

The Child Indicator

THE CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY INDICATORS NEWSLETTER

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OECD's "Measuring the Progress of Societies" Global Project

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), in cooperation with other international and national organizations, has launched a major initiative to promote the development and use of social, environmental, and economic indicators in order to promote evidence-based decision-making around the globe. Many organizations around the world have been working to move beyond simple economic measures of progress to a set of measures that better reflect overall quality of life. The OECD is working to develop a communications infrastructure that will allow such groups to share ideas and best practices, and to push the field forward. Indicators of child, youth and family well-being promise to be an important component of this project, though the scope is far broader than that.

Project activities include:

- *OECD Forums on Statistics, Knowledge, and Policy.* The latest of these international fora was held in Istanbul, Turkey in June 2007. Forum session documents and presentations, available on the project web site, covered a broad set of issues and activi-

ties on the measurement of social progress. These included a session on indicators of child well-being, including a presentation on the KIDS COUNT experience by staff from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. A follow-up to this forum is planned for the fall of 2009 in South Korea.

- *Knowledge Base.* This online library contains hundreds of papers and reports on the development and progress indicators, and their successful use in decision-making. Documents are organized by topic, country, and multinational institution. Topics include social issues, the environment, the economy, knowledge and innovation, and aggregate reports at the national and international levels, along with indicator methodology and the creation of indicator systems that registered users (anyone may register) may add their own documents. Anyone may download documents.

- *Newsletter.* In early 2008 they launched a newsletter to keep interested persons informed of major indicators efforts around the world. The first

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Just Released

Highlights from PISA 2006: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Science and Mathematics Literacy in an International Context is a recently released report from the National Center for Education Statistics. The report gauges U.S. student performance on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in comparison with fifty-seven other countries and jurisdictions. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sponsors the survey, which has periodically measured science, math, and reading literacy since 2000. The 2006 report specifically compares U.S. average scores in science and math to international, OECD, and particular country averages. Included are detailed tables and figures by jurisdiction, as well as summaries of international comparisons and U.S. domestic differences by gender and race/ethnicity. The 2006 report is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008016>

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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 over 25 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

An International Look at Reading: Where the United States Stands

How do America's children rank internationally in reading? Above average—according to 2006 results from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study. The study, a follow-up to a 2001 survey, measured fourth grade children's reading abilities and habits in 45 countries and subnational jurisdictions. The National Center for Education Statistics explores these international comparisons along with domestic differences in their report, "The Reading Literacy of Fourth Grade Students in an International Context".

The study included countries from Western and Eastern Europe, North America, the Middle East, Northern Africa, as well as other countries and subnational entities like Hong Kong and Chinese Taipei. Of the 45 jurisdictions, children in the United States scored higher than their counterparts in 22 other jurisdictions, lower than those in 10, and about the same as children in 12 jurisdictions. No significant change was found in scores between 2006 and 2001 for either the United States or the international average. Scores were on a scale of 0-1000 and measured fourth grader's abilities to retrieve information, make inferences, interpret material, and use fiction and nonfiction texts.

Ninety-five percent of U.S. students attended schools that had informal programs to encourage reading; fifteen percentage points higher than the international average. Fourth graders in the United States were also nearly three times more likely than the average of all students to receive reading instruction for more than six hours per week (68 percent versus 25 percent). Moreover, a higher percentage of fourth graders in the United States reported that they read stories or novels at home everyday or almost everyday, in comparison with the international average (36 percent versus 32 percent). However, the proportion of U.S. fourth graders who read informational texts fell below that of the international average (14 percent in comparison with 16 percent).

For more information on PIRLS and to view the report, visit:
<http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/pirls/index.asp>.

Average U.S. Reading Scores Compared with Those of All Other Jurisdictions (Listed In Order of Scores)

Same as U.S.*	Higher than U.S.	Lower than U.S.
Germany	Russian Federation	New Zealand
Belgium (Flemish)	Hong Kong, SAR**	Slovak Republic
Bulgaria	Alberta, Canada	Scotland
Netherlands	British Columbia, Canada	France
Denmark	Singapore	Slovenia
Nova Scotia, Canada	Luxembourg	Poland
Latvia	Ontario, Canada	Spain
England	Hungary	Israel
Austria	Italy	Iceland
Lithuania	Sweden	Belgium (French)
Chinese Taipei		Moldova
Quebec, Canada		Norway
		Romania
		Georgia
		Macedonia
		Trinidad and Tobago
		Iran
		Indonesia
		Qatar
		Kuwait
		Morocco
		South Africa

*Same should be interpreted as "not statistically different".

