes plan and implement changes in practice, programs, policies, and systems to ensure timely adoption or other permanent family connections for children and youth.

#### **Exploring Systemic Factors**

The Center will assist States and Tribes in exploring how all systemic factors effect timely permanency, especially adoption.

#### **Increasing Cultural Competence**

Children of color are disproportionately represented in the child welfare system and among those waiting to be adopted. Center staff can help States reach out to communities of color to increase adoptions of children from those communities. Using a community-based approach, the Center will help States design programs to build relationships in communities to better address the needs of children and families of color.

The Center also has experience helping States work to fully implement the Multi-Ethnic Placement Act and Interethnic Placement Act and achieve adoptions in the context of Tribal traditions and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

#### **Promoting Stakeholder Involvement**

The Center can help States and Tribes work more effectively with other teams and systems of service

(child protective services, intake, foster care, mental health, schools, etc.) to achieve timely adoptions.

### **Training and Technical Assistance**

The Center can provide training and technical assistance at any point in the CFSR process to enhance practice, knowledge, skills, and abilities and improve adoption program planning. Some areas of technical assistance include:

- Program planning to achieve timely adoption outcomes.
- Utilization of information systems for adoption program planning.
- Developing and sustaining adoption support and preservation services, including adoption assistance programs.
- Collaborative planning among child welfare teams to achieve timely adoptions.
- Working with other systems of service to facilitate adoption and adoption support and preservation.
- Preparing, assessing, and retaining foster, kin, and adoptive families.
- Preparing and assessing children and youth for adoption, including those with developmental disabilities.
- Making adoption an option for older children and youth.
- Finding and engaging fathers and their families in adoption planning.

Curricula are available on assessment and preparation of children and families for adoption, cultural competency in child welfare, and adoption support and preservation services.

### **For More Information**

Address: Spaulding for Children  
16250 Northland Drive  
Suite 120  
Southfield, MI 48075

Phone: (248) 443-0306

Fax: (248) 443-7099

E-Mail: [nrc@nrcadoption.org](mailto:nrc@nrcadoption.org)

Web site: [www.nrcadoption.org](http://www.nrcadoption.org)

Contact: Natalie Lyons, Director

## **National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development**

### **Who We Are**

The National Child Welfare Resource Center for Youth Development (NCWRCYD) increases the capacity and resources of States and Tribes to help youth in care meet the goals of safety, permanence, and well-being. The Center can help States incorporate youth into all areas of programs and services, implement services that address legislative requirements, and prepare for Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) and Program Improvement Plan (PIP) development and implementation. The Center bases its technical assistance and training around four core principles: youth development,

collaboration, cultural competence, and permanent connections.

## **How We Can Help**

Center staff can provide States with the following assistance in their CFSRs:

### **Promoting Stakeholder Involvement**

NCWRCYD has worked successfully with both States and Tribes to bring stakeholders together in an environment that promotes constructive dialogue. NCWRCYD can:

- Facilitate diverse groups for strategic planning, collaboration, and consensus building.
- Work with States to draw youth into all three stages of the CFSR in order to benefit from their unique contributions and perspectives.
- Work with States to engage Tribes as stakeholders.
- Facilitate planning sessions during development, implementation, and evaluation of the PIP.
- Evaluate Statewide Assessments, final CFSR reports, and PIPs with a dual focus on improving services for youth and highlighting opportunities to engage youth in planning and implementation.
- Work with States and Tribes to recognize barriers and identify solutions for successful inclusion of youth and families in case planning and services.

### **Technical Assistance and Training**

The Center facilitates systemic change by providing technical assistance (TA) prior to and concurrent with training activities. TA sessions are designed to assist program and administrative staff with implementing and managing necessary change.

