

Growing Up In New York

2007 Update

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A year has passed since the publication of *Growing Up In New York: Charting the Next Generation of Workers, Citizens and Leaders*. Our chartbook surveyed the well-being of New York's children across a broad spectrum of indicators, looking for the key information that policymakers need to understand the trends that matter to child well-being.

Three months after the publication of *Growing Up*, New York elected a new governor, Eliot Spitzer. The Governor has brought fresh commitment and creativity to addressing the needs of children. In particular, a newly-established Children's Cabinet will coordinate state policy affecting children, potentially creating new opportunities to rethink basic structural assumptions in many areas of policy.

It seemed like an opportune time to update *Growing Up*. Our methodology is straightforward: we present one chart from each of *Growing Up's* seven chapters, trend the chart forward another year, and add new information where available.

A single year may seem a short amount of time in which to expect change. But each indicator was selected because of its openness to policy intervention. If teen prenatal care rates are not improving, it's because the state's policy interventions have not caused them to improve. Improved minority graduation rates, on the other hand, result from several years of hard work, especially among educational leaders in New York City.

This year's update provides clear policy direction for improving each indicator over the next several years.

An underlying theme of our recommendations is the need

for strategic planning. Over the years, program after program has been added to the policy mix, each with its own staff of professionals and cadre of committed supporters. Yet children and families are frustrated with the a la carte mix of programs they have to navigate, often without much assistance.

Several charts—on high school graduation rates, teen prenatal care, and disconnected youth—track roughly the same population: teenagers at risk of missing out on the educational and work experiences they need to succeed as adults. This convergence reflects the way various state programs touch the lives of children and youth simultaneously or in close succession. Yet the dedicated staff of these programs mostly do not coordinate their efforts or even communicate to one another the vital information they possess.

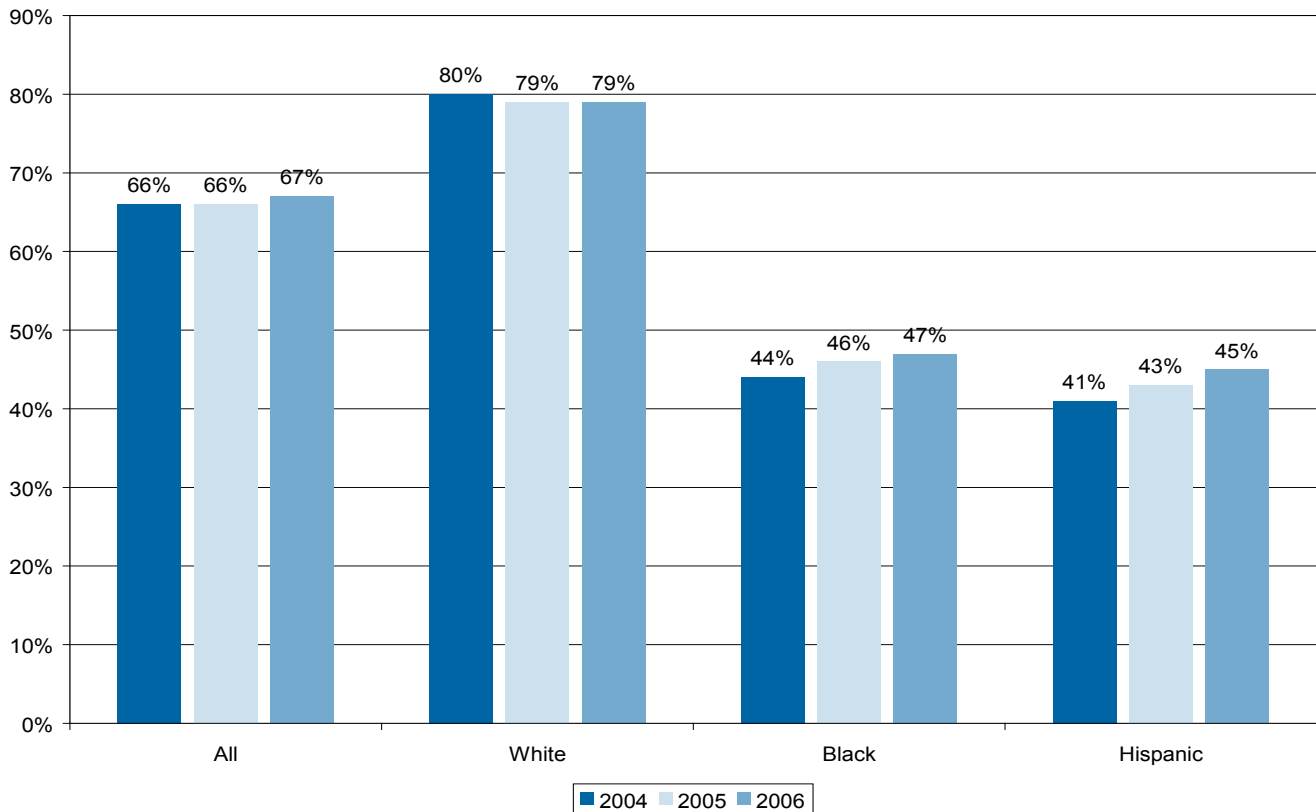
New York has a record to take pride in and institutions to build upon. Yet our state can do better—by learning from the best practices of other states, finding creative ways to bridge gaps between systems, and creating a “culture of evidence” in which innovations must meet performance-based standards or fall by the wayside. First, however, policymakers must embrace change as both necessary and achievable.

