



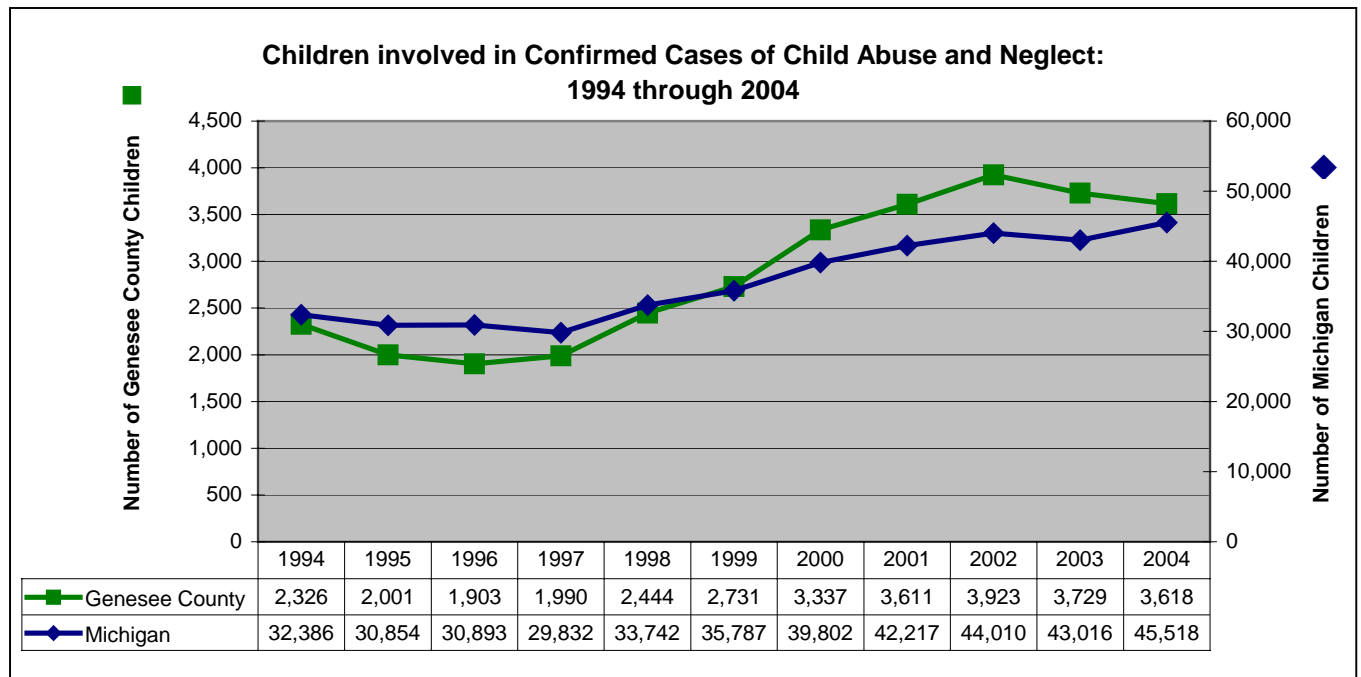
**Mission:** Improve the quality of life for children and families in Genesee County through assessment, public awareness and advocacy.

## Fact Sheet 2.2 Child Abuse and Neglect

Child abuse and neglect are associated with both short-term and long-term negative consequences for children's physical and mental health, cognitive skills, educational attainment, and social development, including anti-social behavior and physical aggression.

