

# The Ohio Works First Longitudinal Survey: Baseline Description of the Surveyed Population

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*prepared for*

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## Introduction

The Ohio Works First (OWF) Longitudinal Survey is part of a five-year research study on the implementation, cost, and outcomes of OWF, Ohio's welfare reform program, which began in 1997. The survey tracks a sample of 1,951 OWF recipients for a period of nearly two years to learn how they fared under welfare reform. The sample was drawn from a frame comprising selected categories of adults who received OWF assistance in both January and June 2000.<sup>1</sup> The results presented in this paper are weighted to be representative of the statewide caseload of these individuals. Individuals in the sample are tracked through a telephone survey conducted in three successive waves.<sup>2</sup> Data for the first wave were collected between August 2000 and April 2001 from 1,167 respondents. Data for the second wave will be collected approximately six months after the first wave, and data for the third wave will be collected approximately one year after the second wave.

The survey focuses on interventions (work activities and other services provided to OWF recipients) and outcomes in terms of individuals' self-sufficiency and well-being. The survey results will provide a description of the interventions and outcomes experienced by the sample members over the two-year survey period. Further, the data will support statistical models designed to identify the interventions that appear to be effective in promoting self-sufficiency and well-being.

The goal of this report is to provide a baseline description of the characteristics and circumstances of the study population, based on sample members' responses to the first wave of the survey. This report focuses on respondents' levels of self-sufficiency and well-being at the time the survey data were collected.<sup>3</sup>

This report is divided into four sections:

Section I provides information about the demographic characteristics of the study population, such as age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education.

Section II provides information about employment and other work activities provided under OWF.

Section III describes family well-being in terms of housing, medical coverage, and health.

Section IV describes child well-being in terms of medical coverage and health, child care, school performance, and a variety of child risk indicators.

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<sup>1</sup> There was one stratum for each of 10 selected counties, plus a stratum representing all other counties, for a total of 11 strata. The sampled individuals were adults who in June 2000 were working (16.6 percent), participating in work activities (57.6 percent), required to participate in work activities and not participating but not sanctioned (24.6 percent), or disabled (1.2 percent).

<sup>2</sup> Surveys will be conducted in person with sample members who cannot be reached by telephone.

<sup>3</sup> Respondents either had to be on OWF or had to have been off OWF no more than three months at the time of the interview to complete the survey.

**Section I. Demographics of the Study Population**

**Section IA. Demographics of the Population From Which the Sample Was Drawn**

This section describes basic characteristics of the population from which the survey sample was drawn. The data on gender, age, racial composition, and marital status were obtained from Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) client (CRIS-E) data files. Information on employment and OWF status was collected in the survey.

**Gender**

More than 90 percent of the individuals in the population were female.

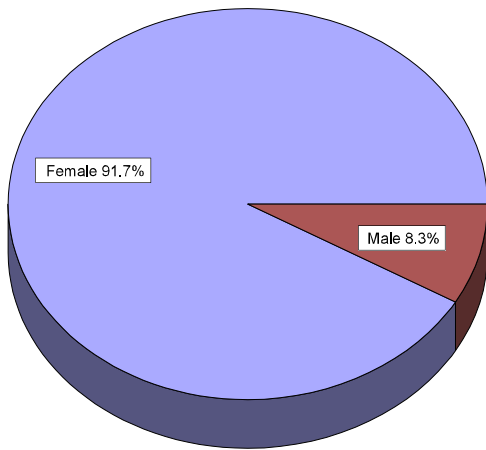


Figure 1. Population Gender

**Age**

The population consisted primarily of young adults. Approximately 73 percent were under the age of 36 and about 40 percent were 26 years of age or younger.

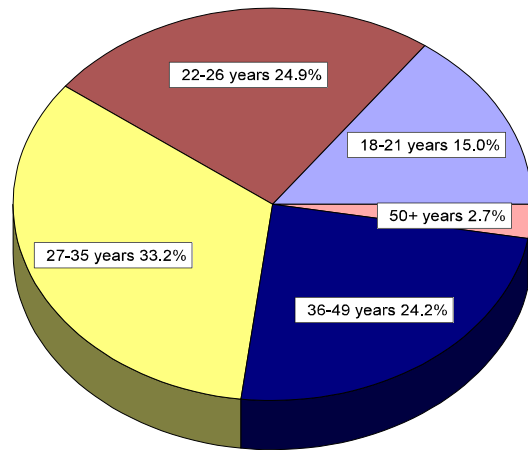


Figure 2. Population Age

**Racial Composition**

More than 55 percent of the individuals in the population were African American, with Caucasians representing another 40 percent.

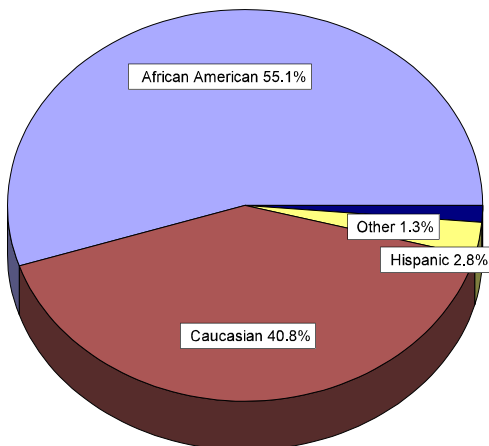


Figure 3. Population Racial Composition

**Marital Status**

More than 65 percent of the individuals in the population were single.

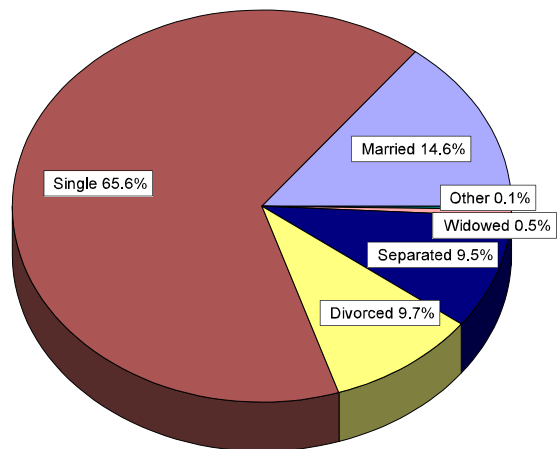


Figure 4. Population Marital Status

## Section IB. Household Composition of the Survey Respondents

This section describes the household composition of the survey respondents, in terms of number and age of children and presence of a spouse or partner in the household.