Technical assistance activities may include:

- Work groups and committees
- Strategic planning sessions (initial and ongoing)
- Action planning sessions

The NCWRCYD offers a variety of trainings for states, tribes and other providers that focus on both organizational and skill development. The Center can modify training to meet an organization's needs in any of the following areas:

- Positive Youth Development
- Youth/Adult Partnership Building
- Permanency Planning
- Cultural Diversity
- Collaboration
- Strength-Based Assessment and Case Planning
- Ethnographic Interviewing
- Conflict Resolution
- Family Group Decision Making
- Youth Leadership Development
- Life Skills Assessment and Transition Planning
- Life Skills Instruction Preparation
- Permanency Planning for Adolescents
- Permanency and Concurrent Planning
- Working with Native American Youth
- Preparing Youth for Transition
- Foster and Adoptive Parent Training

- Managing Aggressive Behavior
- Residential Child Care Programming
- Working with Runaway and Homeless Youth

### **Information Services**

NCWRCYD regularly gathers, analyzes, and disseminates information on services and practices relevant to youth. NCWRCYD communicates with State Independent Living Coordinators and other professionals to stay current with trends, programs and policies. Resources include:

- A Web site providing the most current information on Federal, State, and Tribal policies and practices affecting youth and their families.
- Web-based, State-specific fact sheets highlighting CFSR, PIP, and Chafee activities.
- Newsletters and publications containing best practices and current trends in youth work, published with collaboration from nationally recognized leaders in the field of child welfare.

### **For More Information**

4502 East 41st Street  
 Address: Building 4W  
 Tulsa, OK 74135

Phone: (918) 660-3700

Fax: (918) 660-3737

E-Mail: [pcorreia@ou.edu](mailto:pcorreia@ou.edu)

Web site: [www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/](http://www.nrcys.ou.edu/nrcyd/)

Contact: Peter R. Correia III, Director

## **The Collaboration to AdoptUsKids**

### **Who We Are**

The Children's Bureau **AdoptUsKids** initiative is designed to find and support foster and adoptive families for waiting children by providing new and enhanced recruitment tools and training and technical assistance (T/TA) to States and Tribes.

### **How We Can Help**

In collaboration with the ACF Regional Offices and the Children's Bureau, **AdoptUsKids** provides T/TA to help States and Tribes achieve their Title IV-B Child and Family Service Plan requirements and Title IV-E Child and Family Service Review (CFSR) targets on issues that pertain to the development and implementation of quality recruitment and retention services for foster and adoptive families.

### **Training and Technical Assistance Service Goals**

- Help States and Tribes develop a pool of waiting families that reflect the ethnic and racial

diversity of children for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

- Increase the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.
- Promote and enhance the role of resource parents in recruitment and planning.
- Assist States to enhance worker capacity, satisfaction and validation of their work in recruitment and retention.
- Assist States and Tribes in insuring their recruitment and response processes are driven by promising practices & achieve desired outcomes.

### **Supporting the CFSR Process**

- Providing individualized assessments of recruitment and retention needs.
- Exploring and disseminating information about established, effective recruitment activities and initiatives.
- Offering access to a team of national experts for consultation and training on recruitment and retention issues.
- Working strategically with child welfare agencies and Tribes to tailor T/TA services in the area of recruitment and retention.
- Producing definitive booklets for caseworkers and prospective families on best practices in recruitment/retention of families, writing child profiles and matching waiting children with families.

### **Providing Training/Consultation to Support Agencies**

Current areas of specific training expertise include:

- Recruiting foster and adoptive families (general, targeted, child specific and child-centered)
- Placing children across interjurisdictional boundaries
- Utilization of the national online photolisting for waiting children ([www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org))
- Best practice in writing child profiles
- Developing and sustaining community-based partnerships
- Strategic planning and consultation related to the development of Title IV-B recruitment plans
- Responding effectively and supportively to inquiring families

### **Maintaining a Web Site and Photolisting**

The partnership also maintains the **AdoptUSKids** Web site ([www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org)). The Web site is the first Federal online photolisting service for children waiting to be adopted from foster care.

