

The Child Indicator

THE CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY INDICATORS NEWSLETTER

Fall, 2008

Publication # 2008-41

Vol. 8, Issue No. 2

U.S. Variations in Child Health System Performance: A State Scorecard

A new report from the Commonwealth Fund, *State Scorecard on Health System Performance*, examines variations among states' child health care systems. There are five categories and a total of 16 indicators for each state:

- **Access** (lack of insurance).
- **Quality** (receiving the following: key vaccines; preventative dental and medical care; needed specialty care; service from a medical home; and hospital care for asthma).
- **Costs** (total state personal health spending and family cost for employer-based health insurance).
- **Potential to lead healthy lives** (Infant mortality and percent of young children at risk for developmental delay).

- **Equity** (across income, race/ethnicity, and insurance coverage status).

An interactive online map allows users to determine where each state ranks on the 5 categories and overall simply by clicking on the state. The top-ranked state is Iowa and the lowest-ranked state is Oklahoma.

The report contains six major findings:

- *High performance is possible.* States such as Iowa and Vermont have policies that have led to accessible, equitable and high-quality health care for their children, and other states can do the same.

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ISCI Call for Papers

The International Society of Child Indicators (ISCI) has announced its second international conference, *Counting Children In! Child Indicators: Research Theory, Policy and Practice*. The conference will be held November 4-5, 2009 in Sydney, Australia. The conference will include keynote speakers, paper and poster presentations and discussions focused on child indicators and child well-being.

ISCI is calling for papers and posters which focus on the three themes of the conference:

- Measurement issues at the individual, family, community and global levels.

- Diversity as a challenge to the construction and implementation of indicators.

- Theoretical, conceptual and empirical issues in developing child indicators.

Paper presentations should be 20 minutes in length and posters should be up to 1.5 square meters. Presenters must register for the conference. Abstracts of up to 300 words may be submitted for consideration between November 2008 and April 30, 2009. For more information, email ISCI_Conference_09@uws.edu.au.

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Published by



With funding from the
Annie E. Casey
Foundation

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

New Reports Provide an Education Profile for American Indian and Alaska Native Students

In 2004, Executive Order 13336 authorized the National Indian Education Study (NIES) in an effort to provide a nationally-representative description of the condition of education for American Indian and Alaskan Native students. Sponsored by the Office of Indian Education, the NIES was conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics. The data, analyzed in 2005 and 2007, were gathered from the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) and a supplemental descriptive survey of American Indian and Alaskan Native students. The study presents results gathered from a national sample of approximately 20,000 American Indian and Alaskan Native students. Information is not available on specific tribes, but selected estimates are available for 11 states: Alaska, Arizona, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota and Washington.

Part I of NIES, released in May of 2008, analyzes the academic performance of fourth and eighth grade American Indian and Alaskan Native students in mathematics and reading. Overall, the NIES found that American Indian and Alaskan Natives score lower in both

mathematics and reading than the general population in both fourth and eighth grade. However, American Indian and Alaskan Natives achieve, on average, either statistically similar or higher scores than Black and Hispanic students in mathematics and reading. Scores for mathematics and reading for American Indian and Alaskan Native students showed no significant change since the 2005 report.

Part II of the NIES presents information about the education, home and community experience of American Indian and Alaska Native fourth and eighth grade students. Part II is based on the 2007 survey of students, teachers and school administrators. The three areas the report focuses on are characteristics of American Indian and Alaska Native students in 2007, characteristics of their teachers and schools, and the integration of native language and culture at home and at school.

The NIES may be found on the National Center for Education Statistic's website at <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/nies/>.

Just Released

The Right Start for America's Newborns: City and State Trends now includes data for 2005. This adds to the birth information the Annie E. Casey Foundation has tracked annually since 1990. Estimates are available by state, large city, and the nation. Data are available on births by race; births to mothers who were foreign-born, teens, had less than 12 years of education, or were unmarried; births to women who received little prenatal care, who smoked during the pregnancy; babies with low-birthweights and pre-term births. Estimates were produced by Child Trends for this report. The data are available at www.aecf.org/kidscount/sld/rightstart.jsp.