Summary of Indicators

Education: Minority Graduation Rate	↑
Birth to Five: Early Care & Education Funding	↑
Health: Prenatal Care	○
Mental Health: Emotionally Disturbed Students	○
Economic Security: Children on Public Assistance	○
Child Welfare: Child Maltreatment Reports	○
Youth: Disconnected Youth	↑

EDUCATION

4-Year Graduation Rates by Race and Ethnicity, 2004-06



Source: New York State Education Department

Definition: This chart depicts the change in the on-time high school graduation rate between 2004 and 2006, broken out by race and ethnicity. In New York, this rate is defined as the share of 9th grade students who stay in school and graduate four years later.

Significance: New York's on-time graduation rate remained about the same in 2006 as in previous years. Small but measurable improvements have taken place among Black and Hispanic students, who have

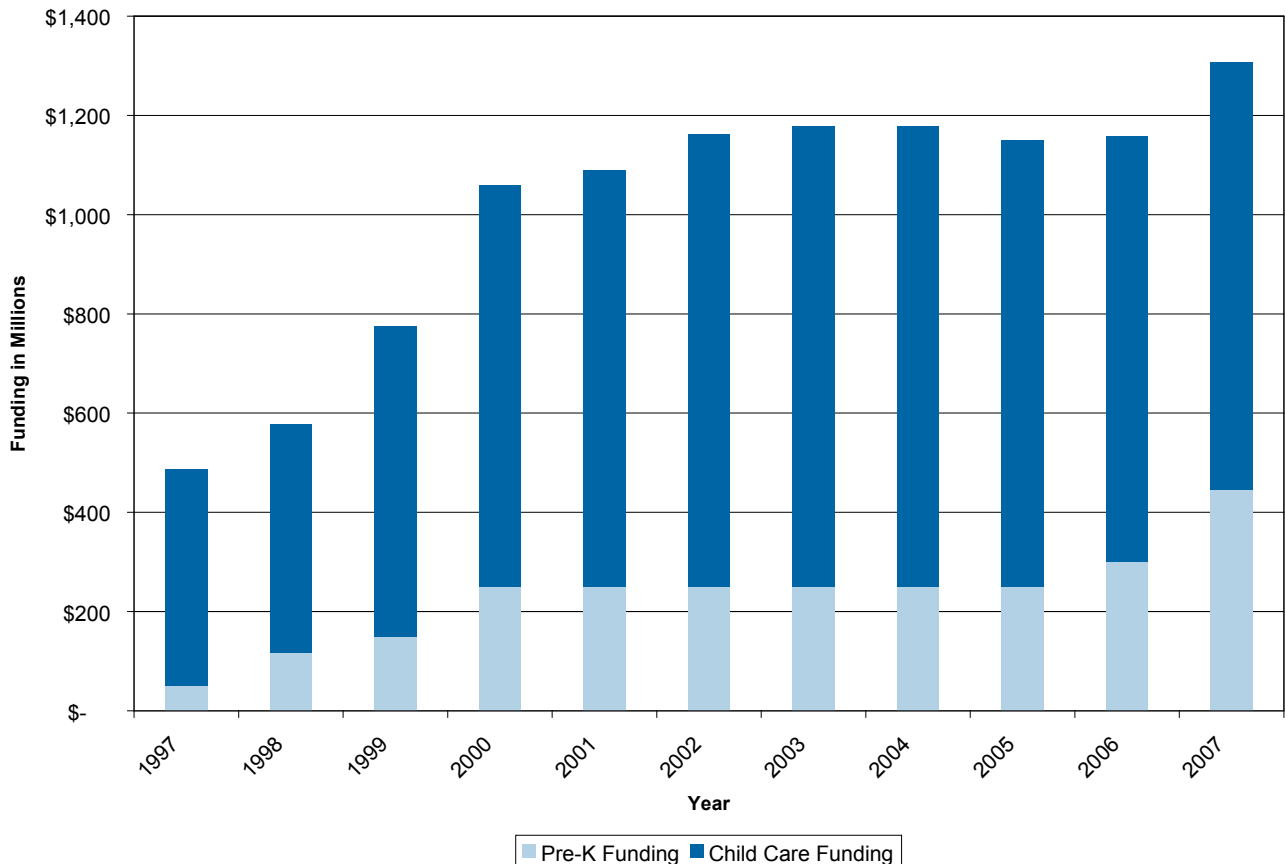
traditionally been at high risk of dropout. Nonetheless, fewer than half of Black and Hispanic students graduate in four years, just as in previous years; another ten percent graduate after five years.

As a result of the continuing ethnic disparity in graduation rates, the educational pipeline is sharply segregated. Black and Hispanic youth account for more than one-third of high school-age students, one-quarter of on-time graduates, and well over half of all dropouts.

Recommendation:

► *New York State should implement the Contract for Excellence, which provides additional resources for school districts to use in one of five allowable educational improvement activities. Careful oversight is essential to ensure that school districts make effective use of resources.*

Early Care and Education Funding



Sources: New York State Division of the Budget, New York State Education Department

Definition: This chart shows state funding for both subsidized child care and prekindergarten programs.

Significance: Overall, funding for early care and education programs has grown continually.

Child care subsidies hit a funding peak of \$929 million in 2004, but dropped 7% to \$862 million

