

# State of Children in Alabama

Each year, approximately 40,000 Alabama's children are separated from one of their parents by family court orders that strip these children of time with one of their parents (usually Fathers) down to only one to six days a month. These children have a parent taken from them, but the child and the parent did not do anything wrong. The perception within society is that the court considers the best interests of the child and makes these decisions for the greater good, and the child and the parent often feel very helpless. The court has been doing this for more than 40 years, and it is clear that judges and attorneys do not know another way to manage child custody. This is simply what they are used to doing and what they find easiest because it is what they know. Interestingly, the social science data now shows that this is possibly the most destructive thing that the court could do to a child—to take one of his or her parents without a valid reason. A child of divorce or separated parents spends a lifetime trying to overcome the loss and deficit of the absent parent.

## Did you know?

According to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Alabama ranked 42nd among the 50 states in overall child well-being based on measures in four categories:

- Health
- Education
- Economic well-being
- Family & community

## According to Alabama DHR and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,

- 63% of youth suicides
- 75% of juvenile drug abuse
- 85% of youths in prison
- 71% of school dropouts
- 71% of teen pregnancies
- 90% of homeless and runaway children

**are children with limited or no contact with one of their biological parents.**

## According to Alabama DHR, children from father-absent homes are:

- 5 times more likely to live in poverty
- 3 times more likely to fail in school
- 2 to 3 times more likely to develop emotional and behavioral problems
- 3 times more likely to commit suicide