The information in this section was collected in the survey; it was not available for the entire population in the ODJFS CRIS-E data files.

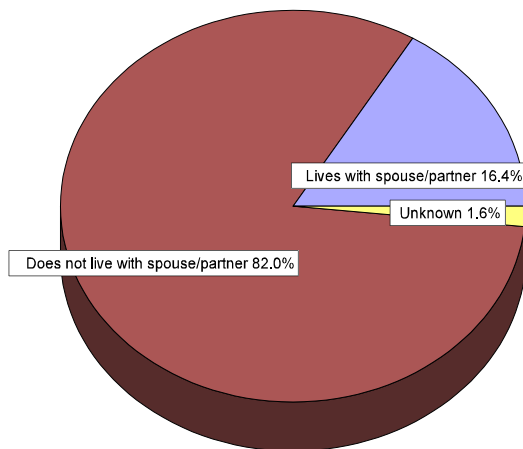


Figure 5. Lives With Spouse/Partner

### Presence of Spouse/Partner in the Household

Less than 20 percent of the survey respondents reported living with a spouse or partner.

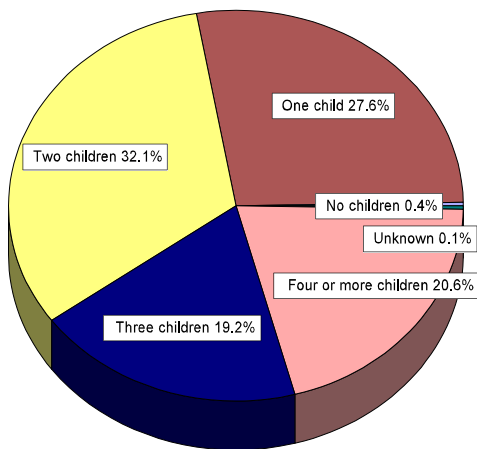


Figure 6. Number of Children in Household

### Number of Children in the Household

Most respondents (59.7 percent) had one or two children in the household.

Note that “children in the household” is defined as all children for whom the respondent was responsible at the time of the interview. This includes the respondent’s biological children, adopted children, foster children, and children who do not live with the respondent for whom the respondent is responsible.

## Age of Children in the Household

Sixty-two percent of respondents had at least one child under the age of 6. More than half had at least one child between ages 6 and 12.

The percentages in the figure add to more than 100 because it is possible for an individual to have children in more than one age group.

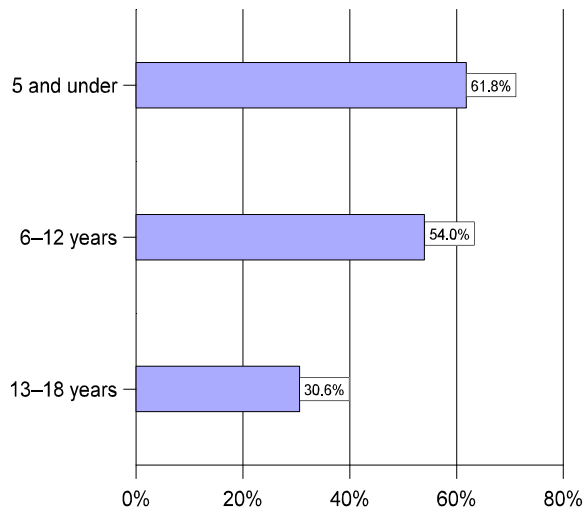


Figure 7. Age of Children

## Age of the Youngest Child in the Household

In most cases (61.8 percent), the youngest child in the household was under the age of 6.

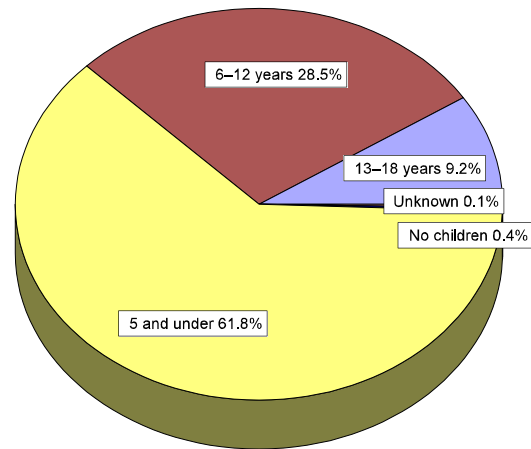


Figure 8. Age of Youngest Child

## Section II. Work Activities and Employment

This section of the report focuses on respondents' work activities and paid employment during their last three months receiving OWF assistance.

Note: In this section and throughout the report, for individuals who were still receiving assistance at the time of the survey, the "last three months receiving OWF assistance" refers to the three-month period prior to the survey. For individuals who were not receiving assistance at the time of the survey, the "last three months receiving OWF assistance" refers to the most recent three months that they were in receipt of assistance.

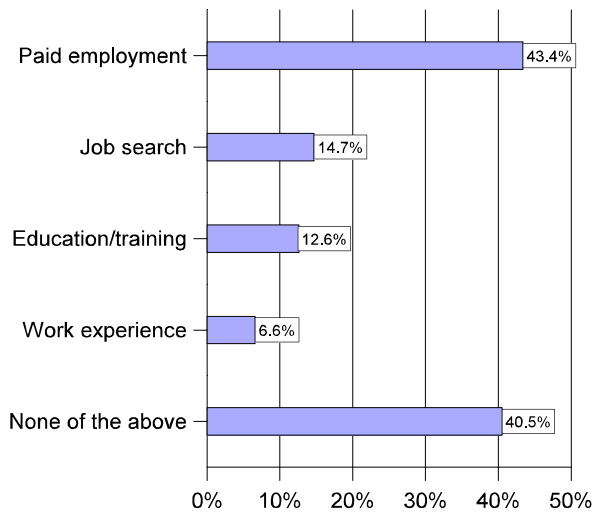


Figure 9. Work Activities/Employment

### Participation in Work Activities and Employment

Paid employment was the most common type of activity—more than 43 percent of the individuals were working at paid jobs during their last three months receiving OWF assistance. Fewer than 15 percent of the individuals participated in each of the other types of work activity. More than 40 percent did not report participating in any of these activities.