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USA Counties Online Update

The U.S. Census Bureau has added updated and previously unpublished information to their *USA Counties* databank. *USA Counties* differs from many other population data tools because it provides not only national and state data, but also county-specific data: as of December 2005, over 3,000 counties were represented. The site contains demographic, governmental, and economic information collected from various federal agencies like the Census Bureau, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, the Social Security Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. From this data, users can quickly generate multi-county comparisons by topic and single-county comparisons across time.

The updated data includes new information from the latest *State and Metropolitan Area Data Book*, and the *County and City Data Book*, as well as a series of data variables previously unpublished by the Bureau.

As with several other Census Bureau data tools, *USA Counties* is updated yearly with revised population estimates. Currently, users can access data for all demographic variables from 2006 to 2000; many variables,

however, contain information from as far back as the 1930 national census. Some of the demographic information accessible through *USA Counties* includes education attendance and attainment, birth and death data, economic (income, poverty) data, employment and labor force data, agricultural and business data, and population characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and gender. *USA Counties* also contains a number of demographic indicators specific to child well-being: infant death rates, percentages of children living in poverty, public and private school enrollment, percentages of children living without health insurance, and household demographics such as parental marriage status.

Users may search for data either by topic or location. Users can create single county profiles by typing the name of a county and choosing the variable(s) of interest.

Users wishing to learn more about USA Counties may access it at: <http://censtats.census.gov/usa/usa.shtml>.

Just Released (Continued)

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Income, Poverty and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2007 has been released by the U.S. Census Bureau and contains information on income, poverty, and health insurance coverage. The data was compiled from the 2008 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC). Estimates are available at the national level, with selected estimates at the state level. The family poverty rate remained statistically unchanged between 2006 and 2007 at 9.8%. The number of uninsured children declined from 11.7% in 2006 to 11.0% in 2007. Five states and the District of Columbia saw a decline in uninsured rates while ten states saw an increase. The report is available online at <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/poverty/poverty07.html>.

KIDS COUNT Data Book. This summer, the Annie E. Casey Foundation published its annual KIDS COUNT Data Book, with the lead essay focusing on juvenile justice reform. Using recent data from each of the 50 states, the Data Book features trends in 10 key areas of child welfare, such as child and teen deaths, children living in poverty, and children in single parent families. The Data Book also includes indicators reflecting the economic, educational, and health status of the nation's children. The complete 2008 KIDS COUNT Data Book can be downloaded from the KIDS COUNT website at <http://www.aecf.org/KnowledgeCenter/PublicationsSeries/KCDataBookProducts.aspx>. User-generated reports by state, rank, or topic for individual child welfare indicators are also available through the KIDS COUNT Data Center, at <http://www.kidscount.org/datacenter/databook.jsp>

The Child Well-Being Index (CWI) 2008 is available from the Foundation for Child Development. The report includes an update of the CWI for 1975-2006 and projections for 2007. The numbers show that progress in American children's quality of life has stalled, increasing less than 1% since 2002. An intergenerational comparison of child well-being for baby-boomers and their children show that baby-boomers were less likely to live in families below the poverty line, while their generation Y children are at a lower risk of death from accidents, violence and disease. The report is available at http://www.fcd-us.org/usr_doc/2008AnnualRelease.pdf.

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Data Tools

Youth Risk Behavior Survey

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Adolescent and School Health has recently updated its online Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) data tool to include 2007 estimates. With the Youth Online data tool, users can generate information from YRBSS regarding both general national trends as well as more specific estimates by state or city, selected states and cities, health topic, or survey year.

The YRBSS data tool displays comprehensive results in either graph or in table form with standard errors and confidence intervals for each measurement. In most categories, national information dates back to 1991 and therefore provides users with comparable longitudinal information through 2007.

About the YRBSS: Through periodic student surveys, the YRBSS monitors behaviors related to adolescent health to

provide parents, educators, and policymakers with the data needed both to combat and prevent the risk behaviors detrimental to youth health. The YRBSS collects information in six topical areas of health for youth in grades nine through twelve: Physical Activity, Dietary Behaviors, Alcohol and Drug Use, Sexual Activity, Unintentional Injuries and Violence, and Tobacco Use. For example, the Sexual Activity category contains questions concerning birth control and condom use, number of sexual partners, age at first intercourse, and others.

