

The Child Indicator

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Chapin Hall Report Highlights the Value of Local Data for Planning Programs and Services for Children

The composition of the child population and the services available to them can vary greatly from community to community; yet such local data are seldom available in a way that is easily accessible for local governments or nonprofits to use for decision-making and planning. The Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago has produced a report, "Chicago Children and Youth 1990-2010: Changing Population Trends and Their Implications for Services." This report represents data for 77 Chicago communities and demonstrates the important uses of monitoring demographic indicators such as the number of children, poverty status, and the racial/ethnic make-up of the population for programs that serve children.

Government officials and non-profits must decide how to allocate resources for programs that affect the well-being of children such as schools, child care availability, after-school programs, public benefits, and law enforcement personnel. Though other factors such as funding or rules and requirements constrain decisions, demographic data can help those providing programs and services plan for the future, espe-

cially because demographic changes can be hard to detect in the short-term. Long-term planning is especially critical for low-income children and families, because their proximity to services is likely to affect their utilization of programs and services.

In Chicago, several factors have affected the child and youth population since 1990. The size of the child population grew due to an influx of Hispanic immigrants and the higher birth rate of Hispanics relative to white and African American families. Many white and African American families moved from the city to the suburbs, where jobs have migrated. Within Chicago, gentrification of neighborhoods and the demolition of public housing have also caused families to move.

The authors of this report, Robert Goerge, John Dilts, Duck-Hye Yang, Miriam Wasserman, and Anne Clary, draw on several sources of data for their analysis of population trends: the U.S. Census Bureau, Chicago Public Schools (enrollment data), Illinois Workforce Information Center Cook County (unemployment data), and

continued on page 5

In this Issue...

Chapin Hall Report Highlights the Value of Local Data	1,5
Interactive Atlas of Health Puts Indicators on the Map	2
Child Well-Being Index (CWI) Internation and National Reports	3
Revised American Community Survey Website Helps Users Navigate Data	3
New VitalStats Website Offers Interactive Tables, User-Generated Maps, and More	4
Right Start Website Includes New Items and Updated Data	4
Recently Released Reports	1,4,6,7
National Infrastructure for Community Statistics	6

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Recently Released

Key Indicators of Child and Youth Well-Being: Completing the Picture. Brett Brown, PhD, Editor. In this new book some of the nation's leading child and youth development researchers review the progress that has been made in the measurement, collection, dissemination, and use of indicators of well-being, and identify opportunities for their future development. The collection includes chapters covering indicators of health, education, social and emotional development, the social context of development (family, peers, school, community), and summary indices of well-being. The use of child indicators as planning tools at the state and community levels is also covered. Copies of this book can be ordered at www.taylorandfrancis.com.

continued on page 4

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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

Data Tools

The Interactive Atlas of Reproductive Health Puts Indicators on the Map

The Interactive Atlas of Reproductive Health is a geographic information system (GIS) containing data on topics such as infant mortality, infant health, and prenatal care. Created using a map server developed at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, this tool allows for a geographic representation of indicators. This ability to see clustering and other spatial relationships among the indicators can be a valuable tool for public health interventions.

The data used in the interactive atlas come from the National Center for Health Statistics - more specifically, the U.S. Census Bureau and the National Vital Statistics System (CDC).

Reproductive health indicators in the atlas include:

- Fetal and infant mortality: Infant mortality rate, neonatal mortality rate, postneonatal mortality rate, and perinatal mortality rate
- Infant health: Low birth weight rate, very low birth weight rate, preterm delivery rate
- Pregnancy outcomes: Fertility rate and fetal loss rate
- Maternal risks: percent who smoke, percent unmarried, educational attainment, multiple gestation
- Teen risks: Educational attainment and late/no prenatal care
- Maternal interventions - First trimester care
- Age, gender, race/ethnicity, and risk groups (based on medical, behavioral, or environmental characteristics)

The interactive tool allows users to compare data across time, geography, and subgroups. Users can obtain data in map, table, and chart form, and tailor the query to their specific needs. When

you click on the icon to call up the interactive atlas, a map of the United States appears. Then the user can select the time period (single year or trend), type of indicator (from the categories listed above), type of geographic dataset (such as state or Census region), layer (geographic unit to be analyzed), and target (area to analyze).

