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**Child Well-Being In West Virginia at a Glance**  
**2007 KIDS COUNT West Virginia Fact Sheet**

West Virginia ranks 44<sup>th</sup> 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 West Virginia improved on three of the 10 measures reflecting child well-being, experienced setbacks on three and saw no change on four 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 4,600 West Virginia children are in need of a permanent family connection.**

In 2004, 4,696 children under age 18 in West Virginia lived in foster care at some point during the year, a rate of 12 per 1,000 children. That year, 152 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.

**West Virginia places in bottom ten among six out of ten categories.**

Compared to the rest of the nation, West Virginia ranked 47<sup>th</sup> for its percentage of children living in poverty, 46<sup>th</sup> for parents without secure employment, 45<sup>th</sup> for idle teens, 43<sup>rd</sup> for its percentage of low-birthweight babies and teen death rate, and 41<sup>st</sup> in the child death rate.

**Child death rate improves modestly.**

West Virginia's largest improvement among the indicators was a 7 percent improvement in its child death rate, which dropped from 30 deaths per 100,000 in 2000 to 28 deaths in 2004. Nationally, this rate also fell from 22 deaths per 100,000 to 20 deaths in the same period of time.

**High school dropout rate increases in West Virginia, opposite of national trend.**

In 2000, West Virginia's high school dropout rate of 8 percent was better than the national average, which stood at 11 percent. By 2005 however, the state's rate rose slightly to 9 percent, while nationally the average high school dropout rate improved by 36 percent to 7 percent.

**Rate of single-parent families remains unchanged.**

West Virginia's rate of single-parent families remained unchanged at 30 percent since 2000 and was slightly better than the national average of 32 percent in 2005.