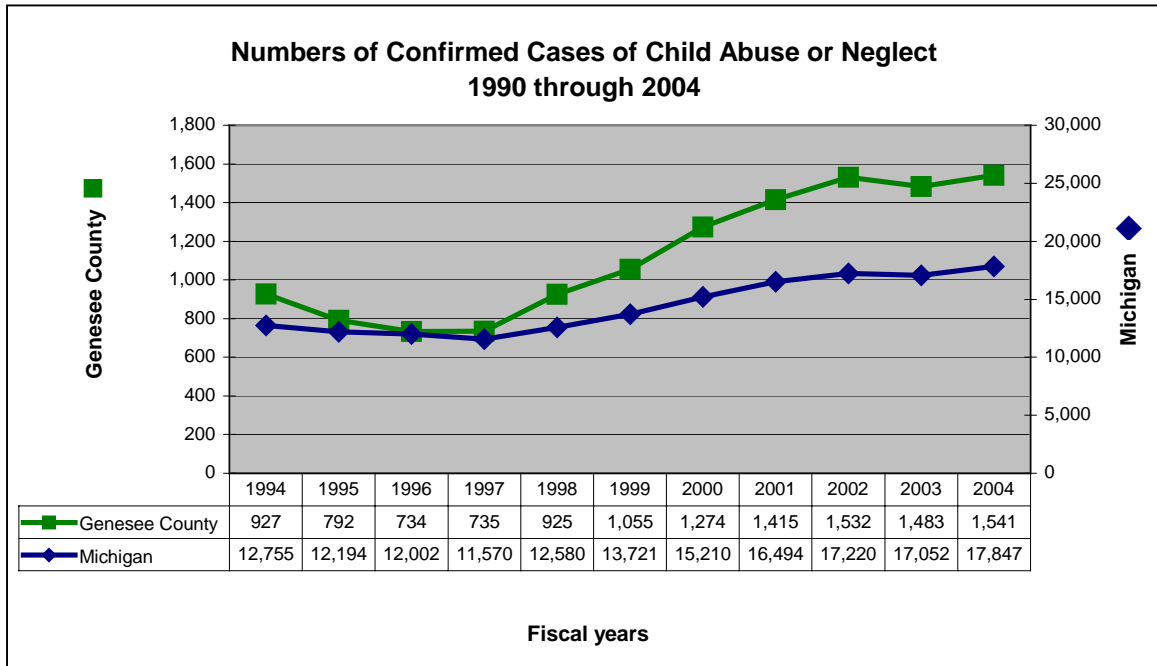
**Child abuse** is defined in Michigan as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through non-accidental physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, or maltreatment.

**Child neglect** is defined as harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare that occurs through negligent treatment or failure to intervene to eliminate risk. The abuse or neglect must be on the part of someone who has a legal responsibility for the child's health and well-being (such as a parent, teacher, etc.).