The map refreshes as the user makes each of these specifications, and when you choose "target", a new screen appears. The user can then choose a specific indicator within that category, as well as age group, race, and ethnicity. Once the user has finished specifying the query, he or she will have a color-coded map and map legend. Icons at the top of the map allow the user to pan, zoom, and print or save. Data are summarized in several sentences, but users can click on the table icon to view all data for the selected area.

The website gives some real-life examples to illustrate how useful this interactive atlas can be to help improve reproductive health services and programs. In one example a user was focusing on teen pregnancy among a certain population in his/her state. The user generated tables and charts and after reviewing them, concluded that the target population did not live close to the health service centers. This information could then be used to improve service delivery either by building new facilities or creating more collaboration between existing providers.

The datasets used in the atlas are continually updated as new data become available. In addition, the Interactive Atlas of Reproductive Health will continue to evolve as new functions are added.

To use the Interactive Atlas of Reproductive Health, please visit <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/GISAtlas/index.htm>.

Child Well-Being Index (CWI) International Report Shows U.S. in Middle of the Pack, While the CWI National Report Shows Progress Stalled

A recent special report from the Foundation for Child Development (FCD) compares the well-being of U.S. children and youth to those in United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand on 19 indicators of well-being, finding that the U.S. is in the middle of the pack overall, but with serious deficiencies in key areas.

The U.S. had the highest teen birth rate among the five countries, and its 15-year-olds scored the lowest in both reading and mathematics. U.S. children also suffered higher rates of obesity and infant mortality than those in other countries, and were the most likely to live in poor families. On a more positive note, those in the U.S. were more likely to graduate from high school than those in the U.K., Australia, and New Zealand, and were the most likely to receive a college degree.

To access the report visit: http://www.fcd-us.org/resources/resources_show.htm?doc_id=510642

In April, FCD released its annual Child Well-Being Index Report, which focuses on national trends in well-being and is released annually. Trends over the past thirty years reveal that improvements in child well-being have stalled since 2002 and are only slightly better than levels in 1975. Using the 1975 index levels as a baseline, the report shows that overall child well-being reached its lowest point in 1994, improved substantially during the mid to late 1990's, and then leveled off after 2002.

To view this report and learn more about the Child Well-Being Index visit: http://www.fcd-us.org/initiatives/initiatives_show.htm?doc_id=463963

Data Tools

Revised American Community Survey Website Helps Users Navigate Data

How many children lived below the poverty line in 2005? Does the Midwest or the Northeast contain more married-couple families with children? Data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) can answer these questions and many others. The ACS is one of the most comprehensive sources of regularly updated demographic, social, and economic information. The survey provides detailed, annual data at geographic levels ranging from counties and metro areas to the states and the nation. Recent revisions to the ACS website have now made this essential data source more accessible and user friendly.

The American Community Survey website provides the information necessary to effectively navigate and use the survey data, including details on the available forms of data, key features, data methodology, and upcoming releases. The "Access Data" page presents a clear and succinct overview of all of the available forms of ACS data. Clicking on any one data source will provide users with additional guidance on how to use

and access it. From these pages, users can directly link to ACS data in fact sheets and briefs, detailed tables and ranking tables, direct file downloads, and other formats.

To help users accurately interpret and use ACS data, the website also contains overviews and links to abridged user guides, definitions, and table indexes. On the "How to Use the Data" page, users can find general user and training guides, as well as definitions of geographical and common ACS subject terms. Users searching for data on a particular topic or area can also browse lists of available tables by topic, geography, and other categories.

Aside from user guides and definitions, the ACS site features information about and links to data quality, methodology, and other technical aspects of the ACS. Under "About the Data", users can access documentation on data collection and dissemination, evaluation reports, and studies related to ACS content choice and differences between the ACS and Census. In addition, the site offers similar overviews and links to the

ACS methodology, quality measures, accuracy, survey questionnaires, and other technical documentation.

2006 ACS data was recently released in August and September and includes estimates of poverty, health insurance, housing, and broad range of social and demographic measures. The site provides 2006 user guides and detailed comparisons of the 2006 survey to past ACS surveys and other data sources. The site also includes some information on the upcoming Census and ACS surveys, along with future multi-year estimates.

Users wishing to learn more about the revised ACS website can access it at: <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

Data Takes

New VitalStats Website Offers Interactive Tables, User-Generated Maps, and More!

