

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS



*Examining
critical issues for
North Dakota
children and
families*



DEMOGRAPHICS

From 2003 to 2008, 24 of North Dakota's 53 counties had an increase in the number of younger children ages 0 to 5.

- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division



SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Children

In 2008, children ages 0 to 17 comprised 22 percent of North Dakota's total population, compared to 25 percent in 2000 and 28 percent in 1990. Statewide, these children numbered 143,048 in 2008, an 11 percent decline from 160,849 in 2000 and an 18 percent decline from 175,385 in 1990.

The proportion of North Dakota children ages 0 to 17 in 2008 ranged from a low of 13 percent in Sheridan County to a high of 35 percent in Sioux County. From 1990 through 2000, five of North Dakota's 53 counties had growth in the number of children (Cass, Burleigh, Rolette, Sioux, and Benson); from 2000 to 2008, only one county, Cass, showed growth.

Due to a consistent increase in births during the past few years, the number of children ages 0 to 5 in North Dakota has grown each year since 2003; 24 North Dakota counties had an increase in the number of children ages 0 to 5 from 2003 to 2008. Conversely, the number of children ages 6 and older continues to decrease statewide, with the exception of Cass County.

Total Births

The number of births in North Dakota declined consistently throughout the 1980s and 1990s, reaching a low of 7,635 in 1999. After a few years of little change, the number of births in North Dakota increased an average of 2 percent per year from 2001 through 2008, rising to 8,931.

Teen Births

Births to North Dakota teens totaled 669 in 2008, which is 8 percent of all births statewide. While this proportion has remained relatively unchanged since 2003, the teen birth rate (i.e., teen births per 1,000 girls ages 15 to 19) rose slightly from 25.6 in 2004 to 28.8 in 2008.

Race and Ethnicity

Though white children comprised the majority of children ages 0 to 18 statewide in 2008 (87 percent), their numbers declined 12 percent from 2000 to 2008 (150,812 to 132,492). During the same time, the number of American Indian children, North Dakota's largest minority group, grew 11 percent (13,522 to 14,940).

The state's smallest minority groups saw much larger percentage gains. From 2000 to 2008, the number of Hispanic children (of any race) increased 59 percent (3,377 to 5,351), the number of Asian children increased 31 percent (1,311 to 1,721), and the number of African American children increased 68 percent (2,248 to 3,777).

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Parents and Households

The majority of all North Dakota children ages 0 to 17 live with at least one of their parents. According to Census 2000, 76 percent of North Dakota children live with both parents and 19 percent live with a single parent. The remaining 5 percent live with other relatives (e.g., grandparent), non-relatives (e.g., foster parents), by themselves or with a spouse/unmarried partner, or in a group facility. Current state-level 2008 data (2008 county-level data are not available) suggest that the proportion of North Dakota children living by themselves or with someone other than their parent has grown to 7 percent (to be 90 percent certain, this amount could be +/-0.7) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B09001, <http://factfinder.census.gov>).

Foster Care

The number of North Dakota children living in foster care totaled 2,105 in 2009, representing 1 percent of all children ages 0 to 18 statewide. Statewide, the five most common reasons for the removal of a child from their home to be placed in foster care included child behavior issues (22 percent), neglect (17 percent), the caretaker's inability to cope (12 percent), parental alcohol use (10 percent), and parental drug abuse (10 percent). Multiple reasons may be cited in each case.

Working Mothers

Most North Dakota children live with their mothers (whether she is married or single), and most North Dakota mothers work. In 2000, 90 percent of all North Dakota children lived with both parents or with a single mother, the largest proportion in the nation. In addition, the proportion of North Dakota mothers (with children ages 0 to 17) in the labor force was 81 percent in 2000, the 2nd highest proportion nationwide. The proportion of working mothers is slightly smaller for mothers with young children ages 0 to 5 (76 percent), but rises to 85 percent for mothers with older children (ages 6 to 17). Nationally, 69 percent of mothers with children ages 0 to 17 were in the labor force in 2000. Current national and state-level 2008 data (2008 county-level data are not available) indicate that these proportions have changed little since 2000 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B23003, <http://factfinder.census.gov>).