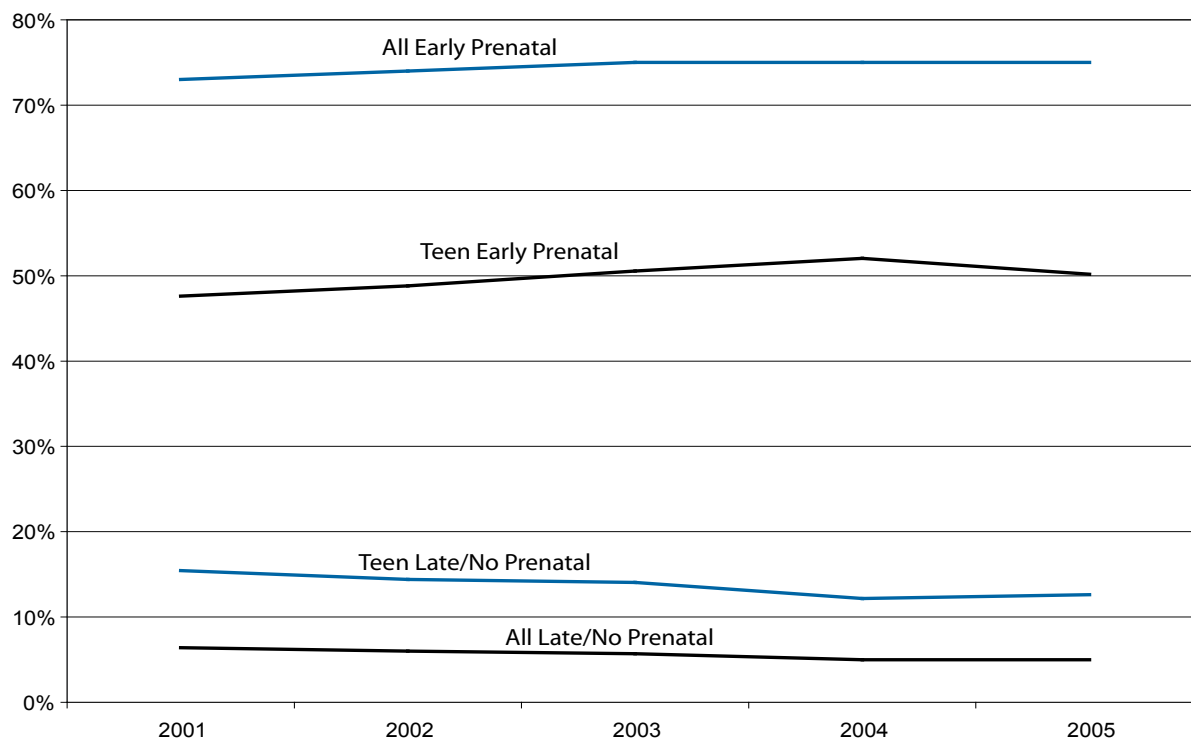
in 2007. The reduction in funding resulted in 14,000 children losing subsidized child care.

Pre-K hit an all-time funding high of \$446 million in 2007-2008. Pre-K programs served 71,600 children in 2005. New York State could serve an additional 16,000 children with this funding.

Recommendation:

► *New York State should develop an appropriately funded, comprehensive plan for prekindergarten expansion, and should restore and build capacity for high-quality child care.*

Early and Late/No Prenatal Care Among Teen Mothers and All Mothers



Source: New York State Department of Health