Note: “Paid employment” refers to regular, paid jobs (either subsidized or unsubsidized). “Work experience” refers to unpaid employment. “Job search” refers to activities designed to help individuals find jobs and generally fit into the workplace. Individuals could report participating in one, several, or none of these activities.

### Employment Status

Nearly one-third of the individuals in the population were employed at the time of the survey.

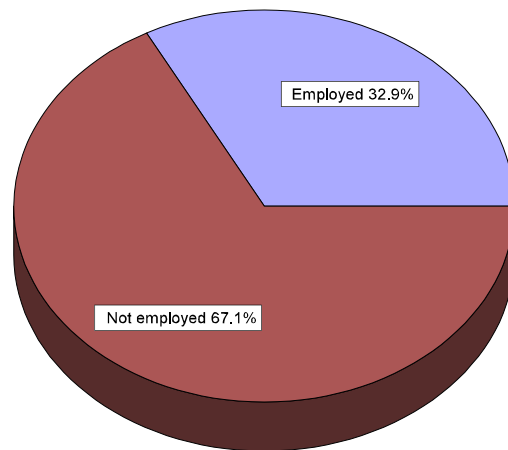


Figure 10. Employment Status

## Paid Employment: Type of Job, Hours Worked per Week, and Hourly Earnings

As shown in Table 1 on the next page, among those who held a paid job during their last three months receiving OWF assistance, the most common type of work was food service (28.1 percent), followed by healthcare (16.2 percent) and education and childcare (11.9 percent). Employed individuals worked 31.4 hours per week on average, and they received an average wage of \$6.23 per hour. The highest paying type of job was banking (\$9.66 per hour) and the lowest paying was personal services (\$3.81 per hour).

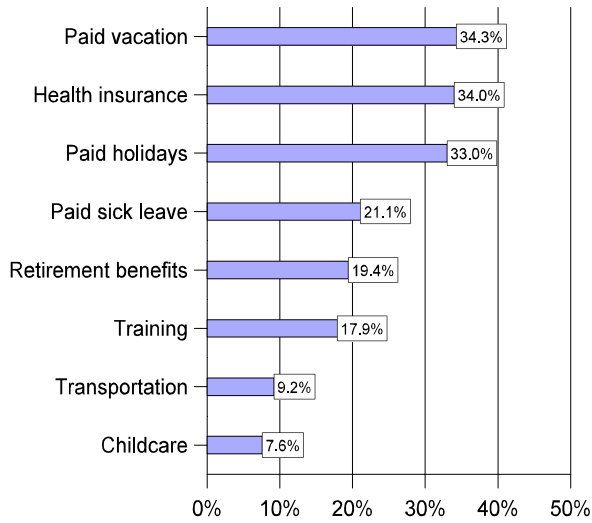


Figure 11. Paid Employment: Benefits

## Paid Employment: Benefits

Respondents who held paid jobs during their last three months receiving assistance were asked about benefits offered by their employers. One third or more received paid vacation and paid holidays. Thirty-four percent reported that health insurance was offered by their employer.

Note: The percentages in Figure 11 may add to more than 100 because individuals could receive multiple types of benefits from an employer.

**Table 1. Paid Employment**

<b>Type of Job, Hours Worked per Week, and Hourly Earnings</b>			
<b>Type of Job</b>	<b>Percentage with Type of Job</b>	<b>Mean Hours Worked per Week</b>	<b>Mean Hourly Earnings</b>
Food services	28.1 %	31.2 hours	\$ 5.05
Healthcare	16.2 %	32.3 hours	\$ 7.75
Education/childcare	11.9 %	28.8 hours	\$ 6.25
Manufacturing	6.2 %	34.3 hours	\$ 6.37
Cleaning	3.5 %	32.5 hours	\$ 5.63
Hotel	3.1 %	27.7 hours	\$ 5.89
Misc. retail	3.0 %	25.6 hours	\$ 6.20
Office work	2.8 %	39.7 hours	\$ 5.39
Apparel sales	2.7 %	23.9 hours	\$ 7.75
Entertainment	2.6 %	29.8 hours	\$ 7.15
Transportation	2.4 %	43.7 hours	\$ 5.42
Construction	2.4 %	36.7 hours	\$ 9.52
Telemarketing	2.3 %	39.9 hours	\$ 6.34
Personal services <sup>4</sup>	2.3 %	32.0 hours	\$ 3.81
Government	1.6 %	19.9 hours	\$ 4.74
Banking	1.4 %	35.5 hours	\$ 9.66
Business services <sup>5</sup>	1.4 %	36.0 hours	\$ 7.20
Warehouse	0.3 %	36.2 hours	\$ 7.26
Other	5.8 %	26.1 hours	\$ 6.61
All jobs	100.0 %	31.4 hours	\$ 6.23

Data Source: Longitudinal Study Survey, Wave I

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<sup>4</sup> “Personal services” refers to miscellaneous personal services such as hairdressing, house painting, or landscaping.

<sup>5</sup> “Business services” refers to miscellaneous services for businesses such as security or delivery.

## Evaluation of Paid Employment

Individuals who were employed at some time during their last three months receiving OWF assistance were asked to choose a statement characterizing their most recent job. The greatest percentage (37.7 percent) chose “I like it and it offers potential for permanent employment or advancement.” However, nearly as many (34.5 percent) chose “It’s just a temporary job that I will do until something better comes along.” The smallest percentage (27.3 percent) chose “I like it, but it offers no potential for permanent employment or advancement.”

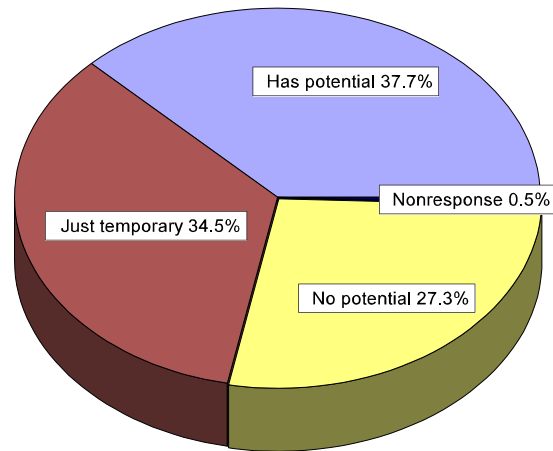


Figure 12. Evaluation of Paid Employment

## Section III. Family Well-Being

This section describes the well-being of families at the time of the survey. The topics covered are income, assets, debt, housing, transportation, and respondents’ own health and healthcare (children’s health and healthcare are covered in the next section).