Unmarried Mothers

One-third of all North Dakota births in 2008 were to unmarried women. This proportion has risen consistently over the past several years, up from 23 percent in 1994. Most of the births to unmarried women in 2008 were to women ages 20 or older (80 percent); 20 percent were to teenagers. Births to unmarried teens ages 12 to 19 totaled 601 in 2008, or 7 percent of all births statewide.

One in three births in North Dakota was to an unmarried woman in 2008 (34 percent), which is up from 23 percent in 1994.

*-North Dakota
Department of Health,
Vital Records*



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

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In 2008, 14 percent of North Dakota children lived in poverty, a rate which has not improved in the past nine years.

-U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2000 and the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates (SAIPE) Program



Family Income

Income and poverty are issues that affect individual North Dakotans differently. As a whole, numbers for the state are encouraging. North Dakota families with children ages 0 to 17 earned a median income of \$44,640 in 2000. Current 2008 state-level data (2008 county-level data are not available) indicate that this median has risen to \$60,946 (to be 90 percent certain, this amount could be +/- \$1,666), a value similar to the national median of \$60,764 (+/- \$142) (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B19125, <http://factfinder.census.gov>).

Poverty

Poverty refers to a condition in which one is unable to afford basic human needs, such as clean water, nutrition, health care, education, clothing, and shelter. Income thresholds used to determine poverty are updated annually by the Census Bureau. In 2009, a four-person family earning \$21,947 or less was considered impoverished, which is less than the \$22,017 threshold established in 2008.

Even with the increase in North Dakota's median family income from 2000 to 2008, the child poverty rate has not improved. In 2000, 14 percent of North Dakota children ages 0 to 17 lived in poverty (22,163 children). Current 2008 data indicate that the child poverty rate is still at 14 percent.

American Indian reservations in North Dakota are most affected by high rates of child poverty. In Sioux County, which includes part of the Standing Rock Reservation, one out of every two children ages 0 to 17 was impoverished in 2008 - the 6th highest child poverty rate in the nation (when ranked among all counties nationwide).

Financial Assistance

Financial assistance programs are available to help low-income families and children in North Dakota. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP (formerly the Food Stamp Program) provided help to 34,502 children ages 0 to 18 in 2009 (23 percent of children statewide). In addition, 34,689 North Dakota children received free or reduced price lunches in school (34 percent of total school enrollment). In 14 of North Dakota's 53 counties, at least 40 percent of students received free or reduced price lunches in 2009.

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF) provided assistance to 8,983 North Dakota children ages 0 to 19 in 2009, up 19 percent from 2008.

In addition, North Dakota helped low-income families pay child-care bills for 8,053 children ages 0 to 13 in 2009, or 7 percent of all children ages 0 to 13 statewide.

EDUCATION AND EARLY CARE

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

School Enrollment and Costs

North Dakota's public schools averaged 95,157 students daily during the 2008-09 academic year. As daily enrollments continue to decrease throughout the state (2 percent per year, on average, since 1996-97), expenditures continue to rise. Since 1996-97, per student expenditures have increased 7 percent per year on average, totaling \$8,517 per student in 2008-09.

Test Scores

Academically, North Dakota 4th and 8th grade students test well in reading, math, and science - with achievement scores exceeding national averages in 2009 (National Assessment of Educational Progress, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/>).

While North Dakota students rank relatively well nationally in terms of academic achievement, there is room for improvement. Composite scores for 2009 North Dakota public high school graduates taking the ACT averaged 21.5 out of a possible 36, slightly higher than the national average of 21.1.

Beyond the overall composite ACT score, ACT, Inc. has developed benchmarks in the areas of English, math, reading, and science to measure what it takes to be successful in standard first-year college courses. Based on these benchmarks, 70 percent of the 2009 ACT-tested North Dakota high school graduates were ready for college English, 47 percent were ready for college math, 57 percent were ready for college reading, and 31 percent were ready for college science. However, 24 percent were ready for all four courses, a proportion that has changed little over the past several years.

