



Child Welfare

- Child Abuse and Maltreatment Reports, Charges and Arrests
- Persons in Need of Supervision
- Foster Care

Child Welfare

Why is it important?

One of the most important responsibilities of any community is to protect those who cannot protect themselves. Each year, thousands of children in Westchester experience maltreatment at the hands of their parents or legal guardians. It is the responsibility of the County Department of Social Services (DSS) to investigate allegations of abuse or maltreatment of children by family members, and to ensure the safety of children in these situations. If DSS finds the allegation to be substantiated, it may offer services--such as parenting classes, respite services, mental health or drug treatment—to families or may take the case to Family Court and ask a judge to mandate such services. In cases of severe physical or sexual abuse, the case may also be investigated by local police, and criminal charges brought by the District Attorney's office. In any cases where the child cannot remain safely in his or her home, DSS will ask the Family Court to place the child or children in foster care. Foster care is meant to be temporary, and all efforts are made to return the child safely to his or her own family, find an alternate safe and permanent home, or help an older foster child prepare to live independently.

The child welfare system includes several distinct parts of the local Department of Social Services (DSS), as well as Family Court. Child Protective Services, or CPS, is the part of DSS that receives and investigates reports of abuse or maltreatment. Preventive Services offers services to families in order for children to safely remain with or return to their families of origin. Preventive Services may be mandated by the Family Court as part of the disposition of a case, but they may also be requested by families voluntarily. They are often provided by non-profit agencies under contract to DSS. The Foster Care and Residential Care divisions of DSS work with non-profit foster care agencies and directly with foster parents to provide safe homes for children who cannot safely remain with their own families (as determined by a Family Court judge). For some children, out-of-home placement will be in a group home or residential treatment center rather than with a foster family. Usually, this is because a suitable foster family is not available or because the foster child needs more intensive services than can be provided in a home setting.

It is important to note that Westchester County collects Foster Care statistics according to monthly averages and also by yearly totals. Yearly totals include any child in care for any amount of time. These two methods can produce significantly different data and users should be careful when analyzing this information

Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) refers to young people who have willfully and repeatedly committed status offenses—such as truancy, incorrigibility, running away—that would not be crimes if committed by an adult. PINS complaints are filed through the Westchester County Probation Department, and are usually initiated by parents or school officials.

Before mid-2002, the PINS program provided services to youth under 16 years old. Today, youngsters under 18 years of age can be charged with a PINS complaint. This change has led to a significant increase in the number of youth referred for PINS services. In 2006, 16 and 17 year olds accounted for almost 30% of all intakes. WCA has chosen to include data on PINS in this section because the emphasis of the PINS process is on treatment and rehabilitation of the offenders without Family Court involvement. Data on juvenile delinquency is included in the section on Juvenile Justice.

What stands out?

- After more than a decade of staying at the same level, reports, or allegations of child abuse and maltreatment have increased 17.5% from 2005 to 2006. The trend has continued in 2007. The increase may be due in part to increased reports by school district personnel, following recent highly publicized incidents, in both New York City and Westchester, which highlighted the responsibility of teachers and administrators to report suspected child abuse.
- The percentage of substantiated or “indicated” reports has remained steady over the last several years, ranging between a low of 30% in 2000 to a high of 34% in 2005. The most common reason for an indicated report was physical neglect, which was cited at least once in 65% of all reports.
- In 2006, 1,336 children were referred for services through the county’s PINS program. “Incorrigible/Ungovernable” accounts for the majority of complaints against these children; however, in recent years this percent has been decreasing while the percent of complaints due to truancy have been increasing. Of those referred for PINS services, a disproportionately high number of them were minorities. And although males represented the majority of those in PINS, females accounted for 45% of the total.
- During 2006, 342 children were admitted into foster care, 1,051 were in care, and 264 were discharged. Since 1998, the number of admissions and children in care has remained steady, but in 2006 the number of discharges showed a significant drop. This drop is expected to lead to an increase in the overall number of children in care in 2007.
- About 14% of youngsters discharged from foster care are released to their own responsibility. These are young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who typically have little or no family support system, and are at great risk for homelessness, poverty, early parenthood, and other difficulties.