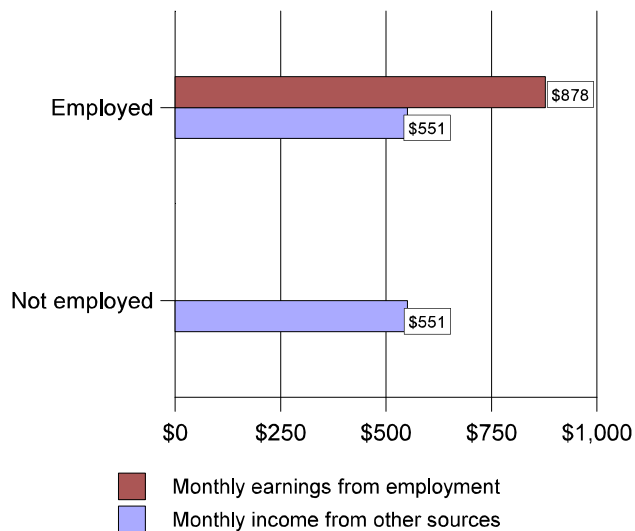


Figure 13. Average Monthly Income

## Monthly Income

The 32.9 percent of individuals who were employed at the time of the interview earned on average \$878.25 per month from employment and also received an average of \$550.66 per month from nonemployment sources.

The 67.1 percent of individuals who were not working and had no monthly income from employment at the time of the interview had an average monthly income of \$551.02 from other sources.

Other sources of income included employment of other household members, child support, Workers’ Compensation, SSI, veterans benefits, unemployment benefits, food stamps, and foster care payments. OWF cash assistance payments are not included in the income from other sources totals.

## Savings and Debt

At the time of the interview, respondents' average debt (\$2,379) was nearly 80 times greater than their average savings (\$30).

Debt was defined as "money owed to stores, banks, hospitals or doctors, credit unions, credit card companies, and friends and relatives." It does not include money owed on a mortgage or vehicle.

Savings was defined as money "in savings or other bank or investment accounts."

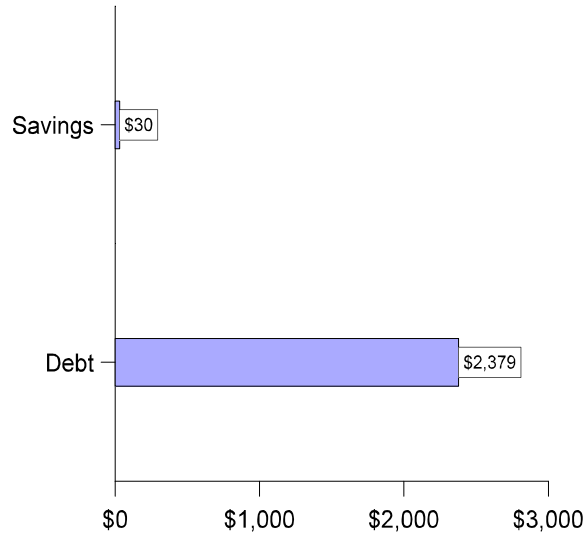


Figure 14. Average Savings and Debt

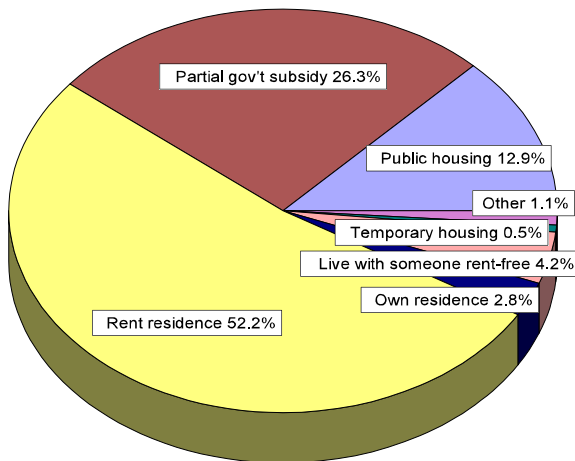


Figure 15. Housing Situation

## Housing Situation

At the time of the interview, more than half of the respondents lived in rental housing. Nearly 40 percent lived in subsidized or public housing.

Across all types of housing, the average monthly payment was \$259. The average monthly unsubsidized rent was \$331. The average monthly mortgage among homeowners was \$283. The average monthly rent was \$184 for residents of partially subsidized housing and \$108 for public housing residents.

### Public Transportation Use

Nearly two-fifths of the individuals (38.4 percent) reported that they owned a vehicle at the time of the interview.

Respondents were asked “How often do you use the public transportation system in your area?” As shown in Figure 16, the majority (52.9 percent) reported using public transportation at least occasionally, and 23 percent said that they used public transportation all the time.

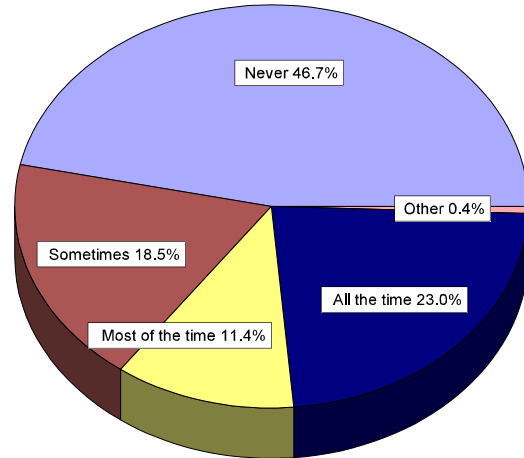


Figure 16. Public Transportation Use

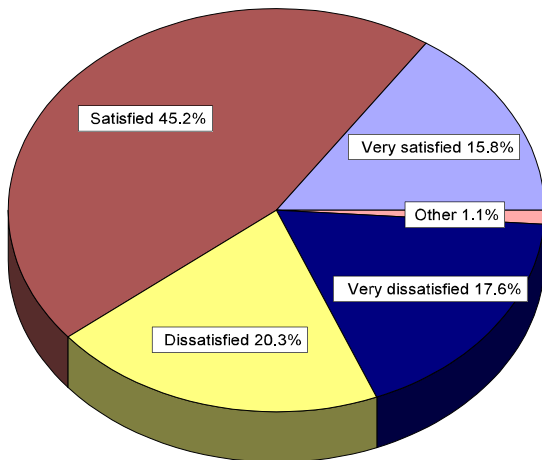


Figure 17. Satisfaction With Transportation

### Satisfaction With Transportation

Respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with your current transportation arrangements?” More than half (61.0 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with their transportation arrangements, but a substantial percentage (37.9 percent) reported being dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with their transportation.

