

The Child Indicator

THE CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY INDICATORS NEWSLETTER

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State-Level Health Indicator Data from the NSCH Presented in *Pediatrics*

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) is a valuable source of state-level indicator data on children's health and well-being. It is a representative survey of children under age 18 for each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. *Pediatrics*, a journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, has published a supplemental issue showcasing NSCH research articles using data at the state and national levels.

Examples of state-level articles include:

- Factors Associated With Not Having a Personal Health Care Provider for Children in Florida
- Children's Mental Health and Family Functioning in Rhode Island
- Does Access to a Medical Home Differ According to Child and Family Characteristics, Including Special-Health-Care-Needs Status, Among Children in Alabama?

National -level articles also cover a range of topics, such as the following:

- The Prevalence of Violent Disagreements in US Families:

Effects of Residence, Race/Ethnicity, and Parental Stress

- Associations Between Breastfeeding Practices and Young Children's Language and Motor Skill Development

- Sleepless in America: Inadequate Sleep and Relationships to Health and Well-being of Our Nation's Children

Abstracts of the research articles are available at no cost, but full access to the articles requires a subscription. The journal can be accessed at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>.

A limited number of copies of the journal supplement are available from the Health Resources and Services Administration Information Center by visiting their website, www.ask.hrsa.gov, or by calling them at 1-888-Ask-HRSA. In addition, requests can be made directly to Steph Toomer by contacting her at stoomer@hrsa.gov.

The NSCH asks questions in the fol-

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Just Released

The Nation's Report Card: 12th-Grade Reading and Mathematics 2005 has been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. Data are reported in several ways: the percentage of students reaching basic, proficient, and advanced achievement, percentiles, and subscales. Results are reported by gender, race/ethnicity, and parental education. Text highlights trends in achievement, subgroup differences, and achievement gaps. The report also provides information on significance testing, sample questions, and item maps to clarify what it means to perform at different levels.

The full report can be accessed at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007468>

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Statement of Purpose

The goal of *The Child Indicator* is to communicate major developments and new resources within each sector of the child and youth indicators field to the larger community of interested users, researchers, and data developers on a regular basis. By promoting the efficient sharing of knowledge, ideas, and resources, *The Child Indicator* seeks to advance understanding within the child and youth indicators community and to make all its members more effective in their work.

Child Trends, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research center that has been active in the child and youth indicators field for 20 years, produces and distributes *The Child Indicator* with funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. We welcome your comments and suggestions. All communications regarding this newsletter can be directed to childindicator@childtrends.org.

Brett Brown, Ph.D., Editor

Research

Call for Proposals from the International Society of Quality-of-Life Studies

The International Society of Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) aims to promote and encourage research in the field of quality-of-life (QOL) studies. Along with its objectives of academic leadership, creating an organization for coordinating QOL activity, and stimulating interdisciplinary research, ISQOLS strives to develop better indicators of QOL for different groups and levels of analysis.

ISQOLS is holding a conference in San Diego, California on December 6-8, 2007 and is currently accepting proposals. The theme of the conference is "From Quality of Life Concepts to Quality of Life Performance Measures". There is a Quality of Life track focused on children chaired by William O'Hare of the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Asher Ben-Arieh of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Proposals can be applied to the following types of formats: workshops, individual presentations in the context of concurrent paper sessions, panel sessions, plenary sessions, roundtables, and poster sessions. Please see the website for more details.