¹ Douglas W. Nelson, “Gratified But Not Satisfied on Foster Care Independence,” *Advocacy*, Volm 3, Number 2, Fall, 2001.

Reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, 2006

	Number of Reports	0 - 8 Years Old	9 - 16 Years Old	17+ Years Old	Female	Male
Westchester Total	5186	2,909	2,884	300	3,120	3,142
Neglect	4798	2,680	2,690	281	2,873	2,946
Educational Neglect	690	152	571	17	355	401
Inadequate Food, Clothing, Shelter	386	236	211	41	264	248
Inadequate Guardianship	4319	2,505	2,339	270	2,624	2,629
Lack of Supervision	858	569	460	33	514	591
Malnutrition, Failure to Thrive	7	7	0	0	4	3
Other	1266	846	645	87	817	801
Abandonment	9	5	3	1	2	8
Child's Drug/ Alcohol Use	119	11	86	29	53	72
Inappropriate Custodial Conduct	9	2	7	0	4	6
Other	217	146	109	7	143	124
Parent's Drug/ Alcohol Misuse	997	712	489	64	657	641
Physical Abuse	1249	596	650	65	645	674
Burns, Scalding	78	66	11	1	26	53
Choking/Twisting/ Shaking	76	20	53	6	48	32
DOA/Fatality	11	10	1	0	3	8
Excessive Corporal Punishment	477	202	282	22	240	268
Fractures	22	19	2	1	10	12
Internal Injuries	29	14	15	1	13	17
Lacerations, Bruises, Welts	930	415	507	48	477	491
Poisoning, Noxious Substances	4	3	1	0	1	3
Swelling/Dislocation/Sprains	84	34	45	6	45	39
Medical Neglect	419	177	238	21	194	246
Lack of Medical Care	419	177	238	21	194	246
Sexual Abuse	283	104	167	30	241	66
Sexual Abuse	283	104	167	30	241	66
Psychological Maltreatment	82	19	61	6	47	41
Emotional Neglect	79	19	59	5	45	40
Inappropriate Isolation/Restraint	3	0	2	1	2	1

Each abuse and neglect report may involve more than one allegation or victim. Therefore, the total number of children as reported by age group (0 - 8 Years Old, 9 - 16 Years Old, 17+ Years Old) and by gender (Female, Male), can exceed the number of reports in a particular category.

Discrepancies between the total number of children reported by age group and the total number reported by gender are due to cases in which the age and/or gender of the child is not reported.

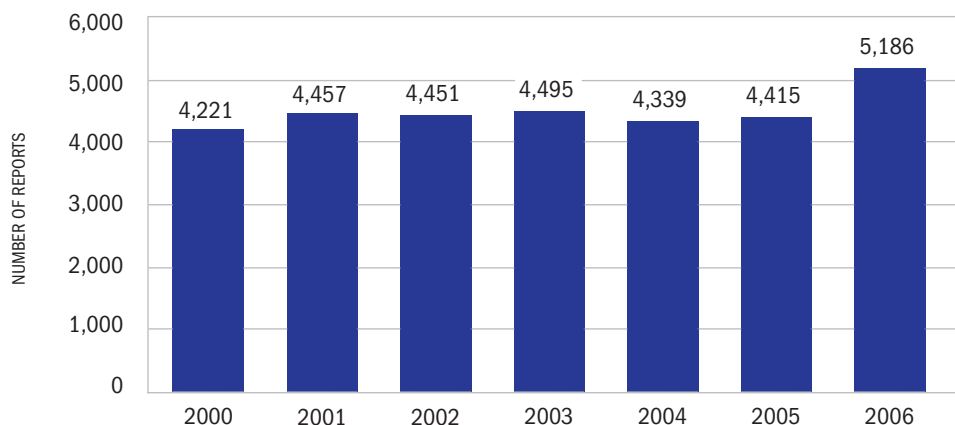
For both male and female children, the five most common specific allegations were the same. They are Inadequate Guardianship, Parent's Drug/Alcohol Misuse, Lack of Supervision, Lacerations/Bruises/Welts, and Educational Neglect.