### **Additional Components of AdoptUSKids**

- Supporting critical research on barriers to adoption.
- Identifying family factors that support long-term success in special needs adoption.
- Establishing joint trainings and national meetings with child welfare administrators, adoption and foster care managers and other child welfare professionals from the public and private sectors.
- Developing and supporting a network of adoptive parent organizations.
- Implementing a national campaign to recruit new adoptive and foster families for waiting children.
- Implementing Recruitment Response Teams to assist States in responding to national, State, and local recruitment campaigns and to support/nurture interested families.

## **For More Information**

Address: 8015 Corporate Drive, Suite C  
Baltimore, MD 21236

Phone: (888) 200-4005 or (410) 933-5700

Fax: (410) 933-5716

E-Mail: [info@adoptuskids.org](mailto:info@adoptuskids.org)

Web  
site: [www.adoptuskids.org](http://www.adoptuskids.org)

Barbara Holtan, Project Director  
Contact: Melody Roe, Director—The Adoption Exchange Education Center & T/TA for  
**AdoptUSKids** (303-755-4756 x241)

## **National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare**

### **Who We Are**

The National Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare (NCSACW) is a service of the Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and the Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau Office on Child Abuse and Neglect.

### **How We Can Help**

NCSACW works to develop knowledge and provide technical assistance (TA) to Federal, State and local agencies and Tribes to improve outcomes for families with substance use disorders in the child welfare and family court systems.

### **Technical Assistance**

NCSACW helps develop cross-system partnerships and practice changes to address the issues of substance use disorders among families in the child welfare system. All requests for TA are coordinated with CSAT and ACF. A limited amount of on-site TA is provided at no charge based on availability and application process. Areas of TA include:

- Connecting individuals with resources, including publications, journal articles, research, and statistics.
- Consulting expertise on screening and assessment for family engagement, retention and recovery.
- Presenting at conferences
- Facilitating clinical and policy workgroups of substance abuse and child welfare staff and judicial officers.
- Assisting in the development of interagency protocols and strategic plans.
- Assisting States in preparing for their Child and Family Services Reviews (CFSRs) and developing their Program Improvement Plans (PIPs).
- Answering questions and making referrals to other experts in the field.

- In-depth TA is provided to a limited number of sites selected through a solicitation process.

### **Information Gathering and Dissemination**

NCSACW staff maintain an extensive library of resources on the intersection of alcohol and other drug, child welfare/Tribal child welfare, and family court systems.

### **Web-Based Services and Tutorials**

A NCSACW website, [www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov), is available to provide a wide range of on-line resources. In addition, NCSACW is developing a series of four online tutorials:

- Understanding Child Welfare and the Dependency Court: A Guide for Substance Abuse Treatment Professionals. (Available Now)
- Understanding Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery: A Guide for Child Welfare Workers. (Available Now).
- Understanding Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Issues: A Guide for Judicial Officers. (Anticipated Summer 2005)
- Understanding Substance Abuse and Child Welfare Issues: A Guide for Legislators. (Anticipated Spring 2006)

### **Biennial Conference**

NCSACW conducts a biennial national conference. The second National Conference on Substance Abuse, Child Welfare and the Dependency Courts will be held in October 2006.

### **For More Information**

4940 Irvine Boulevard  
Address: Suite 202  
Irvine, CA 92620

Phone: (714) 505-3525

Fax: (714) 505-3626

E-Mail: [ncsacw@samhsa.gov](mailto:ncsacw@samhsa.gov)

Web site: [www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov](http://www.ncsacw.samhsa.gov)

Nancy K. Young, Director  
Contact: Lani Daly, TA  
Coordinator

## **National Abandoned Infants Assistance Resource Center**

### **Who We Are**

The National Abandoned Infants Assistance (AIA) Resource Center's mission is to enhance the quality of social and health services delivered to abandoned children and those at risk of abandonment due to the presence of drugs and/or HIV in the family. The Center seeks to achieve these ends by providing training, information, and resources to service providers who assist these children and their families.