The YRBSS website may be accessed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/yrbs/index.htm>

New Online Source of Indicators from NCES

The Institute of Education Sciences' National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) has created an online DataLab. The DataLab contains information from surveys and published tables from the NCES. The homepage is easy to navigate and is divided into Tools (QuickStats and PowerStats) and Resources (Library and Help).

Tools:

QuickStats contains data from education surveys done from 1993 to 2006. These surveys include information on schools, staffing, postsecondary students and faculty, baccalaureate and beyond.

Examples of available indicators include:

- Ethnicity of students;
- Grades offered;
- Classroom accommodations;
- Number of transfer students;
- Full-time and part-time teachers, counselors and nurses; and

- Number of computers connected to the internet.

Visitors can create a table by choosing a survey and then adding variables and can include specific groups in the table. The DataLab can save, print or open the created table in Microsoft Excel.

PowerStats is coming in 2009 and will allow users to produce more complex tables and estimates.

Resources:

The **Library** allows visitors to locate all tables, figures and charts published in many NCES publications, including:

- The NCES' National Education Data Resource Center Postsecondary Tables Library;
- The Digest of Education Statistics; and
- Indicators of School Crime and Safety.

Over 20 years of tables, figures and charts are available to be searched. The search may be narrowed by year or topic. QuickRetrieve is also available so visitors may locate a table immediately by searching the table number.

The **Help** section provides an email address to contact about any problems or questions.

The DataLab is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/datalab/>.

“U.S. Variations in Child Health System” (continued)

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- *Leading states consistently outperform lagging states on multiple child health care indicators and dimensions.* That is, states that lead in one area tend to lead in others as well.
- *There is a wide variation in children's access to care and health care quality across the United States.* For example, only 5 percent of children are uninsured in Michigan, compared to 20 percent in Texas.
- *Children's access to a medical home (primary care providers who are accessible and provide high quality service) varies widely across states.* 61 percent of New Hampshire's children have access to a medical home compared with only 33 percent in Mississippi.
- *Better access to care is closely associated with better quality of care.*
- *There are strong, regional patterns in child health system performance.* Overall, New England and the north-central states perform well, but western and southern states have lower health-care costs.

If all states achieved the same rates as top-states, 4,691,326 more children would be covered by health insurance than are currently.

The report is available online at http://www.commonwealthfund.org/publications/publications_show.htm?doc_id=687113.

Just Released (Continued)

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America's Children. The Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics has published its 2008 report: *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being.2008*. Since 1997, a consortium of federal agencies from the Department of Health and Human Services, Commerce

(Census Bureau), Department of Labor, the Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Justice, and other sectors of the federal government have collaborated to update and disseminate key indicators of child well-being on an annual basis. Indicators are

presented in the areas of Family and social Environment, Economic Circumstances, Health Care, Physical Environment and Safety, Behavior, Education, and Health.

The full report is available at <http://www.childstats.gov>.

Call for Papers and Registration for Conference

Announcing a call for papers and registration for an international symposium on **Building Safe, Humane, and Responsive Communities for Children and Families**. The symposium, to be held March 30, 31 and April 1, 2009 at the Westin Poinsett in Greenville, SC, USA, is co-sponsored by Clemson University's Institute on Family and Neighborhood Life, the American Orthopsychiatric Association, the International Family Therapy Association, and the International Society for Child Indicators. Deadline for papers is January 15, 2009. Details at www.familysymposium.com.

Presentations may be in one of three forms: posters, 20- to 30-minute papers, and panels of three or four papers. To be considered, abstracts of potential presentations should be focused on topics of relevance to the symposium theme. We are interested in presentations relating to both U.S. and international research on the linkages between community life and the safety and well-being of children and families.

The best papers from the symposium will be published soon thereafter in one of three forums: a special section of the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, a special issue of Child Indicator Research, and an edited book in Springer's series on child indicator research. Invitations to refine papers for publication will be issued at the symposium. Peer reviewers and editors will be drawn from distinguished scholars in the four sponsoring organizations.

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/>

