

Iowa Child Welfare by the Numbers in Calendar 2011

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Unless otherwise noted, data are for calendar 2011

Assessments, abuse findings

- 30,747 assessments for child abuse or neglect in calendar 2011.
 - ✓ 68 percent of assessments resulted in a finding of “no abuse.”
 - ✓ Number of assessments up 16 percent due to a policy clarification regarding confidentiality.
- 11,747 children subject to abuse or neglect, down 7 percent from 2010. Of those children:
 - ✓ 8,757 children were subject of ‘founded’ abuse, down 12%.
 - ✓ 2,989 children were subject of a “confirmed” abuse, up 11%. A “confirmed” abuse is minor, isolated, and not likely to re-occur, and the perpetrator is not placed on the child abuse registry.
- 51 percent of abused or neglected children were age 5 or younger (similar to past years).
- Of all child abuse or neglect:
 - ✓ 79 percent was neglect (denial of critical care), similar to past years.
 - ✓ 10 percent was physical, up from 9 percent.
 - ✓ 4 percent was sexual (3 percent in '10, 4 percent in '09 and '08).
 - ✓ 5 percent was presence of illegal drugs in body (4 percent in previous two years).

Assessing abuse, caseload

Allegations of abuse are screened by a central intake unit in Des Moines. Accepted intakes are assessed by county-based DHS child protective workers. When abuse is founded, a separate group of DHS case managers supervise ongoing services for children and their families. Those services are performed by non-government social service agencies under performance contracts. The *monthly average* DHS caseload in 2011:

- ✓ 202 DHS child protective workers, up from 200 in '10, were assigned an average of 14.2 new cases a month in 2011, including cases alleging adult abuse.
- ✓ 383 DHS case managers, down from 385, had an average child welfare caseload of 26. In addition to supervising child welfare services, these workers attempt to visit every child and every child's parent every month.

Strategies and Results of Iowa's Child Welfare System

- Consistent best-practice assessment of risk and safety.
- Preventive strategies targeting at-risk families.
- Optional, free, and “non-DHS” help for families where re-abuse risk is low.
- Reduce racial disparities. Gap is narrowing for both African American and Native Americans.
- Focus on best-practice results (lowering rates of re-abuse, increasing rate of speedy reunification, etc.).
- Boost service for older foster youth. Program for “aged out” youth serves hundreds.
- Transparent results. <https://dhssecure.dhs.state.ia.us/digitaldashboard/> In quarter ending 12/11:
 - ✓ 90.8 percent of all abused or neglected children were abuse-free in following six months.
 - ✓ 88.5 percent of children leaving foster care did not re-enter foster care within a year.
- Engage families in plan for improvement, especially via family team meetings and parent mentors.
- Provide performance-based contracts aligned with safety and permanency outcomes for families.
- Keep once-abused children at home if safe to do so. 76.4 percent of abused children remained in the family home with the support of services in 2011.

The cost of child welfare: FY11 actual expenditures

Major Services	State dollars	All other dollars	Total*	Average Monthly Number Served (FY11)
Family centered services	- \$ 3.1	\$23.6	\$26.7	5,114 families served (at least one child per family)
Family foster care	- \$13.5	\$ 8.6	\$22.1	2,218 children in licensed foster care
Group care	- \$22.1	\$ 6.7	\$28.8	808 children in highly structured group settings
Adoption subsidies	- \$31.8	\$33.7	\$65.5	8,765 (subsidies paid until adopted child reaches 18)
Aged-out program (PAL)	- \$ 2.9	\$ 0.5	\$ 3.4	307 aged-out youth receiving stipends, counseling
Shelter care	- \$ 7.9	\$ 1.2	\$ 9.1	182 children served in average month
DHS social workers	- \$27.7	\$33.6	\$61.3	* millions