The new VitalStats website offers users the ability to access and create data tables, charts, and maps for over 100 birth and perinatal variables. For both sets of variables, the site offers interactive tables for quick access to select birth and perinatal statistics, as well as a data tool to generate tables from all 100-plus variables, such as length of gestation, fetal distress, or maternal alcohol use during pregnancy. Data are currently available for birth statistics from 2000-2004, fetal death for 2003 and 2004, and infant death rates for 1995-2004 at the national, state, and county levels on topics such as low birth-weight, maternal characteristics, prenatal care, and fetal deaths. The data come from vital statistics records such as birth and death certificates, provided by state health departments. The National Center on Health Statistics recently added the perinatal mortality data to the website and they will add infant mortality data to the site within the next year, with the eventual goal of making all vital statistic data available through the site.

The interactive table tool enables users to select a topic of their choice and alter a pre-built table to fit their needs. Users select pre-constructed tables from folders arranged by topic, location, and then year. By simply dragging and clicking on table variables, users can view data by a desired subgroup, switch the order of variables in rows and columns, and select which categories variables contain. Data can be displayed as numbers or percentages. Subgroups vary by indicator, but may include race/ethnicity, age of mother, and length of gestation.

Users can also build their own tables by selecting and arranging up to six variables from public data file folders. Users must log in and create a password to use this function, but can then save and re-use their created tables. Both interactive and user-generated tables include functions to view the data in a chart or map. Users can also export tables and make a printable version of their tables.

The VitalStats site provides two guides to help users navigate and utilize the tools and data. They are called "Quick Guide: Getting Started" and "Quick Guide: Calculation Rates and Percentages".

Try the new VitalStats tools and learn more at:
<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/VitalStats.htm>

Right Start Website Includes New Items and Updated Data

KIDS COUNT has recently added new data items and updated data on Right Start, an online tool providing pre- and post-birth indicator data. The conditions under which children are born can substantially influence their development and school readiness. Right Start offers a set of indicators that focus specifically on these conditions; providing data tables, geographic profiles, and rankings on infants' prenatal environment, health status, and maternal characteristics. This online tool and website offers data at the national, state, and city-level from the National Center for Health Statistics. Estimates were produced by Child Trends for KIDS COUNT.

The revised Right Start site contains two new additions, births to foreign born mothers and sub-group estimates by mother's race. Users can now view the percentage of births to foreign-born mothers at the state and city level for every year since 1990. The new data show that births to foreign born mothers have steadily increased during this time. The site has also added separate estimates by mother's race/ethnic group for each birth indicator at the national level. The breaks reveal less favorable outcomes for children of Hispanic and non-Hispanic black mothers, in comparison with children of non-Hispanic white mothers. One exception to this trend is smoking during pregnancy, with Hispanic and non-Hispanic black mothers being less likely to smoke than non-Hispanic white mothers.

The remaining eight Right Start indicators have been updated to incorporate 2004 data from the Right Start 2007 report. These indicators include births by mother's marital status, race, age, and educational attainment, smoking status during pregnancy, receipt of prenatal care, as well as whether the child was premature or had a low birth weight.

Updated Right Start data is available at: <http://www.kidscount.org/sld/rightstart.jsp>. Learn more about updates and new additions at:
http://www.aecf.org/Newsroom/~media/PDFFiles/Newsroom/RightStart2007MediaAdvisory%20final%20_2_%20pdf.a shx

Recently Released

continued from page 1

America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2007 has been released by the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. This annual report was modified from previous years and now includes 9 new indicators, making a new total of 28. In addition to the previous sections on family and social environment, economic circumstances, behavior, education, and health, this year's report also has sections on health care, physical environment and safety. The data used in the report come from numerous federal survey and administrative sources.

This report is available at: <http://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/>.

continued on page 6

National Infrastructure for Community Statistics (NICS)

National Infrastructure for Community Statistics (NICS) is a project of the Urban Markets Initiative at the Brookings Institution. The stated goals of the project are:

- To fill gaps in data access and analysis among national, state, regional and local data providers and users;
- To inform the data community of metadata standards development, and to aid in the understanding of issues and methods regarding the protection of data confidentiality.

There have been about 300 partners involved in the NICS project, who are a part of nonprofits, industry, and government. The NICS website is intended to be a medium for this group, know as the Community of Practice, to interact. The website contains extensive documentation of the initial meetings of the Community of Practice as the NICS project was being formed, which can help new users further understand the purpose and intended capabilities of the project.