The topic areas and sub-topic tracks for the conference are the following:

- World Region Issues: Quality of Life in Latin America/Caribbean, Arctic Circle, Asia, North America, the Middle East, and Europe.
- Population Segments Issues: The QOL of the Poor, Migrants/Refugees, Children, the Elderly, Women, and the Disabled

- Life Domains Issues: Spiritual Well-Being, Family Well-Being, Social Well-Being
- Community Well-Being, Consumption Well-Being, Health Well-Being, Well-Being: Employment & Work, Arts & Culture Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being, Financial Well-Being, and Housing/Neighborhood as Dimension of QOL
- Applied Disciplines Issues: QOL Issues in Political Science, Urban Planning & Policies, Rural Sociology, Marketing, Business Ethics & QWL, Economic Development, Public Administration, and Public Policy, Education, Travel/Tourism, Social Work, Pharmacology, Psychology and Health Care, Recreation/Use of Leisure Time
- Basic Disciplines Issues: QOL Research in Personality-Social Psychology, QOL Research in Economics
- Methodological Issues: Qualitative QOL Research, Composite QOL Indices, Psychometrics & Quantitative Methods

All submissions should be sent to the Conference Secretariat (isqols@vt.edu) as well as the relevant track chair. Email addresses for track chairs can be found on the website. **Please note:** although the website states that draft abstracts are due March 30, 2007, *the children's track will be accepting proposals during the summer and early fall of 2007.*

For more information please visit the ISQOLS website at: <http://www.isqols.org/>

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The Nation's Report Card: U.S. History 2006 and The Nation's Report Card: U.S. Civics 2006 have been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. Both reports present data on the achievement of students in the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. History is assessed on a scale of 0 to 500 and civics is assessed on a scale of 0 to 300. National scores are presented as average scale scores, the percentage of students at basic, proficient, and advanced levels, and the percentage of students with scores at or below selected percentiles. The history report also contains student scores on four U.S. history subscales. For both subjects, data are presented by background characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, and eligibility for reduced price lunches. The report also highlights achievement gaps and trend data.

These reports can be accessed at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>

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LINKS Database Easy Access to Child and Youth Programs

How can program providers, researchers, and policy makers know what programs are most effective at promoting child well-being? By using Child Trends' LINKS database (Lifecourse Interventions to Nurture Kids Successfully) of programs intended to improve outcomes for children and youth.

The LINKS online database contains random assignment evaluations on a range of programs across various domains of child well-being that target children from birth to young adulthood. LINKS acknowledges and visually represents the ideas that different programs are appropriate for specific developmental stages and can build upon one another. With funding from the Stewart Trust, Knight Foundation, and the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Child Trends has been able to identify and post over 167 evaluative studies on the LINKS site, making it one of the largest online resources with access to this type of information. Only evaluations using experimental control

group designs with an intent-to-treat analysis, the gold standard for evaluating programs, are included.

The site offers four ways to search the programs in LINKS. Users can:

- o Select programs by age, developmental stage, or child outcome
- o Choose one of the following program areas:
 - o Child Care/Early Education
 - o Clinic-Based, Provider-Based, or Miscellaneous
 - o Community or Media Campaign
 - o Counseling/Therapy
 - o Home Visiting
 - o Mentoring/Tutoring
 - o Parent or Family Component
 - o School-Based
 - o Service or Vocational Learning

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DiversityData.org: New Data Tool Highlights Diversity and Opportunity in Metropolitan-Areas

How are children and adults faring in large cities across the United States? What opportunities and quality of life do different racial/ethnic groups experience within metropolitan areas? How do the metro areas in your state rank? The Harvard School of Public Health and the Center for the Advancement of Health, with support from the Kellogg Foundation, have recently launched a website that showcases well-being statistics from metropolitan areas across the United States. The site is unique in that it presents a broad range of indicators for the overall population in these areas, as well as for individual racial/ethnic subgroups. In addition, the first report on these data is about children and highlights differences by race and ethnicity across metropolitan areas.

The indicators available on this website encompass a wide variety of topics including detailed data on demographics, housing and economic opportunities, integration and neighborhood characteristics, as well as health, education, crime, and urban planning indicators. The topics were selected as a result of recent urban inequality research that revealed racial/ethnic disparities in these

aspects of well-being in metropolitan areas. The Diversity Data project is meant to inform others about the quality of life across metropolitan areas and to promote policy action and social change that considers the diverse populations that these responses affect.

