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

California ranks 19th 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 California improved on five of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being, experienced setbacks on three and saw no change on two 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 122,000 California children are in need of a permanent family connection.

In 2004, 122,109 children under age 18 in California lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 13 per 1,000 children. That year, 4,535 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.

California ranked within the top ten in three categories nationally.

Outpacing the national trend, California improved its infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) and child death rate (deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14), placing 6th and 9th in the country respectively. While the percentage of low-birthweight babies increased by 8 percent between 2000 and 2004, California still ranked 8th overall with a rate of 6.7 percent.

Teen death rate worsened.

Nationally, the rate of teens ages 15-19 dying per 100,000 dropped slightly, while in California the rate increased by 11 percent since 2000, from 53 per 100,000 to 59 per 100,000 in 2004. This is still lower than the national rate of 66 teen deaths per 100,000.

Largest improvement seen in high school dropouts.

California followed the national trend between 2000 and 2005, with the percentage of teens, ages 16-19, who are high school dropouts, improving by 30 percent, down to 7 percent from 10 percent five years earlier. Nationally, the rate dropped by 36 percent from 11 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2005.

Rate of teen births decreases in California.

The rate of births to females ages 15-19 improved by 17 percent from 47 per 1,000 in 2000 to 39 per 1,000 in 2005.