

# Iowa Child Welfare By the Numbers - Calendar Year 2013

Contact Amy McCoy (515) 281-4848 or [amccoy@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:amccoy@dhs.state.ia.us)



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

## **Assessments and Abuse Findings**

- 26,129 assessments for child abuse or neglect in calendar 2013 - down 10 percent from 2012 and within normal variation year to year
  - 66 percent of assessments resulted in a finding of “no abuse,” similar to past years.
- 12,276 children subject to abuse or neglect, up 5 percent from CY2012. Of those children:
  - 9,560 were subject of “founded” abuse, up 0.5 percent.
  - 2,716 were subject of a “confirmed” abuse, down 4 percent. 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:
  - 78 percent was neglect (denial of critical care), similar to recent years.
  - 9 percent was physical, similar to recent years.
  - 4 percent was sexual, similar to recent years.
  - 6 percent was presence of illegal drugs in body (varied 4 percent to 6 percent in recent years).

Allegations of abuse 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:**

- 186 DHS child protective workers were assigned an average of 14 cases a month, including cases alleging adult abuse. Similar caseload to previous year.
- 359 DHS case managers had an average child welfare caseload of 29, 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**

- Pursue permanency and family connections for at-risk children.
- Use consistent best-practice assessment of risk and safety.
- 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 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:
  - 91 percent of all abused or neglected children were abuse-free in six months following assessment.
  - 83 percent of children who were reunified were living with their families 12 months later.

## **The Cost of Child Welfare: FY12 Actual Expenditures**

Major Services	State dollars*	Other dollars*	Total*	Average Monthly Number Served - FY13
Family centered services	- \$ 4.0	\$23.3	\$27.3	5,122 families served (at least one child per family)
Family foster care	- \$10.8	\$ 8.1	\$19.9	1,897 children in licensed foster care
Group care	- \$18.8	\$ 7.9	\$26.7	756 children in highly structured group settings
Adoption subsidies	- \$31.4	\$37.2	\$68.6	9,215 (subsidies paid until adopted child reaches 18)
Aged-out program (PAL)	- \$ 2.9	\$ 0.0	\$ 2.9	284 aged-out youth receiving stipends, counseling
Shelter care	- \$ 7.4	\$ 1.0	\$ 8.4	164 children served in average month
DHS social workers	- \$21.7	\$37.5	\$59.2	545 workers

\* millions

Starting in CY 2014, Iowa has a new, two-pathway protective response system in place. **Differential Response** details can be found here: <http://dhs.iowa.gov/child-welfare/differential-response>