High School Dropouts

Various measures exist for determining high school dropout rates. In this publication, the actual number of dropout events is presented along with the percentage of total high school enrollment. According to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction, the number of high school students (in grades 9 through 12) who were enrolled in school and then dropped out in 2009 totaled 775 (2 percent of high school enrollment). Three counties in North Dakota had dropout rates of at least 5 percent: Rolette (9 percent), Williams (7 percent), and Benson (5 percent).

Special Education

In 2009, 13,261 North Dakota children ages 3 to 21 were enrolled in special education (14 percent of total public school enrollment). Statewide, 31 percent of students enrolled in special education had a specific learning disability, 26 percent had a speech impairment, 7 percent were emotionally disturbed, and 6 percent were mentally handicapped in 2009.

North Dakota 4th and 8th grade students test well in reading, math, and science - with achievement scores exceeding national averages in 2009.

- National Assessment of Educational Progress



EDUCATION AND EARLY CARE (CONT.)

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Legally recognized child care providers in North Dakota numbered 3,136 in February 2010 and had the capacity to care for 41,478 children (approximately 54% of all children ages 0 to 13 with working parents).

- U.S. Census Bureau, ACS PUMS and North Dakota Department of Human Services



Child Care

In North Dakota, it is estimated that 33,778 children ages 0 to 5 and 43,546 children ages 6 to 13 had working parents in 2008 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year PUMS, <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Products/PUMS/>). Legally recognized child care providers in North Dakota numbered 3,136 in February 2010 and had the combined capacity to care for 41,478 children. Legally recognized child care providers include those who are licensed, self-certified, in-home providers, approved relatives, and registered tribal providers. Informal networks of relatives, friends, and neighbors provide care for many North Dakota children. These providers are difficult to track and care is not monitored.

Licensed Child Care

As of February 2010, North Dakota reported 1,617 licensed child care programs. Licensed child care in North Dakota is state-approved and reviewed yearly, with licenses being granted by county social services. The majority of licensed child care in North Dakota takes place in a home setting. Family providers (24 percent) together with group child care homes (52 percent) comprised 76 percent of all licensed providers in 2010. Large centers and group child care facilities comprised 13 percent of licensed providers in the state. Other licensed providers consist of facilities holding multiple licenses, preschools, public approval programs, and school-age programs; together, they comprised 11 percent of all licensed providers in 2010.

Unlicensed Child Care

Legally recognized yet unlicensed child care providers in the state included 678 self-certified and in-home providers, 142 registered tribal child care providers, and 699 approved relatives in February 2010.

Child Care Assistance

Child care has become part of the daily routine for thousands of North Dakota families, many of whom are struggling. As mentioned in the Economic Well-Being component of this report, the Child Care Assistance Program helped low-income families in North Dakota pay child care bills for 8,053 children ages 0 to 13 in 2009, or 7 percent of all children ages 0 to 13 statewide.

Child Care Quality

In addition to finding affordable child care, parents are also faced with finding a quality program they can trust and depend on. Quality child care is critical for providing safe and nurturing environments for children. To that end, the North Dakota Child Care Resource and Referral agency provides comprehensive training and consultation to improve the quality of programs caring for infants and toddlers (<http://www.ndchildcare.org/>).

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Prenatal Care

A healthy mother is vital to the health of her child. Prenatal care can improve birth outcomes and is more likely to be effective if begun early in pregnancy. Of the 8,931 North Dakota births in 2008, 442 (5 percent) were to mothers receiving late or no prenatal care.

Low Birth Weight Births

Throughout North Dakota, 610 babies were born weighing less than 5.5 pounds (or 2,500 grams) in 2008. These low birth weight babies comprised 7 percent of all births in 2008. Nationally, North Dakota had the 5th lowest percentage of low birth weight births among all states in 2006 (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC&P, National Center for Health Statistics, <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/vitalstats.htm>).