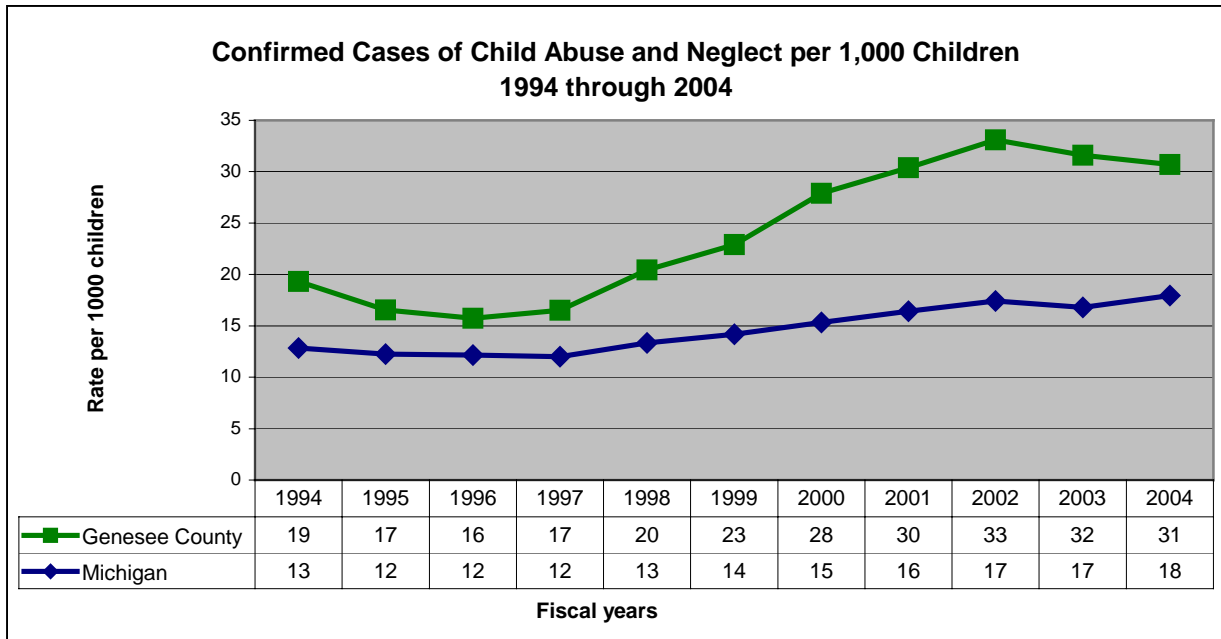


- The numbers of children in families where child abuse and neglect was confirmed has more than doubled in Genesee County since 1996.

**Fact Sheet 2.2: Child Abuse and Neglect continued...**

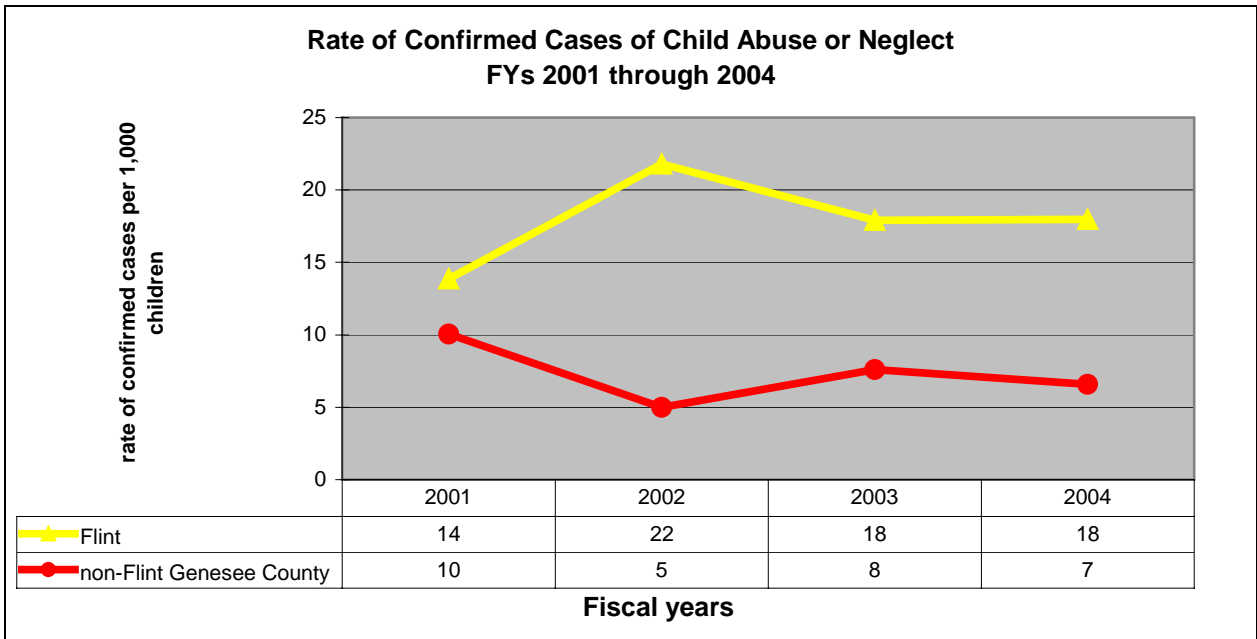


- For 2004, with 3,618 children involved in 1,541 cases of child abuse or neglect, we can conclude that an average of over 2.3 children per case are affected.