## Travel Time to Work and Childcare

Respondents were asked how long it took them to travel to jobs that they held at the time of the interview. It took most individuals (81.0 percent) half an hour or less to travel to work.

Respondents who used childcare were asked how long it took them to travel to formal childcare (i.e., a program at a licensed childcare provider) for children ages 0 to 5, and to any kind of childcare for children ages 6 to 12. The majority of those who used childcare traveled 15 minutes or less to their childcare provider.

**Table 2. Travel Time to Work and Childcare**

Time of Travel	Purpose of Travel		
	Travel to work	Travel to formal childcare (ages 0–5)	Travel to any childcare (ages 6–12)
15 minutes or less	50.9%	65.8%	74.2%
16 to 30 minutes	30.1%	19.6%	4.4%
31 to 60 minutes	13.4%	7.7%	2.5%
61 to 120 minutes	2.9%	2.4%	0.2%
More than 120 minutes	1.1%	0.6%	0.0%
Uncertain	1.6%	3.9%	12.5%
Nonresponse	0.0%	0.0%	6.2%

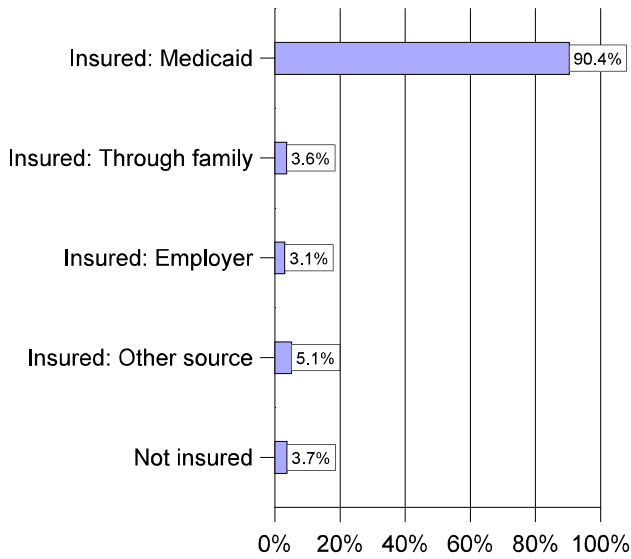


Figure 18. Respondents' Health Insurance

### Respondents' Health Insurance

Respondents were asked to describe the source of their own health insurance (if any) at the time of the interview. (Children's health insurance coverage is described later in this report.) Of the respondents, 90.4 percent reported having Medicaid coverage. Only 3.7 percent said that they had no health coverage.

Note: The percentages in Figure 18 add to more than 100 because respondents could report more than one source of health coverage.

### Respondents' Health

Nearly two-thirds of the individuals (65.5 percent) reported that they were in good or excellent health at the time of the interview. However, 11.7 percent described their health as "poor."

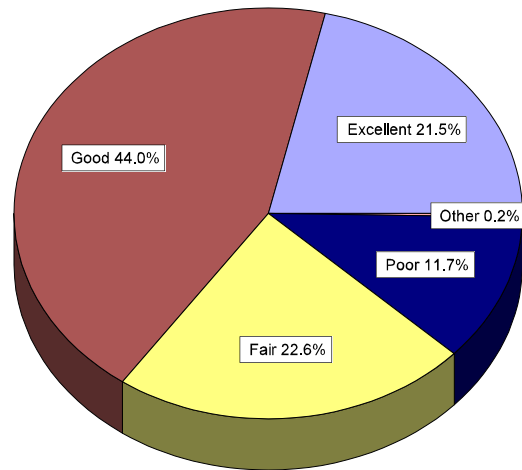


Figure 19. Respondents' Health

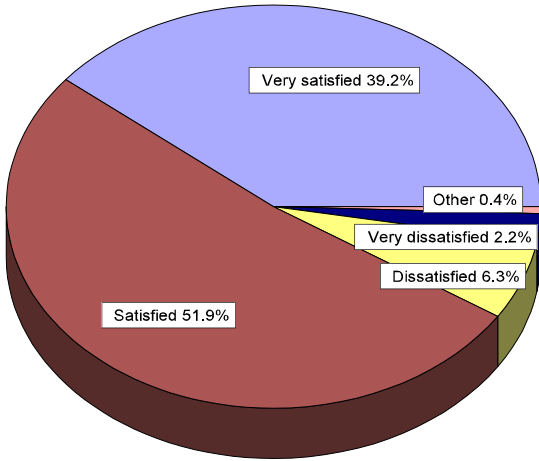


Figure 20. Satisfaction With Access to Medical Care

**Satisfaction With Access to Medical Care**

Respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with your access to medical care?” (This question referred to respondents themselves; a separate question was asked regarding satisfaction with access to medical care for their children.) A large majority of individuals (91.1 percent) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with their access to medical care.

**Section IV. Child Well-Being**

This section describes the well-being of respondents’ children at the time of the survey. The topics covered are children’s medical coverage and health, childcare, academic achievement and behavior at school, contact with Children’s Protective Services, children’s living situations, and teen pregnancy.