DiversityData.org offers users several different options for accessing and presenting indicator data. Users can create color-coded maps displaying the ranges of a particular indicator for the largest 100 metro areas in the United States. Users can obtain the exact frequency for a metro area by scrolling over the map or by reviewing an accompanying table that lists frequencies for each area. In addition to maps and profiles, users can generate rankings of the largest 100 or all 331 metropolitan areas on a single indicator. Through this option, the site generates a table displaying the frequencies of an indicator for each metro area and a bar representing this frequency.

Users also have an option to customize their maps and rankings. They can sort the order of rankings and the tables accompanying maps by value (e.g., highest to lowest, top and bot-

tom ten) or by alphabetical order. The site allows users to select the metro areas that they want the rankings or U.S. map to present. Moreover, website viewers can often adjust which races/ethnicities, years, region types, or other details the map or rankings display.

The site also contains a resource section that will host a series of reports based on data analyses by DiversityData.org. The first report is titled, "Children Left Behind: How Metropolitan Areas Are Failing American Children," and compares the 100 largest metropolitan areas on a range of well-being indicators for white, black, and Hispanic children. Aside from the report series, this section includes links to the Census Bureau and other websites that provide relevant data, studies, or information on applying data to policy making. Each link is paired with a brief description of what the site offers.

The online tool and further information is available at DiversityData.org at: <http://diversitydata.sph.harvard.edu/about.jsp>

Local Scene

A Window into the Community: Evaluating Quality of Life in Charlotte Neighborhoods

A child's well-being is influenced not only by his or her home environment, but by the neighborhood and community as well. The City of Charlotte, North Carolina, evaluates the quality of life in each of the 173 neighborhood statistical areas (NSA's) in the city and the surrounding region. The most recent data are detailed in the 2006 Neighborhood Quality of Life Study.

Since 1993, the city has conducted a biannual Neighborhood Quality of Life Study that gauges how well neighborhoods and the city as a whole are faring in terms of social, crime, physical, and economic indicators. The study draws on data from a wide array of sources including the 2000 U.S. Census, 2005 Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System records, the 2003 Charlotte BellSouth Yellow Pages, and 2003 Mecklenburg County Property Records and Land Management. Findings are used by the local government to guide policies and service/investment priorities to improve neighborhood conditions.

The 2006 report and website offer detailed data for a variety of indicators in each NSA. The twenty neighborhood area and city-level indicators include common measures of well-being such as high school dropout rates, violent crime rates, percentage of persons receiving food stamps, and percentage of homeowners, as well as more unique measures like the Youth Opportunity Index, Crime Hot Spots, and Pedestrian Friendliness Index. Several indicators focus specifically on children, such as measures of average kindergarten achievement scores, dropout rates, percentages of births to adolescents, and juvenile crime rates.

While individual indicators provide a high level of detailed information for each NSA, the 2006 report and website also contain a system for categorizing overall neighborhood status. In this scheme, each neighborhood is ranked as stable (neighborhoods that experience few problems

and score high on all or most indicators), transitioning (neighborhoods that experience a few weaknesses and score average on most indicators), or challenged (neighborhoods that are "at risk" and score low to moderate on some or all indicators). Although these labels are not meant to substitute for the more detailed indicator data, they provide users with a rough measure to quickly categorize and compare NSA's.

Profiles of the individual neighborhood areas are available on the website and in the report. Each profile contains the area's overall "Quality of Life" ranking, and rankings on each of the four main dimensions (social, crime, physical, and economic), as well as basic demographic statistics and values for each of the twenty indicators. City data are provided for comparison, and historical trend data for the neighborhood area are available for 2000, 2002, and 2004.

More information is available at <http://www.charmeck.org/Departments/Neighborhood+Dev/Quality+of+Life/home.htm> or by contacting Stanley D. Watkins at 704-336-2904 swatkins@ci.charlotte.nc.us.

The Urban Institute sponsors the National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership, a collaborative effort with local partners to use local indicators data systems for community development and policy. The website contains resources on the development of community indicators, including links to cities and communities with local indicators projects similar to Charlotte.

