

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS



*North Dakota
KIDS COUNT
seeks to
examine critical
issues for
North Dakota
children and
families.*



DEMOGRAPHICS

For four years in a row, North Dakota has had the fastest growing population among states in the U.S., growing 2 percent in the past year – nearly three times the national average in 2015¹.

¹U.S. Census Bureau, Population and Housing Unit Estimates. *Annual Estimates of the Population for the U.S., States, Counties, Cities, and Towns, and Puerto Rico: April 1, 2010 to July 1, 2015*. Available online at <http://www.census.gov/popest/data/cities/totals/2015/SUB-EST2015.html>.

²National Vital Statistics System, National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Births: Final Data for 2014*. Available online at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr64/nvsr64_12.pdf.

³The Annie E. Casey Foundation. *Race for Results: Building a Path to Opportunity for All Children*. Available online at <http://www.aecf.org/resources/race-for-results>.



SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Population

Energy development activity in western North Dakota continues to impact population trends in the state. Shifting migration patterns and an increase in total births have resulted in significant population growth for the state over the past decade. For four years in a row, North Dakota has led the nation with the fastest growing population among states. According to the 2015 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, North Dakota has 756,927 residents, a record high¹. This also represents a 2 percent growth from 2014, a growth rate nearly three times the national average.

In 2014, children ages 0 through 17 comprised 23 percent of the total population in North Dakota (i.e., 168,527 children). After nearly two decades of continuous loss, the number of children has grown consistently since 2008, by approximately 3 percent annually through 2014.

The majority of North Dakota counties (33 of 53) had an increase in the number of children from 2013 to 2014, with the fastest growth located in western North Dakota (McKenzie 24%, Stark 13%, Williams 11%, and Divide 9%).

Total Births

The number of young children ages 0 through 5 began increasing in 2003, which parallels the upswing in total births. After decades of decline, total births began to increase in 2002 when there were 7,755 births. By 2014, there were 11,352 births recorded statewide by the North Dakota Department of Health.

Births to teenagers in North Dakota totaled 570 in 2014, which is 5 percent of all births statewide. The teen birth rate in North Dakota decreased 17 percent over the past few years, from 29 births per 1,000 female teens in 2010 to a rate of 24 in 2014. Nationally, the trend in teen births is similar, decreasing by 9 percent from 2013 to 2014, resulting in 24 births per 1,000 female teens in 2014².

Race and Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity have important implications for culture, identity, and overall well-being. Children of different races and ethnicities often show large variation in well-being including health, mortality, school performance and attainment, and access to family and community resources³.

While minority children continue to represent a relatively small percentage of North Dakota's youth overall, the state is becoming more racially diverse. Comprising 14 percent of North Dakota's children in 2014, the number of Black, Asian, and American Indian children combined grew twice as fast as White children from 2010 to 2014. The number of Hispanic youth (of any race) grew six times faster than the number of White children. Estimates suggest that at a national level, there will be no race-ethnic majority among children by 2018 (i.e., White, Non-Hispanic youth will comprise less than 50 percent of all youth nationwide)³.

FAMILY AND COMMUNITY

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Living Arrangements

While the majority of all North Dakota children ages 0 through 17 live with their parent/s, the composition of families continues to change. In 2014, 69 percent of North Dakota children lived with both parents. This percentage is down from 82 percent in 1990. During the same period of time, the percentage of children living with a single parent has increased. In 1990, 14 percent of children lived with a single parent. This percentage increased to 23 percent in 2014. Also on the rise is the number of children living with their grandparents. In 2014, 4 percent of North Dakota children lived with a grandparent (6,422 children), which is up from 2 percent in 1990 (2,628 children).

Approximately 1 percent of North Dakota children received foster care services in 2015 (2,344 children). The majority of children in foster care are in a family home (82%). Approximately one in six children in foster care are in a group home or institution (16%).

While most North Dakota babies are born to married mothers, one-third of births in 2014 were to unmarried women (32%). The percentage of births to unmarried women was 23 percent in 1994 and grew an average of 3 percent per year through 2005 where it has remained relatively unchanged through 2014. Approximately 14 percent of births to unmarried women in 2014 were to teenagers. Births to unmarried teens ages 12 through 19 totaled 511 in 2014, which is 5 percent of all births statewide.