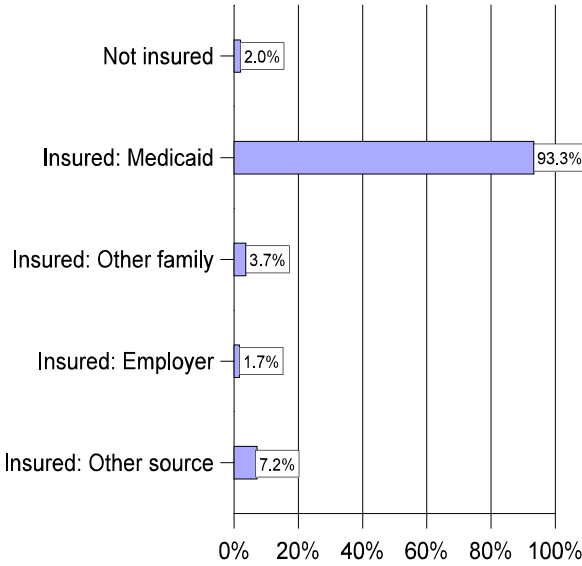


Figure 21. Children's Health Insurance

**Children’s Health Insurance**

Respondents were asked to describe the source of their children’s health insurance (if any) at the time of the interview. Most (93.3 percent) reported coverage through Medicaid. Only 2.0 percent said that they had no health coverage for their children.

Note: “Employer” refers to insurance through the respondent’s employer, while “Other family” refers to insurance through a family member other than the respondent. The percentages in Figure 21 add to more than 100 because respondents could report more than one source of health coverage for their children.

## Children's Health

Ninety percent of the individuals said that their children were in good or excellent health at the time of the interview. Only 1.6 percent described their children's health as "poor."

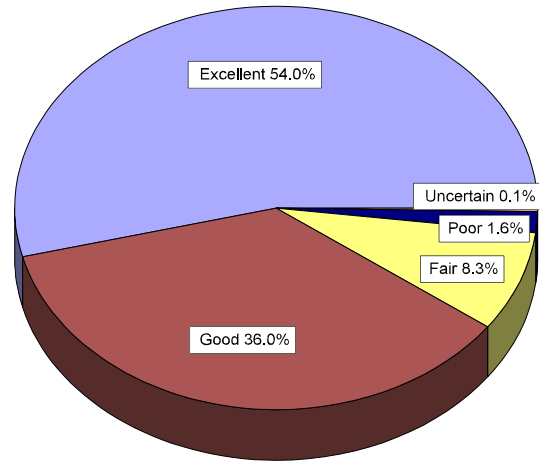


Figure 22. Children's Health

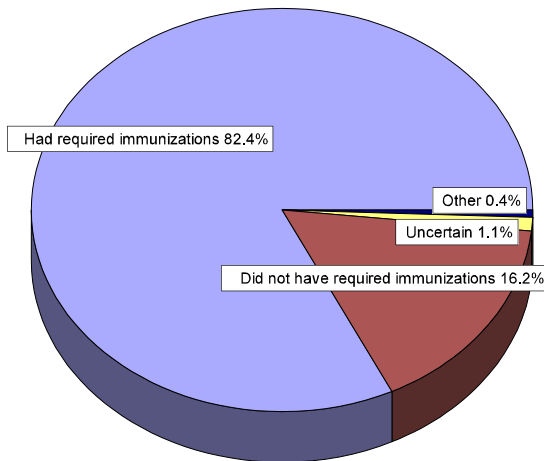


Figure 23. Immunizations

## Immunizations

Respondents were asked "Have any of your children that needed immunizations received the immunizations this last year?" More than four-fifths of the individuals (82.4 percent) reported that their children who needed immunizations had received them during the last year.

### Satisfaction With Access to Medical Care for Children

Respondents were asked “How satisfied are you with your ability to get medical care for your children?” The majority of individuals (95.1 percent) reported being satisfied or very satisfied with access to medical care for their children.

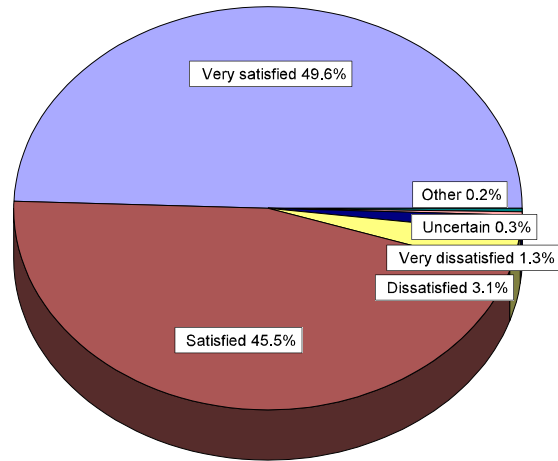


Figure 24. Children: Access to Medical Care

### Type and Cost of Childcare

The majority of individuals (90.3 percent) reported having at least one child age 12 or under. As shown in Table 3, four out of five individuals who had children age 12 and under reported using some form of childcare (84.9 percent and 82.1 percent for children age 5 and under and children ages 6 to 12, respectively). Informal childcare or no childcare was reported more often for children ages 6 to 12 (79.7 percent) than it was for children age 5 and under (54.6 percent). The average monthly childcare payments were \$34 and \$30 for children age 5 and under and children ages 6 to 12, respectively.

Respondents tended to be satisfied or very satisfied with their childcare arrangements. On a 1-to-4 scale, where 1 means “very dissatisfied” and 4 means “very satisfied,” mean reported satisfaction with childcare arrangements was 3.5 for children age 5 and under, and 3.4 for children ages 6 to 12.

**Table 3. Percentage of Respondents With Children by Type of Childcare and Average Cost per Child per Month**

Type of childcare	Childcare for children age 5 and under		Childcare for children ages 6 to 12	
	Percentage	Average cost per child per month	Percentage	Average cost per child per month
<b>Do not use childcare</b>	15.1 %	n/a <sup>6</sup>	17.9 %	n/a <sup>6</sup>
<b>Use informal childcare only<sup>7</sup></b>	39.5 %	\$ 34	61.8 %	\$ 33
<b>Use formal childcare only<sup>8</sup></b>	22.0 %	\$ 25	11.0 %	\$ 30
<b>Use both formal and informal childcare</b>	21.1 %	\$ 44	1.9 %	\$ 46
<b>Other</b>	2.3 %	\$ 47	7.4 %	\$ 18
<b>Total</b>	100.0 %	\$ 34	100.0%	\$ 30

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<sup>6</sup> Respondents who did not use childcare were not asked about mean monthly payment for childcare.

<sup>7</sup> Informal childcare was defined as having children looked after by “family, friends, a babysitter or some other informal childcare provider.”

<sup>8</sup> Formal childcare was defined as “a program at a licensed childcare provider such as Head Start or a preschool.”