Notes: Each report is classified into at least one of six main "Allegation Categories." Additionally, each report is classified by at least one of 23 "Specific Allegations."

Glossary: See "Child Protective Services" and "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.

Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment



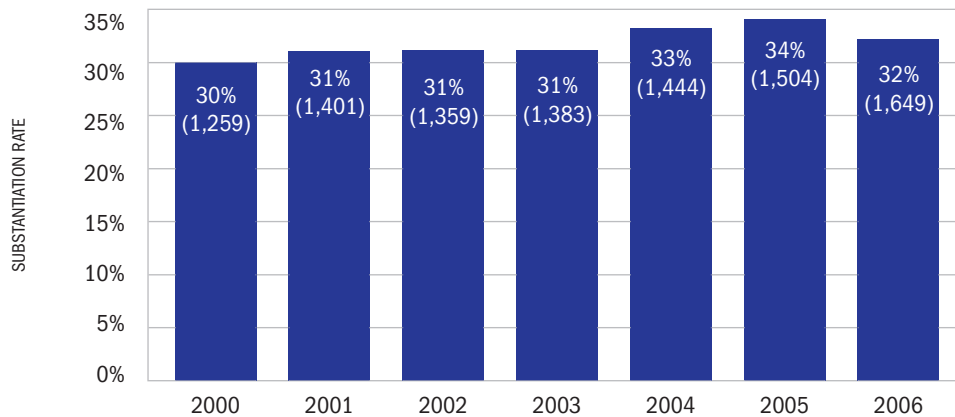
Each abuse and neglect report may involve more than one allegation and/or victim. In 2006, the 5,186 cases represented 15,975 total abuse, neglect, and maltreatment allegations, and 8,192 individual children.

Notes: Westchester County Child Protective Services (CPS) is responsible for investigating allegations of the abuse or maltreatment of children that are directly caused (or allowed to happen) by the actions of the child's parent, caretaker, or other persons legally responsible for the child. CPS evaluates reported allegations of abuse, neglect and maltreatment, determines the validity of allegations and determines the need for services to ensure the protection of the child.

Glossary: See "Child Protective Services" and "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.

Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Substantiated Reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment

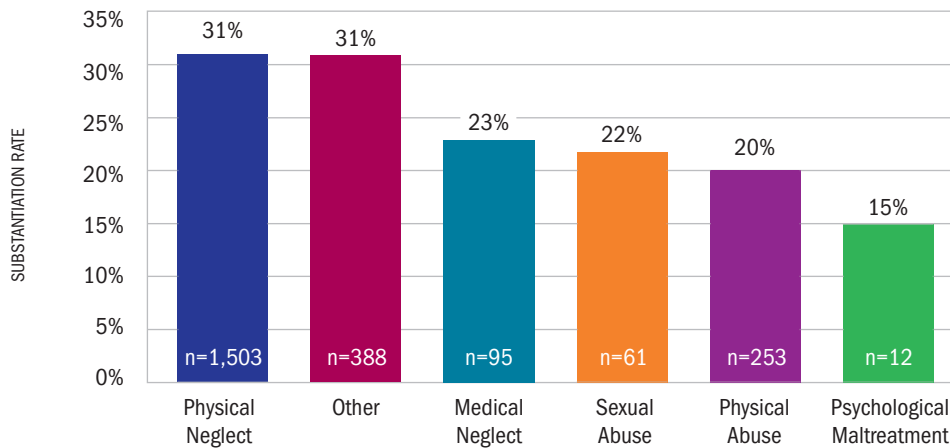


Glossary: See "Child Protective Services" and "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.

Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Substantiation Rates of Child Abuse and Maltreatment, 2006

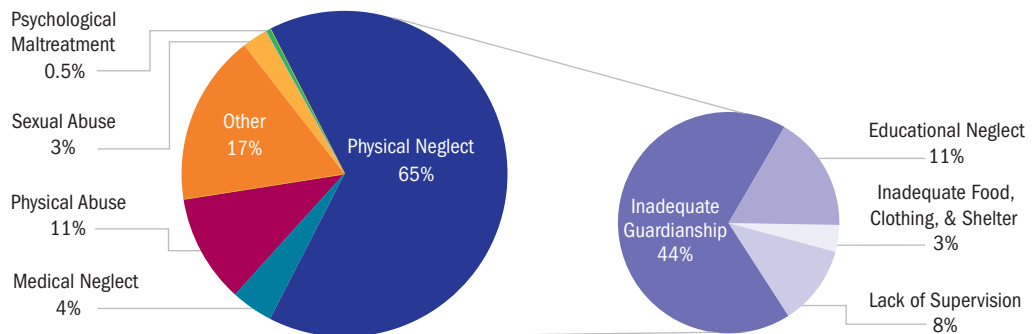
Percent of Each Allegation Category that was Substantiated



The final step in an CPS investigation is the determination of whether the report is Substantiated or Unsubstantiated. If some credible evidence of abuse or maltreatment exists, the report is Substantiated (i.e. Indicated) and the family is offered appropriate services.

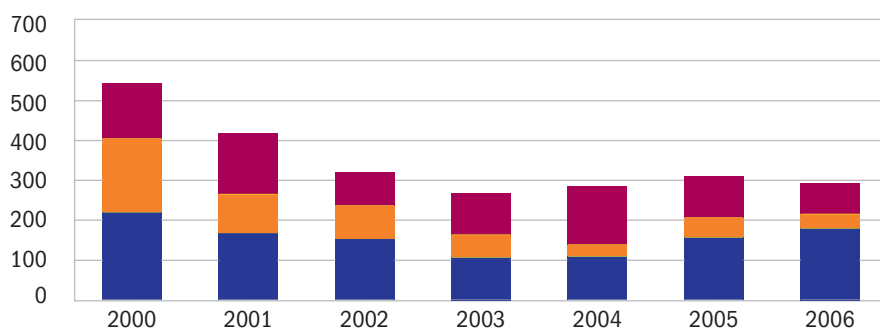
Notes: Data represents the number of substantiated allegations divided by the total number of reports. A single abuse case may be associated with more than one allegation category.
 Glossary: See "Child Protective Services" and "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Total Substantiated Reports of Child Abuse and Maltreatment by Allegation Category, 2006



Notes: CPS investigations that show some credible evidence of abuse are Substantiated (i.e. Indicated). Each report is then classified into at least one of six main "Allegation Categories". Additionally, each report is classified by at least one of 23 "Specific Allegations." Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.
 Glossary: See "Child Protective Services" and "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Criminal Investigations of Child Abuse and Maltreatment



Endangering the Welfare of a Child	139	153	85	104	147	103	77
Physical Abuse	183	96	82	55	29	49	34
Sex Abuse	221	169	155	108	110	158	181

The Country District Attorney's office, in conjunction with the Police Department and Child Protective Services (CPS), conducts child abuse investigations upon finding credible evidence of a child abuse crime. This evidence is usually identified previously by independent investigations by either CPS or the Police. An Arrests may be made, and charges are filed, during or after this investigation.

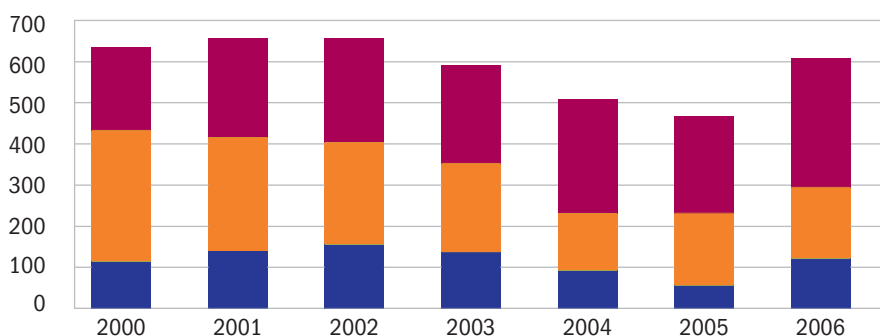
Criminal child abuse charges may also be filed without a formal investigation if there is clear evidence of child abuse.

