



Kids Count in Arkansas

~Issue Brief~



Improving the Well-being of Arkansas's Children

Embargoed until Wednesday, July 25th, 2007

Introduction

This issue brief is intended to be used as a supplement to the 2007 Kids Count Databook which is being released by the Annie E. Casey Foundation. The databook, which is released annually, compares Arkansas to every other state on measures of child well-being. This year's report ranks Arkansas 45th in the nation. This brief report examines several of the indicators contained in the Kids Count Data Book to determine what Arkansas can do to improve its standing in the nation.

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Low Birth Weight Babies

The percent of total births that were low birth weight babies in 2004.

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 43rd in the nation. 9.3% of Arkansas's births were low birth weight babies (3,593) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain a 6% low birth weight baby rate, reducing the number of low birth weight babies by 1,270. Alaska and Oregon are the best in the nation at 6% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of low birth weight babies will have to decrease by 469 newborns to achieve an 8.1% rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase access to prenatal care and programs that reduce the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco and other harmful substances during pregnancy.

Infant Mortality

The infant mortality rate is the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age per 1,000 live births in 2004.

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 40th in the nation. 8.3 per 1,000 Arkansas infants die before age 1 (319 infants). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain an infant mortality rate of 4.5 per 1,000, reducing the number of infants dying in their first year by 145. Montana and Vermont are best in the nation at 4.5 per 1,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of infants dying before age 1 in Arkansas each year will have to decrease by 57 to achieve a national rate of 6.8 per 1,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase mother's access to prenatal care and programs that help pregnant women avoid the use of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Increase use of home visiting models to help identify potential problems earlier and to provide parent education concerning SIDS.

Child Deaths

The number of deaths per 100,000 children ages 1-14 in 2004.

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 47th in the nation. 34 child deaths per 100,000 (178 children ages 1-14 died) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attain a rate of 11 children per 100,000 the number child deaths would have to decrease by 121 deaths per year. Rhode Island is the best in the nation at a rate of 11 per 100,000 children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of child deaths in Arkansas will have to decrease by 71 deaths to achieve an infant mortality rate of 20 per 100,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educate parents about properly using child restraint seats and securing harmful substances and weapons. Implement an injury prevention program in Arkansas. Pass a primary seat belt law to encourage use of safety restraints in vehicles. Create a statewide trauma center system.

Teen Death

The teen death rate is the number of deaths per 100,000 teens ages 15-19 in 2004

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 42nd in the nation. 93 deaths per 100,000 teens (181 teen deaths) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain a rate of 40 teen deaths per 100,000, reducing the number of deaths by 103 teen deaths per year. Hawaii is the best in the nation at 40 deaths per 100,000 teens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of teen deaths in Arkansas will have to decrease by 52 deaths to achieve a rate of 66 deaths per 100,000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policies that encourage teen use of seat belts, reduce teen substance abuse, institute graduated drivers licensing, and expand after school and summer programs. Create a statewide trauma center system.

Teen Births

The teen birth rate is the number of births to girls ages 15 to 19 per 1,000 in this age group in 2004

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 46th in the nation. 60 births per 1,000 are to Arkansas teen mothers (5,716 births) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas will need to attain a birth rate of 18 per 1,000 teens, reducing the number of teen births by 4,010. New Hampshire is the best in the nation at 18 per 1,000 teens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of teen births in Arkansas will have to decrease by 1,706 births to achieve a teen birth rate of 41 per 1,000 teens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to quality programs and information that promote making good decisions, including abstinence, after school and summer programs, and safe sex education.

High School Dropouts

The high school dropout rate is the percentage of teens ages 16 to 19 that are not enrolled in school and are not high school graduates. GED is included.

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 27th in the nation. 8% of the state's youth ages 16 to 19 drop out of high school (11,734 dropouts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas will need to attain a high school dropout rate of 3%, reducing the number of dropouts by 7,222. Hawaii is the best in the nation at 3%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of teens dropping out of school will have to decrease by 1,204 to achieve a dropout rate of 7%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide needed services to meet the educational, emotional and health needs of students and linking them to global workforce skills.

Idle Teens

Percent of teens ages 16-19 not attending school and not working in 2005

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 31st in the nation. 9% of Arkansas's teens are not attending school and not working (14,250 idle teens). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas would need to reduce the number of idle teens by 6,750 to reach the top rate of 5% held by five states that include Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nebraska, and North Dakota. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of idle teens in Arkansas will have to decrease by 2,217 to achieve a national average of 8% of teens who are idle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create policies that connect older teens with local and global workforce skills through technical education, apprenticeships, credit recovery education programs and workforce education.

Kids without Secure Parental Employment

The percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment in 2005

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 36th in the nation. 36% of Arkansas's children live in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment. (241,125 children). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain a rate of 26% of children without secure parental employment, reducing the number by 66,763 children. Iowa, Nebraska, and Utah lead the nation with just 26%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children without secure parental employment would have to be reduced by 13,090 to meet the nation average of 34%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the percent of adults with a BA degree, increase literacy rates, and expand workforce development and career training opportunities in Arkansas, such as Career Pathways.

Children in Poverty

The percentage of children living in families with incomes below the federal poverty level in 2005 (\$19,350 for a family of four).

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 44th in the nation. 25% of Arkansas's children live in poverty (164,510 children). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain a 9% child poverty rate, reducing the number of poor children by 105,045. New Hampshire is the best in the nation at 9%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children in poverty in Arkansas will have to decrease by 38,933 to achieve a 19% child poverty rate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progressive taxation, state level EITC, Individual Development Accounts, access to reasonable credit, low income housing, innovative workforce development programs such as Career Pathways, and other supports for families to ensure their economic viability.

Single Parent Families

Percent of children in single-parent families in 2005.

Where are we now?	What will it take to be #1?	What will it take to be average?	How can we do it?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas ranks 39th in the nation. 34% of Arkansas's children live in single parent families (214,964 children). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arkansas needs to attain an 18% rate, reducing the number of children in single parent families by 102,666 children. Utah leads the nation with 18% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of children living in single parent families in Arkansas would have to decrease by 15,388 children to reach the national average of 32%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The state should explore policies and research based programs that are shown to encourage marriage and reduce the number of divorces

Conclusion

The 2007 Kids Count Databook takes on special meaning because Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families will celebrate thirty years of working to improve the well-being of Arkansas children and their families. In 1979, Arkansas Advocates released *Arkansas Children Have Problems*, the state's first comprehensive look at the challenges facing Arkansas children and a precursor to the Kids Count Data Book. Through research, public policy, and public education Arkansas Advocates continues to help the state focus on the solutions to the problems facing children.

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