## **How We Can Help**

The Resource Center provides training and information to professionals on a wide range of issues, particularly as they relate to the safety, well-being, and permanence of children.

### **Training**

The Center sponsors an annual telephone seminar series on child welfare issues. These are structured, interactive phone conferences with guest presenters. Recent seminars include:

- Working with Women Survivors of Trauma
- Issues for Relative Care Providers
- Mental Health Needs of HIV-Infected Children and Adolescents
- Treatment and Program Development for Women with Multiple Disorders

### **Conferences**

The Resource Center hosts annual national conferences. Recent topics include:

- Spirituality: A Powerful Force in Women's Recovery (2003)
- Raising Kin: The Psychosocial Well-being of Substance-affected Children in Relative Care (2004)

### **Online Database of Trainers**

The Center provides an online database of trainers who specialize in topics such as:

- Child abuse and neglect
- Substance abuse and treatment
- Women and addiction
- HIV-affected families and children

Detailed information is available for each trainer (e.g., bios, vitae, contact information, and areas of expertise).

### **Online Database of Conferences**

The Center provides an online database of national child welfare conferences.

### **Materials Development**

The Resource Center disseminates a biannual theme-based newsletter, fact sheets, videos, and directories. Examples include:

Newsletter—*The Source*:

- Case Management for Substance Abusing Parents and Their Children
- Building Upon the Unique Strengths of Peer Workers

Fact Sheets:

- Women and Children with HIV/AIDS
- Recreational Programs for HIV-affected Children and Families
- Boarder Babies, Abandoned Infants, and Discarded Infants

Reports:

- Discarded Infants and Neonaticide: A Review of the Literature
- Focusing on the Needs of Youth in Kinship Care

### **Research and Resource Development**

The Center examines emerging issues and explores practice and policy implications by conducting research and consulting with technical expert groups. Results are released in the form of monographs.

Topics include:

- Establishing Permanent Futures for Children: Recommendations for Improving Future Care and Custody Planning
- AIA Best Practices: Lessons Learned from a Decade of Service to Children and Families Affected by HIV and Substance Abuse
- Expediting Permanency for Abandoned Infants
- Partners' Influence on Women's Addiction and Recovery

### **Individualized Information Searches**

The Center provides links to literature, statistics, and relevant referrals on a broad variety of topics related to its mission.

### **For More Information**

University of California, Berkeley  
School of Social Welfare  
Address: 1950 Addison Street, Suite 104 # 7402  
Berkeley, CA 94720-7402

Phone: (510) 643-8390

Fax: (510) 643-7019

E-Mail: [aia@berkeley.edu](mailto:aia@berkeley.edu)

Web site: [aia.berkeley.edu](http://aia.berkeley.edu)

Contact: Jeanne Pietrzak, Director

## **National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs (FRIENDS)**

### **Who We Are**

The National Resource Center for Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention Programs (FRIENDS) is a service of the Children's Bureau, Office on Child Abuse and Neglect. FRIENDS (Family Resource, Information, Education and Network Development Services) provides technical assistance to Federal grantee agencies implementing the Community-Based Grants for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, under the Keeping Children and Families Safe Act of 2003.

The purpose of FRIENDS' work is to build the capacity of States and communities to prevent child abuse and neglect and strengthen and support families.

### **How We Can Help**

FRIENDS' current areas of expertise that may be of use to States in the course of their Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) process include:

- Enhancing a State's array of services by promoting interagency collaboration and supporting the

- establishment of child abuse prevention and family support programs and networks.
- Promoting program best practices including inclusion of fathers, strengthening families and family relationships, working with diverse populations, promoting parent involvement and leadership, respite care, and other community-based and strengths-based practices.
- Promoting a continuum of participatory evaluation strategies including self-assessment, peer review, and outcome accountability.
- Addressing issues related to prevention systems.
- Assisting with message development.

### **Onsite and Telephone Technical Assistance**

As they strive to improve child welfare systems, States are using family support strategies to improve family functioning and keep families from entering the child welfare system in the first place.

