

Iowa Child Welfare By the Numbers - Calendar Year 2017

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

Assessment data and findings:

- 33,418 assessments for child abuse or neglect in calendar 2017
 - 7,136 (21%) Family assessments were conducted and 26,282(79%) Child Abuse assessments were conducted.
 - 67 percent of Child Abuse assessments resulted in a finding of “no abuse,” similar to past years.
- 8,558 children subject to abuse or neglect. Of those children:
 - 7,023 were subject of “founded” abuse. “Founded” abuse means that the abuse was confirmed and the perpetrator is placed on the child abuse registry.
 - 1,535 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.
- 47 percent of abused or neglected children were age 5 or younger (decreased compare with last year).
- Of all child abuse or neglect:
 - 65 percent was neglect (denial of critical care)
 - 9 percent was physical
 - 5 percent was sexual
 - 9 percent was presence of illegal drugs in body
 - 11 percent dangerous substance

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 protection workers. Most allegations are not confirmed, a trend aligned with other states. When abuse is confirmed with high risk for re-abuse or 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:

- 177 DHS child protection workers were assigned an average of 17.7 cases a month, including cases alleging adult abuse.
- 338 DHS case managers had an average child welfare caseload of 31. 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 to moderate 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 following the assessment and within 2017.
 - 98.2 % of families who engage in Community Care do not experience court intervention within six months.
 - 89.1% of families who engage in Community Care were abuse-free in following the assessment and within 2017.
 - 93 % of all abused or neglected children were abuse-free in six months following assessment.
 - 76.8% of children who were reunified continued living with their families in 2017.

The Cost of Child welfare: FY17 Actual Expenditure

Major Services	State dollars*	Other dollars*	Total*	Average Monthly Number Served - FY17	
Family centered services	- \$ 2.9	\$35.3	\$38.2	4,763	families served (at least one child per family)
Family foster care	- \$11.3	\$ 6.6	\$17.9	1,750	children in licensed foster care
Group care	- \$17.2	\$ 6.7	\$23.9	576	children in highly structured group settings
Adoption subsidies	- \$41.3	\$33.5	\$74.8	9,728	(subsidies paid until adopted child reaches 18)
Aged-out program (PAL)	- \$ 0.0	\$ 4.0	\$ 4.0	332	aged-out youth receiving stipends, counseling
Shelter care	- \$ 7.3	\$ 0.9	\$ 8.2	148	children served in average month
DHS social workers	- \$26.6	\$40.1	\$66.7		

* millions