Working Parents

Most North Dakota children live with their mothers (whether they are married or single) and most North Dakota mothers work. In 2014, 86 percent of all North Dakota children lived with their mother, which is the fifth largest percentage in the nation (behind Utah, Minnesota, Massachusetts, and Connecticut). In addition, 80 percent of North Dakota mothers were in the labor force in 2014, the seventh largest percentage nationwide. Nationally, 73 percent of mothers with children ages 0 through 17 were in the labor force in 2014.

A major contributor to financial stability and well-being of children is secure parental employment¹. In 2014, 76 percent of children ages 0 through 13 in North Dakota lived in situations where all parents were in the labor force, which is the fifth largest percentage among states (behind South Dakota, Iowa, Minnesota, and Nebraska). Nationally, 68 percent of children live with parents who are all in the labor force.

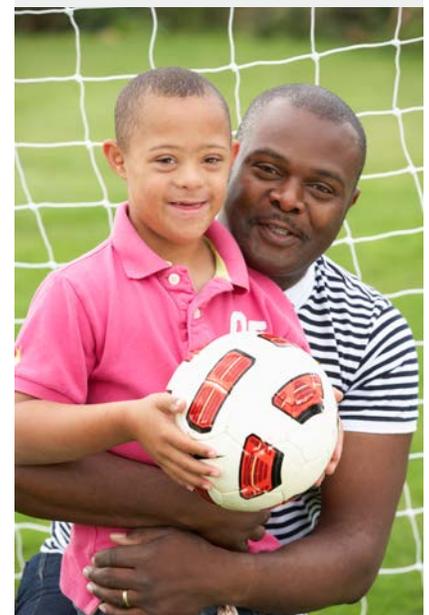
Employed Youth

Employment can provide valuable experience for youth. In moderation, work experience can help youth build skills and can open up valuable opportunities as youth prepare for work and a career². In North Dakota, nearly half of teens ages 16 through 19 were employed in 2014 (45%), which is the second largest percentage among states (behind South Dakota). Among young adults ages 20 through 24 in North Dakota, 75 percent were employed in 2014 - which was the largest percentage among states.

North Dakota leads the nation in the percentage of young adults ages 20 to 24 who were employed in 2014 (75%).

¹Child Trends (2015). *Secure parental employment*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=secure-parental-employment>.

²The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2012). *Youth and Work: Restoring Teen and Young Adult Connections to Opportunity*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/>.



ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

In 2015, 4,887 children and youth received TANF in North Dakota, which is down from 5,358 in 2014 (a decrease of 9% in one year).

¹U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis (2015). *Regional Economic Accounts*. Retrieved from <http://www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm>.

²U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015). *Unemployment Rates for States*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/web/laus/laumstrk.htm>.

³U.S. Census Bureau (2015). *Poverty Thresholds for 2014 by Size of Family and Number of Related Children Under 18 Years*. Retrieved from <http://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/income-poverty/historical-poverty-thresholds.html>.

⁴National Center for Children in Poverty. (2009). *Budgeting for Basic Needs: A Struggle for Working Families*. Retrieved from <http://www.nccp.org>.



Income and Poverty

Despite a recent reduction in oil and agricultural commodity prices, which has resulted in a decline in the gross state product for North Dakota¹, the state's overall economy remains quite strong. North Dakota continues to have the lowest unemployment rate among states² and per capita income has increased substantially since 2006¹. In addition, the median household income for families with children grew to \$71,072 in 2014. Despite this economic growth, child poverty has been unaffected by the state's prosperity. Slightly more than one out of every seven children living in North Dakota is considered impoverished (15% in 2014, or 22,498 children).

The poverty threshold for a family of four in 2014 was \$24,230³. Research shows that families need an income of approximately twice the official poverty threshold to cover the entire cost of basic expenses for housing, food, transportation, health care and child care⁴. In North Dakota, 33 percent of children live in families earning less than twice the poverty threshold (i.e., incomes less than 200% of poverty).

