



May 2009

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Child Welfare by the Numbers
Calendar 2008

Assessments, abuse findings

- 23,236 assessments for child abuse in calendar 2008, down 2 percent from 2007.
7,981 founded or confirmed cases of abuse or neglect.
Of all assessments, 34 percent are confirmed or founded, compared to 38 percent in 2007.
6,141 abuses or neglects are "founded," with perpetrators placed on child abuse registry.
1,840 abuses or neglects are "confirmed" as minor, isolated, not likely to recur. No listing on registry.
Of all abuses or neglects, 23 percent are "confirmed," about the same as 2007.
11,003 children were abused or neglected in 2008, down 14 percent from 2007.
53 percent of abused or neglected children were age 5 or younger (similar to past years).
79 percent of abuse is neglect (denial of critical care), 11 percent is physical, 4 percent sexual, and 4 percent "presence of illegal drugs" in body. Percentages remain fairly constant.

Assessing abuse, caseload

Allegations of abuse are first screened by regional intake units. Accepted intakes are investigated by DHS assessors. When abuse is founded, a separate group of DHS social workers supervise the ongoing care and services for children and their families. Those services are performed by non-government social service agencies. The monthly average DHS caseload in 2008:

- 223 DHS assessors who were assigned an average of 10 new cases a month.
469 DHS social workers with an average child welfare caseload of 25. A goal is for these workers to visit with every child and every child's parents every month. These workers also have other duties, such as licensing activities, adult services, and home studies.

Highlights, results of Iowa's child-welfare redesign launched in 2005

- Focus DHS attention on children with highest risk.
Provide 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. New program for "aged out" youth serves hundreds.
Transparent results. For a quarterly public update, see https://dhssecure.dhs.state.ia.us/digitaldashboard/
91.6 percent of all abused or neglected children are abuse-free in following six months.
99.8 percent of abused or neglected children placed in foster care remain safe from abuse.
88.2 percent of all reunified children do not re-enter foster care in one year.
89.4 percent of children in out-of-home care have two or fewer placements.
Pay for results. Three major social service contracts have financial incentives to reach benchmarks.
Engage families in plan for improvement, especially via family team meetings and parent mentors.

The cost of child welfare: FY08 actual expenditures

Table with 5 columns: Major Services, State dollars, All other dollars, Total\*, Number Served (FY08). Rows include Family centered services, Family foster care, Group care, Adoption subsidies, Aged-out program, Shelter care, and DHS social workers.

\* millions
\*\* average monthly # of families served
\*\*\* average monthly # of children served
\*\*\*\* average daily # of children served