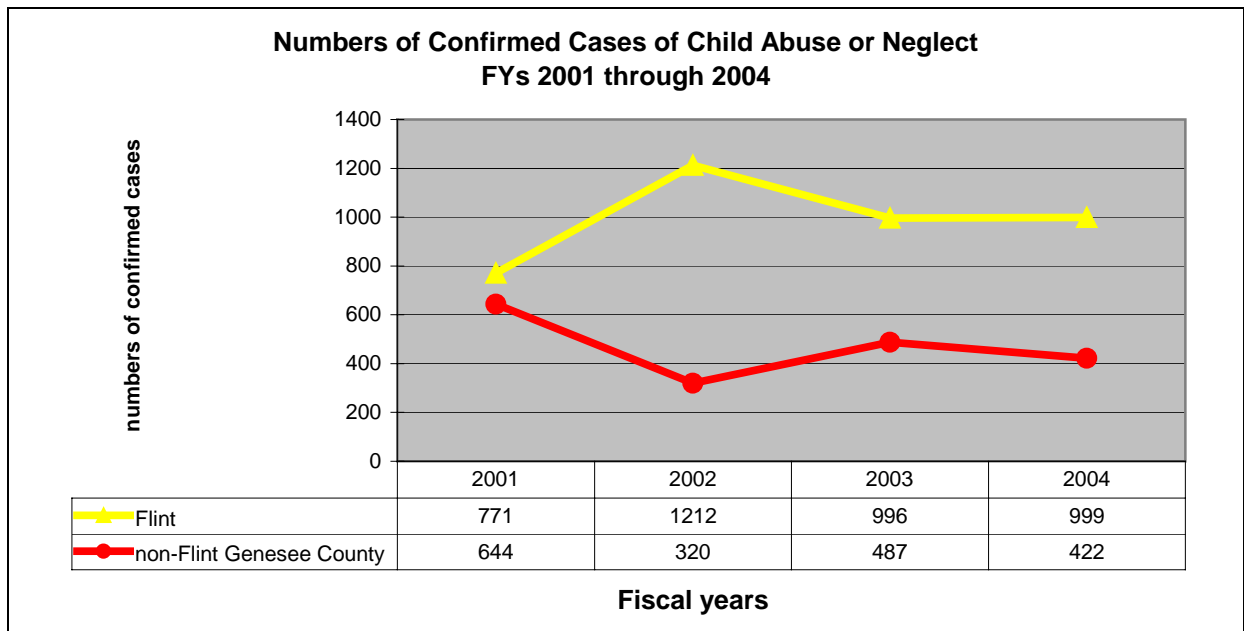


- Rates of child abuse and neglect in Genesee County have doubled since 1996 and continue to rise steadily, while rates for Michigan as a whole increased by 50%.
- If the trend over the past 10 years continues, by 2010 a child in Genesee County will be twice as likely to be abused or neglected as are children as a whole in Michigan.