Definition: This chart compares the rates of early and late/no prenatal care between all mothers in New York and mothers under 18. “Early” prenatal care refers to care received in the first trimester and “late/no prenatal care” refers to mothers who did not receive care until at least the third trimester.

Significance: Teen mothers in New York are more than twice as likely to receive late/no prenatal care than all mothers. This disparity has serious health consequences, because early prenatal care serves so many important functions: increasing

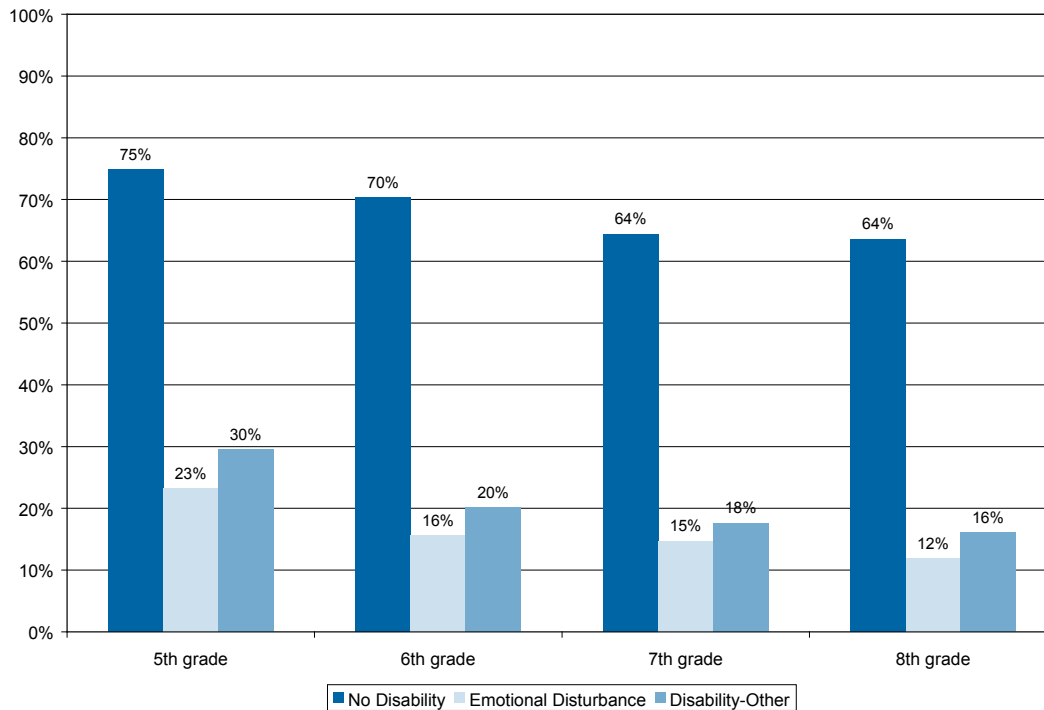
the likelihood that the baby will be born at a healthy weight and without complications, reducing the financial costs associated with poor birth outcomes, and ensuring that at-risk mothers have access to medical, nutritional, and educational interventions.

