

Executive Summary

Child Health

Recent data show a mixed picture of child health in Missouri. Compared to other states we have fewer children without health insurance. Yet, in 2004, almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of Missouri's children still did not receive a preventive medical care visit and only 56% received both a preventive medical care visit AND a preventive dental care visit.

KIDS COUNT data show that the number of low birthweight babies and the number of babies who die before their first birthday (infant mortality) both increased. These indicate many Missouri children do not get a healthy start in life.

The number of children receiving help through food stamps and free or reduced price school lunches continues to rise. Inadequate nutrition stunts child development.

Children and teens in Missouri are more likely to be overweight or obese than children in the nation as a whole. Teen smoking rates are also higher than national averages.

There are more mixed messages in the data about child abuse and neglect and out-of-home placement. Rates of children involved in family assessments or who are victims of substantiated abuse and neglect continue to rise, while out-of-home placements fell.

Child Health Solutions

Health insurance is a critical part of improving child health in Missouri. Covering all of the state's children requires investment and resources. Government policies should require a comprehensive approach.

The state should increase investment in proven programs that focus on prevention. This includes efforts to increase timely prenatal care and to reduce teen pregnancies and the accidental deaths of children and teens. Tobacco settlement money should be used to prevent or reduce teen smoking. Programs that encourage physical activity should also be supported.

We can target public resources to areas where they can have the most impact. This includes supporting working poor families, where a little help can go a long way.

Missouri must invest in better data collection. State government clearly has a role in the collection of information and that requires investment in state infrastructure. Without that, our attempts to improve outcomes are flying blind.

Education

The foundations for success in school are built long before kindergarten. School readiness is more than simply knowing the alphabet or counting to ten. Kindergarten teachers believe that the best predictors of success are those that relate to behavior, like following directions and working with others.

Early education is widely recognized as a component of successful economic development. It is also a major industry in the state with gross annual receipts larger than those in the hog and mining industries.

During their teenage years, young people make decisions that affect their transition to adulthood. Teens are more likely to make a successful transition to adulthood when they: choose to stay in school; delay sexual activity or use a contraceptive; and avoid excessive risks, like driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

KIDS COUNT data show that more Missouri teens are making better choices in many of these areas. Births to mothers without a high school diploma, births to teen mothers and annual high school dropouts are all measures that show improvement.

Safety

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death for children 1 - 14. Accidents account for 3 of 4 deaths among adolescents. In all age groups, the accidents are primarily motor vehicle crashes. KIDS COUNT data show a reduction in child deaths but an increase in teen violent deaths.



KIDS COUNT in Missouri 2005 Data Book



KIDS COUNT in Missouri (KCM) Data Book is a collaborative project of Citizens for Missouri's Children, the Children's Trust Fund and more than 30 public and private organizations from across the state. The project's mission is to improve the well-being of Missouri's children by heightening awareness of children's issues within local communities and by promoting more effective responses to children's needs throughout the state.

The annual *KIDS COUNT in Missouri Data Book* documents the status of children in all 114 Missouri counties and the City of St. Louis. KIDS COUNT data are used to brief members of the legislature, to shape policy goals, and as an integral part of training communities to undertake data-driven advocacy. KIDS COUNT data and their implications for children are the driving forces behind the work of Citizens for Missouri's Children.

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Primary funding for The KIDS COUNT in Missouri 2005 Data Book comes from the Children's Trust Fund and the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

The Children's Trust Fund is Missouri's foundation for child abuse prevention.

The **Annie E. Casey Foundation** is the nation's largest philanthropic source for disadvantaged children. The foundation supports a network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that shapes a new direction for America's children.



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The report can be accessed via Internet at www.mokids.org
Full data set available at www.oseda.missouri.edu/kidscount

For information about purchasing the KIDS COUNT in Missouri 2005 Data Book please contact:

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Citizens for Missouri's Children



Citizens for Missouri's Children (CMC) is Missouri's only statewide child advocacy organization. It serves as an independent voice for children on issues, policies and government programs that affect their lives and about which they cannot speak for themselves. The organization's mission is to advocate for the rights and well-being of all Missouri's children, especially those with the greatest need.

In addition to managing the KIDS COUNT in Missouri project, CMC promotes access to high-quality early learning, child protection, health care and youth development services for all Missouri's children. CMC monitors state expenditures in these areas and presses for sufficient financial supports for children. CMC convenes an annual policy briefing to bring together citizens, service providers and policy makers who share a common concern for children. During each legislative session, CMC keeps the public informed with frequent information about pending legislation. CMC publishes a quarterly newsletter, *The Children's Chronicle*. It also provides in-depth analysis of current policy issues through a variety of fact sheets, policy briefs and reports.

Founded in 1983, CMC is a member of Voices for America's Children.

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The Children's Trust Fund (CTF) is Missouri's foundation for child abuse prevention. CTF is a non-profit organization dedicated to the vision of children and families who are able to grow and reach their full potential in a nurturing and healthy environment, free from child abuse and neglect. Its mission is to prevent or alleviate child abuse and neglect for Missouri's children and families through: planning and policy development; funding of results-oriented programs; training programs for prevention professionals; research; public awareness and education; and the integration of statewide prevention efforts.

CTF was established by state statute in 1983 (210.170 RSMo) as a public-private partnership that is governed by a 21-member board of directors appointed by the Governor that provides fiduciary oversight, program direction and leadership for child abuse and neglect prevention activities throughout Missouri. Unique in its origin and mission, it is the only state agency to receive non-general revenue funding for the specific purpose of child abuse prevention. CTF receives funding through dedicated fees on marriage licenses and vital records, voluntary contributions designated on Missouri State Income Tax Returns, sales of the specialty CTF license plate, general donations, interest income from the Fund, and a federal grant.

CTF strives to prevent child abuse and neglect through grant distribution, education and awareness. Since 1983, CTF has allocated over \$32 million to prevention programs statewide that focus on parent education, home visitation, mentoring, crisis intervention and respite care, safe sleep environments, school-based education, fatherhood and grandparent initiatives, infant massage, Shaken Baby Syndrome prevention, professional training and research.

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Acknowledgements

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