**Hong Kong, SAR is a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

New Data and Tools Available for the National Survey of Children with Special Health Care Needs

The Child and Adolescent Health Measurement Initiative (CAHMI) has recently released data from the 2005/2006 Children with Special Health Care Needs survey. The 2005/2006 national survey is a more recent and updated version of the survey fielded in 2001. The website also has new features that allow users to compare data and questions from 2005/2006 and 2001.

The Children with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) survey is administered by the National Center for Health Statistics and sponsored and designed by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The survey is conducted by telephone and covers every state and the District of Columbia. National and state-level data are available for CSHCN indicators, which include topics like children with special health care needs' demographics, functional limitations, healthy status and quality of care. Also available are national and state data on care access, receipt of needed care by service type, and the impact of special health care needs on families. A user-friendly data tool is available on the CAHMI Data Resource Center's website, which offers easy access to this information. The aim of the survey and website is to provide readily accessible data to inform decisions related to children's special health care needs.

The new 2005/2006 data includes similar items to the 2001 survey, as well as some revised items and some entirely new questions. One improvement in the 2005/2006 survey is the revised lists of functional difficulties and current con-

ditions that better describe the special health care needs children have. Care coordination and transition to adulthood questions have also been changed to capture more detail.

For an individual survey year users can navigate through data by topic, state, or region to access area profiles and detailed indicator pages. Each indicator page includes links to item wording and a table and graph which users can modify to compare data from different states and regions. Users can also present data by subgroups such as age, family structure, poverty level, race, health care need, and insurance status.

In addition to these features, there are new comparison tools. Users can generate state and regional profiles that contain side-by-side comparisons of 2005/2006 and 2001 data. Icons clearly indicate whether items from both survey years are comparable. Users can also find out exactly how question wording changed between the two surveys. Under the "Compare survey content and changes" section, users will find summary sheets of major changes in wording and methodology. The site will also soon release detailed descriptions of changes by individual question.

To access the new data and analysis tools, visit the CSHCN section of the Data Resource Center at: <http://www.childhealthdata.org/>

KIDS COUNT Data Center

Features Data for the States and the 50 Largest U.S. Cities

State and local data on child well-being are now more accessible than ever at the new KIDS COUNT Data Center. The Center provides ready online access to indicators for the 50 states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the 50 largest U.S. cities. Over 100 indicators are available from the areas of education, youth risk factors, health, birth, employment and income, as well as basic demographics. The center replaces an earlier KIDS COUNT site that also featured state-level data. The indicators include all measures from the KIDS COUNT Data Book and Right Start publications, and many more from a variety of federal data sources.

On this site, viewers have a number of options for accessing and customizing data. Data can be searched either by topic or location (now including cities). Users can access national, state, and city-level profiles or customize profiles by selecting which indicators to present. In the profiles, each indicator table includes five-year trend data (with an option for additional years) and national and state comparisons. Tables can be altered to present specific years and population numbers or percentages. Technical notes and data sources are presented with each indicator, and users have the options of printing or emailing web pages.

Alternatively, through the topic function, users can select a single indicator and multiple geographic areas (from states, nation, and territories) to create customized ranks, graphs, tables, and color-coded maps comparing the indicator across areas. Users can also generate rankings among states and all major cities or a selection of cities.

The site also contains links to the most recent KIDS COUNT Data Book, supplementary materials, and raw data downloads.

To see the new site visit: <http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/>

UNICEF Tool Provides Easy Access to International Child

International children's data from UNICEF's State of the World's Children reports are now available online in a flexible format that allows the user to build customized tables, download attractive graphs for presentations, and combine data from current and past reports to show trends over time. Predefined tables are also available.

Child-related topics include child protection, education, health, and nutrition. Basic country demographic data and data on women are also available. Examples of individual indicators include life expectancy, breastfeeding, consumption of iodized salt, immunization levels, school enrollment, access to clean water, child labor estimates, child marriage, and many more.