The National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership can be accessed at: <http://www2.urban.org/nnip/index.htm>

NSCH (continued)

lowing areas: demographic information, child's health and functional status, health insurance coverage, health care access and utilization, medical home, early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence, family functioning, parental health, and neighborhood characteristics. It contains numerous unique measures, such as parent/child activities, the quality of the parent/child relationship, and neighborhood quality.

For more information in the NSCH, please visit the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/about/major/slaits/nsch.htm> or the Data Resource Center website at <http://www.nschdata.org/Content/Default.aspx>.

LINKS (continued)

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- o View the entire list of programs in alphabetical order and make a selection
- o Submit a Google search of the LINKS site by entering a key word or phrase

Each entry offers practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and other users brief summaries of the intervention and the evaluation study. Key program and evaluation details and links to additional sources for further information are provided. In the first section, entries contain a brief overview and description of the program, which provides a methodological summary with details such as the target population, objectives, and length. The evaluative portion of the entries includes information on the evaluation's participants, approach, results, and a reference. An additional useful feature, contained at the bottom of each entry, is a summary indicating the LINKS program's relevant age groups, program areas, and measured outcomes, making it easier to search for similar programs.

The website also provides descriptions of LINKS defini-

tions and methodology, program criteria, and descriptions. This content is especially helpful for explaining the criteria used in evaluations. Child Trends is continuing to expand and update the LINKS site and make it even more user-friendly. In addition, syntheses of program approaches that work are being prepared through a grant from the Stewart Trust Foundation.

LINKS is part of the What Works Series which is dedicated to summarizing the best available research to provide easily accessible information on what programs are (and are not) effective in improving outcomes for children and youth. This information is crucial to guiding the decisions of policy makers, program providers, funders, and others seeking to enhance child well-being through adopting successful programs.

Access LINKS and learn more at:

http://www.childtrends.org/_docdisp_page.cfm?LID=A8381832-B282-4C60-9E76A039BDE8FF89

Recently Released Reports (*continued*)

The State of the World's Children 2007 is the latest in a series of annual reports from UNICEF. This year's report has a theme on women and children and focuses on issues of gender discrimination and equality. The indicators in the report are broken into the following areas: basic indicators (deaths, births, literacy, household income, and school enrollment), nutrition, health, HIV/AIDS, education, demographics, economic indicators, women, and child protection. Data are presented by individual country and region and are generally from 2005, when available. The tables, charts, and graphs from the report can be downloaded in PDF format. In addition, users can create customized tables and export the data to Excel by selecting countries and region and indicators.

This report can be accessed at <http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/>

Indicators of School Crime, 2006 is the latest in a series of annual reports from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and National Center for Education Statistics. The data come from several government surveys, including the School Survey on Crime and Safety, Youth Risk Behavior Survey, National Crime Victimization Survey, and the School Crime Supplement. The report contains 20 indicators that are divided into the following topics: violent deaths, nonfatal student victimization, threats and attacks on teachers, school environment, fights, weapons and illegal substances, fear and avoidance, and safety, discipline, and security measures. In the body of the report, each indicator contains text with a headline and a figure. In the appendix are supplemental tables that contain subgroups breaks and trends when available, as well as standard error tables.

This report is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007003.pdf>.

The **2006 America's Families and Living Arrangements**, a Current Population Survey report from the U.S. Census Bureau, provides detailed data on the composition and characteristics of American households and families. Data includes combinations of household social demographic variables, such as marital status, presence of children, household type, presence of grandparent in household, labor force status of parents and children ages 15-17, earnings, tenure, poverty status, education, and receipt of public assistance, as well as population demographics like age, race, ethnicity, nativity status, and gender. Detailed tables can be accessed through Excel or Comma Separated Values files. In addition to data from the 2006 report, data from previous years are also available through the 1993-2005 annual reports and historical trend tables.