## Awareness of and Application for CDJFS Childcare Subsidies

Respondents were asked if they were aware that the County Department of Job and Family Services (CDJFS) could help them pay for childcare and, if so, whether they applied for and received such assistance (Figure 25). Nineteen percent reported being in receipt of a CDJFS childcare subsidy. Nearly a third (31.2 percent) said they were not aware of the availability of this assistance. Another 42.0 percent were aware of the availability of the assistance but did not apply.

Of these, as shown in Figure 26, 45.5 percent said that they did not apply because they already had free childcare, and another 33.2 percent said they did not apply because they did not want or need childcare payment assistance.

Note: These results are limited to the subset of individuals with children of childcare age (0 to 12 years).

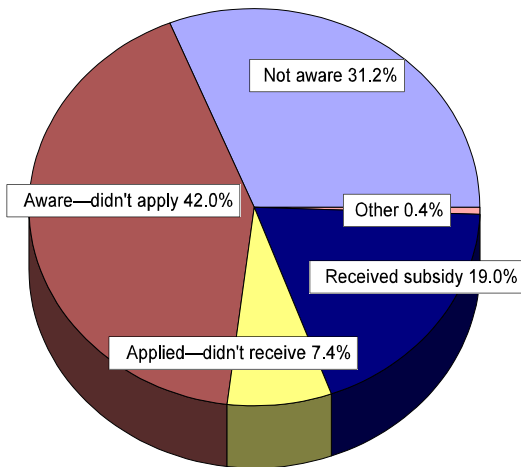


Figure 25. Awareness of and Application for CDJFS Childcare Subsidies

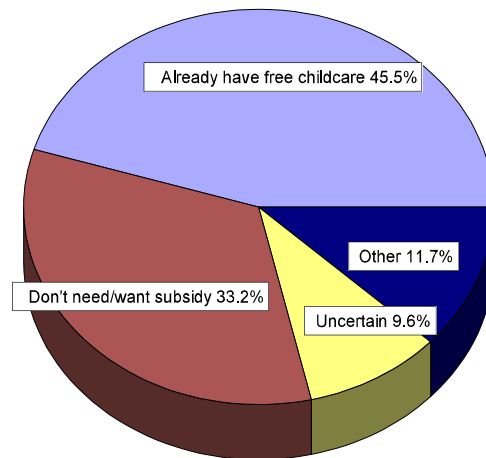


Figure 26. Reasons Respondents Did Not Apply for CDJFS Childcare Subsidies

## Source of Formal Childcare for Children Under the Age of 6

Respondents with children under the age of 6 in formal childcare were asked to describe the source of formal childcare. The greatest proportion (52.7 percent) cited daycare centers, although nearly as many reported Head Start (47.0 percent) and preschools or nursery schools (45.2 percent).

Note: The percentages in Figure 27 add to more than 100 because respondents could report multiple sources of formal childcare.

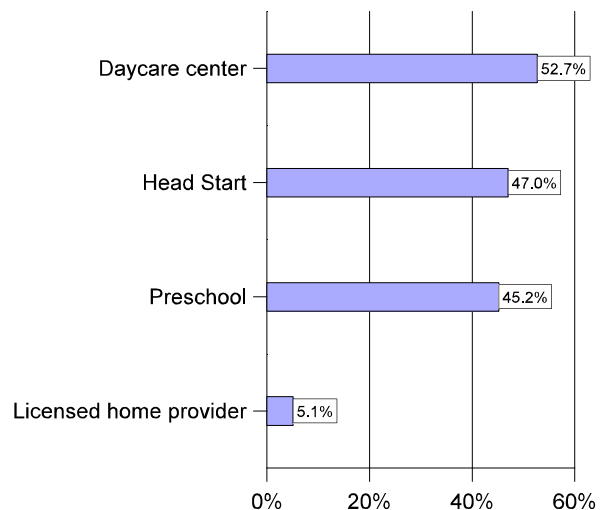


Figure 27. Source of Formal Childcare (children ages 0–5)

## Satisfaction With Children’s Grades

As shown in Figure 28, most individuals (81.2 percent) were either “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with the grades received by their 6- to 12-year-old children. The results in Figure 29 indicate that slightly fewer (73.5 percent) were satisfied or very satisfied with the grades received by their older children.

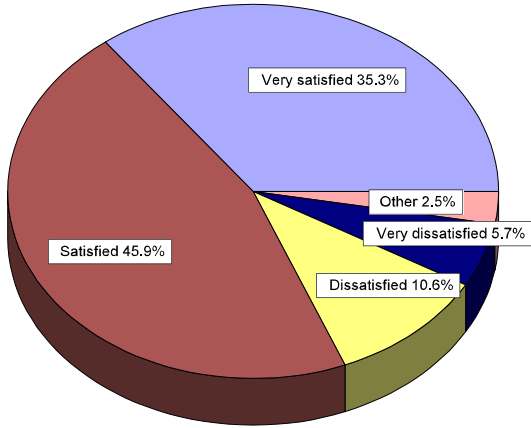


Figure 28. Satisfaction With Children’s Grades (ages 6–12)

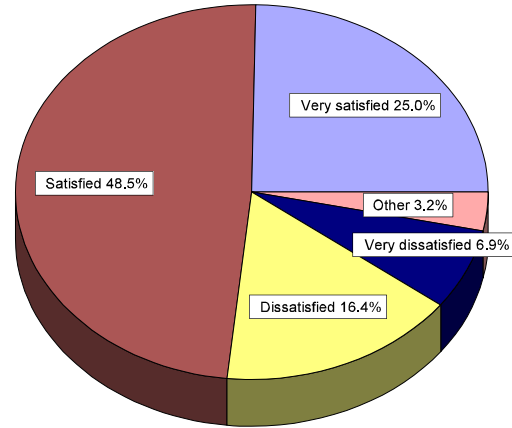


Figure 29. Satisfaction With Children's Grades (ages 13–18)

## Satisfaction With Children’s School

Respondents were asked about their satisfaction with their children’s school(s). Most respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with their children’s school(s).