New York has a lower rate of teen motherhood than the national average, but a higher rate of teen mothers who do not receive early prenatal care. Each year, roughly 10-15% of teen mothers (about 1,500-2,500 women under 18) get no prenatal care or obtain it far too late.

Recommendation:

► *New York should develop a comprehensive strategy to reduce the incidence of teen pregnancy and improve access to prenatal care, utilizing proven strategies to enroll adolescents in health insurance programs, connect them to a medical home, and establish youth development programs for teenagers at risk of early pregnancy.*

Reading Proficiency of Elementary Students by Disability Status, 2006-07



Source: New York State Education Department

Definition: This chart displays the share of elementary students found to be proficient in reading by disability status during the 2006-07 school year. The English Language Arts (ELA) examination is administered to all students in grades 3-8.

Significance: While experts have long discussed the literacy gap between disabled and non-disabled students, newly available ELA data clarifies the magnitude of that gap—especially for students who suffer from serious emotional disturbance.

More than 15,000 elementary students statewide have been diagnosed with a serious

emotional disturbance. Their reading proficiency is poorer than both non-disabled students and those with other types of disabilities. A non-disabled student is four times as likely to read at grade level as an emotionally disturbed student, and a student with another disability 50% more likely.

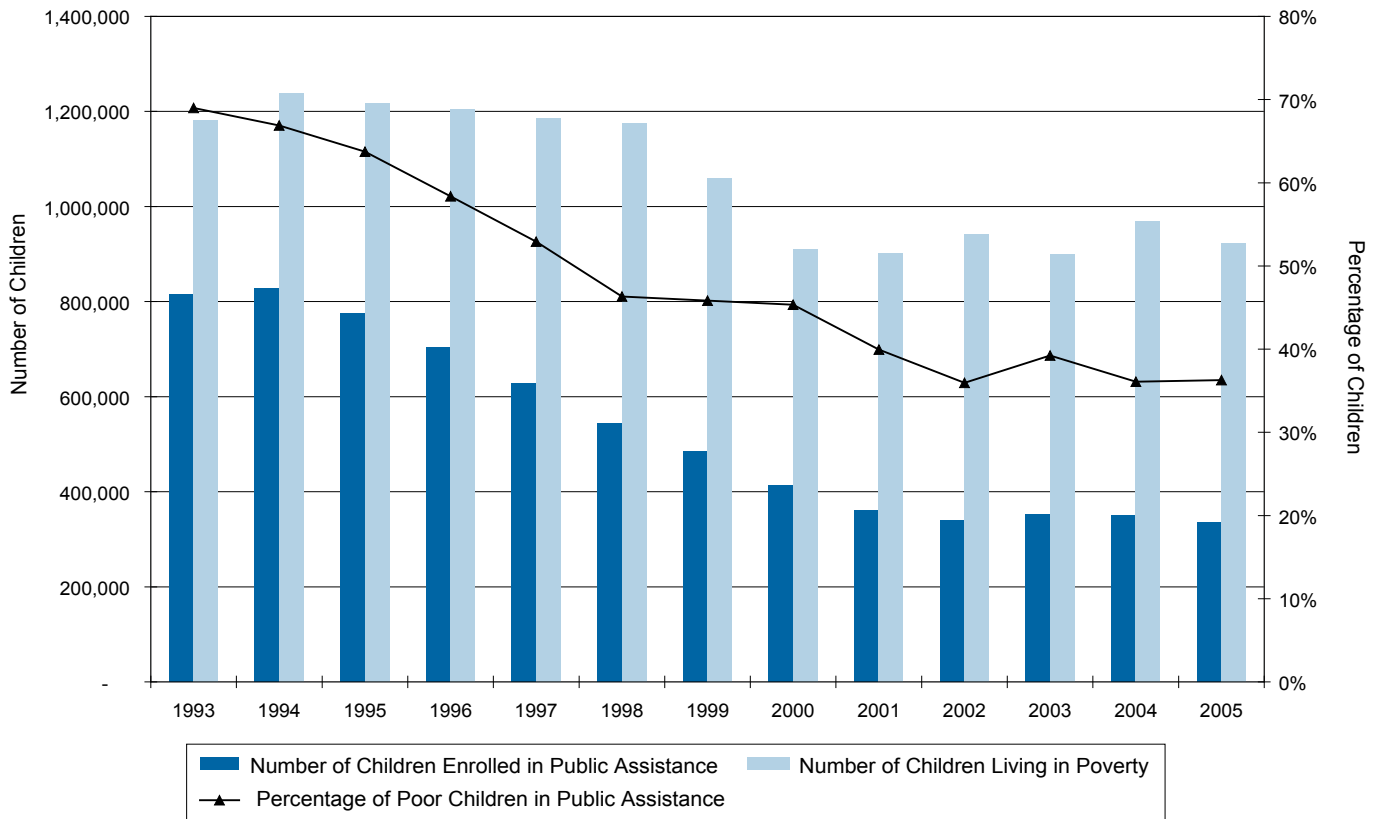
The ELA has focused the public's attention on an alarming and widespread decline in reading proficiency between 5th and 8th grades. But this drop is much more serious for students with disabilities. While non-disabled students' reading proficiency dropped by about one-sixth in 2007, disabled students' reading proficiency dropped by half.

Recommendation:

► *New York needs to effectively implement the Child and Family Clinic Plus program, which expands the role of pediatric clinics to identify and intervene effectively at the earliest possible point in a child's life.*

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Enrollment of Poor Children on Public Assistance



Sources: New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

Definition: The blue bars depict trends in the number of poor children in New York receiving public assistance and the population of all poor children in New York. The federal income cutoff to be considered “poor” in 2006 was \$20,000 for a family of four. The black line shows the ratio of the former to the latter expressed as a percentage.

Significance: Enrollment in public assistance has fallen by more than half since the mid-1990s, one of the most widely praised public policy developments of the past decade. If any group of New