Users can choose to download pre-packaged information or create their own tables. When customizing tables, users select which indicators and countries and/or areas to include in their table. Some interesting features include the ability to switch table columns and rows and download the

table into Excel. Users can also combine data from the current and past years' reports, which can sometimes be used to compare trends.

Under downloadable statistics, pre-defined tables are available to download as excel files or PDF's. Tables can be divided by main topics and each file contains data from all countries and areas, including a total estimate for the world. To accompany these data users can also download PDF files of the charts presented in the published report. Aside from tables and charts, the website also offers relevant indicator reports under the full report tab, as well as gender equality information under the profile tab.

To build customized tables from these data go to: http://www.unicef.org/statistics/index_24183.html

To access predefined tables and additional information from the 2008 State of the World's Children report, go to: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/statistics/statistics.php>

Recently Released Reports (*continued*)

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Highlights from PISA 2006: Performance of U.S. 15-Year-Old Students in Science and Mathematics Literacy in an International Context

is a recently released report from the National Center for Education Statistics. The report gauges U.S. student performance on the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) in comparison with fifty-seven other countries and jurisdictions. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) sponsors the survey, which has periodically measured science, math, and reading literacy since 2000. The 2006 report specifically compares U.S. average scores in science and math to international, OECD, and particular country averages. Included are detailed tables and figures by jurisdiction, as well as summaries of international comparisons and U.S. domestic differences by gender and race/ethnicity. The 2006 report is available at:

<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008016>

The State of the World's Children 2008 is the most recent edition to the annual series of reports by UNICEF. This year's report presents general, international indicators of child well-being, as well as a special focus on child survival and primary health care for mothers, infants, and children. Indicator topics include: basic indicators such as deaths, births, literacy, household income, and school enrollment; nutrition; health; HIV/AIDS; education; demographics; economic indicators; women; and child protection. Data are typically presented for 2006 and are available by each world region and country. The tables, charts, and graphs from the report can be downloaded in PDF format. Additionally, users are able to create customized

tables and export the data to Excel (further details can be found in this newsletter's article, "UNICEF Tool Provides Easy Access to International Child Data"). This report can be accessed at: <http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/index.php>

The Nation's Report Card: Writing 2007 is now available from the National Center for Education Statistics. Students attending public and private school in 45 states were assessed on writing tasks that measured narrative, informative, and persuasive writing skills. The report provides national data on 8th and 12th graders and urban district results for 8th graders and the results of the assessment are presented as proficiency levels, percentiles, average scale scores. Results are presented by race and ethnicity, gender, and free and reduced priced lunch, and for 12th graders, parental education. Trend data on state progress between 1998, 2002, and 2007 are also provided. The report is available at: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2008468>

Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for April 2007 has been released by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics. The publication, part of the National Vital Statistics Reports series, presents data gathered from local administrations on births, infant deaths, marriages, and divorces. The report includes national tables comparing monthly 2006 numbers and rates with those in 2007. Data are also presented for each individual state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The report is available at:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr56/nvsr56_08.pdf

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European Union Offers Comprehensive Online Data Tool

The Eurostat Database is a European Union online tool that contains continually updated indicators for EU nations and other countries, including some data for the United States. The database was created as part of the European Statistical System's efforts to coordinate data from EU member states. With the goal of providing reliable data to inform policy decisions, this online database contains over 300 million statistics that have been collected and refined from member states and other nations.

The database includes both indicators directly relevant to children and more general contextual information (e.g., crime levels, the economy, and technology). The "population and social conditions" subject area contains indicators of particular interest to child professionals including information on demographics, education, health and poverty. Relevant demographic data include teen births, fertility rates, infant and child mortality rates, and population estimates by age group. Education data on graduation rates, enrollment, student-teacher ratios, and educational attainment are also available. Additionally, for young adults ages 15 to 24, users can find information on average BMI (a measure used to determine overweight), health status, hospitalization rates, health care use, and smoking and alcohol use. Other notable indicators include internet use, poverty levels, median income, and housing conditions by age and family type, as well as overall education and child/family social protection expenditures.

The database gives users access to tables, graphs, and data downloads for a range of years and geographic

areas in and outside of the European Union. To select an indicator, users browse through a data tree organized by key EU measures, geographic areas, and subjects. After choosing an indicator, users can generate customized tables of specific countries, years, and, sometimes, sub-groups like age and gender. Data are available from the 1990's-2005 for most countries and up to 2007 for select indicators.