Infant and Child Deaths

In 2008, 50 North Dakota babies died within one year of life (0.6 percent of all births). Of all North Dakota deaths in 2008, 41 were youth ages 1 to 19 (0.7 percent of all deaths).

WIC Assistance

The supplemental nutrition program for women, infants and children (WIC) provides nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, and health and social service referrals to eligible participants at no charge. The number of North Dakota WIC participants totaled 24,070 in 2009.

Medicaid

To assist North Dakota children needing health care, 44,333 children ages 0 to 20 received health care assistance through Medicaid (25 percent of persons ages 0 to 20 statewide) in 2009.

Healthy Steps

To help those children from working families that earn too much to qualify for full Medicaid coverage, but not enough to afford private insurance, the state's Healthy Steps Children's Health Insurance Plan (CHIP) provided premium-free health coverage to 3,365 children in January 2010.

Uninsured Children

While most children ages 0 to 18 in North Dakota are covered by some form of health insurance, 12,020 children were uninsured in 2006, which is 8 percent of all children statewide.

The majority of the uninsured children in North Dakota were living in or near poverty. In 2006, 7,074 North Dakota children ages 0 to 18 were uninsured and living below 200 percent of poverty, which is 59 percent of all uninsured children and 5 percent of all children statewide.

According to Census estimates, 12,020 North Dakota children ages 0 to 18 were uninsured in 2006, which is 8 percent of all children statewide.

- U.S. Census Bureau, Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) Program



SAFETY AND RISKY BEHAVIORS

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The proportion of North Dakota teens considered to be idle (i.e., not in school, not a graduate, and not working) rose from 2 percent in 2000 to 3 percent in 2008.

- U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000 and the 2006-2008 3-Year ACS



Juvenile Court Referrals

A total of 5,784 North Dakota juveniles ages 10 to 17 were referred to court a total of 9,854 times in 2009. Each time a juvenile is referred to court, he or she may be charged with multiple offenses. In 2009, North Dakota juveniles were charged with a total of 12,681 offenses.

While each juvenile court referral may have several charges for multiple offenses, an offense description is available for the major offense only. The major offenses associated with the 9,854 juvenile court referrals in 2009 were distributed into five categories: offenses against property (25 percent), unruly behavior (23 percent), alcohol offenses (17 percent), offenses against person (8 percent), and other offenses not included in the previously mentioned categories (e.g., disorderly conduct, controlled substance, traffic) (28 percent).

North Dakota juveniles referred to court as a proportion of all youth ages 10 to 17 has remained relatively unchanged over the past several years. In 2009, 9 percent of all children ages 10 to 17 (5,784 juveniles) were referred to court for various offenses.

Child Abuse and Neglect

In 2009, there were 6,944 children ages 0 to 17 suspected of being abused or neglected in North Dakota, or 5 percent of all children ages 0 to 17. When a suspected case of abuse or neglect is investigated by the North Dakota Child Protection Services Program, it is determined if services are required, if services are recommended, or if no services are required or recommended.

Following assessments of the 2009 cases by Child Protection Service social workers, it was determined that 1,257 children (18 percent of all suspected victims - or 0.9 percent of all children ages 0 to 17) were in high-risk situations requiring immediate services. The proportion of children requiring services for abuse and neglect varied widely throughout the state. Of particular concern is Divide County in which 6 percent of all children ages 0 to 17 required immediate services for child abuse and neglect in 2009.

Idle Teens

North Dakota children ages 16 to 19 who were not in school, not high school graduates, and not in the labor force (referred to as idle teens) comprised 1.7 percent of all children ages 16 to 19 in 2000. Only one state, Vermont, had a lower proportion (1.5 percent). Nationally, 4 percent of teens were considered idle in 2000, a proportion which decreased slightly to 3 percent in 2008.

Current state-level 2008 data (2008 county-level data are not available) indicate that the proportion of idle teens in North Dakota rose to 3 percent (U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates, Table B14005, <http://factfinder.census.gov>).