

The Child Indicator

THE CHILD, YOUTH, AND FAMILY INDICATORS NEWSLETTER

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Looking at the Big Picture

America's Children in Brief

The percentage of preterm births has declined, and teen smoking rates are the lowest they've been since data collection began. However, the proportion of children living in "food-insecure" households was also the highest seen under current monitoring, and the share of parents lacking secure employment was the highest since 1998. These are some highlights from *America's Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2010*, an annual report from the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. Tracking 40 indicators in seven domains of child well-being, this brief version alternates years with a more extensive report. More information is available at <http://www.childstats.gov>

KIDS COUNT 2010 Data Book

The 21st annual edition of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's report on child well-being was released this past summer. Presenting national and state-level trends on 10 primary indicators, the report ranks each state on each indicator, and on overall well-being. In this year's tabulation, New Hampshire, Minnesota, and Vermont rank highest, and Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi are lowest. The Data Book also makes recommendations for improving the nation's data collection systems

for children.

The Data Book, and information on many additional indicators tracked at state, county, city, and school district levels, can be found at the KIDS COUNT Data Center:

<http://datacenter.kidscount.org>

2010 Child and Youth Well-Being Index

The Foundation for Child Development annually publishes its "Child Well-Being Index" (CWI), a composite of 28 indicators covering seven equally weighted quality-of-life domains. This year's CWI report updates trends tracked since 1975, and makes projections for children's well-being that cover the years 2009-2012. The report documents a decline in the CWI beginning in 2009, on the heels of the "Great Recession," and projects further deterioration in well-being into 2010-2012. Particularly within the Family Economic Well-Being domain, the Foundation report predicts the Great Recession will fully erase the gains made over the past 35 years.

More information is at <http://www.fcd-us.org/resources/2010-child-well-being-index-cwi>

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“Cost of Raising a Child” Calculator

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) annually publishes analyses that estimate what families spend on children, using data from the Consumer Expenditure Survey. Estimates are provided for children of different ages, for different household configurations, for various income-levels, and by geographic region. One striking figure includes side-by-side pie-charts, for 1960 and 2009, depicting the shares of the total allocated to various types of expenses. “Child care and education” accounted for just two percent in 1960, but for 16 percent of the total in 2008. The share devoted to “health care” doubled (from four to eight percent), while the proportions devoted to food and clothing shrank considerably.

Now, USDA has put online its “Cost of Raising a Child Calculator,” which allows users to enter details of their own circumstances (e.g., family structure, ages and numbers of children, region of the country, etc.), and produce customized estimates of their likely expenditures.

To see the Calculator, go to <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/calculatorintro.htm>

To access the latest USDA report (Expenditures on Children by Families, 2009), go to <http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/Publications/CRC/crc2009.pdf>

The Global Village

Young Children of Immigrants

It is difficult to overstate the degree to which the children of immigrants are changing the face—and the future—of young America.

Children of immigrants are responsible for the entire growth since 1990 in the U.S. population of 0-8-year-olds. Children with Mexican parents comprise the largest share (3.7 million) of this population, but beyond this group the immigrant origins of children’s parents are very diverse. Among preschool-age children, those with African or Central American origins will likely be the fastest-growing groups.

A new report from the Urban Institute, “Young Children of Immigrants: The Leading Edge of America’s Future,” summarizes these, and other trends. The brief paints a complex picture of this group, with wide disparities in parental education and linguistic isolation, and generally disproportionate poverty.

The report relies primarily on data from the 2007 and 2008 American Community Surveys. The brief is available at <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412203-young-children.pdf>

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Unauthorized Immigrants and Their U.S.-Born Children

About one in 15 infants (eight percent) born in the U.S. in 2008 were babies born to unauthorized immigrants, according to U.S. Census Bureau data analyzed and reported by the Pew Hispanic Center. Children born in this country are U.S. citizens, according to our Constitution. As of 2009, four million U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrants lived here, together with 1.1 million foreign-born children of unauthorized immigrants. One consequence of these trends is a large and growing number of “mixed” families—families with at least one undocumented parent, and at least one child who is a U.S. citizen—whose status makes these families vulnerable to serious disruption.

See the report at <http://pewhispanic.org/reports/report.php?ReportID=125>

New Data on Youth

Teen Voice 2010: Relationships That Matter to America’s Teens

Following on a 2009 study, this report from Best Buy and Search Institute summarizes results from a 2010 national survey of 15-year-olds. Like the earlier study, this one reports on three constructs—“Sparks,” “Voice,” and “Relationships”—which, according to its sponsors, represent important developmental strengths in the lives of this age-group. “Sparks,” understood as sources of keen passion and interest, figure strongly in the lives of just over half (51 percent) of the study group, who name creative arts, sports, and technology as the top three “sparks.” “Voice,” a measure of teens’ ability to speak out and influence the things they care about, is a significant strength among only 22 percent of 15-year-olds. And fewer than one in five (19 percent) score high on the index of “Relationships,” which focuses on positive, sustained, and meaningful ties with adults. More than a third (38 percent) of teens surveyed had low scores on all three indices.