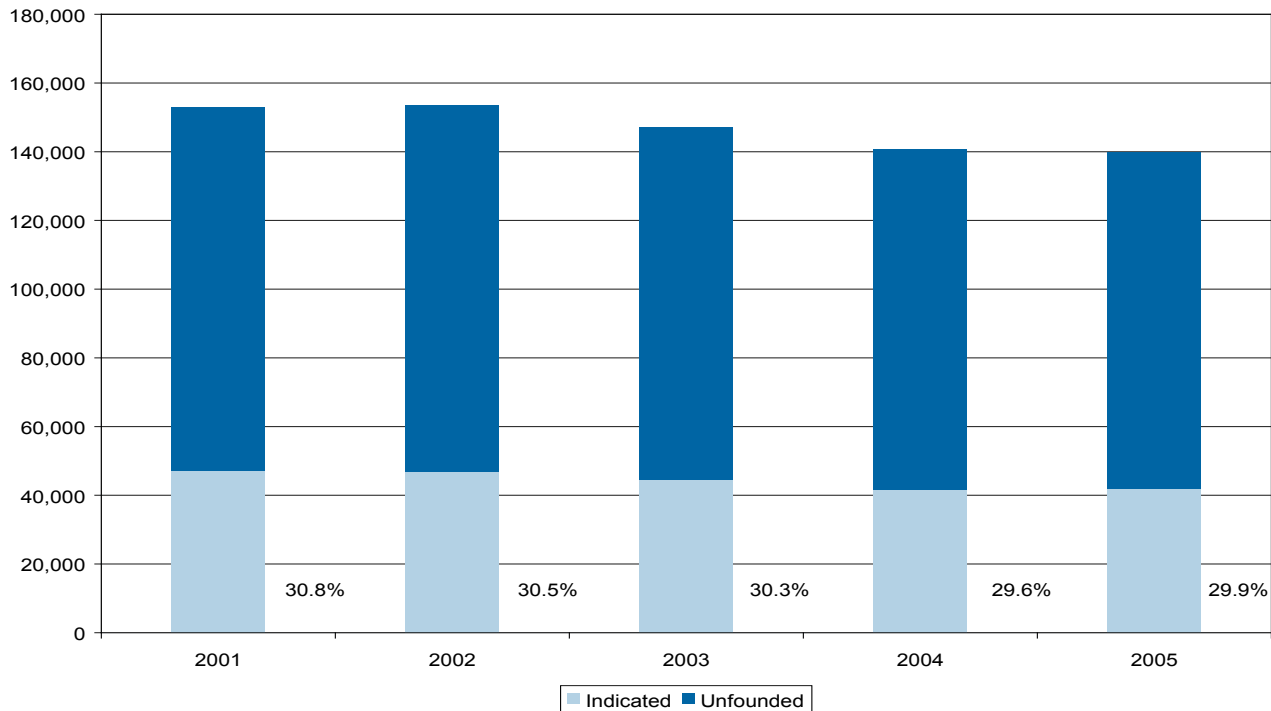
Yorkers would appear to have a legitimate need for public assistance, it would be children living in poverty. Financial instability can result in missed school days, malnutrition, homelessness and other negative events with potentially lifelong damage to a child’s future.

The share of poor children on public assistance has dropped from 69% in 1993 to 36% in 2005. Almost two-thirds of all poor children are not receiving public assistance, and some large fraction of those children may be suffering as a result.

Recommendation:

➤ *Identify the population of families with children that have a valid claim to public assistance, encourage those families to enroll, and then provide intensive case management, education and workforce training to provide the best possible opportunity to rise out of poverty.*

Reports of Maltreatment Received and Indicated



Source: Data Warehouse, New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS), 6/14/07.

Definition: This chart shows the number of reports of child maltreatment (abuse and neglect) received by the New York State Central Child Abuse Register from 2001 to 2005. A report confirmed by investigation is considered “indicated,” while a report not confirmed is considered “unfounded.”

Significance: In 2005, the State Central Register received 139,810 reports, a slight decline from 2004. Of these reports, 30% were “indicated” and 70% were “unfounded.”

Fewer than one-third of all child maltreatment reports are confirmed, a ratio consistent over