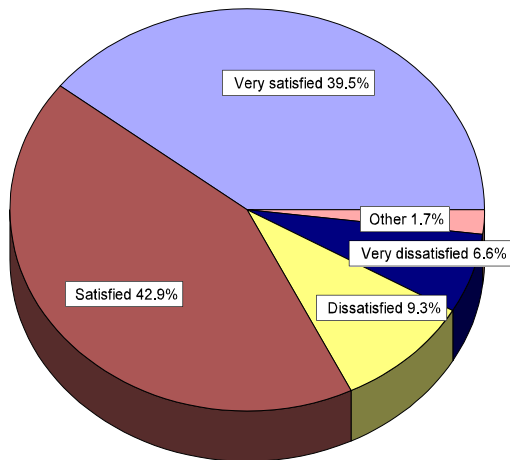


Figure 30. Satisfaction With Children's School (ages 6–12)

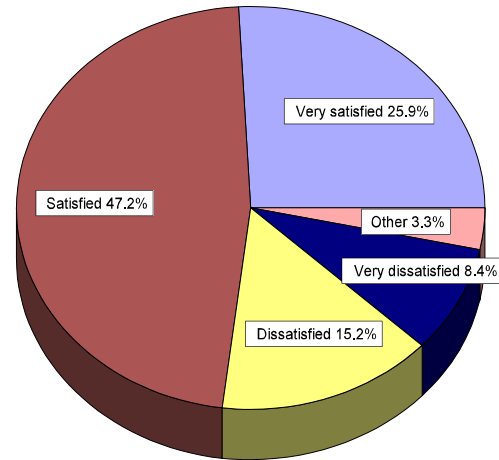


Figure 31. Satisfaction With Children's School (ages 13–18)

## Truancy, Suspension or Expulsion From School, and Academic Performance Problems

Respondents were asked whether any of their children had experienced truancy, suspension or expulsion, or academic problems (as indicated by respondents being called into the school to discuss problems with their children's performance in class) since January 2000. Most individuals reported at least one of these problems. The most commonly reported problem was poor academic performance (64.1 percent and 68.9 percent for children ages 6 to 12 and 13 to 18, respectively).

Note: The percentages in Figures 32 and 33 may add to more than 100 because respondents could report that their children experienced more than one of these problems.

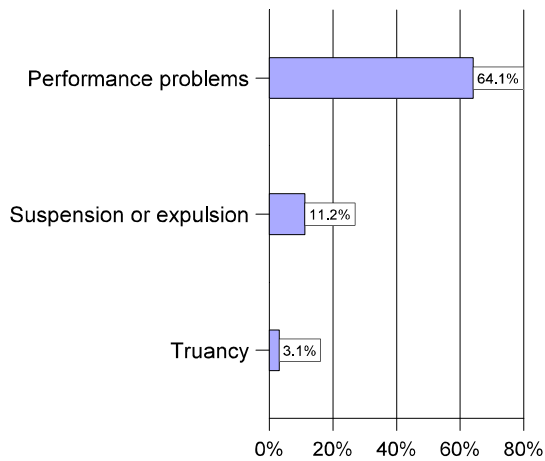


Figure 32. Children's School-Related Problems (ages 6–12)

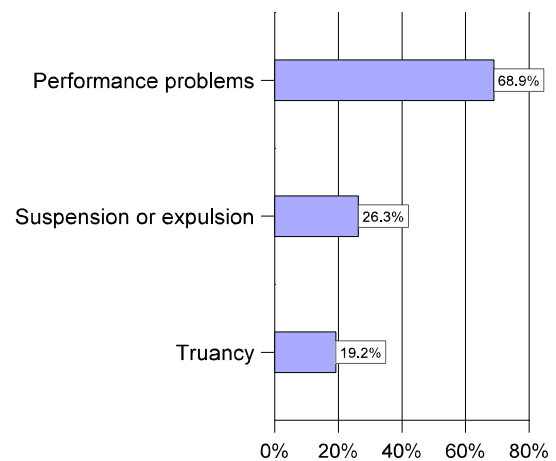


Figure 33. Children's School-Related Problems (ages 13–18)

## Contact With Children's Protective Services

Only 5.6 percent of all respondents reported having had contact with Children's Protective Services (CPS) during their last three months receiving OWF assistance (Figure 34). For the 5.6 percent who had contact with CPS, for the majority (54.2 percent) the contact took the form of counseling or help (Figure 35).

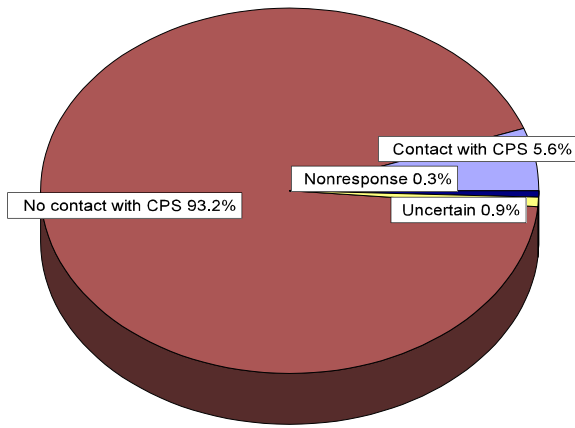


Figure 34. Contact With Children's Protective Services

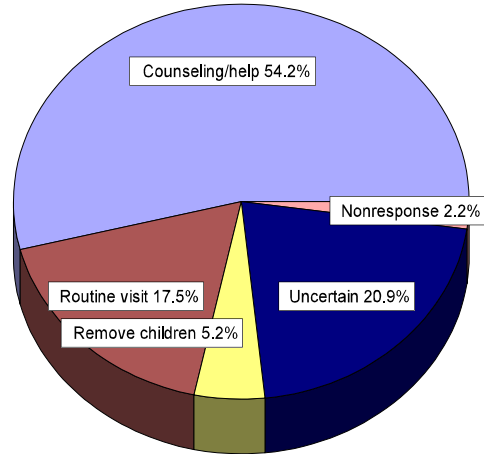


Figure 35. Reasons for Contact With Children's Protective Services

## Sending Children To Live With Family or Friends

A small proportion of all respondents (4.6 percent) reported that they had sent one or more of their children to live with another family member or friend at some time during their last three months receiving OWF assistance. Children were sent away for a variety of reasons, including loss of custody as well as the respondent's decision to remove the child because of lack of money, fear for the child's safety, homelessness, and work schedule problems.

## Child Pregnancy

Among individuals with children ages 13 or older, 2.6 percent reported that one or more of their children were pregnant at the time of the survey.