Younger children (i.e., ages 0 through 4) in the state had a higher poverty rate than older children (i.e., ages 5 through 17) in 2014 (17% compared to 14%, respectively); in eight North Dakota counties, at least one in five children was living in poverty. Children living on American Indian reservations tend to have the highest child poverty rates in North Dakota. Data from 2014 indicate that about half of all children in Benson, Rolette, and Sioux counties were impoverished (51%, 50%, and 46%, respectively).

Public Assistance

Public benefit programs are available to help low-income families and children in North Dakota. The federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e., SNAP, formerly the Food Stamp Program) helped provide food to 36,954 North Dakota children ages 0 through 18 in 2015 (21% of children statewide). The free or reduced price lunch program served 35,976 North Dakota school children in 2015 (31% of total school enrollment). In four of North Dakota's 53 counties, at least half of students received free or reduced price lunches in 2015 (Sioux, Rolette, Benson, and Mountrail).

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF), designed to help families in need achieve self-sufficiency, provided assistance to 4,887 North Dakota children ages 0 through 19 in 2015, which is down 9 percent from 5,358 in 2014.

In an effort to allow parents to work or attain the education necessary to become employed and self-sufficient, 6,639 children benefited from the North Dakota Child Care Assistance program in 2015 (5% of all children ages 0 through 13 statewide).

EDUCATION AND EARLY CARE

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Enrollment

North Dakota's public schools averaged 106,431 students daily during the 2014-15 academic year. After several years of continued decreases in enrollments, North Dakota's average daily enrollment in public schools increased an average of 2 percent per year since 2008-09. Four counties, three of which are located in western energy development areas, had the fastest growth in average daily enrollment in 2014-15, at least 10 percent each over the previous year (Burke, Sioux, McKenzie, and Mountrail). Nearly half of North Dakota's counties (23 of 53) reported a loss in average daily enrollment in 2014-15. Overall expenditures in North Dakota public schools averaged \$11,464 per student in 2014-15, which is a 5 percent increase from 2013-14.

Effective and appropriate education is an important resource for improving long-term outcomes for children and youth with special needs. In 2015, 13,987 North Dakota children were enrolled in special education (12% of public school enrollment). Of North Dakota children enrolled in special education, 30 percent had a specific learning disability, 21 percent had a speech impairment, 6 percent were emotionally disturbed, 5 percent had an intellectual disability, and 7 percent had autism.

According to decades of research, the best way to ensure successful students and productive adults in the future is to invest in early childhood development¹. In North Dakota, approximately one-third of children ages 3 and 4 were enrolled in early education programs in 2014 (36 percent) (i.e., programs offering educational experiences for children during the years preceding kindergarten - including Head Start).

Achievement

Most teenagers in North Dakota are engaged in school or work (98% in 2014) and most high school students graduate on time (86% in 2015). Of those students who graduate, many go on for higher levels of education. In Fall 2014, approximately two-thirds of recent North Dakota high school graduates were enrolled in degree-granting postsecondary institutions (67% or 4,825 students)². In preparation for college, most North Dakota students take the ACT which is a national college admissions examination.

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 four benchmark areas, 62 percent of the 2015 ACT-tested North Dakota high school graduates were ready for college English, 42 percent were ready for college math, 41 percent were ready for college reading, and 38 percent were ready for college science. Approximately one in four graduates (24%) was ready for all four courses.

The vast majority of North Dakota high school students in the Class of 2015 graduated high school on-time in four years (86%).

¹The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2013). *The First Eight Years: Giving Kids a Foundation for Lifetime Success*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/>.

²U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2015). *2015 Digest of Education Statistics*. Table 309.20. Retrieved from https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d15/tables/dt15_309.20.asp?current=yes.



EDUCATION AND EARLY CARE (CONT.)

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Licensed child care is currently meeting less than half (44%) of the potential need for care in North Dakota.

¹U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016). *Unemployment Rates for States*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/lau/lastrk15.htm>.