Users can also opt to access and customize graphs and maps for nearly all indicators in the "key indicators on EU policy" section. Maps can be customized after downloading Adobe's SVG3 software (free). With this enhancement users can zoom in and re-center the map, define the map's category ranges, and compare pre-defined ranges to an EU country, the EU average, or even the United States. Similarly, users can tailor graphs by choosing graph types, selecting years and countries presented, and adjusting scales and labels. Customized graphs and maps can be printed or downloaded by selecting the icons in the top right hand corner. In addition, linking to the "demo" icon in the same area provides easy-to-follow demonstrations of map, graph, and table functions. Users also have the option of creating a free, Eurostat account, on which they can save tables and other customized work.

To access this database visit:

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/&product=EU_MAIN_TREE&depth=1

Recently Released Reports (*continued*)

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The Mississippi State University Early Childhood Institute has released the **Early Childhood Disaster Risk Index 2007**. The 2007 index, the first edition of a series, examines the preparedness of child care services in some of the states most vulnerable to natural disasters. The eleven states covered in this issue are Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. Tables present information by county and state on disaster risks, early childhood service characteristics, and emergency preparedness. The report also includes a preparedness score for each county, and contains maps and text highlighting key findings. To view this chartbook and learn more visit: <http://www.earlychildhood.msstate.edu/disaster-risk/index.htm>

Education at a Glance 2007 has been released by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The annual publication reports comparable education statistics from OECD member countries and other partner economies. Major topics include education participation and achievement, public and private expenditures, life-long learning measures, and conditions for teachers

and students. This issue also examines the impacts of increasing rates of higher education graduates on employment availability and creation. The publication's website includes excel tables and links to an online database. This report and database can be accessed at:

http://www.oecd.org/document/30/0,3343,en_2649_39263_294_39251550_1_1_1_1,00.html

TransMONEE 2007 Features: Data and Analysis on the Lives of Children in CEE/CIS and Baltic States has been released by the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center. The publication is part of a series that monitors the state of children and women in Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States. Each country's national offices contribute data to the annual series. The report includes indicators on demographics, natality and mortality, health, education, child protection, the economy, and other subjects. The 2007 issue focuses particularly on demographic challenges, youth transition, and formal care (i.e. orphanage and non-parent care). The report is available at: http://www.unicef-irc.org/research/article.php?type=3&id_article=74

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Indicator Efforts

South Africa: Children's Institute Tracks Indicators of Child Well-Being and More

The Children's Institute of the University of Cape Town, South Africa, seeks to improve the condition of its nation's children through research, training, technical assistance, and advocacy. Tracking indicators of child well-being is an important element of this larger mission. To that end, the Institute has developed a regularly updated online tracking system for about 40 indicators of child well-being, and also publishes an annual report called Child Gauge, one of its flagship publications.

The online system is called Children Count: Abanhwana Babalulekile - Facts About Children. It offers indicators in the areas of demography, social security (social services), housing, nutrition, health, water and sanitation, and education. Each indicator includes a commentary on its importance for child well-being and a discussion of basic trends and group differences, as well as supporting tables and figures. Data sources, technical notes, and data limitations are well documented on the site. The site is easily navigated. Separate estimates are often available by province, gender, population group (basically race), and/or age. Estimates are updated as new data become available. The estimates are drawn from data from the national statistical agency Statistics South Africa as well as administrative data from other relevant government departments.

Users from outside the country will see many familiar indicators that they use in their own work, but will also notice indicators reflecting the particular challenges to child well-being in South Africa. For example, they track the percentage of children who are orphans, and who live in "child-

headed households," both a reflection of the ravages of HIV/AIDS.

Another feature that users will notice is the extent to which the work of the Children's Institute, including the indicators work, is grounded in a children's rights framework. There are special rights for children detailed in the national Bill of Rights. In addition, South Africa is a signatory of the United Nation's Convention of the Rights of the Child, which calls for tracking child well-being on a regular basis.

In addition to the online Facts About Children, the Institute publishes an annual flagship report on the condition of children called Child Gauge. Child Gauge offers a comprehensive snapshot of the condition of children, and each edition also focuses on a particular theme. The most recent edition focuses on children's services, while previous issues have looked at poverty and HIV/AIDS. Relevant programs and legislation related to these topics are discussed in depth.