Glossary: See "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.

Notes: Sex Abuse charges and investigations include victims 0-15 years old, while Physical Abuse and Endangering the Welfare of a Child pertain to victims 0 - 16 years old.

Source: Westchester District Attorney's Office, Special Prosecutions Division.

Criminal Charges Filed for Child Abuse and Maltreatment



Endangering the Welfare of a Child	203	243	253	240	279	236	314
Physical Abuse	318	273	246	214	136	174	172
Sex Abuse	115	141	157	138	94	57	122

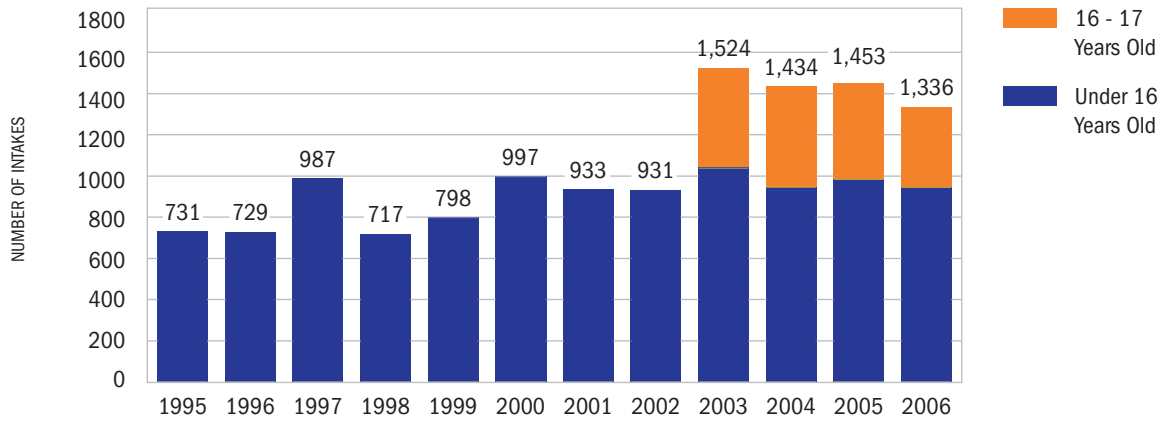
Glossary: See "Child Abuse and Maltreatment" for more information.

Notes: Sex Abuse charges and investigations include victims 0 - 15 years old, while Physical Abuse and Endangering the Welfare of a Child pertain to victims 0 - 16 years old.

Source: Westchester District Attorney's Office, Special Prosecutions Division.

Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)

Youth Referred for PINS Services

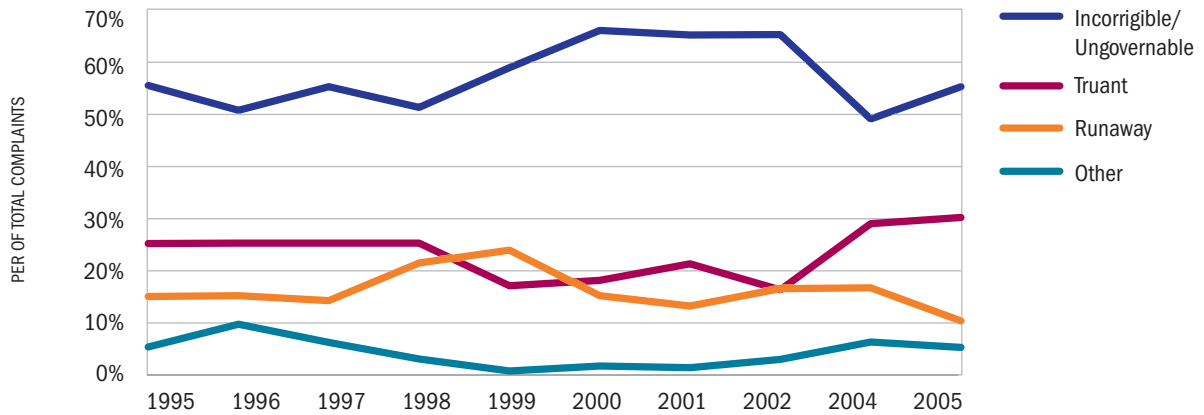


Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) are juveniles 7 - 17 years of age for whom complaints were filed with local probation departments because of non-criminal misconduct, such as truancy from school, incorrigibility, or ungovernability. Complainants in these cases are generally parents or school officials who are seeking the formal intervention of the probation department or family court or to control juvenile's misconduct.