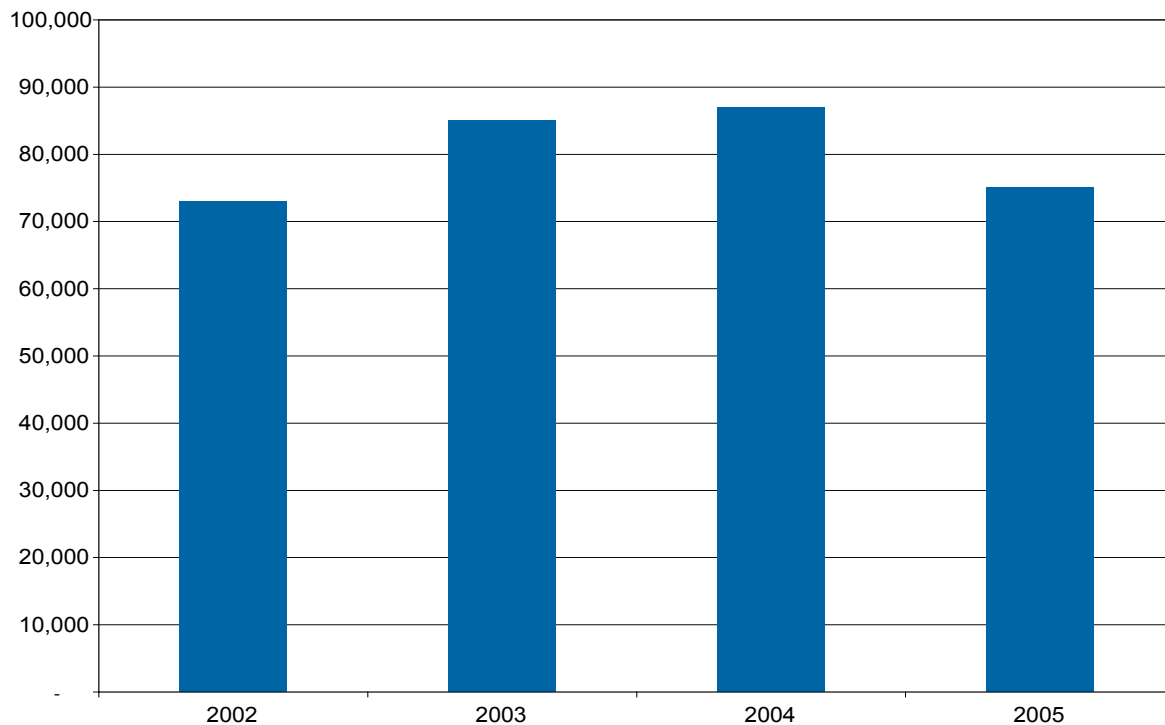
the course of many years. All of those families whose reports were later determined to be “unfounded” were subjected to an intrusive and demoralizing investigation. Fewer than half of the families with indicated cases access services that may prevent future incidents of child maltreatment.

Legislation allowing a differential approach to child protection reports was recently passed in both houses. If signed into law, this approach will reduce the number of unfounded reports, increase the number of families accessing prevention services and lead to improved child safety.

Recommendation:

► *Increase the availability of preventive services for families by offering additional financial support to local districts to increase services in their communities. Changing the Child Welfare Financing from its current rate of 65/35% to a rate of 75/25% will support local districts’ ability to respond to the need in their communities and increase the services offered.*

Number of Disconnected Youth in New York



Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation

Definition: This chart depicts teenagers between the ages of 16 and 19 who are not enrolled in school (full- or part-time) and not employed (full- or part-time).

Significance: Youth who are disconnected from school and work are most likely to fail as adults. These teens, typically cut off from education and employment experiences that provide the learning, life skills and credentials needed for success, are more likely to remain stuck in low-wage jobs, live in high-poverty neighborhoods and engage in destructive behaviors.

In the most recent year, the number of disconnected youth in New York State dropped from 87,000 to 75,000. Any drop in the number of disconnected youth is good news; but as a share of all youth, the decline was less impressive, sliding modestly from 9% of all youth in 2004 to 8% in 2005.

The decline in the population of disconnected youth may be related to declining high school dropout and unemployment rates. Between 2004 and 2005, the number of high school dropouts fell from 78,000 to 61,000, while the number of unemployed New Yorkers fell from 542,000 to 470,000.

Recommendation:

► *New York State should assure that all youth are prepared for independent living through a variety of supports and services including work experience, tuition waivers for continuing education, and consistent stable relationships with family members or caring adults.*