FRIENDS offers knowledge and expertise in the implementation of family support strategies in a variety of settings and for many purposes. FRIENDS staff can provide State lead agencies with assistance in the following areas as they implement their Program Improvement Plans:

- Child and family well-being and family support.
- Enhancing family capacity.
- Creating models of parent involvement and shared leadership.
- Vision, mission, and strategic planning of long-term systemic reform with particular emphasis on prevention strategies.
- Overview of the CFSR process.
- Community assessment.
- Consensus building.
- Engaging families in case planning.
- Family self-advocacy skills.
- Maximizing funding.
- Building respectful relationships with colleagues and families.

### **Promoting Stakeholder Involvement and Investment in the Public Child Welfare System**

Community and consumer consultation is necessary to assess the needs, capacities, gaps, and service development approaches needed within diverse communities. FRIENDS has developed successful strategies and tools to work with parents and can assist States in identifying successful practices for community consultation. From the CFSR Statewide Assessment, to the Onsite Review and the ensuing Program Improvement Plan, FRIENDS can assist States in utilizing their CBCAP statewide child abuse prevention networks, comprised of service providers, parents, advocacy groups, and consumers of services, to carry out ongoing consultation with stakeholders of the child welfare system at all stages of the CFSR process.

### **For More Information**

Address: 800 Eastowne Drive, Suite 105  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

Phone: (919) 490-5577 x 222

Fax: (919) 490-4905

E-Mail: [lbaker3@nc.rr.com](mailto:lbaker3@nc.rr.com)

Web site: [www.friendsnrc.org](http://www.friendsnrc.org)

Contact: Linda Baker, Program Director  
(919) 768-0162

## **Appendix E: Outcomes and Systemic Factors Assessed Through the Child and Family Services Review**

### **Child and Family Outcomes**

Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.

Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.

Permanency Outcome 1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.

Permanency Outcome 2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.

Child and Family Well-being Outcome 1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.

Child and Family Well-being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.

Child and Family Well-being Outcome 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.

### **Systemic Factors**

Statewide Information System

Case Review System

Quality Assurance System

Training (for child welfare agency staff and foster and adoptive parents)

Service Array

Agency Responsiveness to the Community

Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

## **Appendix G: Highlights of *Child Maltreatment 2003***

### **SUMMARY**

During fiscal year 2003, an estimated 2.9 million referrals alleging child abuse or neglect were accepted by State and local child protective services (CPS) agencies for investigation or assessment. Approximately, 906,000 children were determined by CPS agencies to be victims of child abuse or neglect.

## **OVERVIEW**

### **What is the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS)?**

NCANDS is a federally-sponsored effort that collects and analyzes annual data on child abuse and neglect submitted voluntarily by the States and the District of Columbia. The first report from NCANDS was based on data for 1990; the report on data for 2003 is the 14th annual report.

The 1988 amendments to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) directed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish a national data collection and analysis program. The Children's Bureau in the Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, collects and analyzes the data from the States.

### **How are the data used?**

Data from the States are used for the annual report, Child Maltreatment. In addition, data from the States are used systematically to measure the impact and effectiveness of CPS through performance outcome measures.

### **What data are collected?**

NCANDS collects case-level data on all children who received an investigation or assessment by a CPS agency. States that are unable to provide case-level data submit aggregated counts of key indicators.

Case-level data include information about:

- The characteristics of the report of abuse or neglect that are made to CPS agencies
- The characteristics of the alleged child abuse or neglect victims
- The disposition (or finding)
- The alleged maltreatments
- The risk factors of the child and the caregivers
- The services that are provided
- The characteristics of the perpetrators.

## **VICTIMS**

An estimated 906,000 children were determined to be victims of child abuse or neglect during 2003. The rate of victimization per 1,000 children in the national population dropped from 13.4 children per 1,000 children in 1990 to 12.4 children in 2003.

