

CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING IN NORTH DAKOTA: OUR CHILDREN, OUR STATE

This 2007 *Overview of Children's Well-Being in North Dakota* encourages citizens of North Dakota to consider how children's well-being is vital to the future of our state. We draw your attention to the following trends and encourage all North Dakotans to reflect on how our state can support policies and programs that will help create a future for North Dakota that encourages population growth and more economically viable families.



Trends in Children's Well-Being in Our State

Population and Family Composition

- North Dakota is facing a future with fewer and fewer children.
- Between 2000 and 2005, every county in the state experienced a decline in the number of children ages 19 and younger.
- In 2005, more than one-third of all counties in the state had fewer than 30 births.
- The state's population of young adults begins to drop after age 19. Out-migration of young adults has contributed to the shrinking number of children in North Dakota.

Economic Condition

- Most single parents in North Dakota work, but their wages are low.
- Affordable housing is a significant issue for lower-income households in North Dakota.
- Overall, 14% of North Dakota children lived in poverty in 2000.
- North Dakota children younger than 6 have the highest poverty rates of all age groups, including the highest percentage of persons experiencing extreme poverty.

Education

- Public school enrollments continue to decline throughout the state.
- In 2005-06, 29% of all school districts in North Dakota had fewer than 100 students in attendance on an average day.
- The majority of North Dakota students are enrolled in the largest eight school districts.
- In contrast to K-12 enrollments, Head Start enrollment of North Dakota children ages 3 and 4 has grown.

Child Care

- Most North Dakota mothers are employed. Child care is an important concern for many North Dakota families.
- Child-care workers' wages in North Dakota are low relative to other workers' wages.
- One of the ramifications of child-care workers' low wages is relatively high job turnover rates.

Health and Children at Risk

- About 9% of North Dakota children remain uninsured.
- Nearly 6% of North Dakota babies were born to mothers receiving inadequate prenatal care in 2005.
- North Dakota students have one of the highest rates of binge drinking in the nation.