The Center's website offers additional publications that focus on children's status and relevant policies including fact sheets, policy summaries, and research reports. Its newsletter is also a rich resource offering summaries and links to recent publications, child-focused efforts, and legislative events.

To examine the online Facts About Children database, current and past editions of Child Gauge, and all publications of the South Africa Children's Institute, visit: <http://www.ci.org.za>

What's the Latest on Child Well-Being in the US?

Visit the **Child Trends Databank**, the one-stop shop for the latest data and research on child well-being.

- National Estimates for More Than 100 Indicators
- Straightforward Explanations of Each Indicator's Importance
- Overviews of the Latest Trends & Disparities
- Links to State-Level and International Data
- Recent Research by Indicator

Find all this and more at:

<http://www.childtrends databank.org/>



“Measuring the Progress of Societies” (Continued)

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issue, for example, includes an article on the development of the Canadian Index of Well-Being. The newsletter will be issued every few months.

- *Blog.* A blog and other collaborative tools are currently in development.
- *Regional Groups.* OECD is working to establish regional groups that will form the backbone of the Initiative. These are still in development.

This project has the potential to become a major resource for those working in the child and youth well-being indicators field. It is also an opportunity to share your important work with colleagues around the world. For additional information, and to access the resources described above, go to: <http://www.oecd.org/oecdworldforum>

More Resources

Readers interested in international child indicators can learn more through the International Society for Child Indicators (ISCI) and the International Society of Quality of Life Studies (ISQOLS). Both organizations produce newsletters and other resources that focus on many of the topics we have discussed here, including recent international research, initiatives, and data.

ISCI's periodic newsletter can be accessed at: <http://www.childindicators.org/>

ISQOL's quarterly newsletter, the Social Indicators Network News (SINET), is available through an \$18 annual subscription: <http://www.soc.duke.edu/resources/sinet/> (main ISQOLS site is: <http://www.isqols.org/>)

Recently Released Reports (continued)

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The National Center for Education Statistics has released the **Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2007**. This report is the tenth in an annual series on school violence, misconduct, and safety. The National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), Institute of Education Sciences, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) jointly produce the publication, drawing from national surveys of students, teachers, and school administrators. The report covers a range of school indicators such as victimization, fights, bullying, classroom disorder, weapons, perceived school safety, teacher injury, and controlled substance availability and use. Information on crimes that occur outside of school is also included in the publication, and serves as a comparison to in-school indicators. The most recent data are available for 2003-04 to 2005-06, depending on the indicator. The report contains text highlighting key findings, along with detailed tables and figures. Most data are available by state and urbanicity of schools, student demographics, and school characteristics. Read the report at: <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2007/>

The Third School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study (SNDA-III) is a Mathematica Policy Research Report that investigates students' dietary intake and the nutritional content of school foods. Results include the nutritional content of school lunches and breakfasts, number of students served, and the availability of food from vending machines, fundraisers, and other competing sources. Average amounts of fat, calories, protein, and nutrients in school food programs are compared with USDA standards. Finally, the report describes dietary intake averages and disparities between school lunch program participants and non-participants. To view the full report visit: <http://www.mathematica-mpr.com/nutrition/schoolmealsstudy.asp>

Medicaid Enrollment in 50 States: June 2006 Update was released by the Kaiser Family Foundation. The report compiles June 2006 information from state health departments to provide detailed Medicaid enrollment profiles for all fifty states. The report highlights enrollment trends and difference by state, age, and family status, and provides this data for each state in tables and graphs. Data presented in profiles vary by state but typically include enrollment rates by income level, adult/child/family status, and vulnerable group status (e.g., disabled, foster children, aged, refugees). To access the report visit: <http://www.kff.org/medicaid/7606.cfm>

Health, United States, 2007, the 31st report in this series, has been released by the Department of Health and Human Services. The publication presents state and national trend data on health status, health care utilization, resources, and expenditures. Data is drawn from many different surveys and is compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Health Statistics Center. This issue of the report includes data on life expectancy and mortality, risky behaviors and health risks, specific medical conditions, health care expenditures, as well as a special section on access to health care. The chartbook includes figures and detailed trend tables, many with estimates by gender, race/ethnicity, age, and state. This publication is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/hus.htm>

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