

Iowa Child Welfare By the Numbers - Calendar Year 2015

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Child Abuse Definitions: <http://dhs.iowa.gov/child-abuse>

Assessment data and findings:

- 24,298 assessments for child abuse or neglect in calendar 2015
 - 7,469(31%) Family assessments were conducted and 16,829(69%) Child Abuse assessments were conducted.
 - 64 percent of Child Abuse assessments resulted in a finding of “no abuse,” similar to past years.
- 8,298 children subject to abuse or neglect. Of those children:
 - 6,890 were subject of “founded” abuse
 - 1,408 were subject of a “confirmed” abuse. A “confirmed” abuse is minor, isolated, and not likely to re-occur, and the perpetrator is not placed on the child abuse registry.
- 49 percent of abused or neglected children were age 5 or younger (similar to past years).
- Of all child abuse or neglect:
 - 72 percent was neglect (denial of critical care), a decrease from prior years
 - 11 percent was physical
 - 5 percent was sexual
 - 9 percent was presence of illegal drugs in body

Allegations of abuse and neglect are evaluated by a central intake unit in Des Moines. The intake is accepted if the allegation would be abuse if proven true. Accepted intakes are assessed in person by county-based DHS child protective workers. Most allegations are not founded, aligned with National data. 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.

Average Caseloads:

- 180 DHS child protective workers were assigned an average of 13 cases a month, including cases alleging adult abuse. Similar caseload to previous year.
- 352 DHS case managers had an average child welfare caseload of 26, similar to previous year. In addition to supervising child welfare services, workers attempt to visit every child and their parent every month.

Strategies and Results of Iowa’s Child Welfare System

- Use consistent best-practice assessment of risk and safety.
- Pursue permanency and family connections for at-risk children
- Provide voluntary, free, non-DHS help through the Community Care Program for families with low re-abuse risk.
- Reduce racial disparities. Gap is narrowing for both African American and Native American families.
- Engage families in plan for improvement, especially via family team decision making meetings and parent mentors.
- Provide performance-based contracts aligned with safety and permanency outcomes for families.
- Focus on best-practice results (lowering rates of re-abuse, children have permanency and stability, etc.) Results:
 - 95 % of children receiving a family assessment were abuse-free in six months following assessment.
 - 97.5 % of families who engage in Community Care do not experience court intervention within six months.
 - 92.4% of families who engage in Community Care were abuse-free in six months following assessment.
 - 92 % of all abused or neglected children were abuse-free in six months following assessment.
 - 86 % of children who were reunified were living with their families 12 months later.

The Cost of Child welfare: FY15 Actual Expenditure

Major Services	State dollars*	Other dollars*	Total*	Average Monthly Number Served - FY15	
Family centered services	- \$ 2.1	\$21.8	\$23.9	4,283	families served (at least one child per family)
Family foster care	- \$10.4	\$ 7.8	\$18.2	1,740	children in licensed foster care
Group care	- \$20.5	\$ 8.7	\$29.2	695	children in highly structured group settings
Adoption subsidies	- \$41.3	\$31.9	\$73.2	9,490	(subsidies paid until adopted child reaches 18)
Aged-out program (PAL)	- \$ 3.2	\$ 0.0	\$ 3.2	453	aged-out youth receiving stipends, counseling
Shelter care	- \$ 7.4	\$ 0.9	\$ 8.3	151	children served in average month
DHS social workers	- \$24.9	\$37.9	\$62.8		

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