

## WHAT is the 2001 Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book?

This report represents the ongoing effort of the Nevada KIDS COUNT project to provide a profile of the children and youth in Nevada by reporting research findings with current data.

## WHAT is the layout of the 2001 Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book?

The design of this year's *Data Book* is similar to past years'. We provide indicators reflecting critical elements of child and youth well-being. Examples of primary indicators include low-birthweight babies, births to teen mothers, children in poverty, and teen violent deaths. The primary indicators are organized into three descriptive areas as follows:

- ❖ **Definition:** A description of what the indicator is and what it measures.
- ❖ **Research Highlights:** Summaries of current research from academic journals, foundation publications, and public-information materials.
- ❖ **Related Tables and Figures:** Most recent available data for each indicator, including data for the county and state.

Two primary information sections presented in the *2000 Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book* have been revised and released: (1) Preventive Factors: Promising and Proven Practices and (2) Key Facts About Nevada's Children. Although not included in this year's book, the materials can be accessed via the Nevada KIDS COUNT Web site.

## WHAT are the additions to the 2001 Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book?

This year's *Data Book* provides expanded and more comprehensive information. Administrative data have been included in some instances to demonstrate, for example, service availability, program trends, and participation and eligibility differences.

This year's publication includes a submission addressing **Native American children and youth** in Nevada. The information should help to increase our awareness of, and attention to, this population.



In the Health Conditions and Health Care section, additional topics such as **Medicaid, Nevada Check Up, Women Infants & Children Program, dental care, immunizations, and prenatal care** are presented.

New in the Economic Well-Being section are updated federal poverty guidelines and federal program information regarding **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Food Stamps, and National School Meals**. In addition, **child care and child-support efforts** are addressed.

More information on Education and Achievement is provided in this year's *Data Book*. Nevada's challenge to address the status of education, especially the large number of high school dropouts, warranted greater coverage by Nevada KIDS COUNT. The new educational components in this year's *Data Book* include **characteristics of the formal education system in Nevada; testing, proficiency, and college-entrance efforts; and a profile of children and youth enrolled in special education and Early Head Start and Head Start**.

Data regarding Nevada's **children in out-of-home placements** and a profile of **children exposed to domestic violence** are presented in the Safety/Welfare section, emphasizing the importance of a safe, home environment for children.

The section titled **Developmental Assets of Youth** presents a framework of youth-centered development which focuses on shaping caring and supportive family, school, and community environments; establishing high behavior expectations from an early age; and ensuring meaningful opportunities for youth participation and success.

For those interested in more-detailed topical information, a new **Resources** section offers a number of additional, primarily electronic, resources.

### HOW were the data indicators selected?

The measures included in this *Data Book* were chosen through careful examination of the available data with input from the Nevada KIDS COUNT Advisory Council Data Subcommittee. Efforts were made to select substantive sets of benchmarks which represent the health and well-being of Nevada's children and youth. A number of practical considerations guided the selection process, including whether the individual indicators are:

- ❖ relevant and easily understandable by those who plan, manage, deliver, use, and support children's services;
- ❖ based on substantial research connecting them to child well-being;
- ❖ measured regularly, which allows for updates and demonstrated trends over time;
- ❖ representative of selected segments of children and youth;
- ❖ available at the county level where possible;
- ❖ verifiable with reliable data sources.

### Limitations of the data

Nevada KIDS COUNT strives to report the best available data. In doing so, we evaluated data-collection processes and data accuracy, consistency, and applicability.

In some instances, annual county-level information was not readily available or accessible. Examples include most administrative program data and substance-usage information (alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs) by youth. Few measures of social development and health-related behaviors for very young and preteenage children were found. Quality indicators of school readiness, mental health, child homelessness, day-care quality, and measures of children in institutional care are lacking by county.

The atypical population distribution in Nevada creates a serious "rare event" problem in counties with very small populations. Multiyear rolling averages are used to stabilize and improve the usefulness of these data wherever possible. Moreover, caution should be used when drawing conclusions from rates or percentages based on small numbers. Because rates based on small denominators are likely to be statistically unreliable, rates were not calculated for counties with small denominators. The designation N.M. = Not Meaningful is noted in the tables and raw data are provided as applicable. In some data tables, the sum of the county may not equal the state total due to rounding and/or missing county-reference data.

Many of our data sources, such as the Nevada Department of Education, need time after the end of the reporting period to compile and disseminate accurate information. Therefore, current-year data are often not available when this report is produced. Additionally, 1990 decennial Census data are the most

## Overview/Purpose Continued

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current available for a number of indicators such as families in poverty, teens not in school and not working, and children in single-parent families. The data for these particular indicators can be found in the *2000 Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book*; we chose not to report them again in this year's issue. Data on children and youth from the 2000 decennial Census will be disseminated in future KIDS COUNT publications.

### HOW can this information be used?

The **KIDS COUNT data** can be used to make a difference in the lives of Nevada's children and youth. These data can be used by:

- ❖ **private citizens** to find out about the needs of children, help identify areas which need volunteers, and to contact decision-makers regarding children;
- ❖ **business people** to determine what issues in the community affect employees, future employees, and their families;
- ❖ **teachers** to become more aware of possible needs of children in their classrooms and to become engaged in relevant discussion regarding civic responsibility, problem solving, and community service;
- ❖ **parents** to learn more about issues that affect their children and to foster more productive parent-teacher conferences;
- ❖ **educators and social service providers** to design programs to address community issues and concerns;
- ❖ **elected officials** to analyze the effectiveness of current policies and help shape future policies.

*“Successful, happy, healthy kids need families that are strong--families that not only love them, but also provide, nurture, support, and teach. But being a strong family is terribly tough in high-poverty neighborhoods that offer few of the opportunities, networks, and supports that all families need and most families take for granted.”*

*The Annie E. Casey Foundation  
2000 KIDS COUNT Data Book, p. 14*