



## Summer 2002 KIDS COUNT Newsletter

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It's been a long, hot, busy and productive summer. As you can see, Network members have produced a huge variety of reports and other information over the summer. Thanks to all for sharing.

### Published by KIDS COUNT

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#### **Rhode Island Household Income Gap Widens During the 1990s** - by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Census Brief Number 8 - released August, 2002.

Though all cities and towns in the state showed an dollar increase in income between 1989 and 1999, adjusting for inflation shows that the poorest communities actually experienced a decrease in real income while the richest showed significant increases.

#### **Education Levels Increase Statewide in the 1990s** - by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Census Brief Number 7 - released August, 2002. According to the 2000 Census, Rhode Islanders are better educated now than in 1990. This Census Brief analyzes changes in educational attainment levels of the adult population from 1990 to 2000 as well as differences across communities within the state.

#### **More Rhode Island Children At Risk As Child Poverty Rates Increase** - by Rhode Island KIDS COUNT

Census Brief Number 6 released June 2002 documents the increase in the number and rate of children living in poverty in the state with city and town level information.

#### **Child Care in Colorado: The Early Education of Our Children** - by Colorado Children's Campaign

To prepare children for school and support working parents, Colorado needs more high-quality early care and education (ECE). However, ECE is severely underfunded, and many low-income parents are being priced out of care.

This issue brief, the third in a series, examines ECE in Colorado using NSAF data.

#### **Kids May Pay Price for State and Federal Short-Sightedness** - by Carol Kamin, Ph.D., Children's Action Alliance

CAA Executive Director Carol Kamin explains how federal welfare proposals may impact the state's ability to support working families. Ran in The East Valley Tribune on April 4, 2002, and The Arizona Republic on April 7, 2002.

#### **Arizona Just Blew a \$1 Billion Opportunity for Kids and Families** - by Carol Kamin, Ph.D., Children's Action Alliance

CAA Executive Director Carol Kamin explains how the state legislature's failure to expand unemployment insurance benefits ultimately hurts children, families and the Arizona economy. Ran in The East Valley Tribune, May 13, 2002; The Arizona Republic, May 14, 2002; The Arizona Daily Star, May 15, 2002; and the Tucson Citizen, May 17, 2002.

**... And Daycare for All** - by Carol Kamin, Ph.D., Children's Action Alliance

CAA Executive Director Carol Kamin explains that improving access to quality early learning opportunities for all Arizona children is vital to bettering many of today's social ills, including dismal high school dropout rates, teen pregnancy rates and the percentage of children living in poverty. Ran in The Arizona Republic, July 7, 2002.

**Reliable Revenues for Responsible Budgets** - by Elizabeth Hudgins, Children's Action Alliance

This special edition of CAA's Strengthening Families bulletin describes ten tax policies to help Arizona raise reliable revenues for responsible budgets. Strengthening Families is the quarterly newsletter of the State Fiscal Analysis Initiative in Arizona, which does research and education on the ways in which Arizona's budget and tax policies affect children and families.

**6 Lessons Learned 6 Years Later** - by Elizabeth Hudgins, Children's Action Alliance

On the anniversary of sweeping federal legislation that vowed to end welfare reform as we knew it, this special edition of our Welfare Reform Watch bulletin analyzes state Department of Economic Security data from 1997 to 2001 to see what lessons can be gleaned from 6 years of reform efforts. The results: while many families left welfare for work and started at slightly higher wages, significant challenges remain in efforts to help families get off and stay off of welfare.

**Who's for Kids, and Who's Just Kidding?** - by Children's Action Alliance

This 4-page bulletin gives voters background information on critical issues facing children and families in Arizona and provides a list of questions voters can use to get commitments from candidate to benefit kids.

**Children's Program Outcome Review Team 2001 Results** - by Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth

This publication represents an ongoing evaluation process of children in state custody in Tennessee. It provides data on the status of children and tests the service system's performance in improving aspects of the lives of children and families. For more information, contact Tennessee KIDS COUNT, Linda O'Neal, (615) 532-1571 or Linda.ONeal@state.tn.us.

**2000 Population for South Dakota Counties. Single Age Years by Gender, Under Age 20** - by South Dakota KIDS COUNT Project

Provides single year ages, 0 through 19, for the state and each county by gender.

