

# Overview of KIDS COUNT

## WHAT is KIDS COUNT?

KIDS COUNT is a well-known, well-respected project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Its purpose is to track the well-being of children at both the national and the state levels. All 50 states have a KIDS COUNT project, allowing for state-by-state comparisons of child well-being indicators.

In Nevada, the primary activities of the KIDS COUNT project are to:

- ❖ collect, analyze, and distribute the best available data measuring the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children and youth in Nevada;
- ❖ educate and inform decision-makers, citizens, service providers, providers of funding, and community partners regarding data, policy, and resource analysis;
- ❖ provide linkages with community efforts to reach decision-makers with information concerning relevant issues for children and youth.

## WHAT is the *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book: 2006*?

This report represents the ongoing effort of the Nevada KIDS COUNT project to provide a profile of the children and youth in our state.

## WHAT is the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER)?

The Center for Business and Economic Research, established in 1975, aids businesses and agencies in achieving the fullest expression of economic potential by providing academic expertise in data collection, business-conditions analysis, and research projects which assist the development and diversification of the Nevada economy. CBER serves Nevadans by making presentations for conferences, task forces, symposiums, and meetings of Nevada organizations. The work of

CBER is rather evenly split between data collection and analysis, market analysis, business-conditions analysis, financial feasibility studies, and econometric modeling. CBER's staff publishes many reports and conducts both basic and applied research. CBER's relationship with KIDS COUNT began in 1996 when it began providing data for the *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book*. Since 2000, CBER has been publishing the *Data Book*.

## WHAT is the layout of the *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book: 2006*?

This year's *Data Book* is similar to past years' books. We provide indicators reflecting critical elements of child and youth well-being. The indicators are organized as follows:

- ❖ **Definition:** A description of what the indicator is and what it measures
- ❖ **Map:** Rates or percentages are presented for each county
- ❖ **Nevada:** Most recent state data for each indicator
- ❖ **Counties:** Most recent county data where applicable

## WHAT is new to the *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book: 2006*?

This year we add an essay to the beginning of our *Data Book*. By concentrating on one issue we can give our readers in-depth information on a child well-being indicator relevant to our state. We pattern the new format after the national *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which on an annual basis features an essay by Douglas W. Nelson, President of the Annie E. Casey Foundation. With the new addition comes a deletion. The review of literature for each indicator was eliminated as we think that the research findings do not vary significantly over a one-year period to justify inclusion on a yearly basis.

# Overview of KIDS COUNT Continued

We are pleased to include essays on my most memorable teacher written by successful people in Nevada. These essays grace the divider pages. Our guest essayists are Tom Axtell, Caesar J. Caviglia, Clint Holmes, Sonja Horsford, Sheila Leslie, and Richard Morgan.

We also made changes regarding the calculation/measurement of two child well-being indicators, now collecting data on the number of births to teenage females between the ages of 15 and 19, rather than for ages 15 through 17; and, collecting data on all causes of teen deaths rather than for teen violent deaths solely. The most recent national *KIDS COUNT Data Book* uses these new measures. Because Nevada KIDS COUNT tries to replicate what is done in the national *Data Book*, we made the change. Dr. William O'Hare of the Annie E. Casey Foundation compiled a list of reasons for using the new measures. A partial list is provided in the Notes section.

Lastly, child abuse and neglect data are not reported due to under-reporting of the number of child deaths by Clark County that might have involved maltreatment.

## HOW were the data indicators selected?

Nevada KIDS COUNT presents seven of the ten indicators identified and used by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in its state-by-state assessment. The Foundation believes: “. . . (1) They reflect a wide range of factors affecting the well-being of children (such as health, adequacy of income, and educational attainment). (2) They reflect experiences across a range of developmental stages—from birth through early adulthood. (3) They permit legitimate comparisons because they are consistent across states and over time.” (See *KIDS COUNT Data Book: 2005* by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, p. 28.)

The 10 indicators are:

- ❖ percent low-birthweight babies
- ❖ infant mortality rate
- ❖ child death rate
- ❖ teen death rate
- ❖ teen birth rate
- ❖ percent of teens who are high school dropouts
- ❖ percent of teens not attending school and not working
- ❖ percent of children living in families where no parent has full-time, year-round employment
- ❖ percent of children in poverty
- ❖ percent of children in single-parent households

In recent years, Nevada KIDS COUNT added additional indicators based on recommendations by *Data Book* users. Practical considerations guided the selection process of the additional indicators, including whether the individual indicators were:

- ❖ relevant
- ❖ substantially researched
- ❖ regularly measured
- ❖ representative of selected segments of children and youth
- ❖ available at the county level
- ❖ verifiable with reliable data sources

## Overview of KIDS COUNT Continued

### WHAT are the limitations of the data?

The atypical population distribution in Nevada counties with very small populations may create a serious “rare event” problem. Multiple-year averages stabilize and improve the usefulness of these data. Still, even when averaged, 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, NM = Not Meaningful, is noted in the maps; and raw data are provided as applicable in the County Data section. Also, the sum of the county data may not equal the state total due to rounding and/or missing county-reference data.

Many of our data providers need time to compile and disseminate accurate information. Therefore, current-year data were sometimes not available when this report was produced.

This year’s *Data Book* and last year’s are easily accessed on-line at: <http://kidscount.unlv.edu>.

### WHERE did Nevada improve or worsen?

Comparing the data on six of the child well-being indicators from last year’s *Data Book* with this year’s, we find that three improved and three worsened. Of the indicators that changed for the better, the juvenile violent crime arrest rate improved the most, dropping from 242.5 to 230.9. Of those that worsened, the percent of children in poverty changed the most from, from 14.1 to 15.3 percent.

### Comparison of Child Well-Being Indicators in Nevada: 2005 and 2006 *Data Books*

<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Nevada 2005 Data Book</i>	<i>Nevada 2006 Data Book</i>	<i>Comparison</i>	
	<i>Rate or Percent</i>	<i>Rate or Percent</i>	<i>Improved</i>	<i>Worsened</i>
Percent low-birthweight babies	7.7% (2001-03)	7.8% (2002-04)		X
Teen birth rate	NA	48.3 (2002-2004)	NA	NA
Infant mortality rate	5.7 (2001-03)	5.9 (2002-04)		X
Child death rate	20.5 (2001-03)	19.5 (2002-04)	X	
Teen death rate	NA	72.6 (2002-2004)	NA	NA
Percent of children in poverty	14.1% (2002)	15.3% (2003)		X
High school dropout rate	6.0% (2002-03)	5.8% (2003-04)	X	
Juvenile violent crime arrest rate	242.5 (2001-03)	230.9 (2002-04)	X	

*Note:* NA = Not Applicable. Due to the changes in the calculation/measurement of the teen birth rate and the teen death rate, we did not compare this year’s rates to last year’s.

*Source:* Center for Business and Economic Research, University of Nevada Las Vegas, 2005, *Nevada KIDS COUNT Data Book: 2005*.