To find out more, please visit: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam.html>

The EU Index of Child Well-Being

Numerous organizations are experimenting with strategies to develop indices of child well-being that can be tracked over time. European researchers, Jonathon Bradshaw, Petra Hoelscher, and Dominic Richardson, have recently developed such an index for analyzing child well-being across Europe.

The EU Index of Child Well-Being is based on existing administrative and survey data. The index takes a multi-dimensional approach to well-being and includes measures of children's environment along with measures of children's well-being and outcomes. The EU index consists of 51 indicators, categorized in 23 domains and 8 clusters (see below). The 8 clusters are summarized into the overall index.

Material Situation

- Child poverty
- Child deprivation
- Parental worklessness

Child Health

- Health at birth
- Immunization
- Health behavior

Education

- Educational attainment
- Educational participation
- Youth labor market outcomes from education

Housing and Environment

- Overcrowding
- Quality of local environment
- Housing problems

Children's Relationships

- Family structure
- Relationships with parents
- Relationships with peers

Children's Subjective Well-Being

- Self-defined health
- Personal well-being
- Well-being at school

Risk and Safety

- Child mortality
- Risky behavior
- Experiences of violence

Civic Participation

- Participation in civic activities
- Political interest

The authors had a wealth of indicators to choose from for the index. They followed several governing principles when choosing a final set of indicators for the index. They included as many measures based on children's responses as possible and tried to use the child as the unit of analysis. They did not use variables if they were not available for at least 70 percent of the countries. The authors always used the most up-to-date indicators possible and always used the same data source across all countries for a single variable.

The authors view this work as an important step in bringing increased attention to monitoring child well-being at the European level. Since 2001 the EU Indicators, a core set of 18 poverty and social exclusion indicators, have been produced for each EU country. Also called the "Laeken Indicators", they are used to measure each country's progress towards their National Action Plan for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. However, the set of EU indicators only contains 2 indicators related to children. Therefore, the authors wanted to demonstrate the great potential of child-level data that are currently available for countries in the European Union.

The EU Index of Child Well-Being is published in Journal of Social Indicators Research in the following article: Bradshaw, Jonathon, Hoelscher, Petra, and Richardson, Dominic. (2007). "An Index of Child Well-Being in the European Union." Journal of Social Indicators Research, 80: 133-177. Available at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/f3642p2x00hn5h01/fulltext.pdf>.

The raw data used to calculate the index can be accessed and downloaded at: <http://www-users.york.ac.uk/~jrb1/>.

Data Tool

New Online Tool Offers Easy Access to Juvenile Statistics at the National, State, and County Levels

Continuing increases in the juvenile population and social and economic changes can impact juvenile delinquency and the justice system, making the ability to monitor these issues increasingly important. In an effort to make juvenile delinquency and juvenile justice system statistics more accessible to the public, the National Center for Juvenile Justice (NCJJ), under the commission of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, has developed several "Easy Access" online data analysis tools. Through these tools, users can generate customized tables listing the annual frequencies and characteristics of juveniles. Separate tools are offered for statistics on the juvenile population overall, juvenile homicide victims and offenders, and those who were arrested, involved in court cases, and were in residential placement. Data can be displayed at the national, state, or county level and available years range from 1985-2005, with each data set spanning from a six to eighteen year period.

With this tool users can easily create tables of national,

state, or county-level profiles that display frequencies and subgroup breaks within the selected juvenile population. Users can also generate tables with state-by-state or county-level comparisons of juveniles. When creating tables, users can choose to limit their table to a specific group or age by selecting an age/age range, gender, race, or Hispanic/non-Hispanic ethnicity in the "selection criteria" box. After the generating the tables, users can switch the population counts to percentages and can download the table into an Excel spreadsheet.

Aside from the data analysis tool, the website offers quick links to more information on juvenile statistics, including brief information and answers to related frequently asked questions for each juvenile population, as well as links to related publications and other websites.

Online data tools and more information are available at: <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.gov/ojstatbb/dat.html>

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