²Institute for Child, Youth, and Family Policy. (2015). *The Heller School*. Brandeis University. Retrieved from <http://www.diversitydatakids.org/>.

³The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). *Family, Friend, and Neighbor Care*. Retrieved from <http://www.aecf.org/>.

⁴Child Care Aware of North Dakota (2010). *2010 Activity Report*. Retrieved from <http://bit.ly/2a1uCzm>.

⁵Child Care Aware of North Dakota (2015). *Child Care Profile*. Retrieved from <http://www.ndchildcare.org/data-pub/>.



Child Care

As indicated in the Economic Well-Being section, North Dakota's economy is growing. With the lowest unemployment rate in the nation¹, almost all North Dakota parents are working. In 2014, 87 percent of North Dakota parents were in the labor force, which is the fifth largest percentage among states². This suggests that most children in the state are in need of quality early care and education opportunities. As noted in the Family and Community section, 76 percent of North Dakota children ages 0 through 13 live in families where all the parents are in the labor force (i.e., 91,681 children statewide) - which was the fifth largest percentage among states in 2014.

Reliable and affordable child care helps children, families, and communities prosper. With dependable child care, parents have greater opportunity to be productive at work and school. In addition, high-quality child care nurtures, stimulates, and supports children as they build the confidence and critical capacities they need to thrive in school and in life³.

As of February 2016, North Dakota reported 1,599 licensed child care programs with the capacity to care for 40,793 children. This means that licensed child care programs in the state have the ability to meet 44 percent of potential need. According to Child Care Aware of North Dakota, national child care standards recommend that licensed care should meet at least 50 percent of potential need⁴. Currently, four counties in North Dakota (i.e., Adams, Cass, Ward, and Ramsey) meet this recommended minimum.

Unlicensed Child Care

Legally recognized yet unlicensed child care providers in the state included 204 self-certified and in-home providers, 18 registered tribal child care providers, and 319 approved relatives in February 2016. Combined, these providers had the capacity to care for 1,856 children.

Informal networks of relatives, friends, and neighbors provide care for many North Dakota children. These situations are difficult to track and the number of providers and quality of care are not monitored. Yet these providers play an important role in helping North Dakota children begin school ready to learn and succeed.

Child Care Costs and Assistance

Child care has become part of the daily routine for thousands of North Dakota families, many of whom are struggling financially. According to 2015 data from Child Care Aware of North Dakota, care for one infant in a licensed center averages \$8,396 annually⁵.

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 6,639 children in 2015, or 5 percent of all children ages 0 through 13 statewide.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Vital Records

A healthy mother is important to the health of a child. Prenatal care can improve birth outcomes and is more likely to be effective if begun early in pregnancy¹. Of the 11,352 North Dakota births in 2014, 14 percent were to mothers receiving no prenatal care or care beginning after the first trimester. Mothers who do not receive prenatal care are much more likely to give birth to a low-weight baby¹. In 2014, 705 babies were born with a low birth weight (i.e., less than 5.8 pounds or 2,500 grams), which is 6 percent of all births. North Dakota had the second lowest percentage of low birth weight babies in the nation in 2014².

Problems relating to low birth weight can result in infant death. The death of a child is a tragedy for family and friends, and a loss to the community. In 2014, 49 North Dakota babies died within one year of life. Of all North Dakota deaths in 2014, 49 were children ages 1 through 19.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss can affect a child's ability to develop communication, language, and social skills. The earlier that children with a hearing impairment get services, the more likely they are to reach their full potential. In 2015, nearly all resident live births in North Dakota were screened for hearing loss (99%); of those screened, 10 percent did not pass the initial screening and were referred for further testing.

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 21,690 in 2015. The number of WIC participants has decreased an average of 2 percent annually since 2008.

To assist North Dakota children needing health care, 57,157 youth (28% of youth ages 0 through 20 statewide) received health care assistance through Medicaid in 2015; which is up 6 percent from 53,814 in 2014. In eight North Dakota counties, at least one-third of young people received Medicaid in 2014.