**Fact Sheet 2.2: Child Abuse and Neglect continued...**

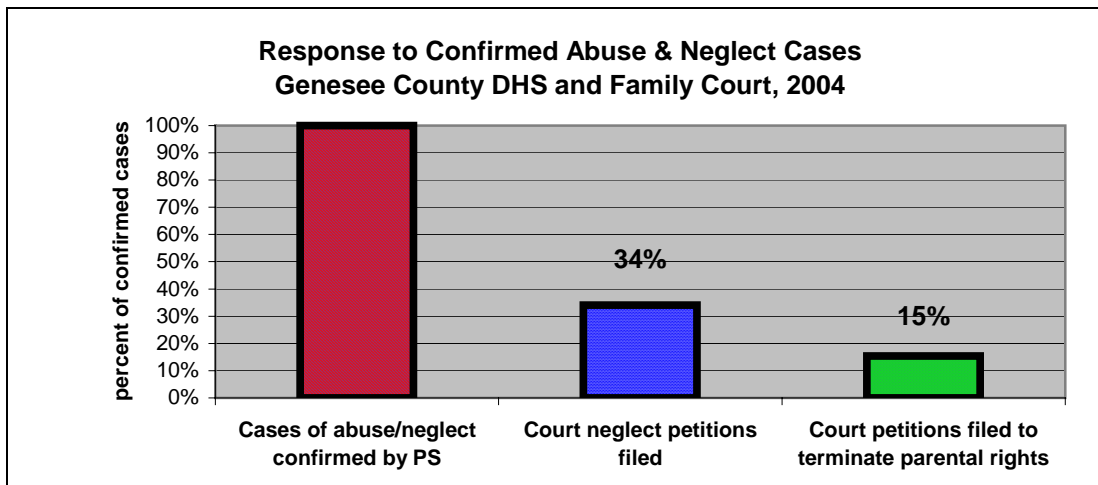


- The rate of confirmed cases per 1,000 children in Flint rose from 13.9 in 2001 to 18.0 in 2004 (an increase of 29.5%). In non-Flint Genesee County, by contrast, the rate declined from 10.1 per 1,000 children in 2001 to 6.6 per 1,000 children in 2004 (a decrease of 34.7%).



- Between 2001 and 2004, the numbers of confirmed of child abuse or neglect to Flint residents rose by 228 (17.9%) while during the same period the numbers of cases to non-Flint Genesee County children fell by 222 (-34.5%).

## Fact Sheet 2.2: Child Abuse and Neglect continued...



- In 2004, neglect petitions were filed in about one-third (34%) of cases of confirmed abuse and neglect. Petitions to terminate parental rights are ultimately filed on only about 15% of all confirmed cases of abuse or neglect.

### BEYOND THE NUMBERS

Increases in incidence have continued except in 2003. The numbers of children involved in confirmed cases of child abuse/neglect is dropping in Genesee County, although it continues to rise in Michigan, except for 2003.

There is a need to take a closer look at what happened in 2003 to reverse the upward trend of child abuse and neglect. Were there successful interventions? Was it simply a decrease in reporting or less thorough record keeping? And finally, what happened to re-establish the climb in numbers of cases, children involved, and rate of child abuse/neglect in 2004? Are there social/emotional supports available to assist the adult caretakers of the county's children in dealing with their and the family's situations? This would include stress relief, affordable recreation/leisure activities, counseling, and similar services that bring positive stimuli to what can be a negative, overwhelming environment.

The increasing rates of abuse in Genesee County, in comparison to the lower but still increasing rate in Michigan, call attention to the relationship between child abuse/neglect and other socio-economic factors. High unemployment, low earnings, and the accompanying frustration have a bearing upon how children are treated by adults. This is borne out by the statistical information depicted in the graph.

### EXAMPLES OF INTERVENTION EFFORTS

- **Community Action Plan on Child Abuse & Neglect** - In February 2005, a community action plan for child abuse and neglect was completed (CAPCAN). The plan includes a vision, goals, activities, education, fund development, assessment, planning, training, and implementation. Very comprehensive and methodical, it should make a difference for families and children in Genesee County. For a copy of the action plan, visit <http://www.prioritychildren.org/CAPCAN.pdf>
- **Consortium on Child Abuse & Neglect** - Offers a variety of services to educate and advocate against child abuse and neglect.
- **Child Advocacy Center** - By using a multi disciplinary team, the center aims to reduce the number of forensic interviews for child victims of sexual abuse. Forensic interviews are conducted on site along with support services for child and family.

**Data Source:** Cases of child abuse and neglect from the Michigan Department of Human Services (formerly Family Independence Agency); and Census 2000 and subsequent population estimates from the US Census Bureau.

**Note:** For purposes of comparison between Flint and non-Flint Genesee County, the population figures used were from the 2000 census. Genesee County's child population was used as one basis, and the Flint population for the following zip codes: 48502, 48503, 48504, 48505, 48506, 48507, and 48532. 48532, 48506, and 48507 are areas that overlap the boundaries of the city of Flint, but were used in their entirety because the numbers of confirmed cases reported by the Department of Human Services for Flint included numbers for those zip codes. (The population per zip code was obtained from the US Census Bureau, via the Missouri Department of Education's website.) Since no population estimates for the city of Flint are available for years subsequent to the 2000 census, 2000 figures were used in calculating the rates for 2001 through 2004. (One artifact of this is the mirror image effect visible in the charts.)

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