### **What types of maltreatment were found?**

More than 60 percent of child victims were neglected by their parents or other caregivers. Approximately 20 percent were physically abused, 10 percent were sexually abused, and 5 percent were emotionally maltreated. In addition, 17 percent were associated with "other" types of maltreatment, based on specific State laws and policies. A child could be a victim of more than one type of maltreatment.

## **What were the characteristics of victims?**

Children in the age group ages birth to 3 years had the highest rates of victimization at 16.4 per 1,000 children of this age in the population. Girls were slightly more likely than boys to be victims.

Pacific Islander children, American Indian/Alaska Native and African American children had the highest rates of victimization when compared to their national population. The rate of White victims of child abuse or neglect was 11.0 per 1,000 White children in the population; the rate for Pacific Islanders was 21.4 per 1,000 children; for American Indians or Alaskan Natives, the rate was 21.3 per 1,000 children; and for African American children, the rate was 20.4 per 1,000 children.

## **REPORTS**

Approximately two-thirds of the referrals received during 2003 were accepted for investigation or assessment. One-third of referrals were not accepted.

## **Who made the reports?**

More than one-half of all reports that alleged child abuse or neglect were made by such professionals as educators, law enforcement and legal personnel, social services personnel, medical personnel, mental health personnel, child daycare providers, and foster care providers. Educators made 16.3 percent of all reports, while law enforcement and legal personnel made 16.0 percent, and social services personnel made 11.6 percent. Friends, neighbors, and relatives submitted approximately 43.2 percent of the reports.

## **What were the results of the investigations and assessments?**

After conducting interviews with family members, the alleged child victim, and sometimes other people familiar with the family, the CPS agency makes a determination concerning whether the child is a victim of abuse or neglect, or is at risk of abuse or neglect. This determination often is called a disposition.

Approximately 30 percent of the reports included at least one child who was found to be a victim of abuse or neglect. Sixty-one percent of the reports were found to be unsubstantiated (including intentionally false); the remaining reports were closed for additional reasons.

## **FATALITIES**

Child fatalities are the most tragic consequence of maltreatment. In 2003, an estimated 1,500 children died due to child abuse or neglect.

## **What were the characteristics of these children?**

More than three-quarters of the children who died due to child abuse or neglect were younger than 4 years old, 10 percent were 4–7 years old, 5 percent were 8–11 years old, and 6 percent were 12–17 years old.

The overall rate of child fatalities was 2 deaths per 100,000 children in the population. More than one-third of child fatalities were attributed to neglect. Physical abuse also was a major contributor to child fatalities. Infant boys (younger than 1 year old) had the highest rate of fatalities, nearly 18 deaths per 100,000 boys of the same age in the national population. Infant girls had a rate of 14 deaths per

100,000 girls of the same age.

## **PERPETRATORS**

Approximately 80 percent of perpetrators were parents. Other relatives accounted for 6 percent of the perpetrators, and unmarried partners of parents and "other" each accounted for 4 percent of perpetrators. The remaining perpetrator relationship types accounted for less than 1 percent of the perpetrators.

### **What were the characteristics of perpetrators?**

Female perpetrators, who were mostly the mothers of the children, were typically younger than male perpetrators, who were mostly the fathers of the children. Women also comprised a larger percentage of all perpetrators than men (58 percent of perpetrators were women compared to 42 percent who were men).

## **SERVICES**

CPS agencies provide services to some families and their children during, and as a result of, an investigation or assessment.

### **Who received services?**

Approximately 57 percent of victims and 25 percent of non-victims received services as a result of an investigation or assessment. Additional analyses indicated that children who were prior victims of maltreatment were approximately 52 percent more likely to receive services than first-time victims. Additionally, children with multiple types of maltreatment were almost 73 percent more likely to receive services than children who were physically abused.

### **What services were provided?**

Services included both in-home and foster care services. Approximately 15 percent of child victims were removed from their homes and placed in foster care. About 3 percent of non-victims also experienced a removal—usually a short-term placement that occurred during the course of investigating the maltreatment report.