Notes: The PINS program began serving 16 and 17 Year Old in mid-2002; however, the first full year of PINS services for older children was 2003.
 Glossary: See "Persons in Need of Supervision" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Probation.

Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS) by Type of Complaint

Youth Less than 16 Years Old

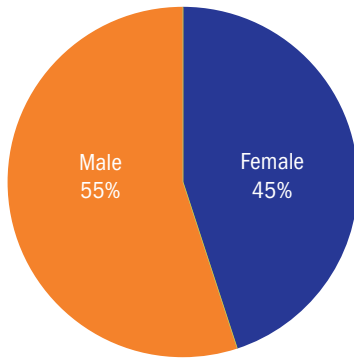


Notes: The PINS program began serving 16 and 17 Year Old in mid-2002; however, the first full year of PINS services for older children was 2003.
 Glossary: See "Persons in Need of Supervision" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Probation.

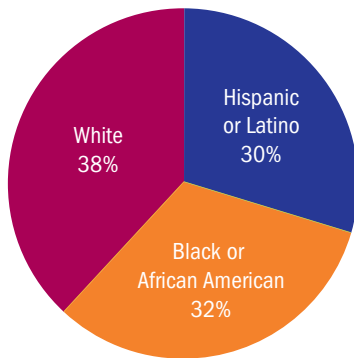
Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS)

At Intake, 2005

By Gender



By Race/Ethnicity



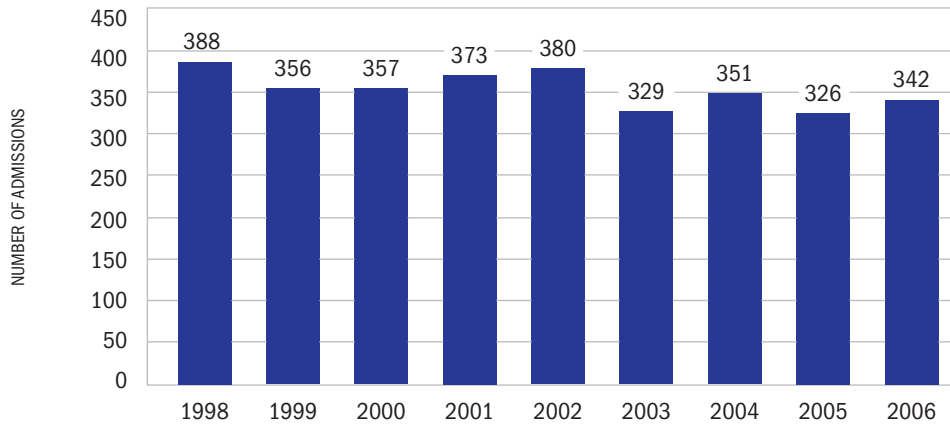
As a rate, per 1,000 youth of each ethnicity, African American youth were referred to PINS at a rate of 12.4, Hispanic at a rate of 8.7, and Whites at a rate of 3.6.

Notes: Each individual youth is classified under only one race/ethnicity even if that particular youth is of multiple races/ethnicities. Individuals of Hispanic ethnicity will NOT be classified as Hispanic if he/she is of another race (ex. Black, White), but instead will be classified under that race. Only individuals who identify themselves as solely Hispanic will be counted as Hispanic.

Glossary: See "Persons in Need of Supervision" for more information.

Source: Westchester County Department of Probation. Population source: US Census, American Community Survey, 2005.