Uninsured Children

Children without health insurance have limited access to health care, which can lead to a greater risk of illness and hospitalization. In addition, a lack of health insurance can have a negative influence on school attendance and participation in extracurricular activities, and increased financial and emotional stress among parents³. While most children in North Dakota are covered by some form of health insurance, 12,093 were uninsured in 2014, which is 7 percent of all children statewide. Nearly half of uninsured children live in families with low to moderate incomes and are potentially eligible for coverage programs such as Medicaid and Healthy Steps. In 2014, 5,533 uninsured North Dakota children were living at or below 200 percent of poverty, which is 46 percent of all uninsured children statewide.

Slightly more than 1 in 4 North Dakota young people received Medicaid in 2015, which is up 6 percent from the previous year.

¹Child Trends (2015). *Late or no prenatal care*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=late-or-no-prenatal-care>.

²Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics (2015). *National Vital Statistics Reports*, Vol. 64, No. 12, December 23, 2015. Retrieved from <http://http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/births.htm>.

³Child Trends (2016). *Health care coverage*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=health-care-coverage>.



SAFETY AND RISKY BEHAVIOR

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

Following a national trend, the number of North Dakota juveniles referred to court has decreased an average of 5 percent annually since 2003.

¹Child Trends (2015). *Juvenile detention*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=juvenile-detention>.

²North Dakota Supreme Court (2015). *North Dakota Juvenile Court Annual Report 2015*. Retrieved from <https://www.ndcourts.gov/court/juvenile.htm>.

³Children's Bureau (2016). *Child Maltreatment 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/resource/child-maltreatment-2014>.

⁴Child Trends (2015). *Youth neither enrolled in school nor working*. Retrieved from <http://www.childtrends.org/?indicators=youth-neither-enrolled-in-school-nor-working>.



Juvenile Court Referrals

Juvenile delinquency has potentially high stakes for both individuals and society as a whole. Delinquency is linked to higher crime rates in adulthood and other negative outcomes. One estimate suggests that between 50 and 75 percent of adolescents who have spent time in juvenile detention centers are incarcerated later in life¹. A total of 3,546 North Dakota juveniles ages 10 through 17 were referred to court (at least once) for delinquent or unruly behavior in 2015 (5% of all youth ages 10 through 17). Following a national downward trend, the number of North Dakota juveniles referred to court has decreased an average of 5 percent annually since 2003.

In 2015, the five most common delinquent referrals received by the Juvenile Courts were theft of property and shoplifting (16%), disorderly conduct (13%), possession of drug paraphernalia (9%), possession of a controlled substance (9%), and simple assault (7%)².

Of the unruly referrals received in 2015 (offenses which only a child can commit), 28 percent were for unlawful possession/consumption of alcohol, 26 percent were for ungovernable behavior, 24 percent for runaway, 12 percent for school truancy, and 10 percent for such things as tobacco and curfew violations².

Child Abuse and Neglect

Providing children with safe and secure environments free from abuse and neglect will improve the likelihood of positive educational, emotional, and social outcomes that extend into adulthood. In 2015, there were 6,437 children suspected of being abused or neglected in North Dakota. When a suspected case of abuse or neglect is investigated by the North Dakota Child Protection Services Program, a determination is made as to whether services are required to provide for the protection and treatment of a child. Following assessments of the 2015 cases by social workers, it was determined that 1,760 children were in high-risk situations requiring immediate services. The number of children requiring services for abuse and neglect has increased an average of 9 percent every year since 2010. Overall, for every 1,000 children in North Dakota, approximately 10 were maltreated in 2015; nationally, the rate was 9.4 per 1,000 in 2014³.

Idle Teens

The transition from youth into independent adulthood involves many challenges. While there are multiple pathways to success, the consequences of unemployment, under-employment, or not acquiring post-secondary education can be damaging and enduring. Males who are neither enrolled in school nor working are more likely to engage in delinquent behavior or illegal activities. Females in this group are more likely to become dependent on welfare⁴. Similar to the national average, North Dakota youth who were not in school, not high school graduates, and not in the labor force (referred to as idle teens) comprised 2 percent of all children ages 16 through 19 in 2014.