



EMBARGOED FOR RELEASE
UNTIL 3:00 a.m. EDT July 25, 2007

CONTACT:

Byron Johnson
202-842-3600, Ext. 230
kidscount@hagerssharp.com

Linda Leask
Kids Count Alaska
907-786-5425
anle11@uaa.alaska.edu

Child Well-Being In Alaska at a Glance
2007 KIDS COUNT Alaska Fact Sheet

Alaska ranks 38th in the nation in a new state-by-state study on the well-being of America's children. The 2007 *KIDS COUNT Data Book* reveals that Alaska improved on four of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being, experienced setbacks on five and saw no change on one since 2000. The 2007 Essay discusses the need for all children in foster care to develop strong, lasting family connections. The Essay also sets an ambitious national goal to preserve, strengthen, rebuild, or find permanent families for every American child who is at risk of not having one.

Over 2,400 Alaska children are in need of a permanent family connection

In 2004, 2,422 children under age 18 in Alaska lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 13 per 1,000 children. That year, 30 children in the state aged out of the system without having a permanent family. Nationwide, 10 children per 1,000 under age 18 lived in foster care with 22,718 leaving the system at age 18 without a stable family environment.

Alaska ranks best nationwide in one category, bottom ten in four others.

Alaska ranked best in the nation in regards to the percentage of low-birthweight babies at 6 percent in 2004. While this is an increase of 7 percent since 2000, it is equal to the national rate of change during the same period.

Unfortunately, the state also ranked in the bottom ten in four other indicators, including: worst in the nation in teen deaths per 100,000 ages 15-19, 49th in child deaths per 100,000 ages 1-14, 47th in the percentage of children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment, and 40th in the percentage of teens, ages 16-19, not attending school and not working.

Decline in teen birth rate greater than in the nation over the past five years.

While in 2000 both Alaska and the U.S. had similar birth rates for teens ages 15-19, 49 and 48 respectively, Alaska's rate had decreased by 20 percent and the national rate by 14 percent by 2004.

Percentage of children living in families where parents lack steady work improves.

Despite Alaska ranking among the lowest in the nation for its percentage of children living in families where no parent had full-time, year-round employment, there was improvement in this category against the national trend. The number dropped from 49 percent in 2000 to 41 percent in 2005, a 16 percent improvement. Nationally the percentage worsened from 32 percent to 34 percent in the same period.