The website has several sections and will continue to grow and expand in its content and capacities. The data exchange section lists data sources, such as Data Ferret, CDC, and the Census Microdata files as well as data intermediaries, such as FedStats and DataPlace. This list is a first step towards creating a national infrastructure where users can access up-to-date community level data that span topics and geographic locations

The NICS Tools Marketplace is a section of the website

that lists metadata tools, statistical and analytical tools, data input and manipulation tools, and mappings tools. These various types of tools can help the more experienced user create his or her own datatool. This section also contains sources on metadata classification, which can help the user to choose appropriate statistical standards for their data.

The metadata section provides the user with an explanation of what metadata is - data about data. It also contains links to NICS papers and presentations on metadata and a glossary on metadata terms.

The NICS effort is also focused on issues regarding the use of metadata and confidentiality. A white paper on metadata standards called "Metadata and The National Infrastructure for Community Statistics: Issues and Resources" was recently released and is available on the NICS web site. There is also a report called "Tools to Avoid Disclosing Information About Individuals in Public Use Microdata Files."

The NICS programs strives to encourage the development of new software, expanding the market on the web for data analysis tools, increasing opportunities for collaboration with all components of NICS, and creating more linkages across data topics and locations.

The project's webpage can be viewed at:
<http://www.brookings.edu/metro/umi/collaboratory/nics.htm>

continued from page 4

Recently Released Reports

Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2006 was recently released by the U.S. Census Bureau. The report includes text, tables, and figures. It provides estimates by subgroups, trend data, and statistical significance for changes between 2005 and 2006. Poverty and health insurance estimates for children and poverty estimates for children by race and type of family are provided. The Census Bureau website also includes more detailed tables, which include additional breaks such as more specific poverty levels and types of health insurance. The national data come from Current Population Survey's Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) and the state, county, and city estimates are from the American Community Survey.

The report can be accessed at: <http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/p60-233.pdf> .

Indicators of Welfare Dependence, Annual Report to Congress 2007, has been released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The report has two main sections. The first contains ten indicators of dependence, such as degree of dependence, rates of receipt of means-tested assistance, and long term receipt. The data are often presented by subgroup, such as age, race/ethnicity, and family structure, and trend data are provided when available. The second section covers predictors and risk factors associated with welfare dependence, and is broken down into the following categories: economic security, employment and work-related, and nonmarital birth risk factors. In addition, a substantial appendix on AFDC/TANF, food stamps, and SSI programs includes information on recent legislative action, data issues, and additional trend data for all three programs.

This report is available at: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/indicators07/index.htm> .

Deaths: Preliminary Data for 2005 has been released by the National Center for Health Statistics. The report contains

Recently Released Reports

continued from page 6

data on the number of deaths, age-adjusted death rates, leading causes of death, life expectancy, and infant mortality. There are three summary tables as well as 10 detailed tables. The detailed tables contain death rates for children and young adults under 1, 1-4, 5-14, and 15-24 by gender and race, infant mortality for under 1 year, under 28 days, and 28 days to 11 months, and leading cause of infant death by race/ethnicity. Most tables compare the 2005 preliminary estimates to final estimates from 2004 and some tables provide estimates by age. Selected findings are briefly highlighted in bulleted text.

This report can be viewed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/pubs/pubd/hestats/prelimdeaths05/prelimdeaths05.htm>

The Condition of Education 2007, a report published by the National Center for Education Statistics, has been released. The report is made up of 48 indicators in the following areas: participation in education, learner outcomes, student effort and educational progress, the contexts of elementary and secondary education, and the contexts of post-secondary education. Each indicator is made up of several paragraphs of text discussing trend and subgroup differences, as well as a figure. The appendix contains detailed tables that contain trend data and various subgroup estimates, depending on the indicator. There is also a special section that is an analysis of high school coursetaking. It also contains text, figures, detailed tables in the appendix.

This report is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2007064>.

The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2007 and The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2007 have been released by the National Center for Education Statistics. These reports contain the most recent mathematics and reading data for 4th and 8th graders from the National Assessment of Educational Progress. Achievement is represented by both scale scores and achievement levels. The reports consist of text, tables, and figures. Trends and differences by race/ethnicity, gender, and income are discussed, as well as an overview of state progress. The detailed tables provide additional data by state, disability status, English Language Learners, school lunch eligibility, and trends by race/ethnicity/. The reports also provide information on the content and scoring method of the assessment.

These reports are available at <http://www.nationsreportcard.gov>.

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