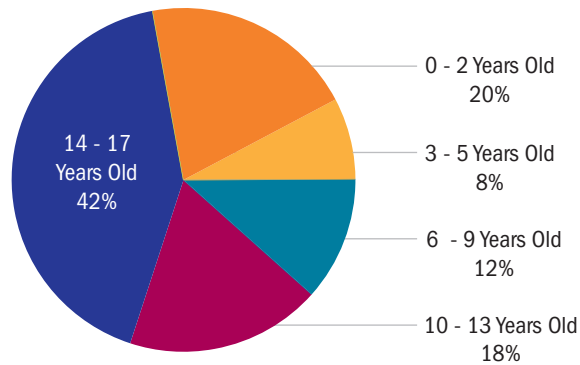
Number of Foster Care Admissions



Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.

Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care Admissions by Age, 2006

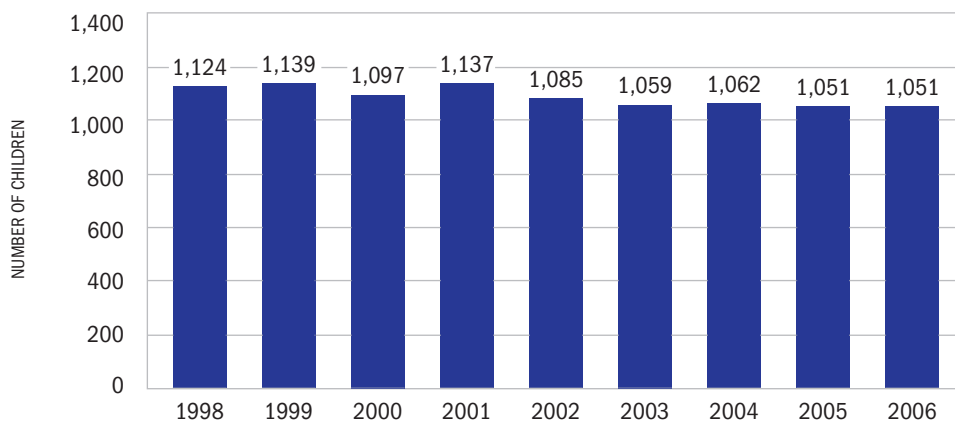


In 2006, there were no Foster Care admissions for children over 17 years old.

Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.

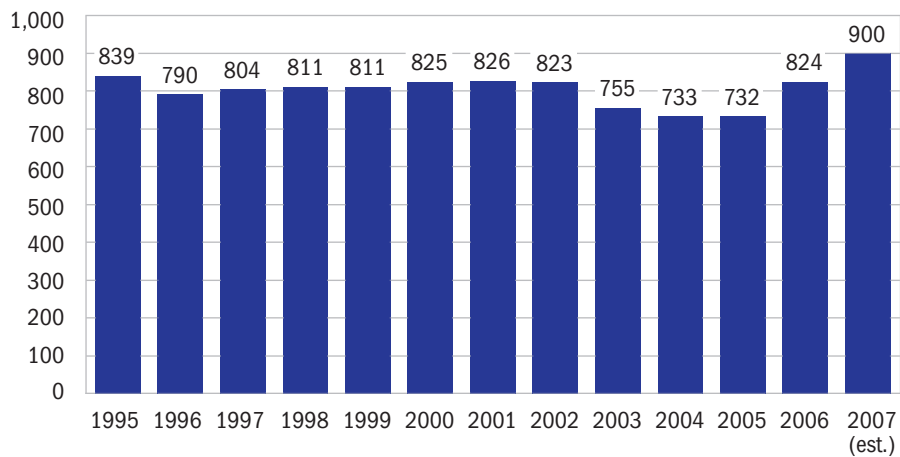
Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care, Number In Care over the Course of a Year