**Impact of Substance Use and Violence/Delinquency on Academic Achievement for Groups of Middle and High School Students in Washington** - by Washington Kids Count

In this study we examined the associations among substance use, violent/delinquent behavior, and academic achievement (as indicated by test scores) in groups of high school and middle school children. Because these risky behaviors commonly take place in groups, and attitudes towards these behaviors are nurtured in a social context, we analyzed our data at the group level (grade by gender by race/ethnicity). We found that groups of middle and high school students with even moderate involvement with substance use and violence/delinquency had poorer overall test scores than groups of students with little or no involvement in these behaviors. If schools and communities are concerned about improving achievement, they must address both attitudes and behaviors related to substance use and violence/delinquency. Intervention efforts need to engage the community in focusing on the learning environment outside the classroom. Intervention should start when students are young and continue through high school.

**Exploring Disparities in Educational Achievement: The Impact of School Funding** - by Washington Kids Count

Despite many challenges, students in Washington show consistent improvement. Over the past three years, the number of children meeting performance standards on the WASL has increased. Reading skills in particular show dramatic gains. Still, as the state as a whole moves ahead, certain ethnic- minority groups are falling further behind. Striking as these test score gaps are, they beg the question of whether there is something in particular about a child's race- ethnic group that affects achievement. We found race- ethnicity did not influence school or district average test scores once the percentage of children living in low- income families was accounted for. How much money a school district spends and where it spends that money did make a difference. A look at average scores reveals that Hispanic, African American, and Native American students persistently lag behind white students in both math and reading. These ethnic- minority students consistently fall behind in both average scores and in meeting basic standards. The

following analysis documents these differences and explores a variety of factors that may contribute to them.

### **State of Washington's Children - Fall 2001** - by *Washington Kids Count*

The State of Washington's Children - Fall 2001 provides comprehensive statistics on the health and well-being of children and families in Washington State. This year's report highlights mental health challenges facing Washington children. Our research finds that mental illness has now surpassed injuries as the single most common reason for hospitalizations in children over four years of age. In 1999, nearly 1,200 school-aged children and over 1,600 adolescents were hospitalized for a mental illness. This year's report takes also an in-depth look at other challenges facing Washington children. For example, in 1999, 4 out of every 10 births in Washington were reported as mistimed or unwanted. This year we take an in-depth look at risk factors associated with unintended pregnancies. Additionally, we found that less than half of 4th, 7th, and 10th graders met basic math standards in both reading and math. This year we explore how school funding and demographics impact achievement and fuel educational disparities.

### **Health Insurance for Colorado Kids: What's at Issue?** - by *Colorado Children's Campaign*

Data from the 1999 National Survey of America's Families (NSAF) illuminate the health insurance issues faced by Colorado's children. In 1999, 22 percent of children from low-income families in Colorado had no health insurance, and for Colorado's growing child immigrant population the situation is worse. Even when children are enrolled in Medicaid and CHP+, Colorado has some of the strictest eligibility standards in the nation. Recommendations are made to address this growing problem.

### **Self-Sufficiency Standard for Virginia** - by *Diana Pearce, University of Washington*

A study of the actual cost of living in 134 Virginia localities for 70 family types.

### **Florida's Children At A Glance, 2001** - by *Center for the Study of Children's Futures*

County and statewide indicator summaries of 1999 and 1999/00 data on population, birth indicators, education, child well-being, and youth and the law. For more information, contact Susan Weitzel, (813) 974-7411 or weitzel@fmhi.usf.edu.

### **The State of the Child in Pennsylvania: A 2002 Guide to Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania** - by *Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children*

The State of the Child in Pennsylvania: A 2002 Guide to Child Well-Being in Pennsylvania is the most comprehensive status report available on Pennsylvania's 2.9 million children and their families. With 272 pages, it's the first place to look for local, reliable, and detailed information on the health, education, and well-being of children.

The State of the Child in Pennsylvania charts 10 years of changes for children. In one convenient book or CD-ROM, it offers the best available data for statewide, county and school district snapshots of child well-being, plus close-up looks at the data for minorities and 23 major municipalities.

### **From Building Blocks to Books: Learning from Birth through 8 in Pennsylvania** - by *Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children*

The report presents the community-wide benefits of helping young children build a strong educational foundation through seven programs and systems: child care, Early Intervention, reading readiness and success, kindergarten, first through third grades, and educational enrichment through after-school programs and tutoring. However, it also shows that Pennsylvania has yet to coordinate its efforts into a comprehensive, fully effective approach.

### **Mental health needs among Colorado youth** - by *Colorado Children's Campaign*

Data from the National Survey of America's Families (NSAF) highlight the mental health needs among Colorado's youth. While one in 16 young children and one in 12 adolescents exhibit high levels of emotional or behavioral problems, Colorado has a severe shortage of appropriate mental health services. Recommendations are made to address this growing problem.

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