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

Washington ranks 13th 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 Washington improved on five of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being, experienced setbacks on four, 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 14,000 Washington children are in need of a permanent family connection.

In 2004, 14,836 children under age 18 in Washington lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 10 per 1,000 children. That year, 357 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.

Washington places in top ten nationally among three out of ten categories.

Compared to the rest of the nation, Washington had the 3rd lowest percentage of low-birthweight babies, 6th lowest child death rate, and 9th lowest infant mortality rate.

High school dropout rate falls.

Washington's greatest improvement was in its high school dropout rate, which fell by 22 percent in 2005 to 7 percent, down from 9 percent in 2000. Nationally, the rate decreased as well, improving by 36 percent from 11 percent in 2000 to 7 percent in 2005.

Higher rate of idle teens in Washington, reverse of the national trend.

In Washington, the percentage of teens not attending school and not working increased between 2000 and 2005, while improving nationally. The state's rate of idle teens rose slightly from 8 percent in 2000 to 9 percent in 2005, while the national rate fell from 9 to 8 percent over the same period of time.

Washington's child poverty rate down, while nationally on the rise.

In Washington the child poverty rate saw modest improvement between 2000 and 2005, decreasing from 16 to 15 percent. In 2005, 19 percent of the nation's total child population lived in poverty, an increase of 12 percent from 2000.