



Center for Public Policy Priorities

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CONTACT: Lynsey Kluever, CPPP
512-320-0222 ext. 112
Kluever@cphp.org

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

Texas ranks in the bottom quarter (37th in the nation) across 10 measures of child well-being, according to the *2007 KIDS COUNT Data Book*, an annual state-by-state study of America's children.

The Data Book also highlights the need for all children in foster care to develop strong, lasting family connections. It calls on the nation to preserve, strengthen, rebuild, or find permanent families for every foster child in America

KEY FINDINGS

Texas has the worst teen birth rate in the nation.

Despite improving by 9 percent between 2000 and 2004, the teen birth rate in Texas is the highest in the nation with 63 births per 1,000 females ages 15-19. Although one in five of these births are to married 18-19 year-olds, their children face the same negative social and economic outcomes as children born to younger teens. Nationally, the teen birth rate fell to 41 per 1,000 females ages 15 - 19 in 2004, a 15 percent decline since 2000.

Texas has the 7th worst child poverty rate in the nation.

One in four Texas children lived in poverty in 2005 (a 14 percent increase since 2000), ranking Texas 44th in the nation. The national child poverty rate also worsened, increasing from 17 percent in 2000 to 19 percent in 2005.

Texas' infant mortality rate increased.

The infant mortality rate in Texas increased by 11 percent from 5.7 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2000 to 6.3 deaths in 2004. The state's rate is still better than the national average, which improved slightly from 6.9 deaths per 1,000 to 6.8 deaths in those years.

Over 34,000 Texas children are in need of a permanent family connection.

In 2004, 34,041 Texas children under age 18 (or 5 out 1,000) lived in foster care at some point during the year. Of those children, 325 aged out of the system without having a permanent family. Nationwide, 10 children per 1,000 under age 18 lived in foster care. Nearly 23,000 left the system at age 18 without a stable family.

KIDS COUNT is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the U.S. and is distributed in Texas by the Texas KIDS COUNT Project, an initiative of the Center for Public Policy Priorities.