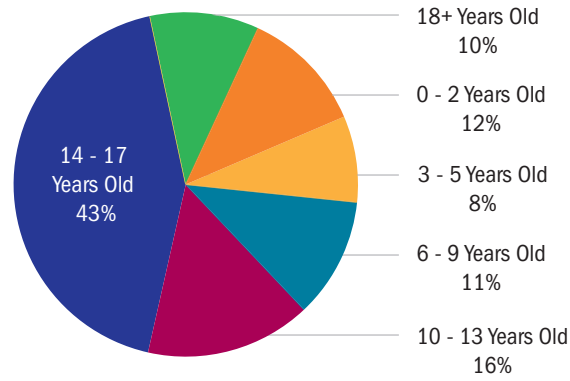
Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care, Monthly Average In Care



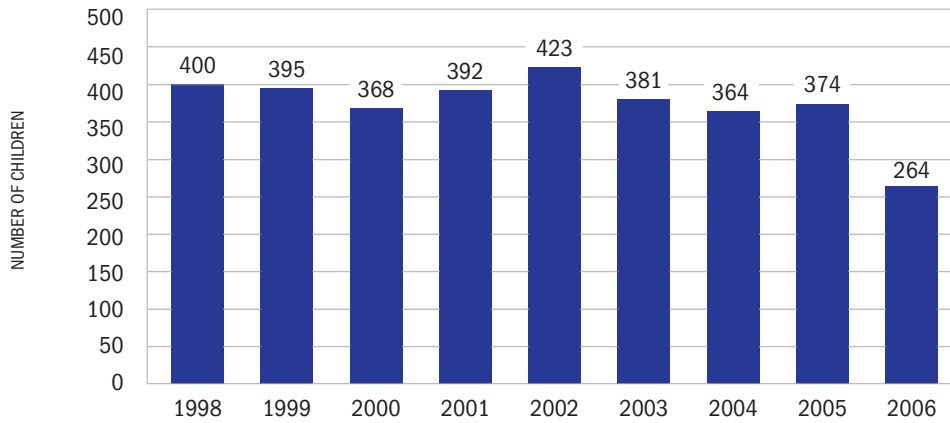
Notes: 2007 data is an estimation as of November 2007.
 Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: 1995 - 2004 data provided by the Westchester Youth Bureau. 2005 - 2007 data provided through the Westchester County's Executive Budget.
 Link: <http://www.westchestergov.com/youth/>

Foster Care, Percent In Care by Age, 2006



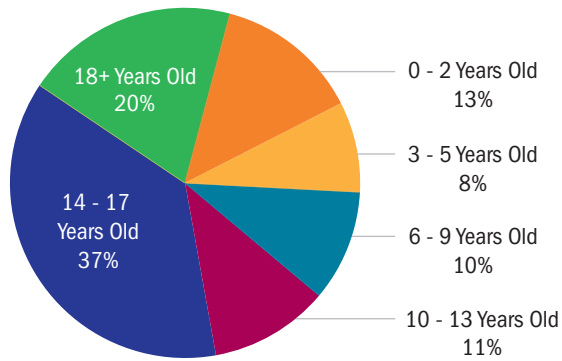
Notes: All people in foster care are under 21 years old.
 Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care Discharges



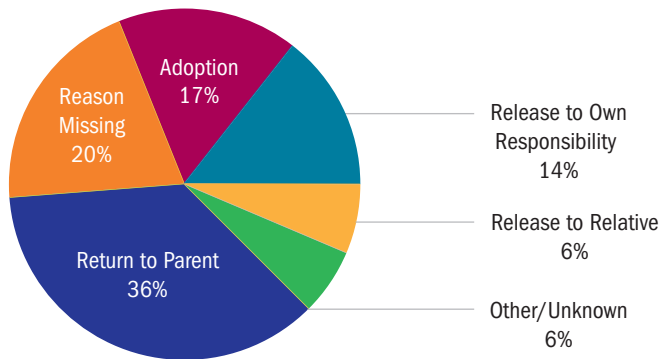
Notes: All people in foster care are under 21 years old.
 Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care Discharges by Age, 2006



Notes: All people in Foster care are under 21 years old. Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.
 Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

Foster Care Discharges by Destination, 2006



Notes: Percentages may not add up exactly to 100% due to rounding.
 Glossary: See "Foster Care" for more information.
 Source: Westchester County Department of Social Services, Office of Family and Children's Services.