For more information, see https://www.at15.com/about_at_15/teen_voice_2010

Conditions of Confinement: Findings from the Survey of Youth in Residential Placement

Nearly one in five confined youth who have a record of minor offenses only are housed with youth who have killed someone, and about one-fourth reside with juveniles or young adults who are felony sex offenders. These are among the findings of a recent report from the U.S. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. In addition:

- A total of more than 100,000 youth are in residential placement facilities within the juvenile justice system, including corrections and detention programs, community-based programs, residential programs, or camp programs.
- A pre-placement history of frequent or injurious physical abuse is reported by one-fourth of youth in custody, and 12 percent report prior sexual abuse.
- About a third acknowledge some affiliation with gangs.
- Twenty-five percent fear attack by another resident, and 22 fear attacks from staff members. More than a third of these youth report being placed in isolation, typically for longer than 24 hours; best practice guidelines specify that any youth in solitary confinement exceeding two hours should see a counselor, and that any isolation of more than 24 hours calls for explicit approval of the facility director.

The report is available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/227729.pdf>

New Education Data

The Condition of Education, 2010

An annual report from the U.S. Department of Education, *The Condition of Education* includes a number of statistics on the status and progress of education. Among the highlights of this year's edition are the following:

- Median annual earnings in 2008 for workers ages 25-35 were \$50,000 for those with a bachelor's degree or higher, compared with \$23,500 for those without a high school diploma.
- Two-thirds (67 percent) of high school completers enrolled in college immediately following high school—up from 49 percent in 1972. However, wide gaps in this percentage persist among income and racial/ethnic groups.
- A little more than half (57 percent) of first-time students seeking a bachelor's degree and attending full-time in 2001-02 completed that degree within six years.

More information is available at <http://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/>

ED Data Express

The U.S. Department of Education recently launched a new website intended to bring together in one place data from a number of Department resources. Previous to ED Data Express, users had to visit multiple sites to obtain various data, and formats were sometimes not conducive to sorting and comparing. ED Data Express centralizes data from various program offices, the National Center for Education Statistics, and the College Board. The new tool also introduces interactive features that encourage users to search and explore the data, create customized reports, and view state profiles. See details at <http://www.eddataexpress.ed.gov>

Diplomas Count 2010: Graduation by the Numbers

Every day, more than 7,000 high school students drop out, according to a new report from *Education Week* and the *Editorial Projects in Education Research Center*. These numbers translate into 1.3 million dropouts per year, or three in ten public school students. While graduation rates have improved over the past decade, with the highest gains seen among blacks and non-Hispanic whites, racial gaps are still large. More striking still are the gaps between the lowest and highest performing states—as much as 40 percentage points. As highlighted in several recent reports, 25 school districts (of some 11,000 nationwide) account for one out of every five dropouts.

For more information, go to http://www.edweek.org/media/ew/dc/2010/DC10_PressKit_FINAL.pdf

The Schott 50-State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2010

A new report spotlights the low rate at which black males graduate from high school. *The Schott 50-State Report on Public Education and Black Males, 2010* puts the overall rate for this group in 2007/08 at 47 percent. However, state-by-state data reveal that in half the states the graduation rate is even lower. Data are also presented for the school districts where 10,000 or more black male students are enrolled; in some of these, fewer than one in four black males graduate.

Concurrently, the report holds up the example of New Jersey, a state where more than 65 percent of black males graduate. New Jersey, following the Abbott court decision, instituted new funding in select districts, intended to close the gap between black and white graduation rates.

The report is available at <http://www.blackboysreport.org/>

International Indicators Update

OECD Family Database

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, which includes the U.S.) has created an on-line database on family outcomes and related policies that currently includes 58 indicators. Four broad categories are represented: family structure, the labor market position of families, public policies for families and children, and child outcomes (including health, poverty, education/literacy, and societal participation). In addition to making available data sheets on each indicator, the site presents interactive “Country Snapshots” allowing users to compare a country’s position on 20 indicators with one or more other countries’, or with the OECD average.

More information is available at <http://www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database>

WHO European “Health For All” Database

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Regional Office for Europe features an on-line health indicators database, including statistics as recent as 2009, many of which have to do with children, youth, and families.

For more information, see <http://data.euro.who.int/hfadb>

Indicators in Practice

CIC Webinars

Wondering about the relationship between *indicators* and *performance measures*? In some communities these work hand-in-hand, as multiple programs and initiatives track their contributions to community-wide change. The Community Indicators Consortium (CIC) is sponsoring a series of webinars on this topic, featuring key concepts as well as on-the-ground examples. Participation is free. Past webinars are archived on CIC’s web site. For more information, visit <http://www.communityindicators.net/events.webinars>

About the Child Indicator

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 of its members more effective in their work. Past issues are available at www.childtrends.org/ci.

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Child Trends is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research center that studies children at all stages of development. Our mission is to improve outcomes for children by providing research, data, and analysis to the people and institutions whose decisions and actions affect children. For additional information on Child Trends, including publications available to download, visit our Web site at www.childtrends.org. For the latest information on more than 100 key indicators of child and youth well-being, visit the Child Trends DataBank at www.childtrends.org/databank. For summaries of over 440 evaluations of out-of-school time programs that work (or don't) to enhance children's development, visit www